Libraries, Registration and Archives

Ambitions for the next five years

Contents

1. **A new ambition for LRA**

Kent has seen and will continue to see significant changes in demography, spatial geography, how people access services and their expectations of those services, technology and IT literacy. LRA must look at the future challenge of population growth and the emergence of new communities in planning the shape of public service provision.

Taking the Kent and national approach into account, it is timely to define the ambitions for the LRA service for the next five to ten years. This will be a set of ambitions for the whole of LRA, recognising the benefit of integration while also recognising the distinctiveness and importance of each element and the financial context the service operates in.

Once the ambition statement for the whole service has been established, attention will then turn to developing the operational strategy to deliver it. This strategy will necessitate looking at the whole service and how we deliver LRA services across the county.

3. <u>KCC'S Strategic Statement</u>

LRA services play a key role in delivering across all of KCC's strategic outcomes. We make everyone welcome and offer a range of services to people of every age, ability and culture. We bring people together in our network of community libraries to promote literacy and a love of reading and provide access to information.

We offer a range of educational, cultural, health and social events and activities. For example baby rhyme time, computer buddy and health trainer sessions. These are part of our free core service offer to everyone who lives, works or is educated in Kent.

With free public Wi Fi and public PCs in all of our libraries, free online resources and e books we work to ensure that no-one is without access to the digital world. We offer outreach services such as the home library service, services to residential homes and wedding ceremonies at 230 approved venues across the County.

Our Vision
Our focus is on improving lives by ensuring every pound spent in Kent is delivering better outcomes for Kent's residents, communities and businesses.

Strategic Outcome

Children and young people in Kent get the best start in life

Strategic Outcome

Kent communities feel the benefit of economic growth by being in-work, healthy and enjoying a good quality of life

Strategic Outcome

Older and vulnerable residents are safe and supported with choices to live independently

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LRA supporting outcomes 2016/17

Our libraries provided 4,100 baby rhyme and story sessions attended by 72,104 people. Feedback from parents and carers said that the sessions had improved their children's social (78%); learning (77%) and listening (75%) skills.

91% of attendees said our homework code clubs helped them understand their homework better.

18,129 children registered, and 9,827 completed our summer reading challenge in 2017. 1,209 customers gave feedback and 27% reported that it helped to keep their child motivated to read during the summer break

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LRA supporting outcomes 2016/17

A more enterprising focus helped to maximise income and customer participation.

Supported by 1,200 volunteers over 200,000 activities gave customers a greater sense of place and belonging.

We delivered ceremonies for 1,777 new British citizens.

Over 14,000 customers visited Kent's Archives to access documents and visit exhibitions. Over 800 were using the resources for their own study.

Our teams visited 54 people in their homes or at hospitals to enable them to marry at short notice, often in difficult circumstances.

LRA supporting outcomes 2016/17

Our dementia friendly libraries initiative ensured everyone was welcome. Our Reading Well, books on prescription project provided 3,500 people with 6,669 books to improve awareness of dementia. We assisted 1,400 people unable to visit a library with a home library delivery service

We delivered the Storybook Dad scheme at 5 prisons across Kent to help build confidence and self-esteem.

Over 29,000 customers attended one of our talk time sessions offered at 72 libraries. Customers have given positive feedback about feeling less isolated and motivated to leave the house.

4. Ambition development

The work to develop LRA's ambitions for the next 5 years brings together 3 distinct services - libraries, registration and archives within one service umbrella of LRA. Consideration has been given to the future ambition of each of the three services, whilst acknowledging the values we share such as inclusivity, customer and community focus, sustainability and delivering value for money.

The work to develop LRA's ambitions has considered a range of themes including:

- The financial pressures that local government faces
- Needs and preferences of customers and communities now and in the future
- Changing demographics
- Impact of wider changes, such as Brexit
- Growing demand for digital access to services and information
- Marketing and promotion and the future LRA brand
- Commercial potential
- Increased partnership working
- Sustainability
- Need for continuous service innovation
- Contribution to KCC strategic outcomes
- Contribution to national ambition outcomes

Feedback has been sought on these topics through a programme of staff face to face and online workshops, customer and non - user focus groups and the support of a cross party member working group. We have been mindful of and are connected to the national agenda for libraries, the National Archives and the General Register Office.

5. We Value

- Making everyone welcome
- Delivering excellent customer service
- Being focused on delivering positive outcomes
- Promoting a strong recognisable brand
- Delivering valued, relevant and innovative LRA services
- Working with customers and communities to shape our services
- A diverse, well trained and knowledgeable workforce
- Our volunteers who add huge added value to our services
- Working with partners to focus resources to deliver best value and maximise access to services for customers

6. Ambition statements

1. Everyone is welcome
Our services will be open to everyone throughout their lives, whatever their needs; everyone will feel valued, supported and safe. Stories, and storytelling are at the heart of our services and we will celebrate these in everything we do. People will understand what LRA has to offer and how it can help improve their lives. Our services will be the trusted first choice for everyone who seeks accessible, timely, credible information, advice and support. We will respond positively to customer feedback, to ensure our services focus on giving the best experience to all who use us.

2. Sustainable and Innovative
Our services will meet KCC's clear, long-term commitment to the future of Library Registration and Archive services whilst recognising these are times of unprecedented financial pressure for local Government. To meet the challenge LRA will deliver flexible, innovative and sustainable services. In addition to our free core services we will focus our resources to ensure excellent value for money; be commercial and take opportunities to generate income. We will keep up with trends and developments to ensure we remain relevant and continue to meet the changing needs of people and communities.

3. Enriching people's lives
Our services will make a positive impact by focusing on delivering outcomes that matter. We will put customers at the heart of everything we do. We will provide choice and allow for personal preferences to make it possible to access our services in different ways. We will promote life long and family learning to develop potential, and enable people to flourish. We will promote access to the digital world and emerging technologies to ensure no-one is left behind. We will provide information and advice about careers, business and employment to support the local economy.

4.Helping everyone to live well
Our services will make a real difference to people's lives. We will reduce loneliness and isolation; we will promote literacy and a love of reading and books; we will bring people together through physical and digital services. We will promote healthy choices and self-management of health conditions. We will support people of all ages to live well, adding value to the lives of families, older people, children and young adults. We will complement new local care services to support mental, physical and emotional health for all ages.

5. Resilient and connected communities
Our services will be at the heart of communities, building resilience and helping people to stay safe, connected and living independently. We will connect different community groups, cultures and generations. We will celebrate Kent and its people both past and present. We will stimulate new ideas and experiences, offer volunteering opportunities, and access to cultural, learning and social events. We will fully utilise our community buildings making sure they are welcoming and easy to access. We will provide spaces for people to be calm and reflective or to take part in events and activities, enabling a sense of place and belonging.

7. How we will deliver our Ambitions

- Make everybody welcome to ensure all are able to use our services.
- Treat everyone with respect.
- Develop strong open communication with customers, communities, staff and partners. Encourage and welcome feedback and actively seek views, ideas, and suggestions.
- Be enterprising and innovative and develop a strong digital presence. Keep an eye on wider local authority and the commercial world for new, successful initiatives.
- Deliver excellent customer service, stay focused on the customer and understand changing needs.
- Support and develop staff and volunteers to ensure that they are equipped with the right skills for the future.
- Develop partnerships to focus and share resources to deliver value for money services that people need and use. Take every opportunity to deliver the best outcomes.