

From: Mike Hill, Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services

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To: Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee - 13th September 2019

Subject: Libraries, Registration and Archives Performance 2018-2019

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of Paper: N/A

Future Pathway of Paper: N/A

Electoral Division: All

Summary: This report outlines Libraries, Registration and Archives (LRA) performance against its outcome-based specification for 2018-2019.

Recommendation: The Cabinet Committee is asked to comment and note the progress LRA has made over the financial year 2018-19

1. Introduction and background

1.1 LRA is one of the pioneer KCC services to be internally commissioned against the KCC 'outcomes' framework. LRA has reported on its performance to the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee (GEDC) against this framework every year since this approach started.

2. Commissioning LRA against key performance indicators and outcomes 2018-19

2.1 The service specification requires LRA to use two different approaches in measuring performance:

- **Outcomes:** Outcomes allow a focus on the quality of the experience/services for the customer which is at the heart of what we do. This enables LRA to better demonstrate the positive difference LRA can make to the people of Kent.
- **Key Performance Indicators:** These are mainly volume outputs; numbers that indicate level of use, for example, the number of people who visit our buildings. This is the traditional way that LRA has been measured and is still an important benchmark of performance. We have reviewed these for 2019/20.

2.3 This report is based on the outputs and outcomes LRA has achieved for the full year 2018/19. Development of the outcome evaluation framework/toolkit has enabled staff to more easily collect outcome information, ensuring evaluation is considered upfront to allow LRA to better record this feedback. Work has focused on promoting the tool to staff and evolving our recording approach, we now categorise our outcome stories against the KCC outcomes framework. Collection of the outcome evidence has gradually improved and in 2017/18 we collected 243 outcome impact stories whereas in 2018/19 this has increased to 670. The framework has been shared nationally and internationally with other interested authorities and we are using this evidence to raise awareness of the impact our service has on our customers with other providers such as Public Health. Further information on this approach is included in Appendix 1.

3. LRA performance 2018-2019: key highlights:

3.1 Appendix 2 provides the full report and detail about performance. The key highlights are shown below:

- This year saw the completion of a new 3-year strategy for all Libraries, Registration and Archives. This work included development of the LRA ambitions, drafting of the strategy and then a full ten-week public consultation exercise to which over 5,500 people responded. The responses informed the final version of the strategy that was endorsed by this Cabinet Committee and a Cabinet Member decision taken to adopt the strategy in March 2019.

a) Outcome 1: Children and young people get the best start in life

- Summer Reading Challenge. This year saw ‘Mischief Makers’ as the theme for this annual children’s reading challenge. The challenge is all about reading 6 books over the summer with activities across the county designed to encourage reading over the summer to boost children’s reading skills. 2020/19 saw over 17,000 children take part and we saw increased completion rate of the challenge to 57%. The following comments highlight the impact of this initiative:

“I think the mischief makers were fun and got me reading”

“My son had done this for the last 3 years and loves reading. This is the first year he read all the book himself. Brilliant idea”.

“It has encouraged my daughter to continue to read through the summer holidays”.

- Libraries: a place to study. Libraries across the county have welcomed many young people to study over the course of the year and particularly in the run up to the exam periods, highlighting the importance of our spaces to people;

"I come to the library to use the computers as I do not have internet access at home. I find the library is a good place to concentrate and get my work done while also looking for a part time job"

"I came to the library to study for my medical degree, I find that the library environment suits my study needs and the staff helped me source a medical book which enhances my studies. I am grateful for the help and the environment in which I can study at my own pace"

- Autism Friendly libraries. All Ashford district staff have completed the Association of Senior Children's and Education Librarians training on being an Autism Friendly library and Ashford library has Autism Friendly status having implemented a number of changes to make it a suitable environment for people with autism. The status recognises the efforts these libraries have made to ensure those users with Autism feel confident to enjoy our spaces and join our events and activities, evidenced by the following comments;

"My son has Asperger's. He has thrived in this environment."

"Your sessions primarily have allowed me to do something with my son that he wouldn't ordinarily do with me (that sounds like schoolwork, so I'm not doing it!) so it's been great!"

"My son has Autism and ADHD so finds it hard mixing with people and socially not great, but he loves this club!"

b) Outcome 2: Kent Communities feel the benefit of economic growth by being in work, health and enjoying a good quality of life.

- For Archives, this year saw two significant achievements;
 - The digitisation of over 2,500 Parish Registers was undertaken by the team at KHLC and published by our commercial partners 'Find My Past'.
 - The award of Archive accreditation from the National Archive. The award followed a full review of our service against the standards. Accreditation defines good practice and agreed standards for archive services across the UK and the service is very proud of the achievement.
- This year saw the refurbishment of one of our Register Offices, Wellington House, Canterbury, to ensure our ceremony rooms are fitted out to the best standard possible for couples spending their special day with us. Since the completion of the works ceremonies have increased by 23% (43 additional ceremonies).

"the ceremony was so lovely, and the staff were amazing. The newly decorated room was a lovely bonus too".

“I booked the ceremony last year based on the images on the website and was told the room was being redecorated but never expected anything like this. Really made our day”.

- Ceremonies in special circumstances. Every day our team are ready to deliver ceremonies in special circumstances. For example, for people with a terminal illness where our staff go to the hospital or hospice to conduct a ceremony which can mean so much to couples at a very difficult time.

As a member of staff describes: A couple had already given their notice but before the ceremony could take place the groom had been diagnosed with cancer and was deteriorating rapidly. The ceremonies team quickly made arrangements to enable the ceremony to take place prior to some urgent surgery that the groom was to have. Despite needing to have oxygen during the ceremony, all went well, and the couple were married with a couple of nurses and one of the doctors in attendance. It was a lovely ceremony and after the groom could not stop telling us how much it meant and how “it would not have happened without you (the staff at KCC)”. It was an incredibly rewarding ceremony and the couple (and even the staff at the hospital) really did appreciate all of the work that we had put in to make the wedding possible.

- This year has also seen further modernisation of our spaces with Faversham library and Tonbridge Library. Bockhanger has also moved to be part of the children’s centre and local school.

“Elderly customer came in on Friday afternoon- told me how the library gets her out and talking to staff as is isolated and does not talk to anyone during the week. The library and staff are a lifeline for her, an event in her week and an opportunity to get some exercise walking to the library. She likes the new stock as it encourages her to try new genres and to advance her reading as well”.

“Came into the library after seeing it had been refurbished. Very impressed. Found it very welcoming and bright. Re-joined library because of it”.

- We continue to have over 1100 volunteers working across LRA adding real value to the services we deliver. We are extremely grateful to the volunteers for the time they give us and as the following quote highlights it is really positive to read the difference the volunteering makes to them;

“My confidence and communication skills have grown since becoming a volunteer and I really enjoy every session I attend”.

“Volunteering has given me more confidence and has helped me to meet new people after moving here two years ago. I really feel like part of the community.”

c) Outcome 3: Older and vulnerable residents are safe and supported with choices to live independently.

- Libraries, Registration and Archives continues to deliver a range of events and activities that have a positive impact on older and vulnerable people. They contribute to people's wellbeing and help to prevent people having to use more costly health interventions;

"It helped me an awful lot after my husband died and I was very depressed so meeting and talking to people got me out of the house and I really looked forward to the Wednesday morning meetings"

"I host the adult colouring club at Birchington, and we have had a number of ladies who have recently been widowed. They have formed friendships with one another, and they see the club as a lifeline."

"I come to the library once a week as my wife attends a reading group meeting at the church opposite. Since coming to the library on a regular basis I really enjoy watching and joining in on the Baby Singing group, as I find that it is an amazing way for young ones to learn rhythm. It gives me joy seeing the huge number of parents and babies joining each week."

A customer explained that she is now a widow and most of her friends had died or moved away so she is now living alone. All 3 banks in the village had gone and the post office had closed last year. She felt the library was now the flagship and heart of the community. She knew if she was having a "bad day" she could always go in and get a warm welcome. Even just walking past and seeing the lights on and people inside cheered her up knowing we were there, just in case.

- Dementia Friendly libraries. A number of libraries across the county have now achieved Dementia Friendly status. This has meant that we have adapted the spaces to be better for people with dementia to use and we have several groups of people with dementia that meet in the library to share experiences and support each other.

One of the Hythe Dementia Forum members, Shirley, was talking to a gentleman in the group last Tuesday, and together they were observing the rest of the group. The gentleman commented "Look, all the women are chatting away and us men are sat back listening and watching." Shirley noted that one man they observed had even nodded off. Shirley said "Everyone is having a good day, though. I bet he's had a good day." Referring to the sleeping man. The gentleman said "Oh yes, I don't mind it. Something special happens here, when we meet in this room. I don't know what it is, but when I leave here, I forget that there is anything wrong with me."

d) Key Performance Indicators –

	Type of KPI	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Year-end target	18/19 Outturn	17/18 Outturn	Direction of travel
KPI 1a	Visits to libraries and Archives venues	1,178,865	1,239,794	1,129,879	1,113,675	5,180,000 4,700,000	4,662,213	4,980,000	↓
KPI 1b	Visits to the Archive search room	1,032	1,871	1,356	1,256	n/a	5,515	4,447	↑
KPI 2	Library Issues	1,150,137	1,299,459	1,132,006	1,150,504	4,860,000 4,420,000	4,732,106	4,667,000	↑
KPI 3a	Events across LRA venues	5,754	5,167	5,721	6,378	n/a	23,085	21,890	↑
KPI 3b	Attendees at LRA Events	57,168	65,725	55,622	61,655	215,000	240,483	216,000	↑
KPI4	Active Library and Archive Borrowers (rolling year)	153,977	151,954	148,448	148,580	n/a	148,580	156,500	↓
KPI 5a	Customer Satisfaction – Libraries	n/a	n/a	n/a	92%	95%	92%	97%	↓
KPI 5b	Customer Satisfaction – Archives	n/a	n/a	n/a	95%	90%	95%	91%	↑
KPI 5c	Customer Satisfaction – Births and Deaths	96%	95%	94%	95%	95%	95%	94%	↑
KPI 5d	Customer Satisfaction – Wedding Ceremonies	97%	96%	96%	96%	95%	96%	96%	↔
KPI 5e	Customer Satisfaction – Citizenship Ceremonies – NEW	n/a	98%	98%	98%	95%	98%	93%	↑
KPI 6a	% of Registration appointments booked online	35%	37%	39%	32%	n/a	35%	35%	↔
KPI 6b	% of birth appointments booked online	72%	73%	76%	77%	77%	74%	74%	↔
KPI 6c	% of death appointments booked online	36%	36%	39%	41%	n/a	38%	40%	↓
KPI 7	PC hours used in Libraries	108,535	109,566	105,252	101,864	n/a	425,216	467,200	↓
KPI 8	Library Community Outreach (rolling year)	1,308	1,323	1,300	1,330	1,500	1,330	1,322	↔

Key

Green- performing within specification or above

Amber/Yellow- Performing just below target.

Red- Under target

To put this into some context nationally, evidence shows that the usage of libraries has been in decline for many years. The 2017/18 CIPFA figures show that nationally issues and visits dropped by 6% and 5% respectively on the previous year. This year Kent issues have gone up by 1% and visits are down by -6% but in addition to the factors above we did have 5 large libraries and 3 smaller libraries closed for various periods during the year.

We did see increases of 108% in our e-issues which as well as books includes our new offer of e-newspapers/magazines and have received positive feedback as this comment illustrates;

"I finally got around to joining my local library after five years of living in Kent, recently. I would just like to place on record how FANTASTIC the online magazine and newspaper access is... I can't believe I get access to so many papers and magazines, of such high quality for free, in my house... I think this is a superb addition...it makes me feel that I get better value for my council tax, since to pay for these sorts of magazines would be hundreds of pounds a year. This is an example of libraries adapting for the Kindle and iPad age and providing a value for a younger generation - long may it continue."

We did not meet our target for library community outreach which relates to our Home library service customers. We will continue to look at how we promote and develop this service. As part of our strategy work in 2019/20 we are focussing our KPI's around customer satisfaction with the service.

More information on performance, outcomes and actions being taken by LRA is provided in Appendix 1.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The service continues to deliver activities and services that have a positive impact on people of all ages across the three outcome priorities for KCC. Performance across the KPIs was on or close to target across the majority of areas.
- 4.2 This year also saw a number of key developments particularly the achievement of Archive Accreditation, achieving the Customer Service Excellence award and significantly the development, public consultation and agreement of a new LRA strategy which has set a clear direction for the service for the next three years.

5. Recommendation

<p>Recommendation: The Cabinet Committee is asked to comment and note the progress LRA has made in 2018-19</p>

6. Attachments

Appendix 1- Outcomes framework approach

Appendix 2- LRA performance report to date

7. Contact details

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