

5.4 COMMUNITY AND CULTURE

Kent and Medway's community and cultural services are diverse and encompassing for the population across the County.

The GIF community and culture chapter focuses on the following areas:

- Library Services
- Sports and Recreation
- Community Learning and Skills (CLS)
- Creative and Cultural.

Summary of total costs/funding for community and culture projects (including youth services) (2017-2031)

Total Cost = £398,991,000

Total Funding = £270,865,000

Secured Funding = £15,772,000

Expected Funding = £255,093,000

Funding Gap = £128,127,000

LIBRARY SERVICES

CURRENT SITUATION

Library services in Kent are organised by the County Council's Library, Registration and Archive (LRA) Service. LRA is currently developing a future approach for library services focused on outcomes that make a difference to people's lives. The service is delivered through library buildings across the County, the mobile library service, an online offer, and for those unable to use these options, a range of outreach services such as the home library and postal loan services.

As well as books, there is also access to ICT, a place to meet others and a range of events and activities for all ages.

Through these services, people improve their literacy and foster a lifelong love of reading. They are also supported in finding information, developing the skills to use online channels and becoming more active citizens.

INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

The list below sets out key library investments to support population growth to 2031:

- Chilmington Green – capital cost to build library space in a new community hub in Ashford, contributions towards Stanhope Library, Ashford Gateway and the mobile library services.
- Library expansion at Queenborough – Development of library services in Queenborough and Rushenden, Swale.
- New Cultural and Learning Hub in Tunbridge Wells – new library provision as part of the wider redevelopment of the existing museum, art gallery, library and adult education centre.
- Southborough Community Hub – new library provision as part of the wider community space, including a replacement theatre and town council offices.
- Sittingbourne Town Centre – redevelopment with a new multi-service centre, including a library.
- Cranbrook Community Hub - new library provision under discussion, as part of the wider community space, including town council offices and multi-purpose indoor meeting space.
- Herne Bay Library - redevelopment including co-location with Canterbury City Council and multi-purpose use of the building.
- Medway - build upon and develop the existing library to cement the success of the Community Hub developments at Strood, Twydall, Chatham, Gillingham, Rochester and Hempstead.

Summary of total costs/funding for library projects

(2017-2031). *The majority of the costings are focused on the maintenance of library services in Kent and Medway.*

Total Cost = £9,467,000

Total Funding = £4,911,000

Secured Funding = £815,000

Expected Funding = £4,096,000

Funding Gap = £4,556,000

SPORTS AND RECREATION (INDOOR AND OUTDOOR)

Community indoor sports facilities, outdoor sports and open play spaces/pitches, and children's playgrounds in Kent & Medway, comprising of both public and private facilities, are owned and operated by a mixture of private sector, voluntary organisations, local authorities and education establishments. Some of these existing facilities were built in the 1960s and 70s and consequently are in need of major modernisation.

HEADLINES

COMMUNITY AND INDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

- Swale, Thanet and Gravesham have the largest gaps in indoor sports provision, with the supply below the Kent and Medway average.
- There are gaps in current facility distribution against the focus areas of housing growth, seen in Maidstone, Thanet, North East Canterbury and North West Medway.
- Ashford, Canterbury, Sittingbourne and Dartford all have relatively strong provision of indoor sports where future housing growth is projected.
- Medway Council is currently developing a new sports facility strategy with an update planned for 2018.
- Dover District Leisure Centre is currently under construction and due to open early 2019.

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

- Shepway, Swale and Medway have the largest gaps in outdoor sports provision, with the supply below the Kent and Medway average.
- Ashford, Sevenoaks and Tonbridge and Malling have the highest levels of outdoor sports provision.
- The large urban centres of Maidstone, Ashford, Canterbury and northern parts of Dartford and Gravesham all have strong provision of existing outdoor recreational facilities.

Sport England has changed its approach to capital funding and now has a considerably reduced ability to fund sport infrastructure projects. This is particularly the case for community sporting facilities, but will be less acutely felt for sport infrastructure costing £1mn or more. However, the vast majority of the required infrastructure identified within this framework is of a value under £1mn and the opportunity to fill this funding gap has become much more challenging since 2015. This is in response to falling lottery sales, and a focus on informal sport being the best way to support the least active people to start being active.

Many schools, universities and colleges allow the community to use their facilities. However, increasingly, some Free Schools and Academies do not. Some of the discrepancy between demand and under-supply could be met by those education establishments being encouraged to be more willing to do so or being required to do so when applying for planning permission.

Summary of total costs/funding for sports and recreation projects (2017-2031)

Total Cost = £337,633,000

Total Funding = £235,676,000

Secured Funding = £10,500,000

Expected Funding = £225,176,000

Funding Gap = £101,957,000

COMMUNITY LEARNING AND SKILLS (CLS)

CURRENT SITUATION

Community Learning and Skills (CLS) is delivered by KCC, meeting central and local Government priority objectives in areas such as social inclusion and social mobility, personal health and well-being, skills and employability. Medway Adult Education service also delivers this service (including; community learning, employment skills, basic skills, volunteering and supported learning).

While CLS is wholly owned by KCC, its income is primarily derived through contracts with Central Government departments, namely the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy and the Department for Education. Through the two funding streams, the following education and learning opportunities are provided:

- **Community Learning** - Kent Adult Education
- **Apprenticeships** - Kent Training & Apprenticeships
- **Traineeships** - Kent Training & Apprenticeships
- **Basic Skills** (English, Maths, Information Technology and Employability) - Skills Plus.

CLS operates from twenty dedicated sites and in numerous community locations throughout Kent. CLS delivers a broad programme of vocational and non-vocational courses, each strand targeting specific audiences. Many courses work towards accreditation, including GCSEs.

CLS BRANDS OPERATING IN KENT AND MEDWAY

- **Kent Adult Education** offers a varied programme to adults 19+ seeking additional skills, personal development or learning for pleasure and well-being. Courses seek to widen participation and engage with communities to increase skills and social mobility. Family programmes work to enhance parenting skills and enable parents and carers to support their children's education and development.

- **Kent Training and Apprenticeships** offers three strands to enable young people (16-19) to enter work via study programmes, traineeships and apprenticeships. Apprenticeships for people aged 21+ are also available.
- **Skills Plus** delivers English and maths to adults aged 19+ from entry-level courses up to GCSE. For those whose first language is not English, a wide range of courses exist to improve their English.

FUTURE REQUIREMENTS

In line with KCC Asset Management Strategy, the CLS property estate is currently under review. Investment is planned to acquire better education and learning facilities and to accommodate growth in sectors that are aligned to national and local priorities. The geographical areas in which investment is being planned are:

- Tunbridge Wells
- Tonbridge
- Sevenoaks
- Thanet
- Shepway
- Maidstone.

The most significant projects are the Lifelong Learning Centre at Eastern Quarry (£1.46mn) and CLS services at both the Sittingbourne Gateway (£1.2mn) and at the Tunbridge Wells Cultural Hub (£1.2mn).

Summary of total costs/funding for CLS projects (2017-2031)

Total Cost = £3,336,000

Total Funding = £2,261,000

Secured Funding = £1,892,000

Expected Funding = £369,000

Funding Gap = £1,075,000

CREATIVE AND CULTURAL

CURRENT SITUATION

Incorporated within the NPPF is the objective of promoting cultural well-being. The Industrial Strategy White Paper 2017 has identified the Creative Industries as one of nine growth sectors. Employment in the creative industries sector is growing four times faster than in all other industry sectors.

The Kent and Medway Cultural Strategy 2017-2027 'Inspirational Creativity, Transforming Lives Every Day' commits to "*Embed culture and the creative economy firmly within planning frameworks...cultural provision and good design is at the heart of all new developments and integral to the growth of strong, resilient and successful communities.*"

Ambitions for economic growth need high-quality places where people choose to live, not soulless dormitory towns. Developers are recognising the value culture brings to new developments.

Participation in creative activity generates aspiration and innovation: some communities in Kent (North Kent, Dover District, Ashford, rural Shepway) have poor access to cultural infrastructure.

HEADLINES

- At present, up to 92% of the creative & digital sector workforce in Kent is freelance¹. Reductions in commuting and increased local spend can be enhanced by provision of shared workspace close to housing and town centres.
- With predictions that 30% of London's creative sector workspace is disappearing in the next five years², London is moving east and the creative and digital sectors are leading

the way. The number of creative and digital businesses located in Kent and Medway has grown 82% in five years; in Gravesham growth is 150%; Dartford is 121%³.

- Land values and conversion of commercial spaces to residential use is preventing workspace development for digital/tech start-ups in Kent's strongest growth clusters- Tunbridge Wells (e.g. The House) and Sevenoaks⁴.
- Redundant commercial and retail spaces, underused public assets and seaside buildings from a past era blight the landscape and their values restrict development. Such buildings - Thanet Press Site, Margate being an example - are often intrinsically attractive to the creative sector who, incentivised to invest with long-term leasehold/freehold security, offer economic activity in areas of weak growth and high unemployment.
- The Thames Estuary Production Corridor proposes large-scale cluster development of world-class production facilities with a digital super-highway for the creative and digital industries. It will re-purpose redundant commercial spaces in North Kent and Medway, provide skills training, employment and provide a national focus for innovation and the knowledge economy.
- Investment planned in West Kent, notably £100mn investment in a new Cultural & Learning Hub and state-of-the-art 1,200 space theatre to support the local cultural and creative economy (emerging costs not included in totals).

FUTURE REQUIREMENTS

Residential developments such as Ebbsfleet and Otterpool include consideration of access to cultural infrastructure as

part of master planning. This could be in the form of on-site facilities (shared with other community services) and transport options to nearby cultural 'hub' towns, particularly to support the night-time economy.

Areas of future development could include:

- Cultural programming to contribute to early activation of residential developments, to add value and generate social cohesion;
- Enabling access to good-quality cultural provision for all of Kent's communities. Investment in the Tunbridge Wells Culture and Learning Hub provides an example of how shared spaces can deliver opportunities for growth in cultural provision;
- High-quality design, public realm and use of public art to create welcoming and appealing places to live;
- Shared workspace to be considered as part of residential developments to support freelance and home working;
- Redundant commercial and other assets supported by planning policy and promoted to the creative and digital sector to relieve pressure on Kent's hotspots where growth is stalling;
- The Kent Creative Workspace Report identifies Kent and Medway's Thames Estuary area as a 'creative opportunity area' requiring the alignment of planning and investment policy to deliver the sector growth.

Summary of total costs/funding for creative and cultural projects (2017-2031)

Total Cost = £42,725,000

Total Funding = £24,180,000

Secured Funding = £0

Expected Funding = £24,180,000

Funding Gap = £18,545,000

¹The Impact of the Creative Economy in the South East, Shared Intelligence 2016 ; ²GLA Creative Workspace Study 2015;

³Mint Business List 2014-17; ⁴Kent Creative Workspace Report 2014