Archive Services FAQs

Developments of the Archive service

A number of improvements have been made this year to the Archive Service that are significant steps forward. The Archives is seen as a service in its own right as part of the integrated Libraries, Registration and Archives. Some key developments:

- The service will continue to engage with the Archive user group and our Service Manager for Archives and Local History meets with them on a regular basis and welcomes feedback from this group.
- While the search room staff have been part of a single staff team for the whole of Kent History and Library Centre, this year changes have been made. A dedicated search room team has been established as part of the Archive Service, recognising and acknowledging the skills and knowledge needed to answer archive search room queries. We are working to improve the training of the newer staff and their knowledge to ensure this area is addressed.
- This year we are looking to make layout changes to the Kent History and Library Centre to improve access to the search room and improve the community history area.
- Significant investment has also been made to the Archive website and catalogue so that it is better and easier for customers to use. We are also making changes to the staff back-office systems to make document retrieval quicker and more efficient.

Statistics used in the consultation document

All the figures quoted in the documents are ones we record. The data for both Table one and two in the consultation document are recorded via Netloan (our IT booking tool). These figures include search room seats, PCs, Microfilm readers and scanners. The most useful of these is the search room seats as you have to book a seat in order to use the search room and thus a very good indicator of usage levels.

Saving’s calculation

The saving is calculated on the reduction in the front of house team that delivers the Archive search room service. This is a reduction of 15 hours and as well as all day on a Friday also includes 5-6 on the other week days and 6-8 on a Thursday. The overall staff saving is £10,000 a year. The other roles in the Archive service are unaffected by this proposal.
Find my past

This is a commercial contract and while it will in the fullness of time contribute income to LRA this will not be this financial year as the digitisation first has to be completed. We will be issuing more information on this initiative as it develops.

Other Archive Services

We have included other Archive services for comparison and because these have shaped our proposal. One way it has done this has been in the selecting of the proposed closed day of Friday in Kent. We do have customer feedback that archive researchers do use other Archives and thus did not want us shut the same day as others. We welcome feedback on this as part of the consultation.