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Repurposing buildings: integrating library services into community facilities

Cath Anley – Head of Libraries, Registration & Archives, Kent County Council

The Future of Library Services Conference

28th June 2012

Kent County Council

Future Library Services – our drivers

- **modernisation**

  our commitment to continually improve and update our services to meet changing public need

- **localism**

  our desire to engage with communities to design and deliver local library services

- **savings**

  our need to secure affordable local solutions which allow us to continue to provide an excellent local library service in the context of reducing budgets

Kent

- Population - 1,427,400
- Number of libraries - 99
- 12 districts

Ashford District

- Population - 115,500
- Number of libraries – 6 plus mobiles
- Largely rural area surrounding Ashford
- Significant housing growth planned

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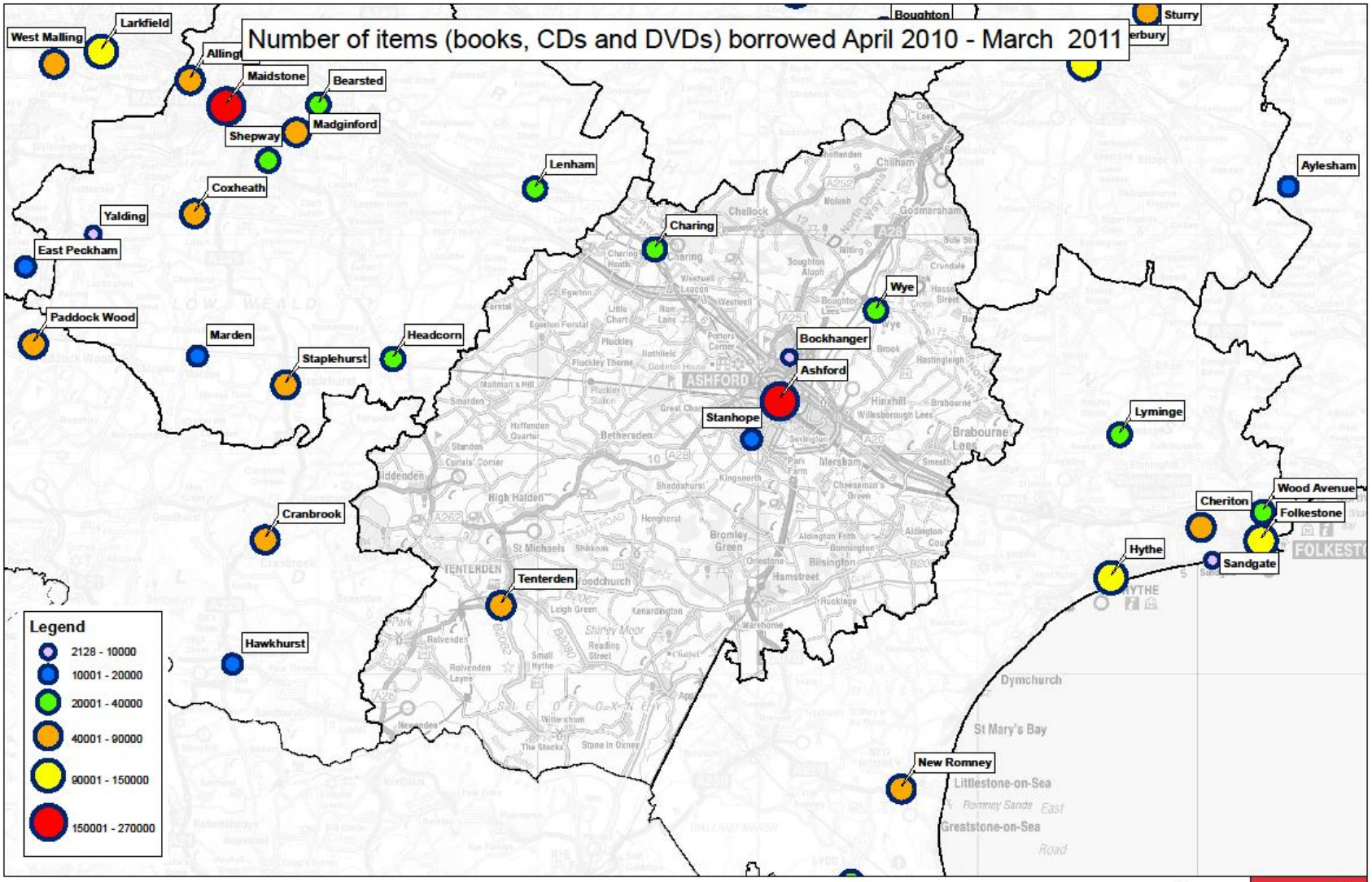

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Libraries in Ashford District

0 1.5 3 6 9 12 15 Kilometers

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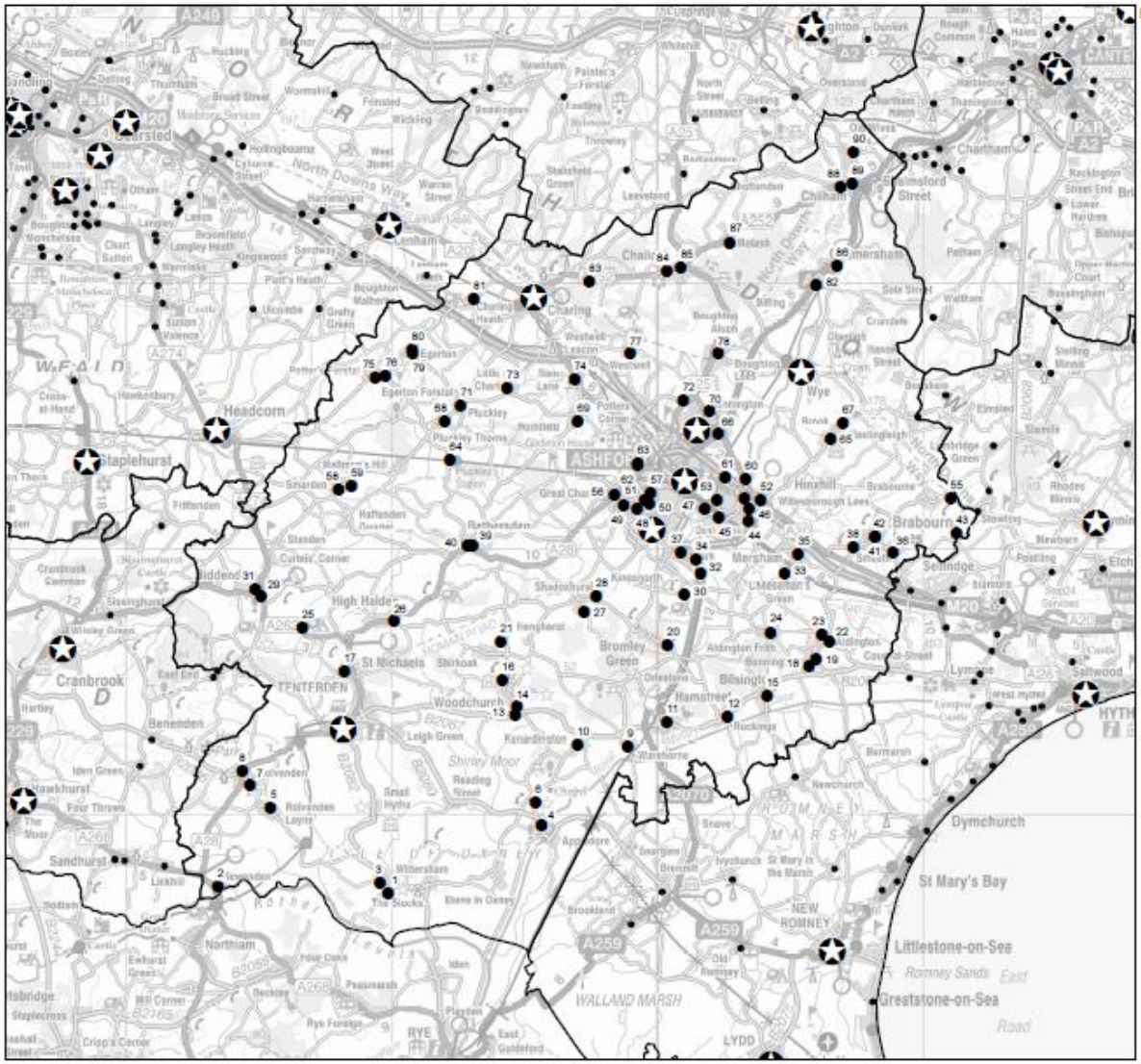
Headcorn
Staplehurst
Cranbrook
Sandhurst
Northiam
Benenden
High Halden
Biddenden
Tenterden
Ashford
Charing
Wye
Chart
Chilham
Chartham
Hinxhill
Brabourne
Mersham
Sevington
Lympne
Dymchurch
St Mary's Bay
Littlestone-on-Sea
Greatstone-on-Sea
New Romney
Rye
Lydd
Wallland Marsh
Romney Sands
Bromley Green
Hamstreet
Woodchurch
Kennington
Shadoxhurst
Smarden
Pluckley
Egerton
Bonnington
Aldington
Bilsington
Ruckinge
Warehorne
Appledore
Brookland
Brenzett
Ivychurch
Newchurch
Snave
Wittersham
Rolvenden
Rolvenden Layne
Tenterden
Hawkhurst
Sandhurst
Lympne
Sellindge
Stanford
Postling
Lyminge
Folkestone
Hythe
Sandwich
Deal
Dover
Canterbury
Ashford
Maidstone
Tonbridge
Tunbridge Wells
Cranbrook
Hawkhurst
Rye
Lydd
Romney Marsh
Dungeness

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Ashford Library

large town centre library serving an area with significant housing growth planned – high % of families with young children

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Ashford Gateway Plus

- purpose built
- range of partners
- district and county services
- voluntary sector
- seamless public services
- flexible design

The Library at Ashford Gateway Plus

- opened August 2011
- estimated annual issues 250,000
- estimated annual visits (to the Gateway) 300,000
- very significant increase in children and teen issues
- adult fiction up
- adult non-fiction and large print issues down
- very large increase in new members, especially children

Bockhanger Library

- 1.7 miles from Ashford town centre
- annual issues 6,000
- annual visits 3,300
- part of rather tired community centre building
- community wardens pilot
- proposed redevelopment of community centre

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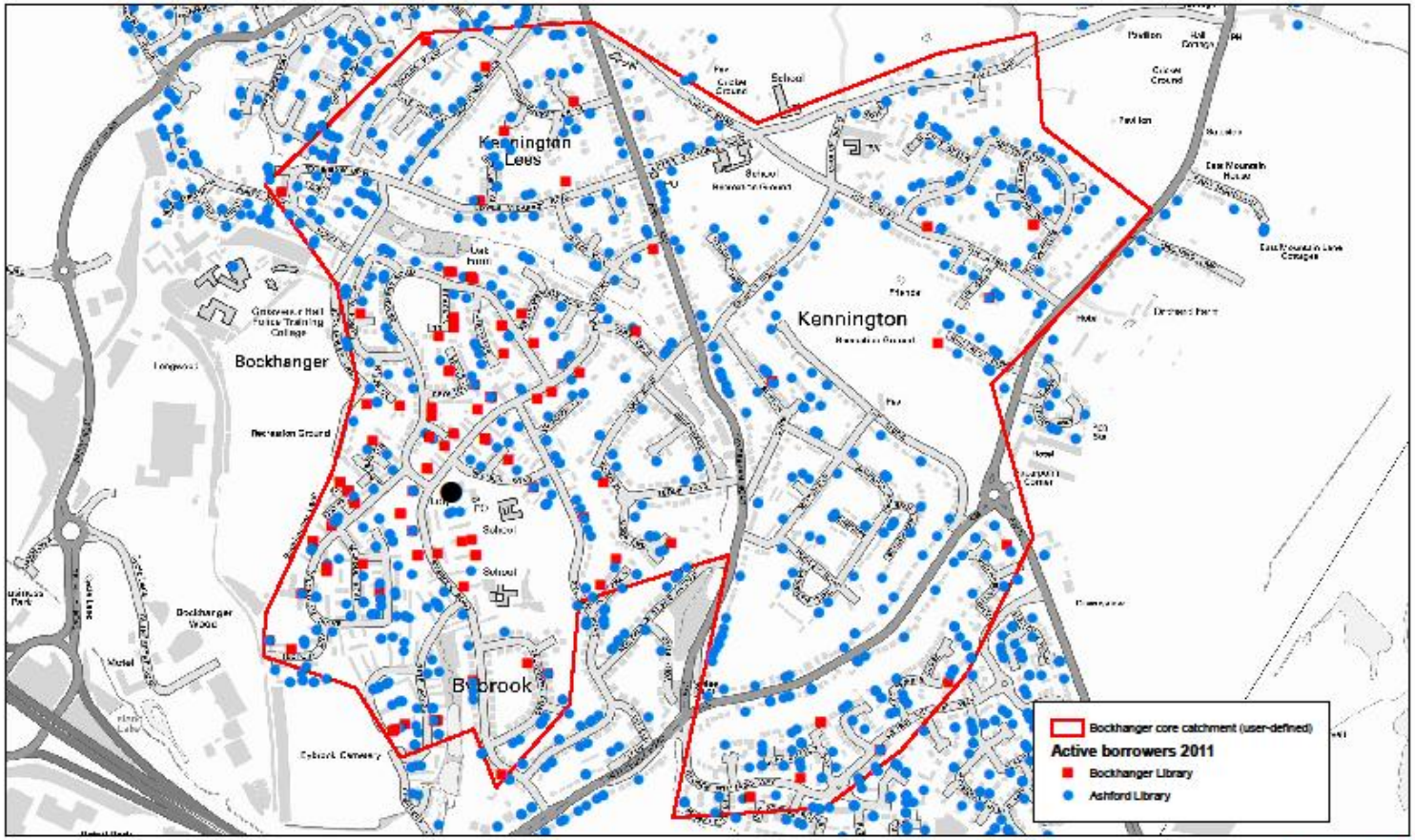
Active Borrowers - Bockhanger & Ashford



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Bockhanger population

- unemployment is lower than the Kent average
- children tend to perform very poorly at school
- community to the east of the library (South Kennington) demonstrates high levels of need:
    - adults are more likely to require assistance to improve their level of qualifications
    - high levels of households with no access to a computer
    - many people are likely to have a car and Ashford Library is a 20 minutes bus journey
    - over 65% of residents shop in Ashford High Street

Stanhope Library

- social housing estate
- 3 miles from Ashford town centre
- library co-located with housing association and next to parish rooms
- annual issues 12,187
- annual visits 12,460
- community warden

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Charing Library

- relatively prosperous village
- 6.4 miles from Ashford Town Centre
- purpose built, well located library
- annual issues 23,004
- annual visits 9,965
- we are talking to local people about a range of options and opportunities

The Library at Tenterden Gateway

- small town attracting shoppers and tourists to range of independent shops and 2 supermarkets
- population relatively prosperous and on average older than Kent average
- 13.3 miles from Ashford Town Centre
- Gateway located in modern and attractive shop unit on the High Street and incorporates:
  - county and district council services
  - tourist information
  - the Post Office
  - small rooms for ad hoc meetings, member surgeries etc.
- annual issues 84,875
- annual visits 236,250
- but – library costs higher than before

Conclusions

- one size does not fit all
- opportunities exist in most communities
- talking to local people and elected members helps identify the opportunities and win support for change
- sharing premises can attract more users provided:
  - the location is central
  - the partner is a good match
- some asset collaboration/co-location projects can save money – but not all
- can be a first step towards local commissioning

See our Future Library Services website for more information including factsheets on all our libraries:

www.kent.gov.uk/leisure_and_culture/libraries/future_library_services.aspx

Many thanks for your attention

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