



POLICY FOR CITIZENS' SERVICES AND LIBRARIES 2011-2014

Policy for Citizens' Services and Libraries 2011-2014
Culture and Citizens' Services
City of Aarhus, 2011

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Intro

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I am pleased to present the City of Aarhus' policy for Citizens' Services and Libraries 2011-2014, which was passed by Aarhus City Council on 22 September 2010. Before the policy was passed, a good and constructive dialogue was held with citizens as well as employees regarding the content of the policy, which provides a good foundation for implementing the policy's initiatives and goals for the coming years.

The policy is intended to develop and strengthen citizens' and library services, which are perceived pertinent and relevant by the individual citizen. The library service must thus continue to develop but at the same time the library must continue to be the place where people stop

by to read the newspaper and borrow a book. Also, it is important that the underlying basis of citizens' services is the citizens' needs and providing the citizen with good service regardless of the nature of the enquiry – be it personal or digital.

It is an essential ambition of this policy to turn our libraries into local community centres. The community centres are going to be the heart of knowledge and citizens' services, which in coherence with locally rooted activities and initiatives will help sustain the libraries as important gathering places and cultural centres and which hopefully will contribute to characterising Aarhus by innovation, creativity and diversity in the future.

Policy for Citizens' Services and Libraries 2011-2014

Aarhus is the City of Multiplicity

Whether focus is on scenery, culture, business, demography, geography, settlement, education or public service, Aarhus has it all: from country side and small villages through small urban communities and suburbs to a city with the will, the desire and the capacity to be an international city of education, knowledge, culture and business.

Multiplicity is a significant challenge in regard to adapting municipal offers to local conditions, while at the same time ensuring an optimal use of resources within the given financial framework.

Aarhus Improves and Supports Democracy

Democracy is the foundation for the Danish government of society with constitutional individual duties and rights for the individual citizen. Democracy is also a set of values, which define how we as citizens interact with each other and the relation between public institutions and the individual citizen.

As public institutions, libraries and citizens' services play an important role in improving and supporting democracy in Aarhus.

The libraries hold a long and important tradition of ensuring free and equal access to information, knowledge and offers to all citizens. Thus, the libraries form an essential foundation for free opinion-shaping and democratic participation.



Likewise, Citizens' Services provide a wide range of information and services aiming to inform citizens about their individual options and rights in relation to the authorities. Moreover, in the City of Aarhus Citizens' Services are responsible for planning and holding a range of public elections, e.g. general elections, local elections and referendums.

Libraries as Cultural and Formative Institutions

In a changeable world, the libraries' role as cultural and formative institutions becomes essential. Through the cultural experiences and cultural community provided by the library, the library constitutes a fixed point and a pivot in the individual citizen's personal development and education.

Culture is many things. It is the experience we have when reading a book, listening to music, watching a film,

playing a game, or the experience we have when simply spending time in the library space and become inspired and enriched by exhibitions, thematic settings or the layout of the physical space. Culture is the libraries' cultural events and activities such as author's talks, lectures, children's theatre, book clubs etc. Culture is the meaningful meeting between citizens which comes about through the libraries' cultural activities. Culture enriches us, challenges us and moves us. Culture makes us more knowledgeable about ourselves, each other and the world which we are a part of. Through culture, we develop, grow and become cultivated and educated people.

Concurrently, the libraries invite all citizens to become part of a cultural community. In a society characterised by an almost infinite number of competing offers, the library is the last non-commercial meeting place, which is used by a large percentage of the population. At the library, citizens meet across social, cultural and ethnic boundaries. Thus, the libraries play a pivotal role in securing the cohesion of society.

Citizens' Services and Libraries for Everyone

The library- and citizens' services offer is for all citizens. The challenge is therefore to balance the development of traditional and new services in the physical as well as in the digital space.

The library must still comprise a flexibility which makes it possible to visit the library to read the paper, borrow

a book, use the PCs or ask assistance of a librarian for information retrieval.

Similarly, the citizens' services offer must be organised in a way that enables competent advice and guidance for citizens, e.g. when they are moving house, changing doctor or applying for day care facilities for their children, irrespective of their chosen form of communication: personal attendance, by telephone or digitally.

Societal and technological development invites Citizens' Services and Libraries to continually develop content and services as well as cultivating the way in which they are communicated. These are important prerequisites for ensuring that individual citizens will continue to view the citizens' services and library offers as relevant.

Policy for Citizens' Services and Libraries – in Relation to Other Municipal Policies and Present Legislation

The policy for Citizens' Services and Libraries is a sector-specific policy which builds on and supports other present policies in the City of Aarhus. Citizens' Services and Libraries interact with other municipal departments and administrations in the City of Aarhus on many levels. Thus, the policy takes as its starting point present policies including integration policy, policy on children and young people, disability policy, cultural policy, sports- and leisure policy and personnel policy. Likewise, the policy takes as its starting point present legislation and international conventions which Denmark is a signatory of.

Vision for Citizens' Services and Libraries

It is the desire of the City of Aarhus that Citizens' Services and Libraries contribute knowledge, pulse and roots to citizens and the city. This is a vision which in itself has a longer time perspective than the policy's 4-year scope. Thus, the policy takes the long view towards both the inauguration of Urban MEDIASPACE Aarhus in late 2014 and Aarhus as European Capital of Culture in 2017.



Citizens' Services and Libraries contributes KNOWLEDGE:

- through providing the information and knowledge which citizens require in their current situation from Citizens' Services.
- by supporting the citizens' needs for perspective and coherence in relation to the large quantities of information that are available.
- by providing free and equal access to a broad and varied stock of media at the libraries.
- by constructing the libraries' services to ensure they are based on topicality, quality and versatility.

Citizens' Services and Libraries contributes PULSE:

- by being a preferred space for inspiration, contemplation, learning, culture and experience.
- through establishing Urban MEDIASPACE Aarhus as a landmark of knowledge, learning, experience and cultural activities.
- through a citizens' services offer in continual development both in regard to new types of services and in regard to new ways of communicating with citizens.

Citizens' Services and Libraries contributes ROOTS:

- through dissemination and conduct of our society's fundamental democratic values.
- through libraries, which are for all citizens and invites all citizens to be part of a cultural community. This strengthens the City of Aarhus' cohesion.

Overriding goals for Citizens' Services and Libraries

The policy for Citizens' Services and Libraries is built around five overriding goals. Subsequently, each goal is expanded in an independent theme which contains a description of ambitions and initiatives within the theme.

1. Citizens' Services and Libraries – where you are!

Citizens' Services and Libraries takes your everyday life as its starting point. Where you are – and where you are going.

2. Lifelong learning

Aarhus shall be a city of knowledge for all citizens throughout their lives.

3. An inspiring offer of knowledge for everyone

The libraries shall be an inspiring offer of knowledge for everyone regarding physical as well as digital content.

4. A citizens' services offer centred on the needs of the citizens

With citizens' needs as the driving force, the City of Aarhus organises a holistic citizens' services offer, which becomes citizens' natural access point to the public sector.

5. Urban MEDIASPACE

Urban MEDIASPACE shall be the city's open and democratic space for knowledge, culture and learning: an offer for everyone.



Themes within the policy for Citizens' Services and Libraries

Synergy and Structure

Citizens' Services and Libraries – where you are!

Citizens' Services and Libraries takes your everyday life as its starting point. Where you are – and where you are going.

Background

The library is one of the oldest and most widespread public institutions in the Danish society. Compared to other cultural institutions, the library is the most widely used institution. Citizens' Services is a new institution established in Aarhus in 2006. Citizens' service is, however, an old concept which lies at the heart of the contact between citizens and the authorities.

The locally situated physical units in Citizens' Services and Libraries are crucial for the city as well as the many local communities. They provide a sense of closeness and create identity and cohesion. The existing physical structure provides a good starting point for maintaining and developing Citizens' Services and Libraries as a pivotal culture-bearing institution in the 21st century.

Further development of Citizens' Services and Libraries must ensure that citizens are offered relevant services in relevant contexts and frames. The starting point is the citizen's everyday life and life situation: where the citizen is and where the citizen is going – whether it is geographically or from one life situation or phase to another.





Ambition

Based on the existing library structure, Citizens' Services and Libraries will develop and establish local community centres

The foundation for developing a community centre is a transformation of the existing library. The community centre will be centred on the public library which ensures the framework of knowledge and dissemination; inspiration and learning; and culture and experiences. The community centre must also form the framework of other citizen-oriented and citizen-generated offers and activities. Many branch libraries house local historical archives which will become a natural part of the community centre. Many other cooperation partners – present and future – can be incorporated into the community centre concept. The transformation will vary between individual communities and individual libraries, just as the process must be expected to be carried out over a period of time. Citizen involvement in the process is crucial as the projected outcome is a centre for the community. Citizens' Services and Libraries will thus further develop the already existing methods of citizen involvement. The organisation can vary according to local conditions but the common foundation for all is that the citizen and the local community are at the centre. Common is also the merging of services from libraries and citizens' services. In the long term, it would be desirable to transform all the municipalities' libraries into community centres.

Initiatives

Citizens' Services at the libraries. The citizens' services offer at the libraries will be further developed in order for the overall offer to have a physical nearness, accessibility and cohesion for the citizen. This will be carried out within the existing financial frames. Scope and organisation will depend on the size of the local community, patterns of demand for citizens' services taking into account an appropriate utilisation of the given resources.

Concepts for community centres. Citizens' Services and Libraries will work out a model for developing community centres in various local communities. The foundation is locally anchored activities which are in demand among and initiated by citizens, associations, organisations and the business community.

Binding partnerships. With local conditions and opportunities as its starting point, Citizens' Services and Libraries will enter into mutually binding partnerships with other public institutions, private actors and volunteer associations.

Unserviced opening hours. Citizens' Services and Libraries will continue to expand services by supplementing the current serviced opening hours with unserviced opening hours in four of the branch libraries. *This requires an expansion of the budget.*

Capital of Culture 2017. Citizens' Services and Libraries will work to ensure that libraries/community centres become important local operators in connection with the venture to become European Capital of Culture in 2017. The branch libraries hold an important function being the local setting of cultural experiences. Culture reaches beyond the city centre boundary and into the local communities of Aarhus via the libraries.

Ambition

Citizens' Services and Libraries shall be a key local operator when it comes to the dissemination of cultural heritage

The libraries are significant culture preserving, culture disseminating and culture developing institutions. Thus, the libraries serve an important function in protecting and disseminating the cultural heritage including the local cultural heritage.

Initiatives

Cooperation between archives, libraries and museums. Citizens' Services and Libraries will work to further develop the cooperation between the archives, libraries and museums (ALM) with a view to achieving improved dissemination of the local cultural heritage in the City of Aarhus.

Aarhus City Archive. Citizens' Services and Libraries will work to establish a city archive for the City of Aarhus. This will reinforce the preservation as well as the dissemination of the cultural heritage of Aarhus city centre but it will also support the work which is being carried out throughout the City of Aarhus with local history e.g. by way of cooperation with the local archives in the municipality.



Inspiration and Learning

Lifelong learning

Aarhus shall be a city of knowledge for all citizens throughout their lives.

Background

The Danish society is built, first and foremost, on knowledge – a raw material whose significance will continue to grow in the years to come. The foundation of the Danish welfare society is good and original ideas as well as products and services and this will become increasingly imperative. At the same time, Denmark faces the challenge that a large part of the Danish population have insufficient reading and IT skills and a considerable percentage of a youth year group does not complete a youth education programme.



Thus the educational system will also play a key role in the future. However, if we are to turn the tide and secure Denmark's ability to do well in future international competition, we cannot rely solely on formal educational institutions. Lifelong learning and multidisciplinary cooperation will become determining factors in citizens attaining the necessary knowledge and competences.

Ambition

Citizens' Services and Libraries wish to maintain and continue working with promoting learning. This work takes as its starting point the role of the libraries as informal and open environments

Characteristic of the libraries is the informal and enjoyable – citizens come to the library voluntarily and out of interest, and the library is open to everyone. This provides the library with very special opportunities to support the learning efforts. Through various learning- and inspirational activities the libraries have the opportunity to reach a wide range of citizens including citizens who have obstacles when it comes to the formal education system.

Initiatives

An appealing and inspiring library. Citizens' Services and Libraries must continue working with further developing the physical spaces of the libraries in order for citizens to experience the library as accommodating, inspiring and appealing, providing the individual with an inclination to explore the library's opportunities.

Learning for everyone. The libraries must continue to be a qualified offer of learning and development – regardless of the individual's qualifications. The libraries must thus continue to provide access to a wide range of materials and likewise it must be possible to use PCs, Internet, office programmes and databases in the library.

Ambition

Citizens' Services and Libraries shall support the citizen's lifelong learning and competence development

Learning throughout life is becoming increasingly necessary in a world undergoing constant change. The ability to read is especially pivotal for the individual's possibilities in today's society. At the same time, good IT-skills are increasingly important in order to handle work, education and daily life.

Initiatives

The citizens' IT-skills. Citizens' Services and Libraries must continue to work with supporting citizens' general IT-skills through goal-oriented activities with a view to helping citizens become competent IT-citizens.

Children's reading skills. Citizens' Services and Libraries must continue to work with supporting and supplementing preschoolers' and school children's proficiencies especially with regard to reading. The libraries' long and fine tradition of initiatives for learning within this area must be carried on and further developed.

Ambition

Citizens' Services and Libraries shall work on cooperating in partnerships around a joint effort to promote learning

Aarhus houses a number of further education institutions. At the same time, Aarhus is well-provided with primary schools and youth education programmes and adult education providers are also well represented. This provides a unique opportunity to provide all citizens of the city with the best possible conditions for learning through increased cooperation across institutions.

Initiatives

Partnerships regarding reading. Citizens' Services and Libraries must establish and further develop partnerships with a view to promoting reading among children and population groups with a reading disability.

Cooperation with the adult education associations. Citizens' Services and Libraries' cooperation with the adult education associations must be maintained and further developed.

Mutual language training. Citizens' Services and Libraries must initiate an experiment with mutual language training as an international language- and cultural meeting between citizens. The experiment must take place in cooperation with educational institutions, the business community, association activities and adult education providers.

Media and Media Dissemination



An inspiring offer of knowledge for everyone

The libraries shall be an inspiring offer of knowledge for everyone regarding physical as well as digital content.

Background

In the knowledge society the knowledge and skills of the citizens are determining factors in the establishment of social value and development. The libraries support access to knowledge through a varied range of printed media such as books, periodicals, papers, leaflets, folders and brochures; digital media such as CDs and DVDs as well as Internet-based digital media and formats. The content consists of fiction, non-fiction, information in databases and encyclopedias, films and music.

In the public libraries, activities and events which supplement the use of (various) media have a natural place. Author events, debates or an interesting presentation of

the materials in the library space are various ways in which to disseminate the media content and ways in which to generate inspiration and surprise. The various forms of dissemination of the media can also contribute to providing the citizen with an overview and context in relation to the large amount of information and knowledge available.

Ambition

Citizens' Services and Libraries will offer a wide selection of traditional and new forms of media which in terms of content appeals to various target groups

The public libraries as public service institutions must be able to offer the entire range of offers - from literature and music to films and games. It is important that the libraries are able to offer popular literature as well as titles appealing to smaller target groups. Furthermore, the libraries must be able to offer the citizens a wide range of media forms from a large selection of printed media to physical and Internet-based digital media.

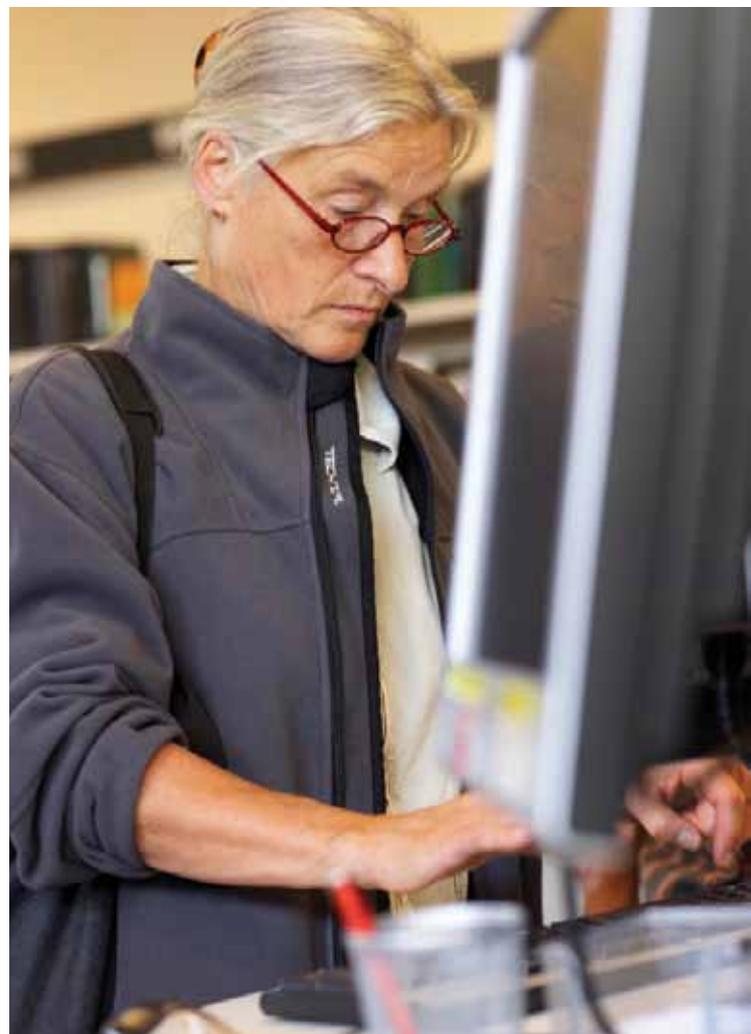
The public libraries' obligation to offer a wide range of media as regards both platform and content holds vast financial challenges but at the same time it is crucial for enabling the public libraries to provide the citizens with an attractive and relevant offer of knowledge.

Initiatives

A selection of media which is based on professional selection criteria. Citizens' Services and Libraries will base the selection of media on a serious assessment of quality within all types of media and diversity is obtained via a wide range of offers within all media areas. Moreover, Citizens' Services and Libraries' selection of materials will be based on topicality, ensuring that citizens are given access to the most recent knowledge.

The Danish Digital Library. Citizens' Services and Libraries will enter into the establishment of The Danish Digital Library. The united IT infrastructure will appear as one joint entry to the libraries online from which citizens will be able to utilise the growing number of offers that the libraries make available in the form of films, music, games and literature.

Increasing title and media variety. A financial basis for increasing title and media variety must be ensured. The selection of media must occur in line with new tendencies in the use of media and with sustained attention to the physical book which is one of the most significant services in the libraries for many years to come.



Developing Citizens Services

A citizens' services offer centred on the needs of the citizens

With citizens' needs as the driving force, the City of Aarhus organises a holistic citizens' services offer, which becomes citizens' natural access point to the public sector.

Background

In a few years, fewer hands will be available to lift the many tasks in the public sector and at the same time it is not anticipated that citizens' and businesses' expectations of the public sector will become equivalently smaller.



Besides the demographical development establishing a new framework for future citizens' services, the digital challenge is also increasing due to the government's strategy for digitisation which must be handled by the municipalities in the years to come. The strategy for digitisation declares that all forms of communication between businesses, citizens and the public sector must be able to take place digitally in 2012 at the latest.

Challenges exist on the national level as well as on a local level in the City of Aarhus. These challenges place demands on the development and optimisation of citizens' services as well as the development of self-service solutions which enable the citizens to service themselves to a larger extent than they do today.

Many citizens will benefit from a better and wider range of digital self-service solutions. The services are available day and night, 7 days a week, which makes them accessible at the most convenient time for the citizens.

Despite the development of new self-service solutions the need for personal service and guidance will continue to exist. This must be viewed in light of the fact that a large part of the population possesses weak IT-skills and thus will not benefit directly from the many opportunities which new forms of digitisation pave the way to. Besides groups with weak IT-skills, groups of citizens who are simply more comfortable with personal service from a social worker also exist.

Ambition

Citizens' Services and Libraries will set up a citizens' services offer which is the citizens' primary access point to the public sector

A need exists for continuous development and adjustment of the citizens' services offer taking as a starting point the needs, everyday life and entire life situation of the citizens. Citizens' Services and Libraries therefore cooperates continuously with other municipal departments regarding the development of citizens' services as an interdisciplinary focus area – including identifying where and how the often complex case histories of citizens are resolved in the best possible manner.

Initiatives

A differentiated citizens' services offer. Citizens' Services and Libraries will set up a citizens' services offer with a range of offers and forms of service which have been modified to suit the various needs and competences of the citizens.

An accessible citizens' service offer. Citizens' Services and Libraries aims to adapt opening hours in the local citizens' service offers to local needs while taking into consideration the given financial framework.

Ambition

Citizens' Services and Libraries will work to channel still more of the municipality's citizens' service to citizen self-service but with a continuous focus on ensuring the equal access of all citizens to citizens' services

Initiatives

Citizens' digital competences. Citizens' Services and Libraries will support the development of the citizens' digital skills e.g. by offering co-service to citizens who call at Citizens' Services in person and by offering an introduction to digital Citizens' Services in the context of IT-courses in the libraries.

Communicative focus. Citizens' Services and Libraries will increase its communicative focus in regard to informing citizens about the advantages of utilising the digital services, e.g. a high degree of accessibility and fast case handling.

Incentive structures. Citizens' Services and Libraries develops incentive structures which support an increased use of the digital services.

Development of new digital solutions. Citizens' Services and Libraries will cooperate in the development of new and improvement of existing digital solutions on a national as well as local level.

Towards Urban MEDIASPACE



Urban MEDIASPACE0

The Urban MEDIASPACE shall be the city's open and democratic space for knowledge, culture and learning: an offer for everyone.

Background

Urban MEDIASPACE will be Aarhus' new democratic meeting place inviting and opening up to the city as well as the world. Urban MEDIASPACE will be the new main library with optimal settings for inspiration, learning and culture. Urban MEDIASPACE will also become the place where people come to read the newspaper, borrow books and music, use the PC or ask a librarian for help with searching for literature. Urban MEDIASPACE will be an icon for Aarhus in terms of content as well as activities. Urban MEDIASPACE will be built according to the strictest of demands concerning energy underlining the objective that the house is going to support the City of Aarhus' goal of becoming CO2 neutral in the year 2030.

Urban MEDIASPACE will have a unique location in Aarhus. Historically, it will be placed where Aarhus once emerged as settlement and currently where the stream, the sea and the city centre meet. Urban MEDIASPACE, with its location and the activities it will contain, will contribute to expanding and enlivening the city of benefit to the city, the municipality as well as the region. Urban MEDIASPACE will be inaugurated at the end of 2014.

Ambition

Urban MEDIASPACE must contribute to making the City of Aarhus an international city of knowledge, culture and experiences

Urban MEDIASPACE is based on a number of core values, e.g. the citizen as starting point, lifelong learning and community, diversity, and culture and experiences. Until the inauguration of Urban MEDIASPACE, Citizens' Services and Libraries will focus on the way in which the core values can be brought to fruition in the activities and relations which the building will come to frame.

Urban MEDIASPACE will hold a central place in the activities and initiatives which Citizens' Services and Libraries launches and which are meant to reinforce and promote the candidature of Aarhus for European Capital of Culture in 2017.

Initiatives

Organisational development. Citizens' Services and Libraries will carry out an organisational development which will support the vision for Urban MEDIASPACE.

Content and activities. Citizens' Services and Libraries will continue to develop content, activities, cooperation relations and forms of cooperation towards the opening of Urban MEDIASPACE. This will enable Citizens' Services and Libraries to fully take advantage of the potential of Urban MEDIASPACE and thus live up to the foundation and values of the project.



