

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

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To: **Growth, Economic Development and Communities
Cabinet Committee – 6 September 2017**

Subject: **Libraries, Registration and Archives ambition work and proposed Member working group**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Electoral Division: All

Summary: This report outlines the proposal to develop an ambition statement for Libraries, Registration and Archives, and recommends the setting up of a cross party Member working group to support this work.

Recommendation: Cabinet Committee is asked to note the proposal to develop an ambition statement for Libraries, Registration and Archives and support the setting up of a Member working group to support this work.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Libraries, Registration and Archives Service (LRA) is a statutory and highly valued public service delivered through a network of 99 libraries, 6 Register Offices; 5 mobile libraries; an archive centre containing over 8.5 miles shelving of historic archive documents; the stock distribution and support function building at Quarrywood; the information service comprising the public 'Ask a Kent Librarian' service and the KCC member information point as well as the 24 hour accessible online services. LRA also currently delivers the record management service on behalf of KCC and is commissioned to deliver the registration service for the London Borough of Bexley and the Prison library service in Kent.
- 1.2 Since April 2016, LRA has been a fully internally commissioned service reporting against the KCC outcomes framework to demonstrate the positive impact these services have on the people and communities in Kent. LRA has just completed the first year of delivery against a service specification. For year two LRA has refined the model and is also developing its outcome evaluation approach.
- 1.3 The service is fully engaged in KCC's Asset Utilisation agenda to ensure the LRA network is fully used given the unique access it provides to Kent's residents and communities. This involves looking at how services such as libraries, Adult Education, Children's Centres, Gateways, Good Day programme and other KCC/partner front facing services can come together more and share resources. The service has also been looking at how it can

become more commercial and is developing its approach to procurement and contract management.

- 1.4 With the production of the national libraries strategy (see below and the report to Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee in June 2017), it is timely to take stock of the direction for the service to enable it to prioritise and focus resources to make the most positive impact for customers and be more sustainable for the future.

2. The National LRA Picture

- 2.1 For Libraries, 2016 saw the publication of the National strategy document *'Libraries Deliver: Ambition for public libraries in England 2016-2021'*. *'Libraries Deliver'* acknowledges the challenging times that local authorities are operating in and that the way people use libraries across the country and expectations of how services will be used has changed. Libraries need to adapt, be more resilient and ready for change, in order that they "thrive not just survive". This strategy also outlines seven key outcomes that libraries need to focus on:



This will be an important reference document in drafting the KCC Ambition statements.

- 2.2 The Archive Service is looking to the future. The focus of the last few years has been to ensure the rich and valuable collections based their new home at Kent History and Library Centre, and now it is time to look forward and plan how the service can further develop including exploring the opportunities for using new technology, digitising the collections and enabling wider access to these unique sources of Kent history and the people who have lived here.

- 2.3 Registration services face a period of change with potential legislative changes to fees and charges and the services provided. Brexit will impact on legislation but it could also prompt an increase in those seeking UK citizen status over the next two years. It will equally be important to recognise the key role Registration plays at key points in people's lives; its role in generating income; in promoting Kent as a venue for weddings; and supporting the Home Office in piloting new initiatives and preventing sham marriages.
- 2.4 Any changes will need to be carefully constructed ensuring that statutory duties are met. The current examples in Lancashire and Swindon highlight the potential interest and scrutiny any proposals are likely to come under from the Secretary of State and local communities.

3. A new ambition for LRA

- 3.1 Kent has seen and will continue to see significant changes in demography, spatial geography, how people access services and their expectations of those services, technology and IT literacy. LRA must look at the future challenge of population growth and the emergence of new communities in planning the shape of public service provision.
- 3.2 Taking the Kent and national approach into account, it is timely to define the ambitions for the LRA service for the next five to ten years. This will be a set of ambitions for the whole of LRA, recognising the benefit of integration while also recognising the distinctiveness and importance of each element and the financial context the service operates in.
- 3.3 Once the ambition statement for the whole service has been established, attention will then turn to developing the strategy to deliver them. This strategy will necessitate looking at the whole service and how we deliver LRA services across the county.

4. Member working group

- 4.1 It is proposed that a cross party Member working group from Members on this Cabinet Committee be established. It is proposed that this is chaired by Sarah Hohler, Deputy Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory services and will assist with the development of the Ambition statement. The aim would be to equip Members with the relevant information through an evidence-based approach, in order to shape the development of the Ambition statement. Appendix A sets out the draft terms of reference for the proposed working group.

5. Next Steps

Date	Action
September 2017	Member working group formed to support development of the ambition statement for the whole of LRA.
September- December 2017	Develop of the LRA ambition statement including resident focus groups.

January 2018	Draft LRA ambition statement produced for consideration and endorsement by the GEDC Cabinet Committee and approval by the Cabinet Member.
From January 2018	Development of the draft LRA strategy to deliver the Ambition which will then be considered by GEDC Cabinet Committee and full public consultation would then follow.

6. Recommendation

Summary: This report outlines the proposal to develop an ambition statement for Libraries, Registration and Archives and recommends the setting up of a cross party Member working group to support this work.

Recommendation: Cabinet Committee is asked to note the proposal to develop an ambition statement for Libraries, Registration and Archives and support the setting up of a Member working group to support this work.

7. Appendices

7.1 Appendix A: Draft Terms of Reference for Working Group

8. Contact details

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