

From: Mike Hill, Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services
Barbara Cooper, Corporate Director, Growth, Environment and Transport

To: Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee - 7 March 2018

Subject: Libraries, Registration and Archives Draft Ambition Statements

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of Paper: N/A

Future Pathway of Paper: N/A

Electoral Division: All

Summary: This report outlines the progress made in developing new ambition statements for the Libraries, Registration and Archives (LRA) service including a copy of the draft ambition statements for comment.

Recommendation: Cabinet Committee are asked for their comment and endorsement of the draft LRA ambition statements.

1. Introduction and background

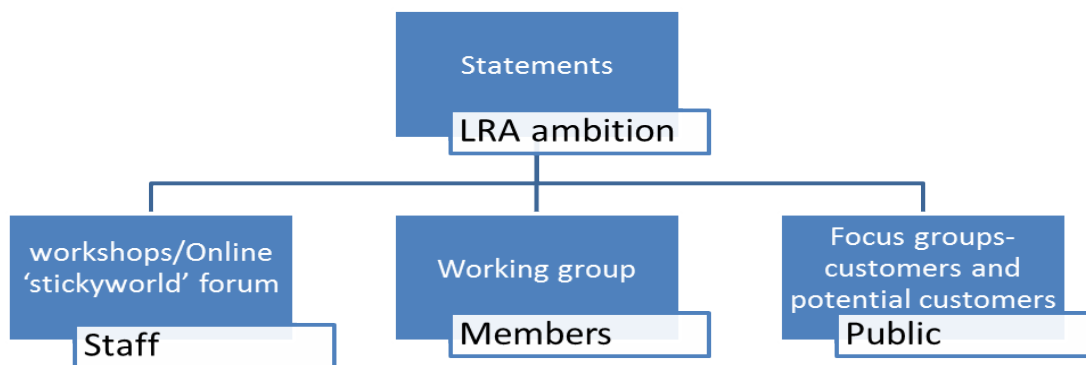
- 1.1 The Libraries, Registration and Archives Service (LRA) is a statutory and highly valued public service delivered through a network of 99 libraries, 6 Register Offices; 5 mobile libraries; an archive centre containing over 8.5 miles of shelving of historic archive documents; the stock distribution and support function building at Quarrywood; the information service comprising the public and KCC Member 'Ask a Kent Librarian' service 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 its contribution towards the KCC outcomes framework and demonstrating the positive impact these services have on the people and communities of Kent. LRA is in year two of its three-year commission against its current service specification.
- 1.3 Kent County Council along with all local authorities is facing a period of unprecedented financial pressure which demands continued and sustained

innovation, change and focus on positive outcomes from all services. LRA has an excellent record of meeting this challenge and has already achieved significant savings of £4.168m since 2013/14 (Net budget in this financial year was £13.8m) and is on target to deliver further savings (efficiencies and one-off savings) this financial year of £1.3m. LRA will continue to find new ways to continue to meet this continuing challenge.

- 1.4 Alongside the financial pressures the LRA service is experiencing significant changes in demography, spatial geography, how people want to access services and their expectations of those services, technology and IT literacy. The service also needs to look at its marketing and promotion to residents and businesses as well as developing further its commercial approach. Developing partnerships both within KCC and beyond will be key to making the most of the services' reach into communities and to providing a more holistic, sustainable, joined up and collaborative approach to public services.
- 1.5 The production in 2016 of the National strategy document '*Libraries Deliver: Ambition for public libraries in England 2016-2021*' has further highlighted the need for LRA to take stock. The service will also take account of the priorities set out by the National Archives and General Register Office.
- 1.6 In September 2017 the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee considered the national Ambition document and endorsed a proposal to develop ambition statements for LRA and the setting up of a cross party Member working group to support this work. This report updates on that work and presents a draft of the future ambition statements for LRA.

2. Progress on developing the LRA ambitions

- 2.1 The service supported by Strategy, Policy and Assurance wanted to ensure that the three key stakeholders of staff, members and customers influenced the development of the ambition statements. The service also wanted to ensure it challenged itself to think differently: focusing on what the service needs for the future and not to be constrained by what it is or how it is delivered today.
- 2.2 The diagram overleaf summarises how each of the key stakeholders were engaged:



- 2.3 6 staff workshop sessions were held across the county generating over 1,300 comments. In addition, the service used an online tool called 'Stickyworld' to invite all staff to have their say. This ran for six weeks and generated an additional 248 responses.
- 2.4 The cross-party Member working group is chaired by Sarah Hohler, Deputy Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services, and is made up of 5 members in total. It has met 7 times across a range of different LRA locations to give the Members an insight to different parts of the service and how it currently operates. The focus has been on the future of the service rather than on the number of buildings – an important distinction for the future. The Members' questions, challenge of the status quo and innovative ideas for the future have provided important feedback to influence the ambition statements.
- 2.5 Ensuring that residents voices are reflected in the ambition statements is fundamental. LRA commissioned market research company Lake Market Research to conduct focus group sessions with both current customers and those who have not used LRA services. Those who took part came from a range of protected characteristic groups involving people from across the county to ensure the feedback was as representative of Kent as possible. While at the time of writing we do not have the full feedback from the focus group sessions, the initial interim feedback has been used.
- 2.6 The LRA steering group which includes Mike Hill, Cabinet Member and Barbara Cooper, Corporate Director has also been heavily involved in the development of the ambition statements and have endorsed the draft version. We would welcome further feedback from Cabinet Committee.

3. New draft ambitions for LRA

3.1 Below are the draft ambition statements for LRA:

1. Everyone is welcome

Our services will be open to everyone throughout their lives, whatever their needs; everyone will feel valued, supported and safe. Stories, and storytelling are at the heart of our services and we will celebrate these in

everything we do. People will understand what LRA has to offer and how it can help improve their lives. Our services will be the trusted first choice for everyone who seeks accessible, timely, credible information, advice and support. We will respond positively to customer feedback, to ensure our services focus on giving the best experience to all who use us.

2. Sustainable and Innovative

Our services will meet KCC's clear, long-term commitment to the future of Library Registration and Archive services whilst recognising these are times of unprecedented financial pressure for local Government. To meet the challenge LRA will deliver flexible, innovative and sustainable services. In addition to our free core services we will focus our resources to ensure excellent value for money; be commercial and take opportunities to generate income. We will keep up with trends and developments to ensure we remain relevant and continue to meet the changing needs of people and communities.

3. Enriching people's lives

Our services will make a positive impact by focusing on delivering outcomes that matter. We will put customers at the heart of everything we do. We will provide choice and allow for personal preferences to make it possible to access our services in different ways. We will promote life long and family learning to develop potential, and enable people to flourish. We will promote access to the digital world and emerging technologies to ensure no-one is left behind. We will provide information and advice about careers, business and employment to support the local economy.

4. Helping everyone to live well

Our services will make a real difference to people's lives. We will reduce loneliness and isolation; we will promote literacy and a love of reading and books; we will bring people together through physical and digital services. We will promote healthy choices and self-management of health conditions. We will support people of all ages to live well, adding value to the lives of families, older people, children and young adults. We will complement new local care services to support mental, physical and emotional health for all ages.

5. Resilient and connected communities

Our services will be at the heart of communities, building resilience and helping people to stay safe, connected and living independently. We will connect different community groups, cultures and generations. We will celebrate Kent and its people both past and present. We will stimulate new ideas and experiences, offer volunteering opportunities, and access to cultural, learning and social events. We will fully utilise our community buildings making sure they are welcoming and easy to access. We will provide spaces for people to be calm and reflective or to take part in events and activities, enabling a sense of place and belonging.

4. How we will deliver against these ambitions

4.1 We will look to;

- Make everybody welcome to ensure all are able to use our services.
- Treat everyone with respect.
- Develop strong open communication with customers, communities, staff and partners. Encourage and welcome feedback and actively seek views, ideas, and suggestions.
- Be enterprising and innovative and develop a strong digital presence. Keep an eye on wider local authority and the commercial world for new, successful initiatives.
- Deliver excellent customer service, stay focused on the customer and understand changing needs.
- Support and develop staff and volunteers to ensure that they are equipped with the right skills for the future.
- Develop partnerships to focus and share resources to deliver value for money services that people need and use. Take every opportunity to deliver the best outcomes.
- Constantly evolve the service

5. **Next Steps**

5.1 Following comment and endorsement by Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee, work will then progress to develop a new LRA strategy for the future. This will set out how these ambitions will become a reality, including how LRA will meet its future Medium Term Financial Plan savings targets. The strategy is expected to look at a range of areas including but not limited to;

- Marketing strategy and brand: A key area highlighted to address
- Digital strategy and service offer
- The customer experience to be provided
- Review of our outreach offer including the mobile offer and Home library service
- Looking at our physical service offer including how we could better tier our service offer and looking at data and evidence to review opening hours.
- Reviewing the Materials Fund to look at how we get the right balance between physical and electronic stock.

6. **Equalities Implications**

6.1 An Initial Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed for the draft ambition statements. No adverse impacts have been identified. The ambition statements highlight LRA's inclusive approach to service delivery which is a fundamental principle that these services operate on now and into the future.

7. Recommendation

Summary: This report outlines the progress made in developing new ambition statements for the Libraries, Registration and Archives service including a copy of the draft ambition statements for comment.

Recommendation: Cabinet Committee are asked for their comment and endorsement of the draft LRA ambition statements.

8. Report Authors:

James Pearson
Head of Libraries, Registration & Archives
Tel: 03000 414923
Email: james.pearson@kent.gov.uk

Relevant Director
Barbara Cooper, Corporate Director for Growth, Environment and Transport
Tel: 03000 415981
Email: Barbara.cooper@kent.gov.uk

9. Appendices

Appendix A- LRA Ambition report
Appendix B- Equalities Impact Assessment