Appendix D - Alternative Criteria put forward for library tiering

Suggested Developments considered

Alternative criteria suggested	Results upon consideration
Age/mobility/disability	All of these were considered as part of the EQIA process and there was a question about the findings as part of the consultation. The EQIA's have been updated as a result. After any decision there will be further engagement with communities to best shape the library opening patterns to best meet local need.
Better promotion of the service/potential users unaware	This has been a key theme raised through the consultation feedback. This will be taken forward, with new promotion and branding forming part of the implementation of the new strategy.
New future housing/population growth should be a criteria for tiering	This will not be included as we would be basing the model on as yet unrealised use of LRA services and ultimately that new use may not happen. The strategy is for 3 years and one of our key commitments is to review the model every two years.
Need data (e.g. deprivation) should be part of the criteria for tiering	Need data should be a key determinant in where libraries are located. This strategy will retain all 99 libraries in Kent. The evidence base represents the full range of use of the modern library service. This covers the number of visits, the number of loans, the percentage of unique users, the amount of public computer usage and the number of customers who attend events. We also feel that several our criteria, for example, use of our public PCs and unique users, do reflect need.

These key indicators capture everyone who uses the library service, for whatever reason, whether to borrow books, use a computer or just to come to read or study. The next stage library staff will then be to engage with communities to shape those hours to best meet local need.

The tiering model offers a good range of opening hours across Kent to ensure that our libraries are open at times when people will use them, and our resources are focussed. We are committed to Saturday opening at all our libraries as this is vital for working people and school children. LRA will also continue to ensure that we target our events and initiatives for those in need as shown by our recent digital dens project which was offered to children from disadvantaged backgrounds and has enabled those young people to develop key skills for the future. |

Current population levels should form the basis of the tiering model.	This is the basis of a suggestion put forward by Ramsgate Town Council for Ramsgate. We have looked at how we could potentially apply this across the county. The difficulties arise for the following reasons; - No consistent methodology of assessing the population of each of the 99 library locations - The latest population estimates are from mid-2017 meaning we would not be using up to date information. The actual usage data of our libraries remains a better range of criteria to base our tiering model on, this can be up to date and reflects current use. Thus, this proposal will not progress.
Assessment period used for tiering not current/wider time frame needed	We accept that usage will have changed in the time since we put the model together. We used data from the full calendar year 2017 as this was the latest full year available to us at the time. Post consultation we have looked at the potential to update this to the period October 17 to September 18 which was the last full quarter period of 2018 before the proposals were made public. This is covered in our decision paper and is proposed is accepted.
Don't believe statistics – figures are not correct	The published figures are from data that is routinely collected by LRA. Data such as borrower information and book issues is collected via our library management system. The number of users at each library is collected by our library Customer Support Assistants. Our data collection team collated all of the relevant data used to inform our proposals. If the library was closed due to either staff sickness or building issue, then this was not counted in the statistics.
Tiering names	Several suggestions were made about alternative names for the tiers and responses from the consultation pointed out that these were not easy to understand. Therefore using one of the suggestions made in the consultation response we propose to number our tiers 1 to 5 instead.
New Growth communities	The question of LRA services in the new growth communities is an issue that we think needs further consideration. This will form part of the follow-on work as we implement the strategy.
Distance from other libraries/community facilities	We are not looking to include this. In this review it is proposed to focus on actual usage which is a more customer focused criteria.
Services & social events offered at individual libraries	Using the criteria we have selected this is covered in terms of the % of customers who attend events
Consider footfall at different times of the day	While we are not looking to use this for our overall tiering model this will be considered for shaping the proposed opening hour patterns for each library.

Proximity to schools, colleges	We are not looking to include this. In this review it is proposed to focus on actual usage which is a more customer focused criteria.
Need to consider customer service or helpfulness of staff	We are very proud of the service all our staff deliver across the county and this does not seem suitable criteria to include when evaluating the usage of a library. The strategy will build on our customer service offer for example through the customer promise.
Other bodies e.g. parish and town councils able to pay for additional opening hours.	This will need to be discussed and is not something that can be fully confirmed here. We invite those bodies who are interested in this option to come forward to discuss how this might work.
Wi-Fi/online use at individual libraries	Wi-Fi data is available for the county not by individual Library. This is best covered in terms of the % public computer use criteria that we have included in the tiering model.
Should be based on more criteria or more than five tiers	The service feels the current criteria represent a good range that covers the full use of the modern library service. We also feel that the current level of tiers is enough and covers a reasonable number without having too many tiers or making the model too complicated
Allow for regular review of tiers/footfall	We do propose to do this and will review the tiering model and the data after 2 years from the launch.