

Library Strategic Plan 2021 to 2025



Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Kurna, Ngadjuri and Peramangk Peoples as the Traditional Owners of the country that makes up the Light Regional Council. We respect their spiritual relationship to their country and acknowledge that as Traditional Custodians, their cultural heritage and beliefs are still as important today.



**ONCE UPON A
STORY TRAIL**

 **slow down**
BRING DOWN TO A SLOW WORLD
WITH IN NATURE'S RHYTHM

Follow the Story Trail signs and discover
Slow Down written by Rachel Williams and
illustrated by Freya Hartas.

All around us, nature is turning, growing and working. Every day,
hour by hour, magical transformations happen right in front of you.
But it's not always easy to see them...

Explore and see what you find when you take the time to slow
down.

Once Upon a Story Trail is proudly brought to you
by the Light Regional Council Library Service

 Scan QR Code for
Opening Hours

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Photo taken prior to COVID-19

Introduction

Public libraries are places in which ‘people can engage, learn, participate and be introduced to new ideas and technologies in a safe and supportive environment’¹. People are at the heart of the library service. It is a place that supports outcomes for the individual and for society.

Community members of all ages, abilities and socio-economic circumstances seek support, information, and social connection from their local library branches in Kapunda, Freeling, and Greenock. This includes the ability to access a range of ‘everyday’ Council customer services including assistance with online dog registrations, enquiries, and payments. Each of the physical library locations have continued to grow as community hubs as the needs of the community have changed.

The Kapunda Library is co-located with the visitor information centre, in the historic Thomson Building, and is open to the community 7 days a week.

The Freeling Library is co-located with Council offices and is open Monday to Friday with opening times going beyond 5pm allowing access to services outside of traditional working hours.

The Greenock Library is the smallest of the branches and uses two rooms in the Greenock Institute. In late 2020 the library hours were modified to better align with other community activities in the town.

As well as providing services at the physical branches, regular library outreach programs are available in locations at Hewett, Wasleys, and Roseworthy.

Council makes a significant investment in its libraries, supported by funding from the State Government through the Libraries Board of South Australia. A report on ‘The value of public libraries in South Australia’ demonstrated the economic value of libraries and showed “for every dollar invested in public libraries in South Australia, \$2.80 of benefits are generated for local community members”.²

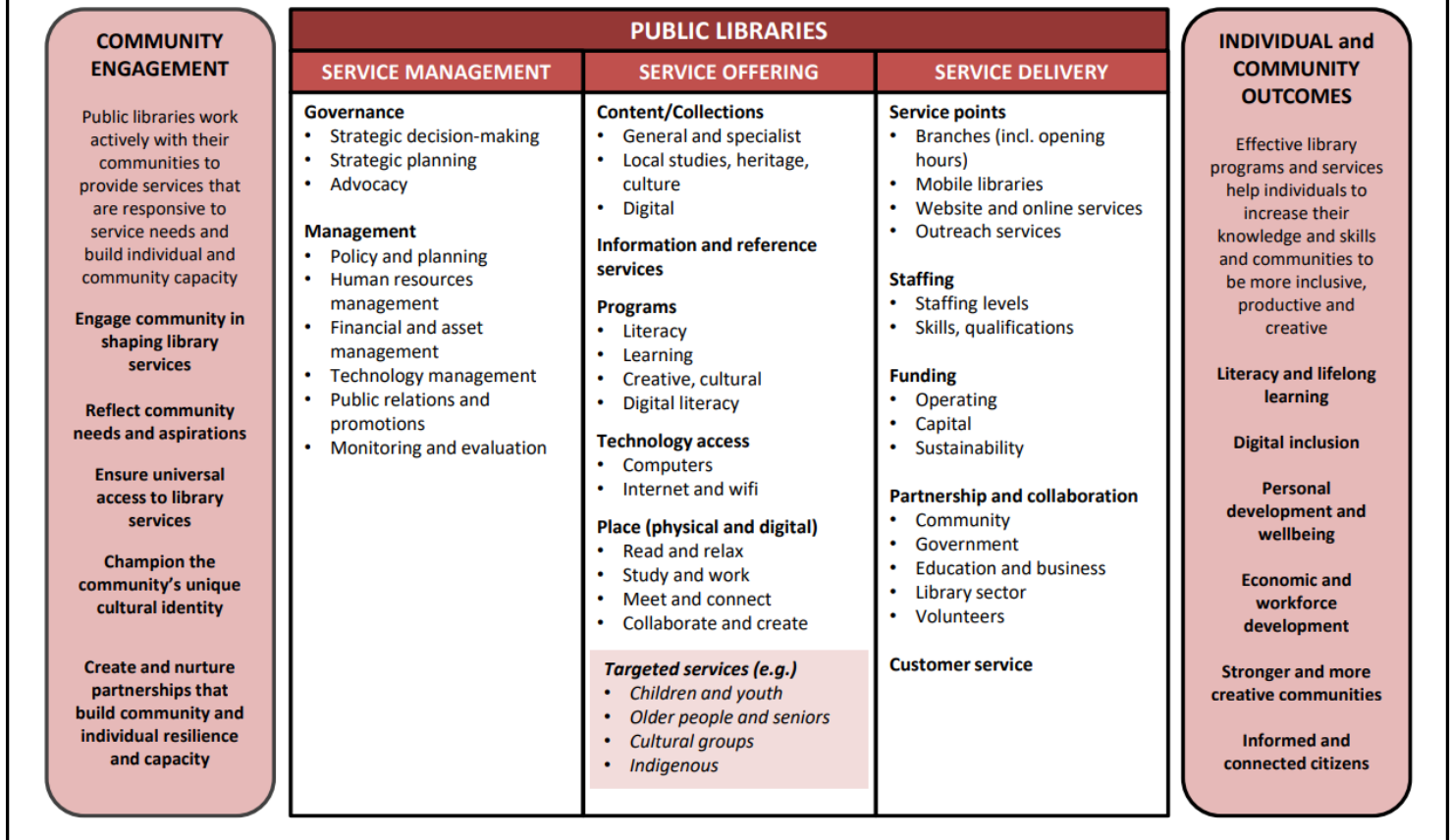
Light Regional Library Service is a member of the state-wide ‘One Card’ network which allows users to borrow and return items to any library across South Australia.

Libraries are guided by the objectives of the *Libraries Act South Australia 1982* and by a range of national standards for public libraries established and maintained by the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) – the national professional organisation for the Australian library services sector.

¹ Public Library Services. 2019. “Tomorrow’s Libraries: Future directions of the South Australian public library network 2019”. https://www.libraries.sa.gov.au/custom/web/PLS/Tomorrows_Libraries_2019_edition.pdf

² SGS Economics and Planning Pty Ltd. 2020. “The answer is libraries: The value of public libraries in South Australia”. https://www.sgsep.com.au/assets/main/SGS-Economics-and-Planning_The-value-of-public-libraries-in-South-Australia_FINAL.pdf

A Framework for Australian Public Libraries



Standards and Guidelines for Australian Public Libraries, 2021 (page 9).

<https://read.alia.org.au/apla-alia-standards-and-guidelines-australian-public-libraries-may-2021>



Tomorrow's Libraries: Future directions of the South Australian public library network, 2019 (page 14).

https://www.libraries.sa.gov.au/custom/web/PLS/Tomorrows_Libraries_2019_edition.pdf

What our libraries offer

Light Regional Library Service provides a range of learning, cultural, literacy support and social connection opportunities for our communities. These include:

- A diverse range of physical and digital collections that support lifelong learning and recreation.
- A safe place to promote and build social connections in the community
- Activities which provide literacy, learning and digital literacy support. From the earliest stages of literacy and language development at our baby rhyme time sessions (Wiggle & Giggle) through to author events, creative sessions, and digital support (incl. internet safety) for all ages.
- Technology responsive to changing community needs, which is relevant, accessible, and supported by library staff.
- Readers advisory services provided by knowledgeable staff.
- Library to your door: home delivery service.
- Access to local history resources, including historical birth, death, and marriage records.
- Staff who are trained to support learning and literacy needs and interests, as well as maximizing the use of digital and other technologies by library users.
- Access to Council customer services including dog registrations, payments, and enquiries.
- Spaces designed to accommodate a range of needs that include anything from quiet study to interactive learning and children's story time.
- Access to online databases and resources for reliable information.
- Job, employment and career resources and workshops.
- Access to free internet and WiFi technologies.
- Safe place for all members of the community.



Library branches

Kapunda Library
Freeling Library
Greenock Library



Outreach locations

Hewett Centre
Wasleys Supper Hall
Roseworthy Institute



Snapshot of our Community



15,501 Residents
in 2021
(ID Community, 2021)



Estimated Residents in
excess of 25,000 in 2036
(LRC Strategic Plan, 2021)



26.4% Children and
Young People
(ID Community, 2021)



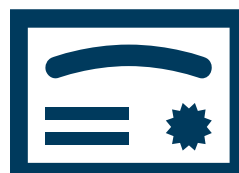
18.8% Seniors
(Aged 60+)
(ID Community, 2021)



4,088
Families
(ABS, 2020)



39 Years
Median Age
(ABS, 2020)



40.9% Completed
Year 12
(ID Community, 2021)



12.7%
Households without internet
connection
(ID Community, 2021)



14.5%
Households renting
(ABS, 2020)



\$390,000
Median house price
affordability
(ID Community, 2021)



Photo taken prior to COVID-19

The Library Strategic Plan

In December 2019/January 2020 a review of the library service was undertaken by an external organisation. The community were consulted during this process with the opportunity to provide commentary and feedback on the existing service.

The review highlighted the library's role as a community service that must evolve to keep pace with the rate of change across digital, social, and demographic trends. It identified the need to promote the library service throughout the community and raise awareness of the services available. There is a need to be flexible and responsive to make sure libraries provide the best value to our community by delivering services that are relevant and contemporary within the available budgets.

The review emphasised the need to develop our libraries as collaborative and inviting community hubs. This is more relevant than ever with the population of the region is set to grow significantly over the next 10 years, with the development of the Roseworthy township.

The *Library Strategic Plan 2021 to 2025* has been developed to ensure we achieve this aspiration. It is underpinned by the *Light Regional Council Strategic Plan 2021-2025* and will contribute significantly to the following objectives:

- 1.5 Providing quality skills education opportunities for the community.
- 1.6 Implementation of systems improvements and efficiency gains (such as through Information and Communications Technologies) and other operational initiatives, such as greater use of digital capabilities, to enhance the customer experience.
- 1.7 Ongoing improvements in communications using digital platforms.
- 1.9 Planning for the integration of new communities, such as Roseworthy, with the balance of the LRC community.
- 1.13 Delivery of effective community education and social connectivity programs and activities based on identified needs. This may include youth education and training and/or other programs run through Council's libraries to inspire civic participation and enhance life skills.

The Plan sets direction for how we provide library services, ensuring we meet community needs and prepare for the changing nature of library service offerings.

The measure of success is driven by the achievement of the objectives and key result areas aligned to Council's *Strategic Plan 2021-2025* and supporting corporate documentation and benchmarked against other South Australian libraries using Standards and Guidelines for Australian Public Libraries. To achieve this, four goal areas have been identified, each of which are underpinned by key objectives.

The sequencing and detail of the actions that underpin these outcomes will be worked through in more detail at a service wide and library-by-library level to ensure our services meet local needs and demands. The progress will be communicated via Council's regular reporting channels, including the Annual Report.

Challenges and Opportunities

Libraries must position themselves to meet the growing needs of library users who utilise and value their services, as well as the broader community who could benefit from what they provide. This will take place in an environment of rapidly changing technology usage, demographic shifts, and expectations that all council services provide the best value for money. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic saw libraries adapt to the challenge of delivering services and supporting the community when face to face services had to be put on hold.

The key challenges and opportunities that our libraries face include:

Falling literacy rates amongst children, youth, and adults

Australia's national and international rankings on literacy across language, literacy, and critical STEAM skills (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) are falling. At a local level, there are pockets within Light Region where children fall below the national standards for literacy established by the Australian Early Development Census (AECED).

Research into Australia's adult literacy skills demonstrates that *"a significant number of people aged from 15 to 74 years old do not have access to sufficient foundation skills in reading and numeracy to be able to cope equitably with life and work in the 21st century"*.³ For residents with lower literacy levels, it increases the difficulty in being able to make considered decisions in their everyday life e.g., in the workplace, out shopping, following medical instructions, making financial decisions, or assisting their children with their literacy needs.

Libraries need to find ways to help turn this trend around by strengthening partnerships with government and non-government agencies (such as local schools, kindergartens, and childcare centres) and employing informal learning techniques to meet the needs of those who need literacy support.

Residential growth and service delivery across the region

Providing equitable access to library services across a large region is challenging. The location of Council's library services in Kapunda, Freeling and Greenock separates the service from some residents. In its response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Council has augmented its service delivery in ways (e.g., electronic) that can continue to be refined to provide a level of service where there is less access to Council's libraries themselves. Council is conscious that the significant growth in its southern area, such as at the Roseworthy Township Expansion and Hewett before that, requires a strategic approach to service accessibility.

Digital literacy support

There is a growing and constantly evolving demand for libraries to provide support across the gamut of digital literacy needs, including service delivery. This ranges from those who need one-on-one support to understand and use devices and platforms, to the 'digital natives' requiring more advanced guidance to connect with and discern the value of quality digital content.

For residents with low levels of digital literacy, accessing Government services (MyGov, My Health Record) has been difficult or not possible without assistance. Digital services are only beneficial to those who can access them. Cyber safety concerns are increasing with scams and fake news becoming more sophisticated and harder to recognise or identify. The library will play a role in educating and supporting the community.

³ Daniel Edwards. 2021. "The importance of measuring adult literacy and numeracy". Retrieved 9 August 2021 from <https://www.acer.org/au/discover/article/the-importance-of-measuring-adult-literacy-and-numeracy>

Increasing user expectations of library services

There is an increasing diversity of library users who use the space for multiple purposes far beyond the perceived 'standard' library services. It is a challenge to meet this diversity of needs, while maintaining the 'core' library services. This will become more relevant as residents move into the new housing developments across the region.

Social Isolation

The impact of social isolation has been highlighted throughout the COVID-19 pandemic; however, this has been an issue in the region prior to 2020. An increase in digital services has provided new ways for social connections to occur, but this does not improve the lives of those who do not have access to this technology.

Access to technology

Access to free, reliable technology such as computers and WiFi is vital to social inclusion – particularly for those who are unable to afford their own internet connection. Increasing numbers of government and other providers offer online options only for access to their services, and people are more and more being referred to libraries for this purpose.

Non-library user perceptions

For those who haven't visited a library in recent years, there remains a perception that the physical collection – i.e., borrowing books – constitutes the entirety of what libraries provide. This misconception may be contributing to under-utilisation by non-user groups, who might otherwise become library users. The review highlighted the opportunity to raise awareness of the library service through improved marketing channels, including presence at community events.

Diversity of expectations for physical space

While some library users visit for quiet spaces to study, others bring noise, colour, and social interaction. The reality is that we want to encourage users of all kinds but need to find ways to accommodate everyone in a manner that supports positive library experiences. Libraries need to be responsive to the changes in working trends, including people working from home more, business enterprise hubs, facilitating service delivery by external organisations to help meet community needs.

Funding constraints

In an environment of increased cost pressure for local government, there is little opportunity to seek additional internal funding for library services to meet increasing demand. Grant funding opportunities provide a channel to bring in external funds, however this is a competitive environment with other libraries, local government services, community organisations competing for the same funding.

Our ageing communities

As our communities age, there will be increasing demands for the kinds of support our older residents require. This is likely to include a particular focus on keeping pace with the rate of technological change, which is becoming an essential component of remaining a functional contributor to the community.

Access and Inclusion Libraries have a responsibility of ensuring they are accessible to all. It is important that the physical environment, information, and services provide the opportunity for people living with disabilities to equally participate in each aspect of the library service.



Strategic Direction

Vision:

Where the community comes together to learn, connect, discover, create, and grow.

Goals:

1. **Community First:** Provide a community focused service that facilitates positive interactions and user experience (UX).
2. **Places and Spaces:** Provide accessible places and spaces for our community to learn, connect, value, and enjoy.
3. **Lifelong Learning and Connections:** Provide resources and programs that promote, engage, and support learning, literacy, health and wellbeing for all.
4. **Technology and Innovation:** Enhance community access to modern technologies, devices, resources, programs, and support innovation.

1. Community First

Provide a community focused service that facilitates positive interactions and user experience (UX).

Objective - What we plan to achieve	Key Result Areas - Outcomes
1.1 Determine opportunities for continuous community feedback and create pathways for action.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community engagement and feedback channels are established for ongoing (including ad hoc) community feedback on programs, collection, and service delivery requests. Implement an annual customer satisfaction library survey*.
1.2 Encourage diverse community use of and engagement of all people with library facilities, collections, programs, and services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marketing plan for the library service developed, implemented, and evaluated. 5% annual increase in library membership. 5% annual increase in library visitation. Library website content is up-to-date and meets accessibility standards. Total number of loans of physical and digital collection items equals the baseline target of 3.5 loans per capita*
1.3 Enhance partnerships with external organisations to meet the unique needs of the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional partnerships with local community groups and organisations implemented. Remain abreast of grant funding opportunities.
1.4 Ensure resources and staff competencies meet service level requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular training for all staff in customer service and digital literacy established. Staff are trained to support literacy and learning needs. Retain and recruit high quality staff committed to providing high level service delivery. A streamlined, digital process implemented for evaluating library visitation and services used.

**Aligns with the targets in the "Standards and Guidelines for Australian Public Libraries" and benchmarking measures for the Libraries Board of SA.*

2. Places and Spaces

Provide accessible places and spaces for our community to learn, connect, value, and enjoy.

Objective - What we plan to achieve	Key Result Areas - Outcomes
2.1 Create inspiring and flexible spaces that adapt to the changing needs and expectations of the community and optimise use of the physical layout.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The library spaces support the collection of library materials that meets the baseline target of 2 items per capita*. Desks and comfortable seating areas established to support use of personal devices and accommodate “charging stations”. Increased use of the library’s community rooms/hubs at the Freeling and Kapunda branches by 5% each year (participants and external bookings). The Freeling and Kapunda library branches are promoted as places for all e.g., hot/cold weather, safe spaces.
2.2 Provision of inclusive and accessible infrastructure for new and existing library buildings and spaces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New and existing spaces support universal access design standards. Improved external library signage to increase visibility and visitation. Undertake a review of the physical layout of the Kapunda, Freeling, and Greenock branches, with a view of making the spaces more accessible and welcoming e.g., encouraging customers to engage with all the services available. Annual community forums/focus groups to assess building needs.
2.3 Develop new library facilities and services to meet community growth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A library facility is developed in the southern area of the Council region (Hewett and/or Roseworthy) in response to community growth and needs. Regular outreach services to townships not serviced by a physical library branch based on community need.

**Aligns with the targets in the “Standards and Guidelines for Australian Public Libraries” and benchmarking measures for the Libraries Board of SA.*

3. Lifelong Learning and Connections

Provide resources and programs that promote, engage, and support learning, literacy, health, and wellbeing for all.

Objective - What we plan to achieve	Key Result Areas - Outcomes
3.1 Support opportunities that build diverse social, cultural and community connections.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased responsiveness to the different social needs and experiences of customers e.g., COVID-19 social and economic impact on the community. Acknowledge and incorporate first nations culture into services offered by the library. Library staff meet the changing learning styles of the community and individuals.
3.2 Activate and support community lifelong learning, knowledge, and literacy development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasis on children's literacy and learning activities with an increase in the number of participants in library programs and resources (physical and online). Increased emphasis on supporting critical thinking and cyber safety for library users (physical and online) e.g., to help identify scams, fake news, or social media profiles. Additional digital literacy initiatives developed through partnership opportunities (e.g., Tech Savvy Seniors, Be Connected).
3.3 Ensure collections are relevant and meet the needs of the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved targeting of the collections to meet the needs of identified user groups. The number of loans exceeds the baseline target of 1.5 loans* per physical collection items per year. Expenditure on library materials and resources (books, magazines etc) meet targets*. Resources support universal access including customers living with physical and intellectual disabilities.
3.4 Align with broader education trends such as STEAM, using makerspaces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement state-wide library initiatives e.g., The Little Bang Discovery Club, Maths fun for Under 5s, Tech Savvy Seniors.
3.5 Support training and skill development opportunities to improve the local economy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with external organisations and programs to deliver workshops with a focus improving skill development e.g., job readiness, small business, digital or social media training. An increase in the number of customers and small businesses maximising use of our library facilities, seeking information, and connecting with council.

**Aligns with the targets in the "Standards and Guidelines for Australian Public Libraries" and benchmarking measures for the Libraries Board of SA.*

4. Technology and Innovation

Goal 4: Enhance community access to modern technologies, devices, resources, programs, and services and support innovation.

Objective - What we plan to achieve	Key Result Areas - Outcomes
4.1 Library users have access to technology to allow them to access relevant information, government, community, retail, recreational and communication services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital access to the Birth Death and Marriages collection and local history resources. Increase the number of public access internet devices to meet the baseline standard of 1.0 devices per 2,500 residents*.
4.2 Provide services and spaces that promote innovation and learning through programs, technology, making devices and inclusive tools, for people to experience, experiment with and master.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement technology that promotes and encourages innovation e.g., 3D printer, green screen, recording equipment, hardware tools. Innovative programs are developed and implemented to promote literacy and social connectivity beyond the library walls e.g., Once Upon a Story Trail initiative. Increased community access to new and emerging technologies.
4.3 Be on the forefront of emerging technologies (smart cities, IoT, gigncity) to ensure that the library service can anticipate their relevance and viability for the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore opportunities to purchase new and relevant technologies. Actively seek grant funding and pilot programme opportunities.

**Aligns with the targets in the "Standards and Guidelines for Australian Public Libraries" and benchmarking measures for the Libraries Board of SA.*

Standards and Resources

In conjunction with Council's *Strategic Plan 2021-2025*, our libraries' service model and processes are guided by several state and federal bodies and initiatives. These are outlined below:

Public Library Services (PLS)

Steers the establishment and continued delivery of a coordinated public library network in South Australia under our One Card libraries banner.

ALIA (Australian Library and Information Association)

The national professional organisation for the Australian library services sector. ALIA is an information and advocacy body which has produced a benchmarking tool – Standards and Guidelines for Australian Public Libraries.

One Card library system

Led by the Public Library Services (South Australia) and supported by various working parties.

Public Libraries Association of SA (PLSA)

The association representing all public libraries in SA.

The Libraries Board of South Australia

A statutory body responsible for library policy and administration of the State Library of South Australia and the Public Library Network.

Our library service is also guided and informed by key documents produced specifically for the public libraries sector in Australia. These include:

Tomorrow's Libraries

A strategic and long-term view for the future directions of public libraries and a joint initiative of the Libraries Board of South Australia, the Local Government Association of SA and Public Libraries SA (PLSA), the association representing all public libraries in SA.

https://onecard.network/custom/web/PLS/Tomorrows_Libraries_2019_edition.pdf

Standards and guidelines

For Australian public libraries produced by ALIA.

<https://read.alia.org.au/apla-alia-standards-and-guidelines-australian-public-libraries-may-2021>

Value of SA Public Libraries

A report produced by PLSA and PLS that estimates the contributions SA public libraries make to their communities.

https://www.sgsep.com.au/assets/main/SGS-Economics-and-Planning_The-value-of-public-libraries-in-South-Australia_FINAL.pdf

National Welfare & Economic Contributions of Public Libraries

A report produced by ALIA that estimates the contributions that public libraries make to Australian community welfare and Australian economic activity.

<https://read.alia.org.au/content/national-welfare-and-economic-contributions-public-libraries-final-report>

Version	Date	Prepared and Reviewed by	Distributed To
Initial draft Library Strategic Plan	September 2021	Library Services Manager and Team	Library Services Team, Community Development Officer, GM Business and Finance, and GM Strategy and Development
Draft for Public Consultation	September 2021	Library Services Manager and Team	Public Consultation
Final	October 2021	Library Services Manager	Community and Elected Membership

