

## English Public Libraries Stakeholder Working Group Terms of Reference

### 1. Purpose

- 1.1 The English Public Libraries Stakeholder Working Group is convened by Arts Council England and comprises senior stakeholders from the library sector.
- 1.2 The English Public Libraries Stakeholder Working Group's principal objectives are to seek guidance and enable change in the public library sector in England working towards:
  - A thriving, sustainable sector
  - long-term financial resilience
  - national recognition of what Libraries deliver, within the sector and in support of external agendas
  - an agreed baseline of the public library offer.
- 1.3 The English Public Libraries Stakeholder Working Group also works to continue developing work detailed in the Libraries Taskforce Action Plan of December 2018.
- 1.4 The English Public Libraries Stakeholder Working Group will devise and implement a shared communications strategy to complement their activity.
- 1.5 The English Public Libraries Stakeholder Working Group members subscribe to the Libraries Connected vision statement (a) and the IFLA / UNESCO definition of public libraries (b) as follows:
  - a) 'Our vision is an inclusive, modern, sustainable and high-quality public library service at the heart of every community in the UK.'<sup>1</sup>
  - b) The public library, the local gateway to knowledge, provides a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision- making and cultural development of the individual and social groups. It underpins healthy knowledge societies through providing access to and enabling the creation and sharing of knowledge of all sorts, including scientific and local knowledge without commercial, technological or legal barriers.<sup>2</sup>

### 2. Responsibilities

- 2.1 The English Public Libraries Stakeholder Working Group has no formal responsibilities, but its primary focus is to agree collaborative work streams to benefit the library sector in England.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.librariesconnected.org.uk/page/about-us>

<sup>2</sup> [IFLA-UNESCO Public Library Manifesto 2022](#)

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- 2.2 The group may be called upon to signpost the Director, Libraries, at Arts Council England to potential developmental projects which aim to directly benefit the library sector.
- 2.3 The group has a responsibility to work cohesively and constructively to best assist the public library sector.

### **3. Delegated Authority**

- 3.1 The English Public Libraries Stakeholder Working Group does not have delegated authority to make decisions on behalf of Arts Council England or its sector partners.

### **4. Reporting Line and Accountability**

- 4.1 The English Public Libraries Stakeholder Working Group will report internally to Arts Council England's Executive Board through the Director, Libraries.
- 4.2 The group will report externally to the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) through the quarterly Arts Council/DCMS liaison meetings.
- 4.3 The group is not formally accountable to any other organisation.

### **5. Membership**

- 5.1 The English Public Libraries Stakeholder Working Group has the following list of permanent members:
- Director Libraries, Arts Council England
  - Chief Executive of CILIP, the UK Library and Information Service
  - Chief Executive of Libraries Connected
  - Head of Public Libraries and Community Engagement, British Library
  - A Chief Executive of a Local Authority (with targeted invites for strategic business planning meetings)
  - A Representative of the CML network
  - The Advisor – Culture, Tourism and Sport at the Local Government Association
  - A Head of Public Library Services in England (from the Head of Service sounding board)
- 5.2 Other partners may be invited at the discretion of the English Public Libraries Stakeholder Working Group membership. These partners may include, but are not limited to:
- The BBC
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- Higher Education Establishments
- Public Health England
- The Reading Agency
- BookTrust

5.3 It is expected that the members of the English Public Libraries Stakeholder Working Group will proactively engage with relevant stakeholders, partners and the public library sector to assist the Arts Council in its role as the national development agency for libraries and to inform the group's meetings.

## **6. Meetings**

6.1 The business conducted at each meeting is determined in consultation with the English Public Libraries Stakeholder Working Group members and is finalised by Arts Council England who then issue the agenda.

6.2 The meeting will be Chaired by the Director, Libraries, Arts Council England.

6.3 If the Chair is unable to attend the meeting (s)he will either nominate another member of the group to chair the meeting or the members present will nominate a chair.

6.4 If a member is unable to attend a meeting, they will notify the Officer, Libraries, at Arts Council England, who can then inform the Chair.

6.5 The English Public Libraries Stakeholder Working Group will meet every 6 weeks, with meetings identified for strategic business planning and review.

6.6 The Senior Manager, Libraries, Arts Council England will observe each meeting for the purpose of maintaining the direct reporting line to DCMS.

6.7 The secretariat for the English Public Libraries Stakeholder Working Group will be provided by the Officer, Libraries, Arts Council England, who will maintain a record of papers and decisions, or discussions made by the group.

## **7. Quorum**

7.1 The Quorum for meetings of the English Public Libraries Stakeholder Working Group is 4.

[October 2022]

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