Minutes
English Public Libraries Stakeholder Working Group (EPL)

Date	Tuesday 5th July 2022	
Time	15:00 – 16:00	
Location	Virtual Meeting	

Present:		
	Sue Williamson	Director, Libraries, Arts Council England (ACE) (Chair)
	Sophie Lancaster	Senior Manager, Libraries, ACE
	Lauren Lucas	Advisor – Culture, Tourism and Sport, Local Government Association (LGA)
	Leah Mason	Policy Officer Apprentice, Libraries, ACE (Minutes)
	Iain Moore	Commercial Director, Libraries Connected
	Nick Poole	Chief Executive, CILIP, The UK library and information association
	Liz White	Head of Public Libraries and Engagement, British Library (BL)
	Anthony Hopkins	Head of Library, Heritage & Adult Education Service, Merton Council
	Kelly Saini Badwal	Head of Cultural Services, Sutton Council
Apologies:	Prof. Steven Broomhead	Chief Executive, Warrington Borough Council
	Isobel Hunter	Chief Executive, Libraries Connected

		Action
1.	**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**	
	1.1 Sue Williamson welcomed everyone to the meeting.	
	1.2 Apologies were noted from Steven Broomhead and Isobel Hunter.	

2.   DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1   There were no interests to declare.

3.   FINANCIAL RESILIENCE UPDATE

3.1   Nick Poole reminded members that the purpose of the work is to a) be better at predicting the climate for libraries and b) seek to understand if a 'plural funding model' (multiple sources of income, including core funding) would be sustainable.

3.2   Work is progressing to phase 2. With an aim to create a clear outline, using the principles, and to build and strengthen relations between library services and their council.

3.3   Nick highlighted the Future Funding Programme model, is a plural model, that there is an opportunity for income generation if libraries are supported in this.

3.4   It was noted that key messaging should include how it is possible to move from a single model to a council plus model (Plural model).

3.5   Following the continuation of the workshops, EPL would need to decide how to take this project forward.

3.6   Discussion and opportunity for questions was opened to EPL members.

3.7   Iain raised that LC will be publishing guidelines from the Future Funding Programme and highlighted the importance of giving freedom to libraries. The use of a plural model would need a careful approach. It was agreed that messaging will need to be consistent, to avoid undermining one another's programme.

3.8   Sue raised that when CILIP originally started the Future Funding Model for libraries, this brought up a need for a plural model. LC developed the Income Generation Model separately, which could be fundamental going forward. Sue suggested that the phrasing could be revised, to highlight the difference yet still being coordinated around this.

3.9   **Action: IM to liaise with NP regarding aligning assets from Future Funding programme as one 'element' of the plural funding model; to discuss coordinating phasing going forward; review phrasing of wording**   **Nick Poole/ Iain Moore**

3.10   Anthony was interested to know LGA's approach. Overall, Anthony welcomed the work that is being done, but is

conscious about the sensitivity of phrasing which could lead to misunderstanding of the purpose.

3.11   Lauren, in response, stated that income generation is proving to be a large initiative in councils, with work streams taking place. It appears libraries have a more limited capacity for income generation compared to other departments. Clarity on this would be gratefully received, so that income generation in libraries can be developed.

3.12   Kelly suggested that we need to understand and establish the percentage distinction of core statutory funding and other funding. This may avoid misunderstanding between core funding from councils and what this programme offers. She suggested that utilising existing models like The Libraries Consortium model could aid this, as there could be money-saving in particular areas, especially as when libraries work together they prove to be stronger than alone. There are other models to utilise as well.

3.13   It was noted that anecdotal evidence regarding which council department the library service is part of seems to have an impact on funding. It was suggested that some data could be included in a more explicit way in the data strategy – looking at where the library service sits, in which departments it works most efficiently and successfully and build an understanding of the reasoning behind these trends.

3.14   Progress update at the next meeting.   **Iain Moore, Nick Poole**

4.   DATA STRATEGY

4.1   Iain briefed the group on the Data Strategy, which has had positive engagement so far. There are two sides to the creation of the strategy, the stakeholder working group that discusses input to the process, that includes ACE, DCMS, LGA, LC, CILIP, BL colleagues, and the sector working group, that is made up of those who work in libraries, those who would provide and create the needs for the data in the strategy.

4.2   Iain explained that the initiative is not for the stakeholders to drive the implementation of the strategy, as 'It needs to be from the sector to the sector and for the sector'. So, therefore the sector working group is very important to this process. The sector working group have met and another meeting will be scheduled for August, (Date TBC).

4.3   Iain clarified that the sector working group consists of 7 individuals, who are evenly spread across geographic areas and types of library services.

4.4	Nick explained the workshop's structure, the first workshop involved questions, expectations, mission of workshop, principles and exploring avenues of these. The second workshop will present the roadmap following the first workshop, with questions from the working group about data.
4,5	Discussion was then opened to the group about any points made about the Data Strategy.
4.6	Sophie suggested that using the data from the Basic Dataset for Libraries could be useful to start, as this is an annual collection, the longer this is continued for, the more valid it becomes.
4.7	Iain explained that there is no indication or confirmation on funding for this yet but he has liaised with DCMS about needs so far.
4.8	Sue reminded the members of the need to conform to the green or the magenta book and be compliant with this.
4.9	Lauren shared her thoughts about the need for collaboration around data across the wider library sector and local government, for example some LAs are developing their own data strategies. There could be learning and it would ensure that there is no duplication in data *asks*. ACE is currently commissioning a survey around this, to look at what data strategies are being created across all different councils, although this is not specific to libraries, it will still prove to be useful.
4.10	Sue raised that although we need to be aware of the developments with data, we also need to share what *we* are doing. Sophie then suggested creating a briefing note to be shared on SOLACE and others so that this is brought to their attention.
4.11	It was agreed there is a short term need to resource this work to support CILIP and Libraries Connected to undertake the initial phase. Again, being mindful of longer terms solutions whether the SDP is the home for housing the data, revenue will be needed to maintain the data. Further investigation and understanding of platforms like Moving Communities and LG Inform running costs or business funding models would be useful.
4.12	It was suggested that other datasets could support making the case for library services such as data on savings made to the service user - borrowing a book from the library rather than purchasing from a retailer and links to the Green Library programme.

5.   **MEMBER UPDATES**

5.1   **British Library**
Liz updated the group about the SDP brand testing that is taking place. This is being taken to the Heads of Service sounding board, to test brand ideas. They are in conversation with FCB Inferno, looking at other appropriate groups to test this with, for names and brand identity. The brand testing process will be a series of conversations with stakeholders.

5.2   **Libraries Connected**
Iain spoke about a new report from The National Literacy Trust alongside Libraries Connected, supported using public funding by Arts Council England that examines the role of libraries in raising the literacy skills of children whose leaning has been disrupted by the pandemic.

Iain confirmed that they are not at a stage to discuss the next steps following this yet but will provide an update for the next meeting.

It was agreed to provide a status update on the Workforce Skills Strategy at the next/future EPL meeting.

5.3   **Arts Council England**
Sue gave an update on the progress with the comms strategy that was planned. It was taken to market testing with some potential organisations, but this was more expensive than originally thought. Following this, conversations are being had to look at options available and budget. It was actioned to update EPL members of the progress at the next meeting.

6.   **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

6.1   Liz shared the details to a workshop taking place on 24th July about E-books.

6.2   Liz raised that at BL there is a university student on placement who is undergoing some research into links between the SDP and HE. Iain actioned to have a conversation with the student about this.

6.3   It was raised that at the next/future EPL meeting, there should be a discussion around E-books.

6.4   Nick informed that group that CILIP has now launched their comms material for libraries week in October.

Date and location of next meeting: Tuesday 30th August 15:00 – 16:00, Virtual Meeting