



## Minutes

### English Public Libraries Stakeholder Working Group (EPL)

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Date	Tuesday 8 <sup>th</sup> November
Time	15:00 – 16:30
Location	Virtual Meeting

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Present:	Luke Burton	Director, Libraries, Arts Council England (ACE) (Chair)
	Alison Hoolihan	Officer, Libraries Development Team, ACE
	Isobel Hunter	Chief Executive, Libraries Connected
	Sophie Lancaster	Senior Manager, Libraries, ACE
	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
	David Smith	Community Managed Libraries Peer Network (CMLPN)
	Simon Smith	Libraries and Museums Manager, Reading Libraries
	James Urquhart	Senior Manager, Libraries & Literature, ACE
	Liz White	Head of Public Libraries and Engagement, British Library (BL)
Apologies:	Prof. Steven Broomhead	Chief Executive, Warrington Borough Council
	Lauren Lucas	Senior Advisor – Culture, Tourism and Sport, Local Government Association (LGA)
	Neil MacInnes	Head of Libraries, Galleries & Culture, Manchester City Council

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS	Action
1.1 Luke Burton welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies were noted.	
2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
2.1 There were no interests to declare.	
3. DATA STRATEGY UPDATE	
3.1 Iain Moore updated the group on the progress of the data strategy. A funding proposal has been submitted to DCMS. Iain noted that other options around investor grants with universities are also being considered. There is currently no indication of timescales for a response from DCMS. The next Data Stakeholder meeting is scheduled for Friday 18 <sup>th</sup> November.	
4 FINANCIAL RESILIENCE UPDATE	
4.1 Nick Poole confirmed the date of the Financial Resilience workshop for EPL members on Wednesday 14 <sup>th</sup> December and noted it would be an opportunity to revisit the findings of the independent review, to look at how it aligns with the work of Libraries Connected, and to consider EPL's response to the review. Isobel Hunter reminded Nick that her and Iain are not available for the workshop. Nick agreed to revisit the date.	Nick Poole
4.2 Iain Moore updated the group on the Future Funding Programme, highlighting that a budget survey was about to go out to the sector, and an additional programme with 36 places will launch in January 2023. Isobel informed the group that Libraries Connected will be holding sessions in London and Manchester to support Heads of Service during the cost of living crisis. The sessions will look at advocacy and influencing skills, and how to effectively work with DCMS in relation to superintendency.	
4.3 Isobel noted that council run services would be hit in the next financial year and that spin outs and mutuals are being hit now. Isobel also stated that it's important to look at the impact beyond 2023 as well.	
4.4 Luke Burton commented that it was a difficult balancing act and that NPO funding shouldn't be seen as a way to fill gaps in service funding.	

Luke also noted that libraries are continuing to deliver a good service despite financial constraints.

- 4.5 Nick suggested that EPL put out a joint position on the financial crisis for all members to use. Nick also stated that it would be helpful to share knowledge and to keep others informed of library services needing support. Isobel agreed to the importance of a shared message around cuts within the group but stated it would be difficult to share knowledge on services because of issues around confidentiality.
- 4.6 Sophie Lancaster informed the group that DCMS attend the ACE Libraries team meetings to share updates on superintendence and ACE teams respond to DCMS with updates for the areas they are looking at.
- 4.7 Isobel highlighted that the library network is currently weaker due to many Heads of Service leaving or retiring. Luke agreed and noted that in the Northeast Libraries Connected group, 4 out of 12 Heads of Service had left within the past 12 months, which also has an impact on those that remain.
- 4.8 Isobel offered to share the Libraries Connected draft template press statement on cuts. Luke will draft a joint statement and will share with the group.

**Isobel  
Hunter/Luke  
Burton**

## **5 TERMS OF REFERENCE**

- 5.1 Luke Burton reminded the group of the amendments to the Terms of Reference (ToR), notably the inclusion of CML as an EPL member. Luke asked if the group wanted to consider the issues around the attendance at meetings of a Chief Executive given their capacity to attend meetings.
- 5.2 Nick Poole noted that the contribution of a CEO is invaluable and suggested that the attendance of a CEO should carry on as is the current situation but to also invite a CEO to a meeting for specific items such as reviewing strategy.
- 5.3 Iain Moore suggested the use of the Councillor Sounding Board and Sophie Lancaster highlighted groups such as SOLACE and members using their own contacts with CEOs when needed. Luke suggested he could attend groups such as SOLACE in order to raise awareness of EPL.
- 5.4 Luke recommended a flexible approach to the length of EPL meetings depending on the number of agenda items. Nick agreed that there should be scope for longer meetings at least twice a year for strategy planning with shorter meetings in between for updates from EPL members.

- 5.5 Luke asked the group about a return to in-person meetings. Isobel stated that in-person meetings had been useful and allowed for tours and presentations to take place before the EPL meeting.
- 5.6 Isobel asked for clarification around the role of Heads of Service (HoS) within the group. Sophie referred Isobel to paragraph 5 of the ToR, clarifying that HoS are full members and are present in the meeting to contribute. Isobel asked if HoS attend on behalf of all HoS or as a representative of their library service. Sophie suggested a flexible approach be taken depending on the agenda item.
- 5.7 Luke agreed to holding longer strategic meetings twice a year. Alison to schedule meetings for 23/24.

**Alison  
Hoolihan**

## **6 IMPACT MODEL**

- 6.1 Sophie informed the group that an EPL Teams Channel had been created and group members invited to join. The impact model resulting from the strategy workshop held on 24<sup>th</sup> October has been shared on the Teams Channel. Sophie suggested a Theory of Change model as a next step to underpin the impact model.
- 6.2 Nick commented that he likes the impact model and that the model looks very promising and could be built into a joined-up approach to communication and advocacy. Nick asked if DCMS are working on Ambition 2 and suggested it would be good for the impact model to feed into DCMS' work. Sophie noted that the impact model had been used in conversations with DCMS and with Baroness Sanderson.
- 6.3 Nick informed the group that CILIP have been in conversation with Baroness Sanderson. Discussion themes included regional coordination, British Library and the Living Knowledge Network, governance of the sector, a national library card, the hiring of professional PR agency, and harnessing the support of Lord Parkinson as an ambassador for Libraries.
- 6.4 Simon Smith noted that Baroness Sanderson had visited Reading Libraries and had discussed physical stock and purchasing from suppliers such as Askews, ebooks, data, and accreditation.
- 6.4 Nick suggested that members share with the group their initial conversations with Baroness Sanderson.
- 6.6 Luke asked the group to feedback on the impact model using the Teams channel.
- 6.7 Sophie recommended that ACE work on a Theory of Change model and use the Teams channel to feedback on this. Nick agreed that this

**All**

**All**

would be very useful and would lead into a programme of work for the group. Liz White offered to work on the Theory of Change model. Sophie suggested using the EPL meeting scheduled for 24<sup>th</sup> January 2023 as a business strategy meeting to discuss the Theory of Change model and to use the meeting scheduled on 28<sup>th</sup> February to discuss a programme of work. Sophie, Liz and Alison to work on a Theory of Change model.

**Sophie  
Lancaster /  
Liz White /  
Alison  
Hoolihan**

## **7 eBooks**

- 7.1 Luke referred the group to the paper circulated in advance of the meeting written by Sue Williamson regarding eBooks and a possible workshop with EPL members, publishers and other key partners in order to advance an eBook proposal for funding.
- 7.2 Isobel noted that Libraries Connected are currently in 1:1 conversations with publishers and aggregators and asked if a possible workshop could be held after these conversations have taken place. Isobel informed the group that LC had spoken with Overdrive US who were happy to share data on eBooks.
- 7.3 Nick stated that he is supportive of this piece of work. CILIP is currently fast-tracking work on e-content, including definitions and different licensing models. Nick pointed out that the academic sector finds it useful to look at the required outcomes from e-content access and then to look at how to secure the sustainable access to e-content in order to achieve the outcomes.
- 7.4 Liz highlighted that the Booksellers Association are good advocates for a change in licensing models and that PLR colleagues should be kept informed of any developments in this area given their access to other relevant groups.
- 7.5 Nick noted that Dan, the new CEO at Publishers Association, would be a useful contact to involve with any work around eBooks.
- 7.6 Iain stated that he would bring all points raised into LC's eBook proposal to help tie it all together. James Urquhart noted that ACE would be happy to take LC's proposal forward following their conversations with publishers and aggregators.
- 7.7 James highlighted that libraries add value to the publishing sector which publishers may not realise and asked how we get publishers to recognise that libraries act as advocates for reading. James also noted that the amount that libraries spend on eBooks is useful to publishers but not enough on its own to interest publishers and that data is needed to evidence the impact of libraries in this area. James asked if aggregators could be invited to share their data and noted that there is

value in getting data on borrowing habits which may help move the issue forward.

- 7.8 Luke suggested that The London Consortium could be a potential participant in the work around gathering data.
- 7.9 Liz highlighted the key takeaways from the SDP workshops with the Publishers Association and publishers in 2019 were that increasing access to reading makes the pie bigger for everyone and that publishers themselves are extremely interested in how they could showcase authors via libraries. Liz shared BL's [Digital Transformation for Public Libraries](#) report, highlighting page 13-14.
- 7.10 Nick stated he could share the approach taken by academic libraries with the group.
- 7.11 Luke acknowledged that Sue's paper sits alongside the work being done by Libraries Connected and Isobel agreed that the work of all in this area should be brought together. James suggested that a multi-strand approach may be the solution.
- 7.12 James suggested that the data gathered by LibraryOn, data from aggregators, and data from libraries will all feed into EPL's work on eBooks.
- 7.13 James agreed to continue his conversations with Iain around their eBook proposal and said he would welcome input from Liz and Nick to achieve a holistic approach to eBooks for the group, which will allow members to move forward individually in this area whilst bringing ideas together.
- 7.14 Luke asked for an update to be added to the agenda for December's meeting where next steps will be discussed.

**Nick Poole**

**James  
Urquhart /  
Iain Moore**

**Alison  
Hoolihan**

## **8 MEMBER UPDATES**

### **8.1 LIBRARIES CONNECTED**

Isobel informed the group that LC had secured NPO funding for 23-26, including funding to transfer out of London. LC have just launched their [strategic plan](#) for 23-27.

### **8.2 CILIP**

Nick updated the group on the launch of CILIP's Digital Leadership for Libraries e-learning modules which will build digital skills and leadership for the sector which will help to support the development of LibraryOn.

### **8.3 CML**

David highlighted CML's ongoing work in building their regional networks.

**8.4 BRITISH LIBRARY**

Liz gave an update on the SDP, with the official brand name of LibraryOn having been unveiled. The LibraryOn team are now working on next steps and product sequencing. Liz also updated on the Living Knowledge Network's new Chinese and British travelling exhibition.

**8.5 ACE**

Luke informed the group that the ACE Investment Programme 2023-26 had been announced with the portfolio including 16 library organisations and 2 IPSOs.

**9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

9.1 Nick asked if the group could reach out to LGA for some key lines from them on how they are approaching the budget announcement on 17<sup>th</sup> November. Sophie will contact LGA and share with the group.

**Sophie  
Lancaster**

**Date and location of next meeting:** Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2022,  
15:00 – 16:30 Virtual Meeting.