Minutes
English Public Libraries Stakeholder Working Group (EPL)

Date	Tuesday 11th October	
Time	15:00 – 16:00	
Location	Virtual Meeting	

Present:	Sue Williamson	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
	Lauren Lucas	Senior 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
	David Smith	Community Managed Libraries Peer Network (CMLPN)
	Simon Smith	Libraries and Museums Manager, Reading Libraries
	Sue Wells	Chief Executive, Lincs Inspire
	Liz White	Head of Public Libraries and Engagement, British Library (BL)
Guests:	Luke Burton	Service Manager, Newcastle Libraries
	Tina Morton	The National Archives
Apologies:	Prof. Steven Broomhead	Chief Executive, Warrington Borough Council

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS	**Action**

1.1 Sue Williamson welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Luke Burton, who will be taking up the role of Director, Libraries (ACE).

1.2 Apologies were noted from Prof. Steven Broomhead.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1 There were no interests to declare.

3. REVIEW OF TERMS OF REFERENCE

3.1 Sue Williamson invited the group to review the relevance of the EPL Terms of Reference (ToR), noting that they were originally devised two years ago.

3.2 Sue highlighted several key areas of the ToR for the group to consider including clarity around shared activity and collaboration on workstreams. Sue also reconfirmed paragraph 4 of the document, with external reporting lines taking place through ACE/DCMS quarterly meetings.

3.3 David Smith queried paragraph 5.1 of the ToR, suggesting that CML should be listed as a member of EPL given the size of its network. Sue asked for any objections from the group, none were raised.

3.4 Isobel Hunter suggested it would be useful to review the membership of the group and to make clear the difference between member and observer. Nick Poole agreed and noted expectations of membership should be clarified.

3.5 Isobel highlighted paragraph 2 for clarification, which explains the responsibilities of the group. Sue agreed and noted that EPL was formed following on from the Taskforce in 2019 as a voluntary group to drive forward development in the public library sector and to make key decisions on pieces of work.

3.6 Sue asked the group to send suggestions for updates and changes to wording of the ToR through to Sophie and Alison who will circulate to the group an updated ToR, including refreshed membership, for agreement.

All / ACE

4 FINANCIAL RESILIANCE UPDATE

4.1 Nick Poole introduced this item and updated the group on the current progress of this piece of work. Nick informed the group that a project manager is to be recruited to advance the project and bring the current stage of the research and report commissioned by Shared Intelligence to publication and to a close.

4.2 Nick highlighted that the report centres on a review of how public libraries are funded and how they should have self-determination to explore a broad and diverse funding base. Nick noted that this raised the issue of skills development for the sector in order to further explore diverse funding options.

4.3 Nick raised the concern that this piece of work addresses long term funding concerns in the sector as opposed to the short-term, more immediate urgency for money, and so explained they are looking into the most appropriate way to publish the report in the current economic climate.

4.4 Isobel Hunter asked if CILIP were going to publish the report and its 5 main principles. Isobel asked if members were required to endorse the report, highlighting that LC trustees were not able to agree to all the principles within it. Nick stated that CILIP would publish the report and that members of the group were not expected to endorse the report and its principles given that there was not enough alignment to go forward collectively.

4.5 Sue noted that the group should consider the value of an external agency making the recommendations within the report alongside input from an appointed steering group, and that the report should be used as a basis for reflection.

4.6 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.

4.7 Iain suggested that there should be a note of caution when publishing the Financial Resilience report, stating it may suggest to Local Authorities that less funding to libraries is an option.

4.8 Lauren Lucas stated that the current context and that of when the report was originally commissioned are very different and that the group should prepare actions to take over the coming months to address the current situation. Nick agreed that the group should align its input into the Sanderson Review and how the sector is funded.

4.9 Sue noted that a Financial Resilience report had been commissioned and was expected that it be published. Sue suggested that, given the current situation, the group should hold a separate workshop to focus

on the findings of the report. Nick suggested that CILIP will look into organising the workshop.

Nick Poole

5   DATA STRATEGY

5.1   Iain Moore updated the group on progress made on the data strategy, including a sector working group putting together a framework to implement the data strategy, and a core stakeholder group supporting the strategy.

5.2   Iain informed the group that a briefing had been submitted to DCMS for potential funding of a short term 12-month project to provide basic data that will be useful to both DCMS and the sector. Funding would be needed for phase 2 of the project involving social value indicators, and Iain reiterated that the strategy will still be sector-led in the long term. Iain stated that he will share the funding proposal with the group and highlighted that members can ask to be signed up to the Data Basecamp group. Iain agreed that he would share the details of the contents of the data strategy in more detail with Tina Morton from TNA.

Iain Moore

Iain Moore

5.3   Sophie Lancaster noted that Tiina Hill's (Head of Delivery, Single Digital Presence) input into the data strategy had been extremely useful. Sophie also added that the funding proposal to DCMS was a short-term solution, and that there is still an issue of who will hold the data in the medium-term before the launch of the Single Digital Presence.

5.4   Lauren Lucas shared with the group the Culture and Heritage Capital Framework, which looks at calculating the value of cultural capital in a way that connects to Green Book methodology. Sophie thanked Lauren for sharing and noted that the Moving Communities platform has social value indicators agreed via green and magenta book thinking.

5.5   Liz White suggested that long-term costs for a data platform should be worked on now to be prepared if any funding becomes available. Sue agreed and noted that a proposal for Neighbourhood Funding was able to have a quick turn around due to the work already prepared by LC's cost of living briefing and EPL's drafted letter to DCMS around the cost of living.

5.6   Nick Poole stated that data leadership and workforce accreditation need ongoing infrastructure funding, rather than ad hoc R & D and project funding.

5.7   Lauren informed the group that the data platform LG Inform requires long-term data collection from local authorities which doesn't currently exist and that there are ongoing conversations regarding data happening with DLUHC which the group should be aware of. Sophie

noted that DCMS are liaising with DLUHC on these conversations around data.

5.8	Sue concluded that a longer-term plan should be worked on by the group.	**All**

6 E-BOOKS

6.1 Sue Williamson informed the group that ACE had received LC's proposal on a project around e-books. Iain Moore added that the proposal looks at adjusting the licensing model for e-books in libraries, suggesting a per issue model where digital content costs the same as physical stock per item.

6.2 Nick Poole stated that it must be made clear to the wider sector that this is an e-books proposal within the context of public libraries in order to separate it from the current ongoing issues with e-book publishers in the academic sector.

6.3	Sue suggested further discussion on e-books be carried over to a future EPL meeting and that Tiina Hill and The Library Consortium attend the meeting.	**ACE**

7 BUSINESS PLANNING

7.1 Sue Williamson reminded the group of the strategy workshop on Monday 24th October at British Library.

8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

8.1 Accreditation
Sue Williamson updated members on the accreditation scheme for libraries and informed them that she will take a paper to ACE Executive Board on 20th October asking for a seconded project manager post to take the project forward.

8.2 Sue informed the group that this is her last EPL meeting before her retirement, and she thanked members for being part of an important group that supports the resilience of the public library sector. Members of the group thanked Sue for her chairing and stewardship.

Date and location of next meeting: Tuesday 8th November 2022, 15:00 – 16:30 Virtual Meeting.