



## Minutes

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

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Date	Tuesday 24 <sup>th</sup> January
Time	15:00 – 17:00
Location	Virtual Meeting

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Present:	Nick Poole	Chief Executive, CILIP, The UK library and information association (Chair)
	Alison Hoolihan	Officer, Libraries Development Team, ACE (Minutes)
	Isobel Hunter	Chief Executive, Libraries Connected
	Lauren Lucas	Senior Advisor – Culture, Tourism and Sport, Local Government Association (LGA)
	Neil MacInnes	Head of Libraries, Galleries & Culture, Manchester City Council
	Leah Mason	Policy Officer Apprentice, Libraries, ACE
	Iain Moore	Commercial Director, Libraries Connected
	David Smith	Community Managed Libraries Peer Network (CMLPN)
	Sue Wells	CEO, Lincs Inspire
	Liz White	Head of Public Libraries and Engagement, British Library (BL)
	Sue Wills	Assistant Director Arts, Culture & Leisure, Surrey County Council
Guests:	Annette French	Project Manager, Libraries Accreditation (ACE)
Apologies:	Prof. Steven Broomhead	Chief Executive, Warrington Borough Council
	Luke Burton	Director, Libraries, Arts Council England (ACE)

Sophie Lancaster

Senior Manager, Libraries, ACE

Simon Smith

Libraries and Museums Manager, Reading  
Libraries

- 1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**
- 1.1 Nick Poole welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies were noted.
- 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
- 2.1 There were no interests to declare.
- 3. ACCREDITATION UPDATE**
- 3.1 Nick introduced Annette French to the group, the newly appointed Project Manager, Libraries Accreditation at ACE. Annette gave a short [presentation](#) on progress made so far on the Libraries Accreditation Scheme, and the next steps in the project including the development of an options appraisal with a costed resource plan to take to ACE Executive Board in July, and the work to align the scheme with internal processes and work flows. Annette then went on to talk about stakeholder mapping and how members of the group would be involved in the next stages of the project as major, key, and significant stakeholders.
- 3.2 The group all agreed that they are looking forward to working with Annette to progress the Libraries Accreditation scheme.
- 3.3 Sue Wills highlighted a number of areas to be looked into during this next phase of the project including the role of DCMS superintendency and LGA peer reviews and where they sit with accreditation; how accreditation will fit with OFSTED reviews; the relationship between accreditation and funding awarded by bodies such as ACE; and whether the accreditation scheme will take account of CMLs.
- 3.4 Annette noted that the relationship with DCMS still needs to be finalised. Annette also stated that the current indication is that accreditation will not be a barrier to funding, in line with the museum accreditation scheme; and, in relation to CMLs, part of her work will be

**Action**

to clarify who is eligible and how accreditation can be scaled up and applied to all libraries.

- 3.5 David Smith agreed that he welcomed this piece of work and that it was important to note that we have moved away from libraries being only statutory libraries, and that CMLs play an important part in the advocacy of the sector.
- 3.6 Isobel Hunter informed the group that many of the questions raised had been noted in the development stage of the project. Isobel also stated that the libraries accreditation scheme may not offer support for individual libraries, as the Archive Accreditation Scheme does for individual archives, so it is important to think about how the accreditation scheme for libraries can be turned into a development tool rather than just a certificate awarded to a library service.

#### **4. DATA STRATEGY UPDATE**

- 4.1 Iain Moore updated the group on the progress of the data strategy, stating that the potential for DCMS funding was no longer available. Iain noted that positive discussions had taken place with DCMS, Libraries Connected and ACE to consolidate the next phase of the project in this next quarter, with DCMS' expectations needing to be reconciled to the aims of the project.
- 4.2 Sue Wills highlighted to the group the difficulty, post-Covid, in having a lack of sufficient data in order to evidence the impact of library services, and how the data required by CIPFA is not adequate anymore. Sue asked if a narrative on library data could be produced to aid Local Authority understanding of libraries and the evidence that is collated. Sue stated that the fact that a lot of data collection is not in place is beginning to impact on Local Authorities, and that there isn't the data needed to apply for post-Covid funding.
- 4.3 Iain informed the group that there is activity data that he could share with the sector and agreed that he could produce a report and roadmap detailing the current situation with library data and the challenges with CIPFA. Iain also highlighted that a report investigating the social return on investment in activities in public libraries in the East of England is due for publication shortly and may help with some of the issues around data.
- 4.4 **Action: Iain to produce a statement on library data to share with the sector.**

**Iain Moore**

#### **5 FINANCIAL RESILIENCE UPDATE**

- 5.1 Nick reminded the group about the financial resilience workshop planned for the morning on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> February. The workshop will provide the opportunity to critically assess the recommendations from

the Financial Resilience report and will provide an EPL response to them.

- 5.2 Nick noted that this work is not happening in time to be a response to the current economic situation. Nick asked for feedback from the Heads of Service in the group on the current economic situation and if there is a useful piece of work to be done around this. Neil noted that it all comes back to impact and evidencing impact, and that it is not about traditional KPIs anymore.
- 5.3 Iain reiterated that the data project will include social impact. He also noted that the Libraries Connected budget survey will be distributed again in February as a mapping exercise.
- 5.4 Nick agreed to feedback the group's comment to the financial resilience workshop.

## **FUTURE LIBRARIES**

- 6.1 Nick introduced the CILIP-led and ACE funded Future Libraries project to the group. Nick gave a short presentation detailing the project as a collaborative research and development project to move from 'defending the old' to 'building the new' – articulating an evidence-based vision of the future public library network that England will need to support its social, economic and industrial development over the remainder of this century. Key outputs will include defining evidence based 'future scenarios'; a heat map of current and future need based on analysis of historic provision, current infrastructure (including an analysis with brief case studies of different models of governance/funding/business plans) and projected demographic change; producing a road map and recommendations for design, distribution and delivery of 'future-ready' community-focussed library services both in place and online.
- 6.2 Nick noted that a working group will be drawn from EPL as a key part of the project.
- 6.3 Isobel asked if the mapping of data will be started from scratch or whether the project will use data that has already been collated. Isobel also asked how local need and a granular level of understanding will be captured? Isobel also suggested that future libraries would not just be about library buildings, but about the holistic service and all it can offer.
- 6.4 Nick stated that the project doesn't have the scope to bring new data together and that the Experian library data used by the NLT went down to ward level and so would be of value to this project.
- 6.5 Lauren Lucas agreed that the project needs to capture data from a very local level.

## **7 E-BOOKS**

- 7.1 Iain Moore updated the group on the ACE funded E-Licensing project to be led by Libraries Connected. The project will involve commissioning a freelance/organisation to work with publishers to come up with a new commercial model for ebooks in public libraries, based on affordability and availability of content; and to look into aligning ebooks with physical stock through a 15p per loan model. A further arm of the project will commission a library consortium or library service to work with book buyers to investigate if book borrowing encourages people to buy books.

## **8 GREEN LIBRARIES**

- 8.1 Nick presented the update paper on Green Libraries to the group and highlighted the Green Libraries conference to be held on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> March and focussing on sustainability in libraries.
- 8.2 Nick went on to talk about the next phase of the project which, in particular, would look into sponsorship opportunities and working with corporate partners in order to develop a sustainable funding model for phase 2 of the Green Libraries Programme, which would hopefully allow for a larger pot of funding for the Green Libraries grants programme.
- 8.3 Liz White informed the group that the British Library is recruiting an Environmentalist in Residence.
- 8.4 Isobel stated that she found it worthwhile to be part of the Green Libraries board and that the programme had seen good involvement from all levels of library staff. Isobel went on to note that the Green Libraries Manifesto needed more take up and that the Green Libraries hub needed more engagement and so the next phase of the programme should focus on achieving more traction in the sector. Isobel noted that the Green Libraries board had resulted in good partnership working.

## **9 EPL WEBINAR**

- 9.1 Alison Hoolihan asked the group for their thoughts on hosting an EPL webinar to highlight its work to the wider library sector and to use it as an opportunity to advocate for the role of public libraries.
- 9.2 Sue Wills agreed that this would present a good opportunity to reach out to the sector and to invite wider connections. Neil stated that the webinar would need a clear purpose so as not to raise expectations. Iain suggested that the webinar could also be used as a call to action if current projects required input from the sector. Iain noted that a

signposting map could be shared after the webinar to direct people to EPL projects and to inform people where to get more information from and how to get involved, for example the Green Libraries Programme.

9.3 Annette proposed that the webinar could be used as an opportunity to share the headlines arising from the EPL business planning meeting in February. The group agreed this was a good suggestion and noted to roll the webinar forward to after the business planning meeting.

9.4 **Action: EPL webinar planning as an item on the March agenda.**

## 10 MEMBER UPDATES

Alison  
Hoolihan

### 10.1 LGA

Lauren informed the group that LGA's Leadership Essentials for lead members is currently open to apply for as are the online culture and library peer challenges. The LGA is currently working on the next steps from the Cultural Commission, which includes regional roadshows. There is also a new lead member on the libraries and councillor sounding board.

### 10.2 BRITISH LIBRARY

Liz highlighted the new Environmentalist in residence role and updated the group on LibraryOn's progress, including the grant programme and the two accompanying webinars. Liz also reminded the group about the Living Knowledge Networks' Chinese in Britain exhibition and pop-up events.

### 10.3 LIBRARIES CONNECTED

Isobel gave a number of updates to the group including LC working with 26 library services as part of the £2.5m Know Your Neighbourhood fund, on projects involving loneliness and volunteering. The LC's peer network for library managers of apprenticeships has launched, with the hope of encouraging discussions around recruitment. The publication of the impact of libraries in the East of England report is due soon along with a new briefing on library support for businesses. LC have just hosted an exchange event with Ukrainian librarians, and they are waiting to hear about a new contract to deliver visa services in libraries. The LC virtual ULO seminar will be taking place in March and bookings for the in-person seminar in June are about to open.

### 10.4 SURREY LIBRARY SERVICE – SUE WILLS

Surrey libraries have received £8m Greener Futures capital investment. Sue also informed the group that the recent OFSTED report for Surrey council had a separate statement about the important role that libraries play in SEND in the county.

### 10.5 LINCS INSPIRE – SUE WELLS

Sue highlighted how Lincs libraries are generating income through renting spaces and charging departments such as Revenues and Benefits for digital support. The archive service also generates income through digitising photographs and selling merchandise. Central library is being refurbished this year, with the redundant upper floors coming back into use. The successful HAF activities held at Christmas are running again at Easter. These will offer a combination of HAF funded places and paid for places.

#### 10.6 MANCHESTER LIBRARIES – NEIL MACINNES

A dedicated children's library has recently opened in Z-Arts, an arts venue and theatre in Hume; and Gorton library has opened as a co-located space with DWP, a health organisation and a housing association. A new library will be opened in Manchester this summer and Central Library will be undergoing a £1m upgrade. Neil informed the group that he is now also responsible for youth services in Manchester so he will be looking at Manchester Libraries providing an even stronger youth provision. A new vision for the library service is also due soon.

#### 10.7 COMMUNITY MANAGED LIBRARIES

David updated the group on the latest developments in CMLs, including the recent appointment of a second network manager, the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Dorset community library, and the lottery funded Growing Great Ideas scheme, turning community libraries into hubs. Many CMLs are also part of the Warm Places network.

#### 10.8 CILIP

The [Welcome to Libraries](#) induction pack, including the digital format, has been launched. CILIP has received funding from the Welsh government to research anti-racist book stock. The ACE funded Controversial Materials guidance, along with a new section on controversial event programming, is currently being worked on with the aim to publish at the end of February. CILIP's workforce mapping results are in, with positive messaging around progress made on EDI and the support given through Covid. Also, the [Digital leadership for libraries](#) modules are being used well in the sector.

**Date and location of next meeting:** Tuesday 28th February 2023, 15:00 – 17:00 Virtual Meeting.