



Minutes

English Public Libraries Stakeholder Working Group (EPL)

Date Tuesday 17 October 2023
Time 15:00 – 17:00
Location Virtual Meeting

Present:	Luke Burton	Director, Libraries, Arts Council England (ACE) (Chair)
	Kathryn Harrison	Development Manager: Libraries & Information Services, Wakefield
	Alison Hoolihan	Officer, Libraries Development Team, ACE
	Isobel Hunter	Chief Executive Officer, Libraries Connected
	Sophie Lancaster	Senior Manager, Libraries, ACE
	Lauren Lucas	Advisor – Culture, Tourism and Sport, Local Government Association (LGA)
	Dave Lloyd	Service Development Manager
	Iain Moore	Commercial Director, Libraries Connected
	Nick Poole	Chief Executive Officer, CILIP, The UK library and information association
	Claire Robe	Lead for Libraries & Heritage, Kingston
	Sue Wells	Chief Executive Officer, Lincs Inspire
	Sue Wills	Assistant Director Arts, Culture & Libraries Surrey County Council
	Liz White	Head of Public Libraries and Engagement, British Library (BL)
Guests:	Stuart Hamilton	Head of Libraries Development, Local Government Management Agency Ireland

Sonia Ramdhian Director of Sector Development, CILIP

Pamela Tulloch Chief Executive Officer, Scottish Library and Information Council.

Apologies: Prof. Steven Broomhead Chief Executive Officer, Warrington Borough Council

Kamal Shah Chair, Community Libraries Network

Adam Tulloch Chief Executive Officer, Association of Senior Children's and Education Librarians (ASCEL)

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

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. SCOTTISH LIBRARY AND INFORMATION COUNCIL

3.1 Luke introduced Pamela Tulloch (CEO, SLIC) to the group. Pamela updated the group on [Forward: Scotland's Public Library Strategy 2021-25](#). This strategy followed the first national library strategy in Scotland, which attracted £5m of funding for the 32 library services across in the country. The new strategy was written following consultation with stakeholders, staff, users, and non-users. It followed best practice from around the globe, including the UN's global goals, it was tied into the national performance framework, and was built upon the key foundations of data driven service improvement, EDI, the customer journey, staff culture and sustainability.

3.2 The strategy has three themes (People, Place, Partnership) and 5 strategic aims under each theme. Key work arising from these aims includes a customer-focussed design toolkit, a digital training platform for staff, an NHS Near Me service, a community planning dashboard, the Every Child A Library Member scheme, and Lend and Mend Hubs.

3.3 Next steps for SLIC include evidence-based action planning, the amplification of minority languages (Gaelic and Scots), economic wellbeing, and digital innovation.

Action

- 3.4 Pamela informed the group that the Lend and Mend Hubs were funded through the John Lewis Foundation, and it had been a competitive commercial process to be awarded the funding.
- 3.5 Isobel asked about how future strategy may change if there is a change of government. Pamela stated that SLIC work across all parties, and when compiling the new strategy, they wrote to all SMPs in Scotland and had meetings with key political people from both main parties. SLIC lobby nationally whilst being in tune with what is happening locally.
- 3.6 Iain asked how NHS Near Me had been set up. Pamela said that this is a very effective scheme as it is relatively low cost with high impact, and that they had worked closely with the Chief Medical Officer for Scotland.

4. LOCAL GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT AGENCY, IRELAND

- 4.1 Luke introduced Stuart Hamilton (Head of Libraries Development, LGMA) to the group. Stuart updated the group on Ireland's new national library strategy, [The Library is the Place, 2023-2027](#). Consultation for the strategy resulted in three key areas of development. These were to 'Keep' books, customer service, buildings; to 'Do More' advertising, climate work, opening hours; and to 'Prioritise' young people, older people, and the Irish language.
- 4.2 The strategy is built on the themes of people, spaces, and connections; it has 66 separate actions; and three strategic enablers of data supported and user focussed design, marketing, and the library team.
- 4.3 The action plan includes a data dashboard, increasing opening hours, book spend per head, a capital programme for the library estate, the feasibility of a library owned ebooks platform, a new national network of Gigabit libraries to offer superfast internet services to users.
- 4.4 Stuart updated the group on the current situation in Ireland around challenging behaviour and groups opposing LGBTQ+ books and events. Stuart highlighted that the Irish Taoiseach has pledged his support to libraries concerning this matter. Staff training is in place and LGMA has produced standard operating guidance on how to deal with challenging behaviour.
- 4.5 Luke stated that Gigabit Libraries will be useful for the next iteration of The People's Network and that it will be useful to bring Scottish, Irish and Welsh colleagues together for knowledge-sharing. Isobel and Liz agreed about convening a group, in particular to discuss ideas around challenging behaviour and Every Child a Library Member.

4.6 ACTION: ACE TO LEAD ON CONVENING A UK LIBRARIES MEETING IN 2024.

**LUKE
BURTON /
ACE**

5. DATA UPDATE

- 5.1 Iain updated the group on the strand 1 data collection. There have been 99 returns to date and individual reports will be sent to these library services from November.
- 5.2 Luke informed the group that the ITT for the Discovery phase of the project has now closed and the panel meeting will take place within the next month. Contracts will be awarded and work is due to start by 1st December.
- 5.3 The group had a brief discussion around data being collected by the Office of Local Government (OfLoG). Lauren noted that LGA and the LGA Inform team are involved in discussions around this.

5.4 ACTION: OFLOG DATA TO BE ADDED AS A FUTURE AGENDA ITEM.

ACE

6 MEMBER UPDATES

6.1 LIBRARIES CONNECTED – ISOBEL HUNTER

- Publication of guidance dealing with disruptive behaviour
- Meetings have taken place with The National Theatre and The Hay Festival to bring content into libraries
- Cultural Commons – LC are now a partner in this work on cultural devolution
- The Regional Development Programme is now underway with Nick Partridge and Tabitha Witherwick in post as Regional Development Managers. Their role will be to develop regional and collaborative funding.
- Iain attended a conference in Dubrovnik around sustainable funding and how this can be applied to the ULOs
- Working on twinning with Ukrainian libraries and crowdfunding for a decommissioned mobile library for Ukraine.

6.2 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION – LAUREN LUCAS

- Joining a cultural devolution project and commissioning a number of think pieces on this
- Working on a show and tell event to bring together all data work in the cultural sector

- A cultural services carbon reduction route map is currently out to tender.

6.3 BRITISH LIBRARY – LIZ WHITE

- A new LKN fantasy exhibition is about to launch, which will include digital content
- Ukrainian books are being distributed to LKN libraries
- A LKN webinar around evidencing impact has been planned
- LibraryOn show and tell event

6.4 CILIP – SONIA RAMDHIAN

- Managing Safe and Inclusive Library Services guidance has now been published. This includes full resources, posters, and toolkits
- A successful Green Libraries Week took place in October, demonstrating the broad value of libraries.
- Libraries Rewired conference will take place on 10 November.

6.5 ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND – SOPHIE LANCASTER

- The Seeking and Securing Developer Contributions guidance will be published in November along with a webinar in December.

6.7 WAKEFIELD LIBRARIES – KATHRYN HARRISON

- The Know Your Neighbourhood project is now up and running.
- 2024 will be a Year of Culture in Wakefield and so planning is taking place for this.

6.8 SURREY LIBRARIES – SUE WILLS

- Currently working on linking a creative corridor to London and have buddied up with a virtual reality partner. Conversations have taken place with the council's economic development teams to build the role of libraries through the creative industries.

6.9 INSPIRE – SUE WELLS

- Work is taking place around rolling health care into libraries
- Have been awarded funding for Makaton training for staff which will help to develop the SEND programme of libraries

- The Credit Union are now part of the main library, offering a green account.

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7 AOB

- 7.1 The group discussed how EPL meetings can evolve from an operational focus to a strategic focus. Luke noted that the Theory of Change and workplan for the group should be reviewed as part of this.
- 7.2 **ACTION: ACE TO UPDATE EPL WORKPLAN AND ADD AS FUTURE AGENDA ITEM**

ACE

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

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