



Minutes

English Public Libraries Stakeholder Working Group (EPL)

Date	Tuesday 9 th February 2021
Time	14:00 – 16:00
Location	Virtual Meeting

Present:	Sue Williamson	Director, Libraries, Arts Council England (ACE) (Chair)
	Jenna Birley	Governance and Business Support Officer, Libraries, ACE (Minutes)
	Isobel Hunter	Chief Executive, Libraries Connected
	Sophie Lancaster	Senior Manager, Libraries, ACE
	Lauren Lucas	Advisor – Culture, Tourism and Sport, Local Government Association (LGA)
	Neil MacInnes	Head of Libraries, Galleries and Culture, Manchester City Council
	Nick Poole	Chief Executive, CILIP, The UK library and information association
	Liz White	Head of Public Libraries and Engagement, British Library (BL)
Apologies:	Prof. Steven Broomhead	Chief Executive, Warrington Borough Council
Guests:	Stuart Hamilton	
	Jonathan Robinson	

1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Action

- 1.1 Sue Williamson welcomed everyone to the meeting and members thanked Neil MacInnes for attending on behalf of the Heads of Service Sounding Board.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 2.1 There were no interests to declare.

3. FINANCIAL RESILIENCE UPDATE

- 3.1 Nick Poole provided an update on CILIP's financial resilience project. Members noted the reference group and independent review panel have been recruited.

- 3.2 The first meeting of the reference group will take place on 5th March 2021 where the draft brief to tender will be agreed. Nick Poole agreed to share the brief with the EPL members.

Nick Poole

- 3.3 Members were interested in the makeup of the review panel. Nick agreed to share the list of members with EPL.

Nick Poole

- 3.4 Members asked for an update on the project timeline. Nick agreed to circulate this information along with the draft brief.

Nick Poole

4. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION PRESENTATION – LOCAL AUTHORITY FUNDING

- 4.1 Lauren Lucas gave a presentation to EPL about the national funding situation for local government.

- 4.2 Members noted the principal issue for local authorities is the increased cost of adult social care and discussed the cross-cutting part libraries can play in helping the preventative agenda.

- 4.3 Lauren highlighted the key messages for the Local Government Association's priorities, including the central government funding for Covid-19, the reform of social care, and a multi-year spending review to give local authorities long term financial security.

- 4.4 Opportunities for the LGA according to central government's policy include:
- The levelling up
 - UKSPF

- Engaging with the NHS' 'prevention' agenda
- Positioning around economic renewal and skills

- 4.5 Members thanked Lauren for presenting and she agreed to circulate the presentation slides to the group.
- 4.6 EPL discussed the division of central government funding and the need for a greater distinction between capital and revenue funding. It was noted that local authorities often find it easier to secure capital funding than maintain revenue funds.
- 4.7 Members queried whether it would be useful to position libraries to help on the education catch up that will need to take place due to lost school hours during the pandemic. It was noted that libraries have a role to play in terms of educational policy and bridging the digital divide, though it may be difficult for them to do this as not all schools are run by the local authorities.
- 4.8 It was noted that libraries have been an essential part of local infrastructure during the pandemic. They are a cross-cutting service that can play a part in many local authority priority areas, including education, public health, upskilling and digital inclusion.

5. DATA

- 5.1 Sue Williamson provided an update to the group on several strands of work concerning data.
- 5.2 Sue outlined work concerning the basic dataset and informed members that conversations with DCMS regarding its publication were ongoing. She asked EPL members to consider how they wished to progress data collection and how to resource this in the future.
- 5.3 Sue provided an update on the open data project. Members noted there was a need to agree on what was meant by 'open data' and that there may be times when the information collected may not always have positive key messages.
- 5.4 Sue updated EPL on progress with the assessment strategy. Arts Council England's libraries team was in discussion with the research team to develop an invitation to tender. Sue agreed to circulate this to members when it was finalised. It will also be shared with the Heads of Service sounding board for their comments.
- 5.5 It was noted that some kind of standardised dataset would be required for the single digital presence work for scalability.

6 REPUBLIC OF IRELAND LIBRARIES UPDATE

(Stuart Hamilton joined the meeting)

- 6.1 Sue introduced Stuart Hamilton, Head of Libraries. Stuart presented the key projects being worked on in Ireland.
- 6.2 EPL were keen to discuss these projects further with Stuart outside of the meeting.
- 6.3 Stuart agreed to circulate his presentation to EPL members.

(Stuart Hamilton left the meeting)

7. CIVIC DATA PRESENTATION

(Jonathan Robinson joined the meeting)

- 7.1 Sue introduced Jonathan Robinson who updated EPL on CIVIC's work on data.
- 7.2 Jonathan discussed questions given in advance and invited further questions from the group.
- 7.3 After discussion, members felt more clarity was needed regarding how any potential partnership would work and invited Jonathan to discuss further with them outside of the meeting if necessary.

(Jonathan Robinson left the meeting)

8. ACCREDITATION UPDATE

- 8.1 Isobel Hunter provided an update on the Libraries Connected's work on accreditation.
- 8.2 The Project Manager and Shared Intelligence have progressed to planning phase two. They have had discussions with key stakeholders and kept library sector members up to date by publishing an interim report and blog.
- 8.3 Isobel informed EPL that the LGA will be taking a full seat on the Accreditation Board and that staff from ACE will be supporting the project when required.
- 8.4 Libraries Connected have two reference group sessions planned for February 2021 and are working on establishing the reporting schedule.

They have also developed a comprehensive risk register which will be overseen by the project board.

8.5 Isobel informed members that Libraries Connected hoped to complete phase two by November 2021.

9. EPL

9.1 Sue Williamson asked EPL for their views on the future of the group and how to continue discussions in the future. She agreed to circulate some thoughts on the subject outside of the meeting for feedback.

10 AOB

10.1 Sue Williamson provided the following updates to members:

- Sue had redrafted the high-level strategy document and would circulate to members for comments and agreement on the headline statements
- The joint CML position statement had been redrafted and circulated. Members were to note that it could be used in relation to reactionary messaging on CMLs.

10.2 Nick Poole informed EPL that CILIP had crowdfunded an initiative to map the UK Library workforce according to diversity. They have partnered with several organisations to conduct the work.

Date and location of next meeting: Tuesday 20th April 2021, 14:00 – 16:00, Virtual Meeting