The Libraries Taskforce Closure Report

Foreword

The Libraries Taskforce was set up in 2015 to bring library sector organisations and important partners together to work through how library services might think and act differently to transform what they offered and how they promoted themselves. The Taskforce stepped up to meet that challenge by producing *Libraries Deliver: Ambition for public libraries 2016 to 2021,* the first public libraries strategy endorsed by both central and local government. That document articulated the wide range of strategic objectives that library services can and do support, demonstrating that they are an asset, rather than a cost, and challenged both central and local government to think and act differently to transform library services. That powerful document, and the activities that the Taskforce followed through with created a stronger profile for the library sector than it had ever had before.

Through its advocacy the Taskforce helped to bring significant extra funding into the sector; for example, free wi-fi being made available in all public library branches across England, 30 projects across 46 local authorities in England backed through the Libraries: Opportunities for Everyone fund, the creation of the Libraries Transformation Fund (part of the wider Cultural Infrastructure Fund announced in 2019) and Budget funding to extend the British Library's network of Business and Intellectual Property Centres supporting start-ups and SMEs in public libraries across the nation.

The Taskforce also led the way in identifying, developing and sharing good practice – through its range of useful toolkits, backed up by a programme of regular free masterclasses, and its well-regarded blog. It has brought many people and organisations together, within and beyond the public libraries sector, to explore new projects and possibilities.

We both strongly believe that libraries change lives for the better, by providing access to books and so much more; they help people to help themselves and improve their opportunities, bring people together, and provide practical support and guidance. As a locally accountable service, they are well-placed to respond to local needs and issues.

Individuals, communities and the nation as a whole face challenging times ahead, and we believe that libraries can play an important role in helping people through these. As you can see from reading this report, the Taskforce has laid strong foundations for future collaboration to develop library services and make the case for their value. But financial and demographic challenges continue to increase, and the way people use libraries and their expectations of public services are constantly changing. Libraries have responded admirably to date, but will need to continue to adapt just as effectively for the future.

We welcome this document; thank all those involved in the Taskforce work over the years for their efforts and achievements; and fully support the sector as it moves into the future.

Caroline Dinenage MP
Minister for Digital and Culture

Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson
Chair, Culture, Tourism and Sport Board
Local Government Association

Executive Summary

Steven Broomhead, Chair of the Libraries Taskforce

Since the start of the Libraries Taskforce in 2015, a substantial amount of investment has been secured in public libraries, including the Libraries Wifi Fund (£3 million awarded to provide free Wifi in public libraries) and the Libraries: Opportunities for Everyone Innovation Fund (a £3.9 million fund awarded to 46 library services for specific projects).

The Taskforce has worked hard to promote 'Libraries First' and this has resulted in a higher profile for public libraries across government. The Taskforce's work has been included in government strategy documents such as the UK Digital Skills strategy and A Connected Society: a strategy for tackling loneliness.

Stronger working partnerships have been established between organisations in the library sector driving towards a vibrant, thriving and world-class public library network in England as set out in our Action Plan.

The Action Plan included delivering workshops for the sector covering topics such as income generation and strategic planning and producing toolkits to help the sector's development. We've also explored the ways that data is captured and how this might be best used.

Libraries Connected led the pilot phase of the regional support programme which is supporting 5 regional networks to develop their ability to deliver strategic collaborations and is also providing 3 individual library services with expert consultancy support to tackle specific challenges.

I'm pleased to say that Arts Council England will be co-ordinating the core delivery organisations (CILIP, Libraries Connected, British Library and the LGA), to build on the achievements of the Libraries Taskforce so far, which are due in no small part to the result of effective collaborative working between all partners. This focus will include bringing together the current fragmented service approach and how financial resilience for the library sector can be achieved. Working with some Heads of Library Service we will test and deliver on issues important to the sector, and we'll regularly update on our activities.

Contents

1. Context

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (now the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, DCMS) and the Department for Communities and local government (now the Ministry of Housing, Communities and local government, MHCLG) jointly commissioned William Sieghart CBE to lead an advisory panel to investigate how the public library system in England could continue to thrive in the future.

The Independent Library Report for England was published in December 2014 and contained several recommendations for central government about the provision of public library services. The recommendations included that central and local government should jointly establish a library taskforce, led by local government, in partnership with others interested in the sector, which would report to ministers via the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Local Government Association (LGA) as co-sponsors.

In addition to the two co-sponsors, the Taskforce included the main library sector organisations, important partner organisations, and representation from councils across England. This was a new approach to delivering library development in England, by creating a collaborative national forum where key organisations involved in supporting the delivery of public library services were able to share information and engage jointly in a range of development initiatives. The Taskforce was supported by a small, focused team with expertise in policy, partnerships and communications. This structure allowed the Taskforce to respond rapidly to changes in the public library landscape and work with Taskforce member organisations to capitalise on opportunities as they arose in local and central government.

The main objectives identified for the Taskforce were:

1. To support the creation of a national digital library network

2. To respond to the outcomes of the e-lending pilots and continue to work with publishers, libraries and others to secure the adoption of the models supported by the pilots

3. To encourage and develop the library workforce and especially new recruits and graduates

4. To develop sector-led best practice guidelines to help local authorities when working with volunteers and community-led libraries

The Libraries Taskforce met for the first time in March 2015 and, after a period of consultation, developed the strategy for public libraries Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016-21 and the associated Action Plan which was published in 2016. This covered how the Taskforce aimed to help the public library sector, based around 7 strategic outcomes and agreed actions, and issued challenges both to central and local government. The Taskforce has been chaired by a Chief Executive from Local Government and new member bodies have joined over time as priorities have changed. Information about the organisations represented on the Taskforce over the period 2015-20 is set out in Appendix 1.

In its Action Plan, the Taskforce Identified 25 Action Plan Actions (APAs), grouped under the 7 Outcomes for the sector, and within these it identified 9 Priority Actions which have provided the focus for Taskforce activities and the primary benchmarks for its progress. This was in order to prioritise resources and focus the collective effort of Taskforce members against those actions which were felt to be most important for the sector over the next 5 years. There is a brief

assessment of progress against all 25 APAs in Appendix 2 of this document; however the focus of the main text of this report will be the 9 priority actions.

The 9 Priority Actions were:

1. Ensure that the 'libraries first' approach is promoted to central government, local councils and partners as part of future advocacy activities and develop a programme aimed at supporting library staff to do this themselves (APA 1)

2. Define and publish a core data set (APA 2)

3. Establish current baselines and agree progress indicators for all 7 outcomes and publish them (APA 3)

4. Work with others to develop a joined-up programme of promotional activity based on commonly agreed positive messages, to promote public awareness of what public libraries can do for people, and increase engagement with public libraries (APA 6)

5. Publish guidance on how to conduct an evidence-based mapping and planning exercise, based on established sector good practice and case studies and the 7 design principles (APA 10)

6. Ensure that the projects delivered through the £4.3 million Life Chances funding from DCMS:

   o Support those people living in the most disadvantaged areas, providing them with opportunities they might not otherwise have access to

   o Are robustly evaluated to build an evidence base that can be used to secure investment and scale up the most successful projects (APA 12)

7. Develop and promote a sector-led benchmarking framework that libraries can choose to use for self-assessment, planning and improvement (APA 13)

8. Work with the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) and the Society of Chief Librarians (SCL, now Libraries Connected) to produce a Public Library Skills Strategy. (APA 19)

9. Explore the development of a shared national digital platform for public libraries in England (Single Library Digital Presence) and then identify ways to develop, operate and fund it. (APA 20)

Progress against the 9 Priority Actions were monitored in the Taskforce's Six-Monthly Progress Reports. In addition to these 9 Priority Actions, the Ambition Action Plan set out 6 challenges to central government and 12 challenges to local government. A brief assessment of progress against these challenges is also provided in Appendix 2.

2. Summary of activities and progress

Priority Action 1:

Ensure that the 'libraries first' approach is promoted to central government, local councils and partners as part of future advocacy activities and develop a programme aimed at supporting library staff to do this themselves (Action Plan Action (APA 1)

Progress against action:

- the Taskforce team worked with a range of government departments to ensure the inclusion of public libraries in the following government strategy documents

    o Integrated Communities Strategy green paper

    o UK Digital Skills strategy

    o Culture White Paper

    o Culture is Digital

    o A Connected Society: a strategy for tackling loneliness

    o Internet Safety Strategy green paper (white paper called Online Harms)

    o Civil society strategy

- public libraries were also involved in the Department for Education's Hungry Little Minds campaign

- there was a range of direct communication to Local Authority Chief Executives, about the development of communications and planning tools, such as the Libraries shaping the future: good practice toolkit (2015), which aimed to support senior staff in libraries to promote the value of their service to a range of stakeholders and a strategic planning toolkit (2017) (see more detail against APA10). In addition the Taskforce presented at the LGA's Culture, Tourism and Sport Conferences in 2016, 2017 and 2018. The 2018 conference also saw the launch of the LGA's Councillor Handbook on 'Delivering local solutions for public libraries'.

- as a result of this work public libraries have been included in a range of policy initiatives by local and regional government and in the plans and activities of a wide range of other organisations (see section 3.3 of this report for more detail)

Priority Action 2:

Define and publish a core data set (APA 2)

Progress against action:

- a draft core dataset was published on GOV.UK in July 2017. The Taskforce also supported various pieces of work being undertaken across the sector to explore the potential for libraries to adopt an Open Data approach – for example by sponsoring the Voyage of the Data Treader workshops in November 2017 and March 2019.

- this work was revisited in August 2019 in a workshop held with Taskforce members, front-line library practitioners and data experts. Following this work 3 sector practitioners volunteered to work together to develop a draft schema and definitions. A wider group of library services tested this during January 2020. The next steps will be to draw up guidance and run workshops across the country to raise awareness of the new schema and encourage its use and iteration. This work will be undertaken by DCMS.

Priority Action 3:

Establish current baselines and agree progress indicators for all 7 outcomes and publish them (APA 3)

Progress against action:

- the baselines and progress indicators for the 7 outcomes in Ambition were published in November 2017

- further analysis of progress against these indicators can be found in the 1 page summaries for each indicator in Section 3.7 of this report

- ongoing measurement has not yet been implemented across the sector; however there is anecdotal evidence that the indicators have been used locally by decision-makers

Priority Action 4:

Work with others to develop a joined-up programme of promotional activity based on commonly agreed positive messages, to promote public awareness of what public libraries can do for people, and increase engagement with public libraries (APA 6)

Progress against action:

- the Taskforce set up several channels through which information could be shared, including a blog, Twitter and Flickr account and dedicated pages on the GOV.UK website

- a communications sub-group was established in March 2016 and included communications representatives from the Taskforce member organisations. It developed programmes of communications activity, materials and protocols to help promote the main themes of Ambition, and to support more collaborative approaches between Taskforce partners to reinforce core messages. Since January 2019, communications activity has been coordinated by the Arts Council's Libraries Taskforce Communications Manager – more detail on completed, current and future activities can be found in sections 3.6 and section 4 of this report

- the sector now works more closely on joint communications activities e.g. the shared library calendar co-ordinated by Libraries Connected. However public awareness of, engagement with and attitudes to public libraries have not been consistently monitored and therefore it is difficult to know what the full impact of this work has been.

Priority Action 5:

Publish guidance on how to conduct an evidence-based mapping and planning exercise, based on established sector good practice and case studies and the 7 design principles (APA 10)

Progress against action:

- a strategic planning toolkit was published in August 2017 to encourage and help library services to undertake, or contribute to, a robust, objective and evidence-based analysis of local need as a basis for developing a strategy to deliver a library service that will best meet the needs of their local communities. This has been used by DCMS as part of its statutory guidance to Local Authorities and has influenced the focus of library strategy development; for example, the 7 Outcomes have been used in some library service strategies

Priority Action 6:

Ensure that the projects delivered through the £4.3 million Life Chances funding from DCMS:

  o *support those people living in the most disadvantaged areas, providing them with opportunities they might not otherwise have access to*

  o *are robustly evaluated to build an evidence base that can be used to secure investment and scale up the most successful projects (APA 12)*

Progress against action:

- the Libraries: Opportunities for Everyone innovation fund (LOFE) was launched in December 2016. Its primary aim was to enable library services to trial innovative projects that would benefit disadvantaged people and places in England. Managed by Arts Council England, the £3.9 million fund awarded grants of between £50,000 and £250,000 to 30 projects across 46 library services in March 2017(APA 12)

- an independent evaluation of LOFE by Traverse showed that library services were able to invest in high value equipment and resources, support staff through training, and market their libraries to local communities. Services were also able to embed digital or more inclusive practices within their wider service offer. So that other library services could learn from LOFE, the report also provided a range of insights into the design and delivery of innovative activities in libraries including recommendations to improve delivery and performance

Priority Action 7:

Develop and promote a sector-led benchmarking framework that libraries can choose to use for self-assessment, planning and improvement (APA 13)

Progress against action:

- a sector-led benchmarking framework for library services (APA 13), published in September 2017, was designed with the sector to support library services to develop their organisational capability to achieve enhanced and sustainable positive outcomes for the communities they serve. It provided support for a 'journey' of improvement across all aspects of the library service and its work (underpinned by self-assessment)

- 2 workshops were held to introduce the framework to heads of service and the elements included within it. The sessions included introductions from council Chief Executives explaining why this work was important

- this toolkit has been adopted less widely than the others by the sector, possibly because it requires a new way of working which library teams may be less familiar with and require support to implement Feedback also suggested that there was limited time available to heads of service to plan their use of the toolkit and that

external support was needed to create this time and space to reflect on the service. However, this feedback influenced the later design of the library peer challenges and the new regional support offer from Libraries Connected, which should support wider adoption of this type of approach in relation to the new accreditation process that is being developed

Priority Action 8:

Work with the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) and the Society of Chief Librarians (SCL, now Libraries Connected) to produce a Public Library Skills Strategy. (APA 19)

Progress against action:

- the Public Libraries Skills Strategy (PLSS) was first published in 2017 and is now being refreshed to respond to the rapidly changing skills and profile of the sector, with publication due in 2021

  o the PLSS paved the way for a national mentoring programme, Employer Partnership scheme and a revised ethical framework and diversity and equality plan for the library and information profession

- in 2018 CILIP won approval for a level 3 Apprenticeship standard for the library and information profession and, since then, work has been undertaken to facilitate the implementation of the standard into library services. Arts Council England funded Libraries Connected to run a series of three one-day workshops in Birmingham, Manchester and London from January-March 2020 to explore the apprenticeship process and how it could benefit library staff

Priority Action 9:

Explore the development of a shared national digital platform for public libraries in England (Single Digital Presence) and then identify ways to develop, operate and fund it. (APA 20)

Progress against action:

- the Society of Chief Librarians (now Libraries Connected) published a [report](), delivered by BiblioCommons, on the potential for a Single Digital Library Presence (SDLP) in January 2016. The Taskforce established a SDLP Steering Group to take forward this project, which commissioned the British Library to develop Alpha models for testing with the sector

- in June 2019 the recommendations paper, ['Digital Transformations for UK public libraries: five approaches to a 'Single Digital Presence'](), set out what a national online platform (or "single digital presence") for public libraries could look like, what it could be used for and how such an offering might fit in with existing digital library systems

- further development work is now being funded by Arts Council England and Carnegie UK Trust. The British Library team will report on this work before March 2021 outlining proposals and next steps

3. Achievements of the Libraries Taskforce

The Libraries Taskforce has achieved a range of significant outcomes across a number of strands of activity over its 5 year lifespan, some of which are captured in the summary tables above and some of which extends more broadly across the sector and beyond.

This section of the report provides a narrative review of the Taskforce's achievements, viewed holistically under the following broad activity areas:

3.1 Strategy

3.2 Funding

3.3 Promoting a "libraries first" approach across public policy

3.4 Sector development

3.5 Communications and advocacy

3.6 Research and data collection

3.7 Impact of the Taskforce's activities and ways of working

The Taskforce took a strategic and methodical approach to its activity: initially, consulting extensively with the sector and members of the public before publishing its major strategy document: Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England and then, focussing its activities under the 7 Strategic Outcome areas to which public libraries contribute, which were identified in that document.

The individual member organisations of the Libraries Taskforce each achieved impressive outcomes and progressed the development of public libraries on their own account over the time that the Taskforce was extant. Where these achievements and initiatives were particularly relevant to the aims of the Taskforce and supported and amplified by the Taskforce's communications and policy promotion activities, they are noted under each of these headings. However this report does not constitute an exhaustive list of their activities and achievements over this period. The 6 monthly progress reports provide more detail on these.

3.1 Strategy

Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016-2021 and the Action Plan for Public Libraries

One of the first activities that the Libraries Taskforce undertook was a wide-ranging review of existing strategy documents and sector and public engagement to understand the contribution that public libraries make to communities and to public policy priorities.

The consultation programme which supported the development of Ambition included:

- 13 workshops with public library staff and stakeholders

- 1 LGA hosted session with Local Authority Councillors and attendance at LGA conferences

- 300 Individual conversations with members of the public, stakeholders and staff

- 12 fact-finding visits to different libraries across England

- 181 responses to an online questionnaire from members of the public including lapsed/non users of public libraries, some on behalf of groups

- 38 email/letter/blog responses from members of the public including lapsed/non users of public libraries, some on behalf of groups

Following on from this engagement process, the Taskforce developed a strategy document to guide its activities and articulate the contribution that public libraries can and do make to helping central and local government achieve against 7 strategic Outcomes. Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England was published on 1 December 2016. It was designed to build on existing good practice, and to help highlight the benefits of public library services to central and local government decision makers and other potential partners about the benefits and purpose of public libraries.

This was the first strategy to be endorsed by central and local government and it has been integrated into individual library service and other national strategy documents. Ambition has been used extensively for advocacy work, within and beyond central and local government. The outcomes of this are set out in section 3.3 of this report.

The Ambition document set out 7 Strategic Outcomes. The articulation of the 7 Strategic Outcomes has appeared within many library services' individual strategy documents and has frequently been used to illustrate the range of work undertaken by a modern library service. For example, Libraries Connected referenced the 7 Strategic Outcomes in its review of its Universal Offers in 2019 and illustrated how the 4 new Universal Offers mapped across to them.

The publication of Ambition was followed by 4 sector forums held in Newcastle, London, Bristol and Birmingham in January 2017 which were attended by around 350 people. The main themes of Ambition were discussed, and the attendees had the opportunity to quiz Taskforce members in a panel session and also to hear directly from the then Libraries Minister, John Glen MP, about how he would be supporting the sector in the future. Articles about Ambition and its aims were published in publications read by decision-makers (such as the LGA 'first' magazine for councillors).

In addition to the publication of Ambition, the Libraries Taskforce has supported and promoted national strategy development among Taskforce member organisations. In particular, the following strategic initiatives are anticipated to have a notable impact on the library sector going forward and to build on and incorporate the work undertaken by the Taskforce over the past 5 years:

Arts Council England 10 Year Strategy

In January 2020, Arts Council England published Let's Create – its strategy for 2020-2030. For nearly 2 years, the Arts Council consulted with the arts and cultural sector and communities across the country to enable it to create a strategy that celebrates and supports the creativity of everyone, wherever they live and whatever their background. Libraries are sitting at the heart of the strategy – as places that are inclusive of everybody and where everybody can experience the arts and culture that forms and transforms communities.

The strategy's delivery plan has been delayed by Covid-19 but in 2021 the Arts Council will publish the first delivery plan that will include a set of priorities and detail how it intends to deliver the strategy for the period 2021-24.

Libraries Connected Universal Offers

Libraries Connected, which is funded as an Arts Council Sector Support Organisation, launched its refreshed Universal Library Offers in 2019. The 6 revised offers are reading; digital and information; culture and creativity, health and wellbeing, the Children's Promise and the Six Steps Promise.

The new offers were announced after an 8-month independent review, carried out by Shared Intelligence. This involved extensive discussion with heads of service, library staff, funders and other key stakeholders. The review confirmed that the Universal Offers have been welcomed by libraries and funders over the last 6 years. They provided a powerful strategic tool to demonstrate the core impacts libraries make, and have supported partnership development and funding applications. The review has now streamlined them into a simplified structure. A range of planning tools will help library services show how their activities link to the strategic outcomes of their councils, funders and other key stakeholders.

During the Universal Offers review there was extensive consultation with the Libraries Taskforce members about the relationship of the Universal Offers and the 7 Strategic Outcomes. The Universal Offers describe the range of services and approaches that libraries provide, while the 7 Strategic Outcomes describe the difference these activities make to communities. The final refreshed Universal Offers were explicitly mapped against the 7 Strategic Outcomes.

In July 2020, the Arts Council made some changes to its National Lottery Project Grants programme to enable libraries to apply to deliver work based around the 6 Universal Offers. This will enable support for libraries to improve and to deliver work against their core aims and objectives. It can, and should, be game changing for libraries. Due to the explicit link between the Universal Offers and the 7 Strategic Outcomes, this will embed the Outcomes in a major national funding structure.

3.2 Funding

The Libraries Taskforce has directly supported the achievement of over £19.6 million of funding for public libraries from a variety of sources, in support of a range of outcomes identified in the Ambition document.

The first section below sets out the key funding streams achieved with the direct support of the Taskforce. The second section sets out other funding that was made available to the sector through Taskforce member organisations during its period of operation. For this second category of funding, the Taskforce was actively involved in promoting the opportunities to the sector and leveraging policy engagement from government departments, funders and other interested parties.

Funding secured with direct support of the Libraries Taskforce

£100,000
£2,600,000
£3,900,000
£13,000,000

- Libraries Opportunity for Everyone Fund
- Wifi in public libraries fund
- BIPC network expansion
- New approaches to building digital skills
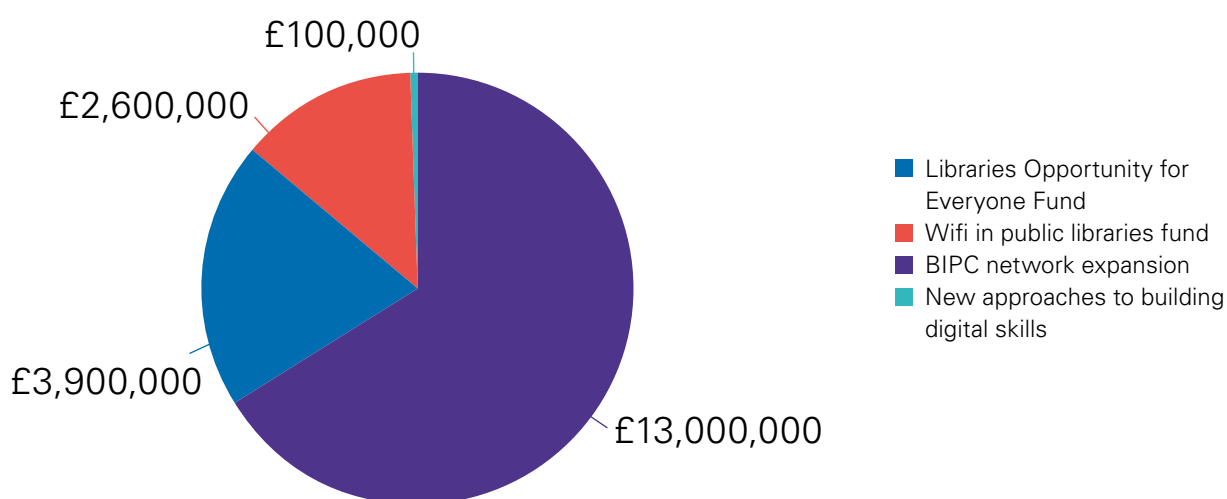
Funding supported and promoted by the Libraries Taskforce

£2,470,000   £450,000

£744,674

£6,400,000

- Enterprising Libraries
- Library NPO funding
- National Lottery Project Grants
- Grant in Aid Development Budget
- Start Ups in London Libraries

£13,301,037
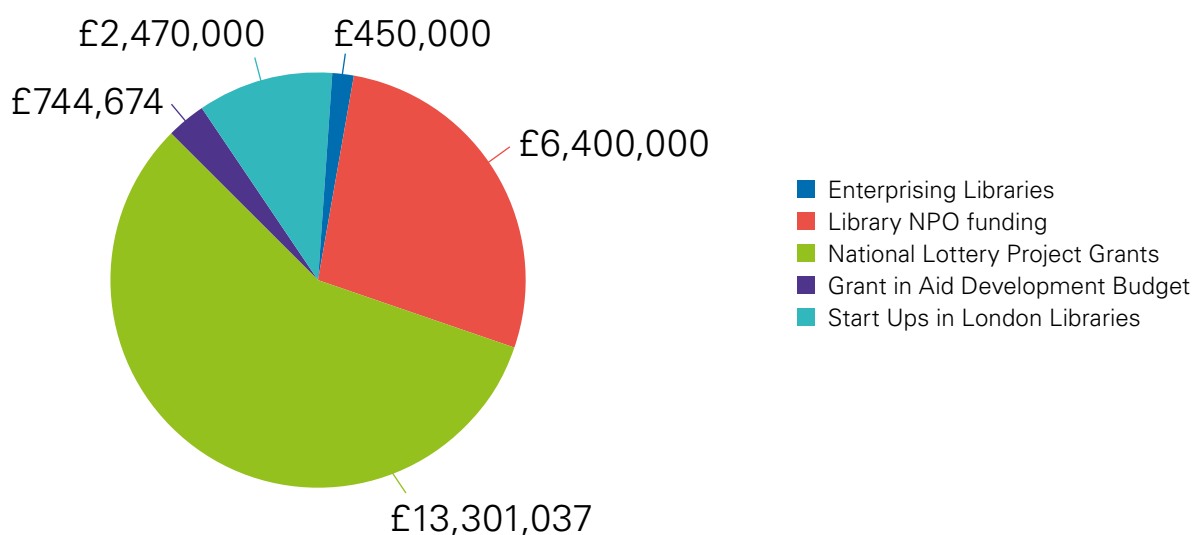
Funding achieved with the direct support of the Libraries Taskforce

Digital Enablement

The Taskforce helped to achieve funding in the 2015 Budget to enable universal Wifi coverage in public libraries in England. This programme helped support online access for those people who were digitally excluded and increased opportunities for libraries to deliver a wider range of services. Through the fund, (managed by Arts Council England) £2.6 million was spent on installing or upgrading Wifi, so that over 99% of libraries in England offered this vital facility by April 2016. This has underpinned the positioning of public libraries in the UK Digital Strategy as the 'go-to' place for digital access and skills training. An evaluation of the programme was undertaken and published.

On 27 July 2015, the Taskforce in partnership with the Tinder Foundation, announced funding of £100,000 to pilot new approaches to building digital skills in socially excluded, hard to reach groups. This action research

pilot on digital inclusion ran between 1 October 2015 and 31 March 2016, targeted at libraries that already had Wifi installed.

Helping disadvantaged groups

The Libraries: Opportunities for Everyone innovation fund (LOFE) was launched in December 2016, alongside the Ambition document. Its primary aim was to enable library services to trial innovative projects that would benefit disadvantaged people and places in England. Managed by Arts Council England, the £3.9 million fund awarded grants of between £50,000 and £250,000 to 30 projects across 46 library services in March 2017 (APA 12).

An independent evaluation of LOFE by Traverse showed that library services were able to invest in high value equipment and resources, support staff through training, and market their libraries to local communities. Services were also able to embed digital or more inclusive practices within their wider service offer. So that other library services could learn from LOFE, the report

also provided a range of insights into the design and delivery of innovative activities in libraries including recommendations to improve delivery and performance. A separate Projects Information Booklet was published outlining the aims, activities and impacts of each individual project. Infographics providing an overview of the LOFE fund and illustrated some of the impacts of the projects.

Libraries Improvement Fund

In October 2019 DCMS announced the Cultural Investment Fund, which, at the time, was the biggest investment in culture for a generation. This will be invested in a range of heritage and cultural projects, including an element for libraries focused on upgrading buildings and technology so public libraries across England are better placed to respond to the changing ways people are using them.

Arts Council England will be managing the fund which includes a Libraries Transformation Fund which will be focused on upgrading buildings and technology so public libraries across England are better placed to respond to the changing ways people are using them. The fund will be launched in early 2021.

Taskforce budget supported external activities

The Taskforce worked with a lean budget of c.£500,000 per annum, however, it invested £195,000 over 5 years into sector delivered activities including:

- £54,650 to commission the development of a business case for makerspaces, business support services and the Every Child a Library Member initiative in public libraries
- £32,000 to support Libraries Connected to join the Assisted Digital and Digital Inclusion procurement frameworks allowing public libraries to bid for government contracts
- £30,000 to support the Public Libraries Skills Strategy Refresh

- £30,000 to support a joint communications strategy for Libraries Connected and CILIP
- £31,000 for Libraries Connected's Regional Support Offer in 2021

Wherever possible the Taskforce conducted workshops and training events in public library spaces and paid hire fees to library services for their facilities.

Other funding offered by Libraries Taskforce member organisations and supported by the Libraries Taskforce

Business support

Arts Council England, along with the British Library and DCLG, developed the Enterprising Libraries programme which was funded with £450,000 from the 3 organisations. This initiative, which ran from April 2013 – March 2015, helped 10 libraries establish hubs in their buildings for small businesses and entrepreneurs. This activity was the start of the Business and Intellectual Property Centres network (BIPC) set up by the British Library. This work continues to be supported via Arts Council England and the British Library, and has proved to be successful in democratising entrepreneurship by supporting a diverse range of entrepreneurs to start up and grow businesses.

The BIPC has enabled a range of initiatives to take place, from Start Up Days to partnership with non-profit organisation Make it Your Business to launch a national roadshow of informal talks and networking events for women entrepreneurs, set to tour in UK libraries.

In May 2019, the British Library's Business & IP Centre launched Start-ups in London Libraries, a three-year project to support London's entrepreneurs from all walks of life to get their business idea off the ground. This project is support by funding from Arts Council England. This coordinated network of free support for start-ups officially launched in over 60 public libraries in September 2019,

in partnership with ten London boroughs. In the March 2020 Budget, Treasury extended the number of hubs, but also accelerated the development of the hub and spoke model, bringing BIPC resources out into more high street locations across the country.

Arts Council England funding

The public library sector has been supported through two separate funding strands by Arts Council England as the National Library Development Agency.

6 public library services (London Borough of Barking and Dagenham, Inspire Nottinghamshire, Community and Cultural Services Cambridgeshire, Suffolk Libraries, Libraries Unlimited (Devon) and St Helens Council Library Service) have joined Arts Council England's National Portfolio, as has Libraries Connected, as a Sector Support Organisation. This represents an investment of £2 million per year over 2018-23.

Public libraries are also eligible to apply for National Lottery Project Grants. In 2018/19 138 projects involving public libraries were successful through this fund, representing a 67% success rate compared with an average across all art forms of 53%.The total investment from April 2011 to October 2019 through the Arts Council's National Lottery funded Grants for the Arts and Project Grants programmes amounts to £13,301,037.

In addition, the Arts Council's Director: Libraries manages a Grant in Aid Development Budget which was £744,674 in 2018/19. Investment from the Arts Council from this budget has enabled the development of partnership work:

- the Single Digital Presence project, in partnership with the British Library and Carnegie UK Trust (APA 20)

- sector Peer reviews, in partnership with the Local Government Association

- supporting the Living Knowledge Network, a UK-wide partnership of national and public libraries who share ideas and spark connections between libraries, their collections and their people

- expansion of the BIPC network through Start Ups in London Libraries, in partnership with the British Library and funding of the "Democratising Entrepreneurship" report

- sharing best practice nationally and internationally, in partnership with Libraries Connected and CILIP which reports on the success of the BIPCs

- supporting library services to understand planning guidance, in partnership with the National Archive

- delivery of workshops for library staff to develop expertise in fundraising

- leadership and research programmes, such as South East Libraries Touring report, the BIPC Centre report with the British Library

- investigating accreditation for the sector, in partnership with Libraries Connected and CILIP

- Keeping Performances Live, South Western Regional Library Services CIO (SWRLS), hosted a national seminar on performing arts collections provision

- Refreshing Arts Council England's working agreement with The National Archives

3.3 Promoting a libraries first approach across public policy

The Taskforce regularly met with various government departments to highlight the value of libraries and the work they do to support policy agendas, such as helping disadvantaged groups. This resulted in a greater appreciation and awareness of the value of libraries to communities in government and the inclusion of public libraries in the following government strategy documents:

- Integrated Communities Strategy green paper
- UK Digital Skills strategy
- Culture White Paper
- Culture is Digital
- A Connected Society: a strategy for tackling loneliness
- Internet Safety Strategy green paper (white paper called Online Harms)
- Civil society strategy

Some examples of the way in which public libraries were included in these government strategies include:

- the Internet Safety Green paper consultation acknowledged that public libraries offer a trusted source of information, both on and offline for many, and noted that several libraries and sector organisations responded to the consultation
- the Taskforce is represented on 3 delivery groups taking the Digital Skills Strategy forward on behalf of the Digital Skills partnership
- the strategy for tackling loneliness mentioned the 2018 Libraries Week, which covered loneliness issues as part of its wellbeing theme. It also noted that Taskforce masterclasses on evaluation and measuring the impact of library services would cover the proposed new loneliness

measure, to improve evidence and understanding of the important role that libraries play in preventing individuals from feeling lonely

In addition to contributing to and securing recognition of public libraries in a range of published policy papers, the Taskforce team supported the thinking and development of a range of government campaigns and initiatives, including:

- ensuring public libraries were central to the delivery planning of the Department for Education's Hungry Little Minds campaign. The Department of Education consulted with the DCMS Libraries team to create a working group to support the Hungry Little Minds campaign and members of the Taskforce contributed to that working group
- the Taskforce contributed to the DfE's work on changing behaviour to help promote early language and literacy development through the home learning environment (HLE). In November 2019, the Education Secretary hosted a summit bringing together nearly 100 businesses, charities and public-sector organisations designed to discuss how best to support parents with learning at home. DCMS and Arts Council England helped ensure that public libraries were represented at this event, and that they were involved in the next stages of developing this initiative. Following this event, ASCEL updated a statement about its Early Years Offer to help contribute to thinking on the next steps
- the DCMS Libraries Team is on the Cross Government Digital Inclusion Steering Group, contributing to thinking on Local Digital Skills partnerships. The team led a session in January 2020 focussing on the contribution that public libraries can and do make to this agenda, alongside Leeds Council who talked about the digital inclusion work being led by its library service

- the Taskforce team engaged with MHCLG on the establishment of the High Streets Taskforce, and with the organisation currently delivering it, to reinforce the role of libraries in its future work. Libraries Connected is the sector body represented on the Taskforce and it has reported progress updates to Taskforce meetings

In addition, significant policy work was undertaken in DCMS in relation to libraries over this period, including:

- in 2019 DCMS revised the information available on GOV.UK about its statutory superintendence role. This information, used in conjunction with the Taskforce resources, will help to guide and support library services considering major changes to their delivery model

- extending the Public Lending Right to e-books and e-audio books in 2018 (see more information on this in section 3.4 of this report, *Infrastructure Development*)

- in 2018 DCMS libraries team laid in Parliament a statutory instrument, signed by the Libraries Minister, to ensure that UK-resident authors will remain eligible to register for the Public Lending Right (PLR) when the UK leaves the EU

The All Party Parliamentary Group for Libraries (APPG Libraries)

CILIP sought to align the APPG Libraries' programme with the Taskforce's work where relevant.

In November 2017 the APPG Libraries held a roundtable to investigate Creating the Library of the Future. Panel members included the British Library and CILIP, alongside other organisations such as Arup, Carnegie UK Trust, and the James Reckitt Trust. Areas of discussion included the changing needs of individuals and communities due to societal and technological change, the economic potential of public libraries, and the impact of new delivery and funding models. Questions

focused on the role and importance of library staff, the financial challenges facing libraries and local authorities, and defining the 'library mission'.

CILIP worked with the Society of Chief Librarians (now Libraries Connected) and the Taskforce to co-ordinate a Libraries All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG Libraries) event at the House of Lords on 31 January 2017. Speakers included Lord Tope, the then new Chair of the APPG Libraries Gill Furniss MP, Minister for Civil Society Rob Wilson MP and the then Children's Laureate Chris Riddell.

The APPG supported the launch of the Summer Reading Challenge in July 2018. It launched Libraries Week together with CILIP in October 2018 with a reception in the State Rooms of the Speaker's House in the House of Commons. The speakers included Libraries Minister Michael Ellis MP, Chair of the Libraries Taskforce Professor Steven Broomhead, Chair of the Libraries APPG Gill Furniss MP and CILIP Chief Executive Nick Poole. Rishi Sunak MP, then Minister for Local Government, was also in attendance.

Local government

Over the period 2015-20 the Taskforce team visited around 90 local library services in England, and over 300 branches. At a local level, the Taskforce has helped heads of library services articulate the contribution that libraries can make to corporate objectives and engage more effectively with Chief Executives and Council leaders.

- the Taskforce Chief Executive contributed to a meeting of the Westminster City Council's Children, Sport & Leisure Policy and Scrutiny Committee on 28 November 2016. The committee was interested to hear about the Taskforce's work. It asked for contributions to some further work it was planning to undertake to review library provision in the Borough via a local Libraries Commission it proposed to set up and which has now been established

- the Taskforce had a stand at the Local Government Authority's Culture Tourism and Sport Conference in Hull in 2018 and in Bristol in 2017, which provided an opportunity to promote the Taskforce's work to senior decision-makers across local government

- sessions which featured libraries and introduced senior local government leaders to their work took place at the LGA's annual conference Innovation Zone. For example, at the Innovation Zone at the Local Government Association's 2017 annual conference, attended by leading politicians and officials in local government, Storyhouse, a library, theatre and cinema complex based in Chester, presented its work. In 2018 Norfolk and Somerset libraries ran sessions at the same event, and Redbridge and West Suffolk in 2019

- the Taskforce team also attended the Conference of Chief Cultural and Leisure Officers (CCLOA) in 2016-18, highlighting the value of libraries to the cultural offer among these key local government officers

- the Taskforce Team and its chairs have spoken at numerous events – ranging from library service staff and partners events, through sector specific seminars, to sessions for library school students

Greater London Authority

Taskforce members in the DCMS policy team and Arts Council England engaged with the GLA to ensure that libraries' important role in providing local access to cultural opportunities was recognised (APA 1). For example, the Taskforce team worked with the Greater London Authority (GLA) to ensure that libraries' important role in providing local access to cultural opportunities was recognised and discussed how libraries' contribution could be covered as work within as the GLA strategy progresses.

The Greater London Authority developed a Cultural Infrastructure Plan for the city, which was published in March 2019 and featured libraries as part of its interactive map and in the launch video.

Engagement with other decision-makers and organisations

The Taskforce team engaged with over 100 other organisations from the public, private and third sector, including library campaigners, organisations working in digital inclusion, major charitable funders, arms-length bodies from a range of sectors, authors, publishers and a range of representative bodies. The Taskforce team also engaged with international delegations to the UK and supported the development of international collaborations, recognising the excellent work undertaken by colleagues in the public library sector across the world and developing links to share best practice and support service development.

Some of the more notable achievements of this work are detailed below:

- libraries as key elements of the High Street Strategy featured strongly in the Innovation Zone presentation by the One Public Estate team at the LGA conference in 2017. A follow up presentation was made by Arts Council England's Director, Libraries to South East One Public Estate teams in February 2020

- the Taskforce team facilitated the establishment of a 'commuter hub' pilot between the Ministry of Justice and a number of library services, to generate extra income for library services

- the team also helped facilitate the co-location of the library service and Job Centre Plus in Helston, Cornwall

- the team introduced organisations such as Youth Employment UK to library services, paving the way for pilots to be run

- the team helped to broker library partnerships to build volunteer digital skills support such as that with Lloyds/Halifax Group

- in 2018, the Taskforce team provided the Justice organisation with evidence to support their work on preventing digital exclusion. The Working Party was concerned about the wide range of digitally excluded people – such as those without access to technology or with low digital capability in light of court reforms underway in England and Wales which have a strong digital element. The Taskforce team provided evidence to the Working Party on the role that libraries can and do play in combating digital exclusion. The report contains a number of positive mentions about the role of libraries, and examples of good practice

3.4 Sector Development

The Libraries Taskforce has supported a number of sector development strategies and promoted and delivered a wide range of direct opportunities for the sector to develop and foster its skills in relation to the 7 outcomes identified in the Ambition document. From its inception, one of the Taskforce's priorities was to draw together and share good practice to help councils and library services be aware of different ways to provide what their communities needed. The approach was to build upon and add value to existing good practice, partnerships and other activity that was already supporting public libraries.

Sector development has included both infrastructure development and support for staff and decision-makers at a variety of levels and roles in public libraries.

Infrastructure development

E-lending

Remote e-lending (downloads of books from outside library premises) was previously not covered by Public Lending Right (PLR) – the right of authors and other rights holders to receive compensatory payment for the loans of books from public libraries in the UK – when the Taskforce was formed. The Taskforce challenged DCMS (CG3) to identify and implement ways to remunerate authors for remote e-lending. Legislation to extend PLR to include remote loans of e-books and e-audiobooks became law as part of the 2017 Digital Economy Act. The extension of PLR to e-lending came into force on 1 July 2018, with the first in arrears payments made by February 2020.

Single Digital Presence

The Society of Chief Librarians published a report, delivered by BiblioCommons, on the potential for a Single Digital Library Presence (APA 20) (SDLP) in January 2016. This examined the potential for public libraries across the country to develop a single digital presence offering existing and potential users of libraries a more engaging and interactive digital experience. The report highlighted the urgent need for public libraries to have a compelling national digital presence which could help retain existing users, attract new ones and change the perceptions of public libraries.

In response to this report, the Taskforce established a SDLP Steering Group to take forward the project, which first met on 31 March 2016. In August 2017 it was announced that the British Library would lead an 18-month scoping project to establish the demand for, and possible shape of, a single digital presence for UK public libraries. Funded by Arts Council England and the Carnegie UK Trust, the project investigated user expectations and demand for what a national online platform for public libraries might deliver.

The British Library undertook a year-long enquiry to examine a range of options for a platform that could enable public libraries to benefit fully from recent technological developments and to engage new and existing users at local and national level.

In June 2019 the recommendations paper, ['Digital Transformations for UK public libraries: five approaches to a 'Single Digital Presence'](#), set out what a national online platform for public libraries could look like, what it could be used for and how such an offering might fit in with existing digital library systems.

Further development work is now being funded by Arts Council England and Carnegie UK Trust, to explore the feasibility of each of these types of transformation. A model for the single digital platform is being showcased and refined and the final recommendations will be released during 2021.

Support for decision-makers and Heads of Service

Good practice guidance and toolkits

The Taskforce published its first toolkit, [Libraries shaping the future: good practice toolkit,](#) on 16 December 2015. Its development was led by a head of library service who was seconded to the Taskforce, enabling the Taskforce to benefit from 'on the ground' experience from the library sector and wider library contacts. It was aimed at chief executives and library portfolio holders and

- emphasised how libraries are trusted spaces, free to enter and open to all

- described the role of libraries as places people can explore and share reading, information, knowledge and culture

- showed how local authority priorities are supported and delivered by libraries

- provided information on alternative governance models

- introduced ideas on smarter ways of working

Alongside this toolkit, the Taskforce worked with DCMS to publish [guidance on the legislative framework for public libraries](#). This included points to consider if an authority was reviewing its library service, incorporating learning from previous case reviews and

inquiries. This was reviewed and updated in July 2019 to:

- clarify the decision-making process

- provide pointers to practical help available to councils considering making significant changes to their library services

The Independent Review for Libraries recommended that the Taskforce should develop sector-led best practice guidelines to help local authorities when working with volunteers and community-led libraries. The Taskforce recognised that some local authorities were, for various reasons, considering moving some libraries into community management. Although the Taskforce did not endorse this approach, it took the view that, if that path were taken, all parties involved should be enabled to make informed decisions, understanding the pros and cons and learning from others who have gone before, so that a high-quality service would be provided to local people.

On 23 March 2016, the Taskforce published a second toolkit: [Community libraries: good practice toolkit](#), again produced under the leadership of a Head of Service seconded to the Taskforce and with experience of operating alongside Community Managed Libraries. This provided guidance to local authorities working with volunteers and community-led libraries, as well as to those communities who were thinking of taking on the running of a library. It included information gathered from library partners and a wide variety of community-run and volunteer-run libraries. Subsequent research commissioned by the Libraries Taskforce into the support needs of community libraries in 2017 (see Section 3.6) was used to pinpoint ways to improve and strengthen the advice and guidance provided through the toolkits.

During the work to develop the Ambition document, the Taskforce agreed that 3 further toolkits would be of value. Its Action Plan included commitments to produce:

- an Alternative Delivery Models toolkit which was aimed at library service managers, council commissioners and transformation teams, councillors, Friends Groups and community groups. It was intended to provide practical guidance to help them consider the desirability, viability and feasibility of a range of alternative delivery model options for their library services. This toolkit (published in March 2017), developed by the Optimo partnership and funded by DCMS, brought together a range of technical processes and the real-life experiences and insights of the 4 library services that had spun out from their respective councils. The toolkit has been used by the DCMS team as a resource when advising people about setting up a mutual and the LGA has also used it for its work with museums

- a strategic planning toolkit (APA10), to encourage and help library services to undertake, or contribute to, a robust, objective and evidence-based analysis of local need as a basis for developing a strategy to deliver a library service that will best meet the needs of their local communities (published in August 2017). This was used by DCMS in its Statutory Service guidance to Local Authorities and has resulted in the 7 Strategic Outcomes being incorporated into a number of local authority strategies

- a sector-led benchmarking framework for library services (APA 13), published in September 2017, which was designed with the sector to support library services to develop their organisational capability to achieve enhanced and sustainable positive outcomes for the communities they serve. It provided support for a 'journey' of improvement across all aspects of the library service and its work (underpinned by self-assessment)

These toolkits have been used extensively by the sector and feedback has been positive. The Benchmarking Framework

toolkit has been adopted less widely by the sector, possibly because it requires a new way of working which library teams may be less familiar with and require support to implement. Feedback also suggested that there was limited time available to heads of service to plan their use of the toolkit and that external support was needed to create this time and space to reflect on the service. This feedback influenced the later design of the library peer challenges and the regional support offer from Libraries Connected, which should support wider adoption of this type of approach in relation to the new accreditation process that is being developed.

Peer challenge

The Local Government Association, in partnership with Arts Council England, delivered 9 library service peer challenges in 2018-19 and 7 library service peer challenges in 2019/2020. The LGA's standard corporate peer challenge was adapted to meet the specific needs of libraries, helping them to evaluate performance, innovate, and think about the future of their service.

Peer challenges are an improvement tool that offer expert, neutral review and advice, providing constructive analysis of the service and helping to identify further opportunities for innovation. Each challenge is tailored around a service's specific needs. The sector led peer team is made up of a peer challenge manager, a councillor and a peer officer from the sector. Members of the Taskforce team and Arts Council England also attended some of the challenges.

All library services participating in the peer challenges had to make large efficiency savings over recent years, due to financial pressures on council budgets, and had challenging targets to achieve in the future. This led to a need to do things differently whilst continuing to provide a vital service for local communities. Several important themes were identified from the library peer challenges that were recognised as impacting on the wider library sector:

1. The importance of library service strategies, visions and service plans

2. Understanding income generation and commercialisation

3. Identifying skills needs and gaps in a modern library service

4. Relationships with volunteers and friends groups

5. Partnership working

6. The use of qualitative and quantitative data

7. Celebrating success and self- promotion

8. Benefits and risks of different operating models

9. Position within council structures

This programme has been well received. A follow up survey has been distributed by LGA. Although the results have not been published, the initial feedback suggests that the programme has had a positive impact and been well received by participating authorities. In addition, many of the senior staff at participating councils went on to become peer officers for other LGA challenges, including on corporate and children's services challenges. Arts Council England and the LGA have agreed to continue with this programme to support the sector until 2021.

Support for public library staff skills

Public Libraries Skills Strategy (APA 19).

The Public Library Skills Strategy (PLSS) was developed jointly by the Society of Chief Librarians (now Libraries Connected) and CILIP. It was published in July 2017 and contained 9 aims and a series of recommendations to guide the development of information and library skills, knowledge and qualifications in the public library sector in England between then and 2030. The Taskforce supported this work and provided advice and expertise as it was developed, as well as promoting it widely once complete.

A programme of joint activity was agreed to deliver on the recommendations including;

- in January 2018, Libraries Connected and the British Library announced their national mentoring programme which aimed to strengthen the sector by supporting talent within the public library network. The 12-month programme supported leadership development for staff at all levels. 22 library services participated in total, including 11 mentors and 11 mentees from services across England. A reflection event to formally end the scheme was planned for June 2020 but has had to be postponed and therefore there is no formal evaluation information available at present

- in 2018 CILIP won approval for a level 3 Apprenticeship standard for the library and information profession and, since then, work has been undertaken to facilitate the implementation of the standard into library services. Arts Council England funded Libraries Connected to deliver a series of 3 workshops across England in 2019-20 to promote the benefits of apprenticeships to the library workforce. 60 library staff attended the workshops

- CILIP created an Employer Partner scheme, which aimed to bring together and recognise employers that are industry leaders in data, information, knowledge and libraries and are committed to developing a workforce with the skills and capabilities to steer them to success. To date CILIP has secured 150 employer partners

- CILIP Ethics Committee developed a diversity and equality plan for the library and information profession celebrating diversity, inclusion, equalities and representation

- CILIP conducted an 18 month review of their ethical principles, and the revised ethical framework was launched at the CILIP Annual General Meeting, in October 2018

Libraries Connected was awarded a grant of £128,456 from Arts Council England to work closely with CILIP to develop and deliver an authoritative, sector-led scheme to help libraries in England to meet the needs of their local communities. This includes the development of a new skills framework as part of an overall programme of sector development outlined in Blueprint for Libraries report.

Delivered collaboratively by Libraries Connected, CILIP and Arts Council England, this programme includes joint projects to update the Public Libraries Skills Strategy and to help drive diversity in library leadership. A Steering Group has been convened to guide the project. The refreshed Skills Strategy will be published as part of this package of work but a publication date has not yet been set.

Masterclasses

As well as sharing good practice via the toolkits, the Taskforce was keen to reach out and involve people across the sector more actively in debating, sharing and hearing from each other. To do this, a programme of free masterclasses was held across England (wherever practical in library buildings), to make it easier and cheaper for people from library services to attend, and to boost regional networking opportunities. The masterclasses were open to anyone interested in the topics covered who wanted to attend, regardless of background or job role.

A total of 25 masterclasses were delivered by the Taskforce team over 2015-20. A summary list is provided below, and more detail on each masterclass can be found in Appendix 2:

o 5 x sector forums

o 3 x Alternative Delivery Models masterclasses

o 2 x Income Generation masterclasses

o 3 x Makerspaces masterclasses

o 2 x Strategic Planning and Benchmarking Framework masterclasses

o 2 x Creative thinking masterclasses

o 2 x masterclasses on Applying for Funding

o 2 x masterclasses on Making an Impact

o 4 x Evaluation masterclasses

To help share the learning with people who were unable to attend, each set of masterclasses was followed with a blog post or series that summarised the speaker sessions and linked people to further useful information.

Some were general updates, covering a wide range of topics, and helping people to understand the issues covered by the Ambition document (the sector forums, which ran in January 2017). Masterclasses were run to expand on some of the published toolkits (for example the sessions on alternative delivery models, and those on strategic planning and benchmarking).

Others arose from sector feedback about issues they felt it would be useful to have a chance to explore in more depth (for example income generation and applying for funding) or come together on to work on collaboratively (for example the sessions for those actively working on developing makerspaces in public libraries).

Undertaking evaluation work with successful LOFE project bidders led to requests to help library services think about how to better build evaluation, measurement and impact assessments into their day to day work – masterclasses were set up to cover all of these.

Feedback was collected after every Masterclass and used to shape and improve future events. For example, speaker roundtable sessions gave attendees more time to talk in greater detail to the speakers and put specific questions to them. The Alternative Delivery Model masterclasses

responded to feedback from the sector forums where attendees wanted to go into far more detail about the process and experiences of others.

Online makerspaces resource library

Following on from the makerspaces masterclasses, resources for library services with makerspaces, or those who are thinking of creating one, were assembled in one place on GOV.UK to provide a 'one-stop-shop' of guidance and support. These include a map showing libraries with makerspaces and those in development and guidance documents developed by the Libraries Taskforce team on issues such as makerspaces and libraries, and applying for funding.

Sector development following on from LOFE funding initiative

LOFE funding also led directly to broader sector development activities via peer-to-peer learning and support among funded projects:

- as part of the evaluation, workshops provided space for project leads to build relationships and share experiences and learning with other funded projects

- as several library services which received LOFE funding were establishing makerspaces (or similar), 3 masterclasses allowed people to share their experiences. These enabled attendees to learn from those who had gone before, compare notes on their plans and look for collaboration opportunities. This group has continued to be highly active on the Library Innovators Network, providing support and advice to other services embarking on new digital services. Information shared in the masterclasses was captured on the DCMS libraries blog

Community Managed Libraries

Research commissioned by the Libraries Taskforce into the support needs of community libraries (see section 6) was used to pinpoint ways to improve and strengthen the advice and guidance provided through the toolkits. Following on from this research, a number of activities were undertaken in relation to Community Managed Libraries:

- working in partnership with the Society of Chief Librarians (now Libraries Connected) and Locality (and subsequently Power to Change), the Libraries Taskforce supported the establishment of a Community Managed Libraries Peer Network. This was led through the Upper Norwood Library Trust and developed a programme of learning events and ways to share information and support between community libraries, including a national conference in Sheffield in 2018

- in 2019 the Libraries Taskforce team at Arts Council England supported the Community Managed Libraries Peer Network to develop its business plan. The network is now formally constituted as a charity with a fully recruited board. The network also has a new website and social media channels and is increasing its engagement with community managed libraries region by region

3.5 Communications and advocacy

Communications activity about the work of the Libraries Taskforce began in September 2015. The Taskforce set up several channels through which information could be shared.

These included:

- GOV.UK pages
- Twitter
- the Taskforce blog
- Flickr

There was significant traffic and engagement on all sites and a total of 364 blog posts were published from a broad spectrum of authors on a range of topics. Further statistics and information are in Appendix 2. All official information on the Taskforce and its work was published on GOV.UK web pages, including minutes of meetings, published reports and information about Taskforce membership.

Communications sub-group

A communications sub-group was established in March 2016 and included communications representatives from the Taskforce member organisations. It developed programmes of communications activity, materials and protocols to help promote the main themes of Ambition, and to support more collaborative approaches between Taskforce partners to reinforce core messages. A workshop was held in December 2016 looking at the advocacy materials currently available and exploring what people would find helpful.

The communications sub-group also ran a survey inviting people to share their experience of engaging with communications and whether there were any barriers to this (as part of an investigation of APA 9 in relation to barriers to accessing communications – for the full list of APAs please refer to Appendix 2). Over 120 people responded, but these were mostly people who had good experience and the barriers shared

were issues around capacity, capability and skills, rather than technical barriers. This also reflects comments made during the sector forums. The Taskforce therefore decided to focus on skills development and confidence building rather than technical access issues.

As a result of this review, a range of advocacy leaflets were developed supporting the 7 Outcomes:

- Prosperity
- Digital Access and Literacy and Helping Everyone Achieve their Full Potential
- Healthier and Happier Lives
- Communities

The Society of Chief Librarians (now Libraries Connected) led on developing an events calendar for the Taskforce partners to use. The members of the communications sub-group also worked collaboratively to promote initiatives such as National Libraries Week. The Taskforce also provided funding for Libraries Connected to be the main point of good practice dissemination for the sector, resulting in the redesign of their website and an increase in their communications staffing.

Libraries Week

Libraries Week is an annual landmark date for the Taskforce members and an opportunity for joined up communications. As part of Libraries Week in 2018, CILIP made a range of downloadable resources available, and urged public libraries to sign up to take part and be kept updated. The LGA prepared a libraries feature for Arts Professional, to coincide with Libraries Week, which was complemented by national press activity.

The Taskforce team supported Libraries Week in a range of ways including:

- sending out a printed series of advocacy documents to heads of library services, available electronically on GOV.UK Ambition page. These had a very positive reception, with numerous requests for further copies to use in local advocacy

- Publishing a series of blog posts which started with a post by the Libraries Minister, and then went on to illustrate each of the 7 Outcomes from Libraries Deliver:

  o Why I'm looking forward to Libraries Week by Michael Ellis MP

  o digital: A focus on outcomes: digital access/literacy – 100% digital Leeds

  o wellbeing: Not just treating the symptoms – Taskforce member Dr Neil Churchill reflected on the benefits of social prescribing and the role libraries can play

  o culture: Encounters: Whitby Library – Celebrating Cook 250 in Yorkshire

  o prosperity: Your library, your work club and The Great Project – helping people find work in Leicestershire

  o communities: With a little help from my friends: the vital contribution made by Friends Groups – examples from around the country, including a filmed interview with the chair of Thurston Friends group in Suffolk

  o learning: Contribution libraries make to early years – post which pulled together lots of research and references which illustrate libraries work with young children

  o literacy: Summer Reading Challenge – getting more children reading – from The Reading Agency

Between 7-12 October 2019, CILIP organised Libraries Week, with a theme of Libraries in a Digital World. More than 1,000 libraries took part with a series of events that included:

- the launch of Simon & Schuster UK Children's 'LOVE YOUR LIBRARY' – a campaign in partnership with Peters featuring an exhibition of original artwork from 12 of the publisher's illustrators in the National Art Library at the Victoria and Albert museum

- The World of Possibilities Festival with late-night openings, film screenings and interactive digital storytelling sessions in all 325 public libraries across London

- mathematician and broadcaster Bobby Seagull announcing the winner of the LEGO Build the Library of the Future competition

Taskforce partners joined forces throughout the week to ensure maximum coverage of the week's activities, with The Reading Agency also marking the week by creating a toolkit containing ideas for Reading Well displays, events and online and social media activity and information on Public Health England's Every Mind Matters campaign.

During Libraries Week

DCMS Libraries Team arranged a programme of events to support National Libraries Week, including:

- Helen Whateley, the then Libraries Minister, published a blog and visited 3 libraries (British Library, Maidstone and Willesden Green). Nicky Morgan (Secretary of State) and Matt Warman (Minister for Digital) visited the British Library. A range of other ministerial visits (Defra and BEIS) were also arranged by the DCMS Libraries team

- the DCMS team also visited a number of libraries during this week, including Leamington Spa to mark the opening of a 3rd makerspace, building on the success of the existing makerspaces in Rugby and Nuneaton that were funded by the DCMS-backed and Arts Council England-managed Libraries: Opportunities for Everyone Innovation fund

Libraries Deliver Newsletter

In response to feedback via informal consultation with the sector, the Taskforce set up the Libraries Deliver newsletter targeted at frontline staff and issued to a wide mailing list across library services in England. It was

published monthly from September 2017 – December 2018 and was designed to be printed out and pinned to noticeboards to reach frontline staff. The newsletter contained 4 sections and generally covered:

1. work undertaken by the Taskforce to achieve its aims – including that achieved centrally by the Taskforce team based in DCMS and work led by Taskforce partners

2. updates on projects funded by DCMS's Libraries: Opportunities for Everyone Innovation fund, plus other funding opportunities

3. examples which illustrated how delivery of the Libraries Connected's Universal Offers were helping to achieve the Seven Outcomes described in Libraries Deliver

4. news about particular initiatives and activities that potentially affected all staff – for example, the new Public Library Skills Strategy produced by CILIP and Libraries Connected

In 2018 this engagement mechanism was replaced with the (already existent) Library Innovators Basecamp group which had been identified as the primary tool for sharing information within the sector and facilitated real-time information sharing and two-way communication between individuals in different library authorities.

Arts Council England communications co-ordination (since December 2018)

Arts Council England's Communications Manager has produced a range of activity including commissioning and publishing blog posts illustrating the impact of libraries on their communities. For example, the post from Kerry Hudson published during Libraries Week 2019 received good engagement on the Arts Council's 6 Twitter accounts (with 36,785 impressions on the national account alone). Other blog posts include one marking The Reading Agency's 20th anniversary and one covering the BBC VR in libraries project. In June 2019, a post about how libraries are

helping to help combat loneliness in their communities was viewed nearly 2,000 times. Proactive and reactive media work has been undertaken, liaising with national and sector media journalists, and the national and 5 area Arts Council Twitter accounts regularly share information from partners and amplify the achievements of the library sector. The Arts Council Communications Manager also works closely with communications leads in partner organisations to ensure the effective sharing of activity as well as supportive communications actions around projects such as Libraries Week and the Summer Reading Challenge.

Other advocates secured include television presenter and teacher Bobby Seagull, comedian Adam Hills and doctor/TV presenter Dr Ranj Singh. These quotes and social cards have been gaining good traction on Twitter. One has received over 15,000 impressions on the Arts Council's North Area Twitter account and is one of its best performing tweets.

3.6 Research and data

Ambition frequently mentions ensuring library service design and delivery is informed by evidence and data. Action 4 in the Ambition Action Plan describes plans to identify and commission further research work to be used as a shared evidence base.

The Libraries Taskforce identified that library service leaders should be able to base decisions on robust evidence, accurate data and analysis of good practice from the UK and overseas. Access to timely, accurate, comparable library data is critical to enabling the library sector and users to monitor the delivery of library services and improve their quality. This includes everything from the information librarians need to manage their service day-to-day and that which decision makers need to consider the strategic direction of library service provision, to the facts informing how local services fit into the national picture.

Improving libraries data

Previously there was no consistent and agreed set of data on libraries across England covering: which are statutory, how they are delivered, and basic information on opening hours, staffing arrangements, etc. This gap led to confusion because there were different figures being quoted based on varied definitions and time periods. Over the course of the past 5 years, the Taskforce collated information from all library authorities which was published and updated regularly.

The Taskforce began this work by holding a data workshop in December 2015 which looked at:

- existing data sets

- how to improve and increase their usage and make them more accessible

- what data was needed in the future to inform decision making

- how to bridge the gaps in the short, medium and long term

In the Libraries Deliver consultation, discussions included balancing the value of any data collected with the effort needed to capture it, the need to widen data collection beyond inputs and outputs to capture outcomes and impact, and recognition that any data should be published openly and regularly updated. As part of the sector forums, workshops were run (held in January 2017 in Newcastle, London, Bristol and Birmingham) where the main discussion focused on what a core dataset should contain. The workshop: 'Libraries core dataset' was held a total of 12 times in these 4 locations with 137 people taking part.

Following on from this, The Ambition Action Plan Action 2 made a commitment to *define and publish a core data set, creating a transparent and automated (where possible) process to gather and share it.* A core dataset refers to series of data which all library services will collect, use and publish. The

plan was to have a consistent dataset which can be used to help inform and improve local library service delivery, as well as being used for advocacy purposes at local and national level (when aggregated). There might, of course, also be other data which authorities choose to collect in addition to this for their own local purposes.

As a first step some basic data was gathered about the numbers and types of libraries available within each local authority in England. Different data sets were collated and library service managers were asked to verify their data. This work was not restricted to data relating to statutory libraries as the aim was to understand all library service provision in local authorities. This included details of closures and transfers of libraries to other operating models since 1 April 2010. This baseline was chosen as most information requests we received made comparisons with and analysed current library numbers against this date. This information was [published](#) (verified to cover the period up to July 2016) on GOV.UK in March 2017 and Arts Council England undertook an update of this dataset, taking it up to December 2019 which will be published in 2021.

The Taskforce also supported various pieces of work being undertaken across the sector to explore the potential for libraries to adopt an Open Data approach – for example by sponsoring the Voyage of the Data Treader workshops in [November 2017](#) and [March 2019](#). These were sector led, run by Dave Rowe (Libraries Hacked), Aude Charillon (Newcastle) and Claire Back (Plymouth), and enabled people to talk about what mattered to them as well as practical sessions on working with data and Wikidata. Discussions were held on topics including Open Data 101, publishing a first dataset, extracting data and automation, social media surgery and open data and social value.

This work was revisited in August 2019 through a workshop held with Taskforce

members, front-line library practitioners and data experts to reflect on what had already been achieved and what the next steps should be. Following this session and the debate it stimulated, the facilitators of the Data Treader workshops volunteered to develop a draft schema and definitions using sample outputs from Newcastle and Plymouth. A wider group of library services tested this during January 2019. The next steps will be to draw up guidance and run workshops across the country to raise awareness of the new schema and encourage its use and iteration. This work will be undertaken by DCMS.

In addition to this work, a Cambridge MPhil intern, Joan O'Bryan, worked with the Taskforce Team to undertake some in-depth analysis of the annual CIPFA statistics relating to library services. She interrogated CIPFA statistics sheets from 2006/07 to 2016/17 to analyse trends regarding public libraries in England as well as assess the reliability and limitations of the CIPFA dataset. Her report was published and featured on the Taskforce blog.

Research

The Taskforce also considered how to strengthen the evidence base about the impact library services have on the lives of individuals and communities based on research findings. This was becoming increasingly important where local authorities and other partners commissioned libraries and paid them based on achievement of outcomes. Robust survey-based research can be resource intensive and time consuming to collect at a local level, so the Taskforce team and Arts Council England undertook work to marshal what research already existed or was underway (including research commissioned by other administrations, such as Scotland) together with thoughts about what it might be useful to gather in the future.

The Taskforce conducted desk research and workshops (held in 2017), to understand what

research already existed, was underway or planned. A research overview spreadsheet was published and regularly updated. Topics that the sector felt would be useful for future research were investigated and this information was used to point academic researchers or students to so that their work could have a practical application.

The Taskforce also commissioned new research. Across England, increasing pressure on resources led many local authorities to move, or consider moving, to a library service model where they work in partnership with local communities to deliver services. So Action 11 in Libraries Deliver: Ambition aimed to:

- undertake research into community managed libraries

- work with partners to create a new peer support network to make it easier for community managed libraries to share good practice and to learn from each other

To further build the evidence base about community managed libraries, the Taskforce and DCMS commissioned SERIO, an applied research unit at the University of Plymouth, to conduct an England-wide research project. The aim was to understand more about how community managed libraries operate, and what lessons can be learnt, and examples shared about their effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. The findings and the Taskforce's plans to act on them were both published.

In 2018 DCMS also published Public Service Mutuals: The State of the Sector, which provided up to date and comprehensive research and evidence on this governance structure in the sector. It also offered insight into the challenges faced by mutuals, and recommendations as to how government could further support the sector to sustain and grow over the longer term. The research also recognises the critical part highly engaged staff play in the success of a mutual.

Between 2015 and 2020, Arts Council England also published a number of research reports on the impact of public libraries. They are:

- Stand by me: the contribution of public libraries to the well-being of older people

- Re-writing the story: the contribution of public libraries to place-shaping

- Libraries as community hubs: case studies and learning

- Evidencing libraries: Audience Reach Research findings and analysis

- Library Rhyme Times and Maternal Mental Health

- Libraries welcome everyone: six stories of diversity and inclusion from libraries in England

- The potential for partnership working between libraries and higher education institutions

- Championing Archives and Libraries within local planning

- Keeping Performance live: This report explores how to utilise performing arts collections in libraries.

These contributed to informing political and sector stakeholders about libraries' contribution to public policy areas, and to sharing models of best practice with the libraries sector. For example, the findings of the research into Library Rhyme Times and Maternal Mental Health were received with interest by the DfE which has a growing interest in work with early years and the home learning environment. Discussions also took place with health sector bodies to consider what role libraries might play in national efforts to develop new forms of Maternal Mental Health support, especially in areas with least existing services. The findings of Libraries welcome everyone were used to support advocacy on the valuable role public libraries can play in equality and diversity work.

Taskforce members discussed future research priorities at a Taskforce meeting in December 2019 and members agreed to start with libraries and their role in employability (including digital skills). Arts Council England subsequently commissioned Shared Intelligence and Cambridge Econometrics to investigate the impact library services in England have on employability outcomes.

If further funding became available, members agreed to follow this with research into either literacy and reader development or health and wellbeing.

3.7 Impact of the Taskforce's activities and ways of working

The Libraries Taskforce constituted a new way of working within the libraries sector. It intended to bring key strategic organisations working on public libraries together, to facilitate greater information sharing and impact for the public library sector and the public it serves. The Taskforce team itself was a small team of project management, communication and policy specialists who worked with member organisations to create impact. The team co-ordinated, amplified and supported the activities of Taskforce members and has supported greater visibility of the work of member organisations and their roles. It has enabled closer working between library sector leaders and library staff at a national level to agree a shared vision for the future of public libraries.

As a model for supporting sectors with a wide range of stakeholders and strategic and delivery responsibilities across different bodies, the Libraries Taskforce represented an innovative, efficient and flexible approach. This was evidenced by its ability to move executive functions from government department to non-departmental public body as required and in its ability to pick up new themes and issues in the sector and provide support as and when needed. An example of this includes support for Libraries Connected

to achieve government contracts in assisted digital services for the library sector at a time when new contracts were being issued by government.

The governance structure for the Taskforce, especially the model of co-sponsorship from DCMS and the LGA, ensured balance, consensus and relevance. The Taskforce was successful in bringing together sector organisations and promoting joined up working, such as the joint communications strategy and the partnership working which achieved the Blueprint for public libraries, which sets out an integrated approach to supporting the public library sector. However, it did not achieve all of its aims in terms of joined up messaging and integrated working across the wider sector.

From 2015-20 the sector experienced wide-ranging change, budget reductions and a movement towards greater diversity of delivery models and operating approaches rather than cohesion. This may have inhibited its ability to engage with more integrated approaches. It may also be that some of the wider sector impacts will take longer than 5 years to be measured and achieved, for example, the Single Digital Presence and the adoption of common messages about public libraries across the sector and local government.

The frequent meetings and updates of the Taskforce allowed member organisations to report issues and needs as they arose and the small amount of funding available to the Taskforce directly was regularly directed to meet those needs and strengthen sector organisations, for example in the funding provided to Libraries Connected and CILIP to develop a joint communications strategy.

The fact that meetings took place in public libraries across the country demonstrated the Taskforce's commitment to engaging the sector as widely as possible. The many visits, consultation workshops and masterclasses which took place allowed the Taskforce team

to engage directly with the sector on a regular basis and gain feedback from those most directly affected by its activities.

The Taskforce placed particular importance on transparency, and therefore it published all its minutes reports, progress updates and guidance, blogged regularly about its work and conducted workshops and consultations with the sector across the course of its operation.

Review of Libraries Taskforce – December 2017

The Taskforce undertook a review of its work in December 2017, assessing progress against the Action Plan and the Outcomes Actions. There was a consensus that the creation of the Taskforce in itself had improved how the various organisations working within the sector came together to focus their work in a more cohesive and effective way.

The work undertaken in drawing together the Ambition document had brought the organisations together to identify shared goals, and to debate their different perspectives in a constructive and mutually supportive way. Its endorsement by both central and local government (the first libraries' policy document to achieve this), and its focus on a detailed and specific Action Plan, with regular and transparent reporting on progress, was also felt to have been a game-changer.

The work undertaken in the first part of the document, in defining the Seven Outcomes that public libraries can and do contribute to, was seen as particularly useful, by providing a simpler and more coherent framework for advocacy work by and on behalf of the sector. At that stage the Taskforce was beginning to see use and impact from this by raising the profile of public libraries with both national and local decision-makers, and welcomed this being continued in the future.

"I was, and have been, amazed at the national profile that the Taskforce and the associated work streams has achieved and particularly early on within a very short timescale. … and how the 'Taskforce' brand is now recognised not just with Library Services but with Local Authorities in general." Taskforce member

The review also looked at the findings from a survey seeking feedback on the Taskforce's work and its impact at grassroots levels which was linked via the Taskforce blog. As the response rate was limited (22 replies in total), the Taskforce team was unable to do any meaningful analysis between sub-groups. However, overall, the survey showed:

- good awareness, and use, of Taskforce toolkits and communications channels

- how the sector values the work of the Taskforce

- a significant majority of respondents felt the Taskforce has had a positive impact

- people felt the Taskforce had provided a unifying force, raising the profile of libraries in government

Areas where respondents suggested the Taskforce could do more work in 2018 included:

- producing communications assets which could be used at local levels

- further promotion of Libraries First to senior leaders and chief executives

- providing further masterclasses, and exploring running webinars

- measuring impact

- more communications aimed at frontline staff

In response to feedback, as well as maintaining its advocacy work across government, the Taskforce team produced a range of publications, intended to be used to support targeted local discussions on particular Outcomes. It continued to run

masterclasses (including two focused on measuring impact).

The report also included feedback on the 14 masterclasses and sector forums run by the Taskforce during 2017 (covering income generation, makerspaces, creative thinking, alternative delivery models, strategic planning and the benchmarking framework). These events were attended by over 500 people and information was published as a blog post to share learning with those unable to attend. A further 6 masterclasses ran before the end of March 2018.

These events were well received, with feedback showing that attendees:

- value the opportunity to network

- find hands on, practical sessions useful

- preferred smaller group sessions with speakers, in preference to plenary Q&As

- liked the detailed follow up blogs and notes

The Taskforce noted achievements during 2017 and that some actions had been delayed. While progress with the Actions was regularly covered in the six-month progress reports, the Taskforce agreed that a [blog post](#) summarising 2017 would be published in the new year alongside the Action Plan for 2018. This progress of the Taskforce was reviewed annually in December against the action plan.

Actions that were not achieved or less effective

Although the Taskforce made progress against all of its Priority Actions and most of the APAs, there were some areas where less progress was possible. These include:

- **Work with local councils to investigate new approaches to procurement** including considering where national frameworks can promote consistency and reduce costs and overheads (APA 16) – some work was done to support commercial frameworks via funding to

support Libraries Connected to access tenders via the Government Digital Framework. National changes, such as the launch of the LGA's National Procurement Strategy for Local Government in 2018 also reduced the need for this work, although there remain some library-specific areas, such as e-book licensing, that would benefit from more exploration.

- **research to assess the benefits and drawbacks of combined library authorities**. Some local authorities stepped forward to participate in this research but it was subsequently felt to be too complex and sensitive to be completed

- **reflect commonly agreed messages about library services consistently** throughout interviews, placed editorial and other media, including online coverage, using nationally-produced communication assets to promote public awareness of what libraries can do for them and to increase usage (APA 9). Although this was achieved to a degree (e.g. around annual events such as Libraries Week), it was challenging to align the communications strategies of such a wide range of organisations with different priorities

- discuss with suppliers current and future needs in library services to encourage the development of **innovative approaches to provision of services** (APA 17). An initial project to design a common Library Management System Specification was shelved after discussion with the sector and there was limited progress in relation to other service delivery areas, due to capacity and lack of established need cases

The 7 Strategic Outcomes

Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries identified 7 Strategic Outcomes that public libraries contributed to; and it articulated its aspirations for what success might look like by 2021 and how it might wish to measure progress. Work on the latter was undertaken by a secondee, and the progress indicator measures were published. Some reflections on the process of developing these indicators were also published. There are no current plans to update the progress indicator measures. Therefore, assessments of progress below are currently based only on the data that is available at the time of writing, which is mainly third-party proxy data and informal assessments of progress.

1. **Cultural and creative enrichment** (Outcome 1)

Indicators

- more people (children and adults) having access to cultural experiences and events through libraries (especially from disadvantaged backgrounds)

- people see libraries as local creative hubs where exploration, experimentation, pursuing of cultural interests, and making are encouraged

- libraries are seen as active partners with professional and amateur cultural and arts organisations to provide cultural experiences and activities within libraries

Activities

- in January 2020 Arts Council England published Let's Create, its strategy for 2020-2030. Libraries sit at the heart of what is being planned for the next 10 years. It is a move towards supporting libraries to develop as practitioners in their own field, as better and more innovative library services

- since 2015, over £16 million has been invested in arts and cultural activities in libraries via Arts Council England's National Lottery funded Grants for the arts and Project Grants programmes

- in 2018 6 Public Library Services (London Borough of Barking and Dagenham, Inspire, Community and Cultural Services Cambridgeshire, Suffolk Libraries, Libraries Unlimited (Devon) and St Helens Borough Council Library Service) joined Arts Council England's National Portfolio

- in 2017 then SCL (now Libraries Connected) launched a new Universal Culture Offer, which has now become Culture and Creativity. This focuses on bringing the contribution that libraries make to the national cultural landscape to the fore and providing a platform for future development of the cultural offer of the public library sector

- in 2018 The British Film Institute (BFI) launched part of its BFI Player product in libraries – specifically, free archive videos

- the DCMS Libraries Blog also highlights the following individual examples of the contributions public libraries make to culture: Cambridgeshire Culture Card; Reimagining Cultural Education in Gloucestershire and Brent Culture Celebrating Windrush 70

Outcomes achieved or measured

- there are 6 Public Library services now forming part of Arts Council England's national portfolio as well as a Sector Support Organisation (Libraries Connected)

- in 2019-20 30 Arts Council England Project Grants, totalling £1,208,693 were awarded to Libraries as lead applicants, which indicates that libraries are leading the development and delivery of significant arts and cultural activities in England and that people are having access to creative and cultural events through libraries

- in 2019-20 libraries were cited as venues for arts and cultural activities in 324 Project Grants awards and as non-lead partners for other cultural organisations in 298 Project Grants awards

- this suggests that good progress has been made towards the original objectives of Ambition in relation to libraries being seen as creative and cultural hubs and being active partners for arts and cultural organisations

Case study

St Helens Libraries: Cultural Hubs

St Helens Borough Council Library Service has successfully used library spaces for arts performances, workshops and exhibitions since 2011. In 2018, it became an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation. Its target audiences for its performance programme over the 4 years were identified as young people, families, LGBT audiences, those identifying as disabled and finally, existing theatre goers, through a more mainstream offer.

In 2018 St Helens celebrated the 150th anniversary of the borough by producing a one-off festival in partnership with the other St Helens National Portfolio Organisation, Heart of Glass. Author and local boy Frank Cottrell Boyce worked with them to curate this event, co-producing an inspiring, challenging festival that engaged local audiences and ensured literacy was a major feature of the 150th celebrations.

During Refugee Week in 2018, St Helens exhibited work by Turner Prize nominee, Mark Titchner in two libraries. Titchner met regularly with a group who had fled Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia and Zimbabwe to find safety for themselves and their families. The resulting artwork features text messages taken directly from the experiences of refugees and asylum seekers living in the UK.

In 2019 The Cultural Hubs project programmed work as part of Homotopia, the Liverpool City Region LGBTQ+ arts festival.

Recently, Paul Harfleet, an artist known for planting pansies at the sites of homophobic abuse, undertook a week-long residency in St Helens. This included an exhibition, Artist Talk, a book reading and a series of plantings. Paul engaged audiences digitally through a callout, asking for local residents who had experienced homophobic abuse in St Helens. He then planted pansies in identified locations.

In 2020 St Helens collaborated with FACT in Liverpool and Heart of Glass to create a FACTLab within a library. This will support development of digital skills for local artists and provide opportunities for communities to take part in the process of creating digital art.

"Cultural hubs arts in libraries are a lifeline for many people, especially those struggling with social isolation, mental health issues, and socio-economic challenges"
Cultural Hubs Artist

2. **Increased reading and literacy** (Outcome 2)

Indicators

- improvement in England's international literacy rankings

- all library services offering a range of reading/literacy programmes and activities with an increase in the number of children, young people, adults and families participating (both as readers and volunteers) and, as a result, increased reading for pleasure

- stronger partnerships between public libraries and local schools

Activities/ achievements

- BBC's #Lovetoread programme in 2018 and the BBC's year long celebration of literacy and reading, including the Novels that Shaped our World Festival which is supported by a Libraries Connected project, funded by Arts Council England to undertake outreach activities through libraries

- The Reading Agency's reading outcomes framework toolkit project to help define and measure outcomes of reading for pleasure and empowerment and Arts Council England published an evidence review on the benefits of reading for pleasure in April 2020

- ASCEL published a rhyme time quality principles toolkit for libraries delivering pre-school facilitated literacy activities

- The Reading Agency was awarded funding by Arts Council England to pursue an external evaluation of the impact of the Summer Reading Challenge in 2020 (delayed due to Covid-19)

- Hungry Little Minds campaign: the DCMS Libraries team and Taskforce supported the Department of Education to create a working group to support the Hungry Little Minds campaign. The Taskforce brokered the involvement of ASCEL, Libraries Connected, The Reading Agency, Arts Council England, BookTrust and library organisations in the development of resources and the campaign launch. It aims to improve the early literacy and language skills in the years before children start school

- Norfolk County Council was awarded £98,020 from the Libraries Opportunities for Everyone (LOFE) fund to work with volunteers to support emergent readers aged 8+ to develop their skills. Plymouth Libraries' Lunch at the Library project, which was also funded by LOFE, aimed to combat hunger and support literacy over the school holidays

Outcomes achieved or measured

- PIRLS will report the UK's literacy ranking again in 2021

- The Reading Agency's Summer Reading Challenge 2018 evaluation (no longer publicly available) shows that while participation remained static at around 700,000 children participating, over the

past 5 years, there was an 8% drop in participation in 2018. The external impact evaluation of the Summer Reading Challenge is currently on hold due to Coronavirus

- BookTrust's Bookstart, delivered in partnership with public libraries, continues to reach every baby in England and Wales in their first year

Case Study

Norfolk Libraries Reading Pathway Literacy Project

Norfolk Libraries received funding from LOFE to deliver a volunteer-led reading support programme for emergent readers across the county. Full Fact (the independent fact checking charity) states that about 5 million working age adults have 'below-functional' literacy skills in England.

In this project, volunteers support readers to develop their reading skills in one-to-one coaching sessions in libraries. It is based on the premise that anyone who can read fluently can teach a poor or non-reader to read in 6 months or less using the Yes We Can Read book, a one-to-one phonics based workbook. The library service invested in Yes We Can Read readers, Quick Reads, the Reading Ahead scheme and book stock for emergent readers to help people grow confident as they progress on their reading journey. The project worked in partnership with Gatehouse Publishing who publish Yes We Can Read and provided the texts and support resources at a discounted rate. Norfolk Reading Pathway is the first county-wide, cross-organisation implementation of the programme and this has provided proof of concept for a wider roll-out.

Over the course of the project 90 active volunteers delivered one-to-one reading coaching. Over 750 referrals were generated into the scheme and over 110 adults started to learn to read with a volunteer coach in a library. Over 30 schools across Norfolk

engaged with the programme and 484 children age 8+ were given the phonics workbook to use in a school setting with a coach.

The project has also helped Norfolk Libraries to develop their online evaluation tool called IMPACT from a snapshot they did of 59 adult starter learners, which has now been shared with the sector. The initial snapshot showed that at the pre-start interview, 98% reported they were not confident readers and 75% reported they were unable to read at all/very well before starting the programme. By the mid-way review 70% said their reading had improved significantly by this stage. The tool also showed that the greatest number of adults participating in the project as learners are between 25 to 34 years old, followed by adults aged 45-54. 60% of participants were male and 40% female.

'Being part of this has made me even more determined to get my life back on track and get out of the hostel – it's given me a sense of purpose.'

'I have always wanted to be able to read (without being made to feel stupid) and this project is giving me that – and will also give me the opportunity to do/be the things I have always wanted to be.'

'Since I have been reading here, my grandchildren have joined the library. They ask us to read to them books they have borrowed. My son and my daughter both say their daughters (1 each) have come on brilliantly at school since I have been reading to them.'

3. Increased digital access and literacy (Outcome 3)

Indicators

- improved levels of digital literacy in England
- people can get online easily and are supported (where necessary) to complete online activities of their choice, through all

library services providing internet access, training and support, in conjunction with partners

- users understand and make more informed decisions about their safety and security, and use of their personal data online as a result of library activities

- people perceive public libraries as being places they can go to co-create and share expertise using cutting edge technology, for example, through makerspaces

- high quality 24/7 online access, seamlessly integrated with physical aspects of public library services, available through a Single Library Digital Presence

Activities/achievements

- £2.6 million was spent on installing or upgrading Wifi, so that over 99% of libraries in England offered this vital facility by April 2016

- Libraries undertake crucial work to support digital literacy and "digital first" strategies, for example Leeds Libraries' 100% Digital project and tablet loans

- the importance of libraries was recognised in government policy documents including the Culture Is Digital Strategy, Culture White Paper, Internet Safety Strategy green paper and the subsequent Online Harms white paper

- Newsguard: Libraries Connected and ASCEL promoted a rollout of this tool to support the public to access accurate news information across public and school libraries across the country. This has been widely taken up by English public library services

- The Raspberry Pi Foundation, which run Code Clubs and Coder Dojo report that there are over 700 Code Clubs or Coder Dojos registered in libraries across England

- there are now at least 60 makerspaces in libraries across England and the Channel Islands, supported by a range of resources on the GOV.UK website, many of which

were developed using LOFE funding

- work to develop the Single Digital Presence is ongoing, with the most recent report setting out recommendations which are now under development

- the Taskforce has been supporting the Open Data initiative in public libraries

Outcomes achieved or measured

- progress has been made towards developing a Single Digital Presence and an Alpha Testing model is in development, led by the British Library, however this action has not yet been completed

- DCMS analysis of trends in Wifi access in public libraries shows that for the 80 library services with consistent data regarding Wifi access, 90% of their statutory service points – including mobile service points – have public Wifi. Of static service points, 99% offer Wifi. Increasingly, local authorities are ensuring that every service point (even mobile) provides Wifi: 53% of authorities had Wifi in every service point in 2016-2017, an increase from just 18% 3 years earlier

- the Libraries Connected Information and Digital Universal Offer, to which over 95% of library services in England have signed up to, commits to "ensure local communities have access to quality information and digital services, to learn new digital skills and feel safe online"

Case Study

Let's Make Spaces – Warwickshire

In 2017 Warwickshire Libraries conducted a scoping exercise to research the best model for makerspaces in Warwickshire. The aim was for people of all ages, backgrounds and interests not only to have fun creating things – but also to socialise and learn. A launch video outlined the project and ambitions.

Warwickshire submitted a successful bid to the LOFE Fund with match funding agreed by

the County Council. The total project budget was £97,000. A key element of the design brief was to make the Let's Make Spaces look different and exciting but still part of the main library. The library team created taster areas, just outside the Spaces, with glass doors that allow browsing library customers to see inside.

The Let's Make Co-ordinator and Assistant set up a test lab so staff could try out the digital kit in advance. Although some were initially apprehensive, all said they felt much more confident after the test lab training sessions. The first two Let's Make Spaces opened in Spring 2018, in libraries serving some of the county's less advantaged communities. The aim was for the people of Nuneaton and Rugby to feel proud, privileged and inspired to be Warwickshire techno-trailblazers.

Learning from the first few months fed into the development of a third Let's Make Space in Leamington Spa, led to the creation of a Let's Make volunteering role, and stimulated plans for 'Let's Make Lite' – taking digital resources out into community libraries and other public venues. The County Council funded additional facilities and employed a permanent member of staff to co-ordinate the Let's Make activities. Warwickshire's Let's Make Spaces are being used and enjoyed by all kinds of library customers. The evaluation resource included with the funding also helped to demonstrate impact.

4. **Helping everyone achieve their full potential** (Outcome 4)

Indicators

- people recognise the role libraries have played in helping them to achieve their goals
- people would recommend the library as a beneficial place to go to for lifelong learning support and access to resources and materials
- education providers, such as schools and adult education organisations, want to partner with library services to provide extended support (such as homework clubs, ESOL support, class visits, etc)
- through library support, people have more positive perceptions of their ability to participate in, engage with, and function in, today's information society

Activities/ achievements

- Libraries Connected ran a series of 9 workshops in 2018 based around the Learning and Digital Universal Offer and focussing on family learning
- the Living Knowledge Network was created by the British Library and supported by funding from the Arts Council to explore new ways for national and public libraries to work together to share ideas and spark connections between libraries, their collections and their people. It is the only network of its kind in the UK and currently includes over 20 public libraries, the British Library itself, the National Library of Scotland and the National Library of Wales
- in 2019, 391 Fun Palaces took place, and 59% of these were in libraries, providing engaging opportunities for families to learn about science and creativity together
- Arts Council England supported research into Partnerships between public libraries and higher education institutions. The Taskforce funded Libraries Connected to deliver a seminar on this topic which was planned for March 2020 but had to be postponed due to Covid-19
- the LGA is commissioning research in 2020 to further investigate the contribution that cultural organisations, including libraries, can play in lifelong learning and skills redevelopment

Outcomes achieved or measured

- there is a lack of comprehensive data about how far the indicators for this objective have been achieved at this stage

- research into Library Rhyme Times and Maternal Mental Health was received with interest by the Department for Education which has a growing interest in work with early years and the home learning environment

- LibrariesFromHome has been embedded in the Department for Education's home schooling guidance

Case Study

The Hive, Worcestershire Libraries and the University of Worcester

"The Hive is an engine for social change, innovation for a moral purpose. We know what we're doing and why we're doing it and we all share in the common aim of widening opportunities for learning – it's not who you are, it's what you want to do" (Anne Hannaford, Director of Arts and Culture, University of Worcester)

The Hive was the first joint university and public library in Europe. It opened in 2012, after a seven-year planning, development and building process. The Hive was funded through £43 million raised through DCMS Private Finance Initiative (PFI) and £10 million funding from HEFCE. The strategic aim of the project was bringing educational opportunity to a wide audience. The Chief Executive of the County Council and the Vice Chancellor of the university both understood and supported this aim and recognized that by sharing resources they could each gain a better facility for the use of the university and the general public.

The public can access the same books as the students and The Hive is open 90 hours per week, from 8.30 am – 10 pm every day for students and the local community. A full cultural, educational and participatory programme was designed from scratch, to suit every target group from children to students to adults and with the ethos of including the public in student and university activities at the library. Besides the library, the building is home to the Worcestershire Hub – a one stop shop for enquiries about council services, and the Worcestershire archive and archaeology service. Since opening, The Hive has attracted over 60,000 new members, including over 40,000 children and young people, welcomed 6 million visitors and has issued more than 6.5 million books.

The Business Centre is run in the building by the Business Development Manager who is jointly appointed by the university together with the public library service. It supports local businesses through networking breakfasts, surgeries and access to provision from the local Chamber of Commerce, Law School, Business School and the Local Economic Partnership in Worcestershire.

5. **Healthier and happier lives** (Outcome 5)

Indicators

- libraries are perceived as important partners for achieving improved health outcomes in communities by Public Health England, NHS providers, local health bodies, clinical commissioning groups, Sustainability and Transformation Plan Committees, and other health and wellbeing commissioners and providers

- people perceive themselves to have improved wellbeing/to be happier as a result of participating in library activities

- people who are housebound, or who have dementia or autism, and their carers feel more connected and supported to manage in the community, and maintain their independence and wellbeing as a result of their contact with libraries

- library users are enabled to self-care and self-manage their health, participate in shared decision-making with healthcare professionals, and are more health literate

Activities/ achievements

- the NHS and Public Health England (PHE) were were full members of the taskforce which facilitated joint working and the inclusion of public libraries on various health initiatives

- The Reading Agency's Reading Well Books on Prescription initiative benefited from greater visibility among healthcare partners as a result of Taskforce activity

- in 2016 ASCEL launched training to support more libraries to become Autism Friendly and there are an increasing number of Dementia Friendly libraries in partnership with organisations such as the Alzheimers Society

- the Libraries Opportunities for Everyone programme enabled a range of activity which benefited the health of participants such as the development of sensory rooms in libraries and autism-friendly libraries

- Arts Council England published scoping research on The impact of library rhyme times on maternal mental health

- libraries are recognised in the LGA's Social Prescribing handbook

- in 2017 The Reading Agency published a report for ASCEL looking at how the Universal Health offer could support children and families. As a result of the findings, consultants were commissioned to research and develop a range of creative and engaging family learning activities to be used by library staff for events focussing on combating childhood obesity. A toolkit, 'Growing Well' has been published on the ASCEL and Libraries Connected websites

Outcomes achieved or measured

- libraries have been involved in decision-making and planning by Public Health England, for example The Reading Agency and Libraries Connected have been working with Public Health England on the delivery of their planned mental health campaign – Every Mind Matters. Public

Libraries are a critical delivery partner using PHE provided resources and support

- in 2018 the annual Libraries Week took place with a theme of wellbeing. Led by CILIP, over 1000 libraries took part, running a series of activities which helped demonstrate how libraries aid wellbeing by combating loneliness, supporting better mental health and bringing communities together

- the 2017 to 2018 Reading Well Books on Prescription evaluation reported growing usage (nearly 1 million unique borrowers since the scheme inception) and high user satisfaction. This is a useful proxy measure for several of the outcome indicators and demonstrates that this library scheme has had strong impact

- however, there is a lack of national data for other activities supporting health and wellbeing in libraries

Case study

Project Sense – London Borough of Merton

Merton Library Service identified the need to better serve and reach Special Educational Needs and Disability children (SEND) in the borough and to reduce inequality, isolation and barriers towards this audience at a community level. They received £94,826 from Arts Council England's National Lottery Project Grants to create a fully inclusive children's library service across all of Merton's 7 libraries. This included creating a fully inclusive library environment and sensory library area in all 7 libraries, each with a theme such as Space, Ocean, Weather, Prolyl Arctic, Forest, Circus and Jungle. Specialist stock was purchased and a dedicated SEND arts and literature activities programme developed. With a minimum of 2 activities per month per library, Merton Library Service delivered over 14 SEND sessions for children per month.

This project also entailed wider community work, working with schools and partners to break down barriers and perceptions of SEND, reduce isolation and open new

doors of opportunity for SEND children and their families. The project promoted SEND awareness and inclusion and sought to raise awareness in the wider community. During class visits, the library service delivered specialist SEND inclusion and awareness sessions for children attending mainstream schools through sessions during class visits to the library. Library staff also worked with Merton's Adult Learning Service to commission specially designed family learning courses for parents and carers which provide opportunities for further learning or employment and training courses for adults and carers of SEND children.

Over 216 specialist SEND events and activities were planned from December 2019 to December 2020.

Between December 2019 and mid-March 2020, when activities had to be suspended due to the Covid-19 lockdown, 1166 people had already participated in events in the library. There were also 11 SEND school class visits to the libraries with 37 children attending before lockdown.

In April 2020, the service was planning to run the first of their quarterly reviews to obtain documented feedback from questionnaires etc to parents/groups/teachers for feedback. However, lockdown took place and the project was put on hold. The team has received positive verbal feedback, especially from parents of SEND children which suggests that the project is having a strong positive impact on the lives of children with SEND and their carers.

6. **Greater prosperity** (Outcome 6)

Indicators

- people recognise that libraries can provide high-quality advice to help them to start up a business

- businesses recognise that libraries can provide high-quality advice to help them to grow

- people recognise that libraries can provide high-quality advice on access to employment, budgeting skills, and job seeking support

- people recognise the benefits of building skills through volunteering opportunities in the library

Activities/ achievements

- Arts Council England, along with the British Library and DCLG, developed the Enterprising Libraries programme which was funded with £450,000 from the 3 organisations. This initiative, which ran from April 2013 – March 2015, helped 10 libraries establish hubs in their buildings for small businesses and entrepreneurs. This activity was the start of the Business and Intellectual Property Centres (BIPC) set up by the British Library. In March 2020 a budget of £13 million was secured to expand the network further

- Start-ups in London Libraries, a network of free support for start-ups in over 60 public libraries linked to the BIPC network, was set up in partnership with 10 London boroughs

- Libraries Connected is feeding into the High Streets Taskforce and libraries have featured widely in the high street agenda; for example they were highlighted by One Public Estate at the LGA conference in 2017

- more libraries are now working as Growth Hubs – for example, Gloucester libraries used capital funding of £224,000 to create a space for business users in every council-run library in the county

- libraries are also offering innovation hubs, such as the Glass Box in Somerset

- libraries increasingly offer work clubs and employment support, for example in Solihull, Rotherham and Leicestershire

Outcomes achieved or measured

- the BIPC network has grown substantially since 2015. The 3 year evaluation report [Democratising Entrepreneurship](#) shows that in the 3 year period, January 2016 to December 2018, the network supported 43,000 individuals through direct face-to-face activities (including one-to-one clinics, workshops and events), online webinars and live streaming of events and the creation of 12,288 businesses, equivalent to 15 new businesses every working day. 47% of these were created in the region

- CIPFA statistics show a 140% increase in volunteering in public libraries between 2011-2019. [Accreditation](#) of volunteers in libraries is increasingly being adopted to demonstrate how volunteer roles can support future employability

Case study

The British Library's BIPC Network partnership with Make it Your Business

As part of its work to expand the BIPC Network, in 2019 the British Library partnered with non-profit organisation [Make it Your Business](#) to launch a national roadshow of informal talks and networking events for women entrepreneurs. This toured in UK libraries.

Established by entrepreneur, writer and broadcaster Alison Cork, Make It Your Business runs a regular programme of seminars across the country, providing opportunities for women to meet established local female entrepreneurs, learn from their experiences and network with other local aspiring female entrepreneurs in a relaxed and welcoming environment.

The new partnership with the British Library's Business & IP Centre and its National Network of 13 Centres located in major UK libraries saw the 2 organisations launch a specially curated ['Libraries Roadshow'](#) of events drawing from the Network's alumni

of successful female entrepreneurs and ambassadors which began at the Library of Birmingham on 28 June 2019.

7. **Stronger, more resilient communities** (Outcome 7)

Indicators

- libraries are acknowledged and celebrated as a vital part of community life, promoting independence and resilience

- the profile of local library users reflects the makeup of their community

- libraries are recognised for leading and supporting activities that help to build understanding between different generations and cultures within the local community

- local people are aware of the information and services available via the library and are choosing to use them

- libraries are being chosen by councils and other commissioners as the first choice channel to provide access to a range of public information and services

Activities/ achievements

- public libraries have been mentioned in a number of government policy reports, including [Integrated Communities Strategy green paper](#), [A Connected Society: a strategy for tackling loneliness](#) and the [Civil society strategy](#) and were mentioned by the Prime Minister as ["the institutions that bring communities together"](#)

- public libraries are increasingly seen as community 'hubs' and many are [co-located](#) with a range of different services, including leisure, GPs, post offices and other services. In some cases the Taskforce team directly brokered new co-location initiatives, for example the co-location of [Helston Library](#) with a Jobcentre Plus which happened as a result of conversations arranged with the Department for Work and Pensions

- the Arts Council Director, Libraries and representatives from Medway libraries were invited to present to the One Public Estate (OPE) teams in February 2020, exploring opportunities for co-location with other public services

- the Taskforce and the Ministry of Justice supported a 3 month pilot across a number of libraries in 2 London boroughs to provide dedicated work spaces (commuter hubs) for use by civil servants. Based on its success, the scheme was extended throughout the South East in 2017- 19

- the role of libraries in placemaking has also been recognised, especially in new library developments such as Halifax library and Storyhouse in Chester

Outcomes achieved or measured

- research funded by Arts Council England suggests that situating libraries as 'community hubs' co-located with other services has benefits for the community and for the long-term sustainability of libraries

- taskforce informal research suggests that there has been an increasing recognition of the role of libraries in integrating communities. A number of councils, such as Norfolk and Warwickshire, now see libraries as the 'face of council in communities'. This approach has been encouraged in conversations, workshops and peer challenges led by the Taskforce

Case study

Crayford Library co-location with a Post Office

Crayford Library, in the London Borough of Bexley, was originally opened in 2012. A new Post Office inside Crayford Library opened for business on 4 December 2017. Crayford had been without a Post Office for over a year since the previous local Post Office closed in July 2016. The Council believed that having the 2 important community hubs in one place will improve delivery of both services. Since the co-location, the Council has seen a marked increase in library visitor numbers. Michael Ellis MP (then libraries Minister) officially opened the Post Office in March 2018.

Crayford Library is now busier in terms of visits than any library other than Central Library – and this is despite being the smallest of the Council managed libraries. It is now busier than the far larger Sidcup and Erith libraries. The increase in visits from 2017/18 to 2018/19 is 83.4%. Crayford Library also increased book issues 2 years running – no other Bexley library did this – and in 2018/19 the percentage increase was greater than any other library. This shows that post office footfall converts to usage of library services.

Crayford Library also substantially increased the number of new members joining – in both 2017/18 and 2018/19 this was a greater percentage increase than any other Bexley library.

4. Legacy and building on the achievements of the Taskforce

While the Taskforce formally ended on 31 March 2020, DCMS provided a further year of funding for the team based at Arts Council England to manage the ongoing Taskforce funded work, to convene a core group of library stakeholders and to assist in the delivery of in upcoming strategic development opportunities. Arts Council England is the National Development Agency for public libraries and is a Non-Departmental Public Body of DCMS.

Revised Taskforce Action Plan

In December 2018 the Taskforce agreed a revised action plan with outcomes to support the sector. The new objectives were:

- to work towards a strengthened library sector
  - achieved by the Public library skills strategy reboot
  - achieved by focused workforce development on fundraising and commercial skills
- to secure sufficient resources for public libraries, create new partnerships with other appropriate bodies and produce evidence for local and national investment into public library services
  - achieved by brokering partnerships between central government departments
  - promoting partnership working between public libraries and the higher education sector
  - collecting and collating impact evidence
  - creating a body of impact metrics
- to have a shared vision for library service delivery, including a coherent and consistent interpretation of the Public Library Act 1964

  - by enabling a systematic review of public libraries including involvement in the Libraries Blueprint and Single Digital Presence work
  - by establishing brand awareness
  - by developing the initial steps towards a potential accreditation scheme for public libraries underpinned by the 1964 Act
- To maintain a local government focus and a local funding agenda
  - by advocating the case for public libraries to local authority CEOs and senior managers
  - by developing a strong sector support offer at local/regional level

DCMS role in Taskforce

DCMS will be regularly updated on progress on the support programmes for libraries being run by Arts Council England through this funding. In addition, DCMS has retained:

- the coordination of other strategic work on libraries in Government (e.g. the Libraries Transformation Fund, preparations for fiscal events such as Spending Reviews and Budgets, and wider policy work)
- 2 strategy policy posts from the same DCMS programme budget, to support the above and leading on the delivery of elements being led by DCMS (Open Data and a Review of Ambition)
- the monitoring of other elements being delivered through Arts Council England as the National Libraries Development Agency

Steering group

The core steering group consists of CILIP, Libraries Connected, the Local Government Association, the British Library and the former Chair of the Libraries Taskforce (representing local government, which is a key stakeholder

and delivery decision-maker in relation to public libraries in England). The group will meet every 2 months and will work with wider sector partners as appropriate such as:

• BBC

• Higher Education establishments

• Public Health England

• the Reading Agency

• Book Trust

The core group, known as the English Public Library Strategic Working Group (EPL) will also deliver against long term actions in the Action Plan and support activity funded through Arts Council England's Library Development Fund. EPL will continue to broker and build relationships between the library sector and potentially useful existing and future partners.

Review of Ambition

DCMS will lead on the scoping and delivery of a successor document to Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries 2016-2021. Consultation with the sector is planned to begin in 2020/21.

Sector development

Libraries Transformation Programme

In October 2019 DCMS announced the Cultural Investment Fund which, at the time, was the biggest investment in culture for a generation. This will be invested in a range of heritage and cultural projects, including an element for libraries focused on upgrading buildings and technology.

Arts Council England will manage a Libraries Transformation Fund (LIF) on behalf of DCMS as part of this work, which, through the focus on upgrading buildings and technology, will ensure that libraries across England are better placed to respond to the changing ways people are using them. It is expected that this fund will be launched in 2021, depending on

the long-term impact of Covid 19 on delivery plans. Arts Council England will establish an expert advisory panel to act as advisers and ensure momentum continues with sector organisations.

Although currently under development, the kind of projects expected will be those which invest in library infrastructure. This could be physical, digital or both, but projects should have the potential to transform a local service by

• increasing flexible use of space

• improving shared community spaces

• creating opportunities for more entrepreneurial use of these buildings

• upgrading or enhancing IT so libraries can maintain and enhance their ability to provide comprehensive digital access and support to their local communities

Regional support offer

The Taskforce has funded Libraries Connected to take forward two of the recommendations from the Regional Support Offer – Business Case Summary. Working with the Taskforce team at Arts Council England and consultancy Activist Group, Libraries Connected has piloted two core strands of activity in 2020: a programme of Libraries Connected regional network development and an Expert Bank which allows individual library services to access fully funded expert support to deliver change within their service.

The network development strand of the pilot programme will support:

• the North East and Yorkshire and Humber regions to develop their governance models, supporting them to operate more efficiently and collaboratively with consistent policies and procedures

• the North West and Eastern regions in their strategic planning which will support them to move to the next stage of collaboration through developing a plan of activities and monitoring its progress

- the London region to help its network progress existing plans for a collaborative project which will support homeless and vulnerably housed people with information, advice, signposting and support

The Expert Bank pilot strand will support:

- Leicestershire to strengthen its ability to evidence the contribution of the library service within the Council and with partners
- Haringey to develop new forms of service integration and partnership working
- Worcestershire to refine an aspect of its transformation programme, such as scoping a review of the network or new operating model; or new service design

DCMS funding will support this work during 2020/21 as part of its transition year funding provided to Arts Council England.

Public Library Skills Strategy refresh

The Public Library Skills Strategy aims to guide the development of information and library skills, knowledge and qualifications in the public library sector in England between now and 2030. The Libraries Taskforce provided funding to revisit the strategy to ensure that it reflects the skills required in a rapidly changing environment. A programme board with representatives from Libraries Connected, CILIP and the Libraries Taskforce was established in August 2019 to take forward the recommendations in the report.

Between January and March 2020, 3 seminars were delivered in Manchester, London and Birmingham to help library services understand how they might best embed the Library, information and archive services assistant apprenticeship standard into their library services. 60 library staff members attended across the 3 sessions which were led by Julie Bell from Lancashire Library Service and included practical guidance on how library services could recruit and train apprentices.

The programme board also facilitated the delivery of a seminar at Libraries Connected AGM in December on the CILIP's Ethical Framework and on the importance of ethics in guiding decision-making on a daily basis in service delivery.

Library data

DCMS will lead on introducing an open data schema for use by the library sector. The draft schema has been drawn up and tested with workshop and guidance on how to use it and a wider rollout is planned later in the year.

Communications and advocacy

The Taskforce Twitter account was retired in June 2019, when Arts Council England took on the work of the Taskforce. Tweets relating to Taskforce activity are now tweeted from @ace_national and the 5 Arts Council area accounts, and amplified by the Taskforce partners.

The Taskforce blog was also retired at that point, but is still available on GOV.UK as is the DCMS Libraries team blog, so previous Taskforce blogs remain available. Information about the English Public Library Strategic Working Group (EPL) is available on the Arts Council's website and will be updated when required. Reports and publications are available in a libraries resource section alongside blog posts, although the formal record of the Taskforce and its work will remain on GOV.UK.

Activity will continue to be undertaken from April 2020 to highlight the work of libraries and advocate for their public funding to local and central government. This will include:

- securing positive media coverage: for example Libraries Week
- responding to media queries
- commissioning, writing and publishing blog posts on the Arts Council website
- producing briefings for internal and external stakeholders

- the effective use of social media and the gathering of assets such as advocate quotes about the importance of libraries

Regular updates to all stakeholders will continue through various communication channels delivered by Arts Council England. Arts Council England will continue to work with other library partners such as CILIP, Libraries Connected and The British Library on communications, to ensure the consistency and complementarity of messages.

The Communications Manager will also work with internal stakeholders to ensure that libraries are embedded in Arts Council communications activity as it moves forward with its 2020-2030 strategy. The Arts Council also let the library sector and other interested parties know that the work begun by the Taskforce will continue for a further 12 months through online and social media activity and emailing stakeholders.

Appendix 1: Taskforce Membership and Representation

Member Organisation	Represented by	Dates
DCMS	Kiera Shaw Dominic Lake Simon Richardson Kate McGavin/Helen Williams Louise Smith Sheila Bennett	2015 2015-17 2015-19 2017-18 2019-20 2018-20
LGA	Rebecca Cox Laura Caton Ian Leete Cllr Matthew Lee Cllr Tom Hollis	2015-20 2015-16 2016-20 2018-19 2020
Arts Council England	Brian Ashley, Director of Libraries Paul Bristow Sue Williamson, Director of Libraries	2015-17 2017-18 2018-20
Society of Chief Librarians/ Libraries Connected	Ciara Eastell, Devon Libraries Neil MacInnes, Manchester Libraries Mark Freeman, Stockton-on-Tees Isobel Hunter, CEO Libraries Connected	2015-16 2016-18 2018-20 2018-20
CILIP	Nick Poole, CEO	2015-20
British Library	Roly Keating Liz White	2015-20 2015-20
The Reading Agency	Sue Wilkinson, CEO Karen Napier, CEO	2015-19 2019-20
Booktrust	Diana Gerald, CEO	2019-20
BBC	Jane Ellison Peter Rippon	2015-19 2019-20
NHS England	Dr Neil Churchill, OBE	2017-20
Public Health England	Felix Greaves Clare Perkins	2015-18 2018-20
cCLOA	Iain Varah Polly Hamilton Julie Russell	2015-20 2018-19 2019-20

Chief Executive, Northamptonshire CC (Chair 2015-17)	Dr Paul Blantern	2015-17
Chief Executive, LB Newham (Chair 2017-18)	Kim Bromley-Derry	2017-18
Chief Executive, Warrington BC (Chair 2018-20)	Steven Broomhead	2017-20
Chief Executive, LB Camden	Mike Cook	2015-16
Chief Executive, Newcastle City Council	Pat Ritchie	2015-16
Chief Executive, Cumbria CC	Katherine Fairclough	2018-20
Chief Executive, LB of Wandsworth and Richmond	Paul Martin	2018-20
Interim Chief Executive, Suffolk CC	Sue Cook	2018-19

Taskforce Team members	Role	Dates
Kathy Settle	Taskforce Chief Executive	2015-18
Anna Wadsworth	Secretariat Lead	2015-16
Sheila Bennett	Policy and Secretariat Lead Interim Head of TF team	2016-18 2018
Julia Chandler	Communications Lead	2015-18
Charlotte Lane	Project Lead	2015-18
Foluke Oshin	Business Support	2015-18
Sophie Lancaster	Senior Manager	2018-20
Jenna Birley	Governance and Business Support Officer	2018-20
Sean Kelly	Regional Development Officer	2018-20
Leah Mason	Business Support Apprentice	2019-20
Fiona Davidson	Communications Manager	2018-20

Taskforce Secondee	Project	Organisation	Dates
Sue Wills	Central government advocacy	Poole Libraries	2015-16
Sharon Kirkpatrick	Toolkits	Dorset Libraries	2015-16
Alyn Thomas	Communications	Kent Libraries	2017-18
Nick Partridge	Outcomes measurement	Sheffield Libraries	2016-17
Darren Smart	Digital inclusion projects	Kent Libraries	2015-16
Stephen Howell	Toolkits	Durham Libraries	2017-18
Ollie Andrews	Health and libraries	NHS England	2017
Joan O'Bryan	Data analysis	Cambridge MPhil	2018

Appendix 2: Overview of progress against all 25 Ambition Priority Actions (APAs) and Challenges

No.	APA	Achieved	Relevant Products	Commentary
1.	Ensure that the 'Libraries First' approach is promoted to central government, local councils and partners Develop a programme aimed at supporting library staff to work better with and influence decision-makers to secure local support and funding	Yes/ongoing	Established as priority action in Ambition – for assessment see Section 3.7 of main report	Ongoing as new initiatives arise Linked to Outcomes 4, 6 and 7
2.	Define and publish a core dataset – creating a transparent and automated (where possible) process to gather and share it	Partially – core dataset created but processes to disseminate still being developed	Established as priority action in Ambition – for assessment see Section 3.7 of main report	Linked to Outcomes 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7
3.	Establish current baselines and agree progress indicators for all 7 Outcomes and publish them	Yes	Established as priority action in Ambition – for assessment see Section 3.7 of main report	
4.	Identify and commission any further research work needed to measure the 7 Outcomes to be used as a shared evidence base by all, connecting to other research frameworks or other sectors where relevant	Partially – ongoing	See section 3.6 of main report	

5.	Continue to seek opportunities for national funding, partnerships and/or support in kind for existing and new major programmes	Yes – ongoing	See section 3.1 of main report	Linked to Outcomes 6 and 7.
6.	Work with others (including the devolved administrations where relevant) to develop a joined-up programme of promotional activity based on commonly agreed messages, to promote public awareness of what public libraries can do for them, and increase engagement with them	Yes – ongoing	See section 3.6 of main report	Linked to all 7 Outcomes
7.	Develop a set of communications messages and resources (case studies, factsheets, images, etc) that everyone speaking for or promoting libraries can use – this will support championing libraries to decision-makers and broader publicity	Yes	See section 3.5 of main report	Now part of established communications plan, led by the Communications Manager, Libraries Taskforce at ACE. Linked to Outcome 6

| 8. | Reflect commonly agreed messages about library services consistently throughout interviews, placed editorial and other media, including online coverage, using nationally-produced communication assets to promote public awareness of what libraries can do for them and to increase usage | Partially – ongoing | See section 3.5 of main report | Linked to Outcome 6

Not as fully complete as other actions because consistency of message was not always possible due to distinct TF member organisational priorities. |
| 9. | Identify and break down any barriers to innovation that stop library staff promoting their work effectively, through guidance and sharing common materials and good practice | Partially | See section 3.5 of main report | Linked to Outcomes 2, 4 and 7. This investigation was started by a member of the communications sub-group, who ran a survey inviting people to share their experience. Over 120 responded, but these were mostly people who had good experience and the barriers shared were issues around capacity, capability and skills, rather than technical barriers. This also reflects comments made during sector forums. |
| 10. | Publish a toolkit on how to carry out evidence-based, long-term and sustainable planning, based on established sector good practice, case studies and the 7 design principles | Yes | See sections 3.3 and 3.4 of main report | Linked to Outcome 7 |

11.	Undertake an assessment of the long term financial sustainability and service quality of different delivery models – including DCMS funded research into community managed libraries	Yes	See section 3.4 of main report and section 3.7 for research details	Linked to Outcomes 6 and 7 Focus is on the CML research and work to help establish the network.
12.	Ensure that the projects delivered through the £4 million Libraries: Opportunities for Everyone Innovation Fund: • support those people living in the most disadvantaged areas, providing them with opportunities they might not otherwise have access to, and • that they are rigorously evaluated to build an evidence base that can be used to capture learning, encourage wider adoption of successful approaches, and secure further investment	Yes	See section 3.2 of main report	Linked to Outcomes 1, 2, 4 and 5

13.	Develop and promote a sector-led benchmarking framework that libraries can choose to use to support self-assessment, planning and improvement	Yes – ongoing	See section 3.7 of main report	Linked to Outcomes 4, 6 and 7 Although the benchmarking toolkit was created, uptake has been low due to unfamiliarity with the method and a requirement for support to implement it.
14.	Consider whether a voluntary sector-led accreditation scheme would add value	Partially – ongoing	See section 4 of main report	Linked to Outcomes 6 and 7
15.	Help library services to exploit opportunities for joint working with other councils and/ or partners, as well as tackling barriers to doing this	Yes	Significant increase in applications for funding programmes that include libraries as key partners/ delivery centres including ACE Project Grants, Engaging Libraries and others. DCMS/Ministry of Justice commuter hubs	Linked to Outcome 1, 3, 4, 6 and 7
16.	Work with local councils to investigate new approaches to procurement including considering where national frameworks can promote consistency and reduce costs and overheads	Partially-ongoing		Linked to Outcomes 6 and 7 The Taskforce team did some early work on this and funded work to enable Libraries Connected to bid on Government frameworks on behalf of all library services but this was not fully developed during the lifetime of the Taskforce and focused more on local arrangements.

17.	Discuss with suppliers current and future needs in library services to encourage the development of innovative approaches to provision of services	No/Ongoing	Support and promotion of the Universal Offers – including the refreshed offers published in 2019 (see sections 3.3 and 3.4 of the main report)	Linked to all 7 Outcomes After discussions with the sector it was decided not to progress a common library management system specification
18.	Identify and promote examples of good practice and research from the UK and overseas through the Taskforce toolkits as well as through Taskforce member activity, blogs, networking and training. These will include governance models, service integration and co-location, approaches to library service funding including income generation, partnership working and community engagement	Yes	See sections 3.4 and 3.5 of the main report. Also note actions taken forward by Libraries Connected in their Libraries Blueprint work and by CILIP in their international working programme	Linked to Outcomes 4 and 6
19.	Work through the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) and the Society of Chief Librarians (now Libraries Connected) to produce a Public Library Skills Strategy	Yes – ongoing	See section 3.4 of the report for work completed and section 4 for ongoing work.	Linked to Outcome 4

20.	Explore the feasibility of a shared national digital platform for public libraries in England (Single Library Digital Presence) and then identify ways to develop, operate and fund it	Yes – ongoing	See section 3.4 of the main report	Linked to Outcome 3
21.	Support the extension of partnership projects such as the BFI Mediatheques and makerspaces	Yes – ongoing	See section 3.4 of main report	Linked to Outcomes 6 and 7
22.	Review progress against the actions in this document at every Taskforce meeting	Yes	Six month progress reports	
23.	Produce a high level, narrative progress update (including updates on the Outcome progress indicators) to ministers and the LGA's Culture, Tourism and Sport Board every 6 months (currently April and October) and publish it on GOV.UK	Yes	Six month progress reports	

| 24. | Review Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016-2021 and its action plan every year to make sure it still reflects the challenges facing library services and their ambitions | Yes | Action plan to March 2020 | |
| 25. | Taskforce members and their organisations will identify further ways to add value and share good practice, and regularly review whether any changes are required in capacity and capability at the national level | Yes | See minutes of Taskforce Meetings and Six Month Progress Reports for documentation of this | |

In [Ambition](), the Taskforce also referenced a series of challenges they would put to local and central government. Progress against these is assessed below:

Central Government Challenge	Progress Assessment
CG1 Acknowledge the role that public libraries can play in achieving the 7 Outcomes and to reflect this in their policy and other strategic documents (where relevant)	See section 3.2 of report – the role of public libraries has been acknowledged across a range of government departments and their profile as key delivery support partners for policy and initiatives has been raised.
CG2 Look first at whether the public library network would provide an effective, value-for-money delivery mechanism for services where public engagement within communities is needed to achieve policy outcomes; and, if it does, to ensure resources are provided to support this activity	The Taskforce provided funding to Libraries Connected to bid for the Government Assisted Digital Framework on behalf of the sector. They were successful and a range of library services across the country now offer Visa Application processing support on behalf of the Home Office. The Libraries First work also supported this, however, there is still scope for this to be further extended.
CG3 Support remote access to e-books, without charge and with appropriate compensation for authors	See section 3.3 of this report – DCMS has extended PLR to e-books guaranteeing that they will continue to be available via the public library network
CG4 [In conjunction with the Taskforce] support the extension of partnership projects such as BFI Mediatheques and makerspaces	See section 3.4 of this report – significant progress has been made on provision of makerspaces through public libraries, especially via Libraries Opportunity For Everyone (LOFE) funding.
CG5 Provide and fund enhanced advice and support to encourage library services to explore and, where right for them, spin out their service as a public service mutual	See section 3.4 of this report – both toolkits and dedicated support via the library development offer have been provided

Local Government Challenge	Progress Assessment
LG1 Adopt a 'Libraries First' approach when considering how to deliver information and services into local communities, and promote this approach to local partners; and where the public library network is chosen as an effective and efficient method, ensure resources are provided to support this activity	See analysis of outcome 6 in section 3.7 of the report – there are examples where this is the case, particularly where public libraries are seen as community hubs. However, this is not always the case because of competing local priorities.
LG2 Reflect commonly agreed positive messages about library services consistently throughout interviews, placed editorial and other media (including online coverage), using nationally-produced communication assets to promote public awareness of what libraries can do for them and to increase usage	The LGA provided support for this, for example in the article they placed in the media for Libraries Week 2019 (see section 3.5 of the main report). However this was not possible to achieve across the whole of local government which is very diverse and autonomous in the messages that it puts across.
LG3 Plan their public library services (including consideration of cross-boundary issues) using the toolkit provided by the Taskforce	The strategic planning toolkit was viewed 4,578 times between 30 August 2017 and 31 March 2020. DCMS used this toolkit in their statutory guidance for Library Services which promoted uptake. However it is not possible to say that all local authorities in England have adopted this approach.
LG4 Adopt, collect and share data as defined in the core dataset by the Taskforce	The core dataset has been developed although it has not yet been widely adopted by the sector. There is anecdotal evidence that certain library services are using it and that decision-makers are referring to it to support decision-making.
LG5 Use the sector-led benchmarking framework for self-assessment planning and improvement	See section 3.4 of this report. Although this has been disseminated, take up has been low because library staff would like support to adopt this new approach. The Regional Support Offer should provide the help and advice that library services need to adopt this more widely.

LG6 Identify and share examples of good practice and research in their area with peers and the Taskforce Team for showcasing (such as use in blogs and speeches) and for incorporation into its toolkits; and consider adopting examples from elsewhere	The Taskforce published a large number of guest blogs from library service officers and decision-makers and a range of conferences, seminars, etc to promote libraries. In addition, the Peer Challenge process engaged local authority officers and councillors who also volunteered to support future Peer Challenges, adding to the bank of expertise available to the sector. The Peer Challenges also allowed Heads of Library Services to act as expert peers on other service challenges, such as children's services. This provided a boost to the profile of the library service in the host council, as well as strengthening the skills of the Head of Service contributing to the challenge.
LG7 Identify any barriers to adoption of new or more efficient ways of working where national support may help to break them down, and share these with the Taskforce Team	This challenge related to the hypothesis of technical or skills barriers to comms, which was not found to be a major issue for the local government sector. The LGA provided information and advice to the Taskforce over the course of the regular meetings, so that it could better understand the constraints on local government and respond to these. This feedback, along with the extensive consultation undertaken (see sections 3.1, 3.4 and 3.5 of the main report) was an invaluable resource for the effective delivery of Taskforce objectives.
LG8 Exploit opportunities for joint working with other councils and/or partners	Although this took place during the lifetime of the Taskforce, for example, in joint purchasing consortia, shared services and combined structures, there is limited evidence to link this directly to Taskforce actions beyond the general support and advocacy provided by the Libraries Taskforce team.
LG9 Inform DCMS Libraries Team about any proposals to make changes to their library service prior to public engagement, having made plans to consult their communities, considered a range of options and assessed the potential impact of their proposals	DCMS issued superintendence guidance was first published in 2018 and updated in June 2020 in the light of Covid-19. This has enabled many local authorities to engage proactively with the department about their service reform plans prior to implementation. The number of pre-superintendence conversations taking place with DCMS has risen considerably over the time the Taskforce has been running.

LG10 Use the Public Library Skills Strategy to inform the learning and development offer they provide to their councillors and senior officers, library workforce and volunteers	See section 3.4 of this report for more information about the development of the Public Library Skills Strategy. A number of workshops and tools have been produced to support the adoption of the strategy and the new Transforming Libraries Leadership programme should support even wider adoption.
LG11 Explore alternative forms of delivery and financing before making any reductions in library services, and exploit opportunities for joint working with other councils and/or partners to maintain and enhance service delivery	The Taskforce tried to encourage more entrepreneurial approaches, for example by running income generation workshops and promoting commissioning more widely (see section 3.4 of the report). These have been positively received by the sector and there are increasing examples of more entrepreneurial approaches being taken, however parts of the sector have not yet taken this up. There has also been good take up of the grants provided by OCS to library services to undertake options appraisals.
LG12 Actively explore how they can generate and use alternative forms of funding and financing in addition to using national funding schemes that are available	There are examples, particularly among Public Service Mutuals, of innovative approaches to funding and financing however this is an area that still requires significant development.

Appendix 3: Achievement of Project Objectives: Review of Action Plan December 2018 to March 2020

The Taskforce Action Plan was revised in December 2018 to focus supporting front line service transformation with additional investment from partners

Action Plan	Achieved	Owner	Relevant Products	Commentary
Agree new action plan December 2018 to March 2020	Yes Adopted December 2018	Libraries Taskforce	See Arts Council England's Taskforce website	The Taskforce agreed in November 2018 that the action plan needed to be reviewed and updated with outcomes.
Review of Government Digital Services contract and concept	Yes	LC		Complete. Linked to Outcome 3
Define a shared proposition for public libraries that sets out what they are, the unique value they provide and encourage the sector to use this messaging with the public and stakeholders	Yes	ACE/LC/ CILIP/ Carnegie	Libraries Blueprint	Next steps being considered. Linked to Outcomes 1,2,4,5 and 7
Develop and deliver a successful Libraries Week campaign which promotes public and political engagement with libraries	Yes	CILIP/ LC/ACE/ British Library/ DCMS	October 2019 Libraries Week	Complete for 2019. Linked to Outcome 2
Deliver report impact data research into the regional Business and Intellectual Property Centres (BIPC)	Yes	ACE/BL		Complete. Linked to Outcome 6
Develop a solid support offer at local or regional level	Yes	ACE/ LC// LGA	Regional Support Offer	Completed Additional reviews are planned. Linked to Outcome 4, 6 and 7
Review progress against Ambition	Yes	All	This paper Minutes Progress Reports	Complete
Produce progress reports for review by Taskforce members	Yes	ACE	Progress Reports	Complete

Provide accountability and transparency of Taskforce activities	Yes	ACE/DCMS	Action Plan Minutes	Complete
Develop and implement a programme of data-driven advocacy for public libraries in partnership with EveryLibrary	Yes	CILIP/ACE	EveryLibrary	Review of activity June 2020 Clear remit to examine whether a model successful in the USA could be adapted to suit the political landscape in the UK. Linked to Outcome 6
Develop Taskforce CSR bid and finalise/strengthen evidence base for the 'case for support' for the SR proposal	Yes	DCMS		Ongoing, prep for next CSR Award of CIF; libraries element included to be administered by ACE
Develop impact metrics (framework). Roll out impact metrics and encourage adoption	Yes – evidence based strategic planning toolkit	DCMS		Ongoing. Linked to Outcome 7
Explore the potential for new governance and delivery models for the public library sector to ensure a quality public library service for all in the context of restricted funding	Yes – guidance produced	LC, CILIP, ACE/LGA	Libraries Blueprint Delivery Models Toolkit	Linked to Blueprint and governance models. Resourced from existing staffing and TF member organisations separate funding. Linked to Outcome 7

Appendix 4: Taskforce Events and Communications Reach Statistics

Masterclass	Date	Attendees	Follow-up
Sector forums x5: Birmingham, Bristol, Idea Store Whitechapel, Newcastle City Library,	January 2017	277	Blogs published on each workshop session
Alternative Delivery Models x3: York Explore Library Learning Centre, British Library, Beeston Library	March and Dec 2017	95	Blogs published sharing findings from workshop. DCMS funded toolkit into Alternative Delivery Models
Income Generation x2: The British Library, Nottingham Central Library	May 2017	75	Shared learning in blog
Makerspaces x3: Canada Water Library, Leeds Central Library, Oxfordshire County Library	2017-18	144	Blog, more detailed learning shared to participants and on Innovators Network, guidance page on GOV.UK
Strategic Planning and benchmarking framework x2: Canada Water Library, Leeds Central Library	Nov 2017	55	Benchmarking blog Strategic planning blog and strategic planning toolkit
Creative Thinking x2: Canada Water Library, Manchester Central Library	2017-18	31	Blog
Applying for Funding x4: Lincoln Central Library, Greenwich Centre Library, Bristol Junction 3 Library and Learning Centre, Newcastle City Library	Feb- March 2018	109	Round up blog and GOV.UK guidance page, handbook produced for participants
Making an Impact x2: Holborn Library, Barnsley Central Library	August 2018	90	Blogs published covering each session
Evaluation x4: Storyhouse, Exeter Library, Newcastle City Library, Idea Store Whitechapel	March 2019	116	Creation of Evaluation resource pack

Communications analytics

Toolkit / guidance	Analytics – Page views to 31 March 2020
Applying for funding Published 9 May 2018	6,802
Strategic Planning of library services Published 30 August 2017	4,578
Community Managed Libraries: good practice toolkit and case studies Published 23 March 2016	29,458
Libraries: Alternative Delivery Models toolkit Published 28 March 2017	73,448
Libraries Shaping the Future: good practice toolkit and case studies Published 16 December 2015	37,215
Makerspaces and libraries Published 18 August 2017	24,081
Benchmarking Framework for library services Published 15 September 2017	4,848

Twitter @LibsTaskforce (ran from August 2015 – June 2019)
4,463 followers

Libraries Taskforce blog (ran from August 2015 – June 2019)

- 364 posts
- 657 subscribers
- 517,176 total page views
- 252,367 individual visitors
- The 5 most popular posts were about:
  o income generation for public libraries
  o RNIB talking books go free
  o New newsletter for people who work in libraries
  o Introducing Libraries Deliver
  o Increasing reading and literacy

Website: Libraries Taskforce

All analytics are from 20 March 2015 – 31 March 2020

329,992 total page views

Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016 to 2021

Between publication on 20 March 2015 and 31 March 2020 it was viewed online over 71,389 times.

Libraries Deliver Newsletter (September 2017 to December 2018) –
16 newsletters published, designed for frontline staff to highlight national initiatives

Number of subscribers (many were team/admin emails) – 655

Flickr

- free to use library images group now contains 1443 photos
- Libraries Taskforce account ran from August 2015 – August 2018
  (now owned by DCMS Libraries Team)
- 1,150 photos published during Libraries Taskforce ownership
- 263,500 views

NB. The web analytics process changed towards the end of the life of the Taskforce, so total figures given above should be regarded as minimum number of views

Arts Council England Libraries Taskforce Communications statistics (Jan 2019-End Mar 2020)

Webpage: https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/supporting-libraries/libraries-taskforce
views = 1,810

Blog: https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/blog/how-libraries-help-combat-loneliness-0
Views = more than 2,000

Twitter: Libraries Week 2019 received good engagement on the Arts Council's 6 Twitter accounts (36,785 impressions on the national account)

Appendix 5: Body of work to carry over to transition year 2020/21

Action Plan	Achieved	Relevant Products	Commentary and budget requirement to continue
Develop an updated public library skills strategy	Ongoing	Public Libraries Skills Strategy published in 2017 Blueprint	Programme board established. The focus is on consolidating work in the existing programme plan, especially with the new library apprenticeship standard, professional ethics and library leadership (through the short leadership course and mentoring managed by Libraries Connected and CILIP) On target Linked to Outcomes 4, 6 and 7
Fundraising and commercial skills support package for the sector to build resilience	Ongoing	none	Devise a tender for training and support to enable the sector to improve its fundraising and commercial skills. Roll out training and support once devised. Evaluate effectiveness of support Linked to Outcome 6
Regional Support Offer Develop a peer development and support offer to enable the sector to reflect on practice and improve	Yes, phase 1 complete	Regional Support model and Libraries Blueprint	Phase 2 being implemented. This is one of the 7 proposals within Libraries Blueprint Regional Development Officer is currently supporting phase 2. Senior Manager is a member of the steering group to support direction of travel. Link to LGA/ACE Peer Review programme Linked to Outcome 7
Develop and implement a programme of data-driven advocacy for public libraries in partnership with EveryLibrary	Yes	EveryLibrary	Review of activity June 2020 will confirm any additional funding requirements. Linked to Outcome 7

Support public libraries to strengthen and develop international collaborations (e.g. LKN visit to China)	Ongoing	Working Internationally	Board established, ACE Director, Libraries is a member Packaged with Leadership and PLSS work Review December 2020 – on going Linked to Outcome 6
Strengthen existing relationships with potential funders and build new relationships to unlock funding and consider efficiencies	Ongoing		With central government departments Develop partnerships with charitable funders Develop a strategic partnership and plan with Higher Education Ongoing Within existing resources Linked to Outcome 6
Develop Taskforce CSR bid and finalise/ strengthen evidence base for the 'case for support' for the SR proposal	Yes		Ongoing, prep for next CSR Within existing resources Linked to Outcome 7
Open Data	Ongoing		Introduced the proposed schema in its current state, what we anticipate will happen with it next and what we would want attendees to do as early testers. On going Linked to Outcome 5, 6 and 7
Establish a research strategy to identify critical areas for research with joint funding with partners to deliver.	Partially	TF report June 2019	Work up how to gather impact on how libraries positively impact on national agendas: e.g. Employability, Health & Wellbeing, Literacy and impact of libraries on early years, the value citizens place on the library in their areas. Use convening power to develop a wider research programme and joint activity Linked to Outcomes 2, 3, 4 and 5

The Single Digital Presence	Yes – ongoing	Digital Transformation	Consideration on recommendations to consider Linked to Outcomes 3 and 6
Explore the potential for new governance and delivery models for the public library sector to ensure a quality public library service for all in the context of restricted funding	Yes – ongoing	Libraries Blueprint	Linked to Blueprint and governance models Linked to Outcomes 6 and 7
Define a shared proposition for public libraries that sets out what they are and the unique value they provide and encourage the sector to use this messaging with the public and stakeholders	Yes	Libraries Blueprint	Next steps being considered Linked to Outcomes 1, 2 3, 4, 5 and 7
Develop and implement a Taskforce comms strategy that highlights a shared national vision for public libraries	Yes	Social Media cards Advocates Joint communications strategy Shared comms lines Refreshed websites: Libraries Connected Arts Council England	Ongoing.
Explore the development of a sector-led accreditation scheme based in clearly defined standards of service to support the understanding of the 1964 Libraries Act	Partially – ongoing	Libraries Blueprint	August 2019-January 2021 for scoping and development. Rollout from February 2021 Linked to Outcome 7

Promote and increase Local Authority CEO and senior manager advocacy to support public libraries	Partially	Delivering local solutions for public library services	On going Linked to Outcomes 6 and 7
6 monthly report to DCMS and LGA	Yes		Within existing resources Part of the management agreement
Ambition review		Ambition	

Appendix 6: Independent Library Report for England full recommendations

The full text of the Independent Library Report for England is available on the GOV. UK website. Recommendations for central government:

- To make available funding to enable local authorities to extend WiFi access, computer facilities and workforce training for all public libraries in England – complete £4 million

- With local government, jointly establish a library taskforce, led by councils, in partnership with others interested in the sector: to provide leadership; to implement the recommendations and to help reinvigorate the public library service in England – complete established 2016.

- To have greater cross-government recognition and support for libraries – on going

- To seek to secure changes in European and UK copyright law to enable the Public Lending Right to include remote e-loans in its next legislative term – complete

Recommendations for the Taskforce:

- To support the creation of a national digital library network – on going

- To respond to the outcomes of the current e-lending pilots and continue to work with publishers, libraries and others to secure the adoption of the models supported by the pilots – on going

- To encourage and develop the library workforce and especially new recruits and graduates – on going

- To develop sector-led best practice guidelines to help local authorities when working with volunteers and community-led libraries – on going

Recommendations for local government:

- With central government, jointly establish a Library Taskforce, led by councils, in partnership with others interested in the sector: to provide leadership, to implement the recommendations and to help reinvigorate the public library service in England – complete

- Through the Taskforce, to develop a vigorous culture of mutual support among local authorities through the sharing of good practice/resources and to seize the opportunities for even greater collaboration – established peer review programme, on going

- Through the Taskforce, to consider all available options for the delivery of their library service – complete and ongoing as business models develop

- Through the Taskforce, to encourage more community involvement in the management of libraries through a variety of models