Libraries Connected

Libraries Accreditation: The draft scheme

March 2022

This scheme is the output of the accreditation project coordinated by Libraries Connected and funded by Arts Council England. The scheme has been co-designed with public libraries in England, CILiP, The British Library, Local Government Association and The National Archives..

Investigations for resourcing and implementing the scheme are being reviewed.

This report was prepared by Shared Intelligence for Libraries Connected.

Contents

Introduction

In late 2019 a project board was established by Libraries Connected to oversee a project which would explore potential for a new accreditation scheme for English public libraries, and if such a scheme seemed worthwhile and feasible, to set about creating it. The project board described the scope of this project as follows:

'To develop a scheme that provides a comprehensive assessment of a library service to demonstrate how it:
- Monitors and responds to user and community needs
- Develops resources, activities, services and collections to meet these needs
- Is managed, funded, staffed and resourced to meet these needs.'

The scheme as currently proposed is informed by existing schemes including Scotland's 'How Good Is Our Public Library Service' accreditation, comparable schemes in Wales and Northern Ireland, accreditation for English museums, and accreditation for local archives. The scheme proposed here would be open to all English public library services on a voluntary basis. It would be awarded to a library service, and in the case of a library service that is run by an organisation other than the local authority, the award would go to the organisation running the service.

Governance

In governance terms it is envisaged this scheme could be sponsored by Arts Council England. Subject to available resource and agreement by their National Council, they could take the role of 'sponsoring organisation' and be responsible for all aspects of administering the scheme.

Accreditation levels

Those library services that complete the process will be assigned one of three possible outcomes by an Accreditation Panel appointed by the governing body 'achieved accreditation (high impact)', 'achieved accreditation', 'working towards accreditation'.

Timing and stages

In terms of timing once a local library service had decided to seek accreditation, the processes of self-assessment, then external assessment and finally award, could be completed in one year:

- Initial application to award takes up to 12 months
- A further two years is envisaged to implement any improvement recommendations
- Tranches of applicants would be invited to apply each year, with size of tranche determined by capacity
- Lifespan of accreditation for a library service would also be determined in part by capacity (i.e. how many years it will realistically take to have offered all library services the chance to apply)

Issues to be addressed in order to progress the scheme:
- How many library services can be assessed per year (depends on capacity)
- How long accreditation lasts and when it needs to be renewed (depends on how many can be assessed per year).

The diagram below summarises the accreditation process. Pre-application to award is intended to take up to one year.

Lib Service agrees internally to seek accreditation

Lib Service requests to join accreditation programme

Peer support group assigned

Lib Service begins gathering evidence

PRE APPLICATION

Review phase /implementation of improvement recommendations

REVIEW

SELF ASSESSMENT

Lib Service works with internal and external partners to produce/complete self-assessment

Improvement recommendations to accompany award

AWARD

EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT

Lib Service consults with peer support group as required (self-led process)

Accreditation Panel consider recommendations and make final decision

External desk-based review of self-assessment (carried out by sponsoring organisation staff)

Recommendation made to Accreditation Panel by independent assessors post-visit

External 'check and challenge' by independent assessors (co-ordinated by sponsoring organisation)

Administration: Governance

If agreed by the Arts Council's Executive Board and National Council, governance of the scheme could be as follows.

Sponsoring body appoint a panel with a range of skills and knowledge based on transparent criteria (makeup below is

ACE	Sector bodies	Local govt bodies
User orgs	Professional bodies	Other expertise

Sponsoring body

- Overall responsibility and ownership of accreditation scheme
- Appoints Accreditation Panel and provides staffing for administration of scheme.

Accreditation panel

- Decides on accreditation awards
- Brings range of independent perspectives to accreditation decisions
- Acts of forum for setting rules and process.

Operational team

- Overall responsibility for the scheme
- Responsible for practical administration of accreditation
- Administers the guidance and self-assessment.
- Undertakes the desk-assessment
- Co-ordinates external check and challenge process.

Sector stakeholders

- Represented on panel
- Contribute to the work of the Panel
- Review all applications
- Take part in accreditation decisions.

Improvement support system for libraries (LGA, DCMS, ACE, CILIP, BL, others)

- Contributes to achievement of accreditation
- Supports library services post-accreditation
- Use accreditation process to target improvement support.

Accreditation panel - ToR

Established by the sponsoring body, to oversee, maintain, and develop the English public library accreditation scheme which aims to support the improvement of public library services. It is specifically out of the scope of the Panel to offer judgements in relation to whether a library service is meeting the public library Statutory Duty.

Administration: Role of sponsoring organisation

Overall administration of accreditation process

- (Ongoing) Oversight of all documentation and procedures required for operating the scheme
- (Ongoing) Promotion of the scheme to would-be applicants, and other stakeholders
- (Occasional) Periodic review of the scheme to keep it current and fit for purpose.

Co-ordination of peer support

- (Ongoing) Light touch facilitation (e.g. Libraries Connected role re Innovators' Community)
- (Occasional) Providing/renewing the platform or process for self-led peer support.

Undertaking desk-assessment of the self-assessment

- (Ongoing) Reviewing self-assessment responses from applicants
- (Ongoing) Producing summary of desk-assessment and suggested issues of interest for external check and challenge process
- (Ongoing) Keeping records of the process and copies of relevant materials
- (Ongoing) Generating data on patterns/trends in self-assessment for use by sector and others (e.g. changes in the pattern of responses on particular issues).

Co-ordinating external independent assessor process

- (Ongoing) Creating and managing the process for creating a pool of assessors to undertake the check and challenge
- (Ongoing) Assigning assessors to each applicant
- (Ongoing) Making practical arrangements for virtual assessment or face-to-face visit
- (Ongoing) Briefing assessors on issues of interest from the desk-assessment.
- (Ongoing) Documenting assessors' recommendations
- (Ongoing) Creating batches of assessor recommendations from multiple applicants to take to Accreditation Panel.

Advice on accessing improvement support

- (Ongoing) Provide post-accreditation advice on access to support and funding, based on improvement recommendations from external assessors and Accreditation Panel.

Appointment of the accreditation panel

- (Occasional) Recruiting initial panel members and ensuring the panel has a full complement of members with a range of appropriate skills and knowledge
- (Ongoing) Planning and organising meetings of the panel
- (Ongoing) Creating the agendas and decision-content for each panel meeting
- (Occasional) Ensuring the panel has terms of reference which are current and fit for purpose

- (Occasional) Organising, if or whenever necessary, revisions to the founding document/MoU.

Process: Pre-application for potential applicants

The aim of the pre-application stage is to ensure library services are properly prepared for the commitment required of them and have secured internal agreement needed to make an application.

In order to apply for accreditation, the library service must be able to confirm in a pre-application that they can meet the commitments set out in this accreditation scheme. Pre-application asks for confirmation that:

- The library service is in the position to produce appropriate evidence as required
- The library service has sought agreement from their own chain of management, and briefed staff and wider stakeholders who might be involved in the process
- The library service has the capacity to deliver the tasks associated with self-assessment, external assessment and award phases.

Provision of support to make use of during self-assessment

Peer support groups
1. Aims of the programme
The existing examples of the Library Innovators community and the similar peer network for library leaders, provide a model on which to base peer support for accreditation.

Library services which request to join the accreditation programme will therefore be invited to contribute to an informal, self-led peer support group to help guide and support the process of responding to the self-assessment. Library services will be encouraged to form into small groups with those who request to join the programme at a similar time. As the accreditation scheme matures, peer support groups could combine new first-time applicants with others who have been awarded accreditation already. The aim of the small groupings will be to enable mutual support during the process of gathering and providing evidence for self-assessment, along with the sharing of ideas between services. While intended to be an organic process without much input from staff from the sponsoring organisation, accreditation peer support could evolve to:

1.1 Facilitate learning and improvement in the library services
- Provide expertise and knowledge that can be used for inspiration and advice
- Provide external viewpoints that can better identify gaps in service.

1.2 Simplify the self-assessment process for library services
- Provide an open line of communication to answer any queries about completing the self-assessment.

1.3 Provide consistency between services in the self-assessment
- So that the self-assessments are generally filled out in similar ways. This will provide easier means to scoring and awarding the library services.

1.4 Add greater credibility to the self-assessment process
- Having a peer support group throughout the process will provide challenge and add a layer of rigour to self-assessment.

2. Who would participate in accreditation peer support?

2.1 Who?
- Individuals who are currently Heads of Library services or staff members at a library service that have previously taken part in the self-assessment process or are currently engaging with it
- Individuals who have taken a significant role in completing the accreditation scheme.
- Individuals who are currently taking a significant role in completing the accreditation scheme
- Individuals who have a strong understanding of the self-assessment process and how best it should be completed.

2.2 Suggested roles and responsibilities
- Guide, mentor and encourage others in the peer support group by sharing experiences, knowledge, and best practice in regard to completing the self-assessment process
- Ask other members of the peer support group questions to provoke discussion and reflection
- Respond to questions from other members.

2.3 What's in it for those who participate?
- An opportunity to learn about and navigate the self-assessment process with greater ease
- An opportunity to learn about different library services and their unique responses to delivery and other service challenges.

3. Who is eligible to take part?

All library services that have applied to be part of the accreditation scheme will be invited to join a peer support group after the formal request to participate in accreditation.

4. The grouping process

During the pre-application process for the accreditation scheme, if the library service chooses to take part in peer support, they will nominate an employee to lead the peer support process for that library service. They will then be assigned a group with representatives from other services starting the process at similar times.

5. Wider sector support

Further support to complement the peer support may be useful for library services during the self-assessment phase of the process. This would provide a channel of communication between the library services and the sponsoring organisation or Libraries Connected. It *could* take the form of the following:

- Webinar: A monthly webinar for library services to clarify any issues they are having and seek support on how to address them

- Guidance and communication: regular updates and 'how to' guides on specific challenges that library services are reporting.

Process: Accreditation self-assessment

Instructions for completing an accreditation self-assessment

This section is central to the accreditation process and sets out the questions applicants must answer. The answers to the questions, and evidence to support those answers, will be assessed by the sponsoring organisation and form the basis of the external check and challenges, and eventually, the final accreditation decision.

A template response document has been created which can be found on the Libraries Connected website. This template spreadsheet has a tab for each of the four sections of the report, and with space to provide short narrative which can be backed up with evidence.

Short description of context

Please begin your self-assessment with a short description of context; the types of communities your service serves, the most pressing socio-economic needs, the scale of the library service, number of branches, number of unique users, patterns of use, indication of budgets and income.

Self-identified strengths and weaknesses and 'self-scoring'

As part of this self-assessment, applicants are also invited to provide their own view of the strengths and weaknesses of their service and how they come to that view. If applicants wish, they are welcome to pre-empt the findings of the accreditation assessors and suggest what level of accreditation they would give themselves. Where applicants suggest a 'self-score' this will be used as contextual information but have no bearing on the final result.

1. People: The community and local needs

A high impact public library service is built upon a detailed understanding of the needs of the local community, delivering a service which meets those needs, and having data and information to know whether the service has a positive impact.

1.1 Is your service tailored to local needs?

Why this is important: A high impact library service should be designed around a good understanding of local needs. That understanding should come from organised analysis of the evidence about local community needs, including needs of non-users. The service's response to those needs should be based on that evidence and should evolve as needs change.

What accreditation assessors will look at:
- Do you have a good understanding of local needs in terms of health and wellbeing, diversity and inclusion, education, skills and jobs, children and families, older people and isolation, access to culture, access to work and study space, digital access?

- Are there gaps in your understanding of local need – e.g. certain locations, particular demographics, who are your online audiences, particular types of need?
- Is this understanding up to date and does it come about through an organised process?
- Is your service tailored to meet those needs, through books and resources, equipment and digital access, programmes and activities, staff skills, and format of physical libraries?
- Do you use the Universal Offers to meet identified local needs?
- Can the library service adapt quickly and easily to changing needs?

To achieve accreditation	To achieve accreditation (high impact)
The service regularly reviews evidence of local need and has a good understanding of community need in some or most of the following areas: health and wellbeing, diversity and inclusion, education, skills and jobs, children and families, older people and isolation, access to culture, access to work and study space, digital access. The library service has a strategy for responding to those needs. The service implements an equality, diversity, and inclusion statement/policy.	The service has systems to keep constant track of community need across all the following areas: health and wellbeing, diversity and inclusion, education, skills and jobs, children and families, older people and isolation, access to culture, access to work and study space, digital access. The library service is able to respond to current needs and can quickly adjust to meet new needs as they evolve. The service uses all the resources at its disposal to support equality, diversity, and inclusion.

Suggested evidence
- Service reviews or strategies and rationale for the current offer
- Service delivery plans
- Results of needs analysis systems or exercises (e.g. using the DCMS strategic planning toolkit, or the LGA and The Libraries Taskforce's Benchmarking Framework for library services)
- Local strategic needs assessments (e.g. JSNA)
- Analysis of local data from Index of Multiple Deprivation, Taking Part, or Active Lives
- EDI policies or access and outreach policies
- Evidence of public consultation and change or impact stories from users
- Take-up and use of resources, programmes, and activities
- Evidence from partners about needs met by libraries.

1.2 Does your service reach those with the greatest need?

Why this is important: A library service only benefits those it can reach. Understanding who the service can make the most difference to, and taking action to reach them if they are not already users, is essential element to achieving impact.

What accreditation assessors will look at:

- Do you know who uses the service, who does not, across all services offered by the library service as well as book borrowing?
- …and do you know why?
- Do you know which non-users could benefit most from your service, and what elements of the service make the most difference (e.g. books and reading, digital access, activities)?
- Do you take action to reach non-users, in particular those for whom you can make the biggest positive difference, and marginalised communities?

To achieve accreditation	To achieve accreditation (high impact)
The service looks at the data it collects through its library systems, along with national data about library use such as Taking Part and CIPFA, to understand who it is reaching and who it is not. The service understands which non-users in its communities could benefit most from its offer and has an approach and process for reaching them. The service can identify when someone uses the library service for the first time.	The service uses local and nationally collected data to understand its service reach and builds on this with processes to understand why different groups do or do not use their service. The service actively reaches out to those who will benefit from its offer, including non-users, and applies learning about how to reach under-served communities. The service has elements of its offer geared specifically to attracting and retaining new users and members, including marginalised communities, and seeks to understand new users' needs.

Suggested evidence

- Reports and analysis of local LMS data and national data – e.g. showing user demographics
- Comparison of user demographics with overall borough demographics
- Mapping of corporate or borough-wide needs and priorities (geographically or thematically), against the library offer to show which needs the library offer helps address
- Analysis of why non-users with different demographic profiles do not use the service

- Analysis or plans for how the service could reach more non-users, and the difference that could make
- Systems and processes for signing-up and inducting new users or members and understanding their needs.

1.3 Is your service built around user engagement, experience, and outcomes?

Why this is important: Impactful local services are built around the needs of the communities they serve, and the outcomes those communities want to achieve. Designing services, resources and collections collaboratively with users helps ensure that the experience of using the service is a positive one and leads to outcomes the service and its users want.

What accreditation assessors will look at:

- What do users think about the experience using the library service - e.g. ease of use, availability, and appropriateness of: resources, collections, activities, and support?
- Do you understand what motivates people to use the service, what they get from the library service, and whether they can get something similar elsewhere?
- Is there an organised process for ongoing community engagement, how is data captured, and what does the service know about what people want to get from using library services?
- What role do the experiences of users play in determining how the service operates?
- What role do opinions or suggestions from the local community (users and non-users) play in service development and selection of collections and resources?
- How do experiences of using the service differ across different demographics or in different places? What are the aims of the service in relation to EDI and user experience?
- What is the experience of a first-time user, does it encourage a repeat visit?
- Do frontline staff understand how positive user experiences of library services can bring wider benefits to the community e.g. access to learning, enrichment, and connectedness?

To achieve accreditation	To achieve accreditation (high impact)
The service understands how different sections of the community experience using the library service and can identify when this raises EDI issues. The service has a structured approach to engaging with users and the wider community on a regular basis. The service understands what people want to get from using the library service, and how this differs between different demographics. The service uses information about user experience to inform daily operations and longer-term planning. The service seeks to identify first time users and understand how the service can help them.	The service understands how different sections of the community experience using the library service and has strategies and processes for creating positive experiences for different types of users. The service builds community engagement into all of its activities and good engagement skills and capabilities exist within the service staff. The service understands the benefit they can create for different users and has ways to collaborate with different sections of the community to deliver services which bring the greatest benefit. The service actively engages with new users to understand their needs, explain how the library service can help them, and encourage repeat use.

Suggested evidence
- Library user surveys and other feedback data (e.g. from social media, or ad hoc feedback systems), and any analysis of these
- Consultation and engagement plans
- Initiatives to create 'typical user' profiles to aide service planning or outreach
- Evidence of the community engagement skills of staff and how these are developed
- Views of user or friends groups
- Evidence about the reasons why people use the service and the benefits they derive from library use (e.g. evidence from other local organisations, or from direct public engagement)
- Evidence of service planning processes which involve the public or community organisations
- Information about new-user experiences, or membership drives.

2. Place: Local priorities and local impact
A high impact public library service is an essential part of the community-serving infrastructure of a place. The library service offer must contribute directly to the priorities set by local decision-makers. The service should be an active participant in negotiating what those priorities are and how it can contribute.

2.1 Are your service goals aligned with local priorities?

Why this is important: Public library services are funded through the structures of local government. Those local democratic structures determine local priorities for the distribution of local public budgets and the exercise of local powers. For public libraries like all other local public services, the allocation of local funding, and contribution to local priorities go hand in hand.

What accreditation assessors will look at:
- How the library service explains its contribution to local priorities?
- To what extent is the library service designed around contributing to local priorities?
- Does the library service focus or highlight specific areas of contribution - i.e. on priorities where it has the most to offer?
- Is the library service contribution to wider social outcomes recognised by other stakeholders - e.g. in policy documents from other services or agencies?
- Does the library service play an active role in determining local priorities?
- Does the service help the public learn about local priority-setting processes, understand the issues at stake, and find ways to get involved?

To achieve accreditation	To achieve accreditation (high impact)
The service reflects wider local priorities in its own planning and strategy. The service understands which wider priorities it contributes to and to what extent. The service engages in local authority-wide priority setting and the service's contribution is understood by other services and partners. The service supports transparency and local democracy by enabling the public to access information about priority-setting by local public agencies.	The service is planned around making an active contribution to local priorities. The service has close working relationship with other services and agencies and takes part in collaborative activities and initiatives to address local priorities with other organisations. The service engages in local authority-wide priority setting at a senior level and brings expertise and insight to influence corporate planning processes and determine priorities. The service brings transparency to local decision-making processes and supports the public to understand the issues and get involved.

Suggested evidence

- Library service documents explaining the contribution of the library offer to local priorities
- Evidence of collaborative action with other services to address local priorities
- Strategy documents from other partners and services which illustrate the library service's influence on other areas of activity
- Service delivery plans
- Perceptions of decision-makers (testimonial from senior officers and Lead Members, or evidence of their actions)
- Evidence of the library using its information and knowledge role to bring transparency to public decision-making

2.2 Does your service build effective partnerships?

Why this is important: Most local priorities (e.g. economic inclusion, social mobility, better wellbeing) are complex and cannot be achieved by any one service or organisation working alone. Collaboration with other local agencies and community-serving organisations is therefore vital to being able to meet local priorities.

What accreditation assessors will look at:
- What partners does the library service work with?
- How effective are those collaborations and what have been some of their achievements?
- Does the library service have representation on key local strategic decision-making groups?
- Do those partnerships lead to better outcomes for local people, do they enable the library service to have a bigger impact?
- Do they help with sustainability, do they generate additional revenue so the service can do more?

To achieve accreditation	To achieve accreditation (high impact)
The service has regular contact with other services and organisations with whom it has shared interests or objectives. The service has worked with other services and organisations on collaborative initiatives and services. Partnership projects have had positive results for residents, the library service, and for partners.	The service has helped create and lead formal arrangements for collaboration with other services and organisations with whom it has shared interests or objectives. The service works with multiple other services and organisations to develop and implement cross-agency initiatives, regularly taking a leadership role where it can contribute expertise or other support Partnership projects have been evaluated and there is robust evidence

	of positive results for the wider population and stakeholders.

Suggested evidence
- Local partnership or commissioning agreements
- Participation in nationwide initiatives (e.g. BIPC Network, Living Knowledge Network)
- Evaluations of partnership programmes or projects
- Documents from partners describing the relationships with libraries.

2.3 What impact does your service have on individuals?
Why this is important: The core of accreditation are questions about the impact a library makes. Alongside assessment of need, and having services designed to meet those needs, the main way a library service can maximise impact is by maximising reach.

What accreditation assessors will look at:
- In what ways can the library service demonstrate its impact on individuals?
- Does the service harness data for informed service development and evidenced impact?
- How do people derive benefit from the library service, and *who* derives benefit?
- Can the service evidence its impact in relation to the Universal Library Offers:
  - ✓ Reading, literacy, and access to written-word
  - ✓ Information literacy, digital skills and empowerment
  - ✓ Health and well-being and health literacy
  - ✓ Engagement with culture and creativity
  - ✓ Supporting children
  - ✓ Supporting people with visual impairment.

To achieve accreditation	To achieve accreditation (high impact)
The service collects evidence of impact on individuals across different elements of its service. The service understands how it has impact across different elements of its service and across all the Universal Library Offers. The service takes specific actions to increase its impact on individuals especially those for whom it can make the most difference.	The service has systems for ongoing monitoring of impact on individuals across all areas of its service and generates insights that it can put into practice to maximise the benefit it can create. The service reaches the majority of residents with the greatest need in its communities (e.g. those in most deprived postcodes, eligible for free school meals, older people living alone, unemployed). The service shares evidence and learning about impact with its partners,

	the wider public, and other professionals.

Suggested evidence
- Percentage of the population reached by the service (e.g. with whom the service has 'meaningful contact')
- Percentage of residents with the greatest needs who are reached (e.g. those in most deprived postcodes, eligible for free school meals, digitally excluded, older people living alone, unemployed)
- Evidence from engagement with Ward Councillors
- Change stories (i.e. qual data gathered from users illustrating how a service has led to beneficial change)
- Evaluation evidence from specific activities (e.g. Summer Reading Challenge).
- Data from the Reading Outcomes Framework
- Data based on the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS).

3. Purpose: Leadership, vision, and use of resources
Effectiveness comes from clarity of purpose, and clarity of purpose comes from confident leadership.

3.1 Are your purpose and vision clear and do they align with stakeholders'?
Why this is important: Describing the purpose and vision of your library service is more complex than for many other public services, but it must be clearly stated. This provides an opportunity for creativity and tailoring to local needs, but also requires greater deliberate effort to articulate. It is important that senior leaders and politicians in the locality understand the role and potential of the library service, and that library service purpose and vision align with other services and organisations. It is also important that purpose and vision are consistent with operational delivery.

What accreditation assessors will look at:
- Are the library services' purpose and vision explained in a clear consistent way?
- Is the statement of purpose and vision consistent with how the service is delivered operationally?
- How was this developed - e.g. who did it involve, what information was fed in, how were conclusions reached?
- Do the purpose and vision support local priorities and reflect local ambitions?
- Does it make the most of the unique features of public libraries in relation to specific needs of local places?
- Are the purpose and vision well communicated internally and externally?
- Does the library service use its statement of purpose and vision to influence wider agendas?
- Are councillors and politicians (Ward Members, Overview and Scrutiny, Executive/Cabinet, Opposition, MPs) champions for the role of the library service and does the service help them see the wider potential of libraries?

To achieve accreditation	To achieve accreditation (high impact)
The purpose and vision of the service are documented clearly. The purpose and vision are consistent with how the service operates in practice. Purpose and vision were developed through a structured process and involved different stakeholders and interests. Local stakeholders and decision-makers at both a political and officer level understand the stated purpose and vision of libraries.	The purpose and vision of the service are distinctive to the locality and provide a clear sense of ambition and direction of travel. The purpose and vision are reflected in all aspects of operational delivery and understood by staff. Purpose and vision were developed through a creative process involving diverse perspectives. Local stakeholders and decision-makers at both a political and officer level have been part of defining the purpose and vision of libraries and are champions for what it sets out.

Suggested evidence
- Library service vision and statement of purpose
- Documents recording the process through which the purpose and vision were developed
- Evidence of alignment between library vision and place-based visions
- Testimonial or examples of actions of senior managers and politicians
- Results of Overview and Scrutiny reviews focused on library service or related issues (e.g. digital access, skills and literacy).

3.2 Does the service have capable leadership which inspires trust?
Why this is important: Good leadership creates the conditions for clear sense of purpose, which is the foundation of effective delivery.

What accreditation assessors will look at:
- Does the library service have leadership (at service level, CMT level, Exec/Cabinet level) and influencing capabilities which inspire the public, budget holders, and staff?
- Does the library service management have the capability to create short and long-term strategies and plans and the capabilities to implement those?
- Has the service set ambitious goals and then achieved them?
- Does the service have the confidence of stakeholders (decision-makers, users, wider stakeholders)?
- Does service management reflect the local community?

- Does the service management promote a culture of learning and support staff wellbeing and development?
- Do local politicians (Ward Members, Overview and Scrutiny, Executive/Cabinet, Opposition, MPs) act as advocates for the service?
- Do key individuals from the service join local partnerships and decision-making groups?

To achieve accreditation	To achieve accreditation (high impact)
The service leadership has stated a direction of travel for the future. The service leadership is able to set specific goals and achieve them within planned timescales. The service leadership has the confidence of senior decision-makers and local politicians, who act as advocates for the service. Staff are supported to contribute to service aims and ambitions, and the service draws on a diverse skill base which reflects the local community.	The service sets out ambitious plans for the future and devises strategies and plans to achieve them. The service looks outwards to new ideas and challenges and fosters a culture of learning and excellence. The service is able to set multiple goals, consistent with a simple vision and has a steady stream of achievements. Senior decision-makers and local politicians trust and advocate for the library service, and look to the service to innovate and deliver ambitious goals. All staff are encouraged to play a role in leadership, and to bring new ideas and to their own diverse contributions, and to mobilise the contributions of users and the wider community.

Suggested evidence
- Evidence of plans being delivered successfully and consistently
- Annual reports or service reviews
- Evidence of high levels ambitions being made a reality
- Stakeholder perception e.g. lead Members, Ward Councillors
- Evidence of portfolios holders actively championing the service both internally and externally e.g. bringing reports to cabinet, statements to the press, launching new initiative
- Staff survey results
- Accreditations e.g. around leadership, people management, quality.

3.3 Does your service use scarce resources and generate additional income to maximise impact?

Why this is important: Public services are stretched now more than ever, and that will continue both in terms of financial and people resources. More broadly, public services have a role in enabling communities to live more sustainably. Library services must meet internal challenges through creativity in the use and generation of resources. They also have a unique role in providing access to knowledge and spaces where communities can learn about the wider challenges of living within environmental resources limits.

What accreditation assessors will look at:
- Does the service use scarce resources (at whatever level they are set) in the most impactful ways?
- Does the library service have a business plan which describes all the resources at its disposal in order to maximise the impact of those resources?
- Is the service able to generate additional revenue - e.g. from commissioning, grants, income generation, social investment to deliver additional activity, or offset reductions in core council funding?
- Has the service leveraged other kinds of contribution (e.g. non-cash) which increase the resources available?
- Does the library service learn from others in the library sector, or other comparable services, and engage in sharing ideas and best practice?

To achieve accreditation	To achieve accreditation (high impact)
The service reviews all areas of expenditure regularly to seek ways to deliver desired outcomes more efficiently.	The service continuously finds ways to improve efficiency through organisational and technological improvements.
The service identifies where it can add value to other services through outcome-orientated commissioning arrangements	The service has commissioning income from one or more other services. The service generates additional revenue which is aligned with overall goals and purpose.
The service pursues other opportunities to generate additional revenue where these align with overall goals and purpose e.g. from grants, earned income, philanthropy, social investment.	The service applies learning from other places in its own locality and shares its own learning in ways others can apply.
The service learns from approaches in other places and applies learning in its own locality.	

Suggested evidence
- Service-planning and budgeting documents.
- Absolute values and patterns over time for:
    - o Commissioning income
    - o Other income besides commissioning
    - o Income as a proportion of overall spend
    - o Outcomes versus spend
- Examples of non-cash or contributions in kind secured by the service.
- Examples of new approaches being applied and evidence of benefits achieved.
- Perceptions or testimonial from partners, stakeholders, and budget holders.

4. Policy and library practice

The previous sections have asked how well the service meets individual needs, the needs of the place, and whether it has clarity of purpose. This final section focuses on the unique characteristics of public libraries and reflect the Professional Knowledge and Skills Base designed by CILIP, the lead professional body for library and information professionals.

4.1 Are the unique values and ethos of public libraries reflected in your service?

Why this is important: Public libraries are trusted institutions because the general public recognise their commitment to information literacy, impartiality, and public good mission. It is the unique characteristics of public libraries which enable them to reach individuals, deliver impact, and add value which complements rather than duplicates other kinds of services.

What accreditation assessors will look at:
- Do core library ethics and values centrally underpin your service?
- Do staff understand the power of literacies to empower and enrich society through lifelong learning and by connecting communities?
- Is evaluation and continuous learning used to drive innovation and development?
- Does your service build on knowledge from the wider profession and shared best practice to drive innovation and improvement?
- Does the service take part in CPD, engagement with sector bodies, and encourage staff to take part in wider professional engagement?
- Does the service take part in collaborative projects with other library services?
- Does the library service use professional networks links to create bigger benefits locally?
- Does the library service support the development of research, and empower others to conduct research which enriches society, academia, individuals, and the economy?

To achieve accreditation	To achieve accreditation (high impact)
Staff across the service are aware of the core ethics of public libraries. The service uses evaluation and learning to understand impact and support improvement. Staff have access to CPD appropriate to their role and the needs of the local community. The service collaborates with other public library services on learning and shared projects. The service provides access to resources for learning, research, and the enrichment of society.	Staff across the service are aware of the core ethics of public libraries and can demonstrate how these translate into daily practice. The service has a strong culture of continuous learning and evidence-led practice among all staff. Staff regularly take-up CPD opportunities appropriate to their role and the needs of the local community. The service leads collaborative initiatives with other public library services which deliver tangible outcomes. The service actively enables the public to use its resources for learning, research, and the enrichment of society.

Suggested evidence
- Staff handbook.
- Learning and development plans.
- Evidence of monitoring evaluation and learning processes.
- Evidence of participation in formal or informal professional networks.
- Evidence of formal contributions to wider networks (conferences, articles).

4.2 Are values built into practice through policies and frameworks?

Why this is important: General intent and leadership direction need to be formalised in clear policies and practices in order to have effect, and to provide transparency.

What accreditation assessors will look at:
- Does the library service have a clear framework for providing accessible, coherent, and appropriately preserved collections to meet the changing needs of the community?
- Does the service have policies to provide maximum access to information which balance the rights of access with the rights of creators?
- Does the library service set out how it will connect the community to the information they need, in the format they need to inform/empower/enrich their lives, and benefit the wider community?

- Do staff have a practical understanding of their statutory responsibilities as a public-facing service - e.g. around data protection, safeguarding, equalities, and physical safety?

To achieve accreditation	To achieve accreditation (high impact)
Key principles are formalised in policies which determine practice. Staff understand the service's policies and know how to apply them.	Key principles are formalised in policies which determine practice. Along with the values which underpin them these policies are communicated to the public as part of audience development and explaining the benefits of using libraries. Staff help shape the service's policies, understand the value they add for the local community, and are active champions for them.

Suggested evidence
- Collections Policy.
- Council Records and/or Data Policy.
- Service reviews or evaluations.
- Data and digital policies, and staff guidance.
- Learning and development plans.
- Staff satisfaction surveys.
- User feedback surveys.

4.3 Is there a culture of organisational development and diversity of public library practice?
Why this is important: Public libraries have been evolving since they were first created in the UK in the mid-1800s. A continuous approach to organisational development and an outward focus on learning from diverse approaches to running public libraries will enable public libraries to continue having impact with their unique offer.

What accreditation assessors will look at:
- Is there a culture in the service which encourages and enables all staff to lead positive change and advocate the value and impact of the library service to its communities?
- Do staff understand their individual contribution to building a thriving service?
- Are all staff involved in long term planning and service improvement?

- Is there curiosity across the service for innovation and diversity of practice so the service can serve all its communities now and in the future?

To achieve accreditation	To achieve accreditation (high impact)
Staff at all levels are involved in service development and planning. All staff understand how they contribute to service goals, core purpose, and vision. Innovation and adoption of practice from other places is commonplace in the service.	Service development and planning involves the whole organisation with staff at all levels having distinct roles. Staff at all levels are active advocates and champions for service goals, core purpose, and vision with partners and the general public. The service is continuously developing new services and offers, often adopts practice from other places, and shares its own innovation and learning widely.

Suggested evidence
- Annual service plans
- Staff development policy
- Collaborative projects
- Staff satisfaction surveys
- User feedback surveys
- Recognition for innovation.

Process: Outline of process from self-assessment submission to final result

Outline process from applicants submitting self assessment to receiving result

```
┌─────────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────────┐
│ Applicant completes │ ───► │ Assessment staff    │ ───► │ Check and challenge │
│ self-assessment     │      │ undertake desk      │      │ external assessors  │
│ response template   │      │ review of self-     │      │ use [GREEN/BROWN    │
│                     │      │ assessment.         │      │ GRID] to prepare    │
│                     │      │ Results captured on │      │ for check/challenge │
│                     │      │ [THE GREEN/BROWN    │      │ session             │
│                     │      │ GRID]               │      │                     │
└─────────────────────┘      └─────────────────────┘      └─────────────────────┘
```

- Applicant completes self-assessment response template →
- Assessment staff undertake desk review of self-assessment. Results captured on [THE GREEN/BROWN GRID] →
- Check and challenge external assessors use [GREEN/BROWN GRID] to prepare for check/challenge session →
- Check and challenge session is held followed by de-brief. Findings documented on [GREEN/BROWN GRID] →
- Assessment staff produce draft accreditation report. Scoring framework used to check/demonstrate award level arithmetic. →
- Accreditation report submitted to accreditation panel to agree and finalise award level and improvement guidance. →
- Accreditation report finalised to take account of accreditation panel discussion, and sent to applicant.

Process: Desk-assessment

Desk-assessment

1.   Aims

The initial desk review of the self-assessment submissions provides the most in-depth analysis of each library service in the whole assessment process. It is to be conducted by the sponsoring organisation and will provide the baseline scores of the service to be investigated in the check and challenge.

2.   Who would be a desk-assessor?

- The initial desk-assessor will be a representative from the sponsoring organisation. See page 4.
- It will involve individuals with relevant experience of conducting desk-based assessments for other accreditation or national standard schemes.
- It will involve individuals who understand the unique roles of libraries in helping to address and understand local and national needs.
- The desk-assessor will have a clear understanding of the criteria that a library service must meet to achieve each level of accreditation.

3.   Detailed breakdown of the desk-assessors' tasks?

- Write an initial desk-assessment of submissions and evidence, by completing the evidence table below, that provides:
  - ✓ An initial score for each question in the self-assessment
  - ✓ Rationale to justify the scoring
  - ✓ Areas that require further investigation and which could be the focus in the check and challenge
- Ensure that a check and challenge session is arranged, prepare the agenda, and brief the external assessors
- Lead the final part of the check and challenge half-working days to obtain recommended levels that the external assessors will provide to the Accreditation Panel
- Update the evidence table (below) with the check and challenge scoring, rationale, and areas for improvement
- Once the independent check and challenge is complete, the desk-assessor will provide written summary of the assessment to the Accreditation Panel.

Evidence table

The evidence table has been created to ensure the process of assessing each library service is transparent and structured. It has been designed to guide the assessment during the desk-assessment and check and challenge and will form the core evidence that will be included in the award report and discussed at the Accreditation Panel.

		Desk-assessment				Check and Challenge		
Self - assessment question	Scoring	What is the quality of evidence? (High/acceptable/poor)	Suggested score? (Working toward accreditation/ Achieved accreditation/ Achieved accreditation - high Impact	Rationale	Areas to focus on in check and challenge	Suggested score? (Working toward accreditation/ Achieved accreditation/ Achieved accreditation - high Impact	Rationale	Areas for improvement
1.1 Is your service tailored to local needs? (Priority question)								
1.2 Does your service reach those with the greatest need?								
1.3 Is your service build around user Engagement, experience, and outcomes?								

Self - assessment question	Scoring	Desk-assessment			Areas to focus on in check and challenge	Check and Challenge		Areas for improvement
		What is the quality of evidence? (High/acceptable/poor)	Suggested score? (Working toward accreditation/ Achieved accreditation/ Achieved accreditation - high Impact	Rationale		Suggested score? (Working toward accreditation/ Achieved accreditation/ Achieved accreditation - high Impact	Rationale	
Score for section (can't be higher than priority score and needs two or more of the same level to be awarded that score)								
2.1 Are your service goals aligned with local priorities? (Priority question)								
2.2 Does your service build effective partnerships?								
2.3 What impact does your service have on individuals?								

Self - assessment question	Scoring	Desk-assessment				Check and Challenge		
		What is the quality of evidence? (High/acceptable/poor)	Suggested score? (Working toward accreditation/ Achieved accreditation/ Achieved accreditation - high Impact	Rationale	Areas to focus on in check and challenge	Suggested score? (Working toward accreditation/ Achieved accreditation/ Achieved accreditation - high Impact	Rationale	Areas for improvement
Score for section (can't be higher than priority score and needs two or more of the same level to Be awarded that score)								
3.1 Are your purpose and vision clear and do they align with stakeholders'? (Priority question)								
3.2 Does the service have capable leadership which inspires trust?								

| Self - assessment question | Scoring | Desk-assessment | | | Areas to focus on in check and challenge | Check and Challenge | | Areas for improvement |
		What is the quality of evidence? (High/acceptable/poor)	Suggested score? (Working toward accreditation/ Achieved accreditation/ Achieved accreditation - high Impact	Rationale		Suggested score? (Working toward accreditation/ Achieved accreditation/ Achieved accreditation - high Impact	Rationale	
3.3 Does your service use scarce resources and generate additional income to maximise impact?								
Score for section (can't be higher than priority score and needs two or more of the same level to be awarded that score)								
4.1 Are the unique values and ethos of public libraries reflected in your service? (Priority question)								
4.2 Are values built into practice								

Self - assessment question	Scoring	Desk-assessment				Check and Challenge		
		What is the quality of evidence? (High/acceptable/poor)	Suggested score? (Working toward accreditation/ Achieved accreditation/ Achieved accreditation - high Impact)	Rationale	Areas to focus on in check and challenge	Suggested score? (Working toward accreditation/ Achieved accreditation/ Achieved accreditation - high Impact)	Rationale	Areas for improvement
through policies and frameworks?								
4.3 Is there a culture of organisational Development and diversity of public library practice?								
Score for section (can't be higher than priority score and needs two or more of the same level to be awarded that score)								
Overall score Needs all four section scores to be that level i.e. total score is equal to								

		Desk-assessment				Check and Challenge		
Self - assessment question	Scoring	What is the quality of evidence? (High/acceptable/poor)	Suggested score? (Working toward accreditation/ Achieved accreditation/ Achieved accreditation - high Impact	Rationale	Areas to focus on in check and challenge	Suggested score? (Working toward accreditation/ Achieved accreditation/ Achieved accreditation - high Impact	Rationale	Areas for improvement
lowest section score								

Process: External check and challenge

External check and challenge

1. Aims

External check and challenge provides independent validation of the library service's own self-assessment and the desk-assessment conducted by the sponsoring organisation. It will involve a group of three to four independent assessors and will be designed to be conducted remotely as a half-day working session with key individuals from the service seeking accreditation.

The assessors will meet in advance to prepare, review the initial desk-assessment and agree issues to focus on during the session with the library service. Independent assessors will make the recommendation that goes forward to the Accreditation Panel over the level of award the library service should receive.

2. Who are independent assessors?

2.1 Who would be an independent assessor?

- Individuals involved in leading (including Elected Members) or delivering library services
- Individuals involved in related public-facing activities, e.g. from cultural, leisure or other public-facing organisations
- Individuals involved in digital information and knowledge, or in learning, e.g. educators, technologists
- Individuals who understand place-based community needs, e.g. from community-based organisations, or from organisations involved in researching social needs or inequalities
- Individuals with relevant experience and knowledge around the context and landscape of local authorities who apply for the accreditation scheme.

2.2 What is required from assessors?

- Those who agree to become an assessor will be encouraged to participate in multiple assessments to provide continuity and accumulated knowledge
- They would be required to read background materials relating to the library service that has made a submission, including the review of the desk-assessment
- They would be required to attend an online briefing session to identify key issues from the self-assessment to be focus on
- Once the independent check and challenge is complete a written summary of the assessment will be provided to the Accreditation Panel
- Total time commitment per library service will be no more than one day.

2.3 What's in it for the assessors

- An opportunity to learn about library services and the impact they have
- An opportunity to develop skills in making critical assessments of other organisations
- An opportunity to contribute to the improvement and sustainability of public library services in England.

3. Detailed breakdown of the independent assessors' tasks

- Read the self-assessment desk-assessment (evidence table) produced by the sponsoring organisation.
- Take part in a briefing conducted by the desk-assessor to discuss the self-assessment and decide which areas will be most useful to focus on.

- Take part in the half-day working session with the service seeking accreditation by asking questions and facilitating group discussions. The questions and discussions will be tailored around gathering information on the areas it was agreed to focus on.
- Agree a recommended level to provide to the Accreditation Panel for the library service:
  - ✓ Summarise this recommendation with high level key points.
  - ✓ Identify areas for improvement.
  - ✓ Provide findings that will form the basis of a brief written report (to be written by the desk-assessor) which evidences the agreement of the recommended accreditation level, and which includes areas for improvement, which will be sent to the library service upon award.
- Attend an Accreditation Panel meeting to present the final report of the library service(s) they have assessed to the Panel.

4. Detailed breakdown of the half-day working session with libraries
4.1 Who will take part in the external check and challenge

The half-day session with the library service is an opportunity to delve deeper into the information provided in the self-assessment. Depending on the service, it might be a chance to gather further information, or to assess robustness of information and evidence provided.

For this to succeed, it is important that the independent assessors are able to speak with a range of representatives. Possible attendees for sessions could involve those in the table below.

Attendees	
Accreditation body	**Library service**
• Desk-assessor • External assessor • External assessor • Elected member external assessor.	• Library service accreditation lead(s) • Head of library service • Accreditation support staff • Elected member(s) • Senior leadership • Frontline staff. (Additional attendees may be requested by assessors)

4.2 Structure
The half-working days will be split into three sections.
- Assessor pre-meet
- Check and challenge with the library service
- Assessor de-brief

Assessor pre-meet
The main aim of this is to finalise the agenda by:
- Confirming the check and challenge sections and agreeing specific lines of enquiry.
- Confirming which assessor would lead on each sub-section in the check and challenge.

Check and challenge with the library service
Aim: To provide independent validation of the library service's own self-assessment and the desk-assessment and to evaluate findings from the desk-assessment.
The main check and challenge will split up into 3-4 sub-sections decided in the briefing and based on the desk-assessment. Each section may involve a combination of the listed attendees depending on the areas of questioning decided by the desk-assessor and in the external assessor briefing. Each session would be led by an independent assessor.

Assessor de-brief
Aim: To make recommendations to the scoring of the pilot service's self-assessment – chaired by desk-assessor.
Structure:
- Discuss some initial reaction to what was heard.
- Go through the self-assessment desk-assessment question by question to decide:
  - o Whether the assessors agree/disagree with scoring from the desk-assessment.
  - o Rationale behind the above decision.
  - o What some areas of improvement would be.

4.3 Example agenda

Time	Tasks	Facilitators and attendees
15min	**Assessor pre- meeting** • Confirm agenda. • Confirm sub-section leads.	Facilitated by Desk-assessor Library service attendees: NONE
50min	**Service goals and context** • General context about the library service. • How closely aligned are the service priorities with those of the council? **Strategy** • Are there any gaps in the strategy? What will the service do to address these in the development of their next strategy?	Lead -TBC (external assessor) Library service attendees: - Head of service - Accreditation lead - Accreditation support staff - Elected member(s)
10min	BREAK	

50min	**Local need** • How does the service plan to learn from and improve on the back of the data it receives for initiatives? • What does the service do to understand and act on the needs of non-users? **Practice** • What does the service think are the universal core values of a library? How are these reflected in the service?	Lead – TBC (external assessor) Library service attendees: - Head of Service - Accreditation lead - Accreditation support staff
10min	**BREAK**	
45min	**Frontline staff** • Are frontline staff aware of the goals and purpose of the library service, and what they do to meet these? • Is there any feedback from the staff on the training and development offer of the library service?	Lead -TBC (external assessor) Library service attendees: - 3-5 Frontline staff
30min	**Assessors debrief** • Reflections on what was heard. • Question-by-question review of scoring. • Rationale. • Improvement suggestions.	Facilitated by desk-assessor Library service attendees: **None**

Process: Accreditation Panel meeting

5.1 Aim of Accreditation Panel meeting

It is intended that the panel would meet a number of times over the course of a year and would review a number of library services during each sitting. At each meeting, the primary process will be to decide on the library service's final accreditation level and areas of improvement.

5.2 Who would take part in the Accreditation Panel

- Members of the Accreditation Panel, appointed by the sponsoring organisation with a range of skills and knowledge based on a transparent criterion
- Desk-assessors
- External assessors.

5.3 Breakdown of tasks

- Prior to the meeting, the panel will be provided with as much information as possible on each library service including the completed scoring matrix (see next section) from the desk-assessment and check and challenge and the draft accreditation report
- The final report for each library service will be presented to the panel by the external assessors
- The panel will decide on an accreditation score based on the presentation from the assessors and the subsequent discussion.

5.4 Deciding results of accreditation

The key decision for each accreditation applicant will be the agreement of the award level. These decisions will be carefully documented, and each library service will be notified of the score awarded to it along with the report that sets out rationale and areas for improvement for the future.

5.5. Recommending improvement support

Accreditation comes with recommendations for improvement, developed as part of the process and finalised by the Accreditation Panel. They will be grounded in evidence, bring in multiple external perspectives, and carry the 'weight' of the accreditation process. This will provide a valuable framework for ongoing improvement of the library service.

Regardless of the level of accreditation a library service is awarded, as part of their accreditation, each service will receive recommendations and advice around where improvement would be beneficial. This will be based on the recommendations and conclusions from the desk-assessment, the independent assessors, and the Accreditation Panel.

There is a wide range of support currently available to library services and the accreditation scheme will not introduce any new support programmes. Therefore, sources of improvement post-accreditation support will be those which already exist. The accreditation process will enable use of support by library services, and targeting of support by sector organisations, to be targeted more purposefully.

After accreditation, each library service will be offered practical advice on how to implement improvement recommendations into action. This advice will include signposting to existing avenues of improvement support, advice on what existing programmes of support require in

order to access it, e.g. what evidence of need, business case, or grant application evidence is required by different providers of support.

Sources of support could include:
- LGA: Multiple programmes for sector-led improvement including library peer review, corporate peer challenge, mentoring and Member peer support, bespoke improvement support.
- Arts Council England: National Lottery Project Grants are open access funding with no deadlines and few restrictions, open to all public library services. If the library service is the lead applicant, this funding is available for work in all four Universal Library Offers, not just Creativity and Culture.
- Libraries Connected: Sector Support Organisation.
- DCMS.
- CILIP.
- British Library.
- Voluntary and community sector organisations.

Process: Final accreditation report

Following completion of the external assessment process and the Accreditation Panel, the findings of the full assessment process, including feedback from the Panel, will be drafted into a final report to be provided to the library service detailing the official accreditation level that the library service has achieved.

The report will evidence the agreed accreditation level with rationale from the desk-assessment and backed up by findings from the check and challenge. It will include the agreed areas of improvement for the service that have been suggested by the external assessors and the Accreditation Panel.

An example accreditation report follows.

Accreditation report [EXAMPLE]

Name of library service: XXXXX XXXXXX
Date of external assessment: XX/XX/XX
Recommended accreditation level: Achieved accreditation - high impact
Rationale for recommended level
Overall rationale
XXXXXXX Libraries run a highly efficient and motivated library service that seeks to go above and beyond their contracted specification. The service is built around the needs of local communities…….

Section 1: People: The community and local needs
- 1.1 Is your service tailored to local needs? (priority question) **High Impact**
- 1.2 Does your service reach those with the greatest need? **High Impact**
- 1.3 Is your service built around user engagement, experience, and outcomes? **Achieved**

Rationale in relation to Section 1
The model of delivery is strongly influenced by…….

Section 2: Place: Local priorities and local impact
- 2.1 Are your service goals aligned with local priorities? (priority question) **High Impact**
- 2.2 Does your service build effective partnerships? **Achieved**
- 2.3 What impact does your service have on individuals? **High Impact**

Rationale in relation to Section 2
The service currently works closely with their communities to align service provision with local needs. Relationships with ….

Section 3: Purpose: Leadership, vision and delivery
- 3.1 Are your purpose and vision clear and do they align with stakeholders'? (priority question) **High Impact**
- 3.2 Does the service have capable leadership which inspires trust? **High Impact**
- 3.3 Does your service use scarce resources and generate additional income to maximise impact? **High Impact**

Rationale in relation to Section 3
The service has a strategy in place developed with input from all layers of the organisation. Staff are given the opportunity to feedback…...

Section 4: Policy and library practice
- 4.1 Are the unique values and ethos of public libraries reflected in your service? (priority question) **High Impact**
- 4.2 Are values built into practice through policies and frameworks? **High Impact**
- 4.3 Is there a culture of organisational development and diversity of public library practice? **Achieved**

Rationale in relation to Section 4
The service has developed its own core values in consultation with staff. These are published and displayed internally, and staff buy-in is measured in regular check-ins. User outcomes are evidenced through…..

Suggested areas of improvement
- AAAA

- BBBBB

- CCCCC

Process: Scoring levels

Accreditation levels: Structure and allocation

There are three different categories that can be awarded. These categories are designed to encourage improvement and avoid incentivising the bare minimum or a race to bottom.

They are also designed to reward those achieving higher impacts or the creation of more public value, while not simply rewarding higher inputs.

Accreditation will be based on the self-assessment, desk-assessment, and the external assessment visit. The external assessors will bring the evidence together and make a recommendation to the Accreditation Panel. They will then recommend the library service be assigned to one of three categories:

- **'Achieved accreditation - high impact'** = a service which demonstrates strong evidence of a sophisticated understanding of community need and offer which meets those needs in highly impactful ways, and a focusing of resources on meeting those needs which is innovative and responsive.

- **'Achieved accreditation'** = a service which demonstrates clear evidence of a good understanding of community need, an offer which meets those needs, and clear focusing of resources on meeting those needs.

- **'Working towards accreditation'** = a service which is working towards a good understanding of community need, and offer which meets those needs, and clear focusing of resources on meeting those needs – but is not yet operating at that level.

A scoring matrix has been developed to provide a structure to the overall scoring. This identifies a priority question for each of the four sections to the self-assessment, for which the total score for that section cannot be higher than the score for the priority question.

The overall score needs all four sections to equal the lowest section score. For example, if a library service scores 'Achieved accreditation - high impact' for sections one to three of the self-assessment, but receives 'Achieved accreditation' for section four, then it will be awarded 'Achieved accreditation'

Scoring matrix

The scoring matrix provides the formula to calculate the overall accreditation score for the library service.

Self - assessment question	Question score	Score for section (can't be higher than priority score)	
Section 1: People – the community and local needs			
1.1 Is your service tailored to local needs? (Priority question)			Two or more High impact = High impact
1.2 Does your service reach those with the greatest need?			Two or more Basic or above = Basic
1.3 Is your service built around user engagement, experience and outcomes?			Two or more Working towards = Working Towards
Sections 2 : Place - local priorities and local impact			
2.1 Are service goals aligned with local priorities? (Priority question)			Two or more High impact = High impact
2.2 - Does your service build effective partnerships?			Two or more Basic or above = Basic
2.3 What impact does your service have on individuals?			Two or more Working towards = Working Towards
Section 3: Purpose - leadership, vision and delivery			
3.1 - Are your purpose and vision clear and do they align with stakeholders'? (Priority question)			Two or more High impact = High impact
3.2 - Does the service have capable leadership which inspires trust?			Two or more Basic or above = Basic
3.3 - Does your service use scarce resources and generate additional income to maximise impact?			Two or more Working towards = Working Towards
Section 4: Policy and library practice			
4.1 Are the unique values and ethos of public libraries reflected in your service? (Priority question)			Two or more High impact = High impact

4.2 Are values built into practice through policies and frameworks?		Two or more Basic or above = Basic
4.3 Is there a culture of organisational development and diversity of public library practice?		Two or more Working towards = Working Towards
Overall score		**Total score is equal to lowest section score i.e. Needs all four section scores to be that level**

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