

Leadership for Libraries taskforce

The [Independent Library Report for England](#) was published on 18 December 2014. It identified a range of opportunities for the future whilst still retaining the local identity and accountability of the library service. One of the key actions from the Independent Library Report was to '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'. This taskforce will report to Ministers and the Local Government Association'. The Government and Local Government Association took immediate steps to set up this taskforce.

The taskforce will be open and transparent. It will publish an action plan along with regular progress reports. The first meeting was held on 10 March 2015 where the terms of reference, priorities and aims were agreed.

Chair

Dr Paul Blantern is the Chair of the taskforce as well as being the Chief Executive of Northamptonshire County Council where he is responsible for a wide portfolio of customer-facing services including libraries.

Chief Executive

Kathy Settle will become the Chief Executive for the taskforce from April 2015. Kathy is currently the Director for Digital Policy and Departmental Engagement in the Government Digital Service (GDS), part of the Cabinet Office. She will continue to work for GDS until late summer in tandem with her Chief Executive appointment. She brings a strong track record of delivery, leadership and engagement within a wide range of sectors that will help Paul and the taskforce to achieve their objectives within reasonable time limits. She has also led in GDS on Digital Inclusion (working with partners to help get those offline, online) and on Assisted Digital (supporting those offline to access government digital services) that are identified as key areas of opportunity for the public library network in the Independent Library Report.

Partners in the library sector have warmly welcomed Kathy's appointment and Kathy will be arranging meetings with relevant individuals and groups over the coming weeks.

Achievements to date

18 December 2014	Ministers and Local Government Association support creation of libraries taskforce
10 March 2015	First meeting of Leadership for Libraries taskforce
11 March 2015	British Library, Arts Council England and Department for Communities and Local Government announce the continuation of funding for the Enterprising Libraries project
17 March 2015	BT/Barclays announced funding for a pilot for WiFi in certain libraries/community centres to help with social deprivation
18 March 2015	Central Government announced £7.4m funding to support libraries in England to provide internet access and WiFi
April 2015	Chief Executive begins role