**Benchmarking Framework**

**for library services**

**Shorter (alternative) version**

**Version 1, September 2017**

**Introduction**

This template provides an alternative approach to self-assessment using the Benchmarking Framework for library services.

It is slightly simpler to use than template 1 and is useful if you don’t have access to a trained facilitator for your sessions. However, increased simplicity (and the use of tick boxes) risks risk a less insightful and valuable self-assessment.

**Methodology**

During the self-assessment sessions, the following methodology should be used:

* remind the team of the goal and nature of self-assessment
* ensure that every member of the team has a copy of the template and/or project it onto a screen
* ensure everyone in the team understands the characteristic and criteria that you are working on
* ask each member of the team to rate each criteria within the characteristic you are working on (such as for each row), using the evaluation system below, and to add their reasons for their ratings
* once everyone has completed this, open up the discussion, focusing on the criteria where there is variation in people’s perspectives
* reach a consensus on ratings, strengths and areas for improvement (aim to establish two to four of each)
* write these on the flipchart, or type into the template and project this onto the screen
* move on to the next characteristic
* when you have completed the self-assessment, write down all the findings using the template

**Self-assessment is not a competition, a points-scoring exercise, a badge-chasing exercise, a ‘blame game’ or a way to improve your image. It is simply an exercise to help you to develop awareness and agree priorities for improvement**.

**Evaluation system**

This evaluation system is designed to help the self-assessment team members firm up their thinking about strengths and areas for improvement. The goal is not to obtain the highest possible rating; it is simply to agree improvement priorities.

The self-assessment team should aim to reach consensus on the ratings for each criteria using the following system. This will help to identify the main areas for improvement and strengths.

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| **Rating** | **Definitions** |
| **0** | Nothing has been planned so far |
| **1** | We are planning ways of doing this |
| **2** | We have partly implemented ways of doing this |
| **3** | We have fully and systematically implemented ways of doing this |
| **4** | We have fully and systematically implemented ways of doing this; the effectiveness and efficiency of our approaches is measured, reviewed and improved; there is evidence that they have had a positive impact. |

**Characteristic 1: leadership**

**Excellent library services are led by visionary, forward-thinking and self-determined leaders who are passionate about continual improvement and making a difference to the local community through the services they provide.**

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| **Ref** | **Criteria** | ✓ **the appropriate box** | **What are the reasons for this rating?** |
| **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** |
| 1.1 | Leaders agree and communicate clear and compelling purpose and vision for the library service |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1.2 | Leaders establish, communicate and act as role models for a set of values (which reflect the [Ethical Principles of Librarianship](https://www.cilip.org.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/2017/ethical_principles_for_library_and_information_professionals_october_2012.pdf)) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1.3 | Leaders are powerful influencers and advocates for library services |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1.4 | Leaders enable and support continual development and innovation of library services, to meet changing needs and expectations of the community |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1.5 | Leaders passionately seek organisational, team and individual improvement, drive the organisation forward and act as a role model of continuous improvement |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1.6 | Leaders connect to and build valuable relationships within relevant public, commercial and civil society sector bodies |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Strengths**

**Areas for improvement**

**Characteristic 2: governance and management system**

**Excellent library services have a soundly-based and transparent system of governance and operations, which meets legal requirements and enables the team to deliver a high quality service for local people and achieve desired outcomes.**

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| **Ref** | **Criteria** | ✓ **the appropriate box** | **What are the reasons for this rating?** |
| **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** |
| 2.1 | We comply with the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964, including the retention of an explicit connection between national superintendence and local leadership |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2.2 | We comply with other legal obligations and guidance (for example, legislation and guidance relating to equality, health and safety, HR, data protection and child protection) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2.3 | We have established an organisational structure and management system, which enable long-term thinking and planning, innovative service development and effective day-to-day management  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2.4 | We use robust project management techniques to support change, improvement, facility development and delivery of the services |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2.5 | We assess and manage risks to the organisation and create contingency plans |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2.6 | We have established transparent decision-making processes, based on facts, in line with the needs of stakeholders |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Strengths**

**Areas for improvement**

**Characteristic 3: evidence-based decision making**

**Excellent library services base the design, delivery and development of their service on evidence, data, information and analysis of good practice from the UK and overseas.**

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| **Ref** | **Criteria** | ✓ **the appropriate box** | **What are the reasons for this rating?** |
| **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** |
| 3.1 | We develop and maintain an understanding of the present and future political, economic, social, technical, environmental and legal environment in which the library (service) operates |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3.2 | We develop and maintain an understanding of the strategies of relevant national and local organisations and partnerships |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3.3 | We develop and maintain an understanding of the socio-economics and demographics of the local community and other relevant educational and health-related trends |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3.4 | We proactively seek and learn from good practice from the UK and overseas |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3.5 | We evaluate the impact of programmes and projects and share learning widely across the sector |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3.6 | We monitor, measure, predict and report performance in relation to the desired outcomes, user satisfaction, staff satisfaction, efficiency and value for money, and use this information to inform review and improvement (see characteristic 10) |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Strengths**

**Areas for improvement**

**Characteristic 4: community consultation and engagement**

**Excellent library services are shaped by local needs and designed and delivered in partnership with the community, so their services are accessible and available to all who need them.**

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| **Ref** | **Criteria** | ✓ **the appropriate box** | **What are the reasons for this rating?** |
| **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** |
| 4.1 | We develop and maintain an understanding of the present and future needs and service expectations of all parts of the community |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4.2 | We proactively develop an understanding of the barriers that people face in relation to using the service, and find ways to overcome these barriers |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4.3 | We proactively seek, collect and review ideas from the community about how to develop and improve the service |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4.4 | We work in partnership with the community to develop and deliver the services (such as using Friends Groups) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4.5 | We actively engage young people in developing, using and promoting the service |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4.6 | We develop insight to people’s experience and perception of the service |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Strengths**

**Area for improvement**

**Characteristic 5: outcomes-focused strategy and planning**

**Excellent library services plan the future service, so that they can achieve positive outcomes, a high quality service for the communities they service (reflecting the** [**7 strategic outcomes**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/libraries-deliver-ambition-for-public-libraries-in-england-2016-to-2021/libraries-deliver-ambition-for-public-libraries-in-england-2016-to-2021#Annex-1) **in** [**Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England, 2016 to 2021**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/libraries-deliver-ambition-for-public-libraries-in-england-2016-to-2021)**) and long-term sustainability.**

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| **Ref** | **Criteria** | **✓ the appropriate box** | **What are the reasons for this rating?** |
| **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** |
| 5.1 | We define, agree and communicate desired outcomes and related performance measures for the library service, which reflect and contribute to the [7 strategic outcomes](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/libraries-deliver-ambition-for-public-libraries-in-england-2016-to-2021/libraries-deliver-ambition-for-public-libraries-in-england-2016-to-2021#Annex-1)) in Libraries Deliver: Ambition, the council’s authority’s corporate plan, the strategies of key partners and local needs |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5.2 | We prioritise service development activities which will have the greatest impact on the outcomes and broader council priorities |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5.3 | We develop, communicate and implement a long and medium term plan, which enables the service to achieve enhanced outcomes and to be sustainable, based on the identified needs and expectations of the community (see characteristic 4) and research and measurement activity (see characteristic 3) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5.4 | We identify the need for, plan and manage major change with a constancy of purpose, ensuring people are consulted and engaged in the process |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5.5 | We identify, capture and make use of the knowledge, experience and creative ideas from professional staff, volunteers and partners to inform the long and medium term plan |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5.6 | We monitor progress with the long and medium term plan, review its continuing effectiveness and make the necessary changes |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Strengths**

**Areas for improvement**

**Characteristic 6: collaborative working and enterprise**

**Excellent library services have an entrepreneurial and creative approach to building new service models and establishing a wide range of collaborations in order to achieve enhanced outcomes and sustainability.**

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| **Ref** | **Criteria** | ✓ **the appropriate box** | **What are the reasons for this rating?** |
| **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** |
| 6.1 | We activelyexamine alternative delivery models which could unlock additionalinvestment and achieve enhanced outcomes |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6.2 | We proactively seek and develop diverse and sustainable funding streams, including income generating activities, fundraising, grants and commissioning |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6.3 | We establish collaborations with public, commercial and not for profit sector bodies, to develop and deliver service offers |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6.4 | We create synergy relating to vision, outcomes and values with our partners |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6.5 | We collaborate with internal and external partners to improve efficiency, value for money and impact (for example, through shared resources, joint service development, joint purchasing, joint commissioning and funding bids and shared back office functions) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6.6 | We manage the relationships with partners, including risk and tension, to create sustainable collaboration |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Strengths**

**Areas for improvement**

**Characteristic 7: managing and developing people**

**Excellent library services plan, recruit, manage and develop the professional and volunteer workforce in line with the present and future needs of the organisation and the workforce.**

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| **Ref** | **Criteria** | ✓ **the appropriate box** | **What are the reasons for this rating?** |
| **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** |
| 7.1 | We plan the workforce capacity required to achieve the desired outcomes, establish clear roles and responsibilities and identify the required competencies and knowledge |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 7.2 | We seek to attract and recruit a diverse professional and volunteer workforce with the required competencies and knowledge and/or the potential to develop |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 7.3 | Professionals and volunteers are supported to develop, learn and improve, in line with the needs of the organisation and the workforce, through a wide range of learning, development and improvement support activity |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 7.4 | Professionals and volunteers own collective responsibility for achieving the desired outcomes and are engaged in developing and improving the service |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 7.5 | We communicate effectively with each other, giving professionals and volunteers the opportunity to know as much as they need |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 7.6 | The professional and volunteer workforce is supported to maintain and develop personal resilience |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Strengths**

**Areas for improvement**

**Characteristic 8: managing financial and physical resources**

**Excellent library services plan and manage financial and physical resources to develop the service, reduce costs and ensure sustainability, ensuring that they make use of public funds effectively and efficiently.**

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| **Ref** | **Criteria** | ✓ **the appropriate box** | **What are the reasons for this rating?** |
| **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** |
| 8.1 | We allocate and plan financial resources in line with the long and medium term plans to ensure sustainability and achievement of enhanced outcomes |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 8.2 | We manage financial resources in a robust and transparent way, whilst maintaining the flexibility to enable people to respond to opportunities and unexpected situations and to support innovation |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 8.3 | We explore the opportunities for integrating and co-locating libraries with other government and partner services |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 8.4 | We review and improve accessibility of the facilities, in line with the identified needs of the community and the Equality Act |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 8.5 | We plan and implement preventative maintenance, refurbishment and renewal programmes for facilities to optimise performance in the long-term and ensure they continue to meet the expectations of users |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 8.6 | We make the best use of new technology to improve access and service delivery |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Strengths**

**Areas for improvement**

**Characteristic 9: service design, innovation and delivery**

**Excellent library services provide an innovative range of services, which reflect the Society of Chief Librarians’** [**Universal Offers**](http://goscl.com/universal-offers/)**, based on the needs of the local community, and deliver these in line with their expectations.**

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| **Ref** | **Criteria** | **✓ the appropriate box** | **What are the reasons for this rating?** |
| **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** |
| 9.1 | We review the [Universal Offers](http://goscl.com/universal-offers/) and other service offers to identify which to implement, to what extent, and at which sites, based on the desired outcomes and the identified needs of the local community |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 9.2 | We ensure that library services are accessible to all people in the community |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 9.3 | We proactively communicate the service offer with all parts of the community in a meaningful and engaging way |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 9.4 | We maintain levels of suitably refreshed stock and up-to-date information to ensure that user needs and expectations are met |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 9.5 | We deliver a prompt, responsive and seamless service to users which aims to exceed their expectations |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 9.6 | We review the effectiveness of the service offer on a regular basis, using data and user feedback, and make changes using ideas from staff, volunteers, partners and users |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Strengths**

**Areas for improvement**

**Characteristic 10: review, improvement and learning**

**Excellent library services continually review and improve the way in which they operate and learn from what has happened, so that the service meets the needs and expectations of the community and is sustainable.**

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| **Ref** | **Criteria** | ✓ **the appropriate box** | **What are the reasons for this rating?** |
| **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** |
| 10.1 | We conduct annual self-assessment using this framework, plan valuable improvement actions and implement the changes |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 10.2 | We review our service delivery processes, to identify and remove non-value adding activity and waste and enhance the value to the users |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 10.3 | We have implemented a structured approach to systemic problem solving |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 10.4 | We proactively learn from peer organisations and organisations in other sectors to help improve the services |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 10.5 | We learn from the past and using this knowledge to improve the future |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 10.6 | We encourage and support all staff and volunteers to implement many, minor improvements on an ongoing basis |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Strengths**

**Areas for improvement**