

Baroness Sanderson to help develop new public libraries strategy

- She will serve as the independent chair of a new advisory panel
- Panel's work will inform a new public libraries strategy due in 2023

Baroness Elizabeth Sanderson of Welton has been appointed by the Government to help develop a new strategy to make sure public libraries are providing the best possible service for their communities.

Libraries provide a vital service and the strategy will help establish ways in which they can improve to meet the needs of people in their area.

Baroness Sanderson is an experienced former journalist and government adviser who joined the Government benches in the House of Lords in 2019.

She has been appointed as the independent chair of a new advisory panel and will be expected to provide a fresh, challenging and impartial perspective on libraries to help formulate innovative new policy ideas.

Through the autumn and winter she will lead a number of sessions with the advisory panel of contributors who will be drawn from the library sector and beyond. Participants in the panel sessions will be confirmed in due course.

All sessions will be attended by representatives from Arts Council England, Libraries Connected, and the cross-party Local Government Association.

The sessions will help gather information to inspire a set of recommendations which will form part of a new government public libraries strategy for 2023, succeeding the previous [strategy](#) which came into force in 2016.

Input into the development of the recommendations will also come from the British Library, local authority library services and community-managed libraries, as well as other government departments, to bring in a wide range of views and insights.

Libraries Minister Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay said:

Libraries have a unique and precious role in communities across the country – something which was thrown into relief during the pandemic. As we bounce back from that, we want to make sure we are drawing on a wide range of expertise and best practice to give them the support they need to keep serving the public so well.

Baroness Sanderson and the panel of expert and outside voices will help us achieve this and I look forward to seeing the recommendations they put forward.

Baroness Sanderson said:

I'm thrilled to be taking up this new role. Libraries play such an important part in our lives, be that instilling a love of reading in childhood or encouraging economic, social and mental wellbeing throughout adulthood and into old age.

Too often undervalued, they are one of the most critical forms of social infrastructure we have and I look forward to working alongside the experts, and listening to a wide range of voices, so that we may help develop ideas as to how we may promote and protect our libraries into the future.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

- The role is unpaid.
- Participants in the advisory panel sessions will be confirmed in due course.
- While responsibility for managing library services sits with local authorities, the Government has a duty to ensure councils are meeting their statutory duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service, as well as providing support to councils looking for ways to improve their service.
- DCMS funds Arts Council England, which is the national development agency for public libraries. ACE is delivering the Government's £20.5 million Libraries Improvement Fund, which will transform library services in England by helping them upgrade their buildings and improve digital infrastructure. Awards made through the scheme this year include £495,000 for the Sandwell Library and Information Service in the West Midlands and Sheffield Libraries which was given £340,000.
- [Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England](#) was the first ever national libraries strategy, produced by the Libraries Taskforce and co-sponsored by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and the Local Government Association. The Libraries Taskforce ceased in March 2020, with its [final closure report](#) published in June 2021.