Summer Reading Challenge Review 2017-2018

**Report and Recommendations**

**Contents**

1. Introduction p 3

2. Summary of Key Findings p 4

 2.1 The management and delivery of the Challenge p 4

 2.2 Partnerships and delivery channels p 4

 2.3 Planning for the future: new business models p 4

 4.4 Communications and marketing p 5

3. Process, context and scope of the review p 5

 3.1 Process and context p 5

 3.2 Scope and aims p 5

4. Recommendations p 6

 4.1 The management and delivery of the Challenge p 6

 4.1.1 Simplifying the model: applying feedback to 2018 SRC p 6

 4.1.2 Maintain a volunteering offer for young people p 7

 4.1.3 Develop the co-creation model p 7

 4.1.4 Review the membership/remit of the SRC Strategy Group p 8

 4.2 Partnerships and delivery channels p 8

 4.2.1 Build school engagement p 8

 4.2.2 Ensure the Challenge engages and meets the needs of diverse communities p 9

 4.2.3 Involving new partners and looking at ways we might work
 together to enhance reach and impact p10

 4.3 Planning for the future: securing investment and developing new
 business models p10

 4.3.1 Sponsorship to grow participation and fund evaluation p11

 4.3.2 Diversifying the business model p11

 4.3.3 Exploring how the current paper-based model might need to
 change in a digital world p12

 4.4 Communications and marketing p13

 4.5 Priorities for 2018-19 p13

5. Conclusions p14

 5.1 Implementation timeline of activity p15

Appendix A p18
Aims of the Summer Reading Challenge

Appendix B p19
Members of Summer Reading Challenge groups

Appendix C p20
Overview of the research which has shaped the report and summary of findings

Appendix D p24
Newham 2017 Schools engagement pilot – a case study

Appendix E p28
Visual Stories: From Inspire: Culture, Learning and Libraries – a case study

Appendix F p31
Stakeholders and useful terms

1. Introduction

The Reading Agency (TRA) is a national charity that tackles life's big challenges through the proven power of reading.

TRA, with the support of the Summer Reading Challenge Strategy Group (SRCSG), develops and manages the annual Summer Reading Challenge (SRC), a programme delivered in and by public libraries nationally. This reading-for-pleasure challenge was launched in 1999 and has become established in the public library activity calendar. The core aim is to encourage children to read for pleasure, in the long break from schools when many children can experience the summer reading dip, and to put libraries at the centre of the community, demonstrating how they contribute to local authority corporate policy.

The SRC is the UK’s biggest annual reading promotion for children aged four to eleven (with increasing participation of pre-school children). No other free reading activity involves so many children, introduces families to their library, encourages children to choose books freely and independently and is endorsed by parents, teachers and the Department for Education.

The aims of the SRC are given in detail in **Appendix A.**

In the last four years, 3,075,588 children, and between 96% and 99% of UK library services, have taken part in the Challenge. Each of the home nations has a reading strategy which reflects active partnerships with its public library service.

In England and Wales, the SRC is embedded in the Society of Chief Librarians Books and Reading offer, which sets out the public libraries’ vision for a modern reading service within a local community. The Challenge is also a core plank in the ASCEL Children’s Promise. In addition, the Welsh Books Council is a strategic partner in SRC by funding the bilingual versions of the SRC materials for Welsh authorities and supporting SRC within its portfolio of children’s and young people’s policy.

In Scotland, the SRC is in the Scottish Reading Strategy which is embedded in the National Strategy for public libraries in Scotland, Ambition and Opportunity. This is led by The Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC), the independent advisory body to the Scottish Government.

Northern Ireland (Libraries NI) has not participated in SRC since 2015 and is not taking part in TRA’s SRC this year. Libraries NI will be running its own in-house Challenge this summer - as they have done for the last couple of years – so are still supporting children’s reading for pleasure in the summer holidays.

The Summer Reading Challenge Review Group (SRCRG) which reports to the SRCSG, produced this report, which highlights the main findings from the SRC review. It is designed to be used as an internal partnership document by TRA and the library sector to shape future delivery of the Challenge. A Review of SRC is usually carried out every four years with the aim to outline ideas for improving the Challenge in the short to medium term and sets out our ambitions for its future development

The review has shown huge sector and partner support for the Challenge. All stakeholders stressed that the proposals outlined here are designed to help what is already a highly successful programme develop and thrive, so that even more children can take part in the years ahead.

Libraries have shown a tenacity and resilience in delivering the Challenge these last 20 years, navigating budget pressures, the transforming impact of digital, the shifting priorities of local authorities, and creatively using SRC to support wellbeing, community engagement, and as a pivotal/transformational tool in encouraging and facilitating reading for pleasure, with its proven impact on attainment.

Details of the members of both the SRCRG and the SRCSG can be found in **Appendix B**
of this document.

2. Summary of Key Findings

**Headlines**

The research has evidenced both the impact of the Challenge and the strong sector support it has as a national programme, locally-delivered and tailored to meet local needs.

All those interviewed discussed their belief in the programme, the impact of participation on children’s enjoyment of reading and reading skills and a strong commitment to maintaining its reach and impact in challenging financial times. They are ambitious for the Challenge – they want it to remain creative and sustainable for future generations, and for this to happen we need to be open to new ways of working.

The research identified priorities for investment and development, it also highlighted the need to ‘future-proof’ the challenge for a digital generation.

Also, whilst the research identified a number of quick wins, many of the development ideas which emerged from the consultation process do require investment which will need to be part of a fundraising strategy.

The key findings are summarised under the four headings below; these are expanded with accompanying recommendations laid out in Section 4, with the identified priority areas for each one set out in Section 4.5.

2.1 The management and delivery of the Challenge

The goal is to simplify the model. Making the Challenge easier to manage and deliver will free up capacity nationally and locally. We need to develop the co-creation model and sustain and develop the young people’s volunteering offer. This provides young people with access to high quality work experience as well as harnessing their passion and enthusiasm to help inspire children to read more.

2.2. Partnerships and delivery channels

Much review feedback focused on identifying ways of reaching new audiences, by engaging new partners and promoting the Challenge more effectively to schools and families. We also need to review content and approach to ensure that the Challenge meets the needs of diverse communities.

2.3 Planning for the future: new business models

The current, mostly paper-based, model has the strength of being universally accessible without the need for personal smart devices. This appeals to families concerned about excessive screen time. However, children and young people have different experiences and expectations as they grow up in a digital generation. The costs of print, production and distribution shape the current reach of the Challenge and underpin its business model. The consultation showed a willingness to explore new delivery models for the Challenge as well as ways of securing new investment. Possibilities include licensing, sponsorship, paywalls, and so on, which might help to ensure future sustainability.

2.4 Communications and marketing

The consultation emphasised the need to promote and market the Challenge more effectively, both nationally and locally. The 21st Challenge will take place in 2019 –identified as a key moment to start showcasing the need for the Challenge and evidence its reach and impact more effectively.

3. Process, context and scope of the review

3.1 Process and context

In June 2016, the SRCSG agreed the time was right to conduct a review of the programme. Society has changed significantly since the last review in 2012 and it was time to pressure-test the Challenge’s business model, format and approach to build on strengths, address weaknesses and ensure future sustainability.

The 2017-18 review was undertaken by the SRCRG. There were no resources to commission an external organisation to conduct the review, so it was completed in house by TRA, SCL and ASCEL who led on library and family consultation. The review involved the Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC) as well as library partners in Wales and the Welsh Books Council.

Intern support for a school/teachers’ survey was provided via our partnership with ThinkLab at the University of Cambridge and UKLA kindly allowed use of their channels to promote surveys and encourage others to send us their views. The consultation for this review involved library staff, families, teachers, partners and potential partners.

The process was managed by a review subgroup, led by Janene Cox (in her role as Chair of the SRCSG and SCL Executive member and, until June 2017, TRA trustee). The group reported to the SRCSG with sign off of any changes to the SRC model being agreed by SCL Executive and TRA Board.

3.2 Scope and aims

The review started from the premise that there is robust evidence demonstrating the importance of reading for pleasure in developing children’s reading and life skills. Previous SRC impact studies demonstrated that the Challenge keeps children reading for pleasure in the summer break from school.

This review has been shaped by the knowledge that local authorities and public libraries are facing unprecedented challenges. Budget reductions create a strategic need for a tight focus on core local outcomes.

The **aims of the review** were to**:**

* Identify what is needed to ‘future proof’ the SRC as a core library offer running across the whole of the UK and encouraging more children to read for pleasure and join the library.
* Explore how to:
	+ ensure its future growth and sustainability
	+ extend its reach and develop new audiences
	+ increase its impact
	+ secure new partnerships and new investment.
* Deliver a four-year plan, 2019-2022, with interim findings applied, where possible, to the 2018 Mischief Makers Summer Reading Challenge.

## We agreed to do a literature review to identify local and national policy drivers that should shape the way we deliver future Challenges; a teacher survey to find out how to more effectively promote the Challenge in schools as a fun activity which can help to prevent the ‘summer reading dip’; family consultation to learn what parents and carers want from the Challenge and how they think we should develop and promote it; library sector consultation to see what library partners value and what they would like to change – including those services who, for whatever reason, have not participated in the last four years and, finally, interviews with existing and potential new partners to consider future challenges and ways of overcoming these.

## We interviewed/consulted:

* 1,067 parents and carers (through the SRC online family survey - summer 2017) plus families in nine ASCEL SRC Review regional workshops.
* All nine English library regions, plus Scotland and Wales which fed back to the review in regional clusters - we estimate this involved 110 library services.
* Nineteen partner organisations and potential partners.
* 103 teachers (92 online survey, 11 hard copy feedback).

The overview of the research which was undertaken to shape the report can be found in **Appendix C** of this document.

4. Recommendations

The research identified some quick wins linked to the management and delivery of the Challenge, which are outlined in 4.1. It also identified development areas requiring longer-term investment and planning which will need to be part of a fundraising strategy for the future which are outlined in 4.2 to 4.4.

4.1 The management and delivery of the Challenge

The research identified a willingness to simplify the SRC model – making the Challenge easier to deliver and run would free up capacity nationally and locally. There was also agreement that we need to develop the co-creation model for the Challenge and to sustain and develop the young people’s volunteering offer.

4.1.1. Simplifying the model: applying feedback to 2018 Mischief Makers SRC

Based on review feedback the 2018 Challenge will see:

* The introduction of a generic medal alongside the themed medal and a generic
pull-up banner.
* The school pack, power point and template letter reviewed to reflect learning from the teacher consultation. This focused on the need for schools to have a clear understanding of the local offer – including key dates, whether there is a pre-school offer, if completers get a medal, and so on.
* Libraries encouraged to feedback to the schools whose pupils took part. This is very valuable to teachers and can help both libraries and schools with evidence collection around participation and attitudinal change.
* The creation of a:
	+ themed downloadable template for a family stretch model ‘Mischief Makers record keeping card’ for libraries who want to encourage family engagement, for example, parents can log books they have read, alongside their children
	+ a suite of free downloadable certificates for children who have read more than six books and are looking for the ‘stretch’ factor
	+ a school participation certificate (or similar).

4.1.2. Maintain a volunteering offer for young people as part of the Challenge

Paul Hamlyn funding for the Reading Hack programme ends in 2018 and TRA has been working with ASCEL, SCL and others to identify a sustainable legacy for the programme. The review consultation, together with the external evaluation of Reading Hack, identified the double benefits of this programme. Libraries benefit from the support, capacity and energy the young people bring to the delivery of the Challenge and their ability to inspire children; young people value the work experience and skills development.

Despite funding for free materials coming to an end, authorities supported over 7,000 young people to volunteer in SRC 2017 and many young people used their experience towards accredited schemes, such as Duke of Edinburgh Award. The consultation for the SRC review has identified a desire to ensure that a young people’s volunteering offer remains a core part of the Challenge.

**Recommendations**:

* Continue to provide local authorities with the opportunity to purchase materials to support the volunteering offer, for example t-shirts, recruitment invitations, lanyards (materials are produced to order).
* Provide generic materials to assist libraries to recruit young people as volunteers to help deliver the Challenge and support them in doing this (guidance notes for library staff, downloadable resources, website resources, and so on).
* Scope creating a young people’s promise for libraries, as part of the review of the universal offers. This would support library services in using the learning/best practice from Reading Hack to shape future engagement with young people.

4.1.3 Develop the co-creation model

Co-creation means working with participants as well as partners to develop and deliver the Challenge; as such it is a powerful tool for ensuring that a programme is meeting the needs of the audience it is designed for. Co-creation has been a core part of all TRA’s work and has shaped the Universal Health Offer. The review research has demonstrated that we need to embed this model in the future development of the Challenge, working with parents, carers and children. Putting this in place will help ensure that we are meeting need, as well as contributing to a strong local sense of ownership of the Challenge. It will also assist us in developing future themes.

**Recommendations:**

* put a co-creation process in place for the 2020 challenge
* identify possible themes for the future which can link the Challenge with the
health agenda.

4.1.4 Review the membership/remit of the SRCSG

As part of the consultation process we discussed membership of the SRCSG. At present this group is a sector/practitioner group which has responsibility for advising on development and delivery of the Challenge, consulting ASCEL and SCL regionally and nationally, and sharing learning and best practice.

Feedback from the review suggested a need to broaden membership to involve those we want to reach in the process of creating and developing the Challenge. Therefore, we should consider including parents/carers and teachers as well as representatives from organisations such as the Cultural Education Partnerships (CEPs) and Bridge Organisations.

One of the review’s key findings was that many organisations are very interested in partnering with the SRC to help tackle shared problems around literacy, inclusion and living well. It is recommended that we use one of the three SRCSG meetings to focus on policy and development and invite some of the organisations we consulted (Child Poverty Action Group, NHS England, BBC, ACE, and so on) to attend that meeting to learn more about the Challenge and to help with its future development.

**Recommendations**

* review the membership of the SRCSG
* ensure we have an effective process for consulting/engaging home nations
* identify one meeting a year which can focus on policy development and invite representatives from the BBC, CBBC, Child Poverty Action, Every Child a Reader network, the health group and Wimbletech to look at how we promote the Challenge more effectively nationally and locally.

4.2 Partnerships and delivery channels

Much of the review feedback focused on identifying ways to reach new audiences by: promoting the challenge more effectively to schools and families; working with new partners to enhance reach and impact; and reviewing content and approach to ensure the Challenge meets the needs of diverse communities.

4.2.1 Build school engagement

All our research shows that schools have a critical role in helping to grow the Challenge and engage families who would benefit from taking part, but who might not be library users. Reading for pleasure is now embedded in the school curriculum, which provides an opening for teacher engagement. However, the consultation made clear that, as well as providing resources for schools, we also need to promote the Challenge directly at school events and teacher conferences. Given capacity issues, we would need to identify funding to support this activity in the longer term. In the short term the review has suggested that we explore:

* the availability and accessibility of our existing schools resources (promotional video, parent information, schools’ pack to be better signposted and be accessible from our website, partners’ websites and via TES, Guardian, and so on)
* working with library volunteers and with parents to create a network of champions to promote the challenge in their local schools
* identifying key conferences of teachers and head teachers and seeking opportunities to make presentations at them, talking about the links between the Challenge, the reading for pleasure agenda and the impact taking part can have over the course of the summer
* opportunities for cross-promotion with other organisations and charities which have reach into schools and with families, for example NLT, CLPE, Every Child A Reader, World Book Day, BookTrust, and so on
* the feasibility of developing a regional network of champion schools to use as advocates, where we can test ideas and consult with teachers/children/parents
* the feasibility of specific school-based rewards (such as a school cup or a roll of honour template) to encourage participation in the Challenge
* including advocacy material focused on the impact of participation and links with the curriculum in the schools’ pack. Make this information easily available on the TRA website and showcase in TRA corporate communications.

**Recommendations:**

* Create a school development plan identifying local and national activity for delivery in the lead up to the 2019 Challenge.
* Prioritise engagement in areas of deprivation.
* Pilot and test approaches with teachers and refine as a result of the consultation.

4.2.2. Ensure the Challenge engages and meets the needs of diverse communities

Universality is a great strength of the SRC. It runs in every cultural ‘cold spot’ in England, Scotland and Wales and is a free, accessible offer open to all. There's a healthy gender spilt with approximately 46% boys taking part (high for a reading activity).

One of the challenges of the current model is ensuring that every community feels a sense of ownership and engagement. The review process included meeting with diversity specialists to identify actions over the next four years to ensure that the cultural diversity of the SRC matches its geographical diversity and that it is reflective of the local communities it has been designed to engage. It is why, moving forwards, we want to put more emphasis on co-creation in the Challenge (see section 4.1.3).

The consultation evidenced that we need more information about the barriers to participation and how to overcome them. We need to research how libraries promote the Challenge locally; who is currently not using the library and why not. We recognise there are some barriers (such as financial problems, transport issues) we lack resources to tackle, but research would help identify areas we can improve.

We would like to seek investment to pilot activities with certain communities who are not currently engaged, then use the learning from these pilots to shape the Challenge as a whole. The discussions also raised the need to be more proactive in promoting the Challenge to local families, showcasing the benefits of taking part.

**Recommendations:**

* develop a diversity strategy for the Challenge and use this to shape the offer from 2020
* seek investment for pilot activities with communities who are not currently very involved and use the learning from this to shape the Challenge as a whole.

4.2.3 Involving new partners and looking at ways we might work together to enhance reach and impact

The importance of local, national and regional partnerships in helping to promote library-based activity and broaden cultural engagement (culture in terms of art forms and sense of wellbeing and belonging) emerged strongly in the review research. It identified opportunities for embedding the Challenge in place-based activities and for extending its reach and impact by working with a range of organisations to help deliver shared goals. It particularly highlighted opportunities to build on work done across the universal offers, by linking up with health and cultural partners and working together to raise the profile of the Challenge and promote it more effectively to the audiences we are all trying to reach.

Interviews with potential partners show that they recognise the value of the SRC brand: its reach into the communities they wish to work with; shared goals around access, life chances and well-being; the strength of the national/local delivery model and the family engagement at its core. Nurturing and developing these partnerships and using them to help plan future delivery and themes will help us achieve our long-term aims around sustainability and impact.

In addition, the review looked at the powerful role authors and illustrators play in building a love of reading amongst the children who visit the library. Public libraries and TRA already have strong links with publishers and authors. We would like to strengthen this aspect of the programme in discussion with children’s publishers and Patrons of Reading to explore how to attract funding to embed creative author activity during the Challenge. We will involve Bridge Organisations, CEPs, and Artsmark and Arts Award in discussions.

**Recommendations:**

* Create a simple toolkit with ideas and signposting resources/good practice to help library services activate local partnerships. This will include using the annual SRC theme to create local trails and ensuring that SRC branding guidelines maximise, rather than restrict, local activation.
* Involve more authors/illustrators in supporting and championing the Challenge within a strategic framework, as opposed to ad-hoc activity.

4.3 Planning for the future: securing investment and developing new business models

The SRC business model remains largely unchanged since the Challenge was first developed. Library budgets are under pressure and there are currently no other income streams supporting activity to mitigate this. TRA also carries considerable and increasing risk as it places orders for materials before income is secured. Tesco Bank sponsorship in Scotland ends after SRC 2018.

The Challenge is a paper-based model in a digital world. This is both a strength of the programme (many parents said this was what they liked, as it means that everyone can take part) and a problem – in a digital world children and young people want to access books and reading in a variety of ways. The costs of print, production and distribution shape the current reach of the Challenge and underpin its business model. As part of the consultation process we have, therefore, looked at what needs to be done to help us plan for the future.

4.3.1. Sponsorship to grow participation and fund evaluation

The research identified a new willingness to support the search for commercial sponsorship for the Challenge. This builds on the consultation carried out by TRA and SCL in 2015, which resulted in a framework agreement for sponsorship of the Challenge which would include naming rights. The research for this report shows growing recognition of the mutual benefits of sponsorship, as well as a continued commitment to any sponsorship being used to match existing local/national investment and not to replace it. The research recognises the need for TRA to secure sponsorship to cover the ongoing core costs of running the programme. Sponsorship is also required to extend the reach of the Challenge.
**Recommendation:**

* TRA to investigate securing a commercial sponsor for the SRC.

4.3.2 Diversifying the business model

Part of the review process included an initial mapping of potential business development opportunities to help diversify the Challenge’s income model, as a way of mitigating risk and creating an income stream to support continued innovation and development. All the ideas outlined below need significant investment, both to test them and to deliver them. They may need a different skills base to be brought into the steering group to assist with the process. In addition to sponsorship opportunities and digital delivery models, which are covered in a separate section, over the next four years we would like to look at:

* **Extension activities** including a stretch model for those children that exceed the
six-book challenge, older children and family reading activities. These would help to extend reach and impact and may open up new fundraising and income-generation opportunities from a wider range of stakeholders.
* **New markets** – whilst the core focus of the Challenge will always be public libraries, there are opportunities to widen engagement into other sectors based on the SCL approach used with Reading Well. This ensures that delivery of the programme through new frameworks carries signposting back to public libraries as the source of reading content.
* **Extension into museums, Bridges, LCEPS and other cultural/education and family networks** would help to maintain the volume and economies of scale needed to keep materials costs down for libraries, increase profile and fundraising potential and open up new funding streams for targeted work, for example targeted schools, troubled families, children in poverty, children in care.
* **Building the Challenge into other partners’ offers** for example, explore shared engagement with CLPE Power of Reading through school investment. NLT Literacy Hubs extension could also support this development.
* **Partnering with offers in schools** - the Accelerated Reader programme is gaining momentum in schools, with some promoting its use in the summer. The attraction to teachers is clear, given that it provides feedback on reading levels. Discussion with SLS lead and ASCEL has suggested that we might explore cross-promotion with the programme. We are also aware we may need to think about securing school investment in the Challenge moving forwards.
* **Advertising** on the website and Book Sorter to provide an additional income stream to support ongoing development. We have developed ethical and eligibility criteria to support income generation through advertising. This would need approval by SCL/ASCEL to ensure a fit with local government policy in this area. We recognise that finding potential sponsors also takes time and investment. We road-tested
this idea by including National Book Token banners on the SRC website for a
limited time.
* **Backlist materials** may have potential value in other markets.
* **Repurposing materials** for mini challenges in libraries, school reading for pleasure activities, entry-level reading for pleasure ideas to support NQTs, teacher training modules and resources, adapted for additional needs pupils.
* **International licensing** of backlist challenge packages for British Council programmes, international English-speaking schools and private education companies. The levels of participation needed to make this financially viable would have to be explored.
* **Product development** opportunities include the potential to develop or license consumer products using creative content from the Challenge for sale direct to participants. These could include pencils, mugs, and so on, as well as character figures and t-shirts.
* **Buy button** - the primary function of the SRC will always be to support library loans. However, there is potential to build the reading habit by supporting parents to buy books that have been borrowed from the library/are by the same author. More research is needed into library models that have used this function with Amazon and to explore the sponsorship potential with bookshops.
* **Individual giving -** free access to materials is a core Challenge principle, but a donate button to support targeted work with priority groups could help promote innovation and development. We have commissioned external expertise to help develop an individual giving strategy across the organisation and plan to use the learning from this work to help us scope an SRC approach.
* **Reading trends data,** for example from the Book Sorter and family survey,has potential commercial value.

**Recommendations:**

* identify priorities for investigation and criteria for decision making
* create a development plan and timetable for delivery.

4.3.3 Exploring how the current paper-based model might need to change in a digital world

Reading is changing – digital has transformed publishing, delivery and reading models; offering new ways of sharing ideas and participating in the creative process. We want to ensure that children and their families can continue to take part in the Challenge in ways that suit them and also to share their experiences and ideas with others via social media and all of our platforms. We recognise that supporting, producing and distributing creative content digitally can encourage greater engagement with reading; facilitate the sharing of ideas and content; and extend the reach of the Challenge and help us to develop new audiences for it.

Part of the review included a discussion with Wimbletech, a CIC providing co-working hubs in underutilised library and public spaces, which now has partnerships in place with libraries across the UK. Their founder, David Fletcher, takes the view that print-based business models are fast becoming unsustainable in terms of development, delivery and distribution costs. He recommends exploring a licensed digital delivery model for the Challenge and is happy to help scope this. This would be a significant piece of work requiring fundraising to enable it. It would involve mapping key existing and potential stakeholders and identifying the different roles they play in the SRC experience. We would need to agree which elements of the Challenge can be made available for free as a ‘hook’ and those components key to the experience that then sit behind a paywall. His thinks we should develop a ‘pay to play model’ delivered as an automated process, so there are no capacity requirements beyond initial setup.

**Recommendations:**

* explore what would be involved in developing, piloting and testing a digital model
* seek investment to do this work.

4.4 Communications and marketing

A consistent message from the consultation was the need to shout more loudly about the reach, scale and impact of the Challenge. To date, the main focus of activity has been on delivering the programme. TRA now has three full-time employees working on the Challenge instead of the 1.5 it had a few years ago. However, press and PR also need financial investment and we need to consider how to build this into future budgets, given the benefits everyone has identified. The review suggested this should be the top priority moving forwards. We also felt the review created a real opportunity to showcase the value and impact of the Challenge to partners and stakeholders. We should create a public-facing short summary of the review to use to advocate for continued local investment and for new partnerships.

**Recommendations:**

* Create an advocacy resource which draws on the learning from the review to demonstrate the reach, scale and impact of the Challenge nationally and locally.
* Focus on the 21st anniversary in 2019 and start planning for this in 2018.
* Prioritise communications and marketing in the SRC budget.

4.5. Priorities for 2018-19

From these development areas, the SRCRG made the following recommendations to the SRCSG, which were accepted and agreed as priorities for 2018-19; these are reflected in the Implementation Timeline, item **5.1.**

**Management and delivery of the Challenge**

* Simplify the model by making more items generic and reducing the number of items
* Maintain a volunteering offer for young people as part of the Challenge
* Review membership of the SRCSG and hold one meeting a year with external partners which is focused on policy/development.

**Partnerships and delivery channels**

* Prioritise schools’ engagement, particularly in areas of deprivation.

**Planning for the future: securing investment and developing new business models**

* Prioritise seeking commercial sponsorship for the Challenge.

**Communications and marketing**

* Use the 21st anniversary to raise the profile of the Challenge with parents, local politicians and potential funders
* Use the 2018 Challenge to start the campaign.

5. Conclusions

The review is an internal planning document for use by SCL, ASCEL and TRA. It has shown strong sector, participant and partner support for the Challenge and a desire to identify ways of strengthening it for the future. Many of the recommendations require new investment. However, we recognise that even without this we can begin to make changes which will help us to move in the directions recommended by those we interviewed.

We have, therefore, reviewed all the recommendations, agreed priorities for 2018/19 and created a timeline of activity to show how and when we will start work on implementing the broader findings from the research over the course of the next
four years.

A final version of the report will be taken to the June meetings of SCL and ASCEL Executive, The Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC), the Welsh Books Council for Wales and the TRA Board. Once the recommendations have been agreed, we will use this to shape the work plan for the next four years. We will also create a public-facing advocacy document which draws on the research to make the case for continued and new investment in the Challenge.

5.1 Implementation timeline of activity

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Recommendations** | **2018-19 (impacts SRC 2018 & 2019)** | **2019-20 (impacts SRC 2020)** | **2020-21 (impacts SRC 2021)** | **2021-22 (impacts SRC 2022)** |
| **Management and delivery of the Challenge** | Simplify the model by making more items generic and by reducing the number of items. Consult with children around the theme and creative concept for SRC 2019.**Volunteering**Continued commitment to the volunteering offer for young people, with a focus on embedding the offer in the Challenge. Review membership of the SRC strategy group; plus propose having one of the meetings each year attended by external partners, with a focus on policy, strategic development and creative vision. | Develop and pilot a co-creation model to influence the 2020 creative treatment (ideally with external facilitators/agency if funding/in kind).  | First year of co-creation model. | Embed the co-creation model. |
| **Partnerships and delivery channels** | **Schools**Create a realistic, deliverable schools development plan identifying local and national activity and explore the feasibility of a network of ‘testbed’ schools/ authorities. **Inclusion**Prioritise tools for schools and family engagement in areas of deprivation with a focus on identifying and mapping partnerships with those organisations (for example, Child Poverty Action Group) that can act as conduits to reach families who will benefit most. **Cultural engagement** Maintain and develop tangible links with CEPS, identifying scope of SRC activities which make SRC a popular campaign and platform to complement CEP work with libraries and schools.  | Pilot and test approaches with teachers and refine school development plan as a result of the consultation. Seek investment for piloting activities with communities who are not currently very involved with the Challenge and use the learning from this to shape the Challenge as a whole.Create a simple ‘Activation toolkit’ to help library services activate SRC theme locally , e.g. local trails/extended activity with neighbourhood partners tapping into local themes and opportunities, thus strengthening community cohesion and increasing awareness of the Challenge. | Develop a diversity strategy for the Challenge and use this to shape the offer.Involve more authors and illustrators in supporting and championing the Challenge within a strategic framework as opposed to ad-hoc activity; develop with publishers and initiatives such as Patrons of Reading, Schools for Writers, overarching emphasis on inclusivity.  |  |
| **Planning for the future: securing investment and developing new business models.**  | Prioritise seeking commercial sponsorship for the Challenge; and explore feasibility of business modelling ideas from the review (section **4.3.2**). | Seek/maintain commercial sponsorship for the Challenge.Prioritise potential business models for investigation and criteria for decision making.Create a development plan and timetable for delivery.Scope appetite of the sector for developing a digital model for the Challenge.  | Seek/maintain commercial sponsorship for the Challenge.Pilot and test new delivery models.Research, pilot and test a digital model if agreed this is a good way forward. | Implement the findings from the research. |
| **Communications and marketing** | Create an advocacy presentation for use nationally and locally which showcases the reach and impact of the challengeSRCSG to provide guidance to library partners on how to use the 2018 Challenge to start asking parents/carers what they remember from earlier Challenges, scoping anniversary comms. 2019Have the communications strategy for the 21st anniversary in place by Spring 2019.Engage politicians and potential funders. | Use the 21st Challenge to communicate both the need for the Challenge and the impact of participation to parents/carers, local government and potential funders. | Use the learning from 2019 to develop a communications strategy for 2020-21. | Evaluate the impact of the 2020 communications and marketing strategy and plan for the future. |

Appendix A
Aims of the Summer Reading Challenge

The core aims are to encourage children to read for pleasure, especially in the long break from schools when many children can experience the summer reading dip and, secondly, to put libraries the centre of the community, demonstrating how they contribute to local authority corporate policy.

**How it works**

Run through public libraries, the Challenge combines free access to books with fun social activities and a creative online element. The diagram below illustrates how the SRC works.



**Why the Summer Reading Challenge is important**

Reading for pleasure is the best way to support children to develop into confident readers (reference the literature review).

SRC provides libraries with a platform to engage with an increasingly diverse educational landscape. It is accessible for children with a range of special education needs and disabilities and provides equality of opportunity for all young people.

The pre-school materials support local authorities in their school readiness agenda

The opportunities to involve teenagers as young as volunteers (branded Reading Hack) provides opportunities for young people to gain skills and work experience and the volunteering counts towards Duke of Edinburgh accreditation. Children taking part respond warmly to the young volunteers, who are positive and inspiring role models. Whilst helping the children, many re-discover their own enjoyment of reading for pleasure and reading confidence.

The national scale of the Summer Reading Challenge is cost effective and enables local authorities to benefit from economies of scale whilst being flexible to meet local priorities (the core Summer Reading Challenge materials costs libraries less than £1 per child).

Appendix B
Members of Summer Reading Challenge groups

**The Summer Reading Challenge Strategy Group (SRCSG)**

This is currently the governance group for the Summer Reading Challenge. It was established in 2008, with the remit to be accountable for SRC development, service and delivery agreement. In addition, at that time specifically to oversee plans for SRC’s 10th anniversary conference, including the pivotal UKLA SRC impact research, and envisioning the future development of the SRC.

The group is made up of strategic leads from partnership organisations and meets three to four times a year.

* Chair (since inception): Janene Cox OBE, Commissioner for Culture and Communities, Staffordshire County Council, also representing Society of Chief Librarians (SCL) on this group
* Chair or past Chair of The Association of Senior Children’s and Education Librarians (ASCEL)
* ASCEL committee representative for SRC
* Director of School Libraries Association (SLA)
* Chair/representative of Youth Libraries Group (YLG)
* Welsh Books Council
* Youth Libraries Group Scotland
* ASCEL representative, Wales
* Representative from Libraries NI
* Arts Council England relationship manager for The Reading Agency (TRA)
* Internal TRA staff with responsibility for SRC from children’s and young people’s team
* TRA CEO and Creative Director.

**The Summer Reading Challenge Review Group (SRCRG)**

This is a sub group of the Strategy Group.

* Chair of SRC Strategy Group: Janene Cox OBE, Commissioner for Culture and Communities, Staffordshire County Council
* Chair of ASCEL: Sue Ball, Stock, Services & Activities Manager, Staffordshire
* ASCEL Past-Chair and Strategy Group member: Sarah Mears, Library Services Manager, Essex Libraries.

Internal (from within The Reading Agency)

* CEO Reading Agency, Sue Wilkinson MBE
* Creative Director of Reading Agency, Debbie Hicks
* Head of Children’s Reading at Reading Agency, Anne Sarrag
* Project Manager, Summer Reading Challenge, Emma Braithwaite.

Appendix C
Overview of the research which has shaped the report and summary of findings

B.1 Literature review

The literature review assessed the policy context for reading for pleasure, school-based reading and young people’s volunteering. This identified strong links with the reading for pleasure element of the English Key Stage 1 and 2 curriculum and opportunities to promote the Challenge in that context. The research also identified the increasing focus on young people’s volunteering in both the formal and informal sector and the links between this and improving skills and routes into employment. It demonstrated that there is a strong context in the formal education curriculum to help us promote the Challenge to teachers and parents and that, given stretched capacity and resources, we should focus our efforts on: getting the SRC signposted as part of the DfES’s (and other home nation equivalents) reading for pleasure guidance; promoting the Challenge at head teacher conferences and targeting literacy coordinators and PTAs (now known as Parentkind) more effectively.

The research also examined the Challenge’s capacity to support local activity aimed at strengthening family capital/resilience and community cohesion. The goal would be to identify actions which could reduce investment in costly intervention by
front-line services. It acknowledged that positioning the Challenge in this way with local authorities would require scoping, consultation and investment.

B.2 Teacher survey

As a result of our involvement in the Cambridge ThinkLab process, we had an intern working with us on the review who focused on teacher consultation. In addition, UKLA also sent out the survey to their members. The research showed how powerful the Challenge is in helping to deliver the reading for pleasure agenda, which is part of the primary curriculum. However, it also highlighted the need to raise the profile of the Challenge with teachers and to showcase its benefits more effectively. The peer-to-peer approach, which has shaped the Reading Hack offer in libraries, is a model which schools use themselves. Again, we should be promoting the volunteering model and the library offer in this area more effectively. Educators want hard data about participation, completion rates and about the benefits and impact of participation; they also want to be able to promote it easily. They would like local library staff to visit schools where possible and would welcome a promotional video, flyers to send home with pupils and posters to showcase it in schools. Educators welcomed how the six books makes the Challenge accessible, whilst acknowledging the value of a stretch model for those who can achieve this goal easily and quickly.

B.3 Family consultation

We used the annual SRC family survey to ask parents and carers what they see as the value of the Challenge and how they think we can promote it more effectively. ASCEL members also ran a number of focus groups with families. We had 1,067 responses to our family survey between the end of July and the start of November 2017 and focus groups ran in Devon, Essex, Staffordshire, St Helens, Warwickshire and York. Responses showed just how much families value the Challenge; seeing it as a great way of engaging their children in reading and as a high-quality, free, local activity. They valued the rewards and medals which encourage engagement and completion and the fact that children can read anything. There were mixed views about extending the Challenge beyond six books and about giving it an entirely digital focus.

B.4 Sector consultation

ASCEL carried out library sector consultation in England and we worked with the SRCSG national representatives for Scotland and Wales to capture additional feedback. The sector consultation showed general support for the current positioning, delivery model and approach underpinning the SRC format, including the six-book model and a core pack of materials. The view was that we must not undermine what is currently a successful model and not weaken any of its USPs. However, within this there was a desire to refresh the approach to incentives, simplify the offer and provide generic materials to reduce costs. Young people volunteering to deliver the Challenge is seen as a strength of the model, which should be protected and developed. ASCEL members recognise the double benefits which come from this for the young people and the children who take part in the Challenge.

There are real concerns about future sustainability, given the impact of the challenges and budget reduction faced by local authorities. Consequently, there is now much greater support for exploring national commercial sponsorship for the Challenge, for developing local sponsorship models on top of this and for promoting the Challenge more effectively. The sector has identified a number of development areas we should consider as part of future planning. These include:

* The need for greater inclusivity and diversity alongside the potential to build new audiences, particularly with harder to reach groups.
* A stretch model and extension activities for young/older children and for more confident readers.
* New thematic approaches that retain creative appeal, but open up opportunities to hook into key areas, such as health and wellbeing.
* Strengthening the digital offer and developing links to other areas of activity, such as coding clubs.
* Exploring fresh incentives/formats, whilst keeping resources cost effective, and ensuring more co-creation with participants.
* Building the volunteering offer.

The sector also recognised the need to promote the Challenge more effectively to local schools and families and to create a family offer based around the Challenge.

All the sector review consultation captured success stories from authorities, highlighting the capacity of the Challenge to help deliver local ambitions for communities. In some cases, these have also unlocked additional funding from health or education. One example is the community neighbourhoods’ model in Newham, which has seen resources being provided for an additional 10,000 children in both 2017 and 2018. The Newham case study can be found in **Appendix D**. N.E. Cambridgeshire is another example, where Steve Barclay MP has worked with local teachers and communities to build reading engagement in primary schools and, as part of this process, promoted
the Challenge.

B.4.1 Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland

Consultation in Scotland and Wales reiterated the views of the English ASCEL survey respondents. Additional points were made about the need to build cultural considerations into all aspects of Challenge delivery and reflect different dates/sponsors and bilingualism with respect to Wales and Scotland on the website; perhaps with bespoke pages. The Scottish authorities, who since 2011 have each benefited from annual additional free materials for 300 children and £350 to spend on an event/initiative of their choice to support the Tesco Bank Summer Reading Challenge, valued both these ‘extras’. The timetable for delivery needs to be reviewed for Wales and libraries in Northern Ireland would probably still require the self-challenge option rather than using the six-book model, if it was to re-join the scheme (budgets permitting).

B.4.2. Consultation with library services which no longer take part in the Challenge

The Challenge currently (2017 and 2018) runs in 96% of local authorities in the UK. We used the review to talk to the seven out of 205 authorities which have not participated in the Challenge, to establish their reasons and to feed their ideas into the review process. This demonstrated that for some, local budget pressures informed their decision. For others it is either about creating activity which has a strong fit with a local agenda, like the City of Culture, or it has emerged from a desire to create a local challenge customized to meet local needs, encouraging communities to use a wide range of neighbourhood assets (parks, museums, and so on) as well as the library.

B.5 External stakeholder consultation

We used the review as an opportunity to talk to a number of individuals and organisations to scope new and mutually beneficial opportunities. These include:

* Children’s reading and literature specialist and children's books editor for The Guardian*,* Julia Eccleshare, who thinks the Challenge is one of the strongest things libraries do nationally, but we need to promote it better.
* Diversity and Social Exclusion specialist John Vincent of The Network and CILIP Community, Diversity and Equality Group, focusing on how we promote the challenge to a diverse range of parents/carers and encourage their participation.
* Organisations where we have existing partnerships which we’d like to build on to further to broaden awareness of the Challenge, including CBBC which is committed to supporting reading for pleasure and enthusing its young audience.
* Organisations where the Challenge can be used as a hook into other cultural activities, through Arts Council England’s portfolio of NPOs, CEPs (Cultural Education Partnerships) and the ACE Bridge Organisation. This has been demonstrated by Nottinghamshire Cultural Education Partnership, Captivate (led by Inspire: Culture, Learning and Libraries*)*. Their experience of using SRC as a structure to underpin visual art engagement, Arts Award and Artsmark support for schools has informed their plans for 2018, expanding into schools outside of the current CEP area and family engagement with the SRC across the county. The SRC theme and its strong links to libraries and literacy is being used by Captivate and Inspire Arts as a lever for cultural engagement with schools directly involved before and after the challenge. The Inspire case study is detailed in **Appendix E**.

Organisations we would like to engage with in the future include the Child Poverty Action Group and health partners, who already see practical links between what we are trying to achieve and their respective ambitions. These organisations are already targeting and reaching children at risk of exclusion, so can act as multipliers to engage these families directly with libraries and SRC. This avoids libraries duplicating work and trying to build targeted trusted relationships with these hardest to engage families from scratch. Co-creation activities with these targeted ‘non-users’ will help us better understand the reasons for poor engagement and the real or perceived barriers to joining library activity, such as transport to reach the library; cultural significance; relevance of SRC themes, library atmosphere.

These and other interviews have shown an appetite for further collaboration with partners to promote the Challenge to a wider audience, recognising the relevance of the Challenge to our shared policy agendas.

Reading and literacy are recognised as key health determinants, meaning that activity supporting these areas can be positioned against early intervention and prevention strategies. The view was that the creative treatment of a broad-based mental health/wellbeing theme would work well for the SRC and could perhaps be linked to a feeling good/happiness challenge. Mood-boosting books could be supported by linked healthy living activities. A family offer would be key to the success of this approach.

The Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) sees the potential of the SRC model to deliver against key child poverty agendas – literacy and learning, cultural engagement and building resilient families. The summer reading dip is more marked for disadvantaged children who don’t have the support of family activities/trips. Added value of including targeted work in a national programme is that it delivers on key priorities, including avoiding stigma and promoting integration. CPAG are developing an extended schools model with the Greater London Authority (GLA) to provide support for disadvantaged families who are struggling to work and fund childcare, provide food for children and engaging activity. The model being developed includes summer activity and could include libraries.

We also spoke with an education advisor senior lead in Every Child a Reader, Reading Recovery who runs advisory services across an authority, including supporting schools getting ready for SRC and arranging an authority-wide school SRC launch day with the public library service. Their view, given the acknowledged impact parental engagement has on children’s learning, is that the SRC is the perfect platform on which to build family learning and could be a good way of encouraging parents to participate in their children’s educational development. The outcome of this interview was the recommendation to seek investment to model parental engagement in libraries over SRC and, as part of this process, to work with other family-centred agencies who also focus on family learning. These themes resonated with the discussion with Child Poverty Action Group (above) and the Think Family agenda in local authorities.

The discussions with Wimbletech have focused on future development of the Challenge in a digital age which, in their view, is fast making print-based business models unsustainable. David Fletcher’s advice was to create a **pay to play** model.

Appendix D
Newham 2017 schools engagement pilot - a case study

1. Introduction – reasons for the project, context and evidence of need

Newham is the 25th (out of 326) most deprived borough in England. Newham’s children are three times more likely to live in poverty. The Summer Reading Challenge offers Newham Library Service a unique opportunity to engage with parents and schools in an established national brand that has a simple and familiar framework. By encouraging participation in the SRC, the aim was to encourage the children of Newham to read more, share stories, read for pleasure and be library users.

2. Partners in the project

Newham Libraries are part of Community Neighbourhoods, a combination of libraries, community centres and community engagement. The SRC was made a core activity, meeting the key aims of the service, meaning increased budget, allowing a new and aspirational approach to the Challenge.

3. Evaluation - what the activity delivered and achieved, compared with the original aims

**Increasing participation:** Every primary school in the borough was asked if they would be interested in signing up all their pupils to the library and the SRC. Twenty-three schools agreed to take part. The model was simple: Every child in the school was signed up to the library, using secure data transfer to create library records. Schools were asked to visit the library twice in the summer term, so every child had read at least one book and received a set of stickers before the summer holidays.

School engagement in early September and a closing date of mid-September encouraged children who had been away in the summer, but who were close to finishing the Challenge. Medals and rewards were given out in the library, but certificates were presented in schools, reflecting the fact that the Challenge is a library, school and parent partnership.

Engagement with every school was bespoke, to accommodate their busy schedules. Participating children needed flexibility to attend any library in the borough. A real-time (secure) database updated information on the number of books a child had read and when they finished the Challenge. This provided instant access to statistics to track the progress of starters, finishers and books read.

**Quality events:** The key promotional events for SRC needed to be good quality, linked to reading for pleasure, linked to the SRC theme and good fun.
Events were centrally-organised and each of Newham’s 10 libraries had:

* An author visit (including: Tony Ross and Jeanne Willis, Nick Sharratt, Gareth P Jones)
* Forensic science detective workshop
* Musical storytelling workshop
* Interactive comedy poetry performance and poetry writing workshop
* Theatre performance
* A visit from Zoolab – storytelling, role-playing and animal handling.

Library staff then built a programme of locally-commissioned and delivered activities around the central events. These included local author Vaseem Khan leading the children of Manor Park in a detective writing workshop; plasticine Animal Agents creations; and arts and craft activities.

**Preschool engagement:** To engage with preschool children and their families, only the targeted preschool offer was given to the under-four age group, with its own brand, ‘The Little SRC’. It was important for the SRC to remain aspirational – something to take part in once preschoolers were four. Letters for parents and carers outlining The Little SRC were sent to all the children’s centres in the borough and library staff contacted PVI nurseries in their neighbourhoods with information on the scheme. Feedback from parents and carers both in the library and on social media was positive.

**Young people engagement:** The SRC was used as an opportunity to launch Reading Hack. Usage of the library by young people in the borough drops significantly aged 12 and addressing that issue is part of future development. Through visits to secondary schools and four youth zones, over 200 young people were recruited to help in the promotion of the Challenge at events. They were also a visible presence and friendly face for child library visitors during the summer holidays. After the Challenge all the young volunteers were thanked with a celebration event at East Ham Town Hall.

4. Lessons learned - how the activity has developed the library service
and/or SRC offer

 **Outputs and outcomes**

* 18,210 children joined the SRC in Newham, with 12,926 children joining through their school.
* 557 under-fours took part in The Little SRC.
* 48% of children taking part were boys (higher than the London and national average).
* Twenty-two of the 23 participating schools saw an increase in the number of children finishing the Challenge.
* A 35% increase year-to-date (YTD) of active borrowers from libraries aged 5-12. 41% of primary school children in Newham have used the library in the last year. Book issues have risen 11% on last year (the previous two years they fell by 6% and 14%) Book issues for 5–12-year-olds have increased 31% YTD on 2016-17.
* The relationship with local schools has blossomed, helping to develop and launch a new, well-received, school visiting programme – LEaP into Libraries. Schools that were previously difficult to engage with have become regular visitors. Positive outcomes include:
* Inclusion in Primary network meetings
* Better engagement at World Book Days
* Creation of a hard-to-reach boys Reading for Pleasure group
* Creation of a Junior Librarians group
* Partnered Yr3 literacy topic and piloted a whole-school teacher sign up with one school.
* Positive impact on staff morale. SRC Champions continue to be engaged in the project.
* Secondary school engagement. One school have requested joining all Year 7s to the library service and signing them up to the SRC this summer with their active support.
* Advocacy was the main outcome and more important than the number of finishers. For a relatively small cost Newham Library Service reached out to 18,000 children and their families, increased their awareness of the library and of reading for pleasure.

 **Lessons learned**

* **Set out expectations early** Be clearer from the outset what the expectation is from a school. A lot is asked from them and they need plenty of notice. School assembly visits need to be booked early and schools need a longer lead-in time to include their two library visits.
* **Old habits are hard to break** The 2017 new guidelines and new approach to the SRC did not always get through to library staff. This year every member of staff will hear a single consistent message via a briefing session and an FAQ document.
* **Data transfer is the easy part** Allow sufficient time for the whole-school sign-ups and be able to answer all the school’s concerns about data transfer**.** Start the library memberships process by February/March and give cards to schools before the first SRC library visit.
* **Improving communications to parents, schools and library staff** The family letter needs to be clearer about what libraries are and how they work. Schools need this information in a FAQ for parents. Staff need a clearer understanding of policies, procedures and messaging.
* **SRC is a year-round programme** Planning for the next year begins again before Christmas.

5. Longer-term impact

The ambition remains that every child in Newham is a library member and that all Newham school children take part in the Summer Reading Challenge. This can be achieved by:

* Creating a year-round package that involves children coming to the library as part of the LEaP programme throughout the year and culminates with the SRC.
* Reaching out to reception classes each autumn for library membership and their first school library visit as part of Time to Read.
* Increasing the number of under-fours using libraries and taking part in story sharing activities, including The Little SRC.
* Using the new generic medals for the under-fours in 2018, reserving the Mischief Makers medal for the 4–11-year-olds.
* In 2018 consolidating the work undertaken in 2017 by retaining the first cohort of schools and reaching out to new schools.
* Aiming, by 2020 to have every primary school child in the borough signed up to the library; visiting the library at least once throughout the year with school; taking part in the SRC; and sharing books/reading for pleasure.
* Improving social media engagement with schools: when they sign up, when they visit, numbers of children finishing; maintaining a dialogue throughout the year.
* Celebrating the staff contribution and awarding exceptional achievement across the service.
* Encouraging the use of eBooks and eAudio.
* Improving reader development opportunities for children as they take part in the Challenge.
* Developing the roles of young volunteers, creating wider volunteering opportunities for them after the Challenge.

Appendix E
Visual Stories – from Inspire: Culture, Learning and Libraries – a case study

1. Introduction – reasons for the project, context and evidence of need

Inspire is a Community Benefit Society delivering a range of cultural, art, library and learning services. These services are funded by Nottinghamshire County Council, The Arts Council of England, Education and Skills funding agencies. Set up in April 2016, Inspire is an independent organisation that has charitable aims and status and covers:

* Libraries
* Archives
* Arts
* Inspire Learning
* Inspire Youth Arts
* Inspire Music and Nottinghamshire Music Hub.

Inspire recently ran a project called Visual Stories. The project aimed to combine images and words, supporting literacy with visual literacy. The project also aimed to work closely with arts organisations and dovetail with schemes such as Arts Awards and Artsmark.

2. Partners in the project

The project involved collaboration between libraries, artists, schools and arts organisations and supported literacy with visual literacy. The artists worked collaboratively to devise a programme inspired by the Reading AgencySummer Reading Challenge theme, Animal Agents. Artists decided to focus on the ideas of masks and stories, telling stories visually and verbally, using images to inspire words and words to inspire images.

3. Evaluation - what the activity delivered and achieved, compared with the original aims

Professional artists and storytellers engaged with young people and families with visual literacy through a series of mask-making workshops and storytelling sessions to create visual artworks and imaginative stories.

Thirteen artist-led workshops for families were run in the 13 level 1 largest Nottinghamshire Libraries. Twenty-two smaller libraries took part.

Twelve school days artist-led workshops (two artists each time) were run in two invited schools. Eighty-six year-4 pupils took part from West Bridgford Juniors and 35 pupils (the whole school!) from Mattersey Primary.

Arts Award at Discover Level was achieved by 20 pupils from Mattersey Primary School as a direct result of their involvement. Their success was celebrated by, and shared with, parents in a special assembly.

The Arts Award pilot took place at West Bridgford Library on 19 August. Three young people who attended the workshop were able to complete Discover activities in a day while visiting the Visual Stories Exhibition and working with a professional artist and advisor to gain their award.

51,279 people had the opportunity to see the Visual Stories Exhibition in West Bridgford and Retford Library galleries from 28 July to 7 September.

The ‘How To’ kit and accompanying pack of materials allowed the project activities to spread to 22 smaller Nottinghamshire libraries. Video ‘How To’ instructions were made alongside the printed sheets to inform staff and enable them to lead their own workshops in libraries.

The exhibitions and workshops helped inspire library visitors to take up the Summer Reading Challenge. 9,732 children took part in the Summer Reading Challenge in Inspire Libraries.

Artwork given back to both schools is proudly on display and was celebrated in an assembly in both settings.

4. Lessons learned - how the activity has developed the library service
and/or SRC offer

During the life of the project Inspire took on the lead role with ‘Captivate’ Cultural Education Partnership and gained Arts Council NPO status from April 2018. As Captivate, the Nottinghamshire Education Partnership focuses on better aligning and bringing into view the local cultural offer and supporting the education offer by working together. Visual Stories is great example of collaboration, benefitting all parties involved. This type of work is what the wider CEP partnership aspired to deliver going forward.

Visual Stories allowed Inspire to start to work more closely with a school looking to gain Artsmark, and form connections with the Bridge organization and the Artsmark support for the area.

An opportunity to share the learning, explain the project to a new audience and reinforce the links with the Summer Reading Challenge came at the Captivate conference held on 29 November 2017. Visual Stories was shared with 85 delegates from education, libraries and the cultural sector.

5. Longer-term impact

West Bridgford Junior School began their Artsmark journey as a result of the support they received through participation in the project and it has clearly proved as a model for future success. The school have continued on their Artsmark journey and the relationship will continue with Inspire through their 18–22 NPO school projects.

A relationship with the Mighty Creatives, the Bridge organisation for the East Midlands, has been established as a result of the project.

The programme of CPD delivered as part of the project engaged 28 teachers from Rushcliffe Learning Alliance (through West Bridgford Junior School) and Elizabethan family of schools through Mattersey Primary, leaving a legacy of skills and resources for storytelling, working with recycled plastics and creating simple films. One teacher from the Rushcliffe Learning Alliance said: ‘Thank you, Anna, such a simple yet effective technique to work with all ages and something we can hopefully replicate without your expertise.’

The use of video resources to train and inform Inspire library staff has become more established within Inspire since its initial use in this project.

All the partners in the Visual Stories project gained from it:

* Artists were able to work collaboratively.
* Schools got high-quality artists in school and worked with their local library.
* Libraries got artists and schools working in their buildings and gained new audiences through the YP and their families.
* Teachers got new ideas and CPD.
* Libraries got two fantastic exhibitions to promote the SRC.
* YP got new experiences in arts and literacy and become the artists in the galleries and recognising the potential creative careers.
* Libraries gained expertise from the other partners already working with the schools.
* Visitors enjoyed the wonderful YP work in the galleries.
* The project benefited from linking into national initiatives with national status, giving it reach and helping common understanding.
* The Reading Agency Arts Award and Artsmark gained the advocacy of all the partners and the sign-ups to their initiatives.
* Everyone gained a cultural conversation.
* Testimonials included:
‘I really enjoyed looking at the art.’ Ethan, YP from Mattersey.

‘I had an amazing day, thank you.’ Sienna, YP from Mattersey.

Appendix F
Stakeholders and useful terms

**Accelerated Reader programme**
School reading scheme framework, sold into schools by Renaissance Learning, built around motivating children to read with quizzes and immediate feedback, but using ‘real books’, not graded reading scheme.
www.renlearn.co.uk/accelerated-reader

**ACE**
Arts Council England
www.artscouncil.org.uk

**ACE Bridge Organisations**
Arts Council England Bridge Organisations
https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/children-and-young-people/bridge-organisations

**ASCEL/The Association of Senior Children’s and Education Librarians**
www.ascel.org.uk

**BBC**
British Broadcasting Corporation
www.bbc.co.uk

**Book Sorter**
Children’s crowd-sourced database of books children have enjoyed, hosted on the Summer Reading Challenge website.
https://summerreadingchallenge.org.uk/book-sorter

**Booktrust**
Reading charity with focus on supporting pre-school children.
www.booktrust.org.uk

**Bridges**
Short for Arts Council England Bridge Organisations (as above)

**CBBC**
Children’s BBC, children’s television strand owned by BBC.
www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc

**CLPE/Centre for Literacy in Primary Education**
Professional organisation offering courses for teachers, specialising in reading and literacy.
www.clpe.org.uk

**Power of Reading**
Power of reading through school investment, successful training programme for teachers/schools run by CLPE.
https://www.clpe.org.uk/powerofreading

**CPAG/Child Poverty Action Group**www.cpag.org.uk

**ECaR/Every Child a Reader**Programme developed by collaboration of KPMG Charitable Trust with Institute of Education (IoE) under Labour’s Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). Now finished as national policy but learning and best practice continues in many authorities. Often linked to **Reading Recovery** programme (see below).
http://www.ucl.ac.uk/international-literacy/publications/rr-every-child-reader/
http://www.beem.org.uk/Services/1929

**GLA/Greater London Authority**

Administrative body for greater London authorities.

www.london.gov.uk

**Health Group**

CILIP (The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals) and SCL (Society of Chief Librarians) Health Group (England). This is a professional advisory group for the SCL Health offer, one of the six Universal offers.
http://goscl.com/universal-offers/health-offer/

**LCEPS/Local Cultural Education Partnerships** or **CEPS** are Cultural Education Partnerships (CEPS) Local Cultural Education Partnerships to improve the alignment of cultural education for young people, managed regionally.

<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/children-and-young-people/working-partnership>

### **NLT/National Literacy Trust** Independent charity working with schools and communities to give disadvantaged children the literacy skills to succeed in life. https://literacytrust.org.uk/

**NLT Literacy Hubs**
National Literacy Trust Literacy hubs are place-based community partnership model https://literacytrust.org.uk/communities/

**NPOs**
National Portfolio Organisations are those that receive funding from Arts Council England (current tranche 2018-2021).

**Paul Hamlyn funding**
Refers to funding Award from The Paul Hamlyn Foundation to support the young volunteers and develop the **Reading Hack** programme (see below).
www.phf.org.uk

**TRA/The Reading Agency**
www.readingagency.org.uk

**Reading Hack**
Young people’s creative and social action programme from TRA, with a focus on volunteering opportunities for young people in libraries over the SRC. http://readinghack.org.uk

**Reading Recovery**An accredited school-based literacy programme for the lowest achieving children that enables them to reach age-expected levels within 20 weeks through a series of
one-to-one lessons for 30 minutes every day with a specially trained teacher.
www.ucl.ac.uk/international-literacy/reading-recovery

**Reading Well**
A scheme in to encourage people to manage their health and well-being by reading information and fiction, led by The Reading Agency and the Society of Chief Librarians with funding from Arts Council England and Wellcome. https://readingagency.org.uk/adults/quick-guides/reading-well/

**SLIC/Scottish Library and Information Council**
SLICoffers leadership focus and support to the Scottish library and information sector.
https://scottishlibraries.org

**SLS/School Library Service(s)**
Regional services to support schools with book stock loans and resources, especially those schools that don’t have a school library and/or dedicated librarian. Supported and advocated via **SLA** (School Library Association).
https://www.sla.org.uk/sls-map.php

**SCL/The Society of Chief Librarians**
SCL leads and manages public libraries in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. SCL is made up of the head of service of every library authority.
www.goscl.com

**ThinkLab**
This is the Cambridge AHRC Doctoral Training Partnership, a University of Cambridge initiative, developed to give doctoral students opportunities to apply their research skills to non-academic settings within the voluntary sector, government and commerce.
https://www.ahrcdtp.csah.cam.ac.uk/training/thinklab

**UKLA/United Kingdom Literacy Association**
Academic professional organisation supporting teachers’ pedagogy and research
in literacy.
https://ukla.org

**Universal Health Offer**
One of the six Universal Offers (UROs) covering key areas of public library services service, led by SCL and The Reading Agency in partnership.
http://goscl.com/universal-offers/

**Welsh Books Council**
A national body, funded by the Welsh Assembly Government, which provides a focus for the publishing industry in Wales.
www.cllc.org.uk

**Wimbletech**
A CIC, framework for co-working, start-up office desk space for local entrepreneurial model generating income and support in kind for libraries.
www.wimbletech.com

**World Book Day**
Annual campaign promoting reading for pleasure.
worldbookday.com