



# Leading libraries

## The view from above

Prepared by

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October 2017

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Published: October 2017



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Suggested citation: Baker, D and Allden, A (2017) Leading libraries: The view from above, London: SCONUL

<https://www.sconul.ac.uk/publication/the-view-from-above>

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# Contents

Foreword	5
Preface	7
1. In essence	9
1.1 Being a leader, managing change, getting to and staying at the top	9
1.2 The focus on the library to support 'students and learning' and 'research'	12
2. The library and the librarian	15
2.1 The library as a concern, not a problem	15
2.2 Challenging futures: responding to change	17
2.2.1 Identified change	17
2.2.2 The future library: how it will change	18
2.2.3 The future librarian: change and change management	19
2.3 Positioning	22
2.3.1 The library within the institution	22
2.3.2 The librarian within the institution	23
2.3.3 Raising the stakes	25
2.3.4 The (in)dispensable librarian?	27
2.4 The library as an investment: making the case	28
2.5 Strategic alignment	30
2.5.1 Opportunities for strategic impact	30
2.5.2 Empowerment through information	31
2.5.3 Contribution to student learning and satisfaction	32
3. Moving out and up: the view from above	35
3.1 The general view	35
3.2 Extend the portfolio: volunteering	36
3.3 Personal credibility	40
3.4 Ambition	41

3.5	Professionalism and academic empathy	43
3.6	Relationship building and networking	45
3.7	Risk-taking	47
3.8	Being prepared or not	48
4.	Personal development	49
4.1	Know yourself	49
4.2	Formal training	51
4.3	Mentoring and coaching	52
4.4	Further reading	53
	Appendices:	54
A1	Letter to interviewees	54
A2	Interview checklist	56
A3	Consultant biographies	60

# Foreword

In 2016 SCONUL established a Leadership Task and Finish Group to develop a range of initiatives to enhance the collective leadership capacity across SCONUL and to support individuals and groups of staff in member institutions in their leadership development.

At an early stage of this work we identified the value of an approach to support reflections on leadership to assist academic library directors to gain personal reach and strategic influence within their organisations and to guide the planning of their leadership development. A subgroup led by Jane Savidge, University of Southampton and Roisin Gwyer, University of Portsmouth and including Michelle Anderson, University of Hull and Janice Conway, University of the Creative Arts, scoped this work.

SCONUL commissioned consultants Professor David Baker and Alison Allden OBE to conduct an investigation into the perspectives of university executive-level leadership, a 'view from above', through a series of interviews together with a related literature review. This focused on two main research questions:

- What strategies can library leaders employ to 'lead in uncertain times', i.e. which approaches to leadership are needed in the context of continuous and rapid organisational, legislative, and technological change?

and

- What are the views of university senior leaders about academic library leadership and culture?

This report comprises a digest of findings from the series of interviews with higher education sector leaders carried out by the consultants. The results, while perhaps not completely unexpected, are occasionally surprising and make fascinating reading. The comments offer a striking insight into the role and value of the academic library and its leadership that challenges its own perceptions of itself.

One of the main findings is that while the strategic leaders interviewed value the library and its leadership, it is not generally a problem area therefore it is not seen as a strategic

concern other than in terms of future resource requirements. The library's key role in understanding students and supporting student learning is recognised. It was notable that while interviewees expressed confidence in the library's support for research and researchers, there was a lack of detailed awareness of the proactive contribution of library leadership to supporting and developing research strategy.

Clearly part of the challenge for library leaders will be to advocate more effectively to narrow the gap between how we see ourselves and how we are seen by those above. One way to do this is to get out of the library and take on cross-university projects. Those interviewed also emphasised the importance of expressing views that are wider than the library, especially in relation to learning and teaching.

We are grateful to the executive leaders who were interviewed for their time, views, and interest, in the project, to David Baker and Alison Allden for their commitment and enthusiasm, and to Ann Rossiter, Executive Director of SCONUL, for her guidance.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the support of the SCONUL Board and members of the Leadership Task and Finish Group, in particular Jane Savidge and Roisin Gwyer for shaping and directing the project.

As a result of this work we have a sound basis of data which complements the practical initiatives developed by the Leadership Task and Finish Group for SCONUL on routes and resources for leadership development. The provocations which have emerged will be invaluable to emerging, new, and established library leaders as they reflect on their leadership style and development needs.

**Alison Baud**

Director of Library & Learning Services, Bath Spa University

Chair, SCONUL Leadership Task and Finish Group

October 2017

# Preface

## Introduction

This document provides a digest of the interviews carried out as part of the SCONUL Leadership Task and Finish Group work on the 'view from above'. The interviewees were either vice-chancellors or senior members of the executive of a range of universities. Some had previously been librarians. They had varying levels of contact with the library in their current institution; none had direct management responsibility for it. Appendices A1 and A2 give the introductory letter and the interview checklist; the latter was used to ensure consistency in the areas covered.

## The interviewees

A list of twelve people was identified in consultation with the SCONUL Leadership Task and Finish Group. These people were approached and asked to participate in a 45–60 minute interview. One person declined and a substitute was found. The aim was to talk to a range of senior executive staff across UK higher education; care was taken to ensure that different types of institutions from the constituent parts of the UK were included. A separate exercise is to be carried out involving senior staff in or from other countries 'the view from beyond'. In this first phase, we interviewed five vice-chancellors and two deputy vice-chancellors, two registrars, a pro vice-chancellor and two executive level directors of student support services. These came from three research-intensive universities, six large post-92 universities and three small new universities, including one specialist and one independent small university. Of these institutions one was in Scotland, one in Wales and the remainder located across England. Actual quotations have only been provided in the introductory 'In essence' section and here the source is given with the role and type of institution as reported in the *Annual SCONUL Library Statistics for 2015 / 16*. 'None' signifies that the institution represented is not reported as a member of any mission group or similar organisation.

## Approach

Each person was interviewed and detailed notes were taken. It was made clear before the interview started what the ethical framework and boundaries of the research were to be and confirmation was sought – and gained – from all the interviewees to proceed. Following the interview, the notes were written up, anonymised and returned to the interviewees for comment and correction. The final versions, once agreed with the interviewees, were base-lined and have been securely lodged with the SCONUL office for the duration of this project.

## Presentation

This report summarises the interviews. As far as possible, we have provided a digest of the interviews reflecting the words and tone of those we spoke with, captured in the numbered quote boxes. The text has been categorised and organised according to themes discussed and developed with SCONUL representatives, taking account of the key topics and headings that emerged from the parallel literature review. Text outside quote boxes is our commentary on the interviewees' responses. Wherever possible, the 'further reading' suggested during the interviews (referred to at the end of this report) has been incorporated into a literature review undertaken as a separate but related piece of research. We begin with an 'In essence' section which captures summary advice about leadership from the participants in our survey. This section also provides a commentary on the responses about the support of research, which can be set against those that focused on student learning as captured in the remainder of the report.

David Baker and Alison Allden

May 2017

# 1. In essence

## 1.1 Being a leader, managing change, getting to and staying at the top

Advice from the interviewees included summaries of the key elements of leadership, in the context of major change management and getting to the top and staying there. Each quote is referenced by a role and declared mission group.

Library leadership has to be about continuing to make yourself relevant to the institution and the long-term strategy; essentially it is about being completely on top of what the direction of the institution is and how best to support that. The following are key:

- appreciate that there is a need for change and why
- articulate the need for change
- understand the environment and the context in which you are looking to achieve change
- argue the case for change and improvement
- produce a business plan
- deliver the change – be skilled in project management

Vice-Chancellor Alliance

It is about being:

- relevant to the organisation
- up to speed with the direction of travel and constantly thinking about what you can do to support
- a facilitator not a blocker

Vice-Chancellor Cathedrals Group

- have a clear vision
- understand university strategy
- be realistic about resources
- put forward evidence-based arguments
- explain why investment should continue
- exhibit high energy and commitment

Vice-Chancellor **GuildHE**

The qualities of leadership should include ambition:

- be seen to want more and better but not just for the library
- be able to show passion and energy
- avoid the danger of being too specialised
- look beyond the institution and get involved across the HE community
- if you see an opportunity – go for it!

Director of Service **Russell Group**

- be savvy about data analytics and the power of data
- understand processes and systems across the university
- exhibit understanding of academic teaching and learning, with possible expertise in aspects of it
- network inside and outside the university; for example, be involved with national bodies, and contribute to publications
- gain experience from major projects, both within and beyond the library
- be prepared to move to improve opportunity and gain experience of different organisations
- gain experience and make reference to aspects of significant improvement that you have led and achieved
- personal development through opportunities to build networks including action learning, beyond just professional networks

Deputy Vice-Chancellor **Alternative Provider**

Advice to a library leader who wishes to extend their portfolio or move into a more senior executive role:

- be on the front foot
- ask a lot of questions – triangulate
- think about how your service can contribute to other places and suggest that you do
- if there are opportunities to take on things outside the library take them and don't wait to be asked
- build on your track record of delivery
- don't be precious about the library
- appear to be enthusiastic about stuff even if you are not
- champion staff but not in people's faces
- be authentic
- learn how to challenge effectively / appropriately
- learn how to receive and respond to challenge on behalf of your service rather than personally

Director of Student Services **Million +**

So what are the barriers?

- if you don't engage across the university
- if you can only talk about libraries
- if you have no personal ambition to move your career forward
- if there is no opportunity or the opportunity is not taken for personal development and leadership training

Vice-Chancellor **None** (Scotland)

## 1.2 The focus on the library to support 'students and learning' and 'research'

It was evident from the responses to the interview questions that there is a great deal of interest from leaders across the sector in the library providing support for students and their learning. Clearly the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) is seen as a driver of change and the library is regarded as an important contributor in the response to this current issue. This includes a clear expectation that the leadership in the library is able to bring expertise and services which have a positive impact on student satisfaction and the student experience.

The interview questioning also explored the extent to which libraries are central to support for research. Here again there was a clear message particularly from research-focused HEIs that the library provides vital services and resources. This was also the case for teaching and learning institutions that are developing and place value upon the research activities of their staff and students (particularly postgraduate students). However, it is notable that the proactive contribution of library leadership to the development of research strategy, impacting on the success of the Research Excellence Framework (REF), was not commented upon with evidence of detailed awareness.

Perhaps there is a need for more overt advocacy about the library's contribution to research, given the move from traditional areas of information provision and support for compliance towards increased involvement with the research process at a strategic level. It may be too great a step to reach a conclusion about this on the basis of twelve interviews with senior staff (of whom none had specific responsibility for research, whereas two had particular responsibility for student services delivery), with only three identified as research intensive.

In essence the interviewees were confident in the support for research provided by the library and where issues were identified these were connected with the cost of resources, rather than with the library contribution to future research management and delivery.

The following quotes are indicative of the feedback about research emerging from the interviews.

The most evident focus of the library at senior level is around students rather than research issues.

Registrar **Russell Group**

Strategically it is important to see the library at the heart of the university, even though the way people study has changed over recent years. While the library still is about stacks of books, clearly it has key role in providing learning resources of all kinds, including e-resources. It could be suggested perhaps 95% of staff no longer visit the library, recognising the very different role it plays in supporting research.

Vice-Chancellor **None (Scotland)**

More recently I invited the librarian to develop a library vision and that has provided a platform to communicate with deans and senior staff. This has been a powerful initiative for the library, allowing them to re-connect, and has given them a way forward.

Head of Services **Russell Group**

The library is also key in the development of Open Access and the changing research needs of academics and the university. The library seems to be on top of this and the research agenda seems less of an issue.

Head of Services **Russell Group**

An annual report that exhibits what the library has achieved, with quantified data that drives success, is good. But to acknowledge and communicate the impact that it has had across the university strategy is better. Move beyond your own world and if you are a member of a management or executive team avoid talking only about the library.

Head of Services **Russell Group**

The growth of technology and the digital nature of much teaching and learning have played a crucial role in helping connect textbook and research-based learning. The library now supports the delivery of academic quality in the inter-relationship between print and digital.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor **None**

The librarian has ensured an innovative response to growing the amount of digital resources, including pursuing good Jisc procurement deals, which has helped to support and drive research.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor **None**

It is easy to demonstrate how the library is a driver of transformation. The challenge is to ensure that everyone understands the services that they offer the student and staff of any institution. They are the engine of the university, without which the university can neither do research nor teach.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor **None**

## 2. The library and the librarian

This first part of this detailed digest looks at how the library – and the librarian and staff – are viewed ‘from above’.

### 2.1 The library as a concern: not a problem

All the respondents said that the library was ‘not a problem’ and not therefore on institutional risk registers within the university because there were no major issues or complaints about it to senior management: ‘the library is only a concern because it has to work well’. There was often recognition of the library’s importance to the wellbeing of the institution overall, especially in terms of student satisfaction. There was a concern about future resource levels for the library, not only in terms of space requirements, but also looking to a digital-first or, in one case, a digital-only future.

#### *Quote 1*

The library sits well within the department: there is good student satisfaction and it punches well above its weight given its resource base and is well regarded. There are highly competent professional staff. Resources are the issue! But that is generic to the whole institution.

#### *Quote 2*

The library is well run by an experienced leader, it has KPIs, excellent staff and is not itself a concern; however, what is a concern is the demand for more study space for students. This seems to be an incessant demand and, while the current library is well regarded, the building is tired and we will need to plan for a new one.

#### *Quote 3*

The library is not a priority for my attention or the attention of the senior team, but for that reason it almost seems to beg further attention. What I mean by this is that it is well run, there are the usual issues around space management and increasing demands from library users, but there are many more pressing areas of the administration that need attention.

*Quote 4*

The university NSS score has gone up, with the library now achieving 92–93% satisfaction.

*Quote 5*

It is beholden on the library to develop its understanding and support of the students' development needs. The support of academic skills by the library is part of this, but it is often not sufficiently joined up across the university.

## 2.2 Challenging futures: responding to change

Everyone stressed the current and likely future major challenges for HE institutions and that rapid and likely discontinuous change was on its way. Technology and quality assurance will be key drivers.

### 2.2.1 Identified change

#### *Quote 6*

There are major issues around funding and the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF). UK HE is now so driven by a range of different indicators: budgeting, metrics, money, growth, applications. Then there is quality: within the TEF there is also DELHE and the NSS. If [the university] doesn't move in the TEF then we can't grow, and if we don't have growth we can't survive. The growth agenda is the key, especially in an international context, underpinned by regulatory frameworks.

#### *Quote 7*

Future trends? The whole use of technology in teaching and support for research will be a major area, as will TEF and REF; especially TEF in universities. The whole teaching quality agenda will be key.

The many changes now happening or forecast will affect all aspects of UK universities, including library provision. User expectations will both grow and diversify.

#### *Quote 8*

Change is so rapid that everybody has to be on their toes all the time. People need to be involved in a tactical refresh.

#### *Quote 9*

Many key future trends and challenges are evident. There is the issue of expectation of users against a background of the university's ability to provide a safe and good landscape – Amazon v. university infrastructure.

## 2.2.2 The future library: how it will change

It is clear that the future role of the academic library will be conditioned by several factors and driven by key imperatives, ranging from support for digital learning to student satisfaction; from open access to support for advanced research.

### *Quote 10*

The impact of technology and the digital nature of teaching and learning is what now play into the bigger piece about the relationship between textbook and research-based learning. The library needs to support academic quality in the inter-relationship between print and digital.

### *Quote 11*

The library must be active in responding to NSS comments and concerns and this testifies to their ability to adopt appropriate and continuous change management processes.

### *Quote 12*

The library should be at the centre of the 'how to learn' and 'where to learn'. This is now a key contribution expected of libraries. It is the case that numbers in the library remain extremely good.

### *Quote 13*

The library needs to work to remain popular and well regarded by the students. For example, 24x7 learning space is now a student expectation that has to be responded to.

### *Quote 14*

Strategically it is important to see the library at the heart of the university, even though the way people study has changed over recent years. While the library still is about stacks of books, clearly it has a key role in providing learning resources of all kinds, including e-resources. The library continues to be an important place of learning for the students. It remains a focal point of the university.

*Quote 15*

[Information and Library Services] make an enormous contribution to the institution. From a student's perspective, it is absolutely crucial. It drives the whole feel of the place. The university is starting to embrace digital first, though it is quite a way behind where it needs to be on the digital piece. But... there will always be a physical space – the learning centre.

*Quote 16*

The new centre will not be called a library, it will be the learning commons. The language around 'the library' is historical. Libraries as stores of knowledge are being replaced – so what must a library become to maintain its relevance?

*Quote 17*

The librarian should be seen as a driver of understanding and change – able to provide insights that are valuable to the team, particularly about how students study and learn.

### 2.2.3 The future librarian: change and change management

Given all the challenges facing UK HE in general and academic libraries especially, it is not surprising that the ability to be a good change manager is an essential part of the librarian's skill set. The best (library) change managers will welcome and embrace change.

*Quote 18*

Library digital resources and a library to support digitally focused learning requires innovation and forward-looking leadership. This is evident in many libraries, although the battle about why we need libraries has to be fought!

*Quote 19*

Clearly most librarians will lead change in the library; very often this may be operational change and there is confidence in this. A library director therefore should be well practised in change and the introduction of innovation.

*Quote 20*

There are several key ways of responding successfully to change that are particularly relevant to library leaders. It is important to be agile and be ready to think how to best respond to the changes, the agendas. Take a lot of input from other sectors: retail, high street, electronic sales, etc., especially with constraints (no cash!).

*Quote 21*

Ask how best to respond to university and sector agendas. There needs to be a firm connection between what the change is and the librarian's place in that change.

*Quote 22*

Change management has to be part of a librarian's skill set, in particular to be able to achieve successful re-structuring to update services, delivery, and efficiency. Intrinsicly this requires a good understanding of process mapping to understand and trigger change. It also requires good people management. The library leadership must demonstrate this in the preparation for change, in a way that engenders a wish and will to change through widespread staff involvement in the process. The advantage of front-loading change through engagement leads to a much more effective process with less kick-back and union mistrust.

*Quote 23*

I have seen three library leadership teams at the university: the first two were very professional but not very innovative; the most recent is the only appointment that is showing signs of innovation. Changes to date have been driven more by PVCs than the librarian.

*Quote 24*

There is confidence in the library leadership because of the way they approach [the move]. It has been a big ask, but they have done it, they have come up with the goods. They provide a critical part of the university and not just a quiet zone. They know what they are doing: anticipating, being one step ahead of you. In the sector more generally, experience is mixed. N has seen library teams being reactive rather than proactive; they have been focused on the student experience but they cannot see the bigger picture.

*Quote 25*

There is confidence in the library leadership to lead change. They are driving and inventing new ways of working. They are valued researchers in their own right, breaking down the idea that they are just professional services; they are creative and well led. This is quite unusual, but it will become more usual. We need to invent Library 2.0.

## 2.3 Positioning

In organisational terms it is recognised that the library in some institutions is no longer the central independent unit it once was and 'the librarian' is at least two tiers down in the senior staff structure. This was evidenced by the interviews and reveals some challenges for library leadership in how they position themselves and the services to achieve maximum impact.

### 2.3.1 The library within the institution

It is evident that the position of 'the library' within the university varies. In some cases, the library is part of a converged service (whether with IT services or some other multi-service grouping, or both) or one unit within a broad group of student-facing services. Typically, this will include media services and learning technology. In a few institutions, even closer convergence is envisaged; in others, de-convergence is happening. The general trend is towards greater centralisation of services, whether or not the libraries are then converged within a single academic / student support unit.

#### *Quote 26*

The blurring of library boundaries and structure is common, as was the case in my previous institution as a Learning Resources Centre... offering front-facing services to students.

#### *Quote 27*

The aim is to achieve a properly converged service that can offer a full 'mash up' of IT and content management. The service is delivered through two hubs – library and IT support are offered through the learning support hub and all aspects of student administration through a general support hub.

#### *Quote 28*

Having a corporate-level executive means that the library is further away from senior management than before. There is a library committee; discussion is based around faculties and student engagement with various user panels and groups.

*Quote 29*

Historically the librarian was a member of the Academic Board but this is no longer the case, which may be a reflection of an institutional re-consideration of the role and the position of the library. In the past, it might have been considered unusual for the librarian not to be part of the Academic Board.

*Quote 30*

The library in my current institution has more recently been punching below its weight due to the focus of the previous librarian on getting the house in order, rather than promoting the library and gaining more strategic impact. The influence of the library's own stage of development and the response to these demands of the director, as well as their personality and focus, can influence the widely-held perception of the library at a strategic level.

*Quote 31*

The library is largely invisible to the senior executive group and for many senior staff in the university. The library has maintained good relations at various levels of the faculties and delivers well-run user services, which receive positive user feedback. The library has been awarded external customer service accreditation. However, it does lack profile in the institution and at strategic level there is no shared view of what it is trying to do or be.

*Quote 32*

It is easy to demonstrate how the library is a driver of transformation. The challenge is to ensure that everyone understands the services that they offer the student and staff of any institution. They are the engine of the university, without which the university can neither do research nor teach.

### 2.3.2 The librarian within the institution

There was much comment on the role and especially the status of the librarian within the institution. While there were threats to the future of librarians within universities, significant opportunities for reinvention were identified.

*Quote 33*

Avoid the danger of being too specialised – especially within the confines of a professional service – work instead towards a joined-up infrastructure. Look to the join between library services and technology.

*Quote 34*

You are not always at the top table as librarian even though everything is supposedly coming back to the library. The game-changer was taking on IT in a Russell Group university – that was the difference – there I was at top table.

*Quote 35*

This is an opportunity for librarians to reinvent themselves, but it is about moving out of their areas. For the most part librarians don't bring problems; nor do they bring solutions. The library is the library. The NSS feedback is typically OK. Librarians need to move out of that cosy environment.

*Quote 36*

Always go with it – you have to capitalise on opportunities – if you can't employ that mindset, then go back to cataloguing.

*Quote 37*

The members of the service are encouraged to push themselves 'above the parapet' across the institution regarding student satisfaction; the NSS impact is well recognised. It is important to push the relevance of department – value and impact – plus the potential for adding value. The senior staff all step up on behalf of the service and push above the parapet: if there is a place where they contribute they do. There is a lot of generic activity: panels, staff and student disciplinaries, investigations, etc. and individually as a third party in university-level activity at top and second tier level in particular. Library staff with liaison responsibilities also sit on various faculty and related boards.

*Quote 38*

For a new library director to engage at a strategic level, to 'get a seat at the table' and / or to influence upwards, s/he needs to have a strong relationship with their line manager, who will always be at the top table. This is especially important if the line manager is taking all the credit. In other words, manage the boss. That's the key element.

### 2.3.3 Raising the stakes

There is a clear message that library leaders need to provide innovative solutions to current and likely future challenges – and not just those facing the library. Librarians already are moving, or need to move, out of their policy and managerial areas and raise their profile and their contribution across the institution, not only to ensure that the library has a secure and vital future, but also to maximise senior library staff opportunities for further advancement by helping to solve cross-institutional problems.

*Quote 39*

At the retirement of the librarian there was then a library review to change the mode of operation and to benchmark it against other specialist libraries. The result was an increase in staff and a determination to engage better with the academic community under a new (younger) librarian.

*Quote 40*

The new librarian has really upped the ante in terms of the quality and accessibility of resources available. We are looking at a learning space and not a library space. Even the laggards are moving forward with the accessibility of material online.

*Quote 41*

Librarians have a terrible habit of wanting to collaborate, but when it comes to it, you have to go outside of your own doors. Internally the library is a nice cosy 'something' that isn't a problem.

*Quote 42*

Subject-to-subject links are very good, but you don't get the head of library having a conversation with the dean about what the future library might look like. It's about moving from the specific to the general.

*Quote 43*

An understanding of the institution's processes and structures and approaches and participating in them will result in the improvement of personal and library impact. Take the initiative to contribute to them, for example by looking closely at NSS library results and engaging with the quality enhancement process.

*Quote 44*

Have an understanding of what is going on and a critical eye on transformation. Demonstrate the ability to transform. Never approach the role as a traditional support role – see it as much broader.

*Quote 45*

Put your head above the parapet! And why not in a positive way to help the institution with the changes? Libraries have done a lot with digital means: why isn't that expertise being used in other ways in which we are engaging with students? The library is not the only area that keeps itself to itself, but if you want to get yourself known...

*Quote 46*

Another aspect of the changing demands on universities that the library could tackle and lead on is around information compliance and information management. Librarians getting involved in quasi-governance / legal / audit role would be helpful.

*Quote 47*

I invited the librarian to develop a library vision and that has provided a platform to communicate with deans and senior staff. This has been a powerful initiative for the library allowing them to re-connect and given them a way forward. Although a higher profile at corporate strategic level still seems to evade them.

### 2.3.4 The (in)dispensable librarian?

Just as library leaders can move into more senior roles that involve leading and managing other areas, so too might the library be led by someone who is not a career librarian in the future.

*Quote 48*

You must have good functional leads – you don't have to know everything – good leads that you trust. Some librarians have made step changes with libraries.

*Quote 49*

There doesn't need to be a librarian leading the library. Increasingly it won't be the librarian who is leading on this.

*Quote 50*

Do you have to have a librarian to run the library? No, but you would need a team with the expertise. It's the range of operational versus strategic; e.g. subject specialists versus senior leaders.

*Quote 51*

An important question for managers of librarians would be 'would it matter if the Director of Library Services wasn't there; what would / could be different?'

## 2.4 The library as an investment: making the case

Cost reduction is happening or planned as the HE environment becomes ever more challenging and competitive. Libraries are being – or will need to be – restructured as a result, though many are already regarded as ‘lean and effective’. There are tensions between the academic leadership and institutional management and their respective expectations of the library: student and staff support versus tight financial management. Librarians must avoid the need to, or the reputation for, ‘always asking for money’.

Financial stringency can provide opportunities for library leaders, but these are not always being seized. In some institutions, library development seems to be driven from the estates department as much as the library. This is affecting the status and credibility of the library and the senior library staff within the organisations concerned.

### *Quote 52*

Financial management is important, but it is more than just keeping the books; there is a bigger piece about how finances work within an organisation.

### *Quote 53*

There is evidence that the library work stream is in fact being driven by the estates department. This feels like a missed opportunity and reinforces prejudices about the ability of the librarian to put their neck out there and lead rather than wait for others just in case it’s difficult.

### *Quote 54*

A vehicle for initiating some new thinking and re-definition has been to ask the librarian to consider how the library would respond to a 5% budget cut, but this has been responded to less creatively than was hoped, lacking therefore any leadership commitment to dynamic re-design. The focus has been on identifying the services that won’t be delivered as a result of the proposed cuts rather than on taking this as an opportunity to rethink service delivery.

*Quote 55*

The librarian is going to have to downsize the staff (undergraduate recruitment a problem) and yet protect the student experience. Public libraries are a lot better at this. Bring in new solutions, but librarians are not good at the staffing implications – e.g. self-issue v. staffing. Very traditional in what we do and how we do it – a strength but also a weakness.

*Quote 56*

Successful leadership at times has to focus on investment and money and acquire particular skills in how to put a case for investment. Understand the need for prioritisation and 'doing deals'. For example, 'I will hold back on that, with a commitment to fund in two years, if the funding is made available for this now.' Be clear about what is critical now and understand how that fits in the big picture.

*Quote 57*

It is the first time that I have had someone who has said they are going to stop spending money on books and go over to digital; previously it was just whingeing about wanting more money for books... you can do amazing things with support for learning.

## 2.5 Strategic alignment

For the library to be a vibrant, valued, and essential part of the whole institution, there needs to be good and integrated strategic involvement, alignment, and development and an identified and understood impact across the whole institution. The library is particularly seen as being key to the delivery of student learning and teaching strategy. There was less evidence of the library being seen as central to research strategy except perhaps for postgraduates, on the basis that resources (largely electronic resources) for research seem almost taken for granted.

### 2.5.1 Opportunities for strategic impact

It was clear that those interviewed were keen to see those responsible for the library overtly demonstrating their engagement with and understanding of the institutional strategy.

#### *Quote 58*

Demonstrate the more generic leadership skills including the ability to motivate, to influence, and to win confidence. Be open to new ideas, strive for continuous improvement, and operate at a strategic level. Avoid being pigeon-holed as a librarian. 'Think of yourself as being more than a librarian!'

#### *Quote 59*

It is essential that any library leader engages with and aligns their activities with relevant strategies and uses these to make the case for the library.

#### *Quote 60*

As far as possible, be involved with strategy development, particularly around digital skills. The librarian should be the authoritative voice on the learning process and how the library contributes, and on the development of digital skills.

*Quote 61*

To make an impression, a librarian should be proactive, not reactive. They should be engaged in and able to deliver to the learning, teaching and assessment strategy. For example, the strategy specifically has aimed to improve digital literacy, which it very much looks to the library to deliver.

*Quote 62*

It is essential as a librarian to live and breathe the holistic strategy; it isn't good enough just to 'speak the speak' if behaviours and actions don't follow. Avoid the risk of retreating into the library and what the library wants to do.

*Quote 63*

To impress at a strategic level, it is a mistake if all you ever talk about is your specialised remit. Have a view about 'other things' rather than only talking about the library.

## 2.5.2 Empowerment through information

Specific mention was made of the important, if often underused, role of the librarian in providing highly relevant information about student learning and engagement. Using their skills in information management is an area where the librarian and the library have an obvious area of expertise and potential opportunity in terms of future strategic positioning.

*Quote 64*

Be prepared to share valuable information. An annual report that exhibits what the library has achieved with quantified data that drives success is good. But to acknowledge and communicate the impact that it has had across the university strategy is better.

*Quote 65*

A way of being noticed and referred to is to be a source of particularly insightful information about the student body and to communicate this at a senior level. The library can provide valuable intelligence for the university and indeed this can be communicated more widely to great effect.

*Quote 66*

Listen to and understand your audience and your customers. There will be a range of views about the library but it is how you paint the picture that will influence to best effect. Demonstrate evidence and be ready with data and understanding about how to capture and how to communicate student views.

*Quote 67*

Measure everything! Data is everything. Be savvy about what VCs are interested in and how the data will be used.

*Quote 68*

The ability to analyse and use data to set the vision is key, informed by creativity and innovation in thinking and implementation.

*Quote 69*

Be aware of the emerging issues in the sector as a context for demonstrating leadership; for example, being aware of what teaching and learning metrics universities are interested in.

### 2.5.3 Contribution to student learning and satisfaction

The view is that libraries are customer focused and the leadership typically provides strength in this area, with the possibility in some cases that other related services may be moved to the library in the future as a result. The 'embedded service culture' is considered a strength. Positive responses to student requirements and overall professionalism were regularly cited. There was also a widespread acknowledgement that the library is crucial to the success of the parent institutions, at least in terms of student satisfaction.

#### *Quote 70*

The library is in touch with students. A great asset of the leadership is that they provide vital intelligence about the students, and the librarian has a good sense of key touch points of value to the senior team.

#### *Quote 71*

The library is usually switched on about feedback for services (alongside catering – they are pretty switched on too!) SCONUL gives them a wider perspective, including through benchmarking.

#### *Quote 72*

The library is now understood as not just a place for books and articles but somewhere that responds to the needs of students. It shows an understanding of the behavioural nature of our student body.

#### *Quote 73*

Changes are in part driven by student expectations and by the need for value-added in competitive terms. A librarian needs to be aware of what is out there and what is coming down the line.

*Quote 74*

To know what libraries are doing and how students are using them is important. Be aware of digital advances and how students are using libraries digitally and be prepared to communicate that. Be in a position where you can advise your VC on student learning and teaching. Understand how students work and share that intelligence. The library is in the unique position of having an 'open contract' with the student as an independent learner.

*Quote 75*

The library demonstrates innovation in its services, including well being for students with preventative approaches to the avoidance of crisis, expressed over the exam period by 'bring a dog to work' and mindfulness sessions. This is an expression of thoughtful and progressive leadership.

*Quote 76*

The most evident focus of the library at senior level is around students rather than research issues. At executive level the library leadership works! The KPIs and measurement against them tell a good story. The librarian is well respected and has excellent relationships with both peers and the executive team. The librarian demonstrates a breadth of thinking beyond the traditional view of a library and provides a modern and welcoming service.

*Quote 77*

The librarian is more engaged with strategy and, in particular, began to work on social spaces for learning and support of the full range of learning and teaching methods, plus other innovations like pop-up libraries.

*Quote 78*

A library initiative, in creating 'pop up' library space in low utilisation areas, is an innovative response to an idea that came from a lunch with students, which is one mechanism for listening to student demands.

## 3. Moving out and up

This section looks at all the aspects of the librarian moving out and up to a senior executive role beyond the library.

### 3.1 The general view

The general view is that there is no reason why librarians should not move into more senior executive roles within UK HE, though there are challenges, not least in terms of perceived narrowness of the library portfolio or being typecast as 'only a librarian'.

#### *Quote 79*

There is no reason why a librarian should not become a registrar – they have to come from somewhere: it shouldn't be a problem, so what are the barriers?

- if you don't engage across the university
- if you can only talk about libraries
- if you have no personal ambition to move your career forward
- if there is no opportunity or the opportunity is not taken for personal development and leadership training.

### 3.2 Extend the portfolio: volunteering

There is no substitute for being prepared to take on non-library challenges and think of university-wide solutions. This is important not just for librarians in their current roles, but also those looking to move up within the institution: moving up may well mean moving out to areas with no direct involvement in the library, emotionally hard though this may be.

#### *Quote 80*

Sometimes you might not want to change your orbit of responsibility – it's what you love – librarians are almost unanimously dedicated to what they do – they genuinely love their job – and that is not necessarily true in the same way in other areas. They may not therefore move out and up because they don't want to lose the responsibility for the library. To move on you have to lose the library!

#### *Quote 81*

Move beyond your own world and if you are a member of a management or executive team avoid talking only about the library.

#### *Quote 82*

Libraries are not a problem. The things that are going to get you up the ladder are the problem areas.

#### *Quote 83*

A librarian will need to have more than just library services to hit the radar of senior management. The person would have to demonstrate that they can do more than just library. A common route in terms of promotion would be to take on a broader portfolio, developing a good understanding of student needs, and demonstrating leadership through leading and managing change projects, and especially where there is innovation. Not dissimilar from what you would expect of anybody moving out and up.

*Quote 84*

For the librarian to gain status, it is key that they should build relationships with peers beyond the library, and seek supporters across academic and support services. Developing support through both formal and informal links and 'making friends' across the university should not be underestimated.

*Quote 85*

Look beyond the library profession and the library operations and have views on what is topical and important beyond the library world. Understand what is going on within the academic domain and what is affecting other services.

*Quote 86*

If you want to get on, stop managing the library and get a portfolio going across different services and then position yourself in relation to those things that would never have come near you before.

*Quote 87*

The key advice to a library leader wishing to extend their portfolio is to demonstrate that you can work across the whole piece. You have to reinvent yourself, to say goodbye to your roots. When I took on marketing and admissions at [institution], I said I didn't want libraries and IT. But it is a while before the professionals in those new teams trust you. But then people realise that you don't need to be an expert in those areas. I deliberately didn't intervene in library matters unless there was a danger that it was going pear shaped.

*Quote 88*

There is a problem for librarians wanting to move up to VC roles. There is more of a need for a track record in the academy; while COOs typically have been a finance director. The current VC was DVC Resources and is an accountant by background!

*Quote 89*

It would be difficult for a librarian to become a COO or a senior director without the background. The word 'librarian' doesn't have the impact. Librarians need to reinvent themselves. They need to be – and are – respected as 'spot experts'. But to be a COO you have to have other qualifications such as accountancy. There need to be programmes to 'broaden people out'. On the other hand, do you need to be a qualified librarian to run a library?

*Quote 90*

I was on the board and that was a massively useful experience. You need to build up ways of working, to get a sense of what it would be like [to be a VC/PVC].

*Quote 91*

Seek opportunities beyond the library; for example, chair a working group on something very different. Demonstrate you can work across the university.

As stressed time and again, being prepared to take on more roles and responsibilities outside the library – 'volunteering' – was deemed an essential ingredient in moving into top-table roles.

*Quote 92*

Be prepared to say yes, whether it is to work on equal opportunities agenda or on other cross-cutting initiatives. Demonstrate you are open to learning and up for a challenge. You need to be about to show that 'stretch' as a leader.

*Quote 93*

Volunteer to take on more. Gain experience from major projects, both within and beyond the library.

*Quote 94*

Say yes to opportunity even if it takes you outside your comfort zone and seems frightening until you do it. That may include project work, speaking at conferences, getting involved in change initiatives and collaborative working beyond the university. Aim to get chairing experience.

### 3.3 Personal credibility

Personal credibility (professional and institutional as well as personal) was identified as being key to success. Many librarians already have significant credibility within their institutions.

#### *Quote 95*

Building personal credibility is key: being able to work within a team and demonstrating that you can take difficult decisions (e.g. making cuts) and being able to work in the same space as the senior managers. The broader management piece is really important. Credibility is around how you are as a leader. If people spot that you are good...

#### *Quote 96*

You don't get a second chance; you need to judge all that. It is about credibility. You need to have good timing: knowing when to do something – or not.

#### *Quote 97*

The typical view about libraries and library directors is that they have a good reputation; we are often asked to do things that aren't necessarily linked to libraries. It has been a job to make us open to other responsibilities while also maintaining the library presence. Librarians get things done but it has to be at the right level. Eyes up and promote the service; don't lose yourself in the library!

### 3.4 Ambition

Being confident is a crucial trait. Comments were made about the need for librarians to appreciate their existing skill sets and to understand their strengths as well as the need to develop beyond their sector and their specialisms. In addition, it is important for librarians moving up the career ladder that they 'can make a major contribution as someone who can listen and understand'. They therefore need to be able to interact with the executive on an equal footing. In extremis, it would be possible to succeed by being 'super pushy'; to gatecrash everything. That might work, but you would have to be very careful.

#### *Quote 98*

Gain experience and make reference to aspects of significant improvement that you have led and achieved.

#### *Quote 99*

The qualities of leadership should include ambition – both personal ambitions and also overt ambition for the institution. Be seen to want more and better, but not just for the library. Be able to show passion and energy rather than the stereotype retiring and quiet profile.

#### *Quote 100*

Be confident and talk in a way that breaks down silos and demonstrates an understanding of how the systems work across the institution and how they connect.

#### *Quote 101*

Horizons – make sure that you keep extending them – don't feel that you are limited – don't say 'I am only a librarian.' Yes, you are, but you can do other things – constantly expand – push yourself. Be confident! Give off that air of confidence. You can go beyond; have a skill set, know what needs to be done to support students and research. Understand your skills set.

*Quote 102*

Do not be in awe of the senior executive – have the confidence to hold your own.

*Quote 103*

One characteristic for librarians to guard against is to be seen as too deferential, resulting in a sense of top-level agreement followed by a more tactical manoeuvring, which engenders a sense of mistrust and a sense that they are only interested in the outcome for the library. This is also wrapped up in needing to understand the professional identity of librarians and the extent to which their personal status is important to them.

*Quote 104*

Be aware of the need to gain attention in order to further your career and avoid being part of the latent middle.

### 3.5 Professionalism and academic empathy

Being a librarian in an academic organisation involves understanding the academic base of the institution as much as its managerial structures. This was seen as being key to gaining support to move to more senior roles.

#### *Quote 105*

It may not be overly important for the library to be academically led, but you do need to know enough. You have got to be able to understand their agendas. What does it mean to be an academic? You need to build your understanding of the institution.

#### *Quote 106*

A librarian should be able to demonstrate a range of 'academic qualities', so consider how to develop a stellar set of academic as well as professional skills and attributes. Your role gives you the opportunity to transform lives and deliver long-lasting experiences. It is crucial that you are able to listen to student and staff views, understand evidence and respond innovatively, and monitor impact. Think about how your qualities would differentiate you from other candidates with a good CV.

#### *Quote 107*

A future librarian should provide the focus for both 'learning' and, more broadly, 'education', including pedagogic appreciation of the use of the VLE and library resources and the support of blended learning. Library leadership should demonstrate the ability to move the library towards this and to become the advisor to senior staff across this broader brief.

#### *Quote 108*

To effect change well the library should remain linked to courses and their development and be able to respond to academic change, working with the academics involved.

*Quote 109*

The refresh of the education strategy is a great opportunity for the librarian to take the lead on the 'learning environment.'

*Quote 110*

Mix with and gain an understanding of academics and other staff – be ready to 'help' them.

### 3.6 Relationship-building and networking

Networking internally and externally and shadowing senior staff were considered to form important parts of necessary career and professional development. This was expressed as the development of personal and political alliances, including the advantage of having a senior champion.

#### *Quote 111*

Personal development of the sort that results in networking and getting to know senior staff beyond the library world is invaluable. It should be maintained as a key component that assists individuals in moving up.

#### *Quote 112*

Network inside and outside the university; for example, be involved with national bodies; contribute to publications.

#### *Quote 113*

There are also smaller steps; for example, asking to shadow a senior member of staff to give you a sense of what is possible. You may also benefit from personal leadership coaching or mentoring, particularly when considering a new role.

#### *Quote 114*

You need to understand the politics of the organisation and build relationships. Librarians are very good at that – working across the senior portfolios and building positive relationships.

#### *Quote 115*

I was lucky in having a boss who passed on opportunities and pushed me, which is something I try to do for my staff.

*Quote 116*

Form personal alliances to bring on your side individuals who will support you as a leader and support the library. Get to know people across the university, both academics and service colleagues and work out what is important to them, understand what provides added value.

*Quote 117*

The librarian needs to be networking and promoting a dynamic view of the library.

*Quote 118*

Look beyond the institution and get involved across the HE community (not just SCONUL). It is a way of achieving added-value leadership. SCONUL connections are professionally helpful but this is only one community – expand beyond this to influence and add to others.

*Quote 119*

Get involved in national professional bodies like SCONUL or UCISA and contribute to professional practice through papers, journal articles and presentations. Seek out cross-sectoral networks, for example regional library groupings for collaborative working and to expand your experience.

*Quote 120*

Getting on means getting headhunted.

### 3.7 Risk-taking

Any career move will involve risk. It may not always be possible to prepare for promotion and a seat at the top table. Some interviewees reported that it was a 'sink or swim' situation when they moved into a second-tier, executive management role.

#### *Quote 121*

At some point, it is likely you will need to take a leap of faith, to move to a new role and to take on more. It may involve personal bravery and you need to be prepared to take a risk. If it doesn't work out there can be a way back.

#### *Quote 122*

Track the success of others. If you see an opportunity – go for it! What is the worst that could happen? If, as a result, you take on a new role, seek a mentor to help.

### 3.8 Being prepared – or not

Some interviewees spoke of the lack of preparation that they felt when moving into higher-level roles. Even where preparation is given or made, those who moved out of the library were surprised by the broader range of activities that were undertaken and overseen by the executive within the organisation.

#### *Quote 123*

There was no preparation for executive board membership. The university was very poor at that; there was no help or guidance; poor etiquette in meetings.

#### *Quote 124*

I think I thought that I knew how a university operated; you work across the institution as a librarian, but then being a PVC, I realised that I didn't understand a lot of what had been going on. I had another learning curve. You are not always at the top table as librarian even though everything is supposedly coming back to the library. But that is not true. The game-changer was taking on IT in a Russell Group university – that was the difference – there I was at the top table.

#### *Quote 125*

No amount of leadership development is going to help you with jobs like those being done by [senior] people. There is always an element of what an individual brings rather than training. That cannot be overestimated or planned for. The library is not the centre of the universe and never will be... Senior librarians don't need more staff development.

## 4 Personal development

### 4.1 Know yourself

Successful leaders know their strengths and weaknesses, what they want to achieve and why, and how they might go about meeting their aims and achieving their ambitions. Formal tools to identify personality traits may be useful.

#### *Quote 126*

Understand your motivation to move on and up, and act on it. For example, I made an appointment to speak to my vice-chancellor to discuss my desire to move up from my role. He wasn't immediately able to offer any thing due to the makeup of the senior team but did come back with an opportunity to be involved in a university wide initiative in tandem with a PVC (who then left and my role then became a secondment and major opportunity to move onto the executive) and he also offered me the chance to go on the Top Management Programme (TMP), which was definitely beneficial for the shared learning and networking.

#### *Quote 127*

There are some library-related skills and strengths and leadership experience that have proved useful in a broader institutional role. Analytical approaches are valuable in executive board discussions, for example, having the ability to boil the issues down to three or four facts / statements.

#### *Quote 128*

Having a wide set of interests is useful: juggling, dipping in and out of things, filing information away until you need to use it – like old-fashioned reference questions. The downside of this is that you can use too much detail; you need to know when to stop the analysis.

*Quote 129*

You have got to want to do the job, and not just feel that you must do it. Talk less but demonstrate leadership by actions. Some are happy to babysit an organisation – they want to be something rather than to do something. But to do something you have to look at an organisation from outside and see what can be done.

*Quote 130*

MBTI (Myers-Briggs Type Indicator) and the Insights Discovery tools provide insights and help people to see how they are perceived and where they need to change and develop; it helps the shape of who you are and how to mitigate the bad bits.

## 4.2 Formal training

There was a divergence of opinion as to the value of courses offered by the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education (LFHE) and the Top Management Programme (TMP) in particular. 'Whether or not it was intrinsically valuable, if you have done TMP, then you have a notch on your belt.'

### *Quote 131*

TMP is not fit for purpose: do something different that broadens you out. Go to things that are not library – e.g. audit committee – and learn stuff outside the library. Any strategic leadership course can give you the basics, but it is really about the continuous addition to your agenda. But you must be willing to do it.

### *Quote 132*

Formal training schemes such as the TMP were not particularly useful. Even though you may think you have a lot of the skills, the networks and action learning sets are valuable.

Studying and learning alongside senior staff from other professions and sectors was valuable, as was gaining an MBA.

### *Quote 133*

Look at leadership programmes that are not library or student support or learning and teaching focused, for example the Bath MBA in HE.

### *Quote 134*

Personal development should... include opportunities to undertake leadership training, but to be most beneficial it should be alongside people in different roles, in order to discover that other people have similar problems, and to share experiences.

### *Quote 135*

Universities should offer the opportunity for colleagues to join together for leadership training. These programmes provide networks pan-university and result in an understanding of the system as a whole.

### 4.3 Mentoring and coaching

Mentoring and coaching were widely seen as invaluable to career and professional development, including after promotion to the most senior roles. Having supportive senior management is a distinct advantage.

*Quote 136*

Seek out coaching. I had it when I first became director and then maintained the relationship with the coach. More recently I have had more formal transformational coaching, which was a personal initiative.

*Quote 137*

The opportunity provided by leadership coaching was also really valuable; this may be provided through the organisation to support those in leadership roles. Another helpful model is that when first joining AHUA you are offered three personal coaching sessions. Also of value was asking for help from LFHE to find a mentor and having sessions with someone doing a similar role at another university to provide support when new to the role.

#### 4.4 Further reading

All the interviewees were asked to suggest key literature that they had found especially beneficial in their own professional and career development over the years. About half suggested titles, which are included in the literature review where these link with themes explored. It was noted that reading should be focused on specific topics or problem areas to be most effective. While a small number spoke of the benefits of undertaking a postgraduate degree in management and the opportunity that this provided for reading and learning, most interviewees stressed the importance of current awareness and keeping abreast of key trends within the sector and beyond (see Baker, D. & Allden, A. (2017) *Leading Libraries; Leading in uncertain times: a literature review*, part II, section 5). It is interesting to note that there is a marked similarity between the key themes and topics identified here and in the analysis contained in the Literature Review.

##### Quote 138

Further reading [should have] an emphasis on why would anybody follow you? How do you become a leader who has credibility? And how do you do that at an institutional level? But there is no one set of management gurus.

##### Quote 139

Go and look at business and management journals; don't look for leadership material in librarianship. Use Educause – get on to their mailing list. Get on Twitter. ('There is nothing worse than a VC who has been on a trip and read the in-flight magazine.')

##### Quote 140

It is more about staying one step ahead – always reading things about what is coming. What are the trends? What is the next big thing, the next thing that is going to impact? It is useful to keep informed through things like WonkHE and social media (Twitter), and to follow key organisations and individuals as well as networking through GuildHE, UUK, etc.

# Appendices

## A1 Letter to interviewees

Alison Allden and I have been commissioned to carry out an exploration of senior leadership for the Society of College, National and University Libraries (SCONUL) and we are contacting you to ask for your help. SCONUL has established a Leadership Task and Finish Group to support new and existing library directors in their development of the skills and attributes required to lead the academic library through a period of sector-wide change. As part of this work, we have been asked to capture the perspectives of existing higher education leaders on the strategic impact of the library director within their organisation. This feedback will be used to advise library leaders on the positioning of the academic library for effective alignment and maximum strategic impact and to support the personal development of existing and emerging library leaders. We are carrying out a resources review and interviewing a select group of senior leaders within UK HE sector as a central component of this work.

We would very much value an hour of your time for a conversation to seek your advice on the following:

- the view of those at university senior leadership level of the leadership contribution and impact of the library director at a strategic level within the organisation
- effective approaches to leadership in the context of continuous and rapid organisational, legislative and technological change, particularly as affecting the library within the organisation
- what leadership attributes might assist library leaders in achieving their full potential, including increasing their strategic impact and potentially moving into a more senior executive position, such as PVC, Registrar or equivalent.

I will be conducting the interview. This is likely to be by telephone, although if feasible we would be happy to meet with you at a suitable time and place. Attached are brief biographies so that you know something about us before the interview. We would ask you to be aware that:

- a. Notes will be taken but nothing is otherwise being recorded.
- b. A digest of the interview will be sent to the interviewee for final agreement within one working week.
- c. Material from the agreed record will only ever be used anonymously unless you are asked for a quote. The anonymised interview digest will be archived by SCONUL and may be re-used for a range of outputs with your permission.
- d. Details of who was interviewed and any contact details will be used for the duration of the project only and then destroyed.

We look forward to talking to you and unless we hear to the contrary Marie Sowden will be in touch to find a suitable date, time and location if appropriate. If you have any questions about the project or the process, please contact David, Alison, or Jane Savidge, Director of Library Services, University of Southampton, SCONUL Lead.

## A2 Interview checklist

### Introductions

1. Check their name and title (if necessary / appropriate) and that they have had sight of the letter. (Be ready to ping it over if they haven't.)
2. Introduce yourself as necessary and explain that the reason for the call is to explore their perceptions and strategic view of the library and its leadership, aiming to provide advice on leadership and encourage aspiration for current library leaders.
3. Explain briefly what SCONUL is – professional body for librarians in HE.
4. Inform them that as far as procedure and ethical approach go
  - a. The interview will last 45 minutes [minimum].
  - b. Notes will be taken but nothing is otherwise being recorded.
  - c. A digest of the interview will be sent to the interviewee for final agreement within a week.
  - d. Material from the agreed record will kept by anonymously by SCONUL, only ever be quoted / referred to anonymously.
  - e. Indicate how their library staff may be engaged in this work and its outcomes.

NB Reflection on their own experience, and any theoretical underpinning to the answers given will be particularly welcome, including any specific resources or literature.

### Questions for former library directors

5. Explain that the focus is to benefit from their 'view from above' in order to have:
  - A their view (taking into account their experience) of the leadership contribution of librarian and impact and position of library in their organisation;
  - B their advice on strategies that library leaders might best employ to 'lead in uncertain times', ensuring effective approaches to leadership in the context of continuous and rapid organisational, legislative, and technological change;

- C their insight and advice on being a successful leader of library and other services and moving into strategic / senior executive role beyond the library, based on their own experience and observations.

### Section A

1. Do you have responsibility in any way for the library?
2. Where does the library rank compared to other key issues you worry about (depends on nature of portfolio)?
3. Organisational boundaries representing 'library' have blurred with many and different convergence models emerging. Explore the position of the library within their own organisation and the leadership model.
4. What are your views of your library leadership and the culture and contribution of the library at strategic level in your institution?
5. Do you have particular advice or insights into the library leadership given your previous role in libraries?

### Section B

1. What do you believe to be the current and likely key future trends and challenges in (a) HE generally and (b) technology and learning that might affect academic libraries and their services particularly?
2. What do you regard as the three or four key ways of responding successfully to change, particularly as may be relevant to library leaders?
3. What gives you confidence in your library leadership to lead change?

### Section C

1. What were you underprepared for when you moved from a library director role?
2. Which library-related skills and strengths and leadership experience have proved useful in a broader institutional role?

3. Finally, what advice would you give a library leader who wished to extend their portfolio or move into a senior executive role?
  - I. What personal development and literature do you identify as highly relevant to your own leadership pathway or to library leaders?
  - II. Anything else you would like to add / tell us?

### Questions for senior HE managers with / without responsibility for/interest in the library

6. Explain that the focus is to benefit from their 'view from above' on these key issues:
  - A the library and its strategic position in their institution and their view of the library leadership and its culture, plus senior team perception and engagement with the library and its services;
  - B strategies that library leaders might best employ to 'lead in uncertain times', ensuring effective approaches to leadership in the context of continuous and rapid organisational, legislative, and technological change;
  - C insight and advice on being a successful leader of library and other services and/or moving into strategic / senior executive role beyond the library based on their own experience and observations.

### Section A

1. Do you have responsibility in any way for the library?
2. Where does the library rank compared to other key issues you worry about (depends on nature of portfolio)?
3. Organisational boundaries representing 'library' have blurred with many and different convergence models emerging. Explore the position of the library within their own organisation and leadership model.
4. What are your views of the library leadership and the culture and contribution of the library at strategic level in your institution?

5. How do your senior managers / the senior team view the senior librarian(s) and the library?

### Section B

1. What do you believe to be the current and likely key future trends and challenges in (a) HE generally and (b) technology and learning that might affect academic libraries and their services particularly?
2. What do you regard as the three or four key ways of responding successfully to change, particularly as may be relevant to library leaders?
3. What gives you confidence in your library leadership to lead change?

### Section C

1. What advice would you give to a new library director on how best to engage at a strategic level, to 'get a seat at the table' and / or to influence upwards?
2. Do the leadership qualities required in the university library map to generic leadership qualities?
3. Finally, what advice would you give a library leader who wished to extend their portfolio or move into a senior executive role?
  - I. What personal development and literature do you recall as relevant to your own leadership pathway and / or that might apply to library leaders?
  - II. Anything else you would like to add / tell us?
7. Thank them for their time. Give a timescale for completion of the interview digest and the project outcomes, check contact details and confirm they have access to or can be sent a contact name and number.

## A3 Consultant biographies

### Professor David Baker

David Baker, MA, MMus, MLS, PhD, MBA, Hon FCILIP, FCILIP, FCMI, FRCO, FRSA has over 35 years' experience in higher education, including as Principal and Chief Executive of the University of St Mark and St John ('Marjon'), Plymouth (2003 – 2009) and as Deputy Chair of the UK's Joint Information Systems Committee (Jisc) (2008 – 2012). While Principal at Marjon he was Chair of GuildHE and Chair of Universities South West. Before moving to Plymouth, David was in turn Chief University Librarian, Director of Information Services and, from 1998–2003, Pro-Vice-Chancellor at the University of East Anglia. He is an alumnus of the Leadership Foundation's Top Management Programme. He has held a Chair in Strategic Information Management from the University of St Mark and St John since 2006. David led the university through the process of gaining its own taught degree awarding powers (TDAP). He chaired the Transition Board that turned Jisc from a public to a private sector organisation.

David has written widely in the field of library and information science (LIS) with 20 monographs and over 100 articles and book chapters to his credit, editing the peer-reviewed *Journal of Information and Learning Science* along with two major monograph series in the field of library and information provision. He has spoken at numerous conferences, led workshops and seminars and has undertaken consultancy work in most countries in the European Union, along with significant work in Ethiopia, Kuwait, Nigeria, South Africa and the Sudan and for organisations such as the Association of Commonwealth Universities, the British Council and the World Bank.

David has led a number of large technology-based projects in the LIS sector, both in relation to digital and hybrid library development and content creation for teaching and learning. His other key professional interest and expertise has been in the field of human resources, where he has been active in major national projects as well as providing mentoring and coaching to a number of senior managers within UK HE. He also has significant experience of working at CEO level with universities and colleges. In recent years, he has been employed by a number of higher education institutions as their lead consultant on gaining

taught degree awarding powers, including Regent's University London, the British School of Osteopathy and the Anglo-European University College, Bournemouth.

David is also a Principal Consultant with SERO-HE of Sheffield, having been involved in several national-level Library and Information Services projects within higher education as well as major work with Russell Group and other universities on the development of library and information provision, research support and online and distance learning development. He is a member of the boards of governors of the Universities of Northampton and South Wales, and is Chair of the Board of Governors of Trinity Academy, Halifax.

## Alison Alden OBE

Alison Alden, BA, MSc, FBCS, MCLIP, MIFA, offers a wealth of experience and know-how gained from senior experience in UK and international provision of higher education and the increasing focus on student experience. She recently retired from her role as the Chief Executive of the Higher Education Statistics Agency, which she held for six years. This charitable company collects data and creates an information base for UK universities, for use by the public, the universities themselves, students and policy makers. Prior to that Alison was on the senior executive of Bristol University as Deputy Registrar and Director of Information Services, with responsibility for all the student-facing services, including student administration, the library and IT, the residences, student welfare, sport and the Students' Union. Before that she was Director of IT at Warwick University and moved into the university sector in 1993 as Director of Computing for Goldsmiths College. Prior to that she worked in IT in the public sector, including in national museums, and began her career as a professional archaeologist.

In recent years she has sat on various national committees, including the Jisc Board supporting IT across the HE sector, concerned with data and information management, and the ESRC Research Resources Board and AHRC ICT initiative. Currently she is on the Board of Northumbria University and the Board of Regent's University London. She has also served as a school governor for two schools. She recently became a member of the Bar Standards Board. She is the external member of Cambridge University's Strategic Information Services Committee following a major review. Alison is a Principal Consultant with SERO-HE of Sheffield, and has undertaken various library and information services consultancies as well as providing coaching and mentoring for senior staff in these professional areas.

In the 2016 New Year's Honours List, Alison was awarded an OBE for services to Higher Education.



