

LIBRARY
HSILIRB

Director of Development

February 2026



Welcome

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in the role of Director of Development. This is an exciting moment to join the British Library, as we continue to evolve our strategy and look to the future of technology enabled services and inspiring new methods of public engagement. We are strengthening our core capabilities to support the UK's sovereign research capability and investing in advanced technologies that will make our collections more accessible, more discoverable and more inspiring for researchers and audiences of the future.

Alongside this, the major expansion of our St Pancras site represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity. Delivered through a public-private partnership, the project will double the footprint of the building and create new exhibition spaces, learning rooms and public amenities. This will enable us to broaden our education programmes, stage more ambitious exhibitions and enhance the services we provide to researchers. It will also deepen our connection with our neighbours - from the world-leading life sciences research at the Crick Institute to the communities of Somers Town - and welcome millions of visitors arriving from Europe directly opposite our new entrance.

To join us now is to help shape the future of one of the world's leading cultural and research institutions. We are delighted that you are considering being part of this next chapter.

With best wishes,

Dr Jeremy Silver,
Interim Chief Executive



About us

The British Library: A National Home for Knowledge, Culture and Innovation

The British Library is the United Kingdom's national library and one of the world's most significant centres of knowledge. Its collections - over 170 million items and continually expanding - span every era of written civilisation. Among its treasures are the earliest surviving copy of *Beowulf*, Shakespeare's folios, the Magna Carta, early maps of the New World and handwritten Beatles lyrics. Alongside these iconic works sits a living archive of books, manuscripts, newspapers, sound recordings and digital materials collected from every format and every corner of the globe.

A Library With a Mission

The Library's purpose extends far beyond preservation. It exists to share knowledge as widely as possible, supporting scholarship, creativity and lifelong learning. Each year, 1.5 million people visit its sites in London and Yorkshire, while millions more engage with its collections online. Around 82 million items are consulted annually, and its digital learning resources reach approximately 9 million students.

Its learning programmes inspire schoolchildren from across the UK, introducing young people to the power of primary sources and the thrill of discovery. Researchers rely on the Library's experts to navigate centuries of human thought. Screenwriters and novelists immerse themselves in historical detail, cultural context and rare materials that help shape their next story. Entrepreneurs across the UK turn to its Business & IP Centres for guidance, with more than 62,000 new businesses supported in the past three years.



Exhibitions That Spark Curiosity

The Library's exhibitions have become cultural landmarks in their own right, drawing diverse audiences and opening up new perspectives on history, identity and creativity.

Recent highlights include *Beyond the Bassline: Black British Music*, a major exhibition celebrating the artists, communities and cultural movements that shaped Britain's musical landscape. *A Silk Road Oasis* offered visitors a window into the interconnected worlds of trade, religion and storytelling across Central Asia. And the Library continues to expand its cultural reach with forthcoming exhibitions such as a major exploration of the life, legacy and enduring appeal of Agatha Christie - a celebration of the world's most translated author and the queen of crime fiction.

These exhibitions act as gateways into deeper research, encouraging visitors to continue their journeys in the Reading Rooms, online collections or through creative projects of their own.

A National Collection for the Future

As the UK's national library, it collects everything published today and will continue to do so tomorrow. Its holdings encompass every age of written material, in every format - from medieval manuscripts to contemporary digital archives. This breadth allows people to explore the past, understand the present and prepare for the future with confidence and context.

The Library plays a vital role in helping society and the economy thrive. It provides trusted information, supports fact-checking, fuels innovation and ensures that knowledge remains accessible to all.

Transforming St Pancras for a New Era

The Library's Grade I listed St Pancras building, opened in 1998, was designed as a modern home for the nation's collections - bringing together books, manuscripts, maps, newspapers, scientific journals and patents under one roof. It has become one of the great public buildings of the last century, a place where ideas from different disciplines meet and evolve.

But the nature of a national library has changed. Demand has grown, audiences have diversified and the digital age has reshaped how people seek and use information. To meet these needs, the Library is undertaking a major redevelopment of its St Pancras site.

The transformation will create around 100,000 square feet of new public space for exhibitions, learning, business support and cultural events - enabling hundreds of thousands more people to engage with the Library each year. Alongside this, 600,000 square feet of world-class facilities for data and life sciences will foster new partnerships between researchers, innovators and the Library's collections.

A Catalyst for Knowledge and Imagination

The British Library is not simply a storehouse. It is an active engine of creativity, research and enterprise. Whether guiding a scholar through rare manuscripts, helping a student access primary sources, inspiring schoolchildren with hands-on learning, supporting a screenwriter developing a new drama or an author researching their next novel, the Library empowers people to explore ideas and build the future.

In an age shaped by AI, data and rapid technological change, the Library is evolving to ensure that knowledge - preserved, trusted and accessible - remains at the heart of society.

Transforming the British Library

Since the British Library was founded, our world has changed dramatically. We believe that Knowledge Matters, and so we're reimagining what it means to be a 21st century national library: forward-looking and fit for the future, bringing knowledge to life to meet the challenges of the century ahead. And we need your help to make this a reality.

The more we know, the more we make possible

The words and thoughts contained within our collection have long helped people all over the globe to uncover the answers they're looking for. But to keep sparking and sharing ideas we need to transform the Library, supporting new inspiration and innovation.

Our efforts to expand access online and through partner libraries across the UK will empower millions more people to realise new ideas and possibilities, helping both understanding and imaginations to grow. Together we can achieve so much more than any one of us could alone.

An expanded national library in London

With innovation at our core, we'll be transforming our iconic building through a state-of-the-art, multi-purpose extension and new programmes that will inspire everyone to take the next step on their journey of discovery. [Find out more here.](#)

Revolutionising how we store and share our collection

We're building sustainable, cutting-edge storage facilities in Boston Spa that will allow our collection to keep growing long into the future. [Find out more here.](#)

Growing our presence in the North of England

We're deepening our roots in Yorkshire by creating more opportunities for over 10 million more people in the region, and providing a catalyst for regeneration. [Find out more here.](#)



Job description

Job title: Director of Development

Reports to: Chief Executive Officer

Direct reports: Head of Trusts and Foundations; Head of Individuals and Major Gifts; Head of Corporate Relations; Head of Research and Development Operations; Development Business Support Officer

The Opportunity

A transformational fundraising leadership role at one of the world's great cultural institutions.

The British Library is entering a defining moment in its history. As the UK's national library and one of the world's foremost repositories of knowledge, it is embarking on a once-in-a-generation transformation - reimagining how knowledge is shared, experienced and accessed in the 21st century.

At the heart of this moment is a major, transformational capital campaign to support the renewal of the Library's St Pancras site. Alongside this, the Library must continue to grow and sustain its core fundraising activity - securing vital support for collections, research, public engagement and day-to-day excellence. This is not business as usual. It is a rare opportunity to lead both a landmark campaign and a high-performing, sustainable development function that underpins the Library's public mission.

The British Library is seeking an exceptional fundraising leader to take on this pivotal role. The Director of Development will be a bold, visible and influential figure - someone with the strategic insight, personal credibility and fundraising track record to deliver at scale.

This role is for a fundraiser who:

- Has successfully led high-value, high-profile campaigns of comparable ambition and complexity
- Is confident operating at the most senior level, navigating complex stakeholder environments with judgement and authority
- Brings a strong personal network and the ability to build deep, trusted relationships with senior philanthropists, partners and influencers
- Leads from the front - personally engaging donors, inspiring belief in the Library's vision and galvanising others around a compelling cause

The Director of Development will combine personal fundraising excellence with inspirational leadership - building and motivating a high-performing team, working collaboratively across the organisation, and positioning philanthropy as a central driver of the Library's long-term success.

This is a rare opportunity for a senior fundraiser to bring their experience, creativity and networks to a role of national significance - and to help shape a British Library that is open, relevant and inspiring for generations to come.

Key Responsibilities

Strategic Leadership and High-Level Relationship Management

- Develop and lead a clear, ambitious and sustainable fundraising strategy aligned with the British Library's long-term vision and transformation agenda.
- Provide strategic advice to the CEO and Board on all aspects of fundraising and philanthropic growth.
- Operate confidently at the most senior level, navigating complex internal and external relationships with judgement, diplomacy and authority.
- Build, maintain and leverage a strong personal network of senior philanthropists, influencers, cultural leaders and partners in the UK and internationally.
- Position the British Library compellingly within the wider philanthropic, cultural and funding landscape, identifying and securing strategic partnerships and funding opportunities.

Leading a Transformational Capital Campaign

- Lead and help shape a major capital campaign to support the British Library's St Pancras Transformed ambitions, ensuring clarity of case, ambition and delivery model.
- Bring proven experience of leading campaigns of comparable scale and complexity, applying this expertise to inform strategy, pacing, governance and execution.
- Personally cultivate, solicit and steward a portfolio of the Library's most significant donors and prospects, including transformational and naming-level gifts.
- Work closely with the Chair, Trustees, CEO and senior leadership to design and execute high-level donor engagement strategies and approaches.
- Build campaign momentum internally and externally, inspiring confidence, energy and shared ownership across the organisation.

Sustaining and Growing Core Fundraising ("Business as Usual")

- Ensure the continued strength, growth and diversification of annual and multi-year income streams across individuals, major gifts, trusts and foundations, corporates and other philanthropic sources.
- Maintain momentum and performance in core fundraising activity alongside the capital campaign, ensuring neither detracts from the other.
- Balance short-term revenue delivery with long-term relationship development and pipeline building.
- Oversee robust prospect development and stewardship strategies to secure repeat and increased support.
- Safeguard the sustainability of the Development function by ensuring predictable income, effective forecasting and prudent resource allocation.
- Embed a culture of disciplined portfolio management, data-informed decision-making and clear accountability for annual targets.
- Ensure that the case for support for the Library's ongoing programmes, collections, research and public engagement activity remains compelling, visible and distinct alongside the capital narrative.

Driving Fundraising Excellence

- Set and deliver ambitious income targets across individuals, trusts and foundations, corporates and other philanthropic sources.
- Strengthen fundraising capability, systems and performance management to ensure a disciplined, insight-led and high-performing function.
- Apply strategic insight and market intelligence to anticipate trends, seize opportunity and mitigate risk.
- Encourage creativity, innovation and intelligent risk-taking in fundraising approaches.
- Act as a persuasive and credible external ambassador for the British Library in philanthropic and cultural forums.

Key Responsibilities continued...

Leading and Inspiring a High-Performing Fundraising Team

- Lead and manage the Development Office, providing clear direction, focus and accountability across all fundraising disciplines.
- Provide visible, values-led and kind leadership, fostering trust, mutual respect and a strong sense of shared purpose across the directorate.
- Experience in organisational change management and in leading or supporting colleagues and teams through periods of transition.
- Champion role modelling of values and create a positive shared culture.
- Recruit, develop, coach and mentor senior leaders and team members to build capability, confidence and performance.
- Foster a high-performance culture with clear objectives, measurable outcomes and strong performance management, underpinned by collaboration and support.
- Ensure effective workforce planning, succession planning and talent development within the directorate.
- Promote collaboration, knowledge-sharing and continuous improvement across fundraising functions.
- Embed ethical, transparent and compliant fundraising practice in line with all regulatory and legal requirements.
- Ensure appropriate systems, processes and reporting mechanisms are in place to support delivery, insight and accountability.

Working Collaboratively Across the British Library

- Act as a senior leader and leader of the Executive Leadership Team, holding collective responsibility for the effective delivery of the British Library's core functions.
- Work in close partnership with the CEO, wider Executive Leadership Team, Board and Trustees to align fundraising strategy with institutional priorities.
- Collaborate with colleagues across curatorial, commercial, operations and public engagement teams to develop compelling funding propositions and cases for support.
- Partner with the Director of Commercial and other senior leaders to align philanthropic and commercial income strategies where appropriate.
- Champion a strong 'One BL' culture and identity, positioning philanthropy as a central enabler of the Library's mission and transformation.
- Ensure internal stakeholders are informed, engaged and confident in fundraising activity, building shared ownership of donor relationships across the organisation.
- Represent the British Library externally in ways that enhance reputation, influence and strategic partnerships.

Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging

At the British Library, we believe that diversity of thought, experience and background enriches our work and strengthens our impact. We are committed to creating a culture where every individual is valued, respected and empowered to contribute fully.

Our leaders play a critical role in fostering this environment by:

- Championing equity and fair treatment in all decisions and practices
- Actively promoting diversity of voices, perspectives and lived experiences
- Building inclusive teams where differences are celebrated and collaboration thrives
- Ensuring that colleagues feel a genuine sense of belonging.

We expect all leaders to model these values in their behaviour, decisions and leadership approach, helping to ensure the British Library is a place where everyone can flourish.



Person specification

Essential Experience and Expertise

- A demonstrable track record of leading and delivering successful high-value fundraising or capital campaigns of significant scale and complexity.
- Evidence of operating strategically at senior level, shaping fundraising direction and influencing organisational decision-making.
- Proven ability to build and sustain high-level relationships with senior philanthropists, high-net-worth individuals, trusts, corporates and influential stakeholders.
- A well-developed professional network within philanthropy, culture, business or adjacent sectors, with the confidence and credibility to leverage it effectively.
- Experience of navigating complex organisations and stakeholder environments with sensitivity, judgement and impact.
- Outstanding written and verbal communication skills, with the presence and credibility to inspire confidence at the highest level.
- Experience of managing a team of fundraising specialists with a leadership style that fosters growth, develops skills and experience and enables staff to progress and excel.

Personal Qualities

- A strategic thinker with strong judgement and the ability to see the bigger picture.
- Politically astute, emotionally intelligent and adept at reading people and situations.
- Confident, credible and persuasive, with warmth and authenticity.
- Resilient and adaptable, comfortable leading through ambiguity and change.
- Energised by challenge and motivated by delivery at scale.



Terms of appointment

Salary

The salary for this role is up to £120,000 per annum on a full-time permanent basis.

Location

St Pancras, London - office presence of at least 60% of the week.

Pension

A **Civil Service pension defined-benefit scheme** with the Library contributing 28.97%.

Annual leave

25 days holiday plus 2.5 privilege days & bank holidays.

Additional benefits

Great people deserve great benefits. In addition to competitive salaries, interesting work, and the opportunity to develop in a friendly yet highly professional environment, we also offer an enviable array of incentives.

Financial support

- Help with study costs
- Interest-free season ticket loan
- Access to a discount platform

Work life balance

- Generous holiday allowance, starting at 25 days (pro rata) plus bank holidays.
- Depending on the role, we offer up to 20 days flexible working leave per annum (pro rata), part-time working, compressed hours and a range of start and finish times.

Family-friendly benefits

- Shared parental/maternity leave and pay.
- Paternity leave.
- Paid adoption leave.
- Leave for caring responsibilities.

Well-being

- An employer-paid medical cash benefits scheme.
- A comprehensive well-being programme, including yoga and Pilates.
- An employee assistance programme, including on-site counselling.
- Inclusive and social staff networks.

Other benefits

- Free admission to national and regional museums.
- Access to collection items and Reading Rooms.
- British Library Shop discounts.
- Sports and social clubs.
- A subsidised staff restaurant.
- Shower cabins.
- Meditation/quiet rooms.

How to apply

We hope you will consider making an application. To make an application, please go to [this page](#) and click on the apply now button with the following prepared:

- Your CV (no more than two sides).
- A supporting statement (no more than two sides) that sets out why you think this role is the right move for you and how you meet the Person Specification. Please also outline your vision for the role and how you propose to approach it if appointed.

We would also be grateful if you would complete the Equality and Diversity monitoring form on the online application process. This form is for monitoring purposes only and is not treated as part of your application.

Closing date:	Friday 27 th February 2026
Preliminary interviews:	Weeks commencing 9 th and 16 th March 2026
Final Panel interviews:	Weeks commencing 13 th and 20 th April 2026

