

Director of Development

January 2026



Welcome

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in the role of Director of Development at the British Library.

The British Library is one of the world's greatest cultural, intellectual and research institutions, holding a collection of over 170 million items and serving millions of people each year across the UK and around the globe.

This is a pivotal moment to be joining us, and you will be the face of the ambitious fundraising plans that will help us achieve our vision. As we continue to evolve our role as a national library for the digital age, we are strengthening our ambition to expand access, deepen engagement, and ensure our collections, expertise and spaces continue to inspire curiosity, creativity and discovery for generations to come.

Central to our strategy is the transformation of the British Library's estate. As our new Director of Development, you will play a critical leadership role in delivering this ambition. You will lead and complete a successful major capital campaign for the expansion of our St Pancras site, which will create a major new public space for London and the UK that's connected to our community and open to the world. This is one of the largest and most exciting transformation projects in the cultural sector, and is part of an innovative partnership with Stanhope plc and Mitsui Fudosan (SMBL Developments Ltd).

As part of our longer term plans, you will also grow support for our ambitions to open a new British Library space in the heart of Leeds as part of a wider transformation of the city, working with local and regional authorities. Alongside this, and crucially, you will continue to grow and diversify other forms of giving to support the Library's mission and long-term financial sustainability.

Working closely with the Chief Executive, Executive Leadership Team, Trustees and senior stakeholders, you will shape and lead a cohesive fundraising strategy and inspire your team to strengthen a culture of philanthropy across the organisation, and develop meaningful, long-term relationships with our most significant supporters. You will bring strategic clarity, ambition, creativity, and momentum, positioning fundraising as a vital part of the Library's vision and future success.

This will be an exciting journey that will lead to lasting impact. This is, therefore, a compelling opportunity for an ambitious and experienced fundraising leader with excellent networks. If you are motivated by the opportunity to lead fundraising at one of the UK's most respected and globally significant cultural institutions, and by the prospect of enabling philanthropy to support knowledge, culture and access at scale, we would be delighted to hear from you.

Best wishes,

Dr Jeremy Silver,
Interim Chief Executive

About us

We are the national library of the UK. Our shelves hold over 170 million items – a living collection that gets bigger every day.

Although our roots extend back centuries, we collect everything written today, tomorrow, and decades into the future.

We have millions of books, but we have so much more. Our London and Yorkshire sites have everything from newspapers to sound recordings, patents, prints and drawings, maps, and manuscripts.

We are free to use and open to everyone.

We work with partners and other libraries to make sure that as many people as possible have the chance to use and explore our collection. From fostering an early love of learning with local schools, to livestreaming events for audiences joining us from across the UK, to helping researchers around the world find the information they need.

Our spaces are open for research and study, to find business support, as a place to meet friends, or to get inspired by visiting our galleries.



British Library - Director of Development

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Our Mission

We make our intellectual heritage accessible to everyone, for research, inspiration and enjoyment.

Our purposes

Custodianship

We build, curate and preserve the UK's national collection of published, written and digital content.

Research

We support and stimulate research of all kinds.

Business

We help businesses to innovate and grow.

Culture

We engage everyone with memorable cultural experiences.

Learning

We inspire young people and learners of all ages.

International

We work with partners around the world to advance knowledge and mutual understanding.

Our values

- We put users at the heart of everything we do
- We listen, innovate and adapt to a changing world
- We treat everyone with respect and compassion
- We embrace equality, fairness and diversity
- We act with openness and honesty
- We collaborate to do more than we could by ourselves

Our Strategy, Knowledge Matters 2023 - 2030

The big themes that guide us between now and 2030 are:

Access, engagement and inclusion

Ensuring that the services we offer, and the collection we hold, are truly 'for everyone'.

Modernising our library services

Investing in skills, processes, systems and capabilities to deliver the quality of library services our users deserve.

Deepening our partnerships

Collaborating with libraries and memory institutions of all kinds across the UK and around the world, to achieve more than we ever could by ourselves.

Sustainability and resilience

Reducing our carbon impact and collaborating with partners to create a more sustainable future.

New spaces, North and South

In Yorkshire and in London, delivering new, world-class physical spaces designed to welcome future generations of visitors and users.

Explore our full strategy here: [Knowledge Matters Strategy](#).

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.](#)



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Job description

Job title

Director of Development

Reports to

Senior Director of Engagement and Development. Works closely with ELT, CEO and Board.

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

Role purpose

As Director of Development, you will lead the British Library's fundraising function, delivering a successful capital campaign for the St Pancras Transformed programme while growing sustainable income to support the Library's mission.

You will provide expert strategic and operational advice to the Executive Leadership Team, CEO and Board on all aspects of fundraising.

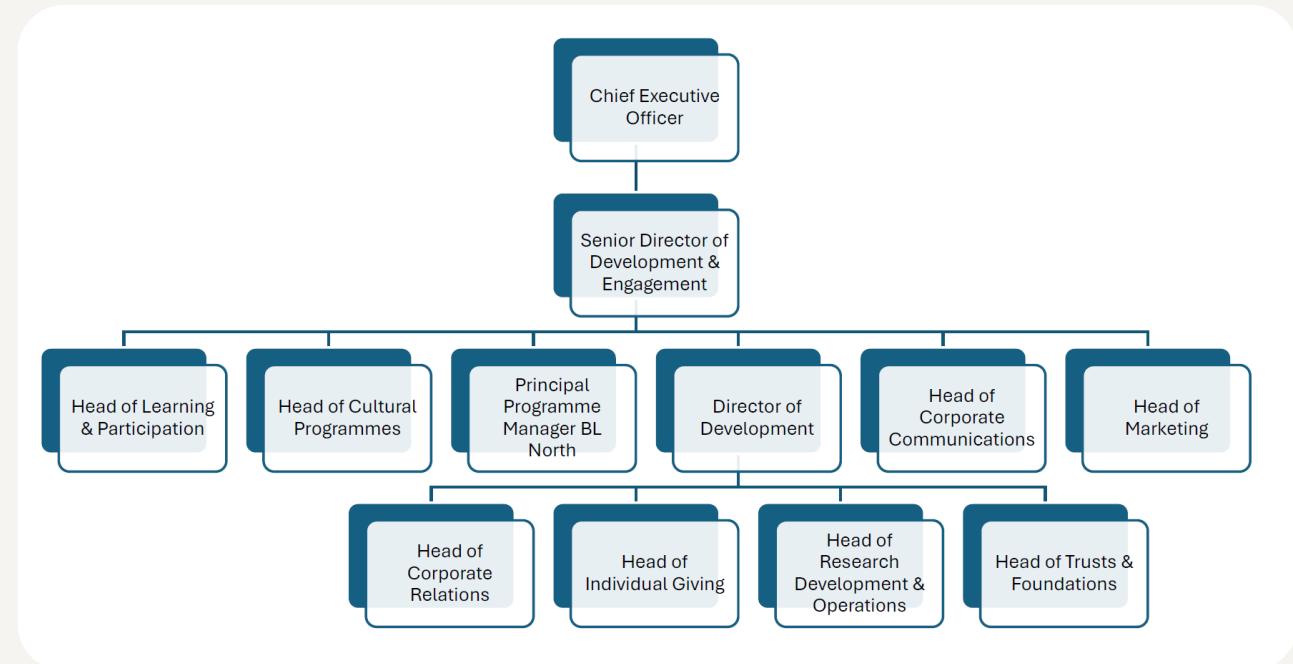
You will be a visible, inclusive leader who inspires high performance, collaboration and continuous development across your team and the wider Library.

You will embrace and lead change; be outcome-focussed; and put the British Library's users, staff and partners at the very heart of everything you do, and every decision we take. As a senior leader, you will contribute to the delivery of corporate objectives and the future direction of the organisation, working closely with SLT colleagues. You will also represent the British Library externally, building strong peer networks and advocating for the Library with partners across government, business and the cultural sector.

Main responsibilities

Key responsibilities include:

- Develop and implement the overall fundraising strategy to support delivery of the Library's strategic priorities, including the capital campaign(s) for London (and Leeds)
- Lead on defining and articulating the case for support and creation of all fundraising collateral required to support major fundraising programmes
- Lead and inspire the Development team including recruiting, inducting, coaching and mentoring team members as appropriate to deliver targets and objectives
- Work closely with other fundraised-income-generating teams across the Library to ensure efficiency and common purposes
- Support the Senior Director, Deputy Chief Executive, Chief Executive, Chair and other senior leaders in building relationships with high profile and high net worth individuals, relevant trusts and foundations and corporates as potential donors to the organisation
- Establish and implement a coherent internal and external communications strategy to maximise awareness of the Library's fundraising activities
- Lead on fundraising policies and practice to ensure all activities adhere to ethical and legal requirements



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.



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Person specification

Knowledge and experience

- Experience of significant fundraising leadership at a senior level. You will have shaped and implemented fundraising strategies that have delivered a step change in income.
- Experience of meeting significant targets and working on multi-million-pound projects in the UK or internationally, including capital projects.
- Excellent networks and experience developing and maintaining strong relationships with a broad range of external stakeholders.
- Strong understanding of the fundraising marketplace and current trends across individuals, trusts, corporations and major donors.
- A full understanding of the British Library's purposes and the ability to shape fundraising activities across the organisation in a way that ensures buy-in from key stakeholders (Board, staff, donors).

Skills and abilities

- Outstanding networking skills, ability to present the Library at the highest level.
- Creative, agile, and a willingness to go the extra mile to achieve goals.
- Effective leadership management skills and ability to transform and inspire an important team, and work across the whole organisation.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills and significant powers of persuasion.
- A problem-solver with commercial acumen, intellectual curiosity and a desire to find better ways of achieving our goals.
- Strong financial skills and commercial acumen and significant experience of budget management.

Values and behaviours

- Enthusiasm and passion for the British Library and our mission to make our intellectual heritage accessible to everyone, for research, inspiration and enjoyment.
- Alignment to the British Library's shared values and Strategic Leadership Behaviours & Competency Framework.
- A strong commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging.

Terms of appointment

Salary

The salary for this role is c.£100,000 per annum on a full-time permanent basis.

Location

St Pancras, London, with occasional travel across the UK and internationally.

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 the [Starfish Search website here](#) and click on the apply now button, with the following prepared:

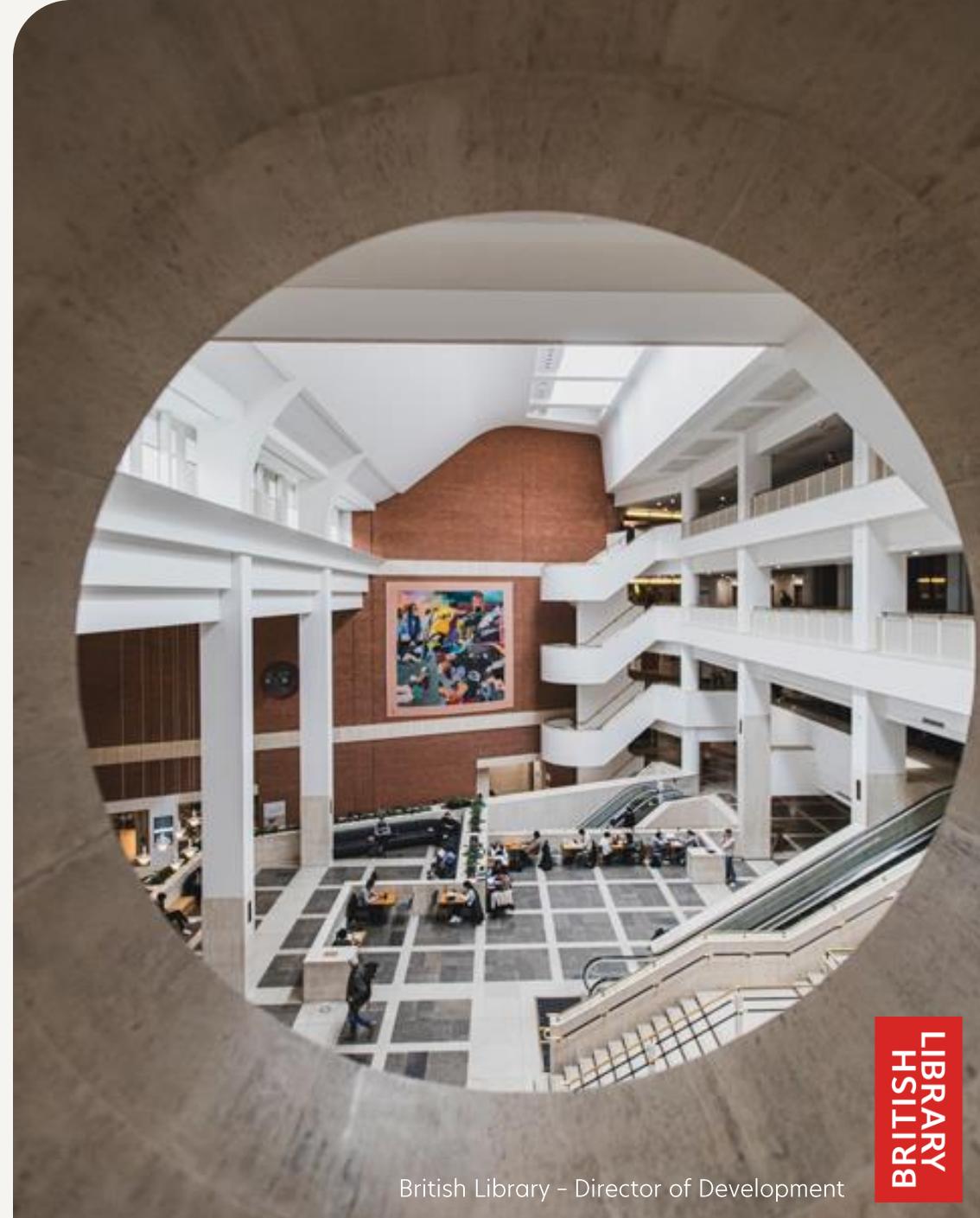
- Your CV (no more than two sides).
- A supporting statement (no more than two sides) that sets out why you think this role is the right move for you and how you meet the Person Specification. Please also outline your vision for the role and how you propose to approach it if appointed.

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 27th February 2026

Preliminary interviews: Weeks commencing 9th and 16th March 2026

Final Panel interviews: Weeks commencing 13th April and 20th April 2026



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