

2007-08

Shetland Council evaluation report

Public Library Quality Improvement Matrix (PLOIM)

Summary

Shetland Library used the Public Library Quality Improvement Matrix (PLQIM) to review its provision across all seven Quality Indicators. From detailed discussions with staff, visits to libraries and a review of the evidence, it is clear that the Shetland Library staff are working hard to ensure that a range of quality library services are delivered across the authority and, in particular, to engage across communities in a purposeful and effective way. Dedicated staff use community planning framework and informal opportunities to identify hard-to-reach groups and to develop and deliver services to meet the needs of communities. Feedback from the public clearly shows that whilst the services are highly valued by their users, the facilities in Lerwick are in need of development. This is currently being addressed by the Council.

Services have important strengths which are having a positive impact on individuals and community life. Key strengths lie in Community and Personal Participation, Meeting Readers' Needs and Ethos and Values. These include the mobile library service, the Welcome Project, the range of innovative reader development approaches for children and adults and the involvement of staff in the development of the Library. The choice of reading activities and resources provided by the library is regarded as excellent practice for such a small population base.

Other important strengths include the use of the media, the range of online subscription services available in a small authority, learning partnerships and the range of innovative projects delivered by a small team.

As part of the PLQIM, staff identified a number of areas for improvement and this will form the basis of an action plan on which to build better services.

Introduction

Sited in all types of communities and with extensive mobile library service provision, libraries remain one of the free universal services for communities where the local population can visit as individuals or in groups to pursue reading for pleasure, learning or hobbies. Libraries can support the business community, individual and community information needs and are inclusive of all age and social groups, nationalities, genders and religious beliefs. The delivery of high quality information and library services to individuals and communities helps people to develop their skills, realise their aspirations and contributes to the economic growth and well being of the country. Libraries encourage the use of digital technologies by communities and individuals providing access to information, learning and culture.

The first public library legislation in Scotland was passed in 1853 and the base legislation is the 1887 Public Libraries Consolidation (Scotland) Act, so local authorities have a statutory duty to secure the provision of adequate library services for all persons resident in their area. Library services make a significant contribution to delivering the Scottish Government's five strategic priorities, as well as local council and community planning objectives.

Local Authority Background

Shetland Islands Council is the second smallest and the most northerly of the 32 local authorities in Scotland. A total population of just over 22,000 is scattered over more than 100 islands (15 inhabited) in one of the most isolated communities in Scotland. Lerwick is the main centre of population with 41% of the population living there, and the remainder of the islands is very sparsely populated. This poses

considerable challenges for service delivery and creates pressure to sustain services to small, geographically isolated communities.

The profile of communities is changing, with a projected decrease of nearly 10% in school age children by 2014 and a rise of over 15% in the population aged 65 and over. Shetland has one of the lowest unemployment rates in Scotland at 0.7% but traditional oil and fisheries industries are under pressure in the current economic climate, so there are concerns. Revenues from Sullom Voe oil terminal have been used by the Council to support the school estate and provide leisure and recreational facilities but the amount available for initiatives is reducing.

The main public library is located in Lerwick with a Learning Centre adjacent, offering free internet access. The school libraries are all part of Shetland Library, providing welcome local library resources. Mobile library services are crucial to communities, visiting most parts of Shetland on a regular basis and there are community libraries in Brae, Unst and Yell. Library and computer usage, both public access and in the home, are among the highest in Scotland, with broadband uptake standing at 50.7%, second in the country.

In the local elections of May 2007, 22 independent elected members were returned and formed the ruling administration. The Library and Information Service is designated as a stand-alone unit, managed through the School Service, part of the Education and Social Care Department.

Process

Building on success: a public library quality improvement matrix, self evaluation toolkit, prepared by the Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC) provides the framework for the process. The Shetland Library staff developed themes around all seven Quality Indicators, encouraging staff to contribute to the process by identifying evidence of outcomes and impact.

SLIC reviewed the evidence and carried out discussions with members of staff, the public and the senior management team on 10th and 11th June 2008. Visits were made to Shetland Library, the Learning Centre in Lerwick and Scalloway Junior High School. Time was spent in the Learning Centre and Library talking to members of the public about the service they received. Arrangements were made for a discussion with mobile library staff and a tour of the newest mobile which had just won a national prize. Representatives of a wide range of library partnerships including Adult Learning, , Community Work, the museum, , the Childcare Partnership, the NHS and the college took time out their busy schedules to discuss the ways in which the library service supported them. This was followed on 11th June by a meeting with Senior Education and Social Care Managers and elected members who described their vision for the future of the service as well as current performance. These arrangements helped SLIC to come to a balanced view on the outcome of the self evaluation.

Levels

This report uses a six level scale, as follows:

- excellent – outstanding, sector-leading
- very good – major strengths
- good – important strengths with areas for improvement
- satisfactory - strengths outweigh weaknesses

weak – important weaknesses
unsatisfactory – major weaknesses

Quality Indicator 1 Access to information

Strengths

- All IT equipment is part of the ICT department's rolling programme of replacement and upgrade
- National entitlement card development
- Wide range of electronic subscription services to support communities and individuals
- Introduction of self issue to encourage independent use

Sufficiency, range and suitability of resources

Space is at a premium in the Shetland Library so alleviating the pressure to provide shelf room by moving to web based information rather than paper-based resources is helpful. This policy also offers the benefit of access to an equitable range of reference sources in school libraries and, in some cases, from home. A wide range of direct and linked web-based resources is provided. Subscriptions to online electronic services include NewsUK, KnowUK, Britannica Online, Oxford Reference Online, Original Sources and SCRAN. Services are still being developed and provision is regularly updated and promoted in the press, the most recent being the addition of Grove. The library website is a well-used source of information. Work on updating the library website is shared across the team and changes are made on a frequent basis. It is particularly helpful that remote access is available for many of these resources via the website, offering 24/7 services and balancing the issue of public transport finishing in the early evening. The hyperlinks are listed on the library website homepage and full details about the services are included in the section on reference links.

Links with school libraries are strong and homework help is offered through Britannica online junior and student. Careers information is provided in both public and school libraries and increasing this information is web based. Regular liaison takes place with Careers Service staff, part of the Information Forum. Library staff are trained to promote the use of the basic web tools and make referrals as appropriate. The relationship with the health sector is demonstrated through Bookstart and a Discover the Web project with the library focusing on meeting health information needs.

Arrangements for access

Shetland Library is the key provider of free public access computers in Shetland. There is high uptake by both residents and tourists, with pressure on resources at busy times, in particular when cruise ships stop over at Lerwick. There is high uptake of broadband services, well above the Scottish average. Libraries are not, at this stage, directly involved in either the broadband pathfinder or the cultural pathfinder. Wi-Fi access is being considered to meet demand. A self issue terminal has recently been provided by the Scottish Government's Public Library Quality Improvement Fund which helps to free up staff time from administrative processes to spend more time with customers, or in reader development activities. This is enhanced with an out of hours return facility to start encouraging more independent use of the service. A number of shorter 15 minutes access times are used to satisfy demands on occasion. An online booking system for pc use is not available and would provide considerable improvements for both staff and public. Shetland Library is working to

get more closely involved in the roll out of Glow, because of the contribution which library staff can make in supporting learning, literacy and information literacy.

Delivery of the national entitlement card is a key area for libraries and Shetland Library staff are keen to support the uptake of the card, which is currently used for travel.

Assistive technologies are provided, specifically text magnification, access to roller balls, different keyboards and staff can change screens settings such as fonts. The staff received basic information as part of their ECDL training and this is regularly updated.

Staff interaction and support

All staff undertake information work, with regular updates on new tools and skills. They have been trained to European Computer Driving Licence standard. Budgetary pressures have hit the staff training budget and, whilst training plans exist from the Review and Development process, funding is not currently available to meet all of these clearly identified skills development requirements.

School library staff are actively promoting the development of information literacy and the Learning centre staff provide support for users.

Areas for improvement	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of online booking system • Upgrade broadband capacity • Funding for staff training and development needs • Continue developments with national entitlement card • Develop links with Glow as it is introduced 	

Quality Indicator 1 Access to information	
Sufficiency, range and suitability of resources	Good
Arrangements for access	Good
Staff interaction and support	Good

Quality Indicator 2 Personal and community participation

Strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobile Libraries • The Welcome Project - world language materials for new workers and families, plus self-issue and out-of-hours return • Strong links with community and heritage groups • Community-focused approach to service development • Use of media to reach into communities 	

Promoting personal and community development

The mobile library service is a key strength of the service and accounts for around a quarter of all library issues. Around 90% of customers get a doorstep service because of the nature of the community, but these vans also visit workplaces and health centres. At the time of the SLIC visit, the new mobile had just returned from winning the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals *President's Shield* for the Best Small Mobile Library. Drivers Elizabeth Robertson and Annette

Shewan were encouraged to attend the 'Mobilemeet' at Aintree for their professional development. It is clear that they provide a high quality service which is valued by their public. Ian Stringer of CILIP said that the award reflects not just on the physical build of the vehicle but the whole concept of the service and its emphasis on social inclusion. "Your staff gave us a vivid account of life on Shetland and this was one of the main reasons for giving the award." Careful profiles of the reading interests of each resident on the routes are maintained, which is very helpful for providing a quality services and also for continuity in should relief drivers be asked to cover routes. Routes are reviewed regularly. Community consultations are carried out via the mobile library and school library network.

In March 2008 First Minister Alex Salmond launched the Shetland Library Welcome Project. Funded by the Scottish Government Public Library Quality improvement Fund, this project saw the introduction of a self-issue machine, out-of-hours return point and a collection of materials selected to meet the needs of key groups like new workers and their families. There are now materials in 19 different languages, dual language books and books for those wishing to improve their English and CDs. The close links already established with ESOL tutors will help new workers and their families to integrate into the community whilst clearly demonstrating that their own culture is valued, as is a natural wish to read in the mother tongue. The First Minister commented *"I am glad to see projects offering library support to groups such as young people and migrant workers – this is where great results will be achieved"*.

Feedback is sought on changes to community profiles on a regular basis through the local service delivery groups. Research into Deprivation and Exclusion in Shetland informs the development of the Service Plan and its delivery. Comments and consultation is a feature of the library website and in the library, with continual efforts made to seek resident's views. Shetland Council of Social Service has a community portal for community websites and Library and Book Groups entries are featured on these.

Some libraries in schools are also open to their local community and provide convenient access to reading material. Staffed community libraries are situated in Whalsay, Brae and Unst, with small, unstaffed community collections in the Brae Community Office, Fair Isle and Yell all of which are very important to those using them. The most recent collection to be introduced is at the Papa Stour ferry terminal.

ICT is used to reach out into remote communities, with the website advertised on the side of the mobiles, events posted regularly on the Council website and by using the Council intranet (The Council is the biggest local employer). Interestingly the library has developed a strong relationship with the local press and radio service. Members of the library service staff speak directly to the community through the media on a regular basis. Mobile library timetables are broadcast, the Library and Information Services Manager is invited to discuss library matters on air, the library has a regular "slot" on the Book programme and library events are announced and covered in a level of detail undreamt of elsewhere.

Libraries offer a valuable opportunity to volunteer and contribute to individuals and community development in a direct way, such as the Talking Newspaper. A Tamil Nadu calendar was published in 2008 to record volunteers' work. A range of placement opportunities have been offered in the Library for young people and

adults who have physical and learning disabilities. Staff provide a support and welcome for those who need extra care and who may be regarded as hard to place.

Providing community space

Public interest and support for the refurbishment of the Library indicates the importance of the development of the service to the community. Shetland Library provides a focus for community life and development. Local organisations demonstrate an enthusiasm for involvement, whether it is to visit or to host events in the library. Examples of the events include the school bedtime story and the Festival of Nature as well as more traditional book publication launch events. Another regular community event is uniquely-named *Makkin and Yakkin* where members of the community are invited to bring along their handicraft to the library to chat, share community stories and information. Libraries have a stall at the annual Children and Families Day to help reach out to islanders.

Links have been established with Disability Shetland in order to better inform those with disabilities about the provision the Library can make for them. In addition to specialist ICT interfaces, there is a current project on Dialect Talking Books linking access needs with an interest in local language and topics of community interest.

Access to community heritage and culture

The principal area of enquiry work is around the local studies area, including family history and heritage. A unique collection of local interest materials are provided on the mezzanine level and facilities for study, research and reading. Efforts are made to ensure that both heritage and contemporary materials and projects are well promoted. Links between the Library and the Family History Society are good and there is frequent liaison with the large number of local history groups, not only on the islands but across Scotland. A number of events are organised on a heritage theme, including Scrapbooking with Archives and History at Home. Museum staff have indicated their interest in working in new areas with the Library and a successful joint project has been undertaken with the Lerwick Local History Group on dialect. There's potential for sharing of heritage and cultural information between museum and library staff to improve the shared knowledgebase and make it more widely available to the public. The Archives are another rich resource and researchers can use library facilities to increase access, as Archive opening hours are restricted.

Areas for improvement

- More flexible space for library-based community activities

Quality Indicator 2 Personal and community participation

Planned approaches promoting personal and community development	Very good
Provision of community space for a range of activities	Good
Supporting, recording and providing access to community heritage and culture	Very Good

Quality Indicator 3 Meeting readers' needs

Strengths

- Wide range of stock to which the public has access

- Poet Partner Project
- Range of innovative reader development approaches for adults and children
- Partnership with Literature Development Officer

Identification of reading needs

The Stock Management Policy is reviewed at least once every two years, the most recent update was December 2007, and is publicly available through the Library website. This clearly lays out the purpose of the policy, which is firmly grounded in meeting community needs, ways in which library staff select items for acquisition, selection criteria and criteria for withdrawing items from stock.

Shetland Library's online catalogue is available 24/7 from any Internet connection. The catalogue allows borrowers to browse, to request items and to renew items online. This service is well-used by library members. The Talis library management system is used to provide information about issues and so inform future stock selection. During the selection process, staff check on the popularity of specific authors and genres prior to purchase. The senior team share the stock editor role and this uses information from the library management system and a physical examination of the condition of stock on which to base decisions. Use of evidence based stock management software will help to support these information needs.

Choice of activities and resources

A wide choice of activities and events is promoted throughout the year. Issues per 1000 population are the highest in Scotland¹ and 80% of these come from Lerwick and the mobiles. Shetland is also number one in Scotland in terms of stock turnover - the percentage of the national target met for replenishing lending stock for both adults and children and young people. There are still challenges in promoting stock to the public. The language material is very new and the collection of around 900 items will have to be developed and continually promoted to existing and new users.

Reader development is a key strength and reader-centred approaches are deployed creatively across stock management, organisation of events, reading groups and displays. Karen Fraser, the Customer Services Librarian takes a lead role and has a large number of varied and successful events ranging from celebrating the centenary of Mills and Boon with a 250 word romantic writing competition and a Yule evening of seasonal music, poetry, mulled wine and mince pies. Reading promotions developed locally include Death by Tartan, Northern Lights, Heart of Europe (contemporary fiction from Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic), Woza Africa and Tales from Many Cities (urban contemporary fiction). Working with the Shetland Arts Literature Development Officer, around 6 reading groups are supported, with the Lerwick Group run directly by the Library. Other groups also receive support, including the University of the Third Age and a community group in Walls. Author visits are also arranged. Shetland Library is an active participant in the National Reader Development Network and links to their promotions offer further choice. The Customer Services Librarian has a regular spot for reading on the local radio.

Morag Nicolson, the Young People's Services Librarian provides leadership for the development a stimulating programme for children and young people. The Library's 'offer' for children begins with Bookstart and there are good links with the local health visitors. Working in partnership the first two Bookstart packs are handed out by health visitors whilst the third, Bookstart Treasure Chest, is collected from the

¹ Audit Scotland. Cultural and Community Services Performance Indicators 2006/7

library. Monthly Rhyme and Story sessions are held at the Old Museum Gallery. These activities help to develop early literacy and numeracy and assist in the development of a lifelong love of reading. These events for parents/carers and children are followed up with nursery, playgroup and school visits. Young readers in Shetland are enthusiastic participants in the Summer Reading Challenge and turn out to support author visits and other book events. The library website has a number of useful links to reading websites. Young Shetland Writer attracted over 80 entries in 2007.

Jen Hadfield is the Shetland Library Poet Partner in a three year project funded by the Scottish Poetry Library and Paul Hamlyn Trust. Poetry has been actively promoted in Shetland for many years, collections. New poetry books have been carefully selected and are currently being promoted in the library and on the website. The Poet Partner runs events and supports the creation of new poetry on the island, as well as running an online discussion group.

Provision for readers

Space is at a premium in the St Ringan's building. Stock is attractively displayed in the building but there is no doubt that the reading appetite of the local population means there has to be a delicate balance of promoting new titles and continuing to provide access to a wide collection. It is simply not possible for all the stock to be on display at one time. One way of alleviating the access problems is to open the storage stack in the basement to the public for serendipitous browsing on a regular basis. Free request services are offered to satisfy readers' needs and these are normally turned-around within 2 working days. Suggestions for purchase are considered and the ability to respond positively contributes to reader satisfaction. Inter library loan services are also provided.

Suitable stock is provided and promoted for those who are learning English. With many new workers and their families the library has taken great trouble to develop a collection in a wide variety of languages now used in the Shetland community. Good links between staff in Adult Learning resulted in a good collection of materials chosen to meet the needs of literacies learners and the Big Plus In Libraries titles offer readers choice and progressive skills development. The stock is well used and integrated into the mainstream collections. In a joint initiative with Adult Learning and the Peerie Café, the Six Book Challenge was launched and promoted to encourage adult reading, attracting fewer than 100 participants.

Areas for improvement	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introducing robust and effective evidence based stock management and improving stock selection and promotion • Continued development and promotion of language materials 	

Quality Indicator 3 Meeting readers' needs	
Identification of reading interests	Very good
Choice of activities and resources	Excellent
Opportunities to improve literacy and numeracy	Good

Quality Indicator 4 Learners' experiences

Strengths

- Partnership working
- Informal learning environment

The library learning environment

The Learning Centre is part of the Shetland Library service, providing access to the People's Network. This provides free computer access to everyone via the network of public libraries and offers a variety of support for learning, from creating text documents to internet-based research and access to online subscription services. The Centre is located in the former St Ringan's church hall, next door to the main library building in Lerwick. It provides a pleasant atmosphere for study and leisure, with staff on site to assist if necessary. The school visited, Scalloway Junior High School, also provided a warm and friendly learning environment, with a good range of print materials and broadband access to the online reference materials. Scalloway Junior High School sends pupils to activity days to stimulate use of resources for educational purposes and to develop close links with the library.

Range of learning

Opportunities are promoted as well as facilitated by the library. As well as evening classes, a new daytime computer class is available in the Learning Centre. Independent learning and personal development is supported by the provision of print materials, web based tools and the online subscription services. The Library's focus has been expanding participation in learning by those at risk of exclusion, such as literacies learners and new workers and their families who need help with developing their English or reading materials in their own languages. On a few occasions, library staff worked alongside adult learning tutors, helping to build a shared understanding.

Addressing the needs of learners

Library staff contribute to the Community Learning and Development Partnership, who keep an overview of provision to meet learning needs. Library performance is reviewed in Vibrant Shetland. School educators are offered additional support with a special educator membership category allowing them to borrow beyond the normal number of books to better support learning. There are good working relations between the Library and staff supporting the needs of literacies and ESOL learners, resulting in a better understanding of the support materials required. Support is also provided for Adult Learners' Week, which reflected the interests of the international community with music and reading from around the world and promoted diversity and integration.

Partnership working in learning

Shetland Library works in partnership to deliver support for learners and does not provide learning direct to customers because of these partnerships. Libraries provide premises, ICT facilities and resources. The learning role of staff has been described as "assisting" in the latest job profiles, re-negotiated in 2007. Extensive adult learning opportunities are provided across Shetland by Adult Learning, Shetland College UHI or local voluntary organisations. The Library has a good profile with learners and partner organisations and the radio and press convey the message that Shetland Library offers informal learning which is broad, free and inclusive.

Areas for improvement

- Continue to work in partnership whilst exploring ways in which the library learning offer can be extended
- Improve access for all users

Quality Indicator 4 Learners' experiences

Extent to which the environment stimulates and motivates learners	Good
The range of learning opportunities offered	Satisfactory
Provision for learners with differing abilities and aptitudes	Satisfactory
Partnerships enabling progression with others	Good

Quality Indicator 5 Ethos and values**Strengths**

- Team working and the contribution of individual members of staff
- Welcome Project
- Involvement of staff in development of Library
- Recognition of the broad cultural interests of the small community

Sense of identity

Heritage and local culture are well promoted within the library and there is many examples of good initiatives. One of the ways in which the library service promotes a sense of identity is listen-dialect link on the library website which provides a written transcript of some local texts and has an audio clip. Trawling Apö Da Net is a Shetland guide to the Internet. This offers a list of local interest websites, including the local council, press, museum, sports clubs, family history societies and travel organisations. The local tourist map and index is produced by Shetland Library on an annual basis.

As mentioned under Quality Indicator 2, the Shetland Library has already take steps to improve the range of materials available to new workers and their families. The Welcome Project is a considered initiative to value the cultural heritage of new members of the community whilst providing them with the language skills they need to integrate into community life. A celebration of International Shetland was held in May 2008, and the Library took the chance to publicise the new collection of books in other languages. This included an Adult Learning event for 'Cultural Diversity Day' and dual-language story times during the week. Linking across the age groups, nursery children were read stories in French, German and Norwegian.

Shetland Library has enjoyed consistently positive feedback from elected members, for example at the quarterly Performance Review sessions.

Reception and atmosphere

There is no doubt that the St Ringan's building has shortcomings which prevent it from being suitable for a modern library service. It does, however, have a unique and lovely atmosphere and efforts have been made to make the building as comfortable as possible. There is disabled access, a self issue terminal, out-of-hours return facilities, a comfortable seating and tea/coffee facilities. The staff must

achieve a difficult balance between providing access to a wide range of reading materials and leaving enough room in the St Ringan's building for the public to browse and study in comfort. Ground floor facilities are fully utilized for access to stock and whilst the available shelf space is limited, every device is used to bring the right book to customers. The recessed windows have reading promotions carefully and attractively displayed and younger readers have their own space, just as they would expect in a larger area. The mezzanine area provides a quieter area for study, reflection and reading. Staff and public are invited to make suggestions about further improvements whilst plans for the future development of the library continue.

Relationships with the local media have resulted in considerable coverage of library and information events on a regular basis. Not only does this promote specific events but it also builds towards a general message about the welcoming and engaging nature of the library for all sectors of the community, whatever their abilities or interests.

Customer service

Customer service is very good and this reflects the focus on competency based recruitment, with an emphasis on good interpersonal skills. Feedback of comments, both positive and negative is welcomed directly to staff, elected members or through the press. All negative comments are followed up and acted on as appropriate, providing explanations supported by policy. Whilst many of the customers are regular users and their reading and information interests well-known to staff, there is a considerable flow of tourists into Lerwick. Many of these visitors use the free internet facilities but some are interested in finding out more about heritage and culture or are family history researchers. The unique wildlife of the islands also attracts tourists and staff understand how important it is that all these customers receive a consistently high level of service. Staff are encouraged by the Library and Information Services Manager to take an active role in making improvements and the quality of the staff response is evidence of their commitment to the service.

Areas for improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More flexible space for library-based community activities

Quality Indicator 5 Ethos and values	
Sense of identity and pride in the civic space	Very good
Reception and atmosphere	Very good
Customer service	Very good

Quality Indicator 6 Organisation and use of resources and space

Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Welcome Project - world language materials for new workers and families, plus self-issue and out-of-hours return • Mobile Libraries • Involvement of staff in development of the Library and its planning

Accommodation and facilities

In September 2007, the council approved proposals to improve the library service through remodelling the old Library centre, former Museum and St Ringans. The present accommodation, whilst lovely, is restricting the development of new library

services. The design phase of the project started in the spring of 2008 and consultation on both the internal and external appearance are the next stage. Although the refurbishment plans, which will allow for the expansion of services, are in process planning, it is important that existing accommodation and services continue to be developed. Mobile libraries are strength of the service, reaching out across the scattered community. Scalloway Junior High School's library has recently been relocated to a larger room which offers a more attractive environment for reading activities and study. Good ICT provision is also integrated into the new facilities.

Buildings services conduct regular audits and inspections. Compliance with DDA is overall good, but there are some issues about the reliability of the lifting platform and access to the mezzanine area. The mobile libraries present a small problem as the vehicles have to have enough clearance from the roads to navigate steep and rough tracks, so this means there are steps. If customers are unable to access the mobile library vans because of the steps, they are transferred to the housebound service.

Organisation and promotion of resources and services

Shetland Library comprises of the main library in Lerwick with a Learning Centre adjacent, the eight school libraries, the two mobile library services and community libraries in Brae, Unst and Whalsay. There are also a few book collections to extend the reading choice in more isolated areas. The main library is open 51 hours per week and efforts are made to extend access to services via the 24/7 services available via the library catalogue. Stock is circulated to refresh collections but recent cuts to library funding will affect the range of material available. Good collection-building needs sustained investment and any deterioration in the range or quantity of stock is soon noticed by regular users. A cycle of declining investment and corresponding declining use can follow.

The Stock Management Policy is reviewed at least once every two years and there are proposals to introduce evidence based stock management to improve the quality of the stock purchased. Electronic book ordering has been introduced to improve the acquisition of stock and streamline backroom processes. Collections on mobile libraries, the provision for the housebound and talking books and newspapers are extensively used in both the more urban areas and the remote rural and island communities.

Marketing is a key priority and there is an informal plan to provide at least one newspaper and radio feature each week. Feedback from the public, as well as high levels of support shows that there is a high level of positive awareness of the range of events and initiatives staged by the library.

Deployment of skilled staff

The staff number 30 FTE are deployed across the service, including 2 on the mobiles and 9 in schools, delivering across the 11 islands. The senior management team have clear roles and have developed expertise in specialist areas, such as reader development, systems management, young people's services and local studies. Relocation within a single building will increase capacity and flexibility. During the 2006 Investors in People process, the assessor found high levels of encouragement for staff to input and be involved in all aspects of the Library and its planning.

Keeping staff training at a level with other mainland library service presents considerable challenges for the service and represents a key area of investment for the Council. Professional development is supported and staff are able to participate in a wide range of professional events, such as Heads of Public Library Services meetings, Heads of School Library Services meetings and the Readership Development Network. There are good partnerships with other Shetland agencies that can help to develop skills, such as Disability Shetland. Self directed training sessions are also used to ensure information skills are current and awareness of online reference resources are updated. Staff are periodically scheduled for a couple of hours of 'web time' to familiarize themselves with the libraries website, the Shetland Island Council Intranet and the public website. The most recent event was in April 2008. Feedback from staff records what items have been scrutinized which are new, have been forgotten or are particularly useful and staff are encouraged to contribute ideas for promoting the reference links to the public.

Use of funding

Opportunities to access funding from external sources have been sought and successful partnership funding sources from the Modernising Government Fund, Surestart and the Scottish Government's Public Library Quality Improvement Fund. These funds have been well used to develop services and meet identified needs, such as provision of services for new workers and their families. Priorities for new developments are considered on a year-on-year basis.

SLIC is concerned when budget reductions impact on the funding available for materials for public use but recognises that the service is making good use of the funding available. Since the budget reductions in 2008/9 very serious consideration has been given to improving the performance of stock. Greater emphasis is placed on making each book 'work harder' and stock rotation has been increased. This refreshes the range of books available at a location on a regular basis and reduces the number of duplicate copies in the service.

Areas for improvement

- Introduction of evidence based stock management
- Funding for staff training and development needs
- Budget for library materials
- Progression with refurbishment

Quality Indicator 6 Organisation and use of resources and space	
Accommodation and facilities	Good
Organisation and promotion of resources and services	Good
Deployment of skilled staff	Good
Use of funding	Satisfactory

Quality Indicator 7 Leadership

Strengths

- Team working and the contribution of individual members of staff
- Range of innovative projects delivered by small team
- Community-focused approach to service development

The vision for the library service

The vision for the Library Service is laid out in the Service Plan making clear pledges to customers, including how the service will engage with both customers and staff. The Library has a wide range of partnerships and their inclusion is evident in all strategic and professional planning groups. Partnership with the library is seen as a positive in reaching widely into the community, whether it is in addressing the needs of literacies learners or promotional events such as the Festival of Nature, in conjunction with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

Planning for improvement

The Library Service Plan for 2008/09 clearly lays out the ways in which the service seeks to improve in the coming year. There is a clear customer focus and special attention is paid to the needs of hard to reach and groups at risk of exclusion. National events initiated by mainland agencies or Government are integrated into a programme of local events, and this includes supporting St Andrew's Day, the Big Gay Read and promoting the Big Plus and RaW.

The Library and Information Service contributes to Community Planning in a number of ways including increasing employment opportunities through providing learning opportunities, keeping the environmental issues at the forefront of provision by achieving the Gold Standard of Keep Scotland Beautiful's Tidy Business Award and promoting cultural identity and social justice through access to resources. Identified for further development are improving equality of access to services and promoting equality in all its activities, developing services for those experiencing health difficulties and re-evaluating provision for individuals and households at risk of social exclusion.

Innovation

Positive comments from elected members and senior Council staff support the role of the library as an innovator in the community and a catalyst for community engagement. Evidence provided contained many new ideas for attracting the public into the library. The Welcome Project and subsequent inclusion in the national scoping study for the provision of library services to new workers and their families has enabled the Shetland Library to take a leading role in innovation. The introduction of self issue is in its early days but feedback shows that the public are happy to use the technology and re-directed staff time can be used to develop new services.

The service is continuing to seek new service points and bring services to people through non-traditional means. These include book collections in the Wind Dog Café, in the Papa Stour Ferry Waiting Room and on Fair Isle. The schools partnership offers good opportunities for community use and the mobile library and housebound service is particularly highly regarded by its users.

Special events are organised to attract non-users, emergent and reluctant individuals. For example, staff attend car shows, agricultural shows and local businesses to attract new readers, in particular, men.

Management of change

The Library and Information Services Manager encourages the service to be outward-facing. Through her contribution to Scotland wide projects and involvement in European library work, she has demonstrated the benefits which a wider knowledge can bring to the service. It is interesting to note that Shetland Library is linked with Crawford County Library in Michigan, where there is a similar approach to

the relationship between the school and public library infrastructure – the school library is the public library.

Communication and consultation within the service is good and assists in the management of change. Service re-design is largely handled by the Service Manager. She takes care to balance the need to keep staff informed and to use their suggestions for improvement with the imperative to focus on further improving customer service and library development.

The balance of skills and allocation of responsibilities within the library senior management team enables leadership in specialist areas and this is a demonstrably effective way of developing staff. Shetland is well represented at national meetings and some staff are able to contribute as leaders within the Scottish library community.

Areas for improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improving equality of access to services and promoting equality in all its activities• Developing services for those experiencing health difficulties• Re-evaluating provision for individuals and households at risk of social exclusion

Quality Indicator 7 Leadership	
Vision and policy making	Good
Planning for improvement	Good
Innovation	Very good
Management of change	Good

2008