



Scottish Library and Information Council

Strategic Plan 2007-2010

The Scottish Library and Information Council is the independent advisory body on library and information matters since 1991. It is funded both by organisational membership subscriptions and by the Scottish Government. Its role is to:

To provide leadership and act as the primary focus, co-ordinator and promoting agent for all library and information services in Scotland, and to support their work for the benefit of the nation and the development of its cultural life.

The main functions are to

- *Provide leadership to library and information services and facilitate the co-ordination of these services;*
- *Promote understanding of the contribution of the library and information services to life of the nation;*
- *Monitor standards of provision of library and information services and advocate the development required for their continuing vitality;*
- *Advise Scottish Ministers upon library and information service matters;*
- *Undertake research and provide information, education and advice to its members;*
- *Liaise with other organisations and institutions;*
- *Award grant-in-aid to promote innovation and development in Scottish library and information services.*

This strategic plan aims to outline key priorities for the Council in the development and improvement of library and information services of all kinds in Scotland between 2007 and 2010, linked to government policy/funding and the needs of users.

The development and improvement of library services in the next three years will take account of the impact of funding through the Comprehensive Spending Review announced in late 2007 and reflect the Scottish Government's Strategic Objectives. SLIC aims to demonstrate the value which library services of all kinds bring to communities, individuals and the economic and social prosperity of Scotland. SLIC will encourage services to develop their services in a way which takes cognisance of public service reform, cross cutting agendas and helps to provide a sense of identity belonging and place. In the next three years it is crucial that library services of all kinds are seen to deliver relevant services in a time of financial stringency.

Scottish Government's Strategic Objectives

1. Wealthier and fairer

Enable businesses and people to increase their wealth and more people to share fairly in that wealth.

2. Healthier

Help people to sustain and improve their health, especially in disadvantaged communities, ensuring better, local and faster access to health care.

3. Safer and stronger

Help local communities to flourish, becoming stronger, safer place to live, offering improved opportunities and a better quality of life.

4. Smarter

Expand opportunities for Scots to succeed from nurture through to life long learning ensuring higher and more widely shared achievements.

5. Greener

Improve Scotland's natural and built environment and the sustainable use and enjoyment of it.

Strategic activity.

There are six strategic areas of activity which SLIC believes are crucial for library and information services, which support the improvement of library and information services across the Scottish Government's Strategic Objectives.

- 1. Quality, Standards and Evaluation**
- 2. Co-ordination, Collaboration and Co-operation**
- 3. Sectoral Priorities**
- 4. Development and promotion of Scottish Information Environment.**
- 5. Innovation and Service development**
- 6. Workforce Development**

The development, improvement and evaluation of these strategic areas will be delivered through the annual operating plan.

Quality Standards and Service Development

The development of quality standards has been a key element of the SLIC's success since 1991. We have worked with key strategic partners to develop standards and evaluation frameworks for the schools, public and further education sectors. In addition the Council has been involved with government and others in the development of technical standards for digitisation and electronic service delivery.

The Council will continue to research, develop, monitor and re-configure standards which improve service delivery and the user experience in all sectors.

To achieve this SLIC will:

- Develop standards and appropriate self evaluation frameworks to service delivery and ensure that these reflect Scottish Government strategic objectives;
- Develop quality assurance processes and benchmarks which assist in the monitoring of impact of standards;
- Advise on standards development and implementation;
- Develop outcome focused indicators which demonstrate added value of the combined library community in Scotland;
- Undertake research and case studies;
- Gather relevant qualitative and quantitative information;
- Identify suitable standards in other areas which complement library ones;

- Develop national and local programmes which are underpinned by robust standards;
- Promote the use of standards with organisations.

Co-ordination, Collaboration and Co-operation

SLIC has a long history of co-ordination, collaboration and co-operation at both a strategic and operational level. The development of successful programmes and outcomes has almost always been underpinned by at least one of these actions. SLIC believes that we need to take a more proactive role in raising awareness of achievements and understanding the library role, in particular in demonstrating outcomes and impacts via the media and to key stakeholders. We need to be able to demonstrate the value of these principles to creating knowledge networks and communities of interest which deliver more efficient and effective services to users.

To support this SLIC will

- Engage with strategic stakeholders to develop programmes which contribute to public service reform and efficiency, economic development and health improvement and support a sense of identity and place;
- Work with strategic stakeholders to develop programmes which encourage innovation through working together or on behalf of other services;
- Provide a focus for knowledge sharing;
- Encourage and support projects which embrace these principles;
- Encourage engagement in the community planning process and develop policies and strategies for library services which support this;
- Promote the outcomes and impacts of working together;
- Continue to develop national, regional and local programmes;
- Develop a communication strategy which raises awareness of library success stories and impact;
- Support and monitor international work and projects.

Sectoral Priorities

SLIC recognises that different sectors are at different stages and have priorities to meet their own user landscape which will also need to be factored in to the overall strategy for SLIC in the next three years. SLIC will consider the following as it develops its operational framework each year.

- Advocacy to support libraries, information, knowledge and culture across government agendas;
- Identifying issues for sectors on a regular basis to inform service planning and SLIC's priorities;
- Advocate, support and promote the role of libraries in learning – both formal and informal;
- Work in partnership with key stakeholders to agree priorities for library services and remove barriers to users accessing services;
- Work to ensure that libraries are able to contribute locally to the regeneration, economic development and learning agenda through community planning and promote this involvement nationally;
- Promote the role of library and information services in meeting enterprise, business and research needs, and improving links with enterprise networks;
- Research the viability and support the development of new delivery models, including the promotion of best practice and the development of model service level agreements;
- Ensure that library services in tertiary education are able to compete in the UK national research agendas, through support for projects such as IRI Scotland.

Development of Scottish Common Information Environment and Services

SLIC has been advocating the need for shared Scottish technical infrastructure since the publication of *Enabling Seamless Access* in March 1999 and *Organising Information* in 2001. SLIC has been actively involved in a number of initiatives to develop a coherent, networked and integrated environment in which Scottish citizens can:

- Access information sources, both traditional and electronic, appropriate to their needs;
- Have confidence that this information will reflect Scottish circumstances and contribute to global information networks;

Make seamless use of electronic sources irrespective of physical location or operating systems. Properly organised information and properly organised access to information can promote social cohesion, minimize inequalities, encourage active citizenship and enhance the quality of life. A lack of such organisation can

exacerbate the gulf between the information rich and the information poor, can lead to poor take-up of public services and be a major source of waste and inefficiency. Steady progress has been made with some support from the former Scottish Executive through Digital Scotland and Open Scotland initiatives in which SLIC has taken an active role. In particular, the pilot Scottish Cultural Portal has left an underpinning legacy on which to build further development of the Scottish Information Environment.

To support this SLIC will:

- Advocate and lobby for support for the development of a shared distributed network, which supports the vision of a strong highly skilled, economically and socially vibrant Scotland;
- Support and develop the principles for digital access, collections development and preservation;
- Advocate for a strategy, which encompasses both printed and digital collections in Scotland, which builds upon existing provision and ensures Scotland's collections are protected, promoted and made accessible to users with the National Library of Scotland, Scottish Museums Council and Scottish Council on Archives;
- Develop programmes with key stakeholders including the National Library of Scotland, Scottish Museums Council, Scottish Council on Archives, Learning and Teaching Scotland and skills agencies, which improve access to common cultural, information and educational resources;
- Identify the elements of the distributed model and gaps in provision/services;
- Identify barriers to infrastructure and collaborative service development and seek solutions;
- Develop programmes which improve service efficiency and effectiveness;
- Encourage and assist with the development of flexible cross sectoral delivery of services;
- Work towards the establishment of a whole Scotland distributed library service which meets the needs of users in the digital age and is contributing seamlessly to UK and international initiatives;
- Explore and research authentication options to ensure that services follow the user, including National Entitlement Cards, Single Sign on, Rights

Management and use across key sectoral networks, such as Glow (formerly Scottish Schools Digital Network), JANET;

- Encourage the development of user focused services and develop models which support users;
- Consider ways in which licensing models for electronic resources can be developed or improved, taking into account Scottish need and the wider landscape.

Innovation and Service Development

SLIC has been encouraging improvement, innovation and service development in library and information services in a number of ways through local, regional and national programmes and projects. Funding has been available through SLIC grants programmes, SE Challenge Fund and Lottery to support the work of library and information services. At times of budget pressures, library and information services come under scrutiny in relation to existing service provision, which often makes it difficult to develop and improve services. We have proven that by supporting innovation and development in service, significant change can be achieved which adds value to wider corporate agenda of members institutions

SLIC believes that library and information services need to continue to evolve and deliver services which are relevant, equitable and wherever possible accessible 24/7.

To achieve this SLIC will:

- Advocate and explore funding opportunities to develop and improve services;
- Disseminate good practice and provide a knowledge network to members;
- Establish mechanisms to ensure good practice is transferable to other services;
- Monitor impact of service innovation;
- Provide opportunities for members to bid for funds which support SLIC priorities;
- Advocate for cross sectoral funding to support innovative and digital collections development.

Workforce Development

The shifting demographic of the workforce and the significant changes in the use of technology to deliver services has had a considerable impact on the skills set

required by library and information service staff across all sectors. In Scotland some 35% of library workers will be retiring in the next 10-15 years. SLIC and the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals in Scotland have worked closely to ensure staff in services are supported with appropriate continuing professional development opportunities. The continued success of library and information services in the 21st century will be in the hands of staff and inherent in this will be their ability to develop and deliver services for both the “digital immigrant” and the “digital native” .

The development of National Occupational Standards for the libraries, information and archives sector is about to be launched by Lifelong Learning UK SLIC is represented on both the country panel for Scotland and the Library Archives and Information Services UK panel. It is important that SLIC works closely in partnership with LLUK, CILIP and CILIPS to ensure the sector and employers have staff with the right skills and competencies to deliver. Through this partnership a strong workforce can be developed and good practice shared to all employers. Over the next three years SLIC will need to engage with its members to ensure that the benefits of the use of the standards are understood by them and how they contribute towards a Skills Strategy for Scotland.

To support workforce development SLIC will:

- Articulate and advocate the difference library services make to education, society and the economy;
- Promote the unique selling point of librarians’ skills to 21st century knowledge and information market;
- Advise on delivery models for the development of workforce skills and ensure engagement with LLUK, CILIP and CILIPS;
- Consider other skills sets and standards which add value to library and information services footprint;
- Support workforce development in relation to standards with employers and our strategic partners LLUK and CILIPS;
- Develop good relations with emerging professions;
- Development of job descriptions – combination of skills and develop new skill sets;
- Understand and agree core competencies and articulate to library schools;

- Consider with key stakeholders how recruitment and retention issues can be addressed in the next 10 years, in particular middle management issues, linked to CPD and forward/succession planning.