



Scottish Library and Information Council Strategic Plan 2006-2009

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 Executive. 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 2006 and 2009, linked to government policy and the needs of users.

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The development and improvement of library services in the next three years must align with the Scottish Executive's priorities, which are currently:

- Growing Scotland's economy
- Delivering excellent public services
- Supporting Stronger safer communities
- Developing a confident democratic Scotland

There are six strategic areas of activity which SLIC are crucial for library and information services

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

The development, improvement and evaluation of these strategic areas will be managed 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 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.

To achieve this SLIC will:

- Undertake research and case studies
- Gather relevant qualitative and quantitative information
- Develop standards and appropriate self evaluation frameworks to support it
- Identify suitable standards in other areas which complement library ones
- Develop quality assurance processes and benchmarks which assist in the monitoring of impact of standards.

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- Advise on standards development and implementation
- Develop national and local programmes which are underpinned by robust standards.
- Ensure that standards development is linked to Scottish Executive policies, with particular attention to the development of cultural entitlements.
- Promote the use of standards with organisations
- Support workforce development in relation to standards with employers and our strategic partners LLUK and CILIPS

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:

- Continue to advocate and explore funding opportunities to develop and improve services
- Disseminate good practice and provide a knowledge network to members
- Monitor impact of service innovation
- Look for ways to ensure good practice is transferable to other services
- Provide opportunities for members to bid for funds which support SLIC priorities
- Advocate for cross sectoral funding to support collections development

Development of Scottish Common Information Environment and Service Mapping

Organising access to information is not only (or even most importantly) a technical issue – it is an issue which impacts on every aspect of the citizen's life. 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.

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
- Make seamless use of electronic sources irrespective of physical location or operating systems

Steady progress has been made with some support from the 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 Common Information Environment.

To support this SLIC will:

- Continue to 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.
- Develop programmes with key stakeholders including the National Library of Scotland, Learning and Teaching Scotland and learndirect Scotland, which improve access to common cultural, information and educational resources
- Identify the elements of the distributed model and gaps in provision/services

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- Identify barriers to infrastructure and collaborative service development and seek solutions
- With the National Library of Scotland, 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.
- Support and develop the principles around Collecting Scotland Task Force, the Scottish Executive's Common Information Standards Advisory Group and the Cultural Technical Group
- Consider licensing models for electronic resources can be developed or improved, which take into account Scottish need and the wider landscape.
- Encourage the development of user focused services and develop models which support users
- Explore and research authentication options to ensure that services follow the user, including Smartcards, Single Sign on, Rights Management and use across key sectoral networks, such as Scottish Schools Digital Network, JANET.
- Encourage and develop flexible cross sectoral delivery of services
- Develop programmes which improve service efficiency and effectiveness.
- Work towards the establishment of a whole Scotland distributed library services, which includes cross searching of all library catalogues.

Co-ordination, Collaboration and Co-operation (The Three C's)

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 the three "Cs" to creating knowledge networks and communities of interest which deliver more efficient and effective services to users. To support this SLIC will

- Continue to encourage and support projects which embrace the three "Cs"
- Work with strategic stakeholders to develop programmes which encourage innovation through working together or on behalf of other services

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- Develop a communication strategy which raises awareness of library success stories and impact
- Promote the outcomes and impacts of working together
- Provide a focus for knowledge sharing

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 an occupational footprint for the libraries, information and archives sector is now being developed by Lifelong Learning UK – the sector skills agency for our sector. SLIC is represented on both the country panel for Scotland and the LIA 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.

To support workforce development SLIC will:

- Develop delivery models for the future and ensure engagement with LLUK, CILIP and CILIPS
- Promote the unique selling point of libraries and librarians to 21st century knowledge and information market
- Articulate and advocate the difference library services make to education, society and the economy
- Develop good relations with emerging professions
- Development of job descriptions – combination of skills and develop new skill sets
- Consider other skills sets and standards which add value to library and information services footprint. E.g. – Adult Guidance, Management

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- 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.

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 culture and libraries across government agendas, including a submission to the Comprehensive Spending Review.
- Promote the role of library and information services in meeting Enterprise and Business information needs, including Careers Information, and improving links with Scottish Enterprise, Business Gateways
- Advocate and promote pathways to learning – both formal and informal
- Continue to develop national, regional and local programmes which support literacy in its widest sense.
- Work in partnership with key stakeholders to agree entitlements to library services and remove barriers to users accessing their entitlement.
- Work to ensure that public libraries in particular are able to contribute locally to the regeneration agenda through community planning and promote this involvement nationally.
- Research the viability and support the development of new delivery models – e.g. John Wheatley College, Crichton University Campus, including the promotion of best practice and the development of model service level agreements
- Identifying issues for sectors on a regular basis to inform service planning and SLIC's priorities
- 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.