

## **Interim submission to Cultural Commission from Library Sector Group**

### **The global context**

"Knowledge societies are about capabilities to identify, produce, process, transform, disseminate and use information to build and apply knowledge for human development"  
*UNESCO Communiqué ("Towards Knowledge Societies")* 2003

The communiqué outlines a set of principles and priorities. It recognises the role that library and information services play in developing knowledge societies and supporting cultural diversity.

The designation by UNESCO of 2003-2012 as the Decade of Literacy and the recent World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) further sets the scene for the development of information and library services in a smart successful Scotland over the next 20 years.

Scotland should strive to deliver quality information and library services to its people for them to realise their aspirations. Services should be designed to enable individuals and communities to think critically, develop understanding and make confident judgments through access to the world knowledge base.

### **Core Principles**

Library Services should

- Provide universal access to resources, which is free, consistent and user focussed
- Help to build vibrant communities by encouraging community involvement and community/based activity and assisting in the creation of social capital
- Promote social justice, civic engagement and democracy
- Help minimise exclusion be it social, digital or illiteracy
- Support learning in the information society
- Promote access to Scotland's cultural heritage
- Support cultural activities through the provision of information and venues.
- Encourage the public to pursue individual cultural interests through access to resources
- Work in partnership with others to offer value added services

### **Citizen's entitlements**

Scotland's People should be entitled to:

- Read for fun and knowledge, taking account of
  - Range and quality – Scottish, historical, current, not just "supermarket" fiction
  - Format
  - Language
  - Ability to access to collections in addition to those held locally
- Access Information – local, national and global
  - Consistent and equitable access regardless of format
  - 24/7 services - both virtual and physical
  - Local community information, local council services and cultural information
  - Social, economic and cultural information held in national institutions
  - Access and interchange with knowledge and information networks
  - Provision of an agreed range of electronic resources fit for purpose and individual ability

- Professional mediated support for finding and using information effectively, to those who need assistance, on-line and off-line
- Provision of free broadband access through a robust and sustainable infrastructure
- Learn for self improvement, skills enhancement and qualification through
  - Provision of informal learning opportunities
  - Access to local learning opportunities
  - Established routes of progression to learning – flexible/revisited, evaluated
  - Provision of a information community learning space
- Engage with their community easily and confidently through
  - Providing a welcoming, neutral environment
  - Enabling seamless access to other services
  - Providing support for literacy and numeracy
  - Building individual skills in information literacy
  - Supporting, recording and providing access to community heritage, history and identity
  - Linking to and working with other community based agencies
  - Serving as community space – for cultural, learning and participation in a range of activities

### **Unique selling points for libraries - The Original One-Stop Shop**

- Trusted brand
- Ubiquitous points of presence in many communities
- Established network for free access to books, information and learning
- Longstanding providers of reliable, mediated and equitable services
- Currently free broadband access which enhances the user experience
- Knowledge management skills in the global information society
- Cradle to grave services
- Neutral support for learning and research
- High number of existing users through choice
- Underpinning culture of being responsive to customer needs, directly or in partnership
- Direct services to remote users e.g. housebound service, mobile libraries, book collections to communities
- Well established network to support social inclusion

### **National structures for local delivery**

- Define standards of delivery across the key entitlements, including inspection to ensure they are delivered
- Develop a national implementation framework for all library services – linked to delivery and evaluation
- Agree core infrastructure to support entitlements (technology, content, access rights)
- Develop regional/national information mediation services, working towards 24/7 support for citizens
- Ensure a coherent training framework for management, staff and individuals is developed
- Existing agencies should be charged with collaborating on any actions required

**Strengths**

- Managing information in widest context
- Strength of variety of existing partnerships
- Collaboration and co-ordination
- Free access
- Quality and organisation of information
- Buildings network
- Strong and trusted brand
- Level of "footfall" through services
- Provision for range of needs and ages from cradle to the grave
- Opportunities for those who wouldn't necessarily have them
- Capacity building
- Nurturing strong community relationships
- Democratic control
- Clearly offering users consistent values
- Support for learning and research
- Test new ways of using new information tools – participation in the modernising agenda
- Providing access to wider range of products and services
- New ways of presenting and using services
- Enabling creativity in ways other disciplines don't
- User focus
- Support for application and synthesis of information as well as information provision (mediation)
- Access to breadth and comprehensiveness through network
- Free from external manipulation (as opposed to commercially-driven search engines)
- Consistent and neutral (unlike search engines)
- Quality of free broadband
- Parochialism

**Weaknesses**

- Parochialism
- Buildings network
- Subject to the whims of politicians
- Not equitable enough for entitlements
- Process driven
- Complacency – people willing to accept mediocrity and won't challenge improved delivery
- Ability to change and move staff on
- Attracting recruits – stereo-typed profession
- Facility and sectorally blinkered
- Assumptions on advocacy – requires marketeering (packaging/buildings)
- Knowing place in voluntary market
- Lack of national guidelines – review, comparison and compliance framework
- Nature of project-based innovation and lack of sustainability
- Won't let go of unsustainable services/projects
- Lack confidence to be entrepreneurial (outward looking at bigger projects)
- Lack of leadership and management development
- Level of engagement with politicians in flatter structures
- Low political profile
- Size of local authorities to deliver modern services
- Local authority framework is not enabling
- Always reactive to funding opportunities
- Libraries are seen as "soft" targets
- Decline of perceived use (of traditional services)
- Lack of output measures
- Lack of good evidence of social, education and economic value of libraries in society
- Lack of clear national vision on libraries' purpose

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of national marketing and advocacy</li> <li>• Lack of continuing professional development and quasi-professional development</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of more partnerships</li> <li>• Could manage more information than at present</li> <li>• Development of review, evaluation and compliance framework</li> <li>• Customisation of services</li> <li>• Buildings as community learning and social spaces</li> <li>• Uniqueness of ethos of library space</li> <li>• Move to person-centred library services</li> <li>• Mentor of people who come in – valued-added interventionist services</li> <li>• C21st government – efficient services</li> <li>• Change infrastructure through Cultural Commission – enabling frameworks, collections/content strategy tied to infrastructure to support delivery</li> <li>• Marketing to expand audience</li> <li>• Outreach, leading to raised awareness</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local authority barriers – political, lack of sustained support for ICT, IT dept issues surrounding equity of access which may affect determination of cultural entitlements</li> <li>• Continuation of free access</li> <li>• Google</li> <li>• User perception of services – especially as more joint-use facilities such as schools with more formal ethos and barriers for some users</li> <li>• Reluctance to articulate libraries' unique value as community sanctuary</li> <li>• Financial silos in central government</li> <li>• Operational silos in local government (lack of enabling culture)</li> <li>• Changes in global publishing industry</li> <li>• Perception "Top Ten Bestsellers" is all there is in the range of reading</li> <li>• Continued slow decline</li> <li>• Lack of relevancy</li> <li>• Gershon</li> <li>• Retreat to educational support</li> <li>• Deskilling</li> <li>• Market approach</li> </ul>
<p><b>Entitlements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Right to consistent and equitable access to information, 24/7</li> <li>• Regional/national information mediation service</li> <li>• Public entitlement to up-to-date infrastructure (Infrastructure, content, access entitlements)</li> <li>• Establishing safe routes – flexible/revisited, evaluated</li> <li>• National planning process – linked to delivery and evaluation</li> <li>• Defined standards of delivery</li> <li>• Underpinning literacy, community planning and learning strategies</li> <li>• Regardless of format</li> </ul>	

- Not operationally hybrid
- Skilled staff to deliver vision

**POLITICAL**

- Social justice
- Social inclusion
- Active citizenship
- 21<sup>st</sup> Century Government
- Digital Scotland
- Lifelong learning

**ECONOMIC**

- Stable employment
- More disposable income
- Shift from low skills to upskilling of jobs
- Increase in stock of qualifications among workforce

**SOCIAL**

- Shifting population – from urban to rural
- Slow decline in total population
- Birth rate in decline
- Increase in population 45 and over (ageing population)
- Growth in home entertainment
- Increased use of e-mail as communication medium

**TECHNOLOGICAL**

- Broadband pervasiveness
- Increase in home pc use
- Increased use of web