

## **Cultural Commission – Stakeholder Consultation Phase 2 Interim Response by The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals in Scotland (CILIPS)**

### **Introduction**

The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals in Scotland is the professional body for librarians and information managers and represents personal members from all sectors - public, school and academic libraries, and libraries from both the voluntary and commercial sectors.

Our Mission Statement is to:

- support the principle of equality of access to information, ideas and works of imagination, as fundamental elements of Scotland's economy, democracy, culture and civilisation.
- enable members to achieve and maintain the highest professional standards in all aspects of delivering library and Information services for the good of the people of Scotland.
- work with relevant Scottish organisations and CILIP to set, maintain, monitor and promote standards of excellence in the creation, management, exploitation and sharing of knowledge resources within Scotland.

### **Response to the Interim report**

The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals in Scotland welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Cultural Commission's Interim report. We welcome the Commission's view on the role that library and information services can play in improving the quality of life in communities and to individuals. Libraries are too often viewed as simplistic structures, principally concerned with the lending of books. Libraries are complex, multi faceted organisations which:

- Stimulate and support lifelong learning.
- Provide access to information
- Help to minimise exclusion be it social, rural or digital.
- Provide access to government and other on-line services.
- Improve information handling skills to ensure that people get the quality information they require.
- Improve and maintain literacy by supporting and encouraging reading for all.
- Encourage community based activity by supporting local history and culture.

Not all activities are related to culture. In a library, at any one time, multi-stranded activities take place; School class visits, exhibitions, family history research, use of reference sources by local businesses, internet and email research, communication, reading of newspapers, more formal learning and skills development happen as well as serendipitous browsing by book borrowers. Public library services deliver across the corporate agenda and wider policy contexts. Equally library services in other sectors may have different objectives, for example to support education, but have a role to play in delivering and supporting culture. The delivery of services using ICT is a key agenda for government. Library services in all sectors are well placed to contribute to seamless access to services through the library ICT infrastructure and their place in the hearts of the communities - schools, universities, colleges and towns - actively engaging people in their communities.

There is a delicate balance between the provision of a safe, neutral public space and co-location in a more formal environment with a different ethos. The quality of the built environment and shared social spaces shapes citizens' self esteem and individual aspirations. We would urge the Commission to widen their thinking on co-location with other local authority services as part of the community planning process. Co-location with formal education, whilst cost effective as part of capital and revenue programmes, may create barriers for some users. Libraries and other cultural services need to be sited where the public visit; indeed co-location with commercial partners such as supermarkets or transport hubs may be usefully explored. There is a difference between private companies who wish to be benefactors and those who are simply marketing products. The tension for libraries lies in the potential loss of the "trusted" brand and the provision of services which cease to be of acceptable quality and neutrality.

Co-operation at a regional level is a significant part of library professional practice. Regional groupings, both organisational and professional, have evolved from the imperatives of cost effectiveness, opportunities for project funding, shared training initiatives and exchange of ideas and best practice. However CILIPS believes that the formalization of regional structures for all services would distance local political control and ownership. This could conflict with the community planning process.

CILIPS believes that local influence is essential to the successful delivery of culture to citizens. "Experience has shown in this country and abroad that the placing of direct control of library services under committees primarily responsible for other functions has led to the distortion and underdevelopment of library services"<sup>1</sup>. There is little evidence that this has changed and any governance structure has to ensure local accountability and have a sharp focus on service delivery.

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<sup>1</sup> Management Structures for the public library service. 1973

The interim report outlines six areas (Education, Access, Delivery, Creativity, Support and Rights) which the Commission is considering. It is CILIPS' view that libraries and other cultural services cut across a number of them. We would urge the Commission to widen its view of libraries to include them Education, Delivery and Creativity strands.

### **Development and use of cultural entitlements**

Within the global context much work has been carried out by UNESCO, British Council, and International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) on human rights, cultural diversity, cultural development, freedom of access to information and freedom of expression. It is important that any development of cultural entitlements of the citizens of Scotland is aligned with this thinking.

The existing "cultural right" could be viewed as being enshrined in the current library legislation, which places a duty on local authorities to deliver free public library services. However the legislation does not clearly define the term "adequate". Although COSLA has developed two sets of public library standards, these have not resulted in equitable core provision across Scotland. The development of a range of cultural entitlements, would enable a more robust definition of "adequate" for clarity and transparency of service performance. It is CILIPS' hope that this would lead to more equitable provision across Scotland, which would be strengthened by an underpinning compliance framework.

### **Planning, delivery and evaluation of services linked to cultural rights**

For 150 years Scottish libraries have served the public in four key areas

- Information
- Reading, language and literacy
- Learning
- Access and community service

CILIPS advocates that cultural entitlements are drawn from these four service functions.

CILIPS believes that services should be made available through the public library and its extended network to support citizens regardless of their age, ability, economic or ethnic background. Public libraries should work with partners in schools, further and higher education, the National Library of Scotland and the British Library to ensure this happens effectively and efficiently within the principles of Best Value.

Scottish cultural content should be embedded across all levels of the curriculum so that it supports the development of Scottish culture, alongside other diversity interests. CILIPS believes that cultural heritage should be reflected in library collections and should be made widely accessible to the general public. Embryonic services are already under development to support this, such as CAIRNS<sup>2</sup>, SCONE<sup>3</sup> and the Scottish Cultural Portal<sup>4</sup>. These support not only the library sector, but also museums and archives.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://cairns.lib.strath.ac.uk/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://scone.strath.ac.uk>

Library services have seen large cuts in their resourcing in the last 10 years, which have resulted in reductions in book funds and, in some instances, reduced opening hours, set against increasing diverse public demand and expectation. Recently, a number of campaigns such as the lobbying by the Scottish Publishers' Association<sup>5</sup> and the Right to Read Campaign<sup>6</sup> have focused public attention on the issue of resourcing. As more demands are made to provide particular formats and materials so the arguments strengthen for good resource levels, robust stock selection policies and collaborative approaches to provision.

Successful library service provision requires a delicate balance of national service equity against local needs. CILIPS supports the Scottish Library and Information Council in its development of third generation public library standards which will set a benchmark for library services for all users linking public demand with appropriate provision. This third set of standards, in conjunction with the cultural entitlements, has the potential to improve provision, if mechanisms of compliance and reward for meeting cultural delivery are developed and implemented in tandem. There are a number of areas of provision which might usefully be explored in a collaborative approach, either nationally or regionally.

### **Supporting the user**

The People's Network initiative ensured that all staff are trained in the use of ICT, most have the qualification of the European Computer Driving Licence. SLIC is leading in the development of a UK diploma in the application of ICT in the public library context. In addition, many have also received additional training in reader development skills through a Scottish Arts Council lottery-funded project. This complements some internal training within local authorities and contextual training provided by SLIC and CILIPS. Whilst trained staff are a valuable asset, we recognize that modern technology offers the opportunity to free up staff time to spend in user support. CILIP, the UK body, has revised and is about to implement a new professional qualifications framework. CILIP in Scotland will initiate work to link this to the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework to ensure relevance in the Scottish employment market. A key finding of SLIC's 2004 Report "Making a Difference" was that staff should have regular customer care training to the highest possible standard, and CILIPS would endorse this recommendation.

### **Institutional infrastructure**

SLIC is the advisory body for library and information services to the Scottish Executive. CILIPS has worked closely with SLIC over a number of years and believes that, with its cross-sectoral management structure, independence, governance and accountability, it provides appropriate leadership and representation for libraries in Scotland. SLIC is well placed to co-ordinate

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.scotlandsculture.org.uk>

<sup>5</sup> For the provision of Scottish published works in public libraries

<sup>6</sup> For alternative formats for the visually impaired

funding for the sector and has experience in managing funding programmes linked to funding criteria and compliance.

Non Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs) are already being charged to look at shared services under Efficient Government. CILIPS and SLIC share resources and can advocate the benefit which that brings. It is crucial that any efficiency savings which emerge from the cultural sector NDPBs are reinvested in direct cultural service provision. The key to creating an enabling cultural framework is linking entitlements to sustainable funding opportunities without unnecessary bureaucracy.

Given the diverse spectrum of activity within the cultural sector, the issue is perhaps not one of leadership rather a need for a Cultural Champion. The Scottish Executive would need to define the role and powers of a Cultural Champion before progressing. Solid working partnerships have developed when shared objectives exist between the cultural agencies or interests. Good examples have been evidenced in funded projects such as Their Past Your Future and the Scottish Cultural Portal; and collaborative structures such as the UK Joint Forum and the Literature Forum. During the development of the cultural strategy, agencies were drawn together in a Joint Implementation Group. This group were never sustained or developed and it may be useful to look at the formalization of such a strategic grouping with Ministerial leadership. A significant challenge for the libraries sector is marketing and promotion of the range and diversity of services. A strategic approach for the cultural sector would be useful to enable Scottish culture to be promoted in a variety of ways - the media, visitScotland and the Cultural Portal.

### **Conclusion**

For over 150 years public libraries have adapted to user requirements and sought to achieve the underpinning principles in the original Act "for the Instruction and Recreation of the People". In recent years libraries have come full circle with the successful implementation of the technology. This has enabled libraries to play a pivotal role in providing access and encouraging use of digital technologies, information and learning.

The unique selling point of libraries is easy and free access for all to information, learning and cultural material in multiple formats, irrespective of the date of publication. The professional skilled workforce is for many people, the "acceptable" face of local authorities. It is important that this legacy of successful public service provision is gifted to future generations; not as it stands but as a fully evolved service with users being able to access services in different ways. By using ICT and its global reach, with fully trained staff and resources which meet local demands we can ensure that the library service is fit for purpose in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**CILIP in Scotland  
December 2004**

**Ian**

**From:** Karen  
**Sent:** 17 January 2005 09:44  
**To:** info  
**Subject:** FW: Response from CILIP in Scotland[Scanned]

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Elaine Fulton [mailto:e.fulton@slainte.org.uk]  
**Sent:** 14 January 2005 15:06  
**To:** James Boyle; James  
**Cc:** Richard  
**Subject:** Response from CILIP in Scotland[Scanned]

James/Richard

As promised the CILIP in Scotland interim response

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