

# Public Libraries

## Strategy 2015-2020



## POLICY BRIEFING

### Introduction

[Ambition and Opportunity: a national strategy for public libraries in Scotland](#) has now been published. CoSLA asked the Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC) to develop the strategy. SLIC convened a group chaired by Martyn Evans, Chief Executive of Carnegie Trust UK, to undertake the work.

### The Report

The report sets out recommendations for libraries under the framework of the Scottish Government's national outcomes. It also contains

- a **vision**: *Scotland's public libraries are trusted guides connecting all of our people to the world's possibilities and opportunities*
- a **mission**: *Scotland's public libraries are part of a shared civic ambition to fulfil the potential of individuals and communities.*
- and an **outcome statement**: *every step individuals and communities take towards fulfilling their potential adds to Scotland's social economic and cultural well being.*

### Strategic Group Members

Amina Shah: CEO SLIC	Helen Milner: Tinder Foundations
Gillian Daly: SLIC	Sophie Moxon: Scottish Book Trust
Trish Caimbeul Botten: Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	Jenny Niven: Creative Scotland
Duncan Campbell: National Library of Scotland	Jenny Peachy: Carnegie Trust UK
Jeanette Castle: Chartered Institute of Library and Information professionals in Scotland	Peter Peacock: Community Land Scotland
Cleo Jones: City of Edinburgh Council	Robert Ruthven: Glasgow Caledonian University
Martina McChrystal: City of Edinburgh Council	Marion Sinclair: Publishing Scotland
Louise MacDonald: Young Scot	Claire Stephens: Voluntary Health Scotland
Ian McKay: Institute of Directors	Rosemary Ward: Gaelic Books Council

### Recommendations

- Ensure access to library services for all citizens using new technology
- Develop and promote the core offer from public libraries in Scotland
- Develop Scotland wide digital access resources
- Ensure Wi-fi is available and accessible in all public libraries

### KEY POINTS:

- Scotland has six hundred libraries and other services points: 61% of Scottish people use a library.
- 28 million actual visits per year and 20 million books loaned and nine million hours of internet access.
- Libraries cost £21 per head of population with an annual return of that investment of £166 per user



### Contact UNISON's Bargaining & Campaigns team:

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- Develop partnerships with advice services, job centres and enterprise organisations
- Mainstream activities to improve STEM skills
- Test and replicate provision of co-working spaces for small businesses
- Create strong national, regional and local partnerships with all public services and community planning partner
- Share best practice on how to create effective and accessible public service or community hubs
- Build on current practice to become champions of community engagement and empowerment
- Develop guidelines on the appropriate use of volunteers
- Develop and strengthen national, regional and local partnerships with arts and culture organisations
- Pilot a collaborative venture to provide access to eBooks from Scottish publishers
- Support librarians to become effective voices for freedom of information and expression
- Continue to develop methods for reporting on the impact and outcomes of library activities through “How Good is Our Public Library Service”
- Develop and implement a learning and development programme for all library staff
- Explore alternative approaches to generating financial investment
- Engage proactively with models for efficient procurement of goods and services at national level

The report contains lots of interesting information about the library service which will be useful for campaigns against cuts in library services. Libraries lend 20million books and have provided 9 million hours of internet access. There are 13.6million virtual visits and 28million actual visits. They provide £166 of annual return on investment per user at cost of £21 per head of population.

### UNISON view

UNISON believes that libraries are a vital public service and welcomes the development of a national strategy. We particularly welcome the evidence of their popularity and excellent value for money. Libraries offer access to a range of information and books for leisure, research for work or hobbies and to enable citizens to fully access their rights. All of these contribute to people’s general wellbeing. It is therefore no surprise that the research showed that those living in disadvantaged areas are more likely to say the library is important to them. They are the least likely to be able to access these things elsewhere.

What matters in the end is the provision of adequate resources. This strategy requires funding for staff, buildings and equipment. Libraries need qualified staff in order to ensure that people get the best possible access to the information/resources they need. The increased use of volunteers cannot replace the role of a fully qualified information professional in supporting citizen’s to access the information they require to fully participate in society. Local government budget is under severe pressure and there are many more cuts to come without adequate funding libraries will not be able to deliver this vision.

### Action for Branches

Please pass the briefing on to members working in libraries. If you require any more information for your campaigns against local government cuts or library campaigns: **Please contact Kay Sillars 0141 342 2819.**

### Further info

**Ambition and Opportunity A strategy for Public Libraries in Scotland 2015-2020**

<http://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/CMS/Pages/GetFile.aspx?guid=f7710124-b208-4164-8519-0b4241a092ee>

**Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals in Scotland**

<http://www.cilips.org.uk/>

**UNISON libraries campaign**

<http://www.unison.org.uk/at-work/local-government/key-issues/cuts-to-local-services/speaking-up-for-libraries/>



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