Developing a National Strategy for Public Libraries in Scotland: deliberative research with library users and non-users

Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC)
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APPENDICES:

Appendix 1: MATERIALS AND TOOLS USED TO FACILITATE FOCUS GROUPS
Appendix 2: WORD CLOUDS FROM EACH FOCUS GROUP
1. **Introduction**

   “I don’t think it can be grave and historic. It has to be something capable of changing and expanding.”

1.1 The Scottish Library and Information Council commissioned Blake Stevenson to undertake deliberative research with members of the public to gather their views on the values that should underpin the work of public libraries; the broad outcomes that libraries and librarians should be helping people and communities to serve; and the kinds of services that public libraries should be providing over the next 20 years. Deliberative research differs from traditional focus group approaches in that it uses a variety of tools to both inform and seek opinion from participants.

1.2 The results of our research provide a strong customer perspective and will contribute to the development of a national strategy for libraries in Scotland.

1.3 We facilitated deliberative workshops at eight locations across Scotland (illustration 1.1):

   **Illustration 1.1: Geographic coverage**

   - Glasgow
   - Dundee
   - Bathgate
   - Duns
   - Elgin
   - Greenock
   - Dingwall
   - Edinburgh
1.4 We consulted 113 people in total across these locations about the future of Scottish libraries. Of these participants, 58% were female and 42% were male. They ranged in age (Table 1.1) with almost a third aged between 35 and 54 and a similar proportion over 65.

Table 1.1. Age range of participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age of participants (base 56)</th>
<th>16-24</th>
<th>25-34</th>
<th>35-44</th>
<th>45-54</th>
<th>55-64</th>
<th>65 and over</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>30%</td>
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1.5 Most participants were current users of libraries. Many were very regular users while a smaller number were occasional or non-users (Table 1.2):

Table 1.2: Library usage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How often I use libraries (base 95)</th>
<th>1 (never)</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5 (a lot)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>44%</td>
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</table>

1.6 In order to ensure that the process was truly deliberative, the workshops were facilitated using a variety of materials and tools which we have appended to this document (Appendix 1). The materials were intentionally both provocative and informative, and led to lively debate.

1.7 Unsurprisingly given the higher proportion of regular users, our research confirmed strong public support for the library service, but indicated mixed views with respect to the type and range of services that libraries of the future should offer. A number of barriers to using libraries were also identified, and we were given much food for thought with regards to how to address these going forward.

1.8 In this report, we draw together the key findings of our research. We outline current usage practices and public perceptions of libraries; reasons why people do not currently use their libraries; the impact of libraries on individuals, groups and the wider community; values and priorities for the future; and suggestions for the ways in which libraries and the proposed National Strategy for libraries in Scotland might address these.

1.9 We wish to thank Open Book (at the Edinburgh Grassmarket Project) and all of the library staff with whom we made contact for their efforts in helping to recruit participants and host the discussion groups. Their enthusiastic and supportive contribution was appreciated. We would also like to thank the several Councils of Voluntary Service who assisted us to recruit participants. In addition to the above, we ran a Facebook marketing campaign to help recruit those with less prior contact with libraries.
2. Current use of libraries

Introduction

2.1 At the outset, and before we provided information for consideration, we asked participants to tell us how they currently use libraries. The responses were diverse and wide-ranging, reflecting the wide range of services offered by library services across Scotland and the variation from location to location. Respondents who used libraries usually did so for more than one reason. The key areas of use can be broadly captured under four headings (Illustration 2.1):

Illustration 2.1: Current usage

Lending and reference materials

2.2 Most respondents told us that they use the library to borrow items. Books remain a key feature of this but borrowing also extends to audiobooks, DVDs and CDs. A minority of people indicated that they use the library as a source of e-books, with others noting that they had not realised this was a service that was available.

2.3 A large number of participants used libraries to access reference materials, for a variety of purposes including researching local history and genealogy, and consulting maps. Respondents told us they often used the libraries’ newspapers and magazines.

Technology

2.4 The majority of consultees also use libraries’ Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) services, including Wi–Fi. The nature of use is varied and includes accessing emails, online shopping, claiming benefits, skyping with family abroad and job search (which, now that benefits must be applied for online, has brought people into libraries who have not previously regularly, or ever, used a library). Printing and photocopying are also commonly cited as popular services.
Learning

2.5 It is clear from our consultation process that learning remains a key reason for people to use libraries. Many participants accessed lifelong learning opportunities offered by the library including, for example, computing courses, Scottish history sessions, digital photography courses and language learning.

2.6 Several consultees told us that they use the library as a quiet place of study and reflection – some of whom noted that opportunities for this were becoming more limited as libraries moved towards community hub type roles, with a plethora of activities on offer, reducing the space available for quiet study (something that historically has been a key feature of libraries).

Community resource

2.7 We asked participants to reflect on the role libraries played within communities, and the extent to which they act as a community resource. The vast majority of respondents consider the library to be a community resource, and use libraries as a source of information about local community events, and local groups, such as book groups.

2.8 A significant minority reported that they attend events in the library, such as author talks, poetry readings and art exhibitions.

2.9 Although a minority of participants had experience of children’s activities, such as Bookbug sessions, in library settings, the majority of consultees were aware of sessions like these and recognised their value. A small but vocal minority were concerned that noisy activities such as Bookbug sessions detracted from other activities happening alongside these in open plan spaces, or conflicted with their desire for libraries to be quiet places for study and reflection.

2.10 A large number of people noted that they had accessed council services through their library and there was discussion about the emerging role of libraries as ‘hubs’ for community and council services. Specific services mentioned included applying for bus passes and looking at planning applications.

2.11 Participants we spoke with in rural areas valued mobile libraries highly and these were considered an important asset to their communities.

2.12 A significant number of people noted that they used the library as a reason for getting out of the house and interacting with others, and most participants agreed that the library played an important role in offering people opportunities to engage with others in their community. Some participants also described libraries as a safe, friendly environment, with some more specifically noting that is a way for them to save on heating costs at home.
Core Services

2.13 An important element of the research was to gain insight into the services the public felt should be core to the library service. Participants were split into groups and provided with visual aids to prompt them to consider a wide range of possible services – both known and unknown to them. The groups then fed back on the services, prioritising those they felt to be core, and highlighting those which they felt were not (Illustration 2.1).

Table 2.1: Public views on the core functions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Library services</th>
<th>Participants' views on core functions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Book lending</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children's activities (e.g. Bookbug, links to schools)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employability</td>
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<td>ICT facilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lifelong learning</td>
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<td>Local information</td>
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<tr>
<td>Newspapers and magazines</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other lending (CDs, DVDs, audiobooks and e-books)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quiet space for study</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference (e.g. local history archive)</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

2.14 The table above gives an indication of the services rated as being ‘core’ by the highest number of focus groups, however it should be noted that it is not a comprehensive list of all the services rated. However, it is interesting to note all the focus groups identified book lending and ICT facilities as core services. Despite some concerns in focus groups that digital competition was reducing the importance of printed books it is clear focus groups felt that both book lending and ICT services within the library were relevant and important.

2.15 Some participants thought that the provision of CDs and DVDs was increasingly threatened by the increased use of digital media and the ease of downloading or streaming music and films. The lending of CDs and DVDs, however, was considered core
by six out of nine focus groups, suggesting that it is still an important service for many people – often those more likely to be digitally or financially excluded.

2.16 Service priorities identified by participants were sometimes conflicting. Children’s activities such as Bookbug, which can be perceived as noisy, were considered equally important to libraries as that of the provision of quiet places for reflection or study. This emphasises the challenges libraries face in balancing competing expectations of the library space.

2.17 Similar conflicting views were expressed about the provision of cafe or vending services in libraries. Some participants saw this as a positive progression within libraries making for a more relaxed and ‘informal’ environment while others did not like what they felt to be an ‘intrusion’ on their library experience.

Why members of the public do not currently use libraries

2.18 An important element of the research was to gain an understanding of why people do not currently use libraries and what barriers to usage exist. Less frequent users were asked for their views while frequent users were asked to consider those they knew who did not use libraries much and why this might be the case. Four main barriers to using libraries were identified:

Illustration 2.3: Barriers to usage

Perceptions of libraries

2.19 Many participants thought that there remained fixed perceptions of libraries as they may have been many years ago, i.e. quiet, intimidating, and with sometimes unfriendly staff. Participants believed that this remained a key reason as to why some people do not use their local libraries and whilst they felt this image was not necessarily representative of libraries today, they thought there was more libraries could do to address this image.

Digital competition

2.20 Most of the people we consulted said that the rise of digital media poses a threat to library use, particularly in terms of lending. They believed that people, particularly younger people, may be less likely to borrow books from libraries because of the increased use of e-readers, and the ready availability of e-books.
2.21 Some participants noted that despite digital competition potentially being a threat libraries have an important role to play in providing internet access to those who cannot access it at home. Others thought that libraries had made good progress in using new technologies, for example the introduction of e–book lending services.

2.22 Most participants thought that it was essential that libraries offer free Wi-Fi to users.

**Accessibility and physical environment**

2.23 Almost all participants cited opening times as a barrier to people using libraries, and this was considered to be a barrier for people working full–time in particular (the ‘missing middle’ as one group termed them). Some wanted more evening and weekend opening.

2.24 A significant minority stated that a lack of large print, easy read and foreign language books posed barriers for members of their communities. Sometimes, where there was provision, choice was perceived as limited and out of date.

2.25 Some people emphasised that the physical location of a library can be a barrier. This was particularly an issue in rural areas, where both public transport and car–parking can be an issue, and in areas of deprivation where people may not have the financial means to pay for bus fares. Some people observed that there had been a reduction in smaller libraries which was forcing them to make a journey to access core centralised services.

2.26 Some participants also noted that the physical layout of a library can be a challenge for some users. Whilst most recognised that libraries usually have good disabled access, other issues such as the height of shelves (e.g. too low or too high for people with arthritis for example) can affect people being able to access the books that they are interested in.

**Lack of awareness**

2.27 The prioritisation exercise, in all of the focus groups, resulted in a heightened awareness amongst participants about the range of activities libraries are involved in. There was a general concern amongst participants that there remains a lack of awareness about the range of services libraries offer and that this was inevitably impacting on user numbers.

“**There is a historic perception that libraries are about borrowing books... and they’ve moved on dramatically in reality. In reality the library service has been unable to get that reality over to the wider population.**”
3. Public perceptions of libraries

“it’s really for everyone in the community isn’t it? It’s almost like they’ve come back full circle to Andrew Carnegie’s vision. There was a time when libraries weren’t community-based, but they seem to be coming back now to be more in line with this.”

3.1 What the public thinks libraries are or should be for is of key importance to a future national strategy for the service. Existing research shows that the general public in Scotland places a high value on public libraries as a community asset and to a slightly lesser extent as an important resource to them individually. However, much less is known about what role the public thinks libraries play and how effectively they are perceived to be doing so.

**Something for everyone...or a service with an identity crisis?**

3.2 In one of the exercises we conducted, the groups were tasked with describing the purpose of libraries to someone who has no prior concept or experience of a library. The deliberative approach enabled groups to share and consider new ideas beyond what they themselves might use libraries for. While book-lending featured prominently across the board as an obvious function, no group felt that it was an exclusive or even the main function of libraries. One participant even mooted the concept that libraries of the future may not be about printed books at all.

3.3 The groups all felt that libraries serve – or set out to serve – multiple important functions. They recognised that libraries have different purposes for individuals but that collectively libraries served the community in many different ways as outlined in Illustration 3.1.
3.4 While some people felt that these diverse functions created a tension and identity crisis for libraries, others saw them to be a core strength of the service and one that was crucial to its identity as a shared community asset.

“...It’s one of very few places physically where people of different ages come for different purposes. What other public space is there where everyone from 0 to 90 can partake of something together or separately within the same space? Which is why it’s such a valuable community resource.”

Strengths and weaknesses of libraries today

3.5 Participants came with a variety of experiences as users and non-users of libraries and were asked to reflect on what libraries do well and less well in providing a service to communities. These experiences were diverse and reflected both individual experience and observation as well as local contexts such as the nature of the local library service or community. However, the following themes emerged as key factors influencing the perceived effectiveness of public libraries in delivering their intended purpose:
Listening to the community / user involvement

3.6 There is a strong feeling that libraries are a community asset and as part of that community they should reflect its specific needs, whether that be in providing mobile and outreach services to communities unable to access the physical library or in the type of book collections, resources and services they offer. Local communities could also have a valuable role to play in designing the layout of the library and use of space.

3.7 Some participants felt that more user involvement in the design and implementation of library services was desirable, and a Bathgate participant helpfully provided an example of a user group having been set up to inform the design phase of the new Bathgate library, whose recommendations instrumentally changed the internal layout to ensure that it better suited the public’s needs.

Knowledgeable and accessible library staff

3.8 The perceived importance of librarians in creating and delivering an effective service cannot be overstated. Libraries are seen by many to be “professional handlers of information”, with librarians providing advice on information, opening up new experiences that people may not have otherwise discovered, as well as providing important support with IT and other skills.

“ I think in the library context, now and for the future, there’s a word that goes in front of information and that’s ‘supported information’ or ‘supported access to information’. It’s not enough to be able to go into the internet, there’s a further essential step. And I think libraries have a key role now and in the future, and that’s to help people deal with that information. ”

3.9 Views were mixed on the quality of service provided by librarians and depended very much on people’s personal experiences, leading participants to agree that consistency in the quality of advice and service is important.

“ There’s a sense now whereas in the library before you would interact with the librarian, simply getting your book stamped, now you have to approach the librarian and interrupt them in their other work, which I find awkward and off-putting. I think that’s a real backwards step. ”

3.10 The importance of staffed libraries was felt to be especially relevant to older people and those with less social contact. While not suggesting that libraries should not embrace technological advances many described libraries as a place of social contact, and how libraries are for some people the only form of social interaction they have in their lives on a day-to-day basis.
“It’s having that personal touch rather than machines. I know we’ve got so much machinery in our lives, and technology, that you kind of lose that human contact. So I go for that. And you’ve got actual books rather than on a machine again.”

Promotion and awareness

3.11 In many, if not most, cases the services and benefits of libraries are not properly communicated with, or understood by, the community. Both users and non-users across the geographical areas where we conducted our research were surprised at the range of services on offer at their local library and believed that libraries have to do more to promote what they do to the public. The lack of awareness about libraries’ services means that the service is being misunderstood and under-used by individuals, groups and communities who could benefit.

“...I would never have thought to use the library until it was forced upon me by the job centre. Now I use it, now I bring my own kids. I just never thought – I’m not a book reader.”

3.12 Those we consulted believed that libraries still retain an old-fashioned image and many participants felt that re-branding and promotion is needed at both a national and local level. Suggestions included public awareness campaigns including celebrity endorsement of libraries, using local and community media outlets to ‘sell’ the local library, and libraries engaging in outreach promotion work with local groups.

Layout and physical environment

3.13 Participants made a number of comments about how the physical environment of libraries can affect the experience of users and potential users. The vast majority of people believed that libraries had developed in a positive way with the inclusion of different services and activities on library premises.
3.14 Dedicated and colourful children’s sections and activities such as Bookbug sessions were noted in particular as a positive way to engage children in reading from a young age. However, some of the research participants, while on the whole agreeing that these activities were valuable, voiced concerns that they sometimes took place in locations within libraries which disturbed other activities going on. Participants suggested that careful planning is needed in relation to lay-out in new and existing libraries, to ensure that they have appropriate spaces to accommodate the range of activities now being delivered.

“On one level it might be irritating to hear someone retell Jack and the Beanstalk, and at the same time I’m very glad it’s there and it makes me feel good. If I want peace and quiet I can borrow a book and take it elsewhere.”

3.15 To varying degrees many libraries now also have computer stations, cafes, open-plan layouts and areas for groups to meet and talk. Many people felt that these were positive developments in creating an open and inclusive atmosphere and bringing in users who would otherwise not use the library. However, as with children’s activities it was recognised that for some people who want to study or see the library as a ‘quiet place’ getting the right balance to suit everyone may be difficult for libraries to achieve. Some people gave examples of where libraries had successfully mitigated this issue such as the Library of Birmingham which has quiet space on the top floor, and more open-plan, “noisy” space on other floors.

Consistency vs. localism

3.16 Libraries undoubtedly vary in the services they provide and many people we consulted feel that it is a strength for libraries to reflect the needs and make-up of their local community (for example, in opening hours, mobile and outreach services, availability of resources in key other languages).

3.17 Indeed some people questioned whether a national strategy might detract from the ability of local libraries to reflect their communities and for local communities to take ownership of their libraries. However, on the whole participants felt that a national strategy was important in strengthening the service from potential cuts, in sharing good practice and setting a minimum standard for the service.
3.18 One of the issues about localism that was raised in the groups was a concern that there is no consistent library 'offer' of what communities can expect from their library service and that this undermines the profile and ability of the library service as a whole. Participants agreed that there should be a core set of services that people can expect from their library in addition to services that are flexible and designed around local community needs.

3.19 They also noted that the ‘rules’ and atmosphere in libraries can vary greatly, with some libraries appearing to be less accommodating of noise and less accessible and inviting for potential users. This inconsistency presents a challenge for the library service in promoting greater awareness and understanding of its purpose and offer, and ensuring equality in relation to what is on offer.

**Inclusivity and accessibility**

3.20 Libraries are still seen as places which are at the heart of communities and which have an important function to play in connecting and supporting all groups in the local community. Many people felt that libraries have a particularly important role in enabling individuals who face social, physical or cultural barriers to access services on an equal footing, whether that be access to free books, learning opportunities and/or opportunities for social contact.

3.21 A number of interesting points were made about Andrew Carnegie’s original vision for libraries as “a cradle of democracy… where neither rank, office, nor wealth receives the slightest consideration” and to enable everyone to have free and equal access to educational opportunities. The groups felt strongly that Andrew Carnegie’s original vision for libraries still applied today and was visible in the public library service. It was felt that although the breadth of library services had developed significantly over time, the purpose itself remained the same and services were adapting to meet changing needs of society, for example the way in which many libraries support digital inclusion and employment skills support today is a solution to a modern day issue very much in line with the original purpose of public libraries.

Elgin Library has a Learning Centre
3.22 Libraries must be inclusive and accessible spaces and while some people feel that they already meet this criterion, others thought libraries needed to do more to improve accessibility. For example, ensuring that the physical spaces are accessible to people with mobility issues, and having a broad selection of large print and talking books. Suggestions were also made about libraries having resources in languages that reflect local communities, and ensuring that staff were available to support people who need help in using library services.

The ‘missing middle’

3.23 It was felt by almost all participants that while libraries are being well-used by some age groups (parent and toddlers, primary school-age children where there are good links with local schools, and retired and older people), they are not as frequently-used by others (in particular, teenagers and young adults and the working age population). It was felt that libraries are difficult for people to access if they are working and the issue of opening hours is one library services need to think about.

“Lots of libraries don’t open at all on a Sunday, and that’s when people are not working. And that’s when they need to get to the library.”

3.24 For teenagers and young adults it was also felt that there were additional barriers to do with perception of libraries as ‘not for them’ which partly relates back to the need for awareness and promotion about what is on offer, but also relates to a need for some libraries to consider how to develop the services on offer to ensure that they have relevance for these groups who currently under-use the services.

Creativity in engaging different groups

3.25 The groups commonly commented on the need for libraries to be creative and proactive in engaging different groups in the community. They reflected on the examples provided as part of the discussions and noted how some libraries were developing innovative approaches to attracting different service users, for example by hosting science and technology workshops for children, graphic novel workshops for teenagers, using their space for art exhibitions and many other examples.

3.26 These were seen as positive examples of engaging people in the library and potentially changing perceptions about the library and increasing use over the long-term. The groups noted that there are limits to what libraries can realistically do but felt that all libraries should be supported to develop creative and proactive approaches to attract new service users, particularly from under-represented groups.
Digital society – competition and opportunity

3.27 One of the key themes that arose in the focus groups was around the place of public libraries in the digital age. The majority of participants felt strongly that libraries have as important a role to play in the digital age as they did prior to it. Many people remarked at how positively libraries have embraced technology, offering e-books, computer terminals, and online booking systems. It was also felt that libraries have a key role in supporting people within the community who are digitally excluded. Providing free access to personal computers and the internet is a key service for libraries today, as many people do not have this access at home and are consequently disadvantaged with respect to access to services and information.

3.28 A particular strength of libraries is also in providing access to technology to people who are unemployed or in receipt of benefits. Job-seekers can benefit from printing their CVs and searching and applying for jobs online, without which they are likely to be at a disadvantage. With the migration of the benefits system to being online libraries are a vital resource for people who are required to apply for their benefits online but who do not have the resources at home. This creates an interesting situation for libraries where they are used both out of choice and, in some cases, out of necessity.

3.29 While recognising the value of libraries in providing this important service, some people raised the point that libraries cannot be expected to be the only source of free computer access within communities and that they risked demand outstripping their capacity in the future. It was suggested that libraries might have a role in partnering with other services to ensure that across the board there is sufficient supply to meet need within the community.

3.30 There were concerns among some participants that libraries may become redundant in the future as people choose less and less to read books in a paper form. However, the majority felt that physical books would always be a feature of libraries and that libraries should embrace the positive opportunities of technology and the internet to grow and develop their services.
Co-location with other services

3.31 Many libraries are now co-locating with other statutory and voluntary services. Examples of this include libraries; sharing space with council contact points, as in Duns; with VisitScotland, as in Elgin Library; the local high School in Dingwall; and, a community centre in Bathgate.

3.32 Some people felt that this was a very positive and constructive way of making stronger partnerships between community services to mutual benefit and to reinstate the position of libraries as a key community function.

3.33 There are also potential benefits in co-location to the library as people using other services may explore the library at the same time, have greater awareness of library services and consequently become active library users.

3.34 It was felt to be a particular benefit where libraries are co-located with schools, for example in Dingwall as school students are accustomed to using the library as part of their daily activities and different age groups within the community are brought together in using the library.

3.35 However, some people noted that co-location may not always be effective – for example there may be a risk of people’s private conversations with council staff being overheard in the library, or instances of library services no longer being staffed by library professionals. These are issues which may result in a negative experience and impact on service use. The point was also raised that the library’s share of space may be much smaller in a co-located set-up than may have been the case when it was a stand-alone service which may potentially reduce its capacity to offer a fuller range of services.

3.36 Exploring the range of co-location examples, the service mix and the impact of this on service users is an area which might be considered as part of the emerging national strategy. There are clear practice lessons, positive and negative, within even the small sample of libraries involved in this work.

“This used to be a library. Now it’s a council contact centre with a few books on the side.”
4. Impact of libraries on individuals, groups and the community

A force for good

4.1 Among the groups who participated in the research there was universal agreement that libraries are a force for good. While some feel that libraries are at risk of being ‘out-of-date’ in terms of the speed and effectiveness with which they are responding to change, there was near universal feeling that libraries have a very important role to play and the potential to make a positive impact in every section of the community.

Who benefits from libraries and how?

4.2 Participants in the focus groups felt that libraries have a key part to play in supporting statutory services (such as education, health and social services) and that they should be recognised for this role. Key examples of this were the role of libraries in supporting literacy, lifelong learning and skills development, skills and opportunities for employment and good health and self-management.

4.3 They noted that these benefits are not always as readily associated with libraries as they are with statutory services and that libraries need to become more effective at demonstrating and evidencing the role they play in supporting the achievement of these outcomes locally.

4.4 The groups also recognised that libraries potentially offer very specific benefits as a result of the services they have on offer and that localism is a strength of libraries adapting to the community’s needs. There were, however, a number of core benefits that groups felt that all libraries have the potential to offer. These are listed below (Illustration 4.1) under key categories: education; health; social and wider community benefits.
Illustration 4.1. Core benefits libraries provide to individuals and communities

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Educational benefits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Improved literacy</td>
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<td>• Lifelong learning</td>
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<td>• IT proficiency</td>
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<td>• Research skills</td>
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<td>• Peer skills–sharing</td>
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<th>Health benefits</th>
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<td>• Improved wellbeing</td>
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<td>• Better health awareness</td>
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<td>• Improved mental health</td>
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<td>• Supported self–management</td>
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<th>Social benefits</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Social inclusion</td>
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<td>• Digital inclusion</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Building social capital</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Support into employment</td>
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<td>• Equality of access and opportunity</td>
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<tr>
<th>Wider community benefits</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Awareness of local services and opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Public involvement in the community</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Awareness and inclusion of cultural diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Greater community connections</td>
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</table>

Are there any groups who could particularly benefit from libraries?

4.5 The strength of the library service is its universality and people were strongly in favour of maintaining the universal function of libraries in the future. In addition though, it was recognised that while all sectors of the community could potentially benefit directly from using the services of libraries, the following groups might particularly benefit from the public library service. As such participants felt that while remaining universal, libraries have a responsibility to ensure that they are effectively identifying and meeting the specific needs of these groups (illustration 4.2):
Illustration 4.2: Groups who could particularly benefit from public libraries

- Elderly and people with dementia
- Socially marginalised, including people who are homeless
- People with sensory, mobility or learning difficulties
- Children and young people
- Speakers of other languages / people who are new to the community
- People who are unemployed, on a low income or digitally excluded

"You just have to go into this library and you can see invitations for young children, pre-school age, to start and read, for parents to read with their parents. You can’t do that on the internet. That’s the trouble with the internet, because people lack the communication. It’s with books and socialisation that children actually learn."

"You’ve got some of the older people who come in who live on their own, it’s one of the few conversations they have in the course of a day."

How can libraries increase their impact?

4.6 With the exception of examples where people believe libraries are under-servicing groups in the community, most participants felt that libraries are (on the whole) already providing the right types of services and that a wholesale ‘re-purposing’ is not necessary. Instead, participants believe that libraries have the potential to significantly increase their impact by:

- Proactively engaging with groups who use the library less frequently and priority groups (see diagram 3);
- Developing their services for these groups where necessary;
- Seeking creative approaches to engage new users and partnering with other services where appropriate;
- Involving their community in shaping their library service; and
- Evidencing their impact and promoting it more widely.

"I don’t think the benefits, the social benefits, are plugged enough."
5. Values and Priorities for the Future

“...it’s broadening people’s horizons really. Whether by reading a book and in your head visiting somewhere else or by learning something and being able to get onto the internet and contact people across the whole world.”

Illustration 5.1: A word cloud created from each focus group’s vision for libraries

5.1 The public’s perception of the values of libraries emerges clearly from the focus group discussions. The findings offer library services considerable opportunities and challenges as focus group participants often held strongly–felt views – occasionally contradictory – on the perceived value of libraries both now and looking to the future. These are discussed in the sections below and the implications considered in the next section on how library services might respond to and build on these values and priorities.
The Perceived Values

5.2 The focus groups discussed the original vision of the Carnegie libraries and the perceived relevance of this. The concept of libraries as offering ‘open access to everyone’, ‘access to knowledge’ and as ‘providing opportunities for self-improvement’ was explored.

5.3 The groups identified several recurring themes in their responses. Some of these were consistent with the original values while others were ‘newer’ reflecting a more current outlook. The existing and ‘new’ values expressed are outlined in illustration 5.2:

Illustration 5.2 Recurring themes on the perceived value of libraries
Information provision

5.4 One of the strongest perceived values of libraries – consistent with the original Carnegie vision – is that of information provision. This is what had drawn many participants into the libraries originally and continues to be a major factor.

5.5 A majority of participants are aware of the distinction between ‘books’ and ‘information’. They recognise that while books may once have been the key source of information provision that there are now other routes, particularly those of the digital world. The focus group participants expressed a range of views on this including:

- A majority of participants feel that books continue to be important as sources of information and libraries play a role in ensuring that all have access to information, regardless of income.
- A smaller number, aware of efforts by libraries to adapt (e.g. the provision of e-books), are positive of these efforts.
- A smaller number still – emerging from those who do not use libraries much – feel that the role of libraries will ‘wither’ in an age where so much information is accessible online.

Community Focus

5.6 One of the challenges for libraries is to find a role in the digital age. A factor which emerges strongly in several focus groups is the value of the library as a resource for ‘local’ or ‘community’ information. This is where libraries have, and can develop more strongly, their ‘unique selling point’ in an online world. The concept of ‘community’ meant different things to those in the focus groups and included information on:

- The local area in terms of people, history, demographics, culture and environment amongst other factors.
- Civic activity e.g. local community and voluntary sector events and opportunities.
- Practical information about the locality e.g. bus timetables, local maps, opening hours for GP surgeries/chemists etc.
- A small number of participants would also like to see information about local businesses provided e.g. tradespeople, therapists etc.

Digital inclusivity

5.7 Libraries have made major efforts to ensure their relevance in the modern age by addressing digital exclusion. All of the focus group libraries offer access to computers and training in using various packages. In a small number of instances, access to computers (or sometimes DVDs) had been the factor which drew our focus group participants into libraries initially.
5.8 Participants are generally positive about the efforts of libraries in this regard, seeing the value of digital inclusivity as a natural fit with that of a service which is about access to information for all, although a small number do not like the additional noise this seems to result in. In fact, when discussing promotion of libraries, many of the participants feel that the libraries fail to get this message across to the general public – that digital inclusivity is a value and that libraries play a key role in its delivery.

Free and accessible

5.9 The free and accessible nature of libraries is highly valued. This is something that participants feel strongly about as a value, both now and for the future. Participants are concerned about the effects of the austerity budgeting on libraries and a number of participants feel that there has been a reduction in resources, primarily in terms of the range and age of the book stock available.

“The most important thing about the library is you don’t have to pay. So I think that’s probably the main reason why a lot of what Carnegie was trying to achieve is still achievable.”

5.10 Accessibility was interpreted differently by those involved. Several participants felt that there has been a loss of smaller library services in rural and isolated communities making it harder to use the library and impacting on those without access to their own transport.

5.11 Other participants considered access in terms of physical layout within the buildings and navigability for those in wheelchairs or with mobility issues. Most people, in our focus groups, are broadly satisfied with the efforts of library services to accommodate their needs in this respect but some points were raised, on book placement for example, which might be reflected in design and layout guidance for libraries.

Cultural understanding

5.12 An interesting point emerged regarding the accessibility of libraries to new immigrant groups within Scotland. There was debate about the extent to which new groups of people coming to Scotland are aware of library services and feel them to be a service they can make use of. A number of questions emerged regarding the role of libraries in terms of:

- the extent to which it is the role of libraries to support integration and what advice and help do they receive on doing this
- how much libraries know about new migrant groups in the communities they serve
what these groups think of libraries currently and what more could be done to ascertain their perceptions of library services, and their needs.

Inclusive environments

5.13 One of the key values identified by the participants is that of inclusiveness – creating a space in which a broad range of people can feel comfortable. There was discussion in several groups about the extent to which libraries have been successful in achieving this and a number of tensions are identified:

- the provision of IT facilities are broadly welcomed and bring in new user groups but for some people this increases noise levels which they do not like
- efforts by libraries to encourage new parents and toddlers/children (e.g. Bookbug) are welcomed by the majority but disliked by some because of the additional noise
- some users feel that there is insufficient provision of resources for people with learning difficulties, visual impairments and lower levels of literacy – stock tends to be limited and out of date.

Education

5.14 The original Carnegie vision was that libraries should offer a place of learning. The continuing relevance of this engendered considerable debate in several focus groups.

5.15 There is no doubt that libraries have encouraged learning in the past – providing access to learning resources for those unable to afford books. Participants told some wonderful stories of older family members who had transformed or enhanced their lives through library-based learning.

5.16 Many participants, however, feel that this is no longer a relevant value for libraries. Access to comprehensive and further education, improved literacy levels, and alternative media for transmitting knowledge has, in the views of many participants, rendered the role of libraries ‘obsolete’ in this regard. In one or two instances, participants were concerned that an emphasis on the educational role of libraries might deter potential users who want an informal and fun experience.

5.17 The argument was further developed in the discussions. Some participants felt that while education should not be promoted as a core value, it still has a role to play in terms of:

- learning taking place ‘by accident’ once people become engaged with their library
- library being encouraged to pass on research tips to the public when required
- library staff developing an ‘assisted learning’ role to school students and those new to further and higher education
- engaging with the very young to foster an early interest in books.
It is important culturally and socially that people should have access to information and books and learning, that it makes a better society than without.

Recreation and contemplation

5.18 Participants, in general, feel that libraries are a place of leisure and recreation first and foremost – and if there was still a role for education, this is a secondary one. Participants view recreation as a more 'sellable' value. In one of the focus group exercises, for example, where people were asked to design an advertisement for libraries, the group chose to promote libraries as a source of leisure activity during school holidays.

5.19 What also emerged during some of the discussions is the value of the library as a 'contemplative space'. Several participants remember, with considerable fondness, the 'quiet rooms' of their youth and how this had made them 'feel'.

5.20 It was the depth of this feeling and attachment that, for some, held considerable value. One participant talked about bringing her mother, who had advanced dementia, to the library as it was a source of pleasure to her even now. Several participants wondered whether there was scope to develop quiet spaces within libraries again or to take this further and cultivate libraries as a natural home for contemplative activities such as tai chi and meditation amongst others.

Overview

5.21 The focus groups highlight current perceptions of the values of library services. They demonstrate the strength of feeling which people attach to libraries and the sometimes contradictory views of what a 'good' library service looks like. There are two key points which emerge:

5.22 many of the participants are keen to see these values preserved in the face of a rapidly changing (particularly in digital terms) world

these perceived values are also an asset and offer opportunities in terms of how the library space can be promoted and developed in the future.
6. **How libraries respond to the challenges**

**Rising to the challenge**

6.1 The focus group participants were asked to think about how libraries might respond to the threats and opportunities discussed in the preceding questions. They produced a range of interesting suggestions which are summarised below (illustration 6.1). We have, where possible, tried to identify groups of suggestions which might be facilitated as part of a national, strategic approach to libraries.

**Illustration 6.1. Responding to the challenges**

- Libraries - a community 'hub'
- Reaching out to harder to reach communities
- Design guide
- Developing the use of IT
- User involvement
- The range of activities
- Marketing suggestions

**Libraries – or community hubs?**

6.2 Libraries play a major role in preserving community identity. This local identity, in an increasingly online, global and, sometimes, homogenised environment, is part of the appeal of libraries for many people. Reflecting local identity is part of the library DNA and something which needs to be protected in a period of public sector cuts.

6.3 One focus group participant suggested that reflecting and enhancing community identity is now the key role of the library and that the concept of libraries as ‘community hubs’ is what should be promoted – and the term ‘library’ dropped from future branding work.

6.4 It is clear from the discussions that the community identity of libraries is important and should be reflected in the stock that is available and the services that the library space can offer. This is an area which might benefit from a more strategic approach in terms of libraries being encouraged to draw on a ‘collection of approaches’, identifying those most applicable to their own circumstances, which enhance localism.
Reaching out

6.5 Libraries need to continue their efforts to provide services for groups that cannot physically access central library resources. This is important for small, remote rural communities that lack other services as well as for other groups such as the housebound or people with physical disabilities. There are opportunities to do this through:

- increasing the use of IT and facilities like e-book lending
- developing more shared, co-operative and volunteer based services – drawing on the reserve of good will which exist amongst many towards library services and the higher levels of volunteering which exist in rural communities.

6.6 Some groups, not apparently excluded in any way, do not access libraries for other reasons. Working people in their middle years – or ‘the missing middle’ as one group termed them – do not appear to make great use of libraries. Several participants across the focus groups called for more evening and weekend opening.

6.7 Reaching out to new communities should also mean Scotland’s increasingly rich and varied cultural demographic. Recent immigrant groups offer an opportunity to increase library usage and inject fresh thinking into the activities which take place within the library setting. As SLIC moves toward a more strategic approach it may wish to consider guidance to libraries on their role with regard to these groups.

Design Guide

6.8 One of the issues cropping up during many of the focus group discussions is that of the physical layout of libraries. This might touch on a range of issues from book placement and lighting through to the zoning of where certain activities take place within the library space so that the preferences of different user groups do not impact upon each other.

6.9 Major work to improve library layout is probably beyond the budget of most services at this time. There would be a benefit, however, in encouraging a more collective approach in terms of design principles incorporating lighting, colours, book placement etc – areas which might be addressed without high levels of capital investment. Every building is different and has its own unique characteristics but there is scope for sharing of good practice on design principles.
Developing the use of IT

6.10 The focus groups suggest that the libraries have made progress in addressing digital exclusion. Most focus group participants are positive about this achievement (and sometimes feel that libraries have not done enough to promote their successes) and understand the need for change, although a smaller number object to what they perceive as increased noise levels.

6.11 In most of the focus groups there is a small number of participants for whom the IT and DVD services are the most important factor in attracting them into libraries. These participants tend to be male and, in general, younger than many of the other participants, being in their 20s and 30s. Their experience and perception of libraries is different from that of many of the other users but it is clear that they view libraries as a valuable local resource and one in the building become more likely to use other facilities.

6.12 Many participants feel that increasing the use and diversity of IT resources will be key to attracting younger teenagers into the library space. While efforts to draw in parents and very young children seem to be having success, there appears to be – from the perspective of the participants – a falling away of usage as children approach their teenage years. Participants are, in most instances, keen to explore how older children and teens can be drawn back into the library space.

“...Modern technology could be the Andrew Carnegie of 150 years ago... If technology is the thing that is going to encourage young people to read and learn and what have you, that's how you have to go.”

6.13 Using iPad technology, providing access to online gaming and role play might help attract younger people, especially boys, into libraries. Once people are in libraries and are familiar with them, the focus group participants felt they may be more likely to take an interest in the other resources available. Libraries will need help in testing and developing such approaches to make them workable.

User Involvement

6.14 Many of the focus group participants felt a degree of ownership of their local library. There is an appetite for increased involvement and a number of suggestions were made which included:

- local user reviews of books (similar to major book retailers)
- using book volunteers to take small collections or specific requests out to other people – especially valuable in rural communities or for often isolated, housebound people
- consulting with local users on future stock purchasing
working with the growing number of informal book clubs to support existing and new book clubs linked to the library

Involving users in the design–stages of new–build libraries.

“When the library opened I asked is there going to be a poetry exhibition. They said no. And I said how are people going to come across what they don’t know they want, or don’t know they need, unless you put it there. So they put it there, there is now a poetry section. So they responded which is good.”

6.15 A more collaborative focus, encouraged by SLIC, might strengthen the attachment of local communities to their library service. It might also enable libraries to tap into local knowledge of new trends and interests which would enhance their responsiveness and relevance.

The range of activities

6.16 The focus group participants identified those activities of particular value to them and had a number of suggestions for enhancing the mix of activities they would like to see taking place in libraries. These included:

- author events, which are particularly popular, and other speaker events
- libraries are also good locations for arts and crafts activities as library users may be attracted to these kinds of activities
- one older participant, supported by other participants, suggested that libraries should offer access to musical instruments and lessons on the premises to overcome the prohibitive costs of trying out a new musical skill – in a similar way that they have successfully promoted IT learning to the elderly and other groups.

Marketing suggestions

6.17 One of the key messages to emerge from the focus group discussions – particularly during the exercise on core activities within libraries – is that more effective promotion of libraries’ existing activities might address the decline in user numbers. Most participants were very surprised by the range of activities that currently go on, even in their own library.

6.18 Most participants also feel that this is the message that libraries need to convey if they are to overcome perceived barriers to using library services. Several people commented in the vein that libraries are now “more than just books”. This is an opportunity for a national strategy for libraries to address and some of the suggestions made by focus group participants regarding promotion included:

- promote libraries as a fun leisure resource – don’t mention books!
more effective use of social media to let people know what is happening in their local libraries – using direct text alerts where possible

finding a high profile national patron – JK Rowling was mentioned as was Danny MacAskill (leaping off a library on his bike with a closing shot of him reading a book in a library with his feet up!).

"There is a historic issue of the libraries were so crucial in terms of people’s local experience and understanding, but they were always allowed for people to come to them. Maybe in the future the library has to actually sell itself, that it’s relevant and helpful."
7. **Key Messages for the Strategy**

**Introduction**

7.1 The research resulted in a large amount of data which we have carefully analysed according to the research questions contained in your brief. Many of the issues raised with us fit with our expectations of people’s perceptions of libraries, others were unexpected. Both have given us much to consider and it has been challenging to synthesise these into conclusions which might inform the development of a strategy.

7.2 In this final section, we provide you with a set of considerations for the national strategy. These are intentionally not recommendations and will require to be considered alongside feedback you have gathered from other sources. Instead, these are key messages that came through our research consistently and with strength of feeling from participants.

7.3 As a precursor to the following considerations, one issue for early consideration is the tone and scope of your ‘national strategy’. Some participants expressed concern that this might undermine the local character of libraries (although the majority expressed positive views on the development of a more strategic approach at a time of funding cuts and in light of the need for a more proactive promotional strategy). The Scottish Library and Information Council will wish to consider, therefore, whether the strategy is:

- directive in scope or takes the form of a ‘looser’ framework of core principles
- is a benchmark of where libraries ought to be and/or is more aspirational, presenting a picture of what an ideal library service looks like and how it might be attained.

**Key issues for the strategy**

**Consistency of offer**

7.4 The research confirmed what we already know about library services – these vary significantly depending on which library you visit and with little consistency of offer across libraries. There was a strong message from participants that it is important to be able to have realistic expectations when you enter any library of access to certain core services being on offer, whilst recognising that other services will vary depending on need, location, size of building etc.

7.5 Similarly, people told us that consistency in terms of the quality of service they can expect from staff is important. In fact, it is very clear from the discussions that the skills and attributes of library staff is a key determinant of the library experience for most users.
Service direction

7.6 One of the key themes to emerge from our participants was the role of the library in reflecting local identity. Many participants value the role of libraries in providing information about the local area in all forms, both past and present. Many see this as a role consistent with the modern role of the library as a community asset. For some, reflecting local identity is viewed as the way in which libraries could demonstrate a unique selling point in an increasingly digitalised, information available, age.

7.7 There is clearly a lot of good practice contained within existing libraries around reflecting local identity. The national strategy could build on this and provide a stronger direction of travel.

Improved awareness raising about services on offer

7.8 Linked with the desire for more consistency of offer was the issue of the need to improve awareness of services available through libraries.

7.9 The participants we consulted were users of a wide range of different types of services across a wide range of library locations. There were many instances when participants in a group would be surprised when they heard some of the examples cited by other participants regarding what was available in their own and other local libraries.

7.10 If frequent library users are often both surprised and enthused by the range of activities taking place this might be reflected, or magnified, in the broader community amongst less frequent and non-users. Improved awareness raising is essential if libraries are serious about increasing the number and range of users.

Reaching out to new groups – balancing expectations

7.11 The discussions highlighted the successes (in terms of people who are digitally excluded for example, or younger readers through Bookbug) and continuing need for libraries to reach out to new groups. This includes parents and children, the ‘missing middle’, teenagers and immigrant communities.

7.12 The discussions also highlighted the challenges of this. There are sometimes conflicting perceptions of what a library space should ‘feel’ like – and the high sense of ‘ownership’ some feel over their library can make change painful. The national strategy could play a positive role in identifying key groups to be targeted and identifying valuable practice lessons.

… and understanding the benefits

7.13 Section Four highlighted a number of the core benefits that groups felt that libraries deliver. These: digital inclusion; education; health; social and wider community benefits. We think, based upon what we were told, that libraries are a source of ‘little understood’ value. A better understanding of these will help preserve and shape the future role of
library services in Scotland. It will help in terms of relationships with funders, stakeholders and the public.

7.14 We recommend that the national strategy give consideration to how the impact of libraries might be captured. This is something that should involve local libraries in shaping and feeding into a national evaluation strategy and, if the right approach can be found, it will also help boost the confidence and motivation of local library staff.

**Improved marketing of image – leisure over learning and shared branding**

7.15 Our participants told us that they believe that libraries continue to suffer as a result of outdated perceptions, and there is a sense that libraries could better market themselves to existing and new audiences. Whilst learning remains at the heart of what they do, there is a sense from those we spoke to that actually leisure is the key reason that people visit libraries and that it is around this banner that libraries should be marketing themselves.

7.16 It is also our sense from listening to people’s feedback that some degree of common branding across libraries may be worth considering. Careful consideration would be required as to the scope of this but a range of design tips and advice in the form of a design guide could help improve the public perception of libraries alongside other marketing approaches.

**Further development of digital offer**

7.17 It is clear from our research that libraries are widely embracing new technologies, and that there is an expectation from users that they do so, although not at the expense of more traditional services such as book lending.

7.18 Again, the offer varies from library to library and our participants indicated that consistency of opportunity, where possible, was something for libraries to work towards e.g. the provision of e-books, WIFI access, and other core digital services being available in all libraries.

**Developing role as recognised community hubs**

7.19 Some libraries, particularly new–build libraries with the physical capacity, are emerging as community hubs, offering a range of services delivered by library staff and staff from partner organisations, such as local authorities or citizens’ advice bureaux.

7.20 While a minority of participants were resistant to this transformation, most agreed that it was the right route for libraries to pursue to safeguard their futures, and consistent with Andrew Carnegie’s original vision of libraries’ place in communities. Some key lessons emerged from our discussions in term of:

- Physical considerations – including issues such as positioning of library staff’s desks, location of noisy activities alongside quiet ones, provision of quiet spaces for study
Partnering compatibility – careful consideration needs to be given to ensure that partnering and co-location relationships are with like-minded organisations with shared values and complementary service offers.

7.21 Further research into the considerable variety of local models of service co-location might help to inform the direction of libraries as community hubs. Mapping current arrangements, the service mix and impact on service users would provide a source of learning which to draw and shape future co-locations in such a way so as to complement the role of libraries as community hubs.

“...And the library, it’s always been seen as a community asset. And it needs to continue. But it needs to be a community asset for the future. There’s no point saying this is the kind of thing that was done so that’s what we’re going to offer, because communities are different now.”

User input

7.22 We were struck, throughout all of the group discussions across Scotland, by the interest and passion of those taking part – both frequent users and those who no longer used libraries on a regular basis. People generally feel a degree of ‘ownership’ of the library concept in a way they do not with most their public services. Our final point on your national strategy is, therefore, about capturing and building on that commitment.

7.23 The importance of user input to libraries’ design and implementation of services was emphasised to us over and over again. Whilst formal mechanisms are already in place in some areas, this is certainly not standard practice and there is an important role for the strategy to be encouraging this to be implemented. This may take the form of user groups which meet regularly, canvassing local opinion through surveys, or through a range of other mechanisms.

And a final thought from some of our participants...

“...It becomes part of your life, “I’m going to the library,” I’ve been saying that since I was knee high.”

“...Oh, it’s a wonderful, wonderful resource. I would be lost without the library.”
APPENDIX 1 – MATERIALS AND TOOLS USED TO FACILITATE FOCUS GROUPS

1. Ice breaker: Is this a library or not?
Blake Stevenson Ltd
National Library Strategy: deliberative research with library users and non-users

5.

6.

7.

8.
Ice breaker: Is this a library or not? – Answers

1. Aberdeen City Library.

2. Kenyan Camel Library (The camels carry both books and camping gear for the traveling librarians as they travel across the desert. The caravan visits people in nomadic communities and serves around 5–6,000 patrons).

3. This is not a library – it is Dundee Sheriff Court.

4. Isle of Skye Mobile Library.

5. Norwegian Fjords: A book boat called Epos (It travels to more than 250 small communities on islands in the fjords every year between September and April. In the summer the floating library turns into a leisure cruise ferry).

6. Italo Rota’s Perugian Library.

7. This is a community library in Somerset created from a recycled phone box and is one of the country’s smallest lending libraries – stocking 100 books.

8. It is a library vending machine (Book vending machines have been around since 1930s. In California they increased book lending by 8%. In Beijing they account for more than 30% of the total books borrowed).

9. This is not a library – it is Kunsthaus, an art museum in Graz, Austria.

10. The National Public Library in Prishtina, Kosovo.

11. The Cottbus University Library, Germany.

12. This is not a library – it is Manchester Civil Justice Centre.
2. Individual participants use and views on libraries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How often I use libraries (<em>please circle</em>)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 ———— 2 ———— 3 ———— 4 ———— 5 ———— A lot</td>
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<p>| What I like about my local library / libraries |</p>
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<tr>
<th>What I don’t like about my local library / libraries</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I use libraries for…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t use libraries because…</td>
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</table>
3. Template for participants to create an advert for their library
4. Prompts for discussing how relevant Andrew Carnegie’s original vision is today

In the UK and Ireland 660 libraries were funded by Andrew Carnegie or by the Carnegie UK Trust, starting with the Central Library in Dunfermline – the world’s first Carnegie Library, opening in 1883. There are a large number throughout Scotland including Edinburgh Central Lending Library 1890, Aberdeen Central Library 1892, Wick Library 1897 and Bridgeton District Library 1903.

Andrew Carnegie’s vision was to provide free access to books and learning for all, and his model was based around towns and communities taking ownership of delivering the service and making them instruments of wellbeing within the community.

“There is not such a cradle of democracy upon the earth as the Free Public Library, this republic of letters, where neither rank, office, nor wealth receives the slightest consideration”

- Andrew Carnegie
5. Deliberative prompts for discussions about library services
National Library Strategy: deliberative research with library users and non-users
6. A prompt for discussions around the benefits of libraries

- Scotland’s libraries offer 8.5 million hours of free internet access every year.
- Many libraries provide free meeting space for social and leisure activities.
- Many libraries partner with job centres, schools and charities to offer skills clubs, information and support.
- Households with children use libraries more than those without children.
- Three-quarters of homes in Scotland have internet access, but this varies by income and age of the householders.
- The Scottish population borrows 24 million library books each year – that’s 4.5 books per resident.

Did you know?

The Scottish population borrows 24 million library books each year – that’s 4.5 books per resident.
7. A prompt for discussions regarding how libraries can adapt to a changing world

How can libraries adapt for the future?

1. A 2012 survey of the UK public found that

**3 out of 4** people said that libraries were ‘essential’ or ‘very important’ **to their community**

**Around half** said that libraries were ‘essential’ or ‘very important’ **to them personally**

Why is this?

Why do some people not use libraries?

2. What are the barriers facing potential library users?

3. What are the challenges facing libraries?

4. How can libraries increase visits and use of their services?
APPENDIX 2 – WORD CLOUDS FROM EACH FOCUS GROUP

Bathgate word cloud

Dingwall word cloud
Dundee word cloud

Edinburgh word cloud
Pitlochry word cloud

Combined word cloud