

SCOTTISH READING STRATEGY

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS





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1 The role of public libraries as a conduit to literacy

Governments the world over are aware that their citizens must be literate to contribute to modern society. Libraries stimulate literacy because they not only provide free access to books and other literature, but also allow individuals to become familiar with the written word in a variety of formats and languages within a neutral, safe, word rich environment. Studies show that the act of reading improves cognition, reduces stress and increases wellbeing. However, the skill of reading requires practice and is not a natural instinct. The action of reading must be performed repeatedly in an individual's first spoken language for them to become proficient, just like learning to swim or play a sport.

Public libraries hold a special role in enhancing the literacy of a population because they are freely available to any member of society. A public library supplies the space and medium by which individuals can practice reading in a personal way driven by their own motivations to read about their interests and stories that they enjoy in their chosen language. The Scottish Government understands this role and has funded initiatives enabling public libraries to enhance literacy and reading in partnerships with other agencies. For example, Read, Write, Count and Book Week Scotland.

2 The Scottish Reading Strategy for public libraries

The vision of the strategy as it stands is:

Through free access to the life enriching, creative activity of reading, contribute to health and wellbeing, improved level of literacy, inspiring reading across all interests and age groups, drawing communities together to bring reading alive

Librarians and library staff also understand the powerful effect that libraries have on literacy and learning.

Therefore, the Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC) collaborated with representatives from libraries and partnering agencies to develop the Scottish Reading Strategy for Public Libraries (SRS). It was implemented in 2014 with the commitment by each library authority in Scotland to deliver a consistent, standardised service that promoted reading and literacy to every individual. This is to ensure that any customer regardless of age, ability or demographic will have the same level of service at any library they visit in any part of Scotland such as Bookbug sessions, books on parenting or reading groups and author events.

Each of the points in the vision are supported by five outcomes:

- **Inspire** reading across all interests and age groups, from pre-literate to fluent readers
- **Encourage** people to read widely, trying new genres and exploring new ways of sharing their reading experiences
- **Contribute** to the overall health and wellbeing of the individual
- **Support** literacy development and increase the number of confident and capable readers
- **Recognise** and support language and diversity

The strategy document lists five strategic elements, which set out the responsibilities and level of involvement to which authorities are expected to commit – the way that the SRS will be implemented. In summary, all Scottish



library authorities are asked to deliver the SRS by working with the strategic groups and partner agencies to hold a baseline level of events and increase the number of events over time. They are also required to develop “a shared evidence bank and advocacy statements which illustrate social impact”. These elements are key to the delivery and management of the SRS.

The SRS is administered through a steering group and three strategic teams: Early Years, Young People, and Adults, that write action plans for its implementation, liaise with partner organisations and organise annual team training workshops. Since the SRS was implemented other policies have been introduced, such as the national strategy for public libraries, *Ambition & Opportunity*, and *How Good is Our Public Library Service?*, as well as several government initiatives for literacy and numeracy. This report examines the present SRS in the context of the six aims of the national strategy with the intention to align it more closely to recent policies and to make recommendations for the delivery framework and infrastructure for a refreshed SRS.

3 Approach to SRS refresh

The overall focus of this review is to understand whether the implementation of the current SRS contributes to fostering literacy and learning for individual people across Scotland and how the SRS can be updated to reflect the current reading climate. Therefore, the aims of this review of the SRS are to:

- Ensure that the strategy aligns with the current reading landscape in Scotland
- Make a contribution to the successful delivery of *Ambition & Opportunity*
- Suggest ways to support the Scottish library community with implementation of the Scottish Reading Strategy

The main objectives include: examining documentation and practise of the SRS as it currently stands; identifying best practice and areas for improvement; comparing the strategy against *Ambition & Opportunity: A Strategy for Public Libraries in Scotland 2015-2020*; investigating the practices of other nations collaborating to deliver a national reading strategy.

Key individuals from libraries and partnership organisations were interviewed by telephone or Skype to collect perceptions of the effectiveness of SRS as it currently stands and to gather examples of best practice. The main conclusions of this project were reached through comparative analysis of the interviews and relevant literature, such as strategy documents, policy documents, reports and online information about the reading landscape in Scotland, other parts of the UK and other countries. The data were analysed by comparison tables and thematic coding and it was quickly found that distinct patterns of success and concern emerged.



4 Effectiveness of SRS

4.1 Perceptions of implementation of SRS

In order to get a well balanced view, the participants were drawn from three groups: partnership organisations, those in libraries implementing the strategy and those overseeing the strategy. The interviews were conducted informally. The participants were asked whether they considered that SRS was working, what should stay in SRS, what could be dropped and should anything be added. Their replies showed that although they considered that SRS was successfully being implemented by libraries they all identified issues with the delivery infrastructure. Here is a summary of the points made:

Jane Austen in Shetland A local library led event

The staff of Shetland Library dressed up in period costume on 18 July 2017 to commemorate the 200th anniversary of Jane Austen's death. An evening event included more costumes and Austen inspired refreshments. Costumed staff handed out copies of her books to island visitors.



Book Week Scotland

Collaborative Working

Fife Libraries organised a Banned Books and Prohibition Cocktails event at Kirkcaldy Galleries during Book Week Scotland 2016. Cocktails made from prohibition recipes were served, passages were read aloud from previously banned books with copies for guests to borrow. The event attracted a different audience to the regular library customer and increased their audience for book events. "That is the Holy Grail, getting people in through the door that would not be coming in the door otherwise."

South Lanarkshire

Engaging new readers

Libraries in South Lanarkshire collaborated with Big Glasgow Comic Page to hold Comic Cons in three libraries during 2016-17, with the aim of encouraging more adults to attend events, increase library membership and launch an e-comic service. They welcomed audiences in their thousands.

4.2 Working well

- **Relevance** - the priorities of SRS are still relevant
- **Commitment** - the authorities are committed to a baseline of events and the SRS strategic groups
- **Partnership** - there are strong partnerships with other national agencies. For example, Book Week Scotland is an annual initiative organised by the Scottish Book Trust in partnership with libraries and other agencies. The Scottish public libraries work closely with the Scottish Book Trust and fulfil a major role in the annual programme. "They are absolutely the backbone of that programme and the reading strategy has a huge part to play in that". Some libraries go "above and beyond" what is expected from them and the funding they have been given to stage the events. Similarly, the Scottish Book Trust gifting scheme (Bookbug) is delivered locally with "absolute buy in" from local libraries. "It's their programme, it belongs to them... They run it and organise it for their customers."
- **A library strategy** - the libraries feel ownership of the strategy because they are administering it through their own action plans, "It's not an external organisation telling us what to do". That sentiment was emphasised by partnership organisations as well as library practitioners and is an essential motivation to the delivery of the strategy
- **Empowerment** - the existence of SRS is empowering libraries to hold events and provide services that otherwise they may not be able to do because it solicits support from managers, some of whom do not have a library background.

- **Funding** - initiatives and events are financed by grants from SLIC or Scottish Book Trust. The team chairs take considerable effort in applying and securing the funding on behalf of all libraries
- **Library network** - a strong informal professional support network has developed which is considered to be of great value and support. "We all speak to each other. It's a great network of librarians in Scotland". The network is non-exclusive and prepared to help where it is needed. "If you are in the position that you are a non-library professional and you are managing a service, you know that you can go to one person, or you can go to 32 and you can get advice"
- **Training** - help, support and training provided by SLIC is appreciated. Training organised by the steering group as "reading day" workshops for all members of each of the three teams are highly valued and supply a platform where good practice can be shared
- **Flexible** - the strategic teams are open to operational change and readily adapt to feedback from the team members.

4.3 Concerns

The infrastructure for the delivery of SRS worked well at its outset, but changes to the management of libraries in a stretched economic climate has meant that the infrastructure is becoming difficult to maintain. This is due to pressure of work of the team members and the reorganisation of library services across Scotland resulting in changes of staff and work roles. These are the issues that were expressed.

- **Strategic team structure** - each strategic team is based on clusters of representatives from two or three libraries with one representative that attends the quarterly strategy meeting (active team member) and is the conduit of information between the non-attending representatives (passive team members) and the meeting. This system is now becoming more difficult to sustain due to current frequent changes in staff and merging of staff responsibilities throughout Scottish libraries. As one participant stated, "the infrastructure of the administration side of the Scottish Reading Strategy should be improved"
 - **Organisation** - meetings of the strategic teams are becoming difficult to organise because team members are finding it hard to organise their time to travel to meetings. At the outset of SRS the original team members agreed that meetings would be either located in Glasgow or Edinburgh. Face to face meetings were considered by the participants to be important because of the clarity and candidness that can be expressed in that situation. These have certainly contributed to the development of the informal network. However, the possibility of using virtual meeting systems was not dismissed out of hand. The likelihood that partnership organisations could help with administrative tasks was suggested
 - **Communication and feedback** - a feeling was expressed that information is not flowing along the chain of communication in either direction, as it really ought. It was considered that there was insufficient and timely feedback on communications between the strategic teams and Association of Public Libraries Scotland (APLS). Similarly there is not enough feedback to the teams from the individual libraries about the innovative ways that some libraries are implementing the strategy. It was widely acknowledged that team leaders work hard to ensure that team members and library representatives have the correct contact details for each other, but there are delays and loss of communication when representatives change without notice from either the authority or the team. In some cases, lack of feedback leads to a perception that passive team members lack engagement with development of the strategy, but "we make all efforts to try to get people to engage with the process". Some participants considered that there was not enough communication to partner organisations and wider, external communication outside the library and literacy world to gain recognition for "the incredible amount of work being done in libraries"
 - **Strategic Direction** - there was a general feeling that SRS was not pushing forward as it should be and some thought that higher strategic direction was being hampered by time constraints and setting short term goals. Action plans set by the strategic teams are being followed in the libraries, but the incremental implementation of the reading strategy means that some outcomes have not been addressed, for example, capturing best practice and establishing a shared evidence bank
 - **Capacity** - implementation of SRS within the libraries is becoming difficult due to reorganisation of services and amalgamation of posts with staff gaining increased responsibilities. It was suggested that efficiency would be increased by sharing best practice and that the development and use of "toolkits" for events would ease the situation, particularly as the new structure of some Scottish libraries include staff with no previous experience of library work
 - **Alignment with policies** - there was a general realisation that although the reading strategy as it stands is good it would be improved by aligning the outcomes more closely to recent initiatives and Ambition & Opportunity
- Generally, the participants felt that most of the issues would be solved by prioritising staff time for working on development of the strategy; there was strong support for the strategy and a strong feeling that literacy is a key priority for libraries.

4.4 Additions

None of the people interviewed considered that any point should be dropped from the strategy, but they did make the following suggestions for points that should be emphasised or are missing and should be included.

Greater emphasis on

- Literacy
- Reading advocacy
- The social importance of libraries
- Innovative ideas
- Creativity
- Clarity of purpose

Include

- Writing activities
- Methods of implementation and achieving improvements
- Alignment with government policies

Other proposals included a wider promotion of achievements made through SRS, a “virtual” meeting space for the three teams and a central online resource to deposit and share information and evidence.

4.5 Alignment with the national strategy for libraries, Ambition & Opportunity

In order to align with Ambition & Opportunity, the SRS vision statement can be broken down into five aims:

- 1 Contribute to health and wellbeing
- 2 Improve levels of literacy
- 3 Inspire reading across all interests and age groups
- 4 Draw communities together
- 5 Bring reading alive

Table 1 on page 9 shows the outcomes, strategic elements and aims of the SRS mapped against the six strategic aims of the national strategy. A full mapping of the SRS with Ambition & Opportunity and Scottish Government National Outcomes can be seen in Appendix 1.

Some SRS aims fit into more than one national strategy aim, therefore, they are repeated in the table. Even so, as can be seen above, not every one of the national strategic aims has an applicable corresponding SRS aim although there is a corresponding SRS outcome. In order to ensure that the refreshed SRS includes aims that entirely correspond to the national strategy, examining the approach of other nations to their reading strategy can provide useful suggestions. Therefore, collaborations between public and other sector libraries from other countries were examined to resolve the missing or weak aims.

4.5.1 Strategic Aim 2: Digital Inclusion

The Norwegian National Strategy for Libraries 2015-2018¹ includes a policy for the purchase of e-books and considers that they should be permanent features in a library’s collection. With the rise in popularity of e-books and e-book readers Norwegian libraries realise that some readers may prefer to read in a digital format and offer digital literacy classes to older people as part of their reading strategy².

4.5.2 Strategic Aim 5: Culture and Creativity

A language can be “brought to life” by promoting its use and supporting its writers. Norway and Wales are mindful of their linguistic cultural heritage. For that reason, Norwegian libraries hold Language Cafés for non-native speakers to improve their Norwegian. Wales’ Sixth Quality Framework for Libraries includes provision for “access to services, cultural activities and high quality resources

in the Welsh language”³. Facilitating events, groups and workshops in community languages will both strengthen a language and an individual’s literacy.

4.5.3 Strategic Aim 6: Excellent Public Services

Excellent customer service comes from having a well-trained and knowledgeable workforce especially in some specialist areas. In order that library staff can guide library users and help enhance literacy they should have the opportunity to attend training courses. For example, the Korean Republic renewed its Library Act and introduced a Reading Culture Promotion Act in 2006. Korea’s National Library holds Reading Class Workshop training targeted at children’s librarians so that public libraries can implement the policies from those acts⁴. Staff that achieve well at the workshops are given prestigious awards. In England and Wales the Society of Chief Librarians in partnership with The Reading Agency

Table 1 SRS aims, outcomes and elements mapped against Ambition & Opportunity

Strategic Aim A&O	Aims SRS (from vision)	Outcomes and elements SRS
Strategic Aim 1: Libraries promoting reading, literacy and learning	To inspire reading across all ages and interests To improve literacy levels To bring reading alive	To inspire reading across all interests, age-groups and abilities To encourage people to read widely, trying new genres and exploring new ways of sharing their reading experiences Support literacy development and increase the number of confident and capable readers
Strategic Aim 2: Digital inclusion	No applicable SRS aim	To encourage people to read exploring new ways of sharing their reading experiences
Strategic Aim 3: Economic wellbeing	To make closer communities	To encourage people to read widely trying new genres
Strategic Aim 4: Social wellbeing	To make closer communities To improve health and wellbeing	Commitment to work with national partners to deliver the strategy Recognise and support language and diversity Continuous development of shared evidence bank and advocacy statements illustrating social impact To contribute to the overall health and wellbeing of the individual
Strategic Aim 5: Culture and creativity	To bring reading alive Weak SRS aim	Recognise and support language and diversity
Strategic Aim 6: Excellent public services	No applicable SRS aim	Commitment to Reader Development Network, Young People's Strategic Group and Early Years Strategic Group Commitment of all authorities to the ongoing enhancement of the agreed baseline 100% of authorities offering agreed baseline activities and events

developed the “Libraries’ Universal Reading Offer” and is developing online training courses and resources for library staff to be better equipped to deliver the offer.

However well trained the workforce, they can only operate efficiently when they have easily available resources. The organisation of an event can be time consuming, therefore sharing experiences and resources cuts down time, effort and financial outlay. Easily accessible shared online toolkits and checklists are used by the Australian State of Victoria in support of their reading and literacy strategic framework⁵. Similarly, the UK’s Reading Agency provides online resources for library staff that support its various initiatives such as the Summer Reading Challenge or Reading Well (books on prescription)⁶.

Any strategy that is designed to improve a public service has to be monitored and assessed in order to understand

when goals are met and whether adaptations are needed. In order to track the progress of their reading initiatives, the State of Victoria public libraries “measure and monitor participation in and the impact of these activities...” and the Reading Agency has developed the Reading Outcomes Toolkit⁷, which provides guidance for the evaluation of reading promotion activities. For example, methods of gathering existing evidence for the personal outcomes of reading for pleasure; ways of evaluating the activity being offered; how to understand the impact of activities and to communicate that impact.

¹ <https://bibliotekutvikling.no/content/uploads/2016/09/LibraryStrategy-EnglishVersion.pdf>

² http://www.librariesireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Norwegian-perspective-on-public-libraries_Leikny-Haha-Indergaard.pdf

³ <http://gov.wales/docs/drah/publications/170331-connected-and-ambitious-libraries-en.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.ifla.org/past-wlic/2011/114-lee-en.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.slv.vic.gov.au/about-us/collaborations-affiliations/public-libraries/reading-literacy-strategic-framework>

⁶ <https://readingagency.org.uk/resources/2440/>

⁷ https://readingagency.org.uk/news/OutcomesFrameworkToolkit_FINAL.pdf

4.6 Delivering a Public Library Reading and Literacy Strategy

4.6.1 Documentation

To effectively and efficiently implement a national library reading strategy libraries must collaborate towards achieving the strategy goals. Working together ensures that effort used for developing promotions, organising events and producing resources is not duplicated and, by economies of scale, overall financial outlay is decreased. However, achieving a state where each library can deliver programmes and initiatives to the same level, certain strategic elements must be put into place:

- The strategy has to be clearly and unambiguously documented stating a focused vision and specific goals with achievable outcomes
- The need for the strategy has to be expressed
- The documentation must set out the management structure of how the strategy is developed and implemented: its administration and delivery framework
- The strategy should include measures for success

Jointly developed between the 47 public libraries and regional library corporations in Victoria, Australia, their reading and literacy strategic framework⁸ is an excellent example of such a clear approach. Targeted at a lay audience, the main document, "Reading and Literacy for All: A strategic framework for Victorian public libraries", sets out the framework, the reason for the framework, the vision, guiding principles, key goals, activities and the way that progress of the strategy will be assessed.

This is supplemented by further documents targeted at library practitioners: an in-depth industry report;

guidance and information on selecting or developing adult or early years reading programmes; evaluation checklists and case studies outlining best practice. Specific activities are mentioned as examples of the type of initiative of which individual libraries may want to be part. There is no baseline level of activity expressed, but the documents give very full guidance on how an individual library can implement the reading strategy. The Victorian strategy is part of Victoria State Library's collaborative programme with the public library network. To support the strategy the State Library also offers staff training and grants for adult literacy development.

4.6.2 Communication

Documentation of a strategy is useless unless its goals and principles are communicated with the practitioners expected to implement them. A degree of facilitation is necessary to oversee the wider communication and ongoing development of a strategy. As the participants in this study have stated uncertainty about internal and external communication of the SRS and that libraries are lacking capacity in staffing, then a solution could be found by creating a role of facilitator. Collaborative groups of libraries have appointed a staff member to administer the smooth running of the group. For example, South West Regional Library Services (SWRLS) is a cross sector library and cultural organisation in the South West of England. Although it is governed by a board of trustees it also engages a director to facilitate internal and external communication, co-ordination and liaison, administer the website and oversee activities⁹.

⁸ <https://www.slv.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/Reading-and-literacy-for-all-strategic-framework.pdf>

⁹ http://www.lboro.ac.uk/microsites/infosci/lisu/downloads/swrls_review_final_report.pdf



5 Future Shape of SRS

The purpose of this review of the SRS was to understand whether the implementation of the current strategy contributes to fostering literacy and learning for individual people across Scotland, as well as to identify ways that the strategy can be updated to reflect the current reading climate. Many positive aspects of the effect of having a strategy were uncovered but a general breakdown of the system of administering the strategy was identified.

The positive aspects of implementing a reading strategy for public libraries include the following points:

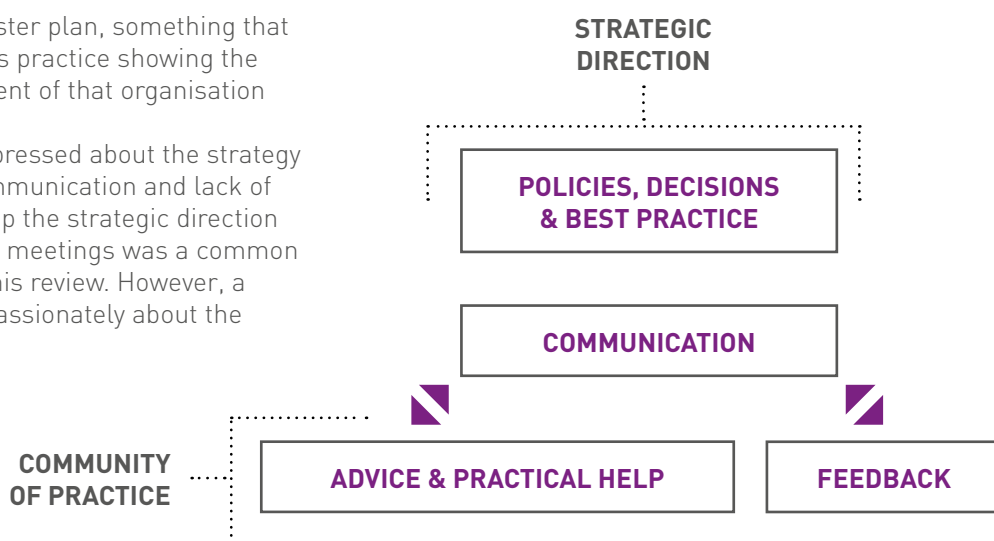
- **Justification** – it provides the justification for a library to hold the basic provision of holding bookbug sessions and for a more inventive event designed to attract a new audience, such as a Comic Con.
- **Support** - from management or local government, giving them a deeper understanding of the contribution of libraries to learning, health and wellbeing
- **Efficiency** - good business practice to share ideas, advice and resources
- **Equality** - for the library as well as for individuals, communities and society
- **Quality** – a documented strategy provides the means of a measurable, assessable benchmark
- **Cohesion** – the unintended consequence of implementing a strategy formed informal professional network which draws together staff working in libraries all across Scotland
- **Training** – it gives the basis for staff training and professional development
- **Advocacy** - it provides evidence to showcase what libraries are achieving
- **Informs** - tell all parties involved what libraries are expected to do and why they do it
- **Direction** – a strategy is a master plan, something that is necessary for good business practice showing the purpose and future development of that organisation

Contradictory opinions were expressed about the strategy process. On one hand, poor communication and lack of time and capacity to fully develop the strategic direction of the SRS through face-to-face meetings was a common concern to the participants of this review. However, a number of participants spoke passionately about the

informal network of librarians and library staff across Scotland that has been built up around the reading strategy. Similarly, through the reading strategy, strong partnerships have developed between libraries and other agencies such as the Scottish Book Trust.

Looking deeper into the situation it is apparent that the breakdown of the system is due to a knowledge management problem – the flow of information through the teams, the authorities and relevant partners. What is not being communicated and what is being communicated are the salient questions. Figure 1 depicts the problem; what is being communicated is advice, support, ideas and practical help through the informal network of 32 library authorities. What is not being communicated are policies, meeting decisions and examples of best practice, which impedes the strategic direction of the SRS. There is insufficient feedback on attempts to communicate which slows the flow of information in the teams.

Figure 1
Information flows of SRS teams



The solution to this problem is to shorten the chain of communication by using an information hub – a central point of communication where knowledge can be gathered and shared. In order for a reading strategy to grow and develop this situation has to be resolved as a matter of priority and some suggestions are made below.

The existence of a formal, collaborative policy for reading promotion and literacy enhancement for all Scottish public libraries has been shown to empower libraries. The belief that libraries feel ownership of the current Scottish Reading Strategy for Public Libraries is an essential part of its success. Any development or change to the strategy has to be willingly adopted and ratified by representatives of the libraries. Therefore, the recommendations given in this report are offered as suggestions to be discussed before any implementation.

Vision aims and objectives

In order to align the SRS to Ambition & Opportunity and the government national outcomes it is recommended that the vision statement of the Scottish Reading Strategy should be amended as follows:

To promote a trusted, consistent service across all Scottish public libraries which enriches all individuals and society

And the following mission statement added:

To give all individuals and communities in Scotland the power to enhance their literacy through free access to resources and by developing and sharing innovative practises

With the aims:

Enriching Every Individual

To be innovative advocates for literacy and self-motivated learning by inspiring readers and promoting reading and writing

To enable all readers to freely access and read literature in digital format

To enrich individuals' literacy so that they can achieve their economic potential

Enriching Society

To provide access to literature, events and resources that enrich the health and social wellbeing of people and communities in Scotland

To foster creativity and understanding of arts and culture found in Scotland

To develop a high quality, continually improving, efficient library service which is responsive to local people's literacy and learning needs

Objectives to meet each of the aims can be seen in the draft framework for delivery (Appendix 2).

5.1 Recommendations

- Framework for delivery** (Appendix 2) – the draft framework for delivery has taken into account: the mapping of the SRS with the Ambition & Opportunity and government national outcomes (Appendix 1); participant's views and suggestions of additions to the SRS; ideas taken from the reading strategies of other nations; and the quality indicators of How Good is Our Public Library Service? It is recommended that this draft framework is duly considered and fully discussed by the SRS strategic teams and amendments made as seen fit before ratification of the refreshed strategy.
- Training and support** – it is essential to offer training for staff who will be implementing the framework. Annual training workshops for the strategic team members are well received. It is recommended that face to face training is supplemented by online training that can be accessed at any point in time, for example, this could be delivered in collaboration with partners such as Scottish Book Trust or CILIPS. Individuals feel supported by the informal network that has developed around the SRS and this should remain informal as it is working well as a community of practice.
- Documentation** – the work achieved by libraries to enhance a nation's literacy is not always recognised. Communicating the strategy to a lay audience is vital to gain recognition and support. It is recommended that documentation of the refreshed strategy consist of:

► A main document suitable for any audience that clearly narrates: reasons for a public library reading strategy; its overall goals; the types of activities; the method of implementation: and evaluation of the strategy.

► Supporting documents targeted at library professionals setting out the framework for delivery, details of activities and the delivery infrastructure.

The infrastructure needed to deliver a public libraries strategy for literacy and reading was thought to be of concern. However, many aspects of the current infrastructure are working well and have done so for the past three years. The individual teams have focused objectives and produce action plans which are linked to relevant policies with measurable outcomes that are incrementally implementing the strategy, although not as fast as anticipated. Libraries are staging innovative events and effectively partner the Scottish Book Trust to deliver Bookbug Sessions and events for Book Week Scotland. The problem lies with the current capacity of the libraries and consequently the capability of the strategic teams to prioritise their efforts, sustain innovation and carry forward the continuing development of SRS.

• **Strategic team structure** – as each of the three teams requires a representative from each of the 32 authorities there are theoretically 96 library staff involved with the administration of the strategy. It is understandably challenging, time consuming and takes effort to organise so many members even with the buddying system of library clusters. It is recommended that this structure is scrutinised and the following options are considered:

► Dispense with the three team system entirely and set up reading champions, one for each authority, similar to the digital champions, which administer and support the national digital programmes (32 representatives). The advantages could be smoother team organisation, inter team communication and higher team engagement. The disadvantage would be losing the specialisations of early years, young people and adult.

► Change the buddying clusters into local “sub-groups” of geographically close members. Consider increasing the size of the sub-group and rotate meeting attendance between each sub-group member. Regularly change meeting locations to allow easier attendance. The advantage would be greater engagement of members and the preservation of team specialisms. The disadvantage would be inconsistency - different individuals at each meeting, which would need strong communication within each sub-group.

► Do not change the team structure. Complete reorganisation of the structure could be more disruptive than leaving the current system as it is and dealing with issues of meeting attendance and communication.

• **Capacity** – team members are finding face-to-face meeting attendance and fulfilling their administrative role in the strategic teams difficult due to the responsibilities and priorities at their place of work. In order to release capacity, it is recommended that virtual conferencing is encouraged and increased to supplement face-to-face meetings. Similarly, the organisation of individual events is time-consuming and can result in duplication of effort over all the libraries. When an interesting and innovative event or activity is devised by a library, this should be shared with other libraries as best practice or as a toolkit. It is recommended that examples of best practice and toolkits of events are placed on a central online resource.

• **Communication and feedback** – confirming that internal communications are successfully passed between individual libraries, the strategic team and strategic partners, is proving to be difficult and information is not being sufficiently circulated. Similarly there is a feeling that external communication and advocacy of the power of libraries to influence literacy is not occurring. In order to facilitate internal and promote external communication as well as to increase capacity and reassign working hours it is recommended that:

► A central online resource is developed which can be used to communicate meeting minutes, strategic decisions, a calendar of events, examples of best practice, staff resources, toolkits of events, useful links and a public facing element that displays the achievements of libraries working with the Scottish public libraries strategy for literacy and reading. A public facing part of this resource would help to communicate the good practice that is already happening in libraries to a much wider audience.

► The role of facilitator is created as an independent paid employee. The post could be part-time; a secondment opportunity or a permanent position. The responsibilities of the post holder would include: overseeing the general implementation of the strategy; liaison between libraries, partners and strategic teams: advocacy for the strategy and Scottish libraries; administration of the online resource including collecting and collating examples of best practice and useful resources.

Further research is also needed to discover what is actually happening in libraries demonstrating the reading strategy in action and to measure the success of the strategy outcomes.

5.2 Recommendations summarised in order of priority

- Adopt the revised vision, mission, aims and objectives of the draft framework for the reading strategy (Appendix 2)
- Produce documentation that clearly articulates the concepts of the reading strategy to lay and professional audiences
- Set up a dedicated website - online resource for the reading strategy in order to provide toolkits, resources and aid communication and advocacy
- Create a paid position for a strategy facilitator to provide cohesion, advocacy and oversight and to increase capacity
- Consider options for developing the strategic team structure

5.3 Further work

In order to achieve the recommendations the following further work should be carried out:

A scoping exercise to select the most appropriate online resource and video conferencing software

Research into all the ways that individual Scottish libraries are enhancing literacy

Devising an annual survey for Scottish libraries to demonstrate their compliance with the strategy and to measure the success of the outcomes





6 Appendix 1

Aims and outcomes of the SRS mapped against Ambition and Opportunity and Scottish Government National Outcomes

In order to align the refreshed Scottish Reading Strategy with the latest policies and initiatives the following comparison tables were created. The first table takes the mission and vision statements from the Ambition and Opportunity and compares them with the vision statement of the current Scottish Reading Strategy for Public Libraries to devise mission and vision statements for the new strategy.

Vision Ambition & Opportunity

Scotland's public libraries are trusted guides connecting all of our people to the world's possibilities and opportunities

Vision SRS

Through free access to the life enriching creative activity of reading, contribute to the health and wellbeing, improved levels of literacy, inspiring reading across all interests and age groups, drawing communities together to bring reading alive

Proposed rewrite

To promote a trusted, consistent service across all Scottish libraries which enriches individuals and society

Mission Ambition & Opportunity

Scotland's public libraries are part of a shared civic ambition to fulfil the potential of individuals and communities

To give all individuals and communities in Scotland the power to enhance their literacy through free access to resources and by developing and sharing innovative practises

The next table compares the strategic aims, recommendations and outcomes of Ambition & Opportunity; the aims, outcomes and strategic elements of the current SRS and maps them against the 16 Scottish Government National Outcomes. The mapping exercise revealed gaps in the SRS and provided the blueprint for the draft framework for delivery.

Strategic Aim Ambition & Opportunity	Recommendations Ambition & Opportunity	Aims SRS (from vision)	Outcomes Ambition & Opportunity	Outcomes and elements SRS	Government National Outcomes
Strategic Aim 1: Libraries promoting reading, literacy and learning	To ensure access to library services for all citizens using new technology	To inspire reading across all ages and interests	We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society	To inspire reading across all interests, age-groups and abilities	Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk
	To develop and promote the core offer from public libraries in Scotland			To encourage people to read widely trying new genres and exploring new ways of sharing their reading experiences	Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens
		To improve literacy levels	We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation	Support literacy development and increase the number of confident and capable readers	We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger
		To bring reading alive			Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens

Strategic Aim Ambition & Opportunity	Recommendations Ambition & Opportunity	Aims SRS (from vision)	Outcomes Ambition & Opportunity	Outcomes and elements SRS	Government National Outcomes
Strategic Aim 2: Digital inclusion	Develop Scotland-wide digital access resources			To encourage people to read exploring new ways of sharing their reading experiences	We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk
	Ensure Wi-Fi is available and accessible in all public libraries				
Strategic Aim 3: Economic wellbeing	Develop partnerships with advice services, job centres and enterprise organisations	To make closer communities	We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people		We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger Our people are able to maintain their independence as they get older and are able to access appropriate support when they need it
	Mainstream activities to improve STEM skills			To encourage people to read widely trying new genres	We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society
	Test and replicate provision of co-working spaces for small business				We live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe

Strategic Aim Ambition & Opportunity	Recommendations Ambition & Opportunity	Aims SRS (from vision)	Outcomes Ambition & Opportunity	Outcomes and elements SRS	Government National Outcomes
Strategic Aim 4: Social wellbeing	Create strong national, regional and local partnerships with all public services and community planning partners	To make closer communities	We live longer, healthier lives. We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk	Commitment to work with national partners to deliver the strategy	We live longer, healthier lives We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others Our people are able to maintain their independence as they get older and are able to access appropriate support when they need it
	Share best practice on how to create effective and accessible public service or community hubs			Recognise and support language and diversity	We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society
	Build on current practice to become champions of community engagement and empowerment			Continuous development of shared evidence bank and advocacy statements illustrating social impact	We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk Our people are able to maintain their independence as they get older and are able to access appropriate support when they need it
	Develop guidelines on the appropriate use of volunteers			To contribute to the overall health and wellbeing of the individual	We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk Our people are able to maintain their independence as they get older and are able to access appropriate support when they need it
		To improve health and wellbeing			

Strategic Aim Ambition & Opportunity	Recommendations Ambition & Opportunity	Aims SRS (from vision)	Outcomes Ambition & Opportunity	Outcomes and elements SRS	Government National Outcomes
Strategic Aim 5: Culture and creativity	Develop and strengthen national, regional and local partnerships with arts and culture organisations Pilot a collaborative venture to provide access to e-books from Scottish publishers Support librarians to become effective voices for freedom of information and expression	To bring reading alive	We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity	Recognise and support language and diversity	We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others
Strategic Aim 6: Excellent public services	Continue to develop methods for reporting on the impact and outcomes of library activities through “How Good Is Our Public Library Service?”		Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people’s needs	Commitment to Reader Development Network, Young People’s Strategic Group and Early Years Strategic Group Commitment of all authorities to the ongoing enhancement of the agreed baseline	We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation

	Develop and implement a learning and development programme for all library staff				
	Explore alternative approaches to generating financial investment				We live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe
	Engage proactively with models for efficient procurement of goods and services at National Level			100% of authorities offering agreed baseline activities and events	
					We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations
					We reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need

7 Appendix 2: Draft framework for delivery

The following draft framework for the delivery of the strategy was compiled by taking a number of things into account. Its basis was the mapping of the SRS with Ambition & Opportunity and Scottish Government National Outcomes (Appendix 1). Onto that framework, participant's views and suggestions for additions to the SRS were taken into consideration. In order to find concepts to support new aims and objectives that were missing in the original strategy and to align the refreshed strategy with the current national strategy, the national strategies, reading strategies and quality outcomes from other countries were examined. Measurable outcomes matching each objective have been written, with an example of how the success of each outcome could be measured. Finally the measures of success were matched to the quality indicators of How Good is Our Public Library Service?

Scottish Public Library Reading Strategy aims

Linked to national strategy aims

To reach the objective that every Scottish public library will:

Measurable outcomes

Example measures of success (per year)
Linked to How Good is Our Public Library Service? Quality Indicators

ENRICHING EVERY INDIVIDUAL

Complying with national strategy aim 1

To be innovative advocates for literacy and self-motivated learning by inspiring readers and promoting reading and writing

Host literature events, performances and promotions that reach out to all interests, ages, abilities and communities in their area
Collaborate with government initiatives and organisations that work to develop literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing
Provide access to a broad selection of literature in formats suitable for different reading preferences, abilities and learning styles
Encourage readers to share their reading experiences in a variety of ways

Each individual living in Scotland will have the opportunity to attend specially planned events and access age appropriate resources
Strong collaboration with partners will mean that individuals will have the confidence to read, improve their literacy and increase their self esteem
Harder to reach individuals and communities will feel included in the library service and society as a whole
Anyone using a Scottish library can extend their choice of author, subject or genre to their preferred reading format
Anyone using a Scottish library can express their reading experiences virtually or in person in a group or individually

Complying with Quality Indicator 2 - Readers Experience

Total audience numbers for events in Scottish libraries increase by X%
Bookbug sessions increase X% across Scotland
X libraries offer Read, Write, Count or activities
CIPFA data shows increase of X% hard to reach individuals use library services across Scotland
PLR stats indicate an increased range of literature borrowed in Scottish libraries
X% of Scottish libraries organise reading groups and display reader's book reviews

<p><i>Complying with national strategy aim 2</i></p> <p>To enable all readers to freely access and read literature in digital format</p>	<p>Provide access to a range of e-books and other e-literature</p> <p>Guide readers to use e-books, e-readers and relevant apps</p>	<p>Anyone using a Scottish library can extend their choice of author, subject or genre and read it in their preferred reading format</p> <p>More individuals read e-books and e-zines</p>	<p><i>Complying with Quality Indicator 3 - Learning Culture</i></p> <p>The number of e-books borrowed has increased by X%</p>
<p><i>Complying with national strategy aim 3</i></p> <p>To enrich individuals' literacy so that they can achieve their economic potential</p>	<p>Host courses or tuition to improve writing and comprehension for business uses</p> <p>Provide access to literature relevant to small businesses and STEM subjects</p>	<p>Increase understanding about business, Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths</p>	<p><i>Complying with Quality Indicator 3 - Learning Culture</i></p> <p>All Scottish libraries develop partnerships with local FE colleges, universities and education providers</p>
<p>ENRICHING SOCIETY</p>			
<p><i>Complying with national strategy aim 4</i></p> <p>To provide access to literature, events and resources that enrich the health and social wellbeing of people and communities in Scotland</p>	<p>Ensure that individuals who are unable to visit a static library have access to a library outreach service</p> <p>Treat volunteers that help with reading promotion and literary events in accordance with national strategy guidelines</p> <p>Have bibliotherapy resources and literature for all ages to read that helps individuals develop life skills and emotional resilience</p>	<p>Harder to reach individuals and communities will feel included in the library service and society as a whole</p> <p>The individuals who volunteer will gain higher self-esteem and competencies</p> <p>Individuals will gain knowledge of their own conditions and how they can be managed</p> <p>Parents and carers will gain knowledge and confidence in caring for their children</p> <p>More children will understand and be able to express their own emotions</p>	<p><i>Complying with Quality Indicators: 2 - Readers experience; 3 - Learning Culture; 4 - Individual and community engagement</i></p> <p>Volunteers volunteer over a longer time period – X% increase of volunteer hours shown in CIPFA report</p> <p>X more bibliotherapy and parenting books are borrowed</p>

<p>Scottish Public Library Reading Strategy aims <i>Linked to national strategy aims</i></p>	<p>To reach the objective that every Scottish public library will:</p>	<p>Measurable outcomes</p>
<p><i>Complying with national strategy aim 5</i></p> <p>To foster creativity and understanding of arts, culture and languages found in Scotland</p>	<p>Bring reading alive by facilitating arts, culture and creative events, groups and workshops that foster reading and writing in English and other community languages</p> <p>Support their local writers and publishers by promoting and providing access to their work</p>	<p><i>Complying with Quality Indicators: 2 - Readers Experience; 3 - Learning Culture; 4 - Individual and community, engagement</i></p> <p>Live events attract X% greater audiences</p> <p>X% more literature in community languages or by local authors are borrowed</p>
<p><i>Complying with national strategy aim 6</i></p> <p>To develop a high quality, continually improving, efficient library service which is responsive to local people's literacy and learning needs</p>	<p>Ensure that staff are given the training they need to implement the Scottish Reading Strategy</p> <p>Contribute to and take information, advice, best practice and toolkits from a Scottish Reading Strategy shared online resource</p> <p>Annually measure the success and impact of the aims and objectives of the Scottish Reading Strategy</p>	<p><i>Complying with Quality Indicators: 1 - Staff knowledge, interaction and user support; 2 - Readers Experience; 3 - Learning Culture; 5 - Vision Strategy and continuous improvement</i></p> <p>Customers report they have</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadened their reading tastes • Can independently access the material that they want to read • Confidently use digital reading formats <p>A flourishing online sharing resource is well used by the staff of Scottish libraries</p> <p>Scottish libraries perform at levels 5 -6 of HGIOPLS</p>



SCOTTISH READING STRATEGY

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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