ANNUAL REVIEW 2019
Enriching lives through libraries
FOREWORD

The Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC) has undergone a period of rapid change and growth during 2018/19.

The SLIC Board held its annual Away Day in Dundee in January 2019. This enabled the Board to reflect on the changing nature of the organisation, most notably the increased workload for ‘Team SLIC’ as a result of more active engagement with school libraries and the increased number of projects being delivered through the public library strategy. Partnership working is one of SLIC’s key priorities and, through the expansion of the organisation, partnerships have been forged with new communities of interest, such as the education sector and the business community.

Vibrant Libraries, Thriving Schools: A National Strategy for School Libraries 2018-2023 was published in September 2018. This is not only the first national strategy for school libraries in Scotland, but also a first for the UK. Vibrant Libraries, Thriving Schools was supported by Martina McChrystal, Director of Library Services, University of Glasgow, who chaired the School Library Advisory Group. The development of the strategy saw the Advisory Group visit schools and libraries across Scotland, speak to pupils to learn firsthand what their school libraries mean to them and learn from librarians and teaching staff about the impact a good school library makes to the learner journey.

SLIC was proud to support the development of the national strategy for school libraries. It was further endorsement of the work SLIC carries out when the Scottish Government commissioned SLIC to provide the secretariat for the Advisory Group, and it has subsequently played a pivotal role in the implementation of the strategy.

SLIC also administers the £450,000 School Library Improvement Fund (SLIF) on behalf of the Scottish Government. Deputy First Minister Mr John Swinney visited Grangemouth High School to announce the SLIF projects for 2018. SLIC was pleased to support the development of the national strategy for school libraries in Scotland, but also a first for the UK. Vibrant Libraries, Thriving Schools was supported by Martina McChrystal, Director of Library Services, University of Glasgow, who chaired the School Library Advisory Group. The development of the strategy saw the Advisory Group visit schools and libraries across Scotland, speak to pupils to learn firsthand what their school libraries mean to them and learn from librarians and teaching staff about the impact a good school library makes to the learner journey.

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Supporting public libraries is a core part of SLIC’s work, with projects such as the Scottish Coworking Network being introduced and a pilot project coming to life. The Wikimedian in Residence initiative was further developed during 2018/19 and produced an online package of tools for SLIC members to use moving forward.

Recognising the role which SLIC plays in supporting member organisations, funding was approved to develop a digital training programme for public library staff to support their role in helping the public improve their digital skills.

The work which SLIC enables for public libraries was further enhanced by the distribution of the £450,000 Public Library Improvement Fund (PLIF), which SLIC administers on behalf of the Scottish Government. Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs Ms Fiona Hyslop announced the PLIF awards at the John Gray Centre in Haddington.

A key highlight of the year was the publication of a review of Scotland’s mobile libraries. The Libraries on the Move research delved into the impact mobile libraries make to the communities in which they operate. This has led to both a recognition and appreciation of this valuable service, which will be celebrated later this year with Scotland’s first Mobile Libraries Day.

SLIC works with partners across the culture sector in Scotland and was pleased to collaborate with colleagues on the events which marked the centenary of one of Scotland’s greatest writers, Dame Muriel Spark. First Minister Ms Nicola Sturgeon announced a donation of a complete collection of Muriel Spark novels to every public library in Scotland.

Highlighting the cultural calendar and ensuring libraries are aware of key dates for national initiatives is central to the organisation’s communications plan. An example of support for this was on World Book Day when the Minister for Children and Young People Ms Maree Todd visited Edinburgh Central Library with pupils from a local primary school to mark the occasion.

SLIC supports its membership in several ways, one of which is encouraging collaboration between the different membership groups. SLIC was pleased to support a range of Innovation and Development Fund (IDF) applications this year that involved collaboration and partnership working. One which stood out is the collaborative approach from the higher education-led project, Creative Conversations, which brought together a range of partners from academic libraries, public libraries and other stakeholder groups.

The SLIC Board members have given their time generously, not only attending Board meetings but also to support the Staffing and Remuneration Subcommittee and the Funding Subcommittee, which approves applications to the PLIF, SLIF and IDF. I would like to thank Board members for their time, diligence and expertise, which have assisted taking SLIC forward.

During 2018/19, SLIC expanded to reflect the increased remit. I would like to thank our Chief Executive and ‘Team SLIC’ for their commitment and dedication through this period of change and growth.

Ian Ruthven
Chair, SLIC Board
HIGHLIGHTS

We provide leadership, focus and support to our membership, which includes public library services, libraries in schools, colleges and universities, and a range of specialist information services.

Our activity is shaped by five key priorities:

Advocacy | Standards | Innovation | Partnership | Funding

Throughout the year, a range of activities and initiatives have been delivered in partnership with members and other strategic organisations to meet these priorities. In this section, we have provided a summary of some of our key projects undertaken during the 2018/19 financial year.

ADVOCACY

Vibrant Libraries, Thriving Schools
We played a pivotal role in the development of Scotland’s first national school library strategy. Vibrant Libraries, Thriving Schools was launched in September 2018, designed to improve literacy and boost attainment among children and young people aged 3 to 18.

Headteachers, teaching staff, school librarians and school pupils across Scotland were consulted on the impact of school libraries and their testimonies helped to shape the strategy. The five-year strategy includes 20 action points for decision makers at local and national government and in schools to support the improvement of literacy and numeracy, boost attainment across the curriculum, and enable opportunities for family learning.

Ambition & Opportunity
Throughout the year, we have continued to lead on the implementation of the national public library strategy. We are encouraged by the demonstration of a strong commitment to public library services in Scotland. Additional funding has been allocated towards modernising the library service offer through a range of initiatives, including the expansion of Code Clubs for children and the roll-out of a film education programme.

Now in its fourth year, a refresh of the strategy has been developed to ensure activity continues to strengthen and promote the role that public libraries play in communities across the country.

Libraries on the Move
In February 2019, we published a report on mobile library services in Scotland. The Libraries on the Move report provides a comprehensive overview of the use and impact of mobile libraries.

There are 49 mobile libraries operating from 22 local authorities or cultural trusts across Scotland. The research found that 98% of users find the service to be very or extremely valuable. It was described as a “lifeline” and it impacts significantly on people’s lives particularly in terms of loneliness and social isolation, health and wellbeing, learning and development, culture, and children’s literacy.

The report was shared with chief executives, directors of finance and council leaders. During 2018/19, six new mobile library vehicles were commissioned for Scotland.

Members survey
A member survey, conducted in December 2018, indicated high levels of satisfaction among our members, who said that the information, support and funding provided by SLIC is particularly helpful to them. The feedback will be used to review our services and help us continue to improve how we do things.
STANDARDS

How Good Is Our Public Library Service?

The How Good Is Our Public Library Service? (HGIOPLS) self-assessment tool has been adopted by public libraries as a method of evaluating the quality and effectiveness of their service provision. It is now a standard part of the application process for the Public Library Improvement Fund (PLIF), and it sits alongside Ambition & Opportunity as a cornerstone of enhancing Scotland’s public libraries.

Two peer reviews took place during 2018/19, receiving ‘good’ and ‘very good’ ratings. Further reviews are planned for 2019/20.

How Good Is Our School Library?

Since the launch of Vibrant Libraries, Thriving Schools, the national school library strategy, the How Good Is Our School Library? (HGIOSL) framework has been adopted by Education Scotland as part of the school inspection regime. We worked with Education Scotland to develop the tool to help assess how school libraries impact on school improvement and the Curriculum for Excellence. It is planned that, over time, this will further contribute to improving the school library offer across Scotland.

Scottish Reading Strategy

In February 2019, we launched a refreshed Scottish Reading Strategy, which was first published in 2014 with a commitment from every library authority in Scotland to deliver a consistent, standardised service to promote reading and literacy. We commissioned the City of Birmingham University to conduct a review of the impact of the strategy and to update it to ensure it is aligned with the current reading landscape in Scotland, and ensure it contributes to the public library strategy, Ambition & Opportunity.

The new strategy outlines a vision to empower all individuals and communities in Scotland to improve their literacy through free access to resources, and by developing and sharing innovative practices. It was launched at an event at AK Bell Library in Perth, allowing practitioners the opportunity to attend workshops and discuss how to implement the strategy locally.

Funding evaluation

An evaluation study found that grants awarded through the Public Library Improvement Fund (PLIF) and the School Library Improvement Fund (SLIF) are delivering positive outcomes for libraries, staff and users. The study, conducted by research consultancy, Blake Stevenson, reported that the projects funded had achieved positive results with relatively small investments.
INNOVATION

Health and libraries
There is growing recognition of the valuable role libraries play in improving health literacy and supporting people to understand and manage their own health and wellbeing. To build on this, we have commissioned independent research to establish the range of health-related services provided by libraries and to identify the benefits that these services are delivering to individuals and communities. The project is due to report in late 2019.

Digital training
We received £110,000 from the Scottish Government Digital Directorate to improve digital skills among frontline library staff. We will develop a national digital training project to equip staff with the skills they need to teach digital skills to local communities.

The project will involve public library services, the digital champions network and other key stakeholders to develop a national training needs assessment; to focus on content creation; increase capacity through hosting arrangements in order to meet the needs of a fully functioning national training solution; and develop content on emerging technology trends facing library staff.

Every Child A Library Member
Work continued on developing the Every Child A Library Member project, which aims to introduce library membership at key stages throughout the early years. All 32 local authorities in Scotland are committed to the project and are working with SLIC to deliver it as part of the Scottish Government’s Programme for Government. Our project team has conducted a global literature review and has surveyed and visited local library services to inform the outputs from the project. A report will be published in late 2019.

Scottish Coworking Network
We launched the Scottish Coworking Network in late 2018 with the first hub at Dunfermline Carnegie Library and Galleries, using a £150,700 grant from the Scottish Government’s Digital Directorate. The hubs are designed to inspire and support entrepreneurs and small businesses with dedicated space to work, meet and collaborate. During 2018/19, a hub opened in Edinburgh, with more hubs due to open in Troon, Inverness and Dundee during 2019.

An independent evaluation of the project will be conducted to review the impact of the hubs and establish a plan for the future of the concept at libraries across Scotland.

Wikimedian in Residence
The 18-month Wikimedian in Residence project, which started in May 2017, concluded during 2018/19 and has established public libraries as quality content creators in the digital sphere, providing open access to freely usable content about Scottish culture.

The project was the first of its kind to place a Wikimedian in public libraries. Eighteen public library services took part and staff received comprehensive training to deliver edit-a-thons. In addition, ‘train the trainer’ teams have been established, equipping more libraries with the knowledge to host their own Wikimedia events in future.
Muriel Spark books for every library
To mark Muriel Spark centenary celebrations, we invited the First Minister Ms Nicola Sturgeon to announce a donation of a complete set of the internationally recognised author’s novels to every public library in Scotland. More than 11,000 books were delivered to libraries throughout the country in a £90,000 investment funded by the Scottish Government and the People’s Postcode Lottery.

The announcement took place in November 2018 at Loanhead Library as part of the Muriel Spark 100 programme of events and in partnership with the Scottish Book Trust, Creative Scotland and Birlinn/Polygon publishing.

Librarians from Argentina
In October 2018, we welcomed a delegation of librarians from Argentina to showcase Scotland’s library landscape. We arranged for them to visit a range of places and organisations, including Cardonald Library, the National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh Central Library, the CILIPS Autumn Gathering, University of Edinburgh Library, the Scottish Poetry Library, and the Scottish Book Trust. In their post-visit report, the delegation commented on the warm welcome they had received across Scotland.

BBC Scotland
Our partnership with BBC Scotland continued to strengthen throughout 2018/19 with several initiatives, including celebratory social media activity to mark the 100th centenary of Muriel Spark’s birth, the 20th anniversary of Harry Potter and Jane Austen bicentenary celebrations.

New partners
Partnership working for SLIC increased to include organisations in the education sector as a result of the development of Vibrant Libraries, Thriving Schools, and the business community as a result of the introduction of the Scottish Coworking Network hubs in public libraries. This reflects the expanding reach of SLIC activity.
Public Library Improvement Fund
The Scottish Government made £450,000 available for the Public Library Improvement Fund (PLIF) 2018/19, which SLIC administered. Nine projects were delivered through 24 public library services, including a project to tackle loneliness and social isolation through virtual reality technology; a new service model to connect librarians, citizens, healthcare staff and third sector organisations to support self-management, shared decision-making and health literacy; and an initiative to instil a love of reading amongst pupils with low literacy levels by using therapy dogs during reading sessions.

Every project was aligned to at least one of the six strategic aims of Ambition and Opportunity.

School Library Improvement Fund
We awarded 39 grants from the £450,000 School Library Improvement Fund (SLIF), which we administer on behalf of the Scottish Government. Successful projects included a partnership with Morton FC to encourage reluctant readers to engage more with reading through their love of football; an information literacy programme with a diverse range of digital and non-digital learning activities; and a project to promote graphic novels as a format to improve literacy skills.

Innovation and Development Fund
We awarded £33,200 to four projects at further and higher education libraries to support innovation and development within this sector. Forth Valley College, the National Library of Scotland, the Scottish Poetry Library, and the University of St Andrews Library were successful in receiving funding.

Conference bursaries
We provided bursaries to staff at member institutions to enable them to attend key library sector conferences and events as personal development opportunities. Public library and school library staff were supported to attend the annual Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals in Scotland (CILIPS) conference. Public library managers also received bursaries to attend the annual EDGE conference and the International Internet Librarians conference.

SLIC funding newsletter
The SLIC funding e-newsletter continues to be a popular service among members. Members have told us, through a recent member survey, that they use the newsletter to identify sources of funding and many went on to be successful in securing that funding.

SLIC annual showcase
We held our annual showcase in November 2018 at the AK Bell Library in Perth, with a focus on the Year of Young People 2018. We invited the director of the Children’s University Scotland to deliver the keynote speech and members also got to hear about our partnership work with Young Scot and details of the range of innovative projects funded by PLIF, SLIF and IDF.

Health and Wellbeing event
In October 2018, we held a health and wellbeing event in partnership with The Alliance and the NHS to celebrate the successful collaboration between public libraries and the health sector. Public library staff and NHS librarians attended the event to showcase activities delivered to date and to pave the way for future partnership working.

Publishing and Libraries Day
We held an event with Publishing Scotland in January 2019 to bring together Scottish publishers and librarians, offering them the chance to network and learn more about each other’s work and priorities.
FINANCIAL REVIEW

TEAM HEADCOUNT
- increased from 8 to 9

CORE INCOME
- increased from £373,143 to £455,926

RESTRICTED INCOME
- increased from £779,256 to £1,010,000

CORE GRANT
- maintained at £205,000

Additional funding
- £110,000
  - Digital Training Project
- £450,000
  - Public Library Improvement Fund
- £450,000
  - School Library Improvement Fund
- £159,000
  - School Library Support

SLIC BOARD

Trustees
- Ian Ruthven, Chair
- Susan Ashworth (appointed 20 June 2018)
- Fiona Clark
- Fiona Dakers
- Carole Gray (resigned 2 November 2018)
- Emma Harvey (appointed 23 November 2018)
- Kate Ho
- Eleanor Logan (resigned 4 March 2019)
- Abigail Mawhirt
- Kenneth McKinlay
- Sha Nazir
- Peter Reid
- John Scally
- Alison Stevenson (appointed 9 November 2018)
- Ann Wales
- Dilys Young (resigned 10 November 2018)