



# Forward

## Scotland's Public Library Strategy 2021-2025



“Inspiring individuals and communities to reach their full potential through innovation and investment in Scotland’s public libraries.”

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# Introduction: Advisory Group Chair



Jeanette Castle

I was honoured to be asked to chair the Public Library Strategy Advisory Group and to facilitate the conversations that helped shape the vision set out in **Forward: Scotland's Public Library Strategy 2021-2025**.

The development of the strategy involved virtual meetings and library visits due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Rather than hinder the process it opened the dialogue to a wide audience and highlighted the strength of the global library network and the generous and co-operative nature of the profession.

The Advisory Group brought together a range of people from across the library sectors and stakeholder organisations to examine the emerging trends and issues facing public libraries as well as broader societal issues. The group met over three informative and inspiring sessions, each of which focused in turn on the overarching themes of People, Place and Partnership. A programme of virtual visits provided practical examples of innovation and best practice.

The Advisory Group meetings highlighted common goals for members and provided opportunity for collaboration as part of a broader societal mission to help communities reset and thrive. Library staff across Scotland demonstrated their commitment to stay connected to their communities during lockdown, to really think outside the box and to design new models of delivery.

**Forward: Scotland's Public Library Strategy 2021-2025** is a bold new vision for libraries in Scotland. It builds on strong foundations and demonstrates that public libraries are the cornerstone of communities. The impact which public libraries will make as a result of this strategy will support community cohesion over the coming years, build capacity and promote wellbeing.

I would like to thank the Advisory Group members, the Scottish Government, COSLA and SLIC for their time, commitment, and invaluable input to the development and production of this strategy.



# Sustainable Development Goals

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals are a global call to action to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all by 2030. **Forward: Scotland's Public Library Strategy 2021-2025** will contribute towards the following goals:

## THE GLOBAL GOALS



# Executive Summary

## Forward: A Public Library Strategy for Scotland 2021-2025

clearly marks the direction of travel for Scotland's public libraries. It is the result of a comprehensive research and consultation process, global in reach yet firmly focused on the needs of individuals and communities in Scotland.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, this strategy embraces the collective desire to not simply return to normal but to do things differently, more efficiently, and more sustainably. Informed and shaped by key national policies and priorities, it places libraries at the heart of recovery. Three key themes underpin the vision for public libraries in Scotland from 2021-2025:



## People

Libraries will support people and communities to reach their full potential and celebrate the unique skill set of staff.

## Place

Libraries will be recognised as both valued places and place makers, with community led design at the heart.

## Partnership

Libraries will deliver on local and national priorities through a strategic approach to collaboration and partnership.

# Strategic Aims

## People

**1.1** Embed libraries as lead contributors to reading and literacy by closing the learning gap in communities, through national programmes and local initiatives.

**1.2** Improve wellbeing and support post COVID-19 recovery with programmes which target health, economic growth, and strengthen communities.

**1.3** Encourage active citizenship through access to trusted, accurate information which empowers communities to make informed decisions.

**1.4** Equip library staff with the skills to deliver a progressive library service and nurture leaders at all levels.

**1.5** Reflect the rich and diverse communities in both library resources and programming to make them accessible to all.

## Place

**2.1** Deploy people-centred design principles and decision making to ensure service development is collaborative.

**2.2** Design library services which reach the heart of communities and engage with new audiences.

**2.3** Ensure the digital and physical space are blended to create a high-quality offer responsive to evolving needs.

**2.4** Curate a diverse cultural offer which celebrates local and national heritage and encourages community led experiences.

**2.5** Explore new ways to support business start-ups, economic growth and stimulate co-production.

## Partnership

**3.1** Develop partnerships which support more resilient, fairer, healthier communities.

**3.2** Amplify the voice of public libraries through inclusive communication to ensure key messaging reaches all stakeholders.

**3.3** Collaborate with partners to contribute towards the sustainable development agenda for 2030.

**3.4** Explore sustainable investment opportunities and preventative spend impact whilst demonstrating libraries return on investment.

**3.5** Develop a service improvement culture which embeds consistent data measurement and self-evaluation practices.

The aims are underpinned by five foundations for success which will ensure libraries deliver effective outcomes:

- Data Driven Service Design
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
- Seamless Customer Journey
- Staff Culture
- Sustainability

A corresponding set of local and collaborative actions will drive libraries forward over the next five years. These actions are accompanied by a series of case studies which bring to life the commitment and passion of public libraries in Scotland and inspire library services to grow with communities. An implementation group,

with a membership of key stakeholders, will be formed to deliver the vision and monitor progress.

**Forward** celebrates public libraries in Scotland and the unique potential to deliver real and meaningful change. It makes a compelling case for sustained investment and celebrates the strength of the public library network as vital social infrastructure; trusted public spaces that deliver on a range of outcomes in every community in Scotland.

The strength of public libraries lies in the ability to build on the core offer and evolve to meet changing needs. This strategy sets out how they will continue to listen, to grow and to move forward with intent.



# Scotland's Public Libraries



**Forward: Scotland's Public Library Strategy 2021-2025** is a dynamic strategy with a bold vision for the future of Scotland's public libraries. With over 40 million visits per year<sup>1</sup>, Scotland's public libraries are the most popular service local government provides. An infrastructure with over 490 local venues, 49 mobile libraries and a 24/7 digital offer sees 1 in 2<sup>2</sup> of the public regularly use local libraries. They are an essential part of Scotland's social fabric, supporting and inspiring people to fulfil their potential, for over 150 years. It is against this proud backdrop that this strategy sets out its vision to ensure public libraries in Scotland remain at the leading edge to empower communities.

Public libraries deliver a wide range of benefits which place them at the centre of the collective endeavour to improve literacy, close the attainment gap, promote health, champion wellbeing, pioneer sustainability, tackle social isolation, reduce inequality, and close the digital divide. Public libraries deliver significant economic benefits on preventative spend and return on investment. The health and wellbeing offer from libraries is estimated to bring a cost saving to NHS Scotland of £3.2 million each year.<sup>3</sup> An Economic Impact Analysis of the British Library Business and the Intellectual Property Centre National Network carried out in 2019 highlighted the unrivalled value for money and return on investment that libraries deliver, standing at £6.95 generated for every £1 of public funding.<sup>4</sup> With sustained investment, public libraries will deliver globally recognised innovation and transformational outcomes for the people of Scotland.

1 CIPFA (2020) Public Library Statistics 2019-20 Actuals  
 2 Carnegie UK Trust (2016), **Shining a Light, Country Factsheet: Scotland**  
 3 SLIC (2020), **Health on the Shelf**  
 4 British Library (2019) **Democratising Entrepreneurship: Libraries as Engines of Economic Growth: A three-year economic impact analysis. 2016-18**



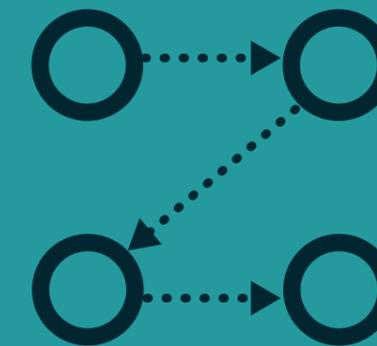
The global COVID-19 pandemic saw public library services across Scotland respond quickly to develop an enhanced digital offer to support communities during lockdown. Creativity and innovation flourished as services introduced new models of delivery such as "click and collect", extended home delivery, digital support and virtual programmes to address social isolation. The deployment of library staff to support the emergency response brought the unique customer service skill set of library staff to the fore, with kindness and empathy at the heart. Collaboration between services grew as did recognition of the vital role libraries have within communities.

**'The transferability of the core public library service skill set enabled staff to work outside of the library service to support communities across the UK during an intense and challenging time.'**<sup>5</sup>

The pandemic exacerbated existing issues, such as digital exclusion and social isolation, and brought new challenges into sharp focus. Many of the challenges are explored throughout this strategy alongside the vital support that libraries offer to aid recovery and growth.

**'COVID-19 has shown how resilient libraries can be in delivering their services in new ways. There is an opportunity to review and adapt 'normal' pre-COVID practices and perhaps do things differently - in conjunction with communities and their needs.'**<sup>6</sup>

5 Carnegie UK Trust (2020), **Making a Difference: Libraries, Lockdown and Looking Ahead**  
 6 Scottish Library & Information Council (SLIC) (2020), Public Library Staff Survey

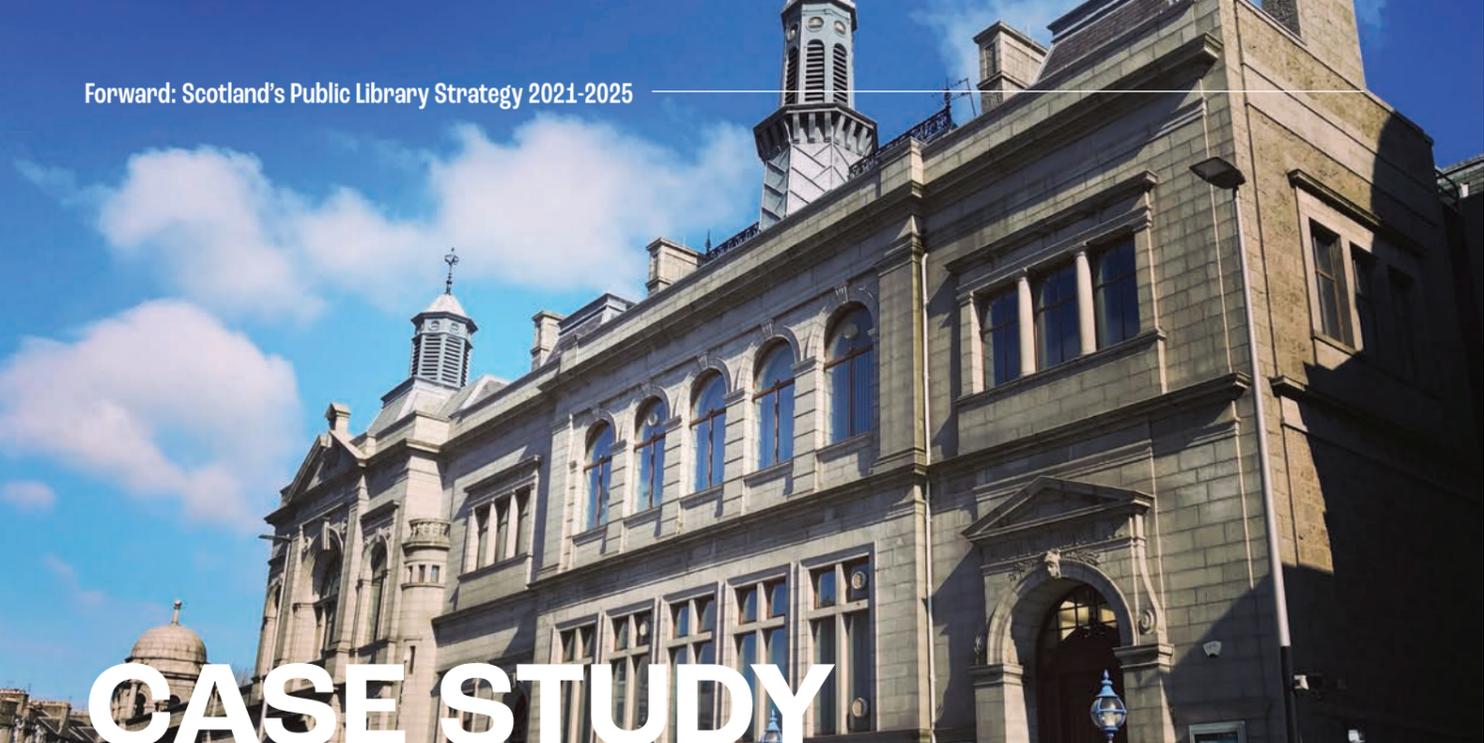


## Strategy Development

**Forward** has been informed by a comprehensive process of research, international collaboration and staff and stakeholder engagement. A global literature review; a scan of national policy and context; independent deliberative research with users and non-users; and a series of staff and stakeholder workshops have all helped to shape the aims and identify the key priorities that will see Scotland's public libraries thrive over the five years of the strategy.

**A more detailed look at the development process can be found on page 58.**





# CASE STUDY

## Aberdeen City Libraries

Shining a light on the flexibility of library staff and services

National Performance Outcome



I would have been lost without the 'click and collect' service...but I can't wait to return to browsing in-house.

Library visits are one thing I've missed the most! Can't wait to get back."

Aberdeen City Library User

The staff and teams within Aberdeen City Libraries worked tirelessly to ensure people in Aberdeen could continue to access services and resources online during the COVID-19 pandemic. Increased investment in eBooks and eNewspapers saw a rise in use of 189% and 288% respectively across 2020/21, with online membership increasing by 237%.

Staff developed various digital activities for children and families and moved Bookbug sessions fully online via the library YouTube channel which generated over 35,500 views. In addition, many library staff were redeployed across the Community Planning Partnership to call lines and various care settings, and as digital champions for the Connecting Scotland programme.

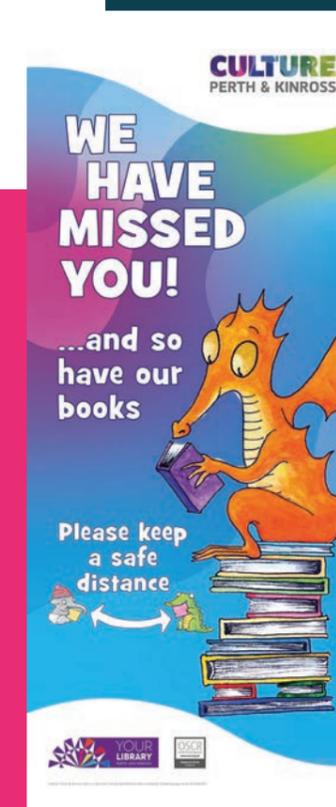
As doors re-opened following the first national lockdown in July 2020, libraries were recognised by the wider Council as a critical community service where local people could access support and resources, particularly as one of the only services available. This recognition and support ensured that libraries were able to continue to deliver services to the most vulnerable during the subsequent lockdown.

# CASE STUDY

## Culture Perth and Kinross Libraries

Reaching out to communities during lockdown

National Performance Outcome



Culture Perth and Kinross Libraries adopted an inclusive approach to communication during lockdown and as services reopened, to engage with as many communities as possible.

To ensure continuity of service, public libraries quickly pivoted to a digital offer, use of social media, website, and local press and media to promote key public health and community information. Online library services and e-resources were used to continue reader development activities through tailored digital events and workshops. A 'Book Hero' campaign was created which encouraged people to donate the average cost of a paperback book and raised £6300 for the service, which helped position the service in people's minds.

In advance of reopening, Culture Perth and Kinross Libraries consulted users through surveys to determine the impact of the pandemic and find out what users wanted, or needed, from the service going forward.

Once able to re-open physical services, local radio was used to raise awareness of key information about new opening hours and how to access services. Utilising local radio gave a reach of several hundred thousand potential listeners, far greater than that of mailing lists or social media channels. Available information was translated into community languages and short welcome back films were used online and in venues. The films demonstrated new Covid-safe measures and were designed to be easily understood without commentary or captioning. Engaging cartoon animations were used on social media to reinforce key messaging.



# National Policy & Public Libraries

The next step on the journey for public library services in Scotland will begin with recognition of the achievements and impact of the previous strategy. Libraries will reset using the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic coupled with national policy and driven by research. This strategy celebrates the unique differences which make every library important to the local community.

Libraries are well placed to deliver against the outcomes identified in the **National Performance Framework**. The national outcomes are mapped to the strategic aims throughout this strategy, as are the contributions towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

## Cultural Regeneration

**Forward** has been developed to align with **A Culture Strategy for Scotland (2020)**, not only to celebrate diversity across communities but to champion the potential of libraries in culture-led regeneration. There has been a growing global trend to place libraries at the heart of cultural and economic regeneration projects and recognise them as catalysts for positive change within communities. Libraries foster local innovation, creativity and create a sense of belonging. Public libraries will support key strategic priorities of the National Library of Scotland's **Reaching People: Library Strategy 2020-25** around widening access and community engagement.

## Data Poverty & Digital Exclusion

Reliance on digital increased exponentially during significant national lockdowns and libraries are at the centre of the collaborative effort to ensure no one is left behind in the new digital landscape as envisioned in **A Changing Nation: How Scotland will Thrive in a Digital World (2021)**. 1 in 7 people across Scotland experience data poverty, rising to 1 in 4 in lower income households. 1 in 5 of those experiencing data poverty depended on libraries for access pre-pandemic.<sup>7</sup> Public libraries will continue to offer vital access and ongoing digital support that embrace both the challenges and the opportunities that the digital world presents.

## Economic Recovery

COVID-19 has had a profound effect on the way people work resulting in a greater focus on the local. The need for a collaborative place-based approach to future growth and renewal is embedded in **The Economic Recovery Implementation Plan (2020)** and in the calls to action of **'If Not Now, When? The Social Renewal Advisory Board Report (2021)**. The Report from the independent Advisory Group on Economic Recovery, established by the Scottish Government to provide expert advice in the wake of the COVID-19 epidemic, advocates "an approach to recovery and economic development that is grounded in local and regional approaches and partnership".<sup>8</sup> Libraries are perfectly placed to be anchor institutions for the principles of Community Wealth Building and support the '20 Minute Neighbourhood' model by offering a space for work, study, learning, recreation, and social interaction.

## National Performance Framework



## Healthy Communities

The health and wellbeing of communities are inextricably linked with growth and renewal. Public libraries in Scotland offer a vast array of health and wellbeing services and are part of an important ecosystem of organisations who support self-management and realistic medicine. Library staff play an active role in linking people to trusted sources of health information as outlined in **Making it Easier: A health literacy action plan 2017-25 (2017)**, **A Collective Force for Wellbeing (2019)** and the recommendations in **Health on the Shelf (2020)** will see libraries continue to develop and grow this role. The COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to an increase in social isolation across a range of age groups. This strategy will align with **A Connected Scotland (2018)** in its commitment to reduce social isolation and loneliness.

## Literacy & Learning

Studies show that the attainment gap, already a key priority before the COVID-19 pandemic, has increased. Robust evidence demonstrates early years interventions, targeted family learning approaches and parental engagement are key to tackling the attainment gap.<sup>9</sup> The role of libraries in supporting literacy and learning has never been more important. Around 6 million children's<sup>10</sup> books are borrowed annually in Scotland's public libraries. Access to reading materials supports several articles of the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**. Libraries will work with schools, school libraries and partners to foster a reading culture within and beyond the school gates and align with **Vibrant Libraries, Thriving Schools: A National Strategy for School Libraries in Scotland 2018-23 (2018)**, **The Scottish Reading Strategy** and the new Adult Learning Strategy for Scotland.

## Reducing Inequality

Scotland's public libraries offer services free to all at the point of access. **Forward** will bring equity across services, ensuring all communities have equal access to information, education, and support. With investment and commitment, public libraries will support the vision for a **Fairer Scotland** where people can become better skilled, healthier, more resilient and, ultimately, more empowered to make fair and informed decisions.

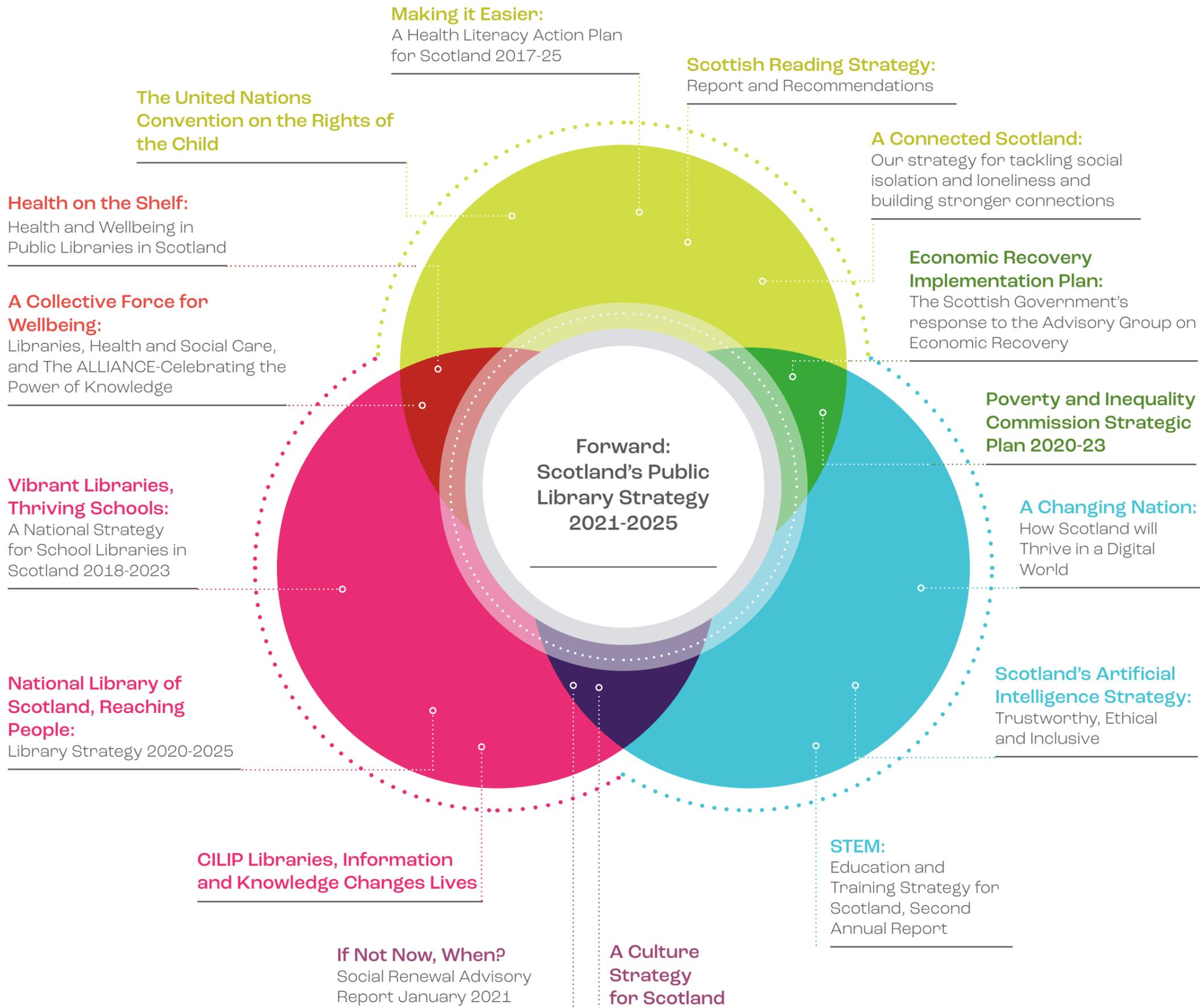
7 Y Lab and Nesta (2021), **Data Poverty in Scotland and Wales**

8 Scottish Government (2020) **Towards a Robust, Resilient Wellbeing Economy for Scotland: Report of the Advisory Group on Economic Recovery**

9 The Poverty Alliance (2021), **The Poverty Related Attainment Gap: A Review of the Evidence**

10 CIPFA (2015-2020) **Public Library Statistics 2015-2020 Average**





## SPOTLIGHT: UNCRC

Scotland is the first country in the UK to directly incorporate the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)** into domestic law. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill was introduced on 1 September 2020. Libraries support this landmark legislation and actively contribute towards:

- **Article 13** - Freedom of Expression
- **Article 17** - Access to Information from the Media
- **Article 28** - Education
- **Article 31** - Leisure, Play and Culture

# Delivering Library Services for Scotland's Future



## Definition

Public libraries in Scotland provide equality of access to reading, culture, technology, trusted information, and creative learning opportunities. A safe space at the heart of communities, they encourage connections, support wellbeing and are a welcoming space for all.

**Forward** sets out 15 strategic aims and articulates the task ahead for library services from 2021-2025. The aims are accompanied by practical actions to drive forward progress locally and nationally:



Mapping the strategy against local priorities allows Scotland's public library services to create and deliver against innovative library service plans which are responsive to local need. This is complemented by transformational, nationally driven programmes.

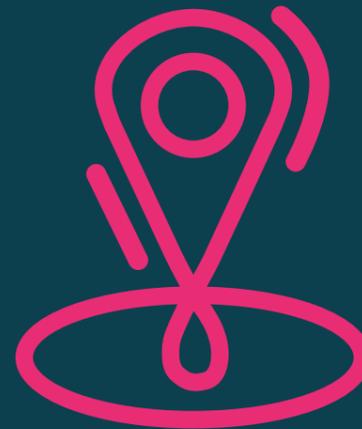
## Vision

To enable and empower Scotland's communities through public libraries



## People

Libraries will support people and communities to reach their full potential and celebrate the unique skill set of staff.



## Place

Libraries will be recognised as both valued places and place-makers, with community led design at the heart.



## Partnership

Libraries will deliver on local and national priorities through a strategic approach to collaboration and partnership.



# Strategic Aims 2021-2025

## People



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**1.3** Encourage active citizenship through access to trusted, accurate information which empowers communities to make informed decisions.

**1.4** Equip library staff with the skills to deliver a progressive library service and nurture leaders at all levels.

**1.5** Reflect the rich and diverse communities in both library resources and programming to make them accessible to all.

## Place



**2.1** Deploy people-centred design principles and decision making to ensure service development is collaborative.

**2.2** Design library services which reach the heart of communities and engage with new audiences.

**2.3** Ensure the digital and physical space are blended to create a high-quality offer responsive to evolving needs.

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## Partnership



**3.1** Develop partnerships which support more resilient, fairer, healthier communities.

**3.2** Amplify the voice of public libraries through inclusive communication to ensure key messaging reaches all stakeholders.

**3.3** Collaborate with partners to contribute towards the sustainable development agenda for 2030.

**3.4** Explore sustainable investment opportunities and preventative spend impact whilst demonstrating libraries return on investment.

**3.5** Develop a service improvement culture which embeds consistent data measurement and self-evaluation practices.

# Foundations for Success



The strategic aims provide a framework to allow public libraries to develop services that meet the changing needs and expectations of individuals and communities. These aims are underpinned by solid foundations which enable libraries to succeed:

## Data Driven Service Improvement

Public library services add value across society and evidence of the contribution is key to secure future investment. To drive forward continuous improvement and allow for meaningful benchmarking there will be a nationally consistent approach to measuring and reporting on impact, best practice, and service innovation. This method of data collection will create a strong evidence base to advocate for equitable services which contribute to local and national priorities. It will be crucial to examine the language around the value of libraries to reflect the deeper impact of libraries on individuals.

**Accompanying Actions: Strategic Aim 3.5**

## Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion



It is vital that barriers, both physical and organisational, are removed to ensure that all communities have fair and equal access to library services. Traditionally under-represented groups do not always view libraries as inclusive and welcoming spaces. Equality, diversity, and inclusion will be key principles of all future service design. The overarching priority of the **Poverty and Inequality Commission's Strategic Plan 2020-23 (2021)** is to amplify the voice of experts by experience - people with lived experience of inequality and discrimination. Public libraries in Scotland will work with partners to increase diversity in the sector in line with the vision of the Chartered Institute for Library and Information (CILIP) report **Libraries, Information and Knowledge Changes Lives (2019)**.

**Accompanying Actions: Strategic Aim 1.5**

## Seamless Customer Journey

Deliberative research with library users and non-users presented strong evidence of the inconsistencies around service provision. Customers felt it was important to be able to move between local authority areas and still recognise core services and a cohesive brand.<sup>11</sup> This has further cemented the need for libraries to offer a modern and financially supported digital offer which blends with the physical offer. Customers will be able to seamlessly transition between physical and digital library services with both areas offering quality and ease of use. Library services will collaborate on a core identity across the library offer which allows for creative, local delivery.

**Accompanying Actions: Strategic Aims 2.3 & 3.2**



## Staff Culture

Successful translation of **Forward** to local outcomes depends on all staff being engaged and empowered. Staff development driven by the strategic aims is vital to equip the library workforce with the required skill set to support communities. Senior managers will raise awareness of national and local outcomes amongst all staff and provide a meaningful route for all to contribute to the achievement of shared goals.

**Accompanying Actions: Strategic Aim 1.4**

## Sustainability

As one of the originators of resource sharing and responsible consumption, libraries will embrace the role in sustainable living. This will be reflected in internal policies and expansion of what can be borrowed to allow communities to share resources responsibly. As providers of trusted information, public libraries will equip individuals with the facts they need to live more environmentally responsible lives. Through these practices, public libraries will make a meaningful contribution to Scotland's progress towards the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

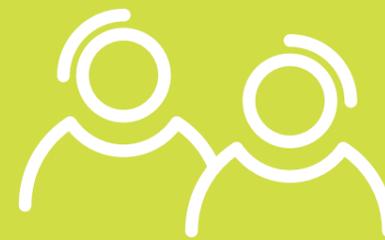
**Accompanying Actions: Strategic Aim 3.3**

11 Blake Stevenson (2020), User and Non-User Deliberative Research

“ Libraries are full of life and interaction!”  
Deliberative Research participant



# People



The greatest resource of any library are the people who make up the unique and diverse communities within which libraries sit, and the committed and highly valued workforce that help bring the library service to life. Library staff connect people to ideas, knowledge and learning whilst fostering a sense of belonging that connects communities. Libraries provide a crucial place for interaction and are at the forefront of combating the growing issues of loneliness and social isolation. Scotland's public libraries are viewed as kind and supportive<sup>12</sup>, and this will be vitally important as people recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. Experiences will be holistic. People will be made to feel welcome, and staff will be equipped with the skills to deliver services confidently.

<sup>12</sup> Carnegie UK Trust (2018), Quantifying kindness, public engagement, and place: Experiences of people in the UK and Ireland



# Literacy & Learning

Libraries support the aspiration that Scotland is a reading nation. Reading and literacy are the beating heart of library services. Not only do libraries support early and family learning, school readiness and attainment across the 5-18 curriculum; they provide support for individuals to return to learning throughout their lives. Libraries will continue to create and innovate across the learning offer to attract new audiences and further enrich the experience of current participants.

## Strategic Aim: 1.1

**Embed libraries as lead contributors to reading and literacy by closing the learning gap in communities, through national programmes and local initiatives.**

### Sustainable Development Goals:



### National Performance Outcomes:



## Local Actions

### Library service plans:

- Commit to under 5s early learning and school readiness using Every Child A Library Member (ECALM) delivery programme.
- Define 5-18 relationship with schools and school libraries whilst articulating the contribution to closing attainment gap.

### Library services:

- Align with the Adult Learning Strategy for Scotland.
- Participate in National Libraries Reading Campaign.

## Collaborative Actions

- Launch ECALM delivery programme.
- Coordinate a National Libraries Reading Campaign which supports mental health.
- Develop a National Lending Strategy which contributes to Scotland becoming a reading nation.

# CASE STUDY

## OnFife Libraries

### Supporting learning during lockdown

#### National Performance Outcome



Following a successful bid to the Public Library Improvement Fund (PLIF), OnFife Libraries worked in partnership with the Children's University Scotland (CUS) to encourage children to join as they signed up to the Summer Reading Challenge (SRC). The aim was to join families to CUS at the tick of a box and reward children for learning.

OnFife Libraries forged ahead with eight months of logistics, information sharing protocols, data dump schedules and online portals. However, just as the project was ready to launch - the

pandemic hit, and physical library services closed.

OnFife Libraries demonstrated flexibility and commitment to support children's literacy and learning needs. Now in a virtual world, the partnership developed an alternative sign up to OnFife's own bespoke online Summer Reading Challenge. CUS membership could no longer be 'hand-sold' by library staff but now took the form of a CUS/OnFife jotform. Children received physical items through the CUS Wonderbox. This gift of creativity carried great weight with schools and delivery partners, and vitally, carried carefully crafted messages directly into homes.

Uptake outstripped expectations with nearly 500 children joining. Bronze Awards were achieved and the gifting of 3 Azus Zenpads, thanks to local sponsorship, were delivered through doorstep award ceremonies. This programme has created a stronger Fife College partnership and funding has been secured for future OnFife Summer Reading Challenges



# Community Wellbeing

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the links between health, mental wellbeing, and economic stability. The local placement and variety of services accessible through public libraries offer a unique combination to provide holistic support to individuals. Libraries will continue to grow the health offer and further develop employability and business support services.

## Strategic Aim: 1.2

**Improve wellbeing and support post COVID-19 recovery with programmes which target health, economic growth, and strengthen communities.**

**Sustainable Development Goals:**



**National Performance Outcomes:**



## Local Actions

**Library service plans:**

- Incorporate recommendations made in 'Health on the Shelf'.

**Library services:**

- Adopt the National Economic wellbeing offer locally.
- Adopt community advice brand to strengthen national cohesion.

## Collaborative Actions

- Deliver a Collective Force for Wellbeing Action Plan
- Develop a National Economic wellbeing offer designed to ensure equity.
- Create and deliver a national brand for community advice and support which brings together key partners.

# CASE STUDY

## Western Isles Libraries

**Connecting rural communities**

**National Performance Outcome**



The Western Isles has the highest percentage of 'very remote rural' populations in the whole of Scotland. The mobile libraries connect each person with books, DVDs, and other resources. Furthermore, each household in the area is connected. The service creates important links between people and communities through the sharing of stories, news, and information.

In 2019, the Comhairle nan Eilean Siar invested in two new mobile libraries to ensure that

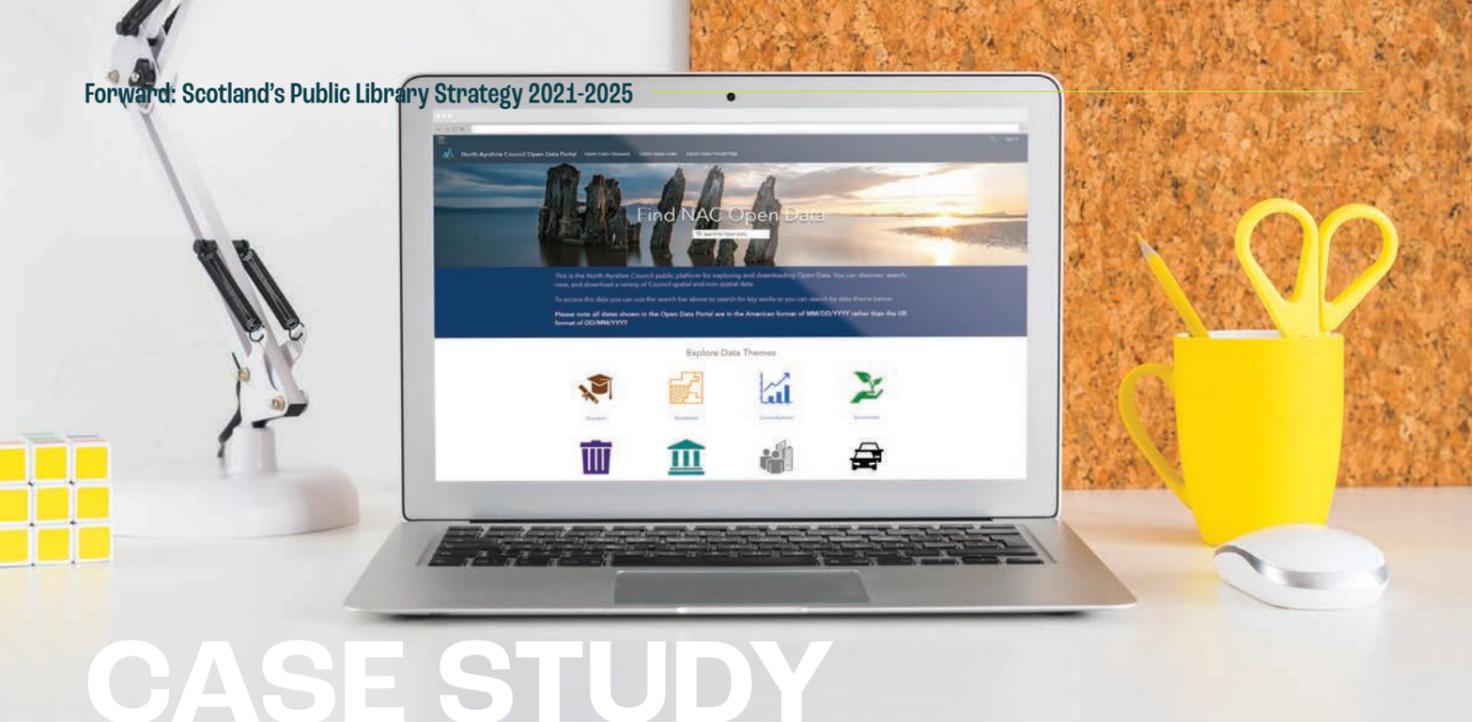
this important community service continued, enabling the four libraries to reach residents across the isles, no matter how isolated they may be. For some, a visit from the mobile librarian is the only contact they may receive in several weeks.

The mobile librarians are at the forefront of delivering a project, **Le Chèile**, which engages with local people about feelings on place, culture, and community. Work is in progress to develop closer partnerships with organisations and communities to further tackle digital exclusion, promote health and wellbeing initiatives and find ways of sharing creative and cultural activities more widely. The mobile library service continues to strive to include and inspire even the most rurally isolated.



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# CASE STUDY

## North Ayrshire Libraries

### Empowering citizens through open data

#### National Performance Outcome



Funded by the Public Library Improvement fund (PLIF), North Ayrshire Libraries launched an Open Data project to engage citizens in applications of publicly accessible information and data sets. The project invited library users to hackathons - rebranded as Data Stories - in local libraries to explore North Ayrshire Council's Open Data Portal and other datasets. Open Data is non-personal and non-commercially sensitive information, freely available via the Internet for anyone to access and reuse. A Library Development Officer (LDO) was recruited to engage the local community with this concept. A Data Stories' event, facilitated by the LDO, included data specialists, groups and individuals who identified an 'issue' and a subject expert. All were equal partners ensuring inclusivity and collaboration to identify open data gaps to be further researched and added to the Portal.

Over 250 residents including carers and disability groups; library staff; students and council employees attended these events. Participants ranged from 8-90 years old. Issues discussed included recycling; portal accessibility; breastfeeding friendly venues and library events promotion. The participants' input helped develop the Portal which now includes a guide; glossary and links to other open data sites/sets.

As part of the legacy of the project, 10 data champions were trained to support communities access the portal, volunteers and library staff participated in joint Data Visualisation training, and a guidance document was created to help other library services organise Data Stories' events. The project saw an increase of 100% in visits to the Portal with more people understanding how to access, manipulate and use the data, accessed by a desktop link on library PCs. In addition, the project funded air pollution monitors for coding clubs to monitor air pollution around library buildings, sharing the data with schools in North Ayrshire.

## Empowered Citizens

Public libraries are an important communal space for conversation and debate. Self-directed learning has always been at the core of the public library offer, but as the mechanics of learning have moved beyond print, the role of libraries as curators of the vast array of information sources has been amplified. Evolution of this offer will help communities make informed decisions. Libraries will open access to and build trust in public data to increase participation in the democratic process.

### Strategic Aim: 1.3

Encourage active citizenship through access to trusted, accurate information which empowers communities to make informed decisions.

#### Sustainable Development Goals:



#### National Performance Outcomes:



## Local Actions

#### Library services:

- Participate in media literacy awareness campaigns.
- Promote spaces for conversation and debate.

## Collaborative Actions

- Develop media literacy awareness campaigns.
- Expand the use of Open Data, Wikimedia UK and Creative Commons through data literacy programmes.

# Staff Culture & Leadership

Public library staff are a vital asset and integral part of library services. The delivery and development of vibrant library services will depend on investment in skills and leadership. With this investment, library services will attract and retain a talented workforce with attractive career pathways.

## Strategic Aim: 1.4

Equip library staff with the skills to deliver a progressive library service and nurture leaders at all levels.

**Sustainable Development Goals:**



**National Performance Outcomes:**



### Local Actions

**Library services:**

- Enrol staff on the Digital Training platform and track progress.
- Articulate a clear development and leadership pathway.
- Identify future leaders and dedicate time to mentorship and national development programmes.

### Collaborative Actions

- Develop a national training programme for staff which can be used by library services.
- Design a leadership programme which supports cohorts from across Scotland.
- Host a seminar programme which supports emerging trends and ideas.



# Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

Viewed as a societal leveller, public libraries provide access to services free at the point of entry to all. Public libraries will address universal barriers - physical, financial, and cultural - to ensure equity of access. Inclusive service including stock and recruitment policies, will ensure that individuals and communities feel represented in collections and programming.

## Strategic Aim: 1.5

Reflect the rich and diverse communities in both library resources and programming to make them accessible to all.

**Sustainable Development Goals:**



**National Performance Outcomes:**



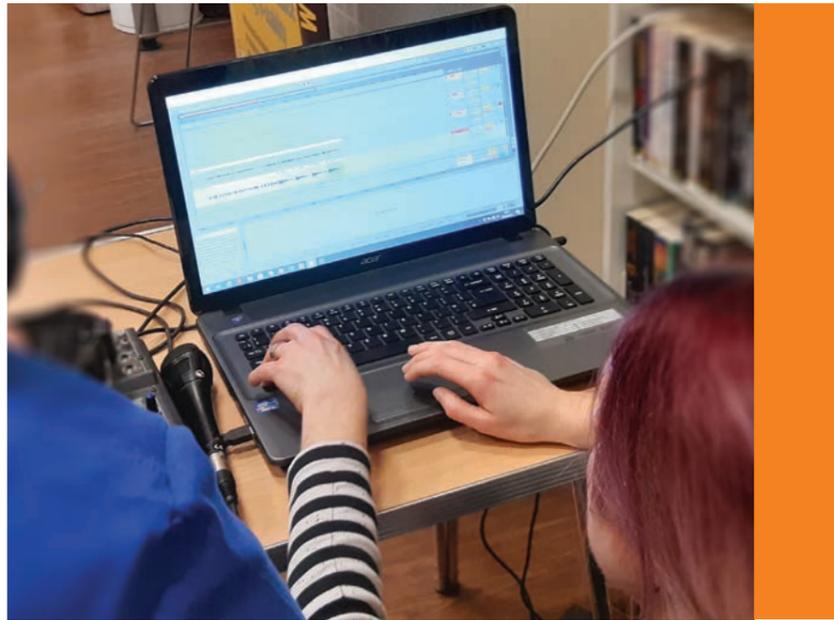
### Local Actions

**Library services:**

- Remove financial penalties for all borrowers.
- Publish stock policy detailing accessible options and diverse stock selection methods.
- Actively consult with communities with direct and lived experience to shape planning.

### Collaborative Actions

- Monitor workforce demographics as part of national workforce data pilot.
- Produce standard accessibility guidelines to ensure equity of access across Scottish libraries.



“

Libraries are part of the fabric of local communities. They are vital hubs and safe places where the public can meet, exchange ideas and promote a sense of wellbeing.”

Staff survey



© Alan Cawley Photography



# Place



The public library has long been one of the most important shared civic spaces. For many the doors to the library open up a world of exploration, escape, learning and research. Since inception, library spaces have flexed to meet the needs of the surrounding communities. The ability to adapt and develop has never been more important as services emerge from the challenges of physical closures. Public libraries were historically designed to house books; the future will firmly focus on design to welcome people both physically and in the digital world. Co-design where libraries listen and learn from communities is crucial to success. Libraries need to re-build confidence in physical spaces, level-up the digital space and make the library visible in the community. The place-making role libraries play in communities brings vital social benefit: a sense of belonging, companionship, support, and inspiration. Therefore, the notion of the library as a 'Place' continues to be essential.

# People-Centred Design

Often referred to as 'the community living room', good public libraries foster a sense of belonging. Public libraries across Scotland worked together to produce a people-centred design toolkit examining the physical and digital future of libraries. Public libraries will apply the outcomes of this ground-breaking work to redefine the physical and digital spaces of libraries and ensure communities are included in the process.

## Strategic Aim: 2.1

Deploy people-centred design principles and decision making to ensure service development is collaborative.

### Sustainable Development Goals:



### National Performance Outcomes:



## Local Actions

### Library services:

- Evaluate current provision and consultation practices using the **Forward** toolkit.
- Investigate the potential use of outdoor spaces.

## Collaborative Actions

- Implement **Forward** Toolkit.
- Commission staff development opportunities around people centred service design.

# CASE STUDY

## Deichman Libraries, Oslo

### Embedding people-centred service design

### National Performance Outcome



Oslo is a city of around 700,000 inhabitants which has seen increasing issues of inequality, particularly in educational attainment, loneliness and social isolation and an evident digital divide. Addressing these challenges was a key consideration when commissioning a new central library for the city. The Norwegian Library Act 2014 states that not only is the public library a provider of collections and services but as a space for conversation and debate, a third place – a home away from home, open to all members of the public, regardless of social status, race, gender, age, or spending abilities.

The process of opening the new Deichman Bjørvika Central Library in Oslo was a lengthy one, initiated with an architectural competition to design the building in 2009. Planning for the programming in the new library began in 2014

using service design practices before the building opened to the public in 2020. This substantial lead time allowed for simultaneous development across the library network - almost all community libraries were redesigned during this time, again in consultation with the local community using service design principles which helped to build anticipation and audiences for the new library.

This timescale was used to completely overhaul the ICT systems - some 40 different systems are required to support library services, and these were all designed in consultation with

the public and subject to rigorous user testing before implementation. Self-service options were key to the design of the new library. Staff numbers did not increase significantly and the investment in technology allowed them to cater for the huge increase in visitor numbers.

Makerspaces were planned in consultation with the local maker community in Oslo as well as with Makerspace communities in Stockholm, Copenhagen, and Helsinki. Knowledge sharing with the rest of the Nordic countries is common practice. This has been hugely beneficial in the launch of Deichman Bjørvika Central Library and the regional network.



© Marco Heyda



# Community Delivery

The COVID-19 pandemic heightened the need to be flexible in how library services are delivered. Many of the services introduced during this period offered convenience for customers, such as 'click and collect', virtual programmes and extended home delivery. Opportunities exist to explore innovative approaches to extend the reach of libraries to meet people where they are and raise the profile of library services to engage new audiences.

## Strategic Aim: 2.2

**Design library services which reach the heart of communities and engage with new audiences.**

### Sustainable Development Goals:



### National Performance Outcomes:



## Local Actions

### Library services:

- Embed 'Click & Collect' as a core service.
- Explore delivery models for out of hours services and community-based engagement.

## Collaborative Actions

- Develop a national community planning data set for libraries.
- Use national campaigns such as Mobile Libraries Day to engage new audiences within communities.

# CASE STUDY

## South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture Libraries

### Thinking outside the library box

#### National Performance Outcome



South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture Library and Information Service created the Active-E brand as a recognisable symbol of quality for all digital resources and activities. Newly acquired eResources, refreshed and bespoke learning sessions, and access to cutting edge technology, such as 3D printing and augmented reality, were gathered under the Active-E umbrella.



The resources and activities were accessible to non-members as part of community roadshows to highlight what the modern library service offered. The new Active-E design was the basis for an impressive portable display featuring a large spot lit backdrop, banners, and pedestals.

Promoting libraries to non-users has always been a priority for South Lanarkshire Libraries, generally achieved through traditional marketing and outreach work. However the Active-E roadshow combined a fresh new design with a chance for visitors to experience first-hand the digital opportunities available.

Around 7,000 people visited the roadshow and 3D printer demos, engaged with library staff, and gained a better appreciation of the library service.

The roadshow visited hospitals, a hospice, schools, job centres, rural festivals, community centres, a university campus, supermarkets, family fun days, and of course libraries, where members were often surprised by the resources that were already accessible.

The hands-on promotion of the eResources resulted in significant increases in usage, but perhaps the most valuable outcome of Active-E was in challenging people's perceptions of the library service, including colleagues in the Council and Leisure Trust who were often surprised by the digital participation opportunities provided by the library service.



# Blended Services

The digital offer in public libraries has grown over the last decade. As key institutions tackling digital exclusion and supporting access to digital innovation, a strong digital presence is key to a high-quality blended service. Library services will work collaboratively to ensure physical and digital services are an integrated and immersive experience designed with a broad range of service users.

## Strategic Aim: 2.3

Ensure that the digital and physical space are blended to create a high-quality offer responsive to evolving needs.

### Sustainable Development Goals:



### National Performance Outcomes:



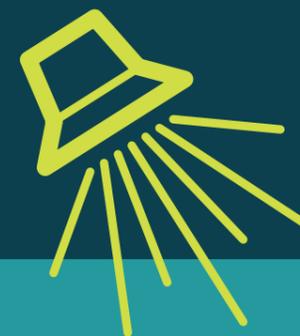
## Local Actions

### Library services:

- Establish local policy to replace & renew digital infrastructure.
- Promote libraries as spaces to try new and emerging technology.
- Ensure investment in physical and digital stock reflects the needs of users through robust consultation.
- Invest in touchless and transactional technology to improve customer experience.

## Collaborative Actions

- Create one digital portal for Scotland's public libraries with accompanying social media.
- Explore potential for a national content database to support virtual and augmented reality.
- Curate national virtual programmes of events which can be accessed across Scotland



# SPOTLIGHT ON

## DIGITAL INNOVATION

Public libraries in Scotland are at the forefront of digital participation. They provide free Wi-Fi, digital skills training, and vital community access to equipment such as 3D printers and Virtual Reality kits, that would otherwise be unobtainable for many. The need to ensure that everyone in Scotland has the skills, connectivity and devices required to fully participate in a digital nation is underlined in **A Changing Nation: How Scotland will Thrive in a Digital World (2021)**. Libraries will have a crucial role in combatting digital exclusion and in providing ongoing support to those in receipt of **Connecting Scotland** devices.

New and future trends in digital are identified and trialled by a dedicated, innovative network of Digital Champions from library services across Scotland. The cradle to the grave approach to learning is very much embedded in the digital offer. Library Code Clubs and Makerspaces introduce children to STEM and AI technology from the earliest age and provide opportunities for meaningful intergenerational work which support the outcomes set out in the **STEM Strategy for Education and Training, Second Annual Report (2020)** and **Scotland's Artificial Intelligence Strategy (2021)**. Libraries will play a pivotal role in supporting communities to reskill as the technology of the future becomes an everyday reality. The Digital Champion network will continue to seek out new and emerging technology and embed libraries as the place to go to access and experiment with it.



© Ipswich Libraries



# CASE STUDY

## Inverclyde Libraries

From physical to digital

National Performance Outcome

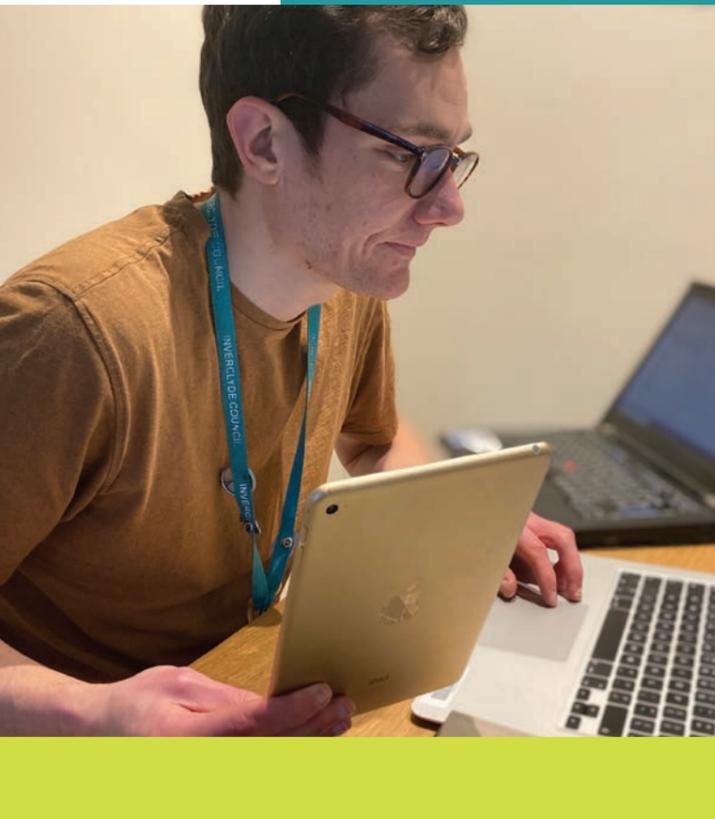


Inverclyde Libraries increased the service online offer through targeted social media interactions, investment in e-resources and support for digital family learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. **Device Advice**, a face-to-face service, moved to tailored video content and became “Techy Tea Breaks” with a focus on helping people stay connected digitally, particularly those feeling socially isolated. The Inverclyde Chatty Café programme moved to virtual platforms. The sessions ensured continuation of delivery of externally funded projects and led to the upskilling of staff.

To support the digitally excluded, regular conversations were held with partners, including the Attainment Challenge team, Barnardo's, the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP), Your Voice, and Community Learning & Development. This joint recognition that many patrons from disadvantaged backgrounds were facing multiple barriers, allowed them to work together to develop blended programmes, using shared distribution networks and collection services when libraries were open. In tandem, libraries provided telephone assistance.

Digital services for children and young people were developed including weekly Bookbug sessions, monthly neuro-diverse AU-Some sessions with Makaton signing, and online sessions in partnership with HSCP. Schools were provided with a blended programme of virtual library visits and resources with sessions tailored for each primary level. Libraries provided secondary pupils with an online creative writing competition with supporting digital workshops. Existing after school clubs went online with virtual activity sessions and links to exclusive video content.

The pandemic accelerated what librarians do best. The Inverclyde team learned ways to adapt, build new areas of expertise, to reconfigure and engage communities in different ways and to recognise that outreach and digital outreach will be essential to succeed in a post pandemic world.



## Culture & Heritage

Public libraries are vibrant local venues which provide varied opportunities to access culture. Partnerships such as those with the British Library's Living Knowledge Network have shared collections and expertise to bring rich cultural experiences to Scotland's public libraries. **Forward** encourages development beyond traditional, programmed culture to make spaces more diverse, representative, and inclusive. Public libraries will create the spark within communities and build capacity to take ideas forward which celebrate local identity and heritage.

### Strategic Aim: 2.4

Develop a diverse cultural offer which celebrates local and national heritage and encourages community led experiences.

Sustainable Development Goals:



National Performance Outcomes:



### Local Actions

**Library service plans:**

- Embed Gaelic & Scots initiatives and events.

**Library services:**

- Deliver programmes relating to Scotland's themed years.
- Set local targets for events designed and led by the community.
- Engage with communities to programme events that amplify voices of those not often heard.

### Collaborative Actions

- Develop a national umbrella brand for promoting cultural activity in libraries.
- Expand and modernise the film education offer.
- Libraries to be embedded in Gaelic and Scots local plans and networks.





# CASE STUDY

## Falkirk Libraries

Connecting young people to quality live music experiences in libraries

National Performance Outcome



A Public Library Improvement Fund (PLIF) funded collaborative project in partnership with Get it Loud in Libraries (GILIL), Library Live! ran music events which were accessible for young people. The project aimed to work with GILIL to develop the ability of public libraries to host live music events. More importantly the project engaged young people through relevant skills development workshops and work experience opportunities in the local area to enhance employability.

In April 2019, Falkirk Libraries held a music gig with Glasgow band Rascalton and local band The Vaunts in Denny Library. The gig went exceptionally well with a capacity audience of 150 people and lots of positive feedback.

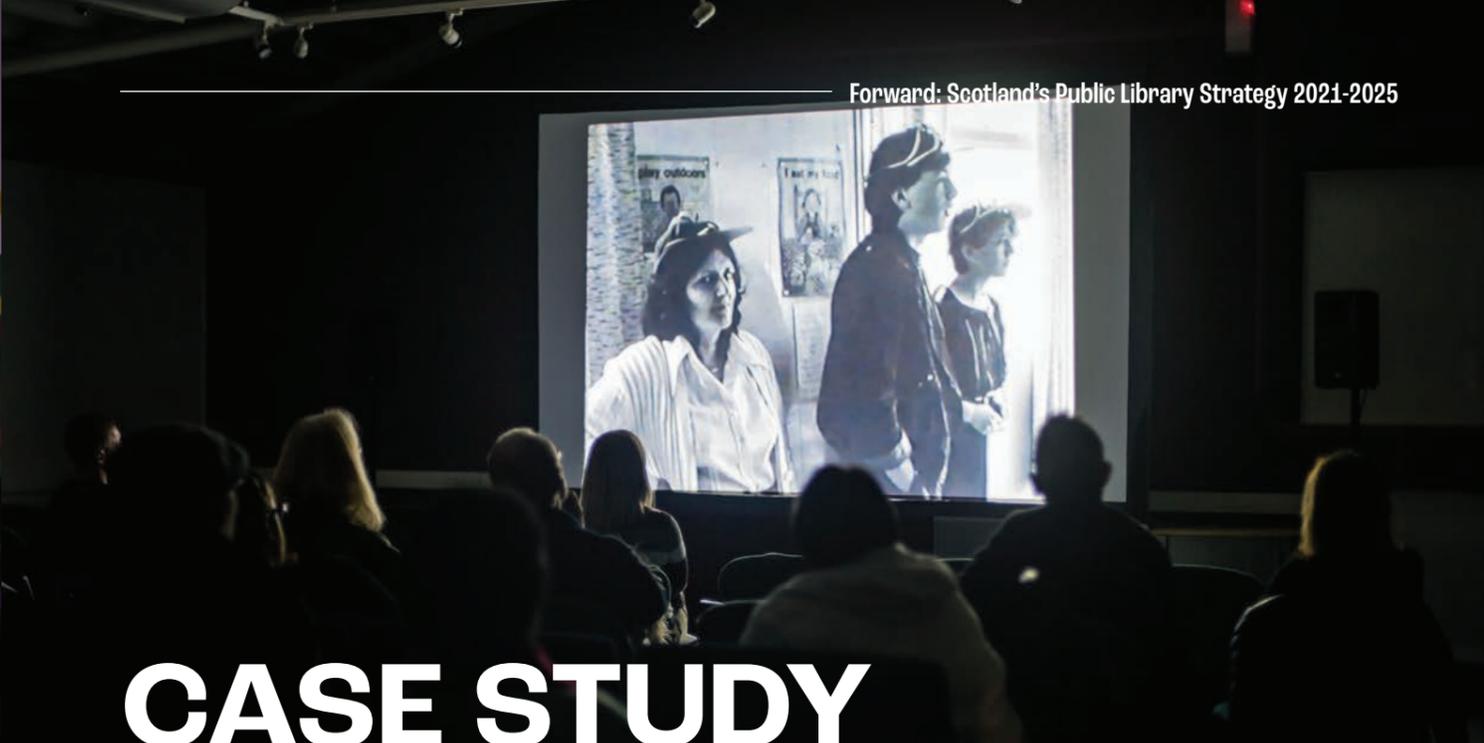
Falkirk Libraries recruited a group of six young volunteers who were given access to training and the opportunity to work at the event, either by taking photographs or videos, working the sound deck, or promoting the gig on social media.

The Rascalton gig was a great success - letting the library team see what was involved in putting on a professional quality music event and going a long way to challenging the stereotype of public libraries as quiet spaces. It provided a safe, alcohol-free environment which opened the performances to young people who would normally be excluded by mainstream live music venues. The young volunteers enjoyed the experience with all involved keen to put on further music events in the future, perhaps featuring young local bands.

“Great gig, wasn’t sure whether to return 2 books or join the mosh pit!”

“Well done... Brave idea but great.”

“Great venue for a gig, the sound is great.”



# CASE STUDY

## South Ayrshire Libraries

Connecting communities through film

National Performance Outcome



Girvan Library Film Club was initially formed with the purpose of providing community social inclusion for the elderly. With no local cinema available this proved to be incredibly successful, with two to three community film screenings a month. Once established, South Ayrshire Libraries wanted to widen this unique opportunity to more community groups.

An open screening for a Local History Archive reached the maximum capacity of 70 very quickly with an extra event provided to meet demand. Archive footage of Girvan and its surrounding area proved popular with local care homes and the local Age Concern group.

In addition to films, South Ayrshire Libraries incorporated illustrated talks with audiences providing images and narrations of past travels and experiences. The Girvan Harbourmaster provided harbour stories which complemented historical archive footage of the local area. For a Remembrance Day event the local men’s club

were invited to a screening of the film “Lest We Forget”. Pop-up screenings were used to support a Scottish Opera tour to Girvan with the mobile opera.

Spurred on by the success at winning a Cinema for All Community Award, the service increased the level of activity with local schools. In one year, all Primary 1 to Primary 7 children had the opportunity to experience the Film Club, linking with the curriculum and always including ice-cream!

“ Safe, friendly and enjoyable experience.

Appreciate meeting within the town on an afternoon as did not go out in the evening.

Brilliant films and lovely to meet up in social setting.”

# Economic Growth

The Scottish Coworking Network and Business and Intellectual Property Centre (BIPC) Glasgow has enhanced the role Scottish libraries play in supporting economic growth. Libraries will further support economic recovery with access to vital skills and training, entrepreneurial support through access to technology, and collaborative workspaces. Libraries, as institutions at the forefront of the sharing economy, will support the creative industries by offering access to equipment which promotes sustainable practices.

## Strategic Aim: 2.5

Explore new ways to support business start-ups, economic growth and stimulate co-production.

### Sustainable Development Goals:



### National Performance Outcomes:



## Local Actions

### Library services:

- Promote libraries as suitable workspace through a core brand relating to economic wellbeing.
- Implement 'Make & Mend' and makerspaces spaces which support new ways of working.

## Collaborative Actions

- Investigate models to support changing business environment and pilot across services.
- Invest in appropriate kit for national rollout which supports business start-ups and entrepreneurs.

# CASE STUDY

## Cultural Regeneration in Scotland

### A new Paisley pattern

#### National Performance Outcome

We are creative and our vibrant and diverse cultures are expressed and enjoyed widely.



In 2014 Renfrewshire Council commissioned a strategy: **Paisley, The Untold Story: Paisley Town Centre Strategy and Action Plan**. The consultants behind the report recognised that Paisley's unique selling



point was its heritage and culture and recommended that the town amplify what it already had and sell it to the world. One of the key recommendations was to bid to be UK City of Culture 2021. Whilst the bid was unsuccessful, it was a hugely beneficial process. It generated an enormous amount of commitment, energy, and new partnerships all on a visible platform. This cemented a commitment to change Paisley with culture and creativity as the basis for that change.

Several capital investment projects are under way to strengthen the cultural infrastructure and bring about transformational change, including work to transform Paisley Museum into an international visitor destination. A very broad partnership was formed for the bid process and this broad coalition has continued within which partnerships can be activated depending on area of development. The new £7 million Paisley Learning and Cultural Hub will be a new modern home for library services, bringing a vacant former retail unit back into use. The building is viewed as a regeneration project, designed to drive footfall to the high street and create a vibrant space. Internationally renowned local artist Clare Barclay is designing some of the interior spaces in collaboration with Collective Architecture. The community have been involved since the service design stage and the strong partnership approach to shaping the vision for the town has created a new-found confidence and belief. The arts team have a pop-up space in the shopping centre that is used for various workshops, activities and exhibitions and a lot of this activity will take place in the library once open.

Libraries have similarly been at the heart of culture-led planning approaches in Perth & Kinross and Dundee.



“

Libraries are placed to support Scotland's people to become better skilled, healthier, more resilient.”



# Partnership



Scotland's public libraries have a strong track record of successful and innovative partnerships with national, regional, and local organisations. Partnerships have benefitted not only those organisations involved but especially the communities libraries serve. The opportunity exists to extend this working model and welcome partners to support economic wellbeing, to ensure sustainable communities, to reduce inequality and to eradicate poverty. Key partner organisations will provide expertise to capture the data needed to demonstrate the exceptional contribution libraries make across society. Public libraries return a healthy dividend on investment and relationships will support the further development of robust data sets which evidence this return. The global pandemic has highlighted a unique opportunity to learn from each other and an embedded service improvement culture will ensure Scotland's public libraries benefit from these lessons for years to come.

# New Partnerships

Libraries consistently deliver services in partnership with organisations both locally and nationally. It is essential for libraries to develop new and innovative partnerships and evaluate existing partnerships. Relationships will have a role to play to attract sustainable funding to the sector. A national partnership strategy will be developed that covers different levels of partnership - strategic, programme and network based - that link to specific outcomes. Staff will be empowered to develop partnerships where personal relationships and local knowledge is key.

# CASE STUDY

## Midlothian Libraries

**Creating community partnerships to support literacy and learning**

**National Performance Outcome**



During lockdown Midlothian Libraries partnered with local teams from the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service to deliver books to children learning from home. The library service offers a non-fiction lending service to assist with the teaching of class projects and was previously only accessible to primary school teachers. With schools and libraries closed it was important to get books to as many children as possible by opening the service up to enable access to all library members.

The new service was promoted as widely as possible, getting information to parents in a variety of ways including emails, social media posts and alerts within digital classrooms.

Alongside non-fiction texts, Midlothian Libraries recommended the inclusion of fiction to ensure young people received a mix of different reading materials to encourage reading for pleasure alongside learning.

The service, delivered to pupils across Midlothian, received very positive feedback from both parents and teaching staff. It highlighted the demand for physical reading materials for young people during a difficult period. In addition, it helped to promote the public library service and provided a great example of community partnership working.



“ My daughter was very excited to see the fire officer, and the huge bag of books. It’s just what we were looking for, and a very generous helping!”  
Parent of 10-year-old girl

## Strategic Aim: 3.1

**Develop partnerships which support more resilient, fairer, healthier communities.**

**Sustainable Development Goals:**



**National Performance Outcomes:**



## Local Actions

**Library services:**

- Incorporate National Partnership strategy into library service plans recognising the value of local and service wide partnerships.
- Represented at Community Planning Partnerships and in Local Outcome Improvement Plans (LOIPs).

## Collaborative Actions

- Develop a National Partnership strategy which supports cross policy service delivery.



# Advocacy & Inclusive Communication

An awareness of the breadth of services public libraries offer is key to attracting new audiences and investment. It is essential there is effective communication to promote understanding amongst decision makers of the multiple outcomes public libraries deliver and to shift outdated perceptions. A nationally cohesive approach to advocacy will help to strengthen the voice of public libraries.

## Strategic Aim: 3.2

Amplify the voice of public libraries through inclusive communication to ensure key messaging reaches all audiences.

### Sustainable Development Goals:



### National Performance Outcomes:



## Local Actions

### Library services:

- Implement advocacy and inclusive communication toolkit.
- Commit to reach out to under-represented groups.
- Adopt cohesive nationally branded programmes which promote consistency across the library offer.

## Collaborative Actions

- Develop advocacy and inclusive communication toolkit.

# CASE STUDY

## Orkney Library and Archive

### An island community with a global reach

#### National Performance Outcome



Orkney Library & Archive's popular Twitter account has been the main factor in the success of its social media reach. As of early 2021, it had 73,500 followers which compares favourably to the Orkney population of around 21,500. The immediacy and consistency of posts as well as having the right person to deliver this service has been key to its success. The correct blend of humour, current awareness and careful planning has helped to draw people in to unexpectedly discover more about the

library and archive service, Orkney, or wider current affairs.

During lockdown 2020, Twitter and Facebook were used to reach out – Lego and jigsaw challenges proved very popular, and the interaction received from all over the world demonstrated the reach of social media. Weekly contributors from the United States sent entries to the Lego challenge and requests for jigsaws occurred regularly.

Orkney Library & Archive's Twitter account demonstrates the potential of social media to bring library services to the attention of the wider world and showcase the wealth of materials in the service collection.



# Sustainable Development

As the original trailblazers of resource sharing, public libraries have long been advocates for responsible consumption. The legacy of COP26 and the role libraries already play will act as a catalyst to drive forward ambitious aims around sustainability. An action plan that ties into the UN Sustainable Development Goals will be delivered through new and established partnerships.

## Strategic Aim: 3.3

Collaborate with partners to contribute towards the sustainable development agenda for 2030.

### Sustainable Development Goals:



### National Performance Outcomes:



## Local Actions

### Library service plans:

- Commit to sustainable policy and practices.

### Library services:

- Explore citizen science led projects which give opportunity to access science experiences and build open data collections.
- Grow the variety of lending collections available to promote community resource sharing.

## Collaborative Actions

- Develop an Environmentalist in Residence project to investigate future opportunities for Scottish libraries.
- Create and deliver against a Sustainable Development Goals action plan.
- Promote and support COP26 and its legacy.

# CASE STUDY

## North Ayrshire Libraries

Promoting sustainability through a community gardening initiative

National Performance Outcome



The PLIF-funded project 'Grow North Ayrshire' was developed to use library space indoors and outdoors to grow food and increase local access to low-cost food with dignity being a key priority. The project saw local community groups share gardening knowledge and experience with young people to develop local library and school gardens. Partners supported the project including Green Gym providing meaningful physical activity, making library grounds more attractive and a local Men's Shed built a bespoke trough.

Library staff led information literacy sessions using books and the internet to research what food to grow and the growing process. Craft sessions were hosted to upcycle tyres to become planters. Fruit, vegetables, salad leaves and herbs harvested have been used in local community cafes and given away to library customers. Tomatoes grown in the

windows of one library became a local talking point and an orchard was developed by Duke of Edinburgh volunteers in secondary school grounds. Staff have used Canny Cookers (low energy, portable tools) to produce healthy and quick one-pot meals using fresh ingredients to provide hot soup at library events!

The project exceeded expectations and several different approaches have been developed using indoor and outdoor spaces, adapting all types of libraries to improve the health and wellbeing of local communities. Sustainability was in-built as the equipment purchased has become part of a tool library. Seed libraries were developed to encourage communities to grow produce during the 2020 pandemic.



# Future Investment

Return on Investment (ROI) research is key to demonstrating the contribution libraries make across various policy areas and the impact on preventative spend. National procurement models and a strategic approach to national programming will be key to improving efficiency and attracting additional investment. Equity in recommended spend per head on library materials across Scottish local authorities is a key component in the delivery of better outcomes for all.

## Strategic Aim: 3.4

Explore sustainable investment opportunities and preventative spend whilst demonstrating libraries return on investment.

### Sustainable Development Goals:



### National Performance Outcomes:



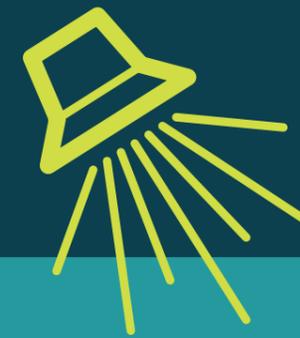
## Local Actions

### Library services:

- Use ROI and preventative spend research to advocate for investment locally.

## Collaborative Actions

- Commission ROI research to create a data set for Scotland.
- Commission preventative spend research to demonstrate the cost savings libraries deliver.
- Commit to a nationally recognised spend per head on materials.



# SPOTLIGHT ON

## The Library Dividend

Globally, over the past decade libraries have increasingly used return on investment studies to measure the value of work and demonstrate social and economic impact, using a variety of methodologies. The following studies are representative of the return on investment that libraries deliver across key areas in terms of wider social return and preventative spend.

### Education

- A 2019 value study of galleries, libraries, archives and museums (GLAMs) in Canada showed that of all the GLAM institutions libraries offered the greatest value in terms of formal educational benefits at **\$1.3 billion**.<sup>15</sup>
- A study by Copenhagen Economics in 2015 explored the potential link between Danish school children reading books borrowed from public libraries, PISA reading test scores, the likelihood of post-secondary educational entry and higher wages. It suggested that child usage of public libraries in Denmark could equate to **DKK 2.1 billion annually** in social and economic benefit.<sup>16</sup>

### Health and Wellbeing

- In 2019 a Predictive Impact Analysis of Suffolk Libraries, which focused on three distinct programmes, with a focus on social isolation demonstrated a return of £8.04 for every £1 spent.<sup>13</sup>

### Economic Recovery

- The British Library's Business and Intellectual Property Centres helped to create over 12,000 new businesses and over 7,000 additional jobs over the three-year analysis period of an economic impact report, generating £78m in Gross Value Added (GVA) for the economy.<sup>14</sup>

The development of Scotland specific research and accompanying data sets are key to understanding the economic impact libraries have on communities and the wider economy. Funding libraries is an investment in building back better; ROI and preventative spend research will show just how successful that investment is.

<sup>13</sup> Moore Kingston Smith Fundraising and Management (2019) **Suffolk Libraries a Predictive Impact Analysis**

<sup>14</sup> British Library (2019) **Democratising Entrepreneurship: Libraries as Engines of Economic Growth A three-year economic impact analysis. 2016-18**

<sup>15</sup> Oxford Economics (2019) **Value Study of GLAMS in Canada: Report for the Ottawa Declaration Working Group**

<sup>16</sup> Copenhagen Economics (2015) **The Economic Value of Public Libraries**

# Service Impact & Improvement

The pivotal role libraries play within communities and how they contribute towards local and national outcomes will be key to raising the profile of libraries. Library services will recognise the value in a continuous self-evaluation culture. The **How Good is Our Public Library Service?** (HGIOPLS) framework allows libraries to embed this continuous improvement culture with five Quality Indicators offering a framework for self-evaluation supported by a system of peer review. HGIOPLS will be updated to align with strategic aims and reflect local and national priorities. Standards and consistent impact data measures will allow for more effective benchmarking of success which builds a cohesive picture of the wealth of benefits library services deliver.

## Strategic Aim: 3.5

Develop a service improvement culture which embeds consistent data measurement and self-evaluation practices.

### Sustainable Development Goals:



### National Performance Outcomes:



## Local Actions

### Library services:

- Report HGIOPLS and progress with Standards to COSLA, Scottish Government and the Strategy Implementation Group twice yearly.
- Adopt comparable impact data measures and reporting schedule.

## Collaborative Actions

- Refresh HGIOPLS to align with this strategy.
- Establish a short life working group to develop library standards.
- Develop a consistent method for collecting comparable impact data and accompanying reporting schedule.

# CASE STUDY

## Ipswich Libraries, Queensland, Australia

### Data driven service design

### National Performance Outcome



The City of Ipswich, which boasts the youngest population demographic in Australia, is a local government area in Queensland with a population of 200,000. The city is known for its architectural, cultural, and natural heritage and its innovative library service, which is at the heart of its community. **Ipswich Libraries** have transformed library services in the city through substantial investment in the library estate. Between 2018 and mid 2021 two existing libraries were refurbished, a further four new facilities launched, and the digital platform rebuilt. In

addition, a fully **self-service pod** was installed in a local shopping village. Innovation is a key focus for Ipswich Libraries who have invested heavily in future focused technology through a strong Makerspace offer that is developed and refreshed when necessary.

This has been combined with the use of data-driven policies, customer feedback and iterative service design to build collections that truly respond to community need. Most notable has been the creation of a modern library "Marketplace" with a cohesive look and feel across both the physical and digital spaces to create a more retail like experience for users. Library staff are responsible for curating the collections, but robust data is used to ensure collections are performing. Ipswich Libraries invested in Business Intelligence software through the library management system to ensure success can be monitored and staff can access meaningful, up to date performance information. Team members at all levels are responsible for the service

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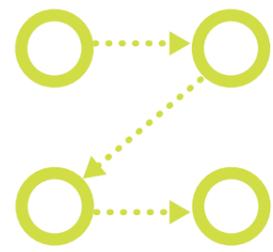


with performance data provided daily, weekly, monthly, and quarterly depending on the required audience. The Marketplace strategy has seen a huge boost in borrowing rates with 80% of the collection on loan. It provides accurate information about reading patterns and user preferences meaning Ipswich Libraries truly tailor the book stock to match the choices of the surrounding communities.



# Mapping Strategic Aims to the National Performance Outcomes

		National Performance Outcomes									
		We grow up loved, safe and respected so that we realise our full potential	We have a globally competitive, entrepreneurial, inclusive and sustainable economy	We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe	We are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society	We are healthy and active	We respect, protect and fulfil human rights and live free from discrimination	We are creative and our vibrant and diverse cultures are expressed and widely enjoyed	We have thriving and innovative businesses, with quality jobs and fair work for everyone	We tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally	We value, enjoy, protect and enhance our environment
STRATEGIC AIMS											
1.1	Embed libraries as lead contributors to reading and literacy by closing the learning gap in communities, through national programmes and local initiatives.	●			●						
1.2	Improve wellbeing and support post COVID-19 recovery with programmes which target health, economic growth, and strengthen communities.		●	●		●			●	●	
1.3	Encourage active citizenship through access to trusted, accurate information which empowers communities to make informed decisions.			●			●				
1.4	Equip library staff with the skills to deliver a progressive library service and nurture leaders at all levels.				●				●		
1.5	Reflect the rich and diverse communities in both library resources and programming to make them accessible to all.			●			●	●		●	
2.1	Deploy people-centred design principles and decision making to ensure service development is collaborative.			●						●	
2.2	Design library services which reach the heart of communities and engage with new audiences.			●						●	
2.3	Ensure the digital and physical space are blended to create a high-quality offer responsive to evolving needs.			●	●					●	
2.4	Develop a diverse cultural offer which celebrates local and national heritage and encourages community led experiences.			●	●			●			
2.5	Explore new ways to support business start-ups, economic growth and stimulate co-production.		●						●		
3.1	Develop partnerships which support more resilient, fairer, healthier communities.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
3.2	Amplify the voice of public libraries through inclusive communication to ensure key messaging reaches all stakeholders.			●			●				
3.3	Collaborate with partners to contribute towards the sustainable development agenda for 2030.				●						●
3.4	Explore sustainable investment opportunities and preventative spend impact whilst demonstrating libraries return on investment.		●	●						●	
3.5	Develop a service improvement culture which embeds consistent data measurement and self-evaluation practices.								●		



# Development process

The development and strategic aims of the strategy were shaped by an extensive **research and consultation** process which sought the **views of library users and non-users, staff, and key stakeholders** on the priorities for the future of libraries in Scotland. Global best practice was also identified through a comprehensive **literature review** as well as input from international colleagues through a series of presentations and virtual visits.

## 3 Advisory Group Meetings

A wide cross-sectional advisory group that focused on each of the three overarching themes of People, Place, and Partnership with international and national guest speakers at each session including:

**Director of University of South Carolina's School of Information Science,**  
USA

**Head of Libraries Development, Local Government Management Agency,**  
Ireland

**Library Director of Aarhus Public Libraries,**  
Denmark

**Head of Cultural Services,**  
Renfrewshire Leisure, Scotland

## 3 Virtual Visits

**Ipswich Libraries,**  
Queensland, Australia

**Deichman Bjørvika Library,**  
Oslo, Norway

**Stockton-on-Tees Libraries,**  
England



Core skills | Organisational | Leadership

**3** Staff Development workshops

**22** Staff members participated

Reading & literacy | Leadership Standards & HGIOPLS

**3** Staff and Stakeholder workshops

**40** Staff & stakeholders participated

## Creative Design Project

People-Centred design project focusing on the physical and digital future of libraries.

**5** Staff interviews

**6** Question shops with a cohort of

**24** Staff from libraries as well as other key stakeholders to develop a toolkit for libraries

Deliberative Research with users and non-users

**82** Participants

**8** 90-minute online focus groups with 55 participants

**28** in-depth telephone interviews with users and non-users

Staff & Stakeholder survey

**491** Responses

**32** Authorities represented.



# Implementing the Strategy and Monitoring Progress

An Implementation Group will be formed to deliver the vision in this strategy.

The Group, chaired by COSLA, will bring together key stakeholders to:

- Develop a delivery action plan.
- Monitor progress through How Good is Our Public Library Service (HGIOPLS).
- Advocate for the continuous improvement of public libraries in Scotland through the aims and actions of this strategy.
- Develop infrastructure which supports new and emerging themes to be considered where appropriate.



# Advisory Group

## Chair

- Jeanette Castle

## Members

- APLS, Annabel Cavaroli
- APLS, Andrew Olney
- APLS, Frances Roberts
- APLS, Karen Walker
- Carnegie UK Trust, Jenny Peachey
- CILIPS, Sean McNamara
- Creative Scotland, Karen Dick
- Gaelic Books Council, Alison Lang
- National Library of Scotland, John Scally
- OnFife, Michelle Sweeney
- Publishing Scotland, Marion Sinclair
- Scottish Book Trust, Marc Lambert
- SCURL, Robert Ruthven
- SCVO, Sally Dyson
- SLIC, Lindsey Henderson
- SLIC, Pamela Tulloch
- Young Scot, Louise MacDonald

## Observers

- COSLA, Anil Gupta
- Scottish Government, Jamie Begbie
- Scottish Government, Maria Eleftheriadou
- Scottish Government, Rachel McLellan
- Scottish Government, Eleanor Stanley
- SLIC, Marion Kunderan



# Acknowledgements

**SLIC would like to thank everyone involved in the development of this strategy. A special thank you to:**

- The Chair and members of the Advisory Group for their input to the meetings and advice.
- Lyndsay Bloice, Research Assistant, Robert Gordon University; Dr Melanie Ramdarshan Bold, Senior Lecturer in Children's Literature Studies, University of Glasgow; Mark Freeman MBE, Library & Information Services Manager, Stockton-on-Tees Libraries; Dr Stuart Hamilton, Head of Libraries Development for the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA), Ireland; Lewis Hou, Director, Science Ceilidh; Jennifer Lambert, Director, Blake Stevenson Ltd; Professor R. David Lankes, Director of the University of South Carolina's Information Science Department; Morag McPherson, Head of Cultural Services, Renfrewshire Leisure; Marie Østergård, Director of Aarhus Public Libraries, Denmark; Matt Pascoe, Customer Experience Manager, Ipswich Libraries, Queensland; Professor Peter Reid, Professor of Librarianship at Robert Gordon University; Annike Selmer, Head of Library Services, Deichman Bjørnvika Library, Oslo for their invaluable contributions.
- Library staff and stakeholders who participated in the various workshops and consultation that informed the development of the strategy.



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8/21

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