Chair’s Foreword
Gordon Hunt

2014/15 has been a landmark year for SLIC. Since our last annual report we have delivered several key reports, a major national strategy and a new quality framework, as well as providing support for key national initiatives in reading and literacy.

This year we launched our Strategic Plan for 2015-18. The plan is shaped by four key priority areas: Advocacy; Standards; Innovation; and Partnership. In this report you will find our activities described under these headings, reflecting our mission to effect positive change in public and institutional policy to support our library services in all sectors.

No one can doubt that libraries are facing challenging times. Funding in all sectors is under pressure and we can expect this to continue for several years to come. In this environment the power of libraries to change lives and enhance communities is more relevant than ever.

The range of services libraries can provide and their potential to support economic, social and educational agendas makes them a vital resource that should be treasured and protected. SLIC has been working closely with all sectors and with the Scottish Government to ensure that this message is heard and understood by decision makers.

In this context the launch in June 2015 of Ambition and Opportunity: A Strategy for Public Libraries in Scotland 2015-2020 was a major milestone. With the support of Carnegie UK Trust, COSLA and the Scottish Government and under the leadership of Martyn Evans, Chief Executive of the Carnegie UK Trust, the creation of the strategy provides us with a platform on which we can face an uncertain future with a strong message of advocacy for our library services.

The implementation of the strategy will be taken forward by a range of work streams led by the Heads of Public Library Services in Scotland and supported by stakeholders from many related sectors.

This collective endeavour represents the strength of our sector and will be supported by our core funding streams, the Public Library Improvement Fund (PLIF) and the Innovation and Development Fund (IDF).

However, the work of SLIC in 2014/15 has gone well beyond the strategy and in this report you will read about our report on School Libraries, our support for Every Child a Library Member, the Public Library WiFi Project, community consultation training and Digital Champions.

We have also completed a prison library audit and begun the implementation of the How Good is Our Public Library Service? framework with training for chairs and panel members. The response to the call for volunteers for these roles illustrates once again the expertise and commitment of library professionals across Scotland.

In presenting my first annual report as Chair of SLIC I commend the range and quality of the work carried out by the SLIC team and the energy and commitment of the SLIC Board. As we move forward into uncertain times we have a strong platform on which to build and we look forward to the challenges of 2015/16 and beyond.

Gordon Hunt
Chair, SLIC Board
“The range of services libraries can provide and their potential to support economic, social and educational agendas makes them a vital resource that should be treasured and protected.”
ADVOCACY


A major focus for 2014/15 has been the development of a national strategy for public libraries. This work was taken forward at the request of the Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs, Fiona Hyslop and has been supported by COSLA.

The strategy aims to reinvigorate the perception of libraries and to clearly define their role in supporting the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century.

A group of key strategic partners was convened to support the strategy development and Martyn Evans, Chief Executive of the Carnegie UK Trust was invited to chair this group. The strategic group was informed by a process of engagement, including independent deliberative research, a public questionnaire and a series of visits to public libraries.


An implementation group from the Heads of Public Library Services network will lead on delivering key objectives in future years.

School Library Advocacy

SLIC exhibited at the Scottish Learning Festival in September 2014 to promote the findings of the SLIC funded research by Dr Dorothy Williams, The Impact of School Libraries on Learning.

School library services have continued to face challenges and SLIC has been working with the CILIPS School Library Advocacy Group to support the sector. This work has focussed on building an evidence base to demonstrate the impact of school libraries through the reinstatement of a quantitative indicators data gathering exercise and a pilot pupil survey in October 2014. The outputs from these projects were used to produce printed advocacy materials for display in schools and dissemination to decision makers.

SLIC also presented at the School Library Association Training Day in April and exhibited at the Children in Scotland conference to promote library services to those working within the education sector. We are also coalition partners for Save the Children Scotland’s Read on Get On campaign.

Scottish Reading Strategy

A strategy for reading activities in public libraries was launched during Book Week Scotland in November 2014 at an event with authors Alan Bissett and Zoe Venditozzi in Edinburgh Central Library. The strategy, developed by a group of Heads of Public Library Services along with partners at The Reading Agency and the Scottish Book Trust, is being rolled out by a reading strategy executive group and three working groups who will look at adult, teenage and early years reading activities across Scotland.

SLIC has been working with library services and other partners to demonstrate the role libraries have in ensuring that everyone has the chance to develop a love of books and reading. These projects include:

Every Child A Library Member

During Book Week Scotland 2014, the Scottish Book Trust suggested that every child in Scotland should be a library member. All 32 public library authorities in Scotland have risen to the challenge and, through Public Library Improvement Fund support, have been working within their networks and communities to promote children’s library membership.
A Wealth of Reading
To mark the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games, libraries across Scotland organised promotions and displays of commonwealth literature. A nationwide competition ran over the summer months for the best review of a commonwealth book. The winner, from Moray Libraries, received an iPad.

Read and Remember
Libraries across Scotland participated in a commemorative reading campaign to remember those who fought and lived through the First World War, in line with government priorities in this area.

STANDARDS
How Good Is Our Public Library Service?
The new updated self-assessment model for public library services, How Good Is Our Public Library Service? (HGIOPLS) was launched in the summer of 2014. Quality Scotland has delivered training sessions for both the peer assessors and the assessment panel chairs who will support the HGIOPLS review process.

HGIOPLS replaces the Public Library Quality Improvement Matrix and was developed by Robert Gordon University on behalf of SLIC. The first assessments are due to take place before the end of 2015.

Prison Library Audit
SLIC has been working with Edinburgh City Libraries and the Scottish Prison Service over the past year to conduct a review of prison library services across Scotland. The review has highlighted evidence of best practice for library services supporting prisoners in developing their education, literacy and health and wellbeing. This will become part of an ongoing self-assessment framework to support continuous improvement in the prison library sector.

INNOVATION
The Public Library Improvement Fund (PLIF)
PLIF has supported innovation and development across the public library network since 2006. The £500,000 fund is administered by SLIC on behalf of the Scottish Government, involving an annual competitive bidding process.

In 2014/15 bids were received in support of three key priority areas: Audience Development, Community Engagement and Partnership Working, Cultural Heritage and Health and Wellbeing. A total of 12 projects – four in each priority area - were successful.

At a national level, PLIF also supported the development of the Scottish Reading Strategy and the extension of the PLACE community consultation training programme for public library staff, which has received funding in previous years. Staff from 21 local authorities have now completed this six-week accredited course delivered by the Consultation Institute.

Feedback from these training sessions has been excellent with many delegates highlighting the value of this training, not just for the library service, but for their local authority as a whole. Further training for the remaining 11 local authorities will take place before the end of 2015.

Innovation and Development Fund (IDF)
This year’s Innovation and Development Fund (IDF) was awarded in February to five diverse projects, supporting an exciting range of service developments and encouraging creative collaborations across the sector.
The five projects, which share a total fund of £50,000, are:

Aberdeen Pop Up Maker Space
Led by the cross-sector group, Grampian Information, this project will deliver opportunities for young people to work with creative technology in local communities supported by a dedicated maker coach.

Growing Skills
This project aims to identify the digital literacy requirements of adults returning to education via participation in the distance learning programmes offered by the Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh.

Libraries, Literacy & Liberation
This project will establish libraries in Low Moss and Shotts prisons through collaboration between the Scottish Prison Service, the Scottish Book Trust and East Dunbartonshire and North Lanarkshire libraries.

Personal Learning Networks:
Getting Connected in the Digital Age
This project, led by Perth College UHI, will create a training unit to assist library staff in developing personal learning networks to support professional development.

ULib2: investigating resource discovery tools within a library environment
A collaboration between JISC, New College Lanarkshire and Forth Valley College, which will build on a previous IDF project to offer students a seamless search across all college collections and e-resources.

Public Library WiFi
The Scottish Government Digital Directorate awarded SLIC a £300,000 grant in 2014/15 to support improvements to public library WiFi. Fifteen library authorities benefited from this funding, resulting in WiFi being installed in 125 libraries and improved in a further six.

The project was supported by a temporary WiFi Officer, Iain Robertson, who was seconded to SLIC from South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture for six months. The final project report highlights the range of issues affecting WiFi provision across the public library network – from connecting small rural locations to meeting the needs of large urban populations – and outlines the different models that have been adopted to meet local needs.

PARTNERSHIP
Digital Champions
SLIC continues to support a network of 32 Digital Champions in public libraries. The group meets quarterly to share knowledge and awareness of digital initiatives. Most recently, members of the group visited Dundee and Motherwell libraries to experience 3D printing first hand.

Health Libraries
SLIC presented at this year’s Scottish Health Information Network (SHINE) Conference and has been working closely with NHS Education for Scotland (NES) to strengthen strategic links between public libraries and the NHS. Bids focusing on health and wellbeing have been supported through PLIF, with some great results in terms of developing the role of public libraries in supporting health literacy through access to information and skills.

SCURL
SLIC continues to support the work of the Scottish Confederation of University and Research Libraries (SCURL) through an ongoing funding stream and collaboration with the SCURL Service Development Manager, Jill Evans.

In 2014/15 SCURL supported the expansion of the Scottish Higher Education Digital Library (SHEDL) portfolio to include enhanced periodical content, as well as an innovative approach to collaborative ebook procurement, which resulted
in the addition of content from five publishers for a three-year contract.

The SCURL Periodicals and Books Group, SCOPNet, welcomed FE college members to this procurement activity.

A number of task and finish groups were convened to support SCURL objectives and two events were convened during the year – The Changing Role of Academic Librarians and Showcasing our Collections. Both events were well supported and attracted delegates from across the information sector.

FE Network
The fifth annual FE survey was again compiled by Penny Robertson at JISC in November 2014. SLIC will undertake a review of the FE survey in 2015/16 to ensure that the right information is being collected to support our FE members and to demonstrate the impact of library services in raising attainment and supporting equality of access to learning materials, information literacy support and skills development.

EVENTS

eBooks Conference
In collaboration with the JISC RSC and SCURL, SLIC hosted the 13th annual eBooks conference at the University of Strathclyde in October 2014. Over 100 delegates from academic, public, health and special libraries from across the country attended. The keynote speaker was Gerald Leitner from the European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation Associations (EBLIDA) Executive Committee and the day ended with a panel discussion on the future of e-reading.

FE Conference
The annual FE Conference took place at City of Glasgow College in November 2014. Speakers included Gina Maddison and Sharon Lyn Jones from the Welsh Literacy Project and copyright expert, Alan Rae. Nearly 50 staff working in FE colleges in Scotland took up the opportunity to attend.

This year’s event, the FE Practitioners’ Forum, will take place on 24th November 2015 at City of Glasgow College’s new Riverside Campus. The key theme will be advocacy.

Information Literacy Symposium
In collaboration with the Information Literacy Community of Practice, SLIC organised an information literacy symposium, which took place at the Scottish Government office at Atlantic Quay, Glasgow in February.

Over 80 attendees from FE, HE and public libraries supported this event and heard presentations from speakers outside the library and information profession on the demand for information literacy within housing, health, welfare reform and education. This was an exciting opportunity for networking beyond libraries and to demonstrate the value of information literacy within the digital inclusion agenda.

SLIC Board Update
In February 2015, the Board nominated Gordon Hunt, Head of External Engagement at the University of the West of Scotland, as the new Chair. Gordon has a wealth of experience in academic, national and public libraries and takes over from Fiona McLeod MSP, who took up a Ministerial appointment as the Minister for Children and Young People.

The Board also welcomed Abi Mawhirt, Head of Organisational Development at Dundee and Angus College, Ann Wales, Director for Knowledge at NHS Education for Scotland, Jennifer Louden, Head of Libraries at City of Glasgow College, and Professor Peter Reid, Head of Department of Information Science, Robert Gordon University. The Board were also delighted to welcome the new National Librarian, Dr John Scally.