The National Strategy for Scottish Public Libraries Working Group will be developing a National Strategy for public libraries in Scotland.

Who we are

The National Strategy for Scottish Public Libraries Working Group has been tasked with the development of a National Strategy for Scotland's public libraries. The group is chaired by Martyn Evans, Chief Executive of the Carnegie UK Trust, and comprises members with expertise from within the library profession and from other sectors and backgrounds relevant to the issue such as digital and the third sector. The secretariat is provided by the Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC). A full list of group members can be found here.

The National Strategy for Scottish Public Libraries Working Group has formal relationships with two other related groups:

- A working group drawn from councillors who are members of the COSLA Sports, Arts and Culture Working Group.
- An advisory group of Heads of Public Library Services.

The Scottish Government and COSLA act as observers on the National Strategy for Scottish Public Libraries Working Group.

The National Strategy for Scottish Public Libraries Working Group aims to present a draft strategy proposal to COSLA in the first quarter of 2015.

Why we are asking these questions: why a national strategy is required

In 2012 The Carnegie UK Trust published 'A New Chapter', a report that touched on the various reasons why a National Strategy for public libraries is required. In 2014, The Scottish Library and Information Council developed a paper titled 'The Case for a National Strategy for Public Libraries'.

These documents discussed how public libraries have limited national policy or leadership. This has led to a lack of a unified vision and set of services. This can inhibit public libraries' ability to collectively deliver on strategic national policy objectives. This has the potential to weaken their position, and while they are statutory services which local authorities must provide, they are not championed in any particular national policy.

Furthermore, the current economic climate and drive to identify efficiency savings will put increasing pressure on public libraries across Scotland with many councils are having to make difficult decisions regarding funding. Other challenges public libraries face relate to the fundamental changes which have taken place in the way in which information and knowledge is created and shared. With the increasing digitisation of information, the public library service needs to have a clear vision for a future in which providing knowledge through the medium of books becomes increasingly marginal.

A national strategy would ensure public libraries' continued relevance and enable them to both consolidate and co-ordinate their ability to deliver on key policy areas. In turn, this would help public libraries to make the case for continued funding. A national strategy would also guarantee the delivery of a core service thereby ensuring a consistent message to the public about the purpose of, and services available at, public libraries.

Our questions and challenge to you

Our questions focus on what the public library service in Scotland should look like: what its visions, values and aims should be; the services it should deliver and the skills staff will require; the practicalities of how and with whom services could best be delivered; and measuring and evidencing the impact of public libraries.

Ways to respond

There are two ways of responding to 'Your views':

1. Download the attachment to this email titled 'Your views - Questions'. Email the form to info@scottishlibraries.org
2. Complete the form online. You need to fill out the form in one sitting. The link to the form is here .

We have posed 11 questions. Please respond to as few or as many of them as you wish. We would be happy to hear about anything that you feel falls within the scope of the questions. The deadline for responses is 5pm **Tuesday 2 December**.