Inspiring Active Lives: A culture and sport strategy for Falkirk 2013-2023.
CILIPS response to consultative draft.

1. CILIP in Scotland (CILIPS)[i] welcomes the opportunity to comment on the consultative draft. CILIPS is the Scottish arm of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP), the leading professional body for librarians, information specialists and knowledge managers.

2. Our organisation promotes the importance of the library, information and knowledge management community. Many of our members work within local authorities. We argue that professionally delivered, high quality and relevant public library services are essential to the wellbeing of communities. This is supported by the findings of recent Scottish Government research which showed that participation in culture is significantly linked to good health and life satisfaction.[ii]

3. In a recent study[iii] carried out by CarnegieUK Trust 76% of Scots rated libraries as important to the community. Local authorities have a statutory duty to secure the provision of adequate library facilities for all persons resident in their area. CILIPS believes that a good library service provides a positive experience for local people and demonstrates the value a local authority places on its community. A good library service provides:
   - A positive future for children and young people.
   - A fulfilling life for older people.
   - Strong, safe and sustainable communities.
   - Promotion of local identity and community pride.
   - Learning, skills and workforce development.
   - Health improvements and wellbeing.
   - Equality, community cohesion and social justice.
   - Economic regeneration.

4. Although the strategy recognises that changes to the universal benefit system will place greater demand on the public library service, the opportunity to develop the wider role of libraries in the cultural fabric of the Falkirk community is missed. Instead, the draft, issued in the period preceding Scotland hosting the Commonwealth Games, places a very heavy emphasis on encouraging participation in sport.

5. The document acknowledges the area has an unemployment rate above the Scottish and UK average. At a time when one third[iv] of Scottish households have no broadband access and the UK government is promoting the aspiration of 'digital by default'[v] some detail on how a statutory library service can meet these challenges and provide opportunities for citizens to access employment, education and online services would be welcome. Any proposed delivery plan for library services should acknowledge and build on the Scottish Government's recognition of the integral role of public libraries in supporting digital participation as set out in its recent progress report.[vi]

6. We believe the case studies which feature in the document are likely to limit its currency over the ten year period it covers. From a library perspective it may be more useful to use quotes from service users which support the CarnegieUK[vii] study findings and

illustrate the value that the community places on its library service and the role professional librarians can play in supporting the development support the development of skills which can contribute to employability and enterprise.

7. COSLA Sports, Arts and Culture Working Group recently declared support for scoping development of a national policy for public libraries based on a vision statement prepared by SLIC. We hope that the final document, where it features libraries, will be informed by this work which links to the Scottish Governments' strategic objectives and aspirations for Scotland.

8. In conclusion, CILIPS holds that the most effective way to support access to knowledge is through sustaining public libraries and professional library services and we would be keen to influence development of the proposed delivery plans for libraries.

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[i] www.cilips.org.uk

[ii] http://www.scotland.gov.uk/publications/2013/08/9956

[iii] http://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/getattachment/c00fe2ce-cde3-4ea4-9dfd-bc28cd183437/A-New-Chapter---Discussion-Paper.aspx

[iv] http://www.ofcom.org.uk/static/cmr-10/SCO-4.1c.html

[v] http://www.publications.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/digital/strategy/

[vi] http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0040/00404183.pdf

[vii] Ibid.