

Proposed changes to the public library service provision in North Lanarkshire.

CILIP in Scotland (CILIPS) is the Scottish arm of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionalsⁱ, the leading body for librarians, information specialists and knowledge managers. Many of our members are employed within the public library service in Scotland.

We welcome the opportunity to respond to proposals put forward by CultureNLⁱⁱ to reshape the local public library network. CILIPS notes the need for the Trust to make savings and regrets that continuing financial pressure has led to the proposal to no longer operate four community libraries (Petersburn, Old Monkland, Craigneuk and Newarthill) and operate three rather than five mobile libraries.

The recently published *Strategy for Public Libraries in Scotland 2015-2020*ⁱⁱⁱ emphasises the important contribution that a locally based public library network can make to national outcomes such as reducing inequality and improving literacy, life chances and health.

CarnegieUK's recent research^{iv} confirmed that online access delivers substantial social and economic benefits to citizens and communities. The public library network plays a key role in supporting the current digital strategies in Scotland by providing free access for people to get online. Scottish Government's recognition of that role in creating "*a national movement for change that encourages people and businesses to make the most of digital connectivity*" is cited within *Digital Participation: a national framework for local action*.^v

It is CILIPS' view that local public libraries are also vital to improving literacy in Scotland. Over a quarter of Scotland adults have issues with literacy and libraries assuage this by promoting access to reading at community level.^{vi}

We advocate that a local public library service is essential to the well being of communities, providing a positive experience for local people and demonstrating the value local authorities place on the communities they serve. Our advocacy is supported by Scottish Government research which concluded that participation in culture is significantly linked to good health and life satisfaction.^{vii}

In conclusion, it is CILIPS's view that the closures will diminish the service in such a way that it may fail to meet the requirement of an adequate strategic network delivering core provision. We are deeply concerned about the scale of proposed closures and its effect on the local community and welcome the ongoing consultation with those communities as we believe such engagement is important to reaching a solution which is considered and focussed on community needs.

ⁱ www.cilip.org.uk

ⁱⁱ <https://culturenl.co.uk/consultation/>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://scottishlibraries.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Strategy.pdf>

^{iv} <http://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/CMSPages/GetFile.aspx?guid=7324c775-a74a-47d6-b9ad-4a4c173087a3>

^v <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0044/00448804.pdf>

^{vi} <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/Life-Long-Learning/17551>

^{vii} <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0043/00430649.pdf>