CILIPS Response to Scottish Borders Council consultation on transferring Cultural Services to a trust

1. CILIP in Scotland (CILIPS)\textsuperscript{1} welcomes the opportunity to offer feedback on the Scottish Borders Council (SBC) proposal to transfer the Council’s Cultural Services, including Libraries and Information Services, to a trust from October 2015. 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. In Scotland we have a membership of around 1500, many of whom work within services provided by local authorities and trusts.

2. CILIPS appreciates that the Council faces difficult choices regarding budget savings as a result of significant financial pressures. We recognise that moving to a trust can help improve responsiveness and cost effectiveness but we also hold that trusts must be well run and have appropriate accountability measures in place.

3. We maintain that a good public library service is essential to the well-being of communities, providing a positive experience for local people and demonstrating the value a local authority places on its community. CILIPS contends that professionally delivered high quality and relevant library services have a key role in the local community and our view is supported by Scottish Government research.\textsuperscript{2} We are therefore concerned to seek assurances that the move to a trust will:

- Promote the important contribution of libraries to the creation of strong and healthy communities;
- Ensure that information and library services remain core to what the local authority does;
- Maintain current levels of service provision and professional library staff posts; and
- Establish robust accountability measures to make certain that the activity of the trust remains open to public scrutiny.

\textsuperscript{1} http://www.cilips.org.uk/
\textsuperscript{2} http://www.scotland.gov.uk/publications/2013/08/9956