

## THE BRITISH LIBRARY'S STRATEGY FOR THE ENGLISH REGIONS AND THE HOME NATIONS

### 1 Summary of strategy

- 1.1 The British Library will implement its national offer through a Library-wide programme for the English Regions and the Home Nations together with a range of national and regional partners.
- 1.2 This strategy is UK wide, covering the nine English Regions and the three Home Nations.
- 1.3 The purpose of the Library's programme is to optimise usage of the Library's assets in the English Regions and the Home Nations.
- 1.4 The strategy recognises and builds on its existing activities and focuses on its four target markets at Regional and Home Nation level: the researcher, the general public, business and the learner.
- 1.5 The Library's offer to the English Regions and Home Nations is built around five strategic strands: content, access, sharing skills, adding value and communication.
- 1.6 The Library will demonstrate its value to each English Region and Home Nation through appropriate metrics and case studies to be developed as part of the strategy, starting with the establishment of baseline data, and through maintenance of an audit of delivery.
- 1.7 The Library will work in partnership with a variety of key national and regional stakeholders; it will become a trusted partner of choice and a recognised stakeholder in networks relevant to its target markets.
- 1.8 The National Libraries of Scotland and Wales also have a key role to play, working in partnership with the British Library, in facilitating effective delivery of the British Library's national offer to the Home Nations.
- 1.9 The British Library will work closely with the National Libraries of Scotland and Wales both to put in place a technical infrastructure for managing UK electronic legal deposit material and also to ensure timely implementation, within an agreed planning framework, of Regulations under the Legal Deposit Libraries Act.

## 2 Introduction

- 2.1 Whereas the British Library's national offering is available to all citizens in the UK, this strategy addresses the Library's programme of distinctive activities for the English Regions and the Home Nations.
- 2.2 The British Library has a history of working with the English Regions and the Home Nations: for example, underpinning local and regional provision of resources through its reading room and document supply services, and working with partners in the regions to deliver national programmes such as NEWSPLAN. *[A more detailed overview of British Library engagement with the English Regions and the Home Nations is provided in Annex 1].*
- 2.3 The Library's strategy for the English Regions and the Home Nations recognises and builds on its existing activities and programmes throughout the UK, and focuses on its four target markets at Regional and Home Nation level: the researcher, the general public, business and the learner. The strategy has been developed in response to the changing political landscape.
- 2.4 The British Library Act 1972 established the British Library as 'the national library for the United Kingdom'. The British Library remains a United Kingdom body by virtue of the British Library Act 1972 not having been amended by the Scotland Act 1998<sup>1</sup>, the Government of Wales Act 1998 and the Northern Ireland Act 1998. The functions of the British Library have not been devolved specifically or by implication by the Devolution Acts. The Library's functions extend to the whole of the UK; they are not restricted to any home national boundary.
- 2.5 Increasing Government focus has been placed on the English regions, for example through Regional Development Agencies, the Museum, Libraries and Archives Council, and Learning and Skills Councils.
- 2.6 The strategy is based on working in partnership with a variety of key stakeholders in the English Regions and the Home Nations. It is embedded throughout the Library. It has been endorsed by the Library's Executive Team and it is supported by its Regional and Library Programmes.
- 2.7 To inform the strategy, a consultation exercise was undertaken during the summer and autumn of 2004. All nine regional Museums, Libraries and Archives Councils in England were consulted together with museums, libraries and archive bodies in the Home Nations, as well as a number of other regional and national organisations and institutions.

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<sup>1</sup> The British Library was specified as a cross-border public authority for the purposes of section 88(5) of the Scotland Act 1998. The British Library Act was amended to ensure that on the Board there would be 'one part-time member appointed by the Secretary of State [who] shall be a person who appears to him to have a special knowledge of Scotland' and requiring the Secretary of State to consult Scottish Ministers before making such an appointment.

### 3 The British Library's national strategy

3.1 **Mission:** *Helping people advance knowledge to enrich lives. We bring direct benefits to those who use our collections and services because we help them advance their own knowledge, and the whole body of knowledge, through their research. We bring indirect benefits to all UK citizens whose lives are enriched through the fruits of the research we have enabled.*

3.2 **Vision:** *We play a lead role in the changing world of research information. We exist for anyone who wants to do research – for academic, personal or commercial purposes. We promote ready access to the British Library's collection and expertise through an integrated range of services which are increasingly time and space independent. We also connect with the collections and expertise of others, and work in partnership to fulfil our users' needs.*

### 4 The British Library's strategy for the English Regions and the Home Nations

4.1 The British Library's national strategy will be delivered through:

- Developing a stakeholder network in the English Regions and the Home Nations
- Maintaining stakeholder contact and developing relationships
- Developing and implementing an ongoing programme of activities in the English Regions and the Home Nations structured round the five strands which emerged from the consultation exercise: content, access, sharing skills, adding value and communication
- Measurable returns in the form of additional usage of the Library's assets demonstrated through case studies

4.2 The strategy is UK wide, covering the nine English regions and the three Home Nations.

### 5 Strands

5.1 **Content** The British Library is committed to increasing the visibility of its national collections which contain many items of world heritage status and world class collections including scientific and business collections, raising awareness of their richness, their depth and breadth and disclosing their relevance to the English Regions and the Home Nations. The Library will also seek to add value by developing links with resources and professionals in the English Regions and the Home Nations.

5.2 **Access** The Library is committed to making its content more accessible to all through the whole range of British Library services. In particular, we will concentrate on:

- promoting our business offer to the English Regions and the Home Nations;
- supporting learning at all levels in the English Regions and the Home Nations;
- facilitating access to the Library's reading rooms.

5.3 **Sharing skills** The British Library will support the continuing professional development of its own staff and of colleagues in the English Regions and the Home Nations through sharing expertise and best practice, sharing information about British Library collections and about new Library developments, and by providing expert advice.

5.4 **Adding value** The British Library will support the wider library network through endorsement of initiatives and flagship projects in the English Regions and the Home Nations and through impartial advocacy for the library sector. The Library will demonstrate the economic value of libraries in the English Regions and the Home Nations and the value to all libraries of working regionally as well as nationally.

5.5 **Communicating** The British Library will share its strategy and plans with the English Regions and the Home Nations. The Library will communicate its strategy for the English Regions and the Home Nations clearly and from the top. It will provide a consistent offer to complement local and regional offers. It will continue to maintain personal contacts, at both strategic and operational levels.

## 6 Key stakeholders

6.1 The Library will work in partnership with a variety of key stakeholders in the English Regions and the Home Nations and wishes to become a trusted partner of choice and a recognised stakeholder in networks relevant to its target markets.

6.2 Stakeholders in the English Regions and the Home Nations with whom we will work as appropriate include:

- The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, Cymal, the Scottish Library and Information Council, Library and Information Services Council (Northern Ireland) and the Committee on Library Co-operation in Ireland
- Library bodies in the English Regions (for example: Libraries and information East Midlands, London Libraries Development Agency, South West Regional Library System)
- Society of Chief Librarians and members of the Core Cities Library Group
- Regional Development Agencies
- Creative Partnerships
- HE regional networks
- BBC and Open University
- The Devolved Administrations and the National Libraries of Scotland and Wales

6.3 We will also report our activity in the English Regions and the Home Nations to the following Government Departments:

- Department for Culture, Media and Sport

And to the

- Scottish Executive
- National Assembly for Wales
- Department of Culture Arts and Leisure Northern Ireland

## 7 Implementation

7.1 In the English Regions and the Home Nations the British Library will implement the national British Library offer through a Library-wide programme. The Library will also demonstrate its value to each English Region and Home Nation through appropriate metrics to be developed as part of the strategy, starting with the establishment of baseline data.

- 7.2 Activity throughout the Library will:
- be sustainable;
  - avoid a project-based approach unless sustainable and capable of national roll-out;
  - develop national offers for regional delivery;
  - invite partners to pilot new offers before roll-out;
  - be developed in partnership;
  - build on what relevant agencies in the English Regions and the Home Nations are already doing;
  - build on existing initiatives English Regions and the Home Nations;
  - build on existing national initiatives being delivered in the English Regions and the Home Nations;
  - be sympathetic to regional and national differences;
  - be creative in developing new partnerships: outside the public library sector and the wider museums, libraries and archives sector.

7.3 The Library's Regional and Library Programmes will champion working with the English Regions and the Home Nations across the Library, identify and promote existing activity, and support the development and delivery of programmes at Regional and Home Nations level to our chosen audiences. It will be a source of intelligence, and a channel of communication to the English Regions and the Home Nations. It will broker partnerships and develop and manage stakeholder relationships.

## **8 The National Libraries of Scotland and Wales and Legal Deposit**

8.1 The British Library has a long history of working closely with the National Libraries of Scotland and Wales, not least in terms of jointly addressing areas of common cause, resource sharing, and professional development, etc.

8.2 However, the key area of partnership working, which is critical to the mission of each of the three libraries in the 21st century, is Legal Deposit and specifically the implementation of the Legal Deposit Libraries Act 2003 to ensure permanent access to our digital cultural heritage. The British Library is working in partnership with the National Library of Wales to develop a shared technical infrastructure for managing UK electronic legal deposit material based on the British Library's Digital Object Management system; the National Library of Scotland plans to create an independent system but with links to the British Library/National Library of Wales system. The British Library will work closely with the National Libraries of Scotland and Wales to ensure timely implementation, within an agreed planning framework, of Regulations under the Legal Deposit Libraries Act.

## **9 Northern Ireland**

9.1 There is no equivalent in Northern Ireland to the National Libraries of Scotland and Wales for facilitating effective delivery of the British Library's national offer to the Province. There have been some significant achievements: British Library funding has for example enabled the establishment in 2000 of the Northern Ireland Publications Resource (NIPR), a repository in Belfast for all Northern Ireland publications which are now systematically collected and catalogued - since 2000 NIPR has identified more than 4,200 N Ireland publications. However a more systematic and proactive approach necessarily awaits the establishment of the new single N Ireland Library Authority.

## **10. Action plan**

10.1 The following are priority areas for progress in 2008/09:

- Completion of an internal database of existing British Library activity in the English Regions and the Home Nations;
- Analysis of the database to identify gaps, duplication and promote existing Library-wide activity;
- Stakeholder development.
- Development of appropriate metrics and case studies to demonstrate the Library's value to the English Regions and the Home Nations;
- Communication of the strategy to partners and stakeholders in the English Regions and the Home Nations;
- Development of a technical infrastructure for managing UK electronic legal deposit material;
- Preparation for Regulations under the Legal Deposit Libraries Act.

## ANNEX 1

### Some examples of existing British Library activity in the English Regions and Home Nations

- 1 Information Supply and Inter-library Lending
  - 100% of the 208 public library services in the UK use the British Library's loan services and 100% of the UK's 148 universities use the British Library's document supply services
  - Over 1 million loans and photocopies are supplied by the British Library to libraries, businesses and other customers across the UK (06/07)
  - Some 81,000 British Library loan and document supply requests are requested through UK public libraries (06/07)
  
- 2 Catalogue and Bibliographic Services
  - British Library catalogues can be accessed through public access terminals in public or educational libraries across the UK
  - Remote searches of the online British Library Catalogue rose from 6.9 million (01/02) to over 20 million (06/07)
  
- 3 [www.bl.uk](http://www.bl.uk)
  - Provides online sources of information and enables online delivery of content
  - Gives access to virtual galleries, innovative e-learning content, *Turning the Pages*, and other virtual resources.
  
- 4 Initiatives
  - Uncovering and digitising spectacular and intriguing treasures held in public libraries across the UK through the *Hidden Treasures Brought to Life* competition in 2007, undertaken in partnership with Microsoft, the Society of Chief Librarians and Scottish library chiefs. For more information see <http://www.bl.uk/ttp2/hiddentreasures.html>.
  - Co-operating with Newsplan to preserve and improve access to local and regional newspapers throughout the UK. The programme makes newspapers available in microform to local and family historians and lifelong learners.
  - Delivering a touring exhibition programme based on iconic items in the British Library collection such as two hugely successful *Lindisfarne Gospels Facsimile Tours* in the NE and a *Turning the Pages* version of the Sherborne Missal in the SW.
  - Delivering British Library Lectures on Location, a programme of public talks by curators about the Library and its collections.
  - Developing an exhibition on panels about research, creativity, innovation and the role of libraries which has visited libraries and other venues across the UK.
  - Developing a programme of events and activities in partnership with public libraries and other cultural organisations across the UK to coincide with major exhibitions at St Pancras, such as *Sacred* in 2007, *Taking Liberties* (working title) in 2008 and *Henry VIII: Man and Monarch* in 2009; providing promotional and learning resources based on the London exhibition.
  - Developing, in partnership with the Society of Chief Librarians, a web-based training package, *The British Library: a tour for public library staff* to raise awareness of British Library services and collections, promote their use alongside local and regional resources and enhance services for public library users. See: [http://www.bl.uk/training\\_package/introduction.html](http://www.bl.uk/training_package/introduction.html)

- Introducing front line staff and middle managers from public libraries to the British Library, encouraging them to act as British Library Champions on return to their authorities and share their experiences with colleagues and users. In return Champions are encouraged to share their experiences and impressions of the public library sector with the British Library to help the Library tailor services more effectively to public library users in the English Regions and Home Nations.
- Supporting the national roll-out of INSPIRE, the access and referral scheme which aims to provide seamless access for lifelong learners to the resources they need in academic, public or national libraries. See: <http://www.inspire.gov.uk/index.php> and <http://www.findit.org.uk/>

5. Data collected in 2003 for the British Library's economic impact study provides an assessment of the amount which members of the general public would be willing to pay through taxes to maintain the British Library. Around 2,000 member of the general public took in the study, randomly selected across all regions. Whereas the current annual average contribution to the Library through taxes is around £3.00 per person, participants in the study indicated a willingness to pay on average £6.30 per year, £3.30 more than they currently pay. The regional breakdown is as follows:

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|----------------------------|--------------|
| • East Midland             | £4.74 (158%) |
| • East of England          | £3.08 (103%) |
| • North East               | £5.51 (184%) |
| • North West               | £3.92 (131%) |
| • Scotland                 | £5.19 (173%) |
| • South East               | £8.56 (285%) |
| • Sotuh West               | £8.04 (268%) |
| • Wales                    | £5.47 (182%) |
| • West Midlands            | £3.86 (129%) |
| • Yorkshire and Humberside | £6.17 (206%) |
| • Overall average          | £6.30 (210%) |