Inverclyde council

AGENDA ITEM NO: 14

Report To:	**Regeneration Committee**	**Date:**	**01 September 2011**
Report By:	**Corporate Director Education and Communities**	**Report:**	**RC/11/9/1/AE/AW**
Contact Officer:	**Libraries Manager**	**Contact No:**	**01475 712347**
Subject:	**Inverclyde Libraries PLQIM (Public Libraries Quality Improvement Matrix) Report**		

1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Regeneration Committee of an external evaluation of Inverclyde Libraries carried out by SLIC (Scottish Library and Information Council) in March 2011. The final report was made available on 16 May 2011 and will be published on the SLIC website later in the year.

2.0 SUMMARY

2.1 Inverclyde Libraries have received a positive report from SLIC. Members should note that in two aspects of the evaluation, Inverclyde Libraries was judged to be 'good' and in the third aspect, the Library service was judged to be 'very good.'

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

3.1 It is recommended that the Regeneration Committee approve the SLIC report on Inverclyde Libraries.

Angela Edwards
Head of Educational Planning and Culture

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 The Public Library Quality Improvement Matrix is a quality assurance tool launched in Scotland in March 2007; it is the first self-evaluation framework designed for use by public library services and replaces COSLA's Public Library Standards 1995. SLIC (the Scottish Library and Information Council) has been responsible for developing PLQIM, which is based on the European Framework for Quality Management. Although participation in the process is voluntary, it is now used by all 32 library authorities in Scotland.

4.2 The Public Libraries Quality Improvement Matrix is made up of seven quality indicators. These are:

- Access to information
- Community and personal participation
- Meeting readers' needs
- Learners' experiences
- Ethos and values
- Organisation and use of resources and space
- Leadership

Library services choose one or more indicator on which to be assessed in any given year. SLIC make annual visits to authorities who have indicated they wish to be assessed. As this is a relatively new scheme we do not have enough inspection evidence to make local or national comparisons.

4.3 Assessment is made using the following 6-point scale:

Excellent   outstanding, sector leading
Very Good   major strengths
Good   important strengths with some areas for improvement
Satisfactory   strengths just outweigh weaknesses
Weak   important weaknesses
Unsatisfactory   major weaknesses

4.4 The first official participation was in May 2007 where we elected to be assessed on Learner's Experiences and received a mark of 4 'Good - important strengths with areas for improvement'. We were subsequently successful in applying for an award of £33,650 for a project to enable those with additional learning needs to access computers with the support of the local learning partnership through a range of learning activities and support.

4.5 Authorities scoring a level 3 (satisfactory) or above are eligible to competitively apply for funding from the Scottish Government for the improvement of library services.

4.6 The final report was made available on 16 May 2011 and will be published on the SLIC website later in the year. It is attached as an appendix to this report.

4.7 Inverclyde Libraries was inspected under the first quality indicator - Access to Information. In assessing the indicator, SLIC found sufficiency, range and suitability of resources to be 'good', arrangements for access to be 'very good'; and staff interaction and support to be 'good'.

4.8 The report lists 9 particular strengths of the service:

- Very good range of electronic resources in a small authority
- 24/7 services via library website
- Very good promotion of electronic resources with staff
- Staff support for ICT
- Support for information literacy in schools
- Development of heritage information resources
- Use of social networking tools

- Use of QR codes
- Well trained staff

4.9 The report lists 6 areas for improvement:

- Review stock management policy
- Introduce evidence based stock management
- Review newspaper and journal provision
- Continue to explore ways of developing information literacy
- Extend availability of internet access through provision of wi-fi/laptops
- Pilot information services for job seekers and tourists in smaller branches

4.10 The areas for improvement from the report have been built into Inverclyde Libraries' Service Plan for 2011 and will be addressed over the coming year.

Inverclyde – report of a visit on 29th March 2011 by the Scottish Library and Information Council

Summary

Inverclyde Library Service's staff used the Public Library Quality Improvement Matrix (PLQIM) to review its provision across in Quality Indicator 1 Access to information.

From detailed discussions with staff, the public and a wide range of stakeholders; visits to libraries; and a review of the evidence, it is clear that the Libraries' staff are strongly committed to developing a range of services and publicising them well in the community. Provision of public access computers is very good with regularly refreshed hardware and very good connectivity, which offers greater opportunity to support the public in finding information, skills development, cultural enrichment, leisure and the tourist industry. Key strengths of the service include the very good range of electronic resources in a small authority, levels of in-house ICT support which offer a reliable and responsive service to the public and staff, highly trained staff, use of web 2.0 tools and QR codes, support for information literacy in schools and development of heritage information resources.

Other important strengths include well-organised web pages, eLibrary, range of online resources and community information. There are a number of areas for improvement including: reviewing the stock management policy and introduce evidence based stock management, continuing to improve staff knowledge of online subscription services to embed their use across staff and develop consistency in the quality of support, continuing to develop IT training and information literacy support, and piloting use of wi-fi and laptops at Kilmacolm with a view to wider availability.

As part of the Public Library Quality Improvement Matrix, staff have identified a number of areas for improvement and this will form the basis of an action plan on which to build better services.

Quality Indicator 1 Access to Information	
Sufficiency, range and suitability of resources	Good
Arrangements for access	Very good
Staff interaction and support	Good

Levels
This report uses a six level scale, as follows:

excellent – outstanding, sector leading
very good – major strengths
good – important strengths with areas for improvement
satisfactory – strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak – important weaknesses
unsatisfactory – major weaknesses

Introduction

Sited in all types of communities and with extensive mobile library service provision, libraries remain one of the free universal services for communities where the population can visit as individuals or in groups to pursue reading for pleasure, learning or hobbies. Libraries can support the business community, individual and community information needs and are inclusive of all age and social groups, nationalities, genders and religious beliefs. The delivery of high quality information and library services to individuals and communities helps people to develop their skills, realise their aspirations and contribute to the economic growth and well-being of the country. Libraries encourage the use of digital technologies by communities and individuals by providing access to information, learning and culture.

The first public library legislation in Scotland was passed in 1853 and the base legislation is the 1887 Public Libraries Consolidation (Scotland) Act, and so local authorities have a statutory duty to secure the provision of adequate library services for all persons resident in their area. Library services make a significant contribution to delivering the Scottish Government's five strategic priorities, as well as local council and community planning objectives.

Local Authority Background

Inverclyde Council serves a population of around 80,210 located on the west coast, on the Clyde estuary. The main centres of population are in Greenock, Port Glasgow and Gourock, and there are a number of smaller communities. The area is undergoing a period of transformation with the clearing of many former industrial sites along the waterfront and new residential, retail and leisure facilities being created. Stretching along the southern bank of the Clyde, Inverclyde has a strong sense of community and a lengthy maritime history. That is set in a context of social and economic challenge. The population is falling year on year and it is projected that Inverclyde will face the highest percentage drop in population in Scotland. Poverty levels are high with 5% of the population claiming Job Seekers Allowance and 13% claiming Incapacity Benefit. These are well above the Scottish average. The Service has 1 central library in Greenock and 6 community libraries, with 34.0 (FTE) staff. Inverclyde Library Service has worked closely with neighbouring authorities on joint initiatives and also with local partners in learning.

Process

Building on success: a public library quality improvement matrix self evaluation toolkit, prepared by the Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC) provides the framework for the process. Library Staff chose to look at Quality Indicator 1 Access to Information. Staff worked together to identify and evaluate evidence about the impact and outcomes and their findings were presented to SLIC.

Working with the assistance of two external verifiers, Alison Hunter, Principal Libraries Officer, East Lothian Council and Richard Aird, Senior Officer (Libraries) West Dunbartonshire Council, SLIC reviewed the evidence and carried out discussions with members of staff, a wide variety of partners and the management team on 29th March 2011. Visits were made to Central, South West and Port Glasgow Libraries.

SLIC would also like to thank all those who participated. Time was spent talking to members of the public and the wide range of partners about the service they receive. These arrangements helped SLIC to come to a balanced view on the outcome of the self-evaluation.

Quality Indicator 1 Access to information

Strengths
- Very good range of electronic resources in a small authority
- 24/7 services via library website
- Very good promotion of electronic resources with staff
- Staff support for ICT
- Support for information literacy in schools
- Development of heritage information resources
- Use of social networking tools
- Use of QR codes
- Well trained staff

Sufficiency, range and suitability of resources

The library service stocks about 118,000 titles and covers a range of information needs. The titles include specialist collections such as Books on Prescription, books in community languages, books on sexual health, adult literacy and collections to support information needs about hobbies, work, study and skills. Books are available in a variety of formats including large print, audio, multi-sensory books, downloadable audio and CD/MP3/Playaway. Annual issues are low but are increasing, as is the turnover of stock. Historically the book fund has been low in previous years and the service is rebuilding. The stock policy needs updating to take into account the new formats, electronic resources and the introduction of evidence based stock management software, SmartSM. Newspapers and journals have not been reviewed in recent years and this should be included in the action plan.

The service has good e-Library service which offers, in so far as it is enabled by remote access permissions, 24/7 access to users from their own homes. Titles are purchased from a specific budget for electronic resources. MARC records for individual titles are added to the library catalogue and dummy books have been added to the library shelves in an effort to increase the *visibility* of these resources. The usage statistics are monitored every month. The range of electronic resources includes Credo Reference, Encyclopaedia Britannica, KnowUK, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford English Dictionary Online, Oxford Reference and Who's Who. The library service has added some additional resources including Ancestry Library Edition, Theory Test, Which Online, GoCitizen and Issues UK as well as some others which make the eLibrary more comprehensive in its coverage than would be expected in a small authority. This is a valuable and enriched service for library users. eLibrary training has been incorporated into staff training and there are plans to integrate the use of electronic resources into regular staff quizzes to develop their knowledge of the resources and into public learning to help build up patterns of use. Information and support is also provided to online courses available through Learning Bytes and Skills Development Scotland. A small print collection is available in each branch and a larger collection at the Central Library. This needs consideration within the context of the Stock Management Policy review.

Inverclyde Libraries are beginning to offer family learning opportunities. They have been active and enthusiastic partners in the BBC/Libraries strategic partnership for a number of years and their learning campaigns or programme themes have often been used well by the library as a starting point to target new audiences. *Finding Our Family Together* was an in-house course developed where under 16s work with their parents or carers to research their

family tree. There is an opportunity to develop a programme in partnership with Community Learning and Development and to link this with Curriculum for Excellence.

The library service has developed a weekly programme in adult literacy and numeracy with the Community Learning team. They are currently running the six book reading challenge. As part of the Inverclyde Alliance, the community planning partnership, Inverclyde Libraries are able to access funding to provide further learning opportunities, such as WOOPI (Wider Opportunities for older People in Inverclyde).

Demand for information about heritage and family history is currently on the increase, as demonstrated in enquiry statistics. The library service provides its own print and electronic resources, including Ancestry. Some of the resources have been created by the library staff over many years and it is important to remember that the library not only holds current heritage and history information it continues to develop and build new information. These resources include birth, marriage and death records, digitised local books, digitised photographs and a Census index. Inverclyde Heritage Hub, the forum for people interested in local history is well-supported by the library service. Recent *new* information was sourced as part of the NLS Post Office Directories digitisation project. The Watt Library has a collection of historic interest but this is not yet fully catalogued. The recent local history events have been well-supported and Tom Johnstone, the local artist, gave a talk and exhibition as part of the BBC campaign *Turn Back Time.*

Visits to the libraries showed that there is a range of community information at each site. The library service provides a community venue for the consideration of print versions of consultations and for access to hard copies of traffic regulations, HMIe reports, council agendas and minutes and school handbooks. Links to electronic versions are available 24/7 from the library website. Through wider partnerships, the service provides links to the Scottish Parliament and European Parliament information centres, as well as the resources of the British Library and National Library of Scotland. The Gourock branch has tourist information in a part-funded initiative with Visit Scotland. This offers potential to be rolled out as 'satellite' tourist points in other places and to strengthen links with Economic Development, who are responsible for tourism within the Council. There is potential to develop an initiative with the Race Online 2012 initiative and Job Centre Plus to develop job information points and skills training in libraries

Arrangement for access
Inverclyde has 80 public access computers with free internet access. Connectivity is good. The PCs were refreshed in early 2011 and the internet feed shared by all libraries gives an access speed of 100Mbps. This is very good in a small authority. The library management system has recently been changed and is Civica's Spydus. The service meets all the standards in terms of providing a DDA compliant web enabled catalogue which uses the Z39:50 protocol enabling cross searching with other library catalogues through the CAIRNS initiative. The service monitors the number of hits on the library catalogue through Google Analytics and has noticed that statistics are improving, possibly as a result of the removal of the reservation charge. Interestingly the service has recently started using QR codes to promote easy access to the library catalogue via smartphones. The service offers access to Microsoft Office software, Photoshop, CD burning and assistive technology on each computer. Access to computers is bookable through the Netloan booking system and protected by Deep Freeze.

The library pages on the Council website are maintained in-house and there is a mission to make as much of the library's information service available online as possible. This means

that there is a good range of links to reader development websites to enhance the readers' experience outwith library hours, remote access to electronic resources is used where possible and the virtual statistics are growing as a result. This is a very good example of electronic local government service delivery.

There is a Marketing group made up from staff at all levels to look at branding, which has recently been renewed and the utilisation of web 2.0 technologies. The service has an active Twitter feed and a Flickr account for sharing library photographs. Induction packs have been redeveloped and mini-tours created. The Council used the library's experience with social networking as a pilot and agreed to unlock access to some of the sites banned on the corporate network so that library staff could experiment with reaching a new audience and develop protocols as a result.

There are plans to develop the learning side by introducing ECDL and improving quality branding. However, there is a capacity issue about computer access. Libraries need to balance the needs of scheduled classes with drop-in use. The availability of wi-fi and laptops would provide a flexible solution to extending capacity. The new Kilmacolm Library will be piloting laptops and netbooks so this will provide some useful feedback for future service planning. The service has effective links with IT which has resulted in the Systems Assistant being given administrative rights.

Public internet access is regulated within the terms of the Acceptable Use and Filtering Policy. Access is appropriate for designated age-groups and decisions to unblock sites can be made by library staff if appropriate. Internet safety is a concern for all staff and one member of staff has just undertaken CEOP Ambassador training with a view to cascading this to staff over coming months. There is full public access to social networking sites and good use is made of these tools to promote library services.

Group visits by schools are encouraged and there is a programme to support the development of information literacy skills. This was observed in action by the visiting team. Schools get a longer loan period with their schools membership to help support project work. The recent restructuring within the council is already encouraging closer working between schools, school libraries and the public library service and this will be of mutual benefit.

Staff interaction and support
All front line staff have ECDL or equivalent qualifications and it is an essential element in the person specification for every post. Three senior staff have achieved the SQA's ICTL Diploma, which is a specialist qualification for public library staff. A further 3 are following the qualification. The library service has supported Frontline training from Opening the Book, which is a specialist reader development qualification. This is a cascade training programme so other staff will follow the supervisor who will be supporting them over the coming months. In addition one member of staff has completed ITALL training which supports adult literacies learners.

There is an annual training programme for staff which covers customer care, reader development and using assistive technologies, for example. The service would benefit from carrying out a skills audit and training needs analysis to ensure that there is no duplication of effort or under-use of staff specialisms. Refresher training is carried out each year and senior members of staff are trained in training delivery. Staff undergo a rigourous induction programme as well as the corporate programme and feedback that they feel well equipped to do their job. There is a commitment to the professional qualifications, the library

Chartership and revalidation and all current professional staff are Chartered. The Libraries Manager is a mentor within the professional network and her leadership in this area is a benefit to the council.

One of the key strengths of the service is the fact that staff are remarkably well trained for a small authority and their confidence in their skills means they are well-equipped to offer a high quality of support for learning with the public.

The service has a good track record in delivering learning to a range of customers. Two staff are dedicated to the delivery of learning. Courses are run by these staff or by one of the local partner providers. This allows the service to offer variety and appropriate expertise. The visiting team observed two classes in action – one a school party and another, an IT class, both led by staff. The Bookstart Bookbug session was also taking place at the time of the visit and is learning at its earliest stage. All activities were well supported by an attentive audience who spoke highly of the quality of the learning they received. In the BBC's recent *First Click* campaign 534 people attended one or more classes, which is very good take-up. At lunchtime the visiting team met a wider range of partners and were able to discuss in greater detail the assistance and support offered by the library service to them in their work or study. Feedback was very good.

The Central Library houses the ABC Project which provides assistive technologies and 1:1 support for computer users with disabilities. Although all branches have assistive technologies on site, the expertise of ABC Project staff is welcomed either to refresh knowledge or to help in individual cases. Other specialist support includes a Braille printing service on demand, which is unusual to find outside of the big city library services.

As not all Inverclyde residents are able to come to the library, the Books on Wheels has been developed to meet the needs of the housebound. Titles are chosen and packed by library staff and then delivered by WRVS volunteers. Paperbacks which have been withdrawn from stock are sent to Inverclyde Royal Hospital for patients to use without concern about loss or return dates.

Areas for improvement
- Review stock management policy
- Introduce evidence based stock management
- Review newspapers and journals
- Continuing to explore ways of developing information literacy
- Extend availability of internet access through provision of wi-fi/laptops
- Pilot satellite information services for jobs seekers and tourists

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