

# Expanding our Horizons

National Library of Scotland

Strategy 2008-2011



# Introduction

Knowledge and learning are of vital importance to the well-being of our society. The National Library of Scotland (NLS) has a key role in managing the knowledge that Scotland needs now and in the future, as well as preserving our past.

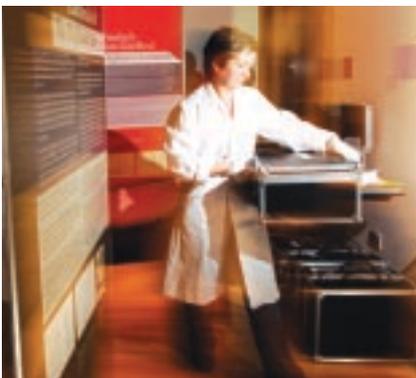
NLS has made enormous strides in recent years and we must continue to develop as an organisation in a rapidly-changing environment. We look forward to the contribution that our staff and all those involved with NLS will make, using their creativity and commitment to achieve the next stage of our development.

The National Library of Scotland has long been recognised for the richness of its collections, breadth of expertise, and support for research and scholarship, across a huge range of fields. In recent years, the Library has built on that record by widening access and increasing the opportunity for new audiences to benefit from this great national resource, while also improving the quality of our services.

This document builds on, and extends, current work to ensure that NLS remains not only one of the world's great research libraries, but also a National Collection for Scotland that is outward looking, dynamic and innovative.

Our main task is to meet the constantly developing needs of our users more effectively, through a planned, evolutionary, but nonetheless far-reaching, approach. This is a task which embraces both traditional library services and emerging digital opportunities. However, funding will be constrained over the lifetime of this strategy and we will therefore have to make clear operational priorities over the next three years. Those decisions will be made within the framework of this strategy.

We remain committed to the role we play in nurturing Scotland's cultural life. We greatly look forward to working closely with other organisations, to supporting collecting activity throughout Scotland, and to celebrating Scotland internationally in the exciting three years ahead of us.



Professor Michael Anderson  
Chairman

Martyn Wade  
National Librarian and Chief Executive



# Overview

## What we are here to do - the NLS mission and vision

NLS will enrich lives and communities, encourage and promote lifelong learning, research and scholarship and encourage universal access to information, by comprehensively collecting and making available the recorded knowledge of Scotland, and promoting access to the ideas and cultures of the world.

## How we approach our work

The way in which we approach our work is important to us. We believe in:

- Service
- Learning
- Innovation
- Commitment
- Excellence

Develop the national collections



Develop the organisation



Build relationships



Widen access to knowledge

## What we will do over the next three years

The four key themes represent our priorities and how they relate to each other. Widening access to knowledge is our ultimate strategic priority, driving everything we do. We will develop more detailed strategies to guide our activities in support of these priorities.

## How we will know if it's working

We are putting in place specific measures and targets for all activities and projects, so that we know if we are on course to achieving what we set out in this document. The details of what we will do are set out in our Corporate Plans.



## Our values

### 1 Service

Actively placing the customer at the heart of everything we do.

### 2 Learning

A passion for the discovery, creation and sharing of knowledge and understanding.

### 3 Innovation

Supporting and encouraging creativity and development.

### 4 Commitment

Dedication to the delivery of the NLS vision and mission.

### 5 Excellence

Achieving the highest possible standards in delivering the NLS vision and mission.

## Core themes: making the strategy happen

#### **Develop the national collection**

Collecting, caring for and promoting the Library's collections and supporting the nation's collections.

#### **Develop the organisation**

Ensuring we are capable of achieving our goals.

#### **Building relationships**

Working with others for mutual benefit.

#### **Widening access to knowledge**

Creating opportunities for everyone to learn and discover.

# How we define our values

We will:

## 1 Service

- Work with our customers and potential customers to understand their needs
- Take pride in meeting their needs in a professional manner
- Treat people courteously and with respect

We will:

## 2 Learning

- Support each other to learn and develop
- Take responsibility for our own learning
- Openly share knowledge and encourage others to do so
- Ensure that the information we give is accurate and reliable
- Demonstrate a passion for knowledge

We will:

## 3 Innovation

- Encourage, support and reward new ideas
- Monitor and anticipate changing user requirements
- Provide a structure for evaluating and implementing useful ideas

We will:

## 4 Commitment

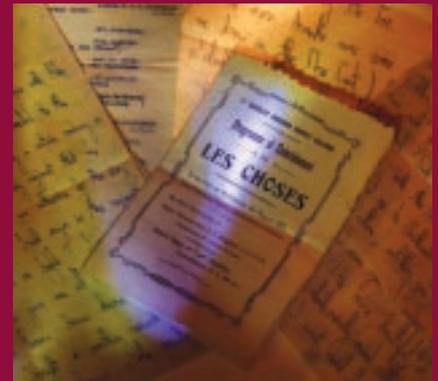
- Set and meet challenging targets that support NLS vision
- Offer full commitment to benefits NLS can deliver
- Take pride in delivering the vision and maximising the benefits NLS brings to Scotland, its people and the world.
- Take pride in NLS collections, service and knowledge

We will:

## 5 Excellence

- Adapt and change what we do when we identify improvements
- Go the extra mile
- Actively seek continuous improvement in what we do, as individuals, as teams and as an organisation
- Make the Library a model of excellence





# 1

## Developing the national collections

Our collections are a national resource for current and future generations. They bring together a wide range of formats - not only the books, maps, newspapers and manuscripts for which NLS is renowned, but also recordings, photographs and film, with digital resources forming an increasingly important part of the collections. We have unique responsibilities for collecting and preserving Scottish material, but it is equally important that the NLS collections serve the current and future needs of Scotland's research community.

Using our Legal Deposit powers to the full, we will claim the publications (printed and electronic) we want to add to our collections. We will also continue to transfer legal publications to the Library of the Faculty of Advocates, and work closely with the Faculty to maintain and support public access to their collections.

- 1.1 We will seek to conserve all NLS collections (physical and digital), preserving them from deterioration and protecting them from fire, theft or any other threat.
- 1.2 We will aim to collect all Scottish material more proactively, including those in non-English languages (such as Gaelic and ethnic minority languages).
- 1.3 We will collect non-Scottish material which we consider is, or will be, of interest to users in Scotland.
- 1.4 We will increase our commitment to the digital NLS and associated ICT infrastructure, by re-allocating resources achieved through efficiency gains, and by re-prioritising the use of grant-in-aid.
- 1.5 We will work to enhance and enable access to those other Scottish library and archive collections which are distributed throughout a wide range of organisations and places, by providing services, advice and support to others.





## 2

### Developing the organisation

Our aim is to use all our available resources as effectively as possible in order to achieve the goals we have set out in this document. These resources include our finances, physical assets and, crucially, the knowledge and commitment of our staff. In order to achieve these goals, we must develop the specialist skills of our staff, and provide effective decision-making, leadership and management at all levels. We will become more confident in our ability to assess and manage risks. In all our plans and activities, we will work to be fair, equitable and environmentally sustainable.

Over the next three years, we will re-prioritise the use of our resources to focus on the goals identified in this strategy and will also make efficiency savings in a planned and incremental way, to provide best value for money.

- 2.1 We will improve the organisation by focusing on the customer; by ensuring that we have good information on our performance and on the difference we make; by being flexible, managing risk and by avoiding unnecessary bureaucracy.
- 2.2 We will become more efficient by scrutinising our services in order to reduce duplication and low-priority activity; by automating processes; by sharing back-office and other functions with appropriate partners where this will free up resources; and by rationalising the NLS estate and developing services and property collaboratively.
- 2.3 We will make sure that our staff have the skills and knowledge NLS needs to implement our strategic goals. We will share such knowledge widely, communicating in Plain English internally and externally. We will encourage research and innovation by our staff.
- 2.4 We will contribute to, and where appropriate lead, Scottish policy development in fields where we have expertise.
- 2.5 We will aim to increase the resources available to the Library from non-Government sources by developing and implementing a sustainable fundraising programme.



# 3

## Building relationships

NLS has a long record of working with others; but there are still many significant opportunities for the Library to contribute more fully to the work of partner organisations and for NLS to provide Scottish leadership in areas where we have particular expertise or responsibilities. We will review our current and potential collaborative activity to make sure that it helps us to deliver our strategic priorities, recognising that we do not have the capacity to work with everyone, all the time. We will look to work with intermediate bodies, as well as directly with service users, in order to achieve the greatest possible impact.

- 3.1 We will act as a national centre of excellence for Scottish libraries, helping to support best practice in the interpretation and preservation of significant Scottish library collections held both by NLS and by partners.
- 3.2 We will collaborate with national cultural, research and education institutions on both the practical and the strategic level, to improve service delivery and to provide new opportunities for the public to explore and enjoy the nation's collections.
- 3.3 We will work closely with Scottish, UK and international library and information networks which enhance the development of services and the sharing of knowledge, including those in the public, private and not-for-profit sectors.
- 3.4 We will manage relations with the Scottish Government to maximise the contribution which NLS can make in supporting national priorities, within the mission of the Library.
- 3.5 We will maintain awareness of the needs of our various user (and potential user) communities through market research, consultation and involvement, in order to develop our services in the most appropriate way.



# 4

## Widening access to knowledge

Our potential users include researchers, businesses, the education sector at all levels, information professionals and the public in Scotland, the UK and across the world. A vast repository of knowledge is held within our physical and digital collections, and also by our expert staff. Our task is to unlock that knowledge so that it is as widely available as possible to our users and potential users. This requires us to provide a range of services, both for visitors and for those who need or prefer remote services, including both 'traditional' and newly-emerging channels.

- 4.1 We will provide permanent on-site services such as reading rooms, events and exhibitions for a wide range of visitors, from scholars to tourists.
- 4.2 We will make a wide range of digital resources accessible through our website, in virtual learning environments and through other communications media which are effective in promoting the use and discovery of collections.
- 4.3 We will improve remote access to our collections and expertise by responding to user enquiries, by finding new ways for our users to interact with us, and each other; to share their expert knowledge and by lending more items to libraries, museums and cultural bodies for display.
- 4.4 We will make it easy for people to find any item from the collections by developing search services which users experience as easy, simple and seamless; by making sure incoming material is catalogued quickly, to an appropriate standard; and by expanding our digitisation programmes, so that users have online access to searchable full-text resources and images.
- 4.5 We will promote the Library, its collections and services by publicising NLS to Scottish and international audiences; by working alongside - and responding to the needs of - Scottish professional library and information science communities; and by supporting the production and dissemination of research based on the Library's collections.



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