

SLIGO COUNTY COUNCIL
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Sligo County Library, Museum & Cultural Services

Library Development Plan 2006-2010

Sligo County Library, Museum & Cultural Services Library Development Plan 2006-2010

To provide a responsive, accessible and inclusive library service for all our customers, which fosters reading, stimulates the imagination and contributes to lifelong learning and cultural recreation

- Our vision

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Executive Summary

1. Introduction¹

Background (1.1)

Aidan Walsh Consultancy was commissioned by Sligo County Council in October 2005 to undertake and assist in the development of a Library Development Plan.

5-Year Library Development Plans (1.2)

Under the Local Government Act 2001, all County Libraries were required to prepare and adopt programmes for operation and development. The Act sets down the broad content of such plans, which must include

- An outline of existing services
- The objectives and priorities for the future
- The measures needed to meet the objectives
- The financial implications of the programme as a whole

The Library Plan will provide a framework for action that will allow the Library to meet its obligations under the Act and provide a strategic framework for developing its services over the 2006-2010 period.

Benefiting Sligo And Its People

Libraries play a major role in combating social exclusion and in providing access to knowledge and information across all socio-economic groups. This era of positive development has been supported by the central policy framework of the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government (DOEHLG) 1998 "Branching Out" report. "Branching Out" has levered over €100 million into public libraries within the past 8 years.

If this 5-year Development Plan is to benefit the people of County Sligo, it must identify where the Library is currently unable to benefit from this rising tide of investment and recommend accordingly, using the external perspective of an outside consultant.

The work programme for the Plan was therefore approached from this pragmatic and practical angle, identifying national benchmarks and Sligo's ranking against them.

¹ Numbers in brackets refer to the paragraph numbering within the full report.

2. Sligo County Library Today

The Library Within The Local Authority (2.1)

Under local government legislation, only county authorities are entitled to establish and operate library services. Sligo County Council is the library authority for the county of Sligo.

History Of The Library² (2.2)

Sligo County Library has a long and distinguished tradition of service to the public and is one of the longest established public libraries in Ireland. Sligo County Library was the fourth county service in Ireland and the first to be established in Connacht. In the decades that followed the famous writer Frank O'Connor worked for the Library. Jack Lambert, father of puppeteer Eugene Lambert, was County Librarian from 1931 to 1943 and then the celebrated Nora Niland became County Librarian, a post she held until her retirement in 1979. She was followed by the highly respected historian, John McTernan who retired in 1994.

The Library's Service Points

The Library delivers its primary services through 4 key branches and through its central headquarters facility in Sligo Town. The present Sligo Town Branch at Stephen Street was opened to the public in 1952. In 1970, the HQ of the Library was moved to premises in Sligo Courthouse, a location it continued to occupy until its move to the Bridge Street. Branches were also established in Ballymote, Enniscrone and in Tubbercurry. A major new Library opened in Tubbercurry in 2003, to widespread acclaim. The Enniscrone Branch was refurbished in 2002.

Central Library Stephen Street, Sligo Town,

This principal branch has over 7500 members and issues 130,000 volumes per annum. Although substantially outdated and inadequate, the branch serves some 95,000 users each year, a considerable achievement, which reflects the strong public support and usage of the Library. The branch provides a lending service of adult and children's literature, books, newspapers, periodicals, audiotapes and an information service. Six p.c.s are provided for public use.

County Library, Bridge Street, Sligo Town

While the Central Library is located in a converted church building in Stephen Street, the County Library is located within an office complex in Bridge Street, Sligo Town. Reference and local history resources, encyclopaedias, dictionaries, atlases, etc. can all be found here. The County Library also contains an extensive collection of material of

² Much of the factual data and background information is taken from two previous library development plans produced in 1979 and 1993.

local interest including histories, maps, newspapers and civil records. There is also a large collection of Yeats material. The administrative headquarters is also located here.

Ballymote

Situated in a small, 21^m2 room in Ballymote Courthouse, this tiny branch has a loyal following and a membership of 800. It lends 12,500 volumes each year. It can only house 2 pcs for public use. Sligo County Council has purchased the site of an old cinema in Ballymote for a new Branch Library and has submitted an application for funding to DOEHLG. It is estimated that the new Ballymote Community Library will cost €2.2 million. The development of both the Sligo Town and the Ballymote buildings will be pursued in parallel.

Enniscrone

Up to 2002, this branch was the smallest branch within the service. Today, their refurbished premises stands at 60 m2. The branch is situated within a County Council building that houses the Area Engineer's office. It has a membership of 900 and issues over 15,200 volumes to borrowers each year. Restricted space here, as at Ballymote, means that only 2 p.c.s are available for public use.

Tubbercurry Community Library-A Great Success

Tubbercurry Community Library is at the heart of a visionary Sligo County Council one-stop-shop that also houses other Council functions and a courthouse space that the Library shares. The award winning building is welcoming, modern and spacious and it has attracted international attention and indeed commendation in architectural awards. Taken together with its energetic programme of activities, its welcoming ambience and its enhanced opening hours, Tubbercurry clearly points the way forward for the County Library Service as a whole.

This branch is the first purpose-built library in the history of Sligo County Library. Up to its opening in 2003, the town of Tubbercurry was home to a 100m2 rented space with a membership of 363 and a staff of 1 part-time librarian. Today, Tubbercurry is 350m2 and has a membership of 3500, of which 45% - 50% are under 12 years of age. The Library's 2001-2005 Development Plan³ projected a membership of 2000, which it has substantially exceeded. It has 4 members of staff and issues 42,000 volumes each year and operates enhanced opening hours of 44 hours per week.

In addition it mounts the only sustained and regular activity programme within the Library Service as a whole, enabled by its staff numbers, its size and additional funding for such activity. It also provides 21 p.c.s for public use.

³ "Sligo County Library Development Plan 2001-2005", Sligo County Library, prepared by the County Librarian.

Moving Forward In A Growing County (2.3)

The County Development Plan for County Sligo⁴ projects population growth by 2011 as follows-

- 75,000-80,000 living in the County and
- 35,000-40,000 living in Sligo Town

In this context of significant growth, the inadequacies of the Library service in Sligo Town Branch and at its HQ have been recognised by Sligo County Council and €6.4 million has been secured for new, purpose-built library buildings. This is the largest grant to date, from DOELHG, to a public library in Ireland.

Activities (2.4)

Today, public libraries do a great deal more than lend books. Reading and borrowing continue as core and major functions of all public libraries, but a lot more happens besides. Modern libraries are centres of cultural activity and engagement with heritage, the arts and the wider world of the imagination. In Sligo generally, this developing work area is severely curtailed by the inadequate size of the libraries branches, with the exception of the branch at Tubbercurry.

Activity programmes have been provided in Sligo Town, but such work is severely restricted there by the unsuitable buildings and inadequate capacity. There is considerable public pressure for such services, as the public consultation for this Plan showed, and the new County and Central Library will take account of this.

Funding (2.5)

Sligo County Council operates Sligo County Library and contributes the bulk of its annual operating costs with approximately one-third of costs coming from Sligo Borough Council. The 2005 Estimates of Expenditure for the County Library⁵ show a total estimated recurrent expenditure of €1.309, 436⁶. This sum represents a 12% increase in expenditure in 2005, over 2004 and demonstrates the continued confidence that Sligo County Council reposes in its Library Service.

Looked at against national spending levels however, Sligo County Library's funding level places it in 18th place out of the 21 county library authorities in Ireland.

⁴ Sligo County Development Plan 2005-2011

⁵ Information from An Chomhairle Leabharlanna, "Public Library Authorities Annual Estimates of Expenditure 2005"

⁶ Of the €1.309, 436, a sum of €22,000 comes from the Department of Education and Science, under the Primary School Scheme Book Grant.

Not Meeting National Benchmark (2.6)

The Library's book- stock continues to grow with 148,000 volumes anticipated by end 2005⁷. In spite of this, however, the Library spends well below the nationally recommended minimum level on its book purchasing, standing at €2.74 for 2006, as opposed to the national minimum level of €3.27 per head of population.

Staff (2.7)

21 people, between full and part-time staff, are employed by Sligo County Library. Sligo County Council has recognised the need to increase staffing and entered into discussions with the Trades Unions. Agreement has now been reached⁸ which will see the creation of new senior positions.

The new staffing structure is very welcome and will enable the Library to undertake the tasks and projects proposed in this Plan.

Achievements Of Sligo County Library (2.8)

Sligo County Council is proud of the Library's contribution to the development of the cultural and artistic life of Sligo. Achievements over the years include

- Providing new libraries at Tubbercurry and Ballymote
- Establishment of the first Public Art Gallery in Sligo
- Creation of the first collection in Ireland that focussed on the Yeats family
- Playing a key role in the foundation of the Yeats Summer School
- Creation of an internationally important Local History & Archive Collection
- Completion of the automation of book stock and membership records
- Award of "High Commendation" by UK & Ireland Public Library Building Awards to Tubbercurry Community Library
- The level of membership, currently standing at 16,000⁹
- Leading a major EU-funded international project which led to production of multi-media CD-Rom on poetry and paintings of Yeats brothers and its roots in Sligo tradition and landscape.

As the Library now enters its next 5 years of work, it will be building on this rich legacy for the benefit of new generations and contributing to strengthening Sligo's place as the cultural capital of the North West.

⁷ Information from An Chomhairle Leabharlanna, "Public Library Authorities Annual Estimates of Expenditure 2005"

⁸ Information from County Librarian, March 23, 2006

⁹ Membership is considered active where a member has made a recorded use of the Library within the previous 18 months.

3. Stakeholder views

Introduction (3.1)

To fully gather views from a dispersed and extensive range of people and organisations, a focussed approach was adopted. Existing user research was gathered and examined through;

- The Public Library User Survey, 2002

In addition, considerable time was devoted to three stakeholder consultations;

- The general public
- The Library staff
- Special interest groups

Criticism Of The Library In The PLUS Surveys Of 2002 (3.2)

An Chomhairle Leabharlanna (The Library Council) co-ordinated the first national survey of public library users in 2002, designed and analysed by a professional market research company.

Called PLUS (Public Library User Survey), the work was undertaken to gather attitudes on the current state of libraries, as users saw them. Each county was separately surveyed and results were provided to each of the 28 participating local authority libraries¹⁰. Almost 800 surveys were completed in Sligo, the majority in Sligo Town. The results allow comparison against the national levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with library services and facilities.

As will be seen below, the PLUS results identified many of the problems that the Library is facing, as identified by stakeholders groups. The results show that Sligo County Library is below the national average in key areas. The principal findings are as follows.

Age Profiles Of Users Sligo County Library differs from the national age pattern of user age profiles. The Library attracts

- Lower than average users from 15-19 age group, over a third lower
- Higher than average 35-44, almost a third higher
- Lower than average 65-74, over a third lower
- Lower than average over 74, almost two-thirds lower

The Library needs to attract larger numbers of younger and older users.

Lowest Satisfaction Levels In Ireland: The PLUS survey grouped a basket of key attributes within libraries and calculated satisfaction levels against them. These attributes relate directly to the government's policy for public library development, as set out in "Branching Out". To successfully attract investment from public sources,

¹⁰ "Public Library User Survey 2002", An Chomhairle Leabharlanna.

applicants must meet the criteria defined in "Branching Out". The grouped attributes measured were

- Opening hours
- Range of books
- Children's services
- Computers

National average levels of satisfaction, at "Good or Very Good" levels were recorded. The results for Sligo County Library were very poor indeed. 92% of users nationally rated this basket of attributes as "Good or Very Good". In Sligo, the satisfaction levels fell to 76%, which was the lowest in Ireland.

Praise And Criticism From The General Public (3.3)

Five publicly advertised public consultation events were organised as part of the process for developing this Development Plan.

All 5 meetings provided valuable comment and opinion, largely relating to the service as a whole. Praise for staff was offered at many meetings, and the welcoming atmosphere at Tubbercurry was positively cited. The general helpfulness of staff was also praised.

In Ballymote, a lengthy meeting focussed on specific local problems, especially

- The delay in developing the new Ballymote Branch Library
- The difficulty posed by steps to physically disabled people and mothers with strollers

In Sligo, where two meetings were held, much comment was focussed on the unsatisfactory buildings and on aspects of the current service. The following main points were made (some points also made at other meetings)

- Absence of car parking
- Absence of public toilets
- Inadequate children's and teenager spaces
- Restricted opening hours and no lunchtime openings for Reference Library and Local Studies collections
- Unsuitable and crowded facilities for using the Local Studies collections

Across the County generally, many ideas for future work emerged at the public meetings, including

- Availability of a greater range of books
- Online availability of Local Studies catalogues
- Better publicising of Library's role as a repository of archives
- A better service for schools
- The development of a mobile service to serve rural areas, like Grange

- Some evening openings
- Develop service for housebound and the elderly
- Provision of learning opportunities for people with literacy difficulties
- Inclusion of Playgroups within Schools Service
- Provision of more space for children's activities (Sligo)
- Development of a dedicated Library website

The Views Of Staff (3.4)

All available staff were also met in groups to establish their views on current operations and to gather their ideas for the future. A day-long workshop with staff also contributed many ideas and proposals for development.

The following feedback from staff relates to the current service

- More resources are needed to deliver more services
- Lack of space is a major handicap at all branches, except Tubbercurry
- More book purchase funding would allow purchase of greater numbers and allow quicker response time to borrowing requests

Staff also saw opportunities for the following service developments in the years ahead

- Providing a better schools service
- Development of a mobile rural and urban library service
- Development of a dedicated service for care and nursing homes
- Extension of the current activity programme at Tubbercurry to other branches

Consulting special stakeholder groups (3.6)

The combating of social exclusion and the development of socially inclusive policies and projects has been an important government policy driver for some years now. Sligo County Council reinforces its commitment within its Corporate Plan 2004-2009¹¹ where it defines "inclusion" as one of its core values

As part of this Strategic Development Plan, a number of bodies that deal with social inclusion and with marginalised people were met with to ascertain their views on how Sligo County Library could best address this important public agenda for change.

Cranmore Regeneration Project (3.7)

The Cranmore Regeneration Project is the largest regeneration project outside Dublin and is a flagship project for the local authorities in Sligo. The Cranmore Regeneration Committee is a partnership representing local Government, Local Development, State Agencies, Social Partners and Elected representatives which came together to develop a Strategic Regeneration Plan for Cranmore Estate. The Plan was adopted by Sligo County Council at its meeting on April 3 2006.

¹¹ "Corporate Plan for Sligo Local Authorities 2004-2009"

Cranmore is a community of some 2500 people in Sligo with high levels of unemployment and the majority of its population under 35. The community has suffered both physical and social decline and has not benefited fully from the general economic growth of recent years.

The CRP Project Leader identified significant opportunity for Sligo County Library to contribute to the regeneration process. The proposed Mobile Library Service was welcomed. This vehicle will serve outlying suburbs and areas where there is a growing or ageing population.

Cranmore Regeneration Project recently commissioned research on the social fabric of the area. The research focussed on a range of issues, like housing and included a section on education and training. The results in that area are as follows

- The average age cited for when residents finished their fulltime education was 16 years of age.
- In terms of the highest level of education attained, the figures showed that the majority of the residents who had finished school at that point, had only completed a lower secondary education
- When asked if they would interested in further education and training, some 35% stated that they would be interested.

The CRP believes that community development is the way forward for people in the estate, anchored in education and training.

A Community History Project In Cranmore (3.7.2)

Cranmore residents are also proud of their community and very loyal to it. The social analysis research demonstrated, for example, that

- The average number of years the residents had been living in Cranmore was 19 years.
- Over 70% of the residents had never moved house within the estate, with 12% moving once and 15% moving twice.
- Nearly two thirds indicated that they would prefer to stay on living in Cranmore (61%). Although a considerable number were undecided (34%), only 11% have applied for a transfer out of the estate.

Looking therefore at the desire for education, the core elements that underlie the CRP as a whole and taking account of local pride of place, the challenge lies in identifying an opportunity to focus the cultural resource of Sligo County Library in support of community development.

Following discussions with Cranmore Regeneration Project, a project-based initiative is suggested, focussing on the development of community pride and identity. It is recommended that Sligo County Library work with CRP to develop a Cranmore Community History Project which explores the origins, history, identity and culture of the Cranmore community.

The proposed project would also

- Be a tool for community development
- Provide a focus for the pride of the community
- Provide youth with access to their heritage
- Develop a sense of belonging, citizenship and identity

Using the local studies resources of the County Library, maps, books, prints, electronic media etc, and the expertise and knowledge that Library staff already holds, it is recommended that the Community History Project explores and celebrates

- The history of the area, before its development as an estate
- The story of the development of the estate
- The families that make up the community and their histories
- The sporting traditions of the area
- Religious and spiritual traditions and beliefs
- Well known personalities from the Cranmore Community

The proposal requires further thought and development and it is recommended that CRP and Sligo County Library meet to begin defining its shape and output. It is recommended that the project be an innovative and unconventional one, involving members of the Cranmore Community in both design and execution.

It is envisaged that the project could have at least 3 types of output, as follows

- A film on video or DVD
- An exhibition
- A popular publication

Proposed Cranmore Neighbourhood Centre (3.8)

CRP commissioned a Feasibility Study on the development of a Neighbourhood Centre in Cranmore. A highly visible focal point building is proposed, at the heart of the community. A mix of functions is recommended; retail and services. Participation by Sligo County Library in the proposed Neighbourhood Centre should be actively considered, now. The example of the Louth Learning Centre may provide useful guidance for Sligo.

Sligo Volunteer Bureau (3.9)

SVB functions under the Community and Enterprise Office of the Council. Its purpose is to promote volunteering on a county wide basis and provide ongoing support and education to volunteers and to organisations which seek volunteers.

SVB sees potential for placing volunteers within areas of Library work and encourages the Library to discuss possibilities now. Their normal approach is to look for volunteers for a defined project. A number of possible project areas were suggested.

In the context of the suggested Cranmore Project, volunteers could be considered to assist with evening meetings and provide administrative or organisational skills.

Partnership (3.10-3.12)

Under the wing of the Director of Community & Enterprise sits the County Development Board for County Sligo. The CDB published its 10-year integrated strategy in 2002.¹² The arts and heritage domains are included, but the library service is not. Consultation for this Library Plan, elicited considerable interest in integrating aspects of the work of the Library with the aims of the County Development Board 10-year strategy. Although not formally part of the delivery of this vision, it is very clear that the County Library has a substantial role to play in achieving the vision.

County Sligo has developed an impressive arts service in relatively recent years. Sligo County Library has since its inception been to the fore in the promotion of literature, drama, art and music. Today, the opportunity exists for the library service to work in partnership with the Councils' own successful arts service.

The Sligo Heritage Plan¹³ commits the Council to the collection and dissemination of knowledge and data on the heritage of the County. Practical opportunities for joint work should be jointly assessed now, by the Library and the Heritage Officer, in the context especially of the new Sligo Town library building.

In discharging its responsibilities towards the county archives, there is also great potential for the Library to develop an integrated approach to development and access of archival collections in the county.

A Proposal For Partnership:

From the external perspective of a consultant, there appears to be a need for greater integration of programming and planning, at a strategic level, within the Council. To maximise potential and to better integrate arts, heritage and library activity programming, some form of agreed formal mechanism is needed, a partnership

¹² "An Integrated Economic, Social and Cultural Strategy for County Sligo, 2002-2010", CDB

¹³ "Sligo County Heritage Plan, 2002-2006". Prepared by County Sligo Heritage Forum.

committee perhaps. Such an arrangement would permit joined-up strategic thinking that the Library needs and obviate, to a good degree, the current separation within the Council's structure where the Library, Arts and Heritage are situated within 3 separate directorates.

4. Reviewing Sligo County Library

Introduction (4.1)

There are now 12 million visits to Irish public libraries every year. At the same time, expenditure on public libraries has been rising consistently in Ireland over recent years. An Chomhairle Leabharlanna¹⁴ statistics show that total spending in 2005 increased by 10% over 2004 to over €99m. Expenditure per capita increased nationally from €22.94 to €25.27. All library authorities in Ireland increased their expenditure on libraries in 2005, including Sligo, which is working to an estimate of €1.309, 436 for 2005.

National Policy Context For Libraries (4.2)

An Chomhairle Leabharlanna (The Library Council) is a statutory body, established by the Government in 1947. It provides assistance and advice to public libraries, makes recommendations to the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government on public library matters and acts to promote and facilitate library co-operation.

In 1998, the Government published a comprehensive review of public library policy in the report "Branching Out". The report itself took regard of two wider national policies, ensuring that Ireland embraces the opportunities of the "Information Society" and the establishment of an inclusive society.

"Branching Out" identified key issues for Irish public libraries, including the following;

- Delivering better service through enhanced opening hours, improved IT and information services, improved equality of access and developing lifelong learning
- The provision of adequate infrastructure to allow libraries to play their role in developing the "Information Society"
- Improvement in both range and quality of book stock
- Improvement in marketing of library services

The report made some key recommendations to government, including

- Development of library infrastructure through a revised programme of government investment

¹⁴ "Public Library Authorities Annual Estimates of Expenditure 2005 Summary", An Chomhairle Leabharlanna, 2005

- Promotion of social inclusion by developing strategies to overcome physical, social and financial barriers to library use
- Investment in providing IT technology and greater access to electronic media
- Piloting solutions to serving isolated communities
- Increased book stock funding and a minimum target expenditure per head of population, revised upwards in 2004 to €3.27
- Enhanced library opening hours

Opening Hours In Sligo Compared To National (4.3)

The nationally recommended levels of opening, as agreed in the "Branching Out" report are

That by January 2002, each library service serving more than 10,000 customers would be, as a minimum, open through lunchtime each day, would be open each Saturday and would be open until 8.30 on at least two nights each week¹⁵.

The following table summarizes the picture in Sligo, by reference to the national recommendations:-

Branch	Lunchtime opening each day of opening	Saturday	Evening opening twice a week	Total hours open
Ballymote	1 day	Yes	1 evening until 7.30	11
Enniscrone	1 day	Yes	1 evening until 8.00	20
Sligo Central (Stephen Street)	4 days	Yes	Not open any evening	34
Sligo County (Bridge Street)	Closed all lunchtimes	No	Not open any evening	27.5
Tubbercurry	Yes all days	Yes	1 evening	44

As the table shows, the opening arrangements in Sligo Town, including the complete absence of evening opening represents significant departures from the national recommended minimum level of public opening hours.

The Library service wishes to expand the number of opening hours at its smaller branches to a potential maximum of 44 hours per week by 2007 but recognises that increases in staffing will be needed to meet this target. At present, only Tubbercurry Branch meets this target.

¹⁵ "Branching Out", page 48

The Need For More Library Activities In Sligo Town (4.4)

As outlined elsewhere, libraries today are civic spaces that encourage and support reading and participation in a range of cultural activities. In Sligo, this occurs extensively in the new purpose-designed Library at Tubbercurry, but relatively rarely elsewhere. The public and other stakeholders called for such programmes during the consultation. New senior staff appointments are needed to lead activity and implement policy. At present, for example, significant partnership with other Council sections, like Arts, is hampered not simply by inadequate buildings, but more critically, by absence of capacity. The new appointments will allow this work to begin.

Poor Public Image (4.5)

The achievements of the Library in opening the Tubbercurry Branch, refurbishing Enniscrone and getting all its book-stock online, are broadly overlooked and overshadowed in the public mind by the ongoing highly unsatisfactory and antiquated service that is currently provided by both the Central and County Libraries in Sligo Town. These are the pivots around which the service moves and their condition, which must be considered as appalling, retards the ability of the Service as a whole and negatively influences the morale of staff. The PLUS results confirm this unsatisfactory position.

Lower Than Average Funding In Sligo (4.8)

Despite a large increase in 2005 funding, Sligo County Library's funding level places it in 18th place out of the 21 county library authorities in Ireland. The Library's book-stock continues to grow with 148,000 volumes anticipated by end 2005¹⁶. In spite of this, however, the Library spends well below the nationally recommended minimum level on its book purchasing, standing at €2.54 as opposed to the national minimum level of €3.27 per head of population.

The national rise in spending on books has not been reflected in Sligo, where the spending on books continues to lag behind other libraries and the nationally recommended level. This is to be regretted. As the Sligo County Library 2001-2005 Development Plan states

"The book fund is one of the boldest statements that a local authority can make about the importance it gives to the library service; it is after all the lifeblood of a library".

Public opinion surveys bear out the importance attached to book stock, in the users mind. The 2003 TSN/MRBI survey on the use and non-use of public libraries¹⁷ showed

¹⁶ Information from An Chomhairle Leabharlanna, "Public Library Authorities Annual Estimates of Expenditure 2005"

¹⁷ "A Public Space for All", An Chomhairle Leabharlanna.

that almost 40% of those that had stopped using their library would return if better and different book stock was provided.

Visibly Link The Library To Sligo County Council (4.9)

During this consultation process, on a number of occasions, a perception about the place and role of the Library Service was voiced. This perception related to different aspects of the same issue, visibility

- Some external stakeholders overlook the Library as a public cultural service
- The Library is physically and to some degree psychologically separate from its parent body
- The Council at times overlooks the Library when looking at council-wide initiatives
- Most importantly, the public visibility of the Library has diminished with the more competitive cultural environment that Sligo now offers.

Despite these perceptions, Sligo County Library remains within

- The Council's largest cultural service
- The Council's longest established cultural service
- The Council's most used cultural Service

Sligo County Library, within its new staffing and new buildings, has the potential to become the flagship of the Council's cultural services, especially if it works in partnership with other council cultural services. It needs to develop

- Greater visibility to the public and so help attract new users
- Better working relationships with community groups
- A more integrated and accountable presence within Sligo County Council

This could be best achieved through the establishment of a County Library of the existing SPC, which is a joint Council-Community committee. Library Sub-Committee business would follow that pattern of other SPC Sub-committees, seeking input and comment on proposals, reporting on progress and presenting proposals for approval. This course is recommended.

Priorities For Action (4.11)

Sligo County Library is coming from behind in approaching this new 5-year Plan. It does not yet have the resources in place to deliver many aspects of this Plan. Two resources are needed, staff and premises. The Library can begin to implement this plan fully when the intended new staff are in place. Implementation and recruitment/interviews for these posts should therefore be adopted as a priority for the Library. The new staff structure, announced at the end of this planning process will go a long way towards allowing the Library to achieve the Objectives set down in this Plan.

Secondly, goodwill and extra staff will not in themselves allow many aspects of the Plan to be implemented. The inadequacy of the current library buildings has been previously noted and emerged as a principal criticism of the general public. New spaces are essential to house most of the new activities and services. Providing new buildings in Sligo town particularly, must be addressed as a matter of priority. It was unfortunate that the outcome of the recently held architectural competition for a new County and Central Library for Sligo was rejected by An Chomhairle Leabharlanna. Undaunted by this setback Sligo County Council have progressed to a second round of interviews in order to secure the architectural services for the design of a County and Central Library on Stephen Street, Sligo.

5. Moving Forward: 2006-2010

Introduction (5.1)

In this section, a series of Corporate Objectives are set down which will guide the Library for the next 5 years. If implemented, these proposals will meet the national benchmarks and respond to the public criticism and dissatisfaction that was first recorded by the PLUS work and confirmed by the Public Consultations for this Plan. The new staff structure, announced at the end of this planning process will play a crucial role in allowing the Library to achieve the Objectives set down in this Plan.

Mission And Values (5.2)

Following consultation with staff and senior Library management, the following mission statement is proposed to guide the work of the Library for the years ahead

To provide a responsive, accessible and inclusive library service for all our customers, which fosters reading, stimulates the imagination and contributes to lifelong learning and cultural recreation

The Main Objectives For The Next Five Years (5.4)

The Corporate Objectives that follow in below were developed through extensive consultation with all stakeholders. They cannot be delivered in many cases without increased resources, both staffing and funding.

It is worth singling out one proposal in particular and highlighting its importance, the development of a Mobile Library Service. This is a growth area within the Irish Library sector. Mobiles can reach both areas and people that regular library services cannot always reach. Nationally, the 2002 PLUS surveys¹⁸ demonstrated that mobiles were 75% used by women (as against a 66% usage of fixed branches) and that mobiles attract a proportionately higher number of users in the middle and upper age ranges.

¹⁸ Information from An Chomhairle Leabharlanna

County Sligo is divided in two by the Ox Mountains, which very much hinders communication in the south of the county. Sligo also holds some isolated pockets of people in the north and west of the county especially; people that are not within easy reach of a branch. To serve these people and to serve suburbs of Sligo Town also, a Mobile Library Service is proposed in this Plan. The proposal is not a new one; the previous 2001-2005 Development Plan highlighted this need.

Eight Corporate Objectives have been defined to guide the work of the Library over the 5-year planning period, as follows-

- **Corporate Objective 1**

Provide public library buildings and facilities to meet national benchmarks of quality and accessibility

- **Corporate Objective 2**

Promote and foster reading throughout the branch network

- **Corporate Objective 3**

Develop socially inclusive projects to reach new communities of users

- **Corporate Objective 4**

Promote the Library and its services throughout County Sligo

- **Corporate Objective 5**

Develop and sustain library services for rural Sligo and for schools

- **Corporate Objective 6**

Maintain, update and make accessible the unique Sligo Local Studies resources and collections

- **Corporate Objective 7**

Ensure that Sligo County Library becomes a vibrant centre for cultural activity

- **Corporate Objective 8**

Develop the managerial framework

Performance Indicators (5.5)

Indicators are tools for use in managing and operating a service. Their main role is to assist in reviewing progress and achievement against measures of success that the Library itself has set and agreed. A number of indicators of activity are already in place. Sligo County Council has set 5 Service Indicators for the Library. These Indicators were originally set by the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government, which expects all Councils to report on 42 Performance Indicators that include 5 for

libraries. The indicators as a whole can be used to measure progress against key objectives, especially those that will impact on the achievement of the targets set out in the "Branching Out" report.

Performance Indicators for Sligo County Library
Average number of public opening hours per week for full-time libraries and part-time libraries
Number of registered library members as a percentage of the local population
Number of items issued per head of county population for (a) books, and (b) other items
Percentage of libraries that offer internet access to the public
Number of internet sessions provided per 1000 population

Monitoring And Review (5.6)

This is a 5-year Development Plan, which will require regular review. An annual review is recommended as a minimum. At years' end, the annual review meeting can then be written up to become the Library's contribution to the overall Annual Report of Sligo County Council.

During the year, key strategies might require an interim, either quarterly or 6-monthly review. All progress and problems against each Objective or Strategy could be discussed, using the Plan as a guide.

At review time, the following measures of success should also be applied

- The relative level of participation of the library service in the economic and cultural well being of the area served
- The provision of better access and services to customers particularly disadvantaged customers
- The level of value-added services
- Increases in staff morale and expertise

Realistic baselines of existing performance will, in due course, need to be established, against which these 4 measures can be gauged.

End Of Executive Summary

Sligo County Library, Museum & Cultural Services

Library Development Plan 2006-2010

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Aidan Walsh Consultancy was commissioned by Sligo County Council in October 2005 to undertake and assist in the development of a Library Development Plan, focussing attention on two key areas, the medium to longer-term nature of the Plan and the physical and operational aspects of the Library's service.

The commission for this work required that 21 days be devoted to the project, to include consultation with stakeholders. Following a commissioning meeting in mid-October, work commenced in November, leading to this First Draft Report by Christmas 2005.

Aidan Walsh personally undertook this commission. No aspects were sub-contracted to other consultants.

1.2 5-year Library Development Plans

Under the Local Government Act 2001, all County Libraries were required to prepare and adopt programmes for operation and development. The Act sets down the broad content of such plans, which must include

- An outline of existing services
- The objectives and priorities for the future
- The measures needed to meet the objectives
- The financial implications of the programme as a whole.

The Library Plan will provide a framework for action that will allow the Library to meet its obligations under the Act and provide a strategic framework for developing its services over the 2006-2010 period.

1.3 Work Methodology

The Invitation to Tender for this work placed explicit emphasis on the importance of an extensive and inclusive consultative process. Chapter 3 of this Plan gives an account of the outcomes from these consultations, which provided very valuable input and gave considerable direction to the Plan. At the commissioning meeting it was agreed to consult

- The staff of Sligo County Library
- The management team at Sligo County Council
- The communities that the Library's serve
- The Strategic Policy Committee for Housing Policy, Social & Cultural Development

1.4 Drafts Of The Plan

Two draft versions of this Plan were prepared for the County Librarian. Following amendments and additions, as required, a Draft was submitted, which was the subject of a presentation to the Management Team and the SPC. Following some additional research and work, the Draft Plan was completed and presented for consideration by Sligo County Council in September, 2006.

1.5 Brief For This Work

The invitation to Tender stipulated that the finalised Plan would include reference to Services, Infrastructures, Objectives, Actions and Costs. (See Appendix 1).

1.6 Benefiting Sligo And Its People

As Chapter 4 elaborates, in Ireland today, libraries play a major role in combating social exclusion and in providing access to knowledge and information across all socio-economic groups. This era of positive development has been supported by the central policy framework of the DOELHG 1998 "Branching Out" report. "Branching Out" has levered over €100 million into public libraries within the past 9 years.

If this 5-year development Plan is to benefit the people of County Sligo, it must identify where the Library is currently unable to benefit from this rising tide of investment and recommend accordingly, using the external perspective of an outside consultant. The work programme for the Plan was therefore approached from this pragmatic and practical angle, identifying national benchmarks and Sligo's ranking against them.

2. Sligo County Library Today

2.1 The Library Within The Local Authority

A development plan for any public library must be set within the overarching strategic framework of its parent local authority. Sligo County Council operates Sligo County Library. The work of the Council is organised under four service directorates. The County Library is responsible to the Director of Housing, Social, Cultural, Corporate and Emergency Services. This directorate also works through the Strategic Policy Committee for Housing, Social and Cultural Development. All directorates are responsible directly to the County Manager.

Under local government legislation, only county or city authorities are entitled to establish and operate library services. Sligo County Council is the library authority for the county of Sligo.

2.1 History Of The Library¹⁹

Sligo County Library has a long and distinguished tradition of service to the public and is one of the longest established public libraries in Ireland. In the late 19th century, Sligo Town became the third Borough in Ireland to establish a library service although proposals to provide a public library in Sligo were current from the middle of the 19th century.

In 2005, Ireland celebrated 150 years of public libraries in the country, marking the introduction of the Public Libraries Act of 1855, which allowed Municipal and Town Councils to establish libraries. For a variety of reasons, including financial, few authorities exercised their powers immediately, but Sligo did respond in due time and opened its doors on September 15, 1880.

Throughout its long history, Sligo County Library has attracted the attention of many distinguished people. Following independence, a Sligo County Library Committee was established in 1923 at a meeting that was addressed by the distinguished playwright Lennox Robinson. Two years later, the County Council took responsibility for the library service throughout the county, a date which marks the formal birth of the Service.

Sligo County Library was the fourth county service in Ireland and the first to be established in Connacht. In the decades that followed the famous writer Frank O'Connor worked for the Library. Jack Lambert, father of puppeteer Eugene Lambert, was County Librarian from 1931 to 1943 and then the celebrated Nora Niland became County Librarian, a post she held until her retirement in 1979.

¹⁹ Much of the factual data and background information is taken from two previous library development plans produced in 1979 and 1993.

She was followed by the highly respected historian, John McTernan who retired in 1994.

2.2 The Library's Service Points

The Library delivers its primary services through 4 key branches and through its central headquarters facility in Sligo Town. The present Sligo Central Branch at Stephen Street was opened to the public in 1952. In 1970, the HQ of the Library was moved to premises in Sligo Courthouse, a location it continued to occupy until its move to Bridge Street, in 1996. Branches were also established in Ballymote, Enniscrone and in Tubbercurry. A major new Library opened in Tubbercurry in 2003, to widespread acclaim. The Enniscrone Branch was refurbished in 2002. The Library provides a service to Primary Schools only. Unlike many other counties, it does not operate a Mobile Library Service, a matter that this Development Plan must address. Currently, there is an application with the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government for funding to provide a Mobile Library Service for both rural and targeted urban audiences.

2.2.1 Central Library, Stephen Street , Sligo Town

This principal branch has over 7500 members and issues 130,000 volumes per annum. Although substantially outdated and inadequate, the branch serves some 95,000 users each year, a considerable achievement, which reflects the strong public support and usage of the Library. The branch provides a lending service of adult and children's literature, books, newspapers, periodicals, audiotapes and an information service. 6 p.c.s are provided for public use.

2.2.2 County Library, Bridge Street, Sligo Town

While the Central Library is located in a converted church building in Stephen Street, the County Library is located within an office complex on Bridge Street, Sligo Town. Reference and local history resources, encyclopaedias, dictionaries, atlases, etc. can all be found here. The County Library also contains an extensive collection of material of local interest including histories, maps, newspapers and civil records. There is also a large collection of Yeats material. The administrative headquarters is also located here.

When the government's Information Society initiative offered personal computer terminals to all public libraries for public use, Sligo Town had no appropriate space in which to house them. The Library was obliged by the level of demand to install the pcs in the Reference and Research Room at the Central Library which now provides 16 internet access points.

2.2.3 Ballymote

Situated in a small, 21^{m2} room in Ballymote Courthouse, this tiny branch has a loyal following a membership of 800. It lends 12,500 volumes each year. It can only house 2 pcs for public use. Ballymote is a town of high cultural status with its famous 14th Book of Ballymote (now housed at the Royal Irish Academy in Dublin) and its celebrated Norman Castle and medieval abbey. A regular heritage weekend celebrates and marks this inheritance.

Sligo County Council has purchased the site of an old cinema in Ballymote for a new Branch Library and has submitted an application for funding to the Department. It is estimated that the new Ballymote Community Library will cost €2.2 million. The development of both the Sligo Town and the Ballymote buildings will be pursued in parallel.

2.2.4 Enniscrone

Up to 2002, this branch was the smallest branch within the Service. Today, the refurbished premise stands at 60 m2. The branch is situated within a County Council building that houses the Area Engineer's office. It has a membership of 900 and issues over 15,200 volumes to borrowers each year. Uniquely in Sligo, the Enniscrone Branch also serves a large summer population of visitors (4,000 at peak) to this long-established traditional resort town. Restricted space here, as at Ballymote, means that only 2 PCs are available for public use.

2.2.5 Tubbercurry Community Library

Tubbercurry Community Library is at the heart of a visionary Sligo County Council one-stop-shop that also houses other Council functions and a courthouse space. The award winning building is welcoming, modern and spacious and it has attracted international attention and indeed commendation in architectural awards. Taken together with its energetic programme of activities, its welcoming ambience and its enhanced opening hours, Tubbercurry clearly points the way forward for the County Library Service as a whole.

This branch is the first purpose-built library in the history of Sligo County Library. This new branch is an undoubted success story. Up to its opening in 2003, the town of Tubbercurry was home to a 100m2 rented space with a membership of 363 and a staff of 1 part-time librarian. Today, Tubbercurry is 350m2 in size and has a membership of 3500, of which 45% /50% are under 12 years of age. The Library's 2001-2005 Development Plan²⁰ projected a membership of 2000, which it has substantially exceeded. It has 4 members of staff and issues 42,000 volumes each year and operates enhanced opening

²⁰ "Sligo County Library Development Plan 2001-2005", Sligo County Library, prepared by the County Librarian.

hours of 44 hours per week. In addition it mounts the only sustained and regular activity programme within the Library Service as a whole, enabled by its staff numbers, its size and additional funding for such activity. It also provides 21 pcs for public use.

The Branch also holds adult and children's books, newspapers, periodicals, audio tapes and provides an information service. It also holds a special interest collection of material from amateur dramatic societies in Ireland and their history.

2.3 Moving Forward In A Growing County

The County Development Plan for County Sligo²¹ projects population growth by 2011 as follows-

- 75,000-80,000 living in the County and
- 35,000-40,000 living in Sligo Town

In this context of significant growth, the inadequacies of the Library service in Sligo Town Branch and at its HQ have been recognised by Sligo County Council and €6.4 million has been secured for new, purpose-built library buildings. This is the largest grant to date, from DOELHG, to a public library in Ireland. The Previous Development Plan²² set the construction of the new Sligo Town complex as a major Corporate Objective. This was not achieved through a combination of factors. The Council's commitment, however, remains and Sligo County Council has recently decided to develop the new Central Library in Sligo Town Centre, to be co-located with the new Sligo County Library at Stephen Street.

2.4 Activities

Today, public libraries do a great deal more than lend books. Reading and borrowing continue as core and major functions of all public libraries, but a lot more happens besides. Modern libraries are centres of cultural activity and engagement with heritage, the arts and the wider world of the imagination.

The public increasingly use libraries as civic spaces in which they can undertake research into local history, read a newspaper or attend a musical event or literary reading. In Sligo generally, this developing work area is severely contained by the inadequate size of the libraries branches, with the exception of the branch at Tubbercurry.

The Plan should take account of this, but even now, the level of activity is worthy of note. Currently, the Library participates in

²¹ Sligo County Development Plan 2005-2011

²² "Sligo County Library Development Plan 2001-2005"

- Seachtain na Gaeilge
- National Heritage Week
- Childrens Book Festival
- National Science Week
- Bealtaine Festival

Activity programmes have been provided in Sligo Town, but such work is severely restricted there by the unsuitable buildings and inadequate capacity. There is considerable public pressure for such services, as the public consultation for this Plan showed, and the new County and Central Library will take account of this.

The most active programmes are held in Tubbercurry which is purposefully design to fulfil this role, with, for example, all the 2005 Children's Book Festival readings, quizzes and creative workshops mostly happening there.

In Tubbercurry, the Leyney Writers Group published a collection of the work of 9 local writers. The Group was established, facilitated and hosted by the County Library.

2.5 Funding Below Par

Sligo County Council operates Sligo County Library and contributes the bulk of its annual operating costs with approximately one-third of costs coming from Sligo Borough Council. The 2005 Estimates of Expenditure for the County Library²³ show a total estimated recurrent expenditure of €1.309, 436²⁴. This sum represents a 12% increase in expenditure in 2005, over 2004 and represents the continued confidence that Sligo County Council reposes in its Library Service.

Looked at against national spending levels however, Sligo County Library's funding level places it in 18th place out of the 21 county library authorities in Ireland. The Plan must take particular account of this and related matters, especially in the context of an energetic and growing town and county. Chapter 4 discusses this further below.

2.6 Not Meeting National Benchmark

The Library's book- stock continues to grow with 148,000 volumes anticipated by end 2005²⁵. In spite of this, however, the Library spends well below the

²³ Information from An Chomhairle Leabharlanna, "Public Library Authorities Annual Estimates of Expenditure 2005"

²⁴ Of the €1.309, 436, a sum of €22,000 comes from the Department of Education and Science, under the Primary School Scheme Book Grant.

²⁵ Information from An Chomhairle Leabharlanna, "Public Library Authorities Annual Estimates of Expenditure 2005"

nationally recommended minimum level on its book purchasing, standing at €2.74 for 2006, as opposed to the national minimum level of €3.27 per head of population.

2.7 Staff

21 people, between full and part-time staff, are employed by Sligo County Library. Led by the County Librarian, the staffing complement is as follows

1	County Librarian
1	Executive Librarian
2	Assistant Librarians
3	Senior Library Assistant
6	Library Assistants
1	Clerical Officer (Secretarial Duties)
1	Porter/Driver
6	Branch Librarians/Attendants

At present, arising from study leave and other factors, only 20 positions are filled. Sligo County Council has recognised the need to increase staffing and entered into discussions with the Trades Unions. Agreement has now been reached²⁶ will see the creation of new senior positions between the current, part of an expected addition of 6 new posts, in total.

The new staffing structure is very welcome and will enable the Library to undertake the task and projects proposed in this Plan. In order to implement this plan over the coming years, the County Librarian is proposing the following staff structure.

²⁶ Information from County Librarian, March 23, 2006

Post	Examples of duties
Senior Executive Librarian New / Sligo Central Library (1)	Marketing and Research Customer Service Provision Health and Safety Education/Schools Liaison. Multiculturalism. Research Access Reading/Literacy Promotion Social Inclusion

Post	Examples of duties
Senior Executive Librarian County Library (1)	Collection Acquisition Development Policy Capital Programmes Partnerships Internal/External Statistics and Annual Reports, Surveys Staff Resources/Training Finance/Funding including Projects eGovernment Building Maintenance Cross Border Partnerships
Executive Librarian County Library (1)	Local Studies Collection Collection Promotion and Development. Digitisation Projects Education and Outreach Branch Exchanges Community Centres Mobile Services Production Line Supervision Stacks and stores
Executive Librarian Tubbercurry Community Library (1)	Current Duties. Supervision of Enniscrone and Tubbercurry Libraries. Stock Control Community Liaison Promotion of Library Book Clubs
Executive Librarian Sligo Central Library (1)	Staff Supervision Inter Library Loans Schools and Children Services Signage Book Clubs <i>Branch Promotion</i> Branch Activities Customer Service Desk Reservations Reference Library Public Internet Access Development. Staff Rotas Staff Leave
Assistant Librarian/Staff Officer with Library Skills Systems Administration (1)	Web Page maintenance. Community Information Database. Online Reservations/Renewals Database Maintenance. Staff IT Training Customer IT services Promotional/Guide Material Production Cataloguing

Post	Examples of duties
Senior Library Assistant County Library (1)	Local Studies Stock Preparation Public Internet Equipment Schools Service.
Library Assistant Sligo Central Library (1) Tubbercurry (1)	Branch Duties
Porter (1) Sligo Central/County Library	Security Building Upkeep Porter Duties Grounds Maintenance
Driver (1)	Schools Branch Exchanges Delivery House Bound Services Van Maintenance/Cleaning New / Mobile Library
Branch Librarian Sligo Central Library (3)	Branch Duties
Branch Librarian Ballymote (1)	Branch Duties
Branch Librarian Enniscrone (2)	Branch Duties

2.7 Achievements Of Sligo County Library

Sligo County Council is proud of the Library's contribution to the development of the cultural and artistic life of Sligo. From 2001-2005, the Library operated under a Development Plan drawn up by the County Librarian. The Council's 2001- 2004 Corporate Plan²⁷ highlighted some key objectives as follows

- Develop central library head quarters and branch libraries including those in Sligo Town
- Provide new libraries at Tubbercurry and Ballymote
- Maximise the potential of I.T. in providing an information and educational role for the library service
- Implement reading initiatives to encourage use of library service
- Increase levels of investment in library from own resources
- Implement actions to achieve objectives in the government policy document "Branching Out"

Many of these matters have been achieved, while others remain to be achieved during the lifetime of this current Development Plan. Among its achievements to date, the Library can claim the following; -

- Establishment of the first Public Art Gallery in Sligo
- Creation of the first collection in Ireland that focussed on the Yeats family,

²⁷ "Sligo County Council, Corporate Plan 2001-2004".

- Playing a key role in the foundation of the world-renowned Yeats International Summer School
- Publishing under its own imprint, one of the first in Ireland to do so
- Creation of an internationally important Local History & Archive Collection
- Successful completion of the automation of all the book stock and membership records throughout the branch network
- Award of “High Commendation” by UK & Ireland Public Library Building Awards to Tubbercurry Community Library
- Completion of the well-received refurbished Enniscrone Library
- The high level of membership, currently standing at 16,000²⁸

The Tubbercurry Library award is worthy of particular note. Against stiff competition, it received a “High Commendation” in the 2005 UK & Ireland Public Library Building Awards which honour excellence in Irish and British libraries.

Sligo County Library also led a major EU-funded international project, known as “Bradán” which led to the production of a multi-media CD-Rom on the poetry and paintings to the celebrated Yeats brothers and its roots in Sligo tradition and landscape.

As Sligo County Library now enters its next 5 years of work, it will be building on this rich legacy for the benefit of new generations and contributing to strengthening Sligo’s place as the cultural capital of the North West.

²⁸ Membership is considered active where a member has made a recorded use of the Library within the previous 18 months.

3. Stakeholder views

3.1 Introduction

A stakeholder is best defined as an individual, organisation or section of the population of County Sligo that has a stake in the Library, be that as a user, a staff member or a governor. The Plan also needs to take particular account of social inclusion initiatives and this section of the Plan looks at a number of proposals for development in this area.

To fully gather views from such a dispersed and extensive range of people and organisations, a focussed approach was adopted. Existing user research was gathered and examined through;

- The Public Library User Survey, 2002

In addition, considerable time was devoted to three stakeholder consultations;

- The general public
- The Library staff
- Special interest groups

3.2 Criticism Of The Library In The PLUS Surveys Of 2002

An Chomhairle Leabharlanna (The Library Council) co-ordinated the first national survey of public library users in 2002. A questionnaire was administered by staff for completion by users at the end of their visit. The survey design and analysis was carried out for An Chomhairle by a professional market research company.

Called PLUS (Public Library User Survey), the work was undertaken to gather attitudes on the current state of libraries, as users saw them. It was a valuable snapshot of opinion in 2002. Consideration is being given to repeating the exercise again and thus building up information on trends and changes.

Each county was separately surveyed, and results were provided to each of the 28 participating local authority libraries²⁹. In Sligo, a summary county-wide picture was prepared which yielded valuable insights into user opinion about the Library and its services. Almost 800 surveys were completed in Sligo, the majority in Sligo Town. The results allow comparison against the national levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with library services and facilities.

²⁹ "Public Library User Survey 2002", An Chomhairle Leabharlanna.

As will be seen below, the PLUS results identified many of the problems that the Library is facing, which were later independently identified by stakeholders groups. The results show that Sligo County Library is below the national average in key areas. The principal findings are as follows.

Table 1 Age profiles of users

Age group	National average	Sligo County Library
15-19	10%	6.1%
20-24	11%	10.6%
25-34	20%	18.1%
35-44	17%	24.9%
45-54	15%	16.6%
55-64	11%	11.6%
65-74	9%	5.4%
Over 74	6%	2.2%

As Table 1 shows, Sligo County Library differs from the national age pattern of user age profiles. The Library attracts

Lower than average users from 15-19 age group

- Over a third lower

Higher than average 35-44

- Almost a third higher

Lower than average 65-74

- Over a third lower

Lower than average over 74

- Almost two-thirds lower

In summary the Library needs to attract larger numbers of younger and older users.

Table 2 General attributes

In this section, the PLUS survey measured satisfaction levels. The table records levels of "Good or Very Good" against a series of attributes.

Attribute	National average	Sligo County Library
External condition	82%	69.3%
Ease of access	87%	77%
Signs & Guiding	77%	54.4%
Internal condition	89%	66.7%
Layout internally	81%	55.2%
Seats & tables	73%	40.9%

Attribute	National average	Sligo County Library
Internal ease of access	91%	71.1%
Hours of opening	71%	52.8%
Range of books	72%	57.1%
Children's services	89%	73.6%
Computers	84%	73.3%
Staff helpfulness	98%	93%
Staff knowledge	97%	90%

Table 2 shows that Sligo County Library is significantly under-performing in every area, as against the national average levels of satisfaction.

The PLUS survey also grouped a basket of key attributes within libraries and calculated satisfaction levels against them. These attributes relate directly to the government's policy for public library development, as set out in "Branching Out". To successfully attract investment from public sources, applicants must meet the criteria defined in "Branching Out". The grouped attributes measured were

- Opening hours
- Range of books
- Children's services
- Computers

National average levels of satisfaction at "Good or Very Good" levels were recorded. The results for Sligo County Library were very poor indeed. 92% of users nationally rated this basket of attributes as "Good or Very Good". In Sligo, the satisfaction levels fell to 76%, which was the lowest in Ireland.

3.3 Praise And Criticism From The General Public

Five publicly advertised public consultation events were organised as part of the process for developing this Development Plan. Details about venues can be read at Appendix 2. At each consultation, following introductory remarks by the County Librarian, a presentation was made by the consultant which outlined the purpose of the Plan, sketched out the known PLUS results from County Sligo and invited comment about the Library Service today and views on opportunities for future development of services.

All 5 meetings provided valuable comments and opinions, largely relating to the service as a whole. Praise for staff was offered at many meetings and the welcoming atmosphere at Tubbercurry was positively cited. The general helpfulness of staff was also praised.

In Ballymote, a lengthy meeting focussed on specific local problems, especially

- The delay in developing the new Ballymote Branch
- The difficulty posed by steps to physically disabled people and mothers with strollers

In Sligo, where two meetings were held, much comment was focussed on the unsatisfactory buildings and on aspects of the current service. The following main points were made (some points also made at other meetings)

- Absence of car parking
- Absence of public toilets
- Inadequate children's and teenager spaces
- Restricted opening hours and no lunchtime openings for Reference Library and Local Studies collections
- Unsuitable and crowded facilities for using the Local Studies collections

Across the county generally, many ideas for future work emerged at the public meetings, including

- Availability of a greater range of books
- Online availability of Local Studies catalogues
- Better publicising of Library's role as a repository of archives
- A better service for schools
- The development of a mobile service to serve rural areas, like Grange
- Some evening openings
- Development of a service for housebound and the elderly
- Provision of learning opportunities for people with literacy difficulties
- Inclusion of Playgroups within Schools Service
- Provision of more space for children's activities (Sligo)
- Development of a dedicated Library website

One Sligo Town primary school prepared a written submission to the public consultation, which echoed and reinforced many points made by others. It asked for

- A mobile visiting all schools in Sligo Town & County twice a year
- A weekly book club for various ages groups
- Dedicated, friendly, welcoming children's library areas and story-telling spaces
- A child-friendly web-site
- Section dedicated to Learning Support to interest older children
- Parental guidance reading workshops
- Increased foreign language books
- Increased Irish language books

All the consultations, with the exception of Tubbercurry, called for better buildings, facilities such as toilets, more computers and increased seating and tables.

3.4 The Views Of Staff

If staff are to feel involved with the Library's future, meaningful consultation is essential at planning stage. In addition, staff hold years of valuable experience that should be tapped and also offer many innovative ideas for the future. Sligo County Council asked for as much staff input as possible and much time was devoted to gathering staff views.

On over three full days, all five Library locations were visited by the consultant as a fact-finding exercise. All available staff were also met in groups to establish their views on current operations and to gather their ideas for the future.

All available staff were then subsequently invited to a full-day workshop, held in Sligo Town. On that occasion, working in groups and led by the consultant, some draft mission statements for the Library were drafted, underpinning values defined and an analysis of its Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) undertaken. Lastly, a series of Objectives and Strategies for the next five years was developed.

The views of senior council and library management were also gathered through a number of meetings, at which feedback from stakeholder consultation was conveyed.

The following feedback from staff relates to the current service

- More resources are needed to deliver more services
- Lack of space is a major handicap at all branches, except Tubbercurry
- More book purchase funding would allow purchase of greater numbers and allow quicker response time to borrowing requests

Staff also saw opportunities for the following service developments in the years ahead

- Providing a better schools service
- Development of a Mobile Library Service
- Development of a dedicated service for care and nursing homes
- Extension of the current activity programme at Tubbercurry to other branches
- Greater communication across the system, between branches and between staff and management, through bi-annual full staff meetings and regular electronic exchange

3.5 The SWOT Analysis

An analysis of the Library's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) was undertaken as part of the development of this Development Plan. SWOTs can usefully assist to clarify positions and throw issues into sharper relief. The tables that follow in the pages below provide a summary of the SWOT workshop outcomes.

Staff identified many key points that other stakeholders and the user survey also cited as important. These are

Strengths

- The developing activity programmes
- The forthcoming building programme
- The quality of collection and improved book-stock

Weaknesses

- Insufficient staff numbers
- Low funding levels
- Inadequate buildings
- Restrictions in opening hours
- Inadequate schools service

Opportunities

- Provision of increased activity programmes
- Provision of new better schools service
- Development of both a rural and urban Mobile Library Service
- New buildings
- Growing diversity of the population

Threats

- General decline in reading
- Other leisure-time competition
- Alternative sources of information
- Perception of the Library service vis á vis other Council services

The full SWOT analysis can be read overleaf.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledge of the staff• Commitment of the staff• Openness of the service• Professionalism of the staff• Improved opening hours• The calendar of events• The proposed new library buildings• The new Tubbercurry building• Quality of the local studies collections• The online access to the library catalogue• Access for public to own accounts• The request service• The improvement of book stock• The absence of membership charges• Outreach, events, school visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Insufficient staff numbers• Unsuitable and inadequate buildings• Absence of events spaces in most branches• Poor public perception of the service as a whole• Absence of adequate information about the service• Restricted opening hours• Inaccessibility of un-catalogued stock• Inaccessibility of stock in permanent storage• Unsuitable, outdated and unsafe shelving• Low funding levels• Concerns over staff safety/security• Apparent lack of Council priority for Library• Inadequate service for schools• Inconsistent avenues of internal communication• Slowness of response to public borrowing requests

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promotional opportunities• Staff education & training schemes• Response to new customers• Provision of a county-wide events calendar• Purchase of a new schools /general delivery van• Development of a Mobile Library Service• Promotion of the unique local studies collection• Opportunity to develop more special projects• Economic health of country• Growing diversity of the population• The proposed new buildings• Staff input into new building design	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Willingness of staff to continually give• A general decline in reading• More time-pressured lives of Library users• Availability of home internet use• Fears about staff safety and security from anti-social behaviour• Alternative information services• Ability of middle socio-economic groups to buy own books• Perception of the Library service vis á vis other Council services

3.6 Consulting Special Stakeholder Groups

The combating of social exclusion and the development of socially inclusive policies and projects has been an important government policy driver for some years now. Sligo County Council reinforces its commitment within its Corporate Plan 2004-2009³⁰ where it refers specifically to taking a pro-active role within its estate management programme. The Council defines "inclusion" as one of its core values and furthermore, it sets the following Objectives in support of this

- Improve the quality of life for those who live and work in Sligo
- Incorporate social and cultural themes within infrastructural development

As part of this Development Plan, a number of bodies that deal with social inclusion and with marginalised people were met to ascertain their views on how Sligo County Library could best address this important public agenda for change.

3.7 Cranmore Regeneration Project



The Cranmore Regeneration Project is the largest regeneration project outside Dublin and is a flagship project for the local authorities in Sligo. The Cranmore Regeneration Committee is a partnership representing Local Government, Local Development, State Agencies, Social Partners and Elected representatives which came together to develop a Strategic Regeneration Plan for Cranmore Estate. The Plan was adopted by Sligo County Council at its meeting on April 3 2006.

The Cranmore Regeneration Programme has been prioritised by the Sligo County Council and significant efforts are being made to ensure the programme succeeds.

Cranmore is a community of some 2500 people in Sligo with high levels of unemployment and the majority of its population under 35. The community has suffered both physical and social decline and has not benefited fully from the general economic growth of recent years.

³⁰ "Corporate Plan for Sligo Local Authorities 2004-2009"

The CRP Project Leader identified significant opportunity for Sligo County Library to contribute to the regeneration process. The proposed Mobile Library Service was welcomed. This vehicle will serve rural and urban suburbs and areas where there is a growing or ageing population and housebound people. This is recommended under Corporate Objective 4 in Chapter 5 of this Plan.

CRP also welcomed ongoing liaison with Sligo County Library, possibly through participation in the CRP Training and Education Committee.

Project-based initiatives were also discussed with CRP. Some recent research by CRP is of particular relevance to the opportunities for the County Library.

3.7.1 Social Research

Cranmore Regeneration Project recently commissioned research on the social fabric of the area.³¹ The report discusses the education, training and childcare needs of the estate. The research focussed on a range of issues, like housing and included a section on education and training. The results in that area are as follows

- The average age cited for when residents finished their fulltime education was 16 years of age
- In terms of the highest level of education attained, the figures showed that the majority of the residents who had finished school at that point, had only completed a lower secondary education (Junior/Inter Cert or lower)
- When asked if they would be interested in further education and Training, some 35% stated that they would be interested

The report recommends that new links be established with 3rd level colleges, Post Leaving Certificate Course and FAS. The CRP believes that community development is the way forward for people in the estate, anchored in education and training.

3.7.2 A Community History Partnership Project In Cranmore For Sligo County Library

The Regeneration process in Cranmore has been designed to pivot on the following core elements, as follows

1. Community participation and local ownership
2. Co-ordination/Integration of existing services and activities

³¹ "Understanding Cranmore-A Social Analysis; Preliminary Findings", ProSoc Research, January 2006.

3. Building on existing strengths and ideas³².

Cranmore residents are also proud of their community and very loyal to it. The social analysis research demonstrated, for example, that

- The average number of years the residents had been living in Cranmore was 19 years
- Over 70% of the residents had never moved house within the estate, with 12% moving once and 15% moving twice
- Nearly two thirds indicated that they would prefer to stay on living in Cranmore (61%). Although a considerable number were undecided (34%), only 11% have applied for a transfer out of the estate

Looking therefore at the desire for education, the core elements that underlie the CRP as a whole and taking account of local pride of place, the challenge lies in identifying an opportunity to focus the cultural resource of Sligo County Library in support of community development. The social analysis of Cranmore, presented above, demonstrates this area in particular would benefit greatly from a pilot intervention by the Library service, working in conjunction with other agencies already involved.

Following discussions with Cranmore Regeneration Project, a project-based initiative is suggested, focussing on the development of community pride and identity. It is recommended that Sligo County Library work with CRP to develop a Cranmore Community History Project which explores the origins, history, identity and culture of the Cranmore community.

The proposed project would also

- Be a tool for community development
- Provide a focus for the pride of the community
- Provide youth with access to their heritage
- Develop a sense of belonging, citizenship and identity

How Might It Work?

Using the Local Studies resources of the County Library, maps, books, prints, electronic media etc. and the expertise and knowledge that Library staff already holds, it is recommended that the Community History Project explores and celebrates

- The history of the area, before its development as an estate
- The story of the development of the estate

³² "Understanding Cranmore-A Social Analysis; Preliminary Findings", ProSoc Research, January 2006.

- The families that make up the community and their histories
- The sporting traditions of the area
- Religious and spiritual traditions and beliefs
- Well known personalities from the Cranmore Community

The proposal requires further thought and development and it is recommended that CRP and Sligo County Library meet to begin defining its shape and output. It is recommended that the project be an innovative and unconventional one involving members of the Cranmore Community in both design and execution. This group, of say 10 individuals, should be an intergenerational group. Participation would be voluntary and significant time may be needed at initial stages to assemble this group.

CRP could

- Provide support for the project through one of its Development Workers
- Assist with selecting members of the community who would work under Library guidance to undertake the research
- Assist with identifying a venue for regular meetings/workshops
- Assist in identifying resources to develop the projects outputs

What Form Would The Output Take?

It is envisaged that the project could have at least 3 types of output, as follows

- A video and DVD
- An exhibition
- A popular publication

Increasingly, local arts and heritage are explored through both creative video pieces and documentary³³. Indeed, a number of community-oriented visual artists³⁴ now act as facilitators working with community groups to define their sense of history and identity. This approach could bear significant fruit in Cranmore and should be considered.

Funding would be required to implement his proposal. It is recommended that Sligo Leader and the Department of Social & Family Affairs be approached, in conjunction with CRP. An Chomhairle Leabharlanna might also be able to advise and guide the library towards funding sources for socially inclusive cultural and heritage projects.

In effect a three-way project partnership, is proposed, led by the Library which has knowledge and historical resources, developed in partnership with the

³³ A 15 minute film would cost between €4500 and €7500 to commission. Production of 1000 DVDs for free distribution to households in Cranmore could be low, say €5 per copy.

³⁴ Further information and details about one such group of artists is available if needed.

community and employing facilitators and filmmakers for the creative output elements, working alongside library staff. Ultimately the output is presented at local and Library venues in publication, film and exhibition form.

Funding

Working with the CRP would engage Sligo County Library in a flagship social inclusion project that sees culture as part of the solution to community development. Large-scale funding will not necessarily materialise through such contact, but smaller- scale funds are available, provided the Library's proposals fit well with the broader social agenda. Through RAPID, high quality advice is available to the Library on the type of proposal that would find favour with funders.

CRP, all in all, presents Sligo County Library with a ready-made opportunity to develop a clear socially inclusive, non-elitist idea, within a leading project, with the possibility of external funding support. For this reason, it is strongly recommended in this Plan and an outline proposal presented above.

3.8 Proposed Cranmore Neighbourhood Centre

CRP commissioned a Feasibility Study on the development of a Neighbourhood Centre.³⁵ The Study recommends that "there is considerable scope for the development of a Neighbourhood Centre in Cranmore".

A highly visible focal point building is proposed, at the heart of the community. A mix of functions is recommended; retail and services. In particular, the Study recommends that access to services by local residents should be facilitated by prioritising the housing of service delivery agencies within the proposed Centre. It is also recommended that the Local Authority maintains ownership of the Centre and remains the principal promoter.

Sligo County Library is one of the delivery agencies that the Neighbourhood Centre would welcome. Participation by Sligo County Library in the proposed Neighbourhood Centre should be actively considered, now, by the Library Service and Council Management. It has been suggested that the Library could develop a Learning Centre. The new DOEHLG "Social and Community Facilities Capital Scheme" may look favourably on a socially inclusive proposal of that kind. The example of the Louth Learning Centre may provide useful guidance for Sligo.

³⁵ Cranmore Regeneration Project; Neighbourhood Centre Feasibility Study", January 2006, Meehan Tully and Associates

3.8.1 LOUTH County Library Learning Centre, Dundalk³⁶

Established in November 2003, as part of Louth Local Authorities role in addressing social exclusion, the Learning Centre provides a facility that targets persons who have experienced a disadvantage in accessing education and training in the past.

The Centre caters for both groups and individuals including

- long term unemployed
- persons with low educational attainment
- persons with low literacy levels
- refugees and asylum seekers
- one parent families
- members of the traveling community

The Centre comprises a space for:

- 12 PC workstations with headphones
- network printer
- lcd projector and screen
- tutorial space
- optical scanning software
- induction loop/radio frequency control system

Computer packages and a wide range of other software for individual use are also available.

The Learning Centre is not solely an information technology centre. Broader education and training courses can be provided.

The facility enables educational organisations to provide courses and individuals to undertake self-learning in a neutral and relaxed environment.

3.9 Sligo Volunteer Bureau

As part of the Plan process, Sligo Volunteer Bureau was met. SVB is at an early stage of its development. SVB functions under the Community and Enterprise Office of the Council, funded through The Peace & Reconciliation Fund. Its purpose is to promote volunteering on a county wide basis and provide ongoing support and education to volunteers and to organisations which seek volunteers.

³⁶ Thanks to Louth County Librarian Ann Ward and Acting Assistant Librarian Alan Hand for this information.

SVB intends to recruit a panel of 250 individuals who wish to volunteer, create 100 volunteering opportunities each year and work with around 25 organisations. Categories of volunteer areas are still being defined and include

Arts, culture and media	Campaigning and awareness raising
Computers	Delivering
Education and literacy	Environment
Fundraising	Information giving
Management	Mentoring
Office work	Working with older people
Practical work	Virtual volunteering

SVB sees potential for placing volunteers within areas of Library work and encourages the Library to discuss possibilities. Their normal approach is to look for volunteers for a defined project. A number of possible project areas were suggested, including

- Using the language skills of migrant workers
- Using volunteers to assist with adult literacy tuition
- Using volunteer drivers to deliver a library service to housebound people
- Using volunteers to assist with a range of events, like talks
- Using volunteers to develop reading/review groups with youth
- Using volunteers to write regular Library News for the media

In the context of the suggested Cranmore Project, volunteers could be considered to assist with evening meetings and provide administrative or organisational skills.

3.10 Sligo County Development Board And Community & Enterprise, SCC

Under the wing of the Director of Community & Enterprise sits the CDB for County Sligo. The CDB published its 10 integrated strategy in 2002.³⁷ The arts and heritage domains are included, but the library service is not. Consultation for this Library Plan, elicited considerable interest in integrating aspects of the work of the Library with the aims of the County Development Board 10-year strategy. The Vision Statement of the 10-year strategy is as follows;-

Sligo is a place with vibrant cultural and commercial activity, a thriving urban centre, dynamic and safe urban and rural communities, a strong sense of civic pride and a superior quality of life.

³⁷ "An Integrated Economic, Social and Cultural strategy for County Sligo, 2002-2010)", CDB

Although not formally part of the delivery of this vision, it is very clear that the County Library has a substantial role to play in achieving the vision. And there are a number of opportunities open to the library in the medium term, availing of CDB or SCC Community & Enterprise assistance. The Library should take note, in particular, of the likelihood of "Peace III" funding which can be applied to social inclusion and community development schemes, such as the development of services for the elderly and isolated.

The potential for the Library's involvement was welcomed during the consultation for this Plan by the officers consulted at C & E and its associated programmes, such as Cranmore Regeneration and RAPID.

3.11 Working With Arts And Heritage Within The Council

3.11.1 The Arts Office: County Sligo has developed impressive arts service in relatively recent years. Sligo County Library has since its inception been to the fore in the promotion of literature, drama, art and music. Today, the opportunity exists for the library service to work in partnership with the Councils' own successful arts service.

The Arts Office welcomed the opportunity to contribute to this Plan. In particular, the arts would make increased use of the new venues that the Library has already developed, like Tubbercurry, and is developing currently in Sligo and Ballymote. From the external perspective of a consultant, there appears to be a need for greater integration of cultural programming and planning, at a strategic level.

3.11.2 The Heritage Office: The annual programmes of heritage activities in many counties notably since the appointments of Heritage Officers in recent years, is now a regular feature of the Sligo County Council service. The Sligo Heritage Plan³⁸ commits the Council to the collection and dissemination of knowledge and data on the heritage of the County. It also defines awareness raising and best practice in management of heritage as key performance areas.

The potential for closer working with the Library was welcomed by the Heritage Office, especially the opportunity to display and to distribute archaeology and other heritage information through the Library. Practical opportunities for such work should be jointly assessed now, by the Library and the Heritage Officer, in the context especially of the new Sligo Town library building.

³⁸ "Sligo County Heritage Plan, 2002-2006". Prepared by County Sligo Heritage Forum.

In discharging its responsibilities towards the county archives, there is also great potential for the Library to work with the HO in assessing the conservation and collection needs of this valuable resource. Currently, the HO works with local museums and other bodies that form collections. Across the county, there is not yet any integrated approach to the development of or the access to archival collections.

3.12 A Proposal For Partnership

To maximise potential and to better integrate arts, heritage and library activity programming, some form of agreed formal mechanism is needed, a partnership committee perhaps. Such an arrangement would permit joined-up strategic thinking that the Library needs and obviate, to a good degree, the current separation within the Council's structure, where the Library, Arts and Heritage functions are situated within 3 separate directorates.

Partnership is the way forward, partnership with both internal groups like arts and heritage, and partnership with external groups like the Cranmore Regeneration Project. Partnership develops working linkages that outlast specific programmes and crucially, partnership can also lever funds into place that one organisation, working alone, cannot do.

4. Reviewing Sligo County Library

4.1 Introduction

There are now 12 million visits to Irish public libraries every year. At the same time, expenditure on public libraries has been rising consistently in Ireland over recent years. An Chomhairle Leabharlanna³⁹ statistics show that total spending in 2005 increased by 10% over 2004 to over €99m. Expenditure per capita increased nationally from €22.94 to €25.27.

On the capital investment side, a recent announcement of funding by the Minister for the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government took this allocation to over €100m since the government embarked on the implementation of the 1998 "Branching Out" report. Spending on book stock nationally has risen from €1.61 per capita in 1998 to €2.96 in 2005.

All library authorities in Ireland increased their expenditure on libraries in 2005 and 2006, including Sligo, which is working to an estimate of €1.402,800 for 2006.

4.2 National Policy Context For Libraries

An Chomhairle Leabharlanna (The Library Council) is a statutory body, established by government in 1947. It provides assistance and advice to public libraries, makes recommendations to the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government on public library matters and acts to promote and facilitate library co-operation.

In 1998, the Government published a comprehensive review of public library policy in the report "Branching Out". The report itself took regard of two wider national policies, ensuring that Ireland embraces the opportunities of the "Information Society" and the establishment of an inclusive society.

"Branching Out" identified key issues for Irish public libraries, including the following;

- Delivering better service through enhanced opening hours, improved IT and information services, improved equality of access and developing lifelong learning
- The provision of adequate infrastructure to allow libraries to play their role in developing the "Information Society"
- Improvement in both range and quality of book stock
- Improvement in marketing of library services

³⁹ "Public Library Authorities Annual Estimates of Expenditure 2005 Summary", An Chomhairle Leabharlanna, 2005

The report made some key recommendations to government, including

- Development of library infrastructure through a revised programme of government investment
- The promotion of social inclusion by developing strategies to overcome physical, social and financial barriers to library use
- Completion of automation of library catalogues
- Investment in providing IT technology and greater access to electronic media
- Piloting solutions to serving isolated communities
- Increased book stock funding and a minimum target expenditure per head of population, revised upwards in 2004 to €3.27
- Enhancing library opening hours

These and other aspects of "Branching Out", notably the need to extend hours of opening and the need for adequate infrastructure continue to inform this Development Plan.

4.3 Opening Hours In Sligo Compared To National

The nationally recommended levels of opening, as agreed in the "Branching Out" report are

That by January 2002, each library service serving more than 10,000 customers would be, as a minimum, open through lunchtime each day, would be open each Saturday and would be open until 8.30 on at least two nights each week⁴⁰.

Targets are not set for smaller areas, as local circumstances are agreed to differ greatly. The following table summarizes the picture in Sligo, by reference to the national recommendations: -

Branch	Lunchtime opening each day of opening	Saturday	Evening opening twice a week	Total hours open
Ballymote	1 day	Yes	1 evening until 7.30	11
Enniscrone	1 day	Yes	1 evening until 8.00	20
Sligo Central (Stephen Street)	4 days	Yes	Not open any evening	34
Sligo County (Bridge Street)	Closed all lunchtimes	No	Not open any evening	27.5
Tubbercurry	Yes all days	Yes	1 evening	44

⁴⁰ "Branching Out", page 48

As the table shows, the opening arrangements in Sligo Town, including the complete absence of evening opening represents significant departures from the national recommended minimum level of public opening hours.

The Library service wishes to expand the number of opening hours at its smaller branches to a potential maximum of 44 hours per week by 2007 but recognises that increases in staffing will be needed to meet this target. At present, only Tubbercurry Branch meets this target.

In 2004 An Chomhairle Leabharlanna surveyed and published progress⁴¹ with extending library opening hours, since the 1998 "Branching Out" report. The Survey found substantial improvements, but identified much room for further change. It further recommended that

Local authorities should continue to review their schedules of library opening hours and provide appropriate staff levels in the context of library strategic plans"

4.4 The Need For More Library Activities In Sligo Town

As outlined elsewhere within this Plan, libraries today are civic spaces that encourage and support reading and participation in a range of cultural activities. In Sligo, this occurs extensively in the new purpose-designed Library at Tubbercurry, but relatively rarely elsewhere. The public and other stakeholders called for such programmes in the public consultation and other stakeholders also.

Some activities already happen in the inadequate buildings in Sligo Town, but new senior staff appointments are needed to lead activity and implement policy. At present, for example, significant partnership with other Council sections, like Arts, is hampered not simply by inadequate buildings, but more critically, by absence of capacity. The new appointments will allow this work to begin, but it will only be when the new buildings come on stream that the real increases in activity will be clearly visible.

4.5 Poor Public Image

The achievements of the Library in opening the Tubbercurry Branch, refurbishing Enniscrone and getting all its book-stock online, are broadly overlooked and overshadowed in the public mind by the ongoing highly unsatisfactory and antiquated service that is currently provided by both the Central and County Libraries in Sligo Town. These are the pivots around which

⁴¹ "Changing the Schedules; a Survey of Public Library Opening Hours", An Chomhairle Leabharlanna, 2004.

the service moves and their condition, which must be considered as appalling, retards the ability of the Service as a whole and negatively influences the morale of staff. The PLUS results confirm this unsatisfactory position.

4.6 Key findings from PLUS in County Sligo

4.6.1 Lowest In Ireland; The PLUS survey of 2002 (see paragraph 3.2 above) demonstrated that that Sligo County Library is significantly under-performing in every area, as against the national average levels of satisfaction. This was especially marked within the key attributes which directly relate to the government's policy for public library development, as set out in "Branching Out". In Sligo, the satisfaction levels for this group fell to 76%, which was the lowest in Ireland.

4.6.2 User Age Profiles; The Library attracts over a third less 15-19 year olds than the national average, almost a third more from the 35-44 bracket, over a third lower from the 65-74 bracket and almost two-thirds lower from the over 74 age group. In summary the Library needs to attract larger numbers of younger and older users.

4.6.3 A National Low For Sligo Town; Of the 800 PLUS surveys that Sligo returned only 11 came from the Tubbercurry Branch. The success of Tubbercurry and the benefit of the Council's investment are therefore not reflected in this Survey, which pre-dates the opening of the Branch.

On the positive side, it can be assumed that Sligo County Library would fare much better if the PLUS work were repeated now, in the new Tubbercurry Library.

On the negative side, the majority of the surveys (700) were undertaken in Sligo Town, where the position has not improved since the 2002 PLUS surveys. Satisfaction levels with the majority of the users surveyed undoubtedly remains at a national low.

The proposed new buildings for Sligo will go a substantial distance towards changing the picture in the future, but buildings alone will not provide a better service. Increased staff, increased book purchasing and increased activity funding will all be needed to turn the situation around.

4.7 Staff Helpfulness & Knowledge

Although the public consultations elicited spontaneous praise for library staff, the PLUS results are somewhat disappointing in this regard.

Attribute	National average	Sligo County Library
Staff helpfulness	98%	93%
Staff knowledge	97%	90%

The small table above summarises the national and the Sligo County Library levels of "Good or Very Good" responses to questions about staff helpfulness and staff knowledge. The Sligo figures fall between 5%-7% below national levels. Surveyors always caution about the natural tendency of respondents to avoid outright criticism in survey situations. The PLUS surveys were conducted in the Library, led by staff, a factor that would have further inhibited a critical response. In that light the lower Sligo ratings do give cause for concern.

The lower ratings apply primarily to Sligo Town Branch and to the Bridge Street Reference Library/Local Studies/Internet facilities. The inadequate premises must take much of the blame for the poor public view, but there appears to be dissatisfaction also with service from staff. Customer Care and training issues need to be addressed.

It is worth repeating that Tubbercurry Library was opened post-PLUS and that it was singled out for its welcoming atmosphere in at least 2 public consultations for this Development Plan. Delivering the same result for Sligo will require a similar approach, consisting of

- An adequate new building
- Adequate facilities within the new building
- Increased staffing
- Customer care training

4.8 Lower Than Average Funding In Sligo

Despite a large increase in 2005 funding, Sligo County Library's funding level places it in 18th place out of the 21 county library authorities in Ireland. Book stock: The Library's book- stock continues to grow with 148,000 volumes anticipated by end 2005⁴². In spite of this, however, the Library spends well below the nationally recommended minimum level on its book purchasing, standing at €2.54 as opposed to the national minimum level of €3.27 per head of population.

⁴² Information from An Chomhairle Leabharlanna, "Public Library Authorities Annual Estimates of Expenditure 2005"

This rise has not been reflected in Sligo, where the spending on books continues to lag behind other libraries and the nationally recommended level. This is to be regretted. As the Sligo County Library 2001-2005 Development Plan states

The book fund is one of the boldest statements that a local authority can make about the importance it gives to the library service; it is after all the lifeblood of a library.

Public opinion surveys bear out the importance attached to book stock, in the users mind. The 2003 TSN/MRBI survey on the use and non-use of public libraries⁴³ showed that almost 40% of those that had stopped using their library would return if better and different stock was provided.

Tubbercurry Library enjoyed a special once-off grant for the purchase of new books. As the currency of this stock begins to fade and as new titles begin to appear that the public require, the present optimistic picture at Tubbercurry will also change to a negative public view, without increased book purchasing funding.

Additionally, the Library is trying to address a significant new challenge in book provision, the huge surge in demand for non-English language books from Sligo's new immigrant communities of migrant workers and asylum seekers. This demand for increased multi-cultural resources has not been adequately met in Sligo where a small sum of €1400 has to date been spent on acquiring book stock. A ten-fold increase in this budget is proposed under this Plan.

4.9 Visibly Link The Library To Sligo County Council

During this consultation process, on a number of occasions, a perception about the place and role of the Library Service was voiced. This perception related to different aspects of the same issue, visibility

- Some external stakeholders overlook the Library as a public cultural service
- The Library is physically, and to some degree physiologically, separate from its parent body
- The Council at times overlooks the Library when looking at Council-wide initiatives
- Most importantly, the public visibility of the Library has diminished with the more competitive cultural environment that Sligo now offers.

⁴³ "A Public Space for All", An Chomhairle Leabharlanna .

Sligo County Library remains

- The Council's largest cultural service
- The Council's longest established cultural service
- The Council's most used cultural service

Sligo County Library, within its new staffing and new buildings, has the potential to become the flagship of the Councils' cultural services, especially if it works in partnership with other Council cultural services. It needs to develop

- Greater visibility to the public and so help attract new users
- Better working relationships with community groups
- A more integrated and accountable presence within Sligo County Council

This could be best achieved through the establishment of a County Library Committee of the existing SPC, which is a joint council-community committee. Library Sub-committee business would follow that pattern of other SPC Sub-committees, seeking input and comment on proposals, reporting on progress and presenting proposals for approval. This course is recommended.

4.10 Meeting National Benchmarks Of Quality Service

In the next chapter, a series of Objectives are set down which will guide the Library for the next 5 years. If implemented, these proposals will meet the national benchmarks and respond to the public criticism and dissatisfaction that was first recorded by the PLUS work and conformed by the public consultations for this Plan.

4.11 Priorities For Action

Sligo County Library is coming from behind in approaching this new 5-year Plan. It does not yet have the resources in place to deliver many aspects of this Plan. Two resources are needed, staff and premises. The Library can begin to implement this plan fully when the intended new staff are in place.

Implementation and recruitment/interviews for these posts should therefore be adopted as a priority for the Library. The new staff structure, announced at the end of this planning process will go a long way towards allowing the Library to achieve the Objectives set down in this Plan.

Secondly, goodwill and extra staff will not in themselves allow many aspects of the Plan to be implemented. The inadequacy of the current library buildings has been previously noted and emerged as a principal criticism of the general public. New spaces are essential to house most of the new activities and

services. Providing new buildings in Sligo particularly, must be addressed as a matter of priority.

It was unfortunate that the outcome of the recently held architectural competition for a new County and Central Library for Sligo was rejected by An Chomhairle Leabharlanna.

Undaunted by this setback Sligo County Council have progressed to a second round of interviews in order to secure the architectural services for the design of a County and Central Library on Stephen Street, Sligo.

5. Moving Forward: 2006-2010

5.1 Introduction

This Plan is designed to cover a medium to long-term period of 5 years. The Corporate Objectives set out below, define the future direction of the Library. These Objectives flow from the ideas raised during the consultation process and from the energy and aspirations of the Library staff. They grew naturally from discussion on social inclusion and the stakeholder view that are presented in Chapter 3. They were also informed by the Situation Review that was presented in Chapter 4.

The Corporate Objectives relate to the primary work areas of the Library including core functions.

Strategies are listed in this Plan, under each Corporate Objective. They are short-term proposals, which flow from each of the Corporate Objectives. The tabulated Objectives and associated Strategies can be found at page 62 onwards.

5.2 Mission And Values

Following consultation with staff and senior Library management, the following mission statement is proposed to guide the work of the Library for the years ahead

To provide a responsive, accessible and inclusive library service for all our customers, which fosters reading, stimulates the imagination and contributes to lifelong learning and cultural recreation

The Mission is underpinned by a series of beliefs that reflect the values of the Library. These are

- Inclusiveness in its relationship with its customers
- Professionalism in the way it discharges its work and duties
- Welcoming to its customers
- Responsive to user needs
- Accessible in physical and intellectual terms

This Mission and these values will guide the Library for the incoming period of this Development Plan.

5.3 Funding The Plan

The implementation of the work proposed in this Plan will be delivered over a full five year period. It cannot be implemented without increased resources.

These resources fall into 3 types

- Capital funds as matching funding for infrastructural development
- Recurring costs to cover increased staffing and activities
- Project costs to enable the delivery of pilot, once-off and time-limited initiatives

5.4 The Main Objectives For The Next Five Years

The Corporate Objectives that follow in the tables below were developed through extensive consultation with all stakeholders. They cannot be delivered in many cases without increased resources, both staffing and funding.

It is worth singling out one proposal in particular and highlighting its importance, the development of a Mobile Library Service. This is a growth area within the Irish Library sector. Mobiles can reach both areas and people that regular library services cannot always reach. Nationally, the 2002 PLUS surveys⁴⁴ demonstrated that mobiles were 75% used by women (as against a 66% usage of fixed branches) and that the mobile attract a proportionately higher number of users in the middle and upper age ranges.

Irish libraries have responded innovatively to the need for mobiles services, from the 1927 Dublin Libraries Book Van, the 1950s Monaghan County Library car and caravan service or the present-day 2003 Donegal County Library Taobh Tire project.

County Sligo is divided in two by the Ox Mountains, which very much hinders communication in the south of the county. Sligo also holds some isolated pockets of people in the north and west of the county especially; people that are not within easy reach of a branch. To serve these people and to serve suburbs in Sligo Town also, a mobile library service is proposed in this Plan. The proposal is not a new one; the previous 2001-2005 Development Plan highlighted this need.

Eight Corporate Objectives have been defined to guide the work of the Library over the 5-year planning period, as follows-

⁴⁴ Information from An Chomhairle Leabharlanna

Corporate Objective 1

Provide public library buildings and facilities to meet national benchmarks of quality and accessibility

Corporate Objective 2

Promote and foster reading throughout the branch network

Corporate Objective 3

Develop socially inclusive projects to reach new communities of users

Corporate Objective 4

Promote the Library and its services throughout County Sligo

Corporate Objective 5

Develop and sustain library services for rural Sligo and for schools

Corporate Objective 6

Maintain, update and make accessible the unique Sligo Local Studies resources and collections

Corporate Objective 7

Ensure that Sligo County Library becomes a vibrant centre for cultural activity

Corporate Objective 8

Develop the managerial framework

5.5 Performance Indicators

Indicators are tools for use in managing and operating a service. Their main role is to assist in reviewing progress and achievement against measures of success that the Library itself has set and agreed. Indicators work best when they are seen as a means to an end, rather than an end in themselves.

A number of indicators of activity are already in place. Sligo County Council has set 5 Service Indicators for the Library. These Indicators were originally set by the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government, which expects all Councils to report on 42 Performance Indicators that include 5 for libraries. The indicators as a whole can be used to measure progress against key objectives, especially those that will impact on the achievement of the targets set out in the "Branching Out" report. The table overleaf summaries the current national indicators.

Performance Indicators for Sligo County Library
Average number of public opening hours per week for full-time libraries and part-time libraries
Number of registered library members as a percentage of the local population
Number of items issued per head of county population for (a) books, and (b) other items
Percentage of libraries that offer internet access to the public
Number of internet sessions provided per 1000 population

5.6 Monitoring And Review

This is a 5-year Development Plan, which will require regular review. An annual review is recommended as a minimum. At years' end, the annual review meeting can then be written up to become the Library's contribution to the overall Annual Report of Sligo County Council.

During the year, key Strategies might require an interim, either quarterly or 6-monthly review. All progress and problems against each Objective or Strategy could be discussed, using the Plan as a guide. It is recommended that the broad outcomes from each review be communicated electronically to all staff.

At review time, the following measures of success should also be applied

- The relative level of participation of the library service in the economic and cultural well being of the area served;
- The provision of better access and services to customers particularly disadvantaged customers;
- The level of value-added services;
- Increases in staff morale and expertise.

Realistic baselines of existing performance will, in due course, need to be established, against which these 4 measures can be gauged.

Corporate Objective 1⁴⁵

Provide public library buildings and facilities to meet national benchmarks of quality and accessibility

Strategies	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Resource
1. Progress the proposed Sligo County / Central Library to completion ⁴⁶		x	X	x		€13,343,000
2. Progress the new Ballymote Community Branch to completion		X	X	x		€2,205,840
3 Implement the findings of the Disability Audit at all branches		X	X	X		€40,000
4. Progress the application for 100% government funding for the new Mobile Library Service vehicle		x				€195,000
5. Purchase books stock for new Mobile Library Service vehicle		x				€45,000

⁴⁵ The implementation of many strategies is dependent upon the provision of increased resources and the agreement on the new staff structure.

⁴⁶ The strategies are listed in order of priority.

Corporate Objective 2

Promote and foster reading throughout the branch network

Strategies	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Resource
1. Increase and index-link the annual book purchasing fund to the national recommended minimum level of €3.27 per head of the population of the County	X					€20,000
2. Establish an annual multi-cultural book purchasing fund to serve new non-English speaking communities	x					€14,000
3. Increase the opening hours of Sligo Town Branch from 34 to 48 hours per week.	X	X				
4. Increase the opening hours of Ballymote Branch by 10 hours per week	X	X				
5. Increase the opening hours of Enniscrone Branch by 5 hours per week			x			
6. Maintain the 44 hours per week opening at Tubbercurry Community Library.						
7. Implement increased lunchtime and evening opening in Sligo Town and in Ballymote by 2006	X	X				
8. Continue reader development work through establishment of Book Clubs, author visits and the use of the Sligo Volunteer Bureau.	X	X				
9. Continue and build upon working relationship with Adult Literacy Officer at Sligo VEC	X	X				

Corporate Objective 3

Develop socially inclusive projects to reach new communities of users

Strategies	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Resource
1. Develop a Community History Project for Cranmore community in Sligo, in conjunction with Cranmore Regeneration Project		X	X			To be defined See paragraph 3.7
2. Consider the development of a Learning Centre within the proposed Cranmore Neighbourhood centre	X	X				
3. Review the existing service for care homes, day centres and retirement homes				X		
4. Define an opportunity to deliver borrowing/lending service for housebound people, possibly in partnership with the carers associations or the Sligo Volunteer Bureau			X			
5. Develop activities for teenagers, especially in Sligo Town ⁴⁷		X				
6. Liaise closely with Community & Enterprise regarding potential future opportunities to for socially inclusive projects and funding	X	X	X			

⁴⁷ Activities for teenagers cannot be delivered within the present Library premises in Sligo Town

Corporate Objective 4

Promote the Library and its services throughout County Sligo

Strategies	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Resource
1. Commission a modern corporate visual identity for the Library Service	X	X				€1750
2. Design, produce and widely distribute 25,000 information leaflets about the services that the Library offers (A4, six panel folding leaflet)	X					€300 (design) €2000 (printing)
3. Using new visual identity, erect directional and building signage at all branches	X	X				€10,000
4. Develop a website for the County Library, including a dedicated children's web page		x				€10,000

Corporate Objective 5

Develop and sustain library services for rural Sligo and for schools

Strategies	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Resource
1. Pursue the current application for funding to DOELHG for a Mobile Library Service vehicle	X					
2. Ensure that the primary school's service grows to regular twice yearly visits to each school	X					
3. Develop a dedicated Teacher Resource Centre at the new Sligo Central Library			X			

Corporate Objective 6

Maintain, update and make accessible the unique Sligo Local Studies resources and collections

Strategies	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Resource
1. Place online the digitised Ordnance Survey First Edition maps of County Sligo	X					€15,000
2. Add Local Studies Collection to the Library database	X	X	X	X	X	
3. Continue to contribute and participate in the national library heritage initiative "Ask About Ireland"	X	X	X	X	X	
4. Commission a Study to scope and cost the role of a County Archivist		X	X			€10,000
5. Select rare or specialist areas of Local Studies collection such as the Wakeman Antiquities drawings, maps and early 19 th century newspapers to digitise and make accessible on the web	X	X	X	X	X	€18,000
6. Purchase and acquire Sligo's written heritage, including manuscripts, prints, photographs, maps and archives records.	X	X	X	X	X	

Corporate Objective 7

Ensure that Sligo County Library becomes a vibrant centre for cultural activity

Strategies	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Resource
1. With the advent of the new Library buildings, develop an annual programme of cultural activities throughout the county and publicise in calendar form			X	X	X	€15,000
2. Ensure the participation of all branches in Seachtain na Gaeilge, National Heritage Week, Children's Book Festival, National Science Week, Bealtaine Festival	X	X	X	X	X	
3. Develop, design and produce an annual exhibition on topics of local interest	X	X	X	X	X	€25,000
4. Translate Library Information leaflets into major languages of new migrant workers and asylum-seeking communities		X				€2000 per language
5. Design, produce and distribute foreign-language Library Information Leaflets		X				€250 per language (2500 copies)
6. Establish a strategic cultural planning partnership with arts and heritage offices of Sligo County Council	X	X	X	X	X	

Corporate Objective 8

Develop the managerial framework

Strategies	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Resource
1. Develop an electronic and simple internal communications system between all branches	X					
2. Ensure that all staff become aware of training opportunities relevant to their responsibilities	X					
3. Draw up and distribute clear procedural guidelines, within a manual format	X					
4. Develop team-building and corporate ownership through an bi-annual full staff meeting	X					
5. Establish a Sligo County Library Committee as a sub-committee of the SPC	X					
6. Provide workplace-focussed training for staff, including customer care	X					
7. Implement the new staff structure agreed with Sligo County Council and the Trades Union	X					
8. Establish team working in selected work areas	X					
9. Develop the Library's role as a communications tool for the Council as a whole			X	X	X	

Appendix 1 Invitation to tender

Sligo County Library Service Library Development Programme 2006—2010.

Sligo County Council is required under the Local Government Act 2001 to prepare and adopt a Library Development Programme, for the operation of its Library service. The previous Library Development Programme adopted by Sligo County Council, covered the period 2001 —2005 and is now due for replacement. Sligo County Council wishes to engage a Consultant with relevant experience, to undertake and assist in the production of a Library Development Programme.

The Library Development Programme 2006 -2010 will include:

- An outline of current services and infrastructure.
- Development objectives and priorities for the library service.
- An outline of actions taken or proposed to be taken, in order, to deliver the objectives and priorities.
- The financial and resource requirements needed to deliver the Library Development Programme.

The Library Development Programme will take account of Sligo County Council's strategic plans which currently exist, in particular those plans that refer to Information Technology, The Arts, Heritage, Education and Culture.

An essential element in the preparation of the Programme will be the consultative process, which will include all stakeholders, elected members, S.P.C., the management team, staff and the communities we serve.

Tender documentation for the above work will include the following: -

- Proposed methodology for the production of the Development Programme
- Timetable for the completion of the Development Programme
- Schedule for the consultative process
- An outline of the fees for the production of the Programme
- Details of Consultants relevant experience

The closing date for receipt of tenders is 5pm. Friday 30th September 2005.

Tenders should be clearly marked "Tender for Library Development Programme" and addressed to:

Mr. Tim Caffrey,
Director of Services,
Corporate, Housing and Emergency Services,
Sligo County Council,
County Hall,
Riverside,
SLIGO,
Ireland.

Appendix 2 Consultations Undertaken

Three groups of stakeholders were consulted

- Staff and management
- General public
- Special interest groups and bodies

Staff & Management

Familiarisation visits were made to each Branch and to the HQ facilities. Meetings were held with groups of staff at each branch to ascertain their views on the current Service, elicit ideas and suggestions and gather data and information.

A number of meetings were also held with the County Librarian and the Executive Librarian to gather data, provide feedback from other consultations and agree the direction and broad content of the emerging Plan.

A meeting was also held with the Director of Services; Housing Policy, Social & Cultural development to input the views of the Library's parent body, Sligo County Council. Dorothy Clarke, then Director of Community & Enterprise was also consulted regarding social inclusion and broader cultural strategy.

Sligo County Manager Mr Hubert Kearns was also consulted at draft stage.

The General Public

Five advertised opportunities to contribute were arranged to gather the views of the general public, which would include the substantial body of people that hold membership of the Service throughout the County. Meetings were held as follows

- Monday, December 5th, Stephen Street Library, Sligo
Session 1 will be 12.40p.m. to 1.15p.m.
Session 2 will be 1.25p.m. to 2.00p.m.
- Monday, December 5th, Tubbercurry Community Library, from 7.15p.m.to 9.00p.m.
- Tuesday, December, 6th, Enniscrone Branch Library from 7.15p.m.to 9.00p.m
- Wednesday, December 7th, Ballymote Branch Library from 7.15p.m.to 9.00p.m.

The text of the media announcement can be read at Appendix 3. Statements were sent to newspapers, parish bulletins, radio stations and the information was also placed on the Sligo County Council website. Paid newspapers advertisements were also taken out.

Special Interest Groups And Bodies Consulted

RAPID programme Sligo Town

Heritage Office, Sligo County Council

Ms Special Projects

Sligo Community Forum

Sligo-Omagh Partnership

Arts Office, Sligo County Council

An Chomhairle Leabharlanna, Dublin

Sligo Volunteer Bureau

Cranmore Regeneration Project

Appendix 3 Public Consultation publicity text

Media statement

Sligo County Library 2006-2010 Development Plan

Public Consultation

What do you like about your Library? Do you have suggestions on how the Service could be improved? If you do not use your local Library, why not? The County Library would like to hear from you.

Sligo County Library invites you to contribute your views on the work of the Service. We are seeking your views on the Service today and your views on how you would like to see it develop.

The Library is currently working on a 5-year development programme, which will set the course of its work until 2010. As part of this process, the Library is holding public meetings at five venues throughout the County. You are invited to come along and give us your suggestions and feedback.

The meeting schedule is as follows;

Monday, December 5th, Stephen Street Library, Sligo
Session 1 will be 12.40p.m. to 1.15p.m.
Session 2 will be 1.25p.m. to 2.00p.m.

Monday, December 5th, Tubbercurry Community Library, from 7.15p.m. to 9.00p.m.

Tuesday, December, 6th, Enniscrone Branch Library from 7.15p.m. to 9.00p.m.

Wednesday, December 7th, Ballymote Branch Library from 7.15p.m. to 9.00p.m.

Each meeting will be conducted by an independent outside consultant who is currently working on the Plan with library staff. Library staff will also be there to greet you. Everybody is welcome.

Notes for editors

Under the Local Government Act 2001, all libraries must prepare and adopt development programmes. Under the Act, the Plan must contain an outline of existing services, set development objectives and priorities, describe how the objectives will be met and calculate financial implications of the development programme.

Appendix 4 Membership of SPC ⁴⁸

Cllr Joe Queenan, (Chairperson), Lacknasaivea, Enniscrone, Co. Sligo

Cllr Martin Baker, 2 Ardkeerin, Riverstown, Co. Sligo

Cllr Veronica Cawley, St. Martin, Rathbraughan, Co. Sligo

Cllr Imelda Henry, Orient. Pearse Road, Sligo

Cllr Joe Leonard, Cloonaghbawn, Ballinfull, Co. Sligo

Cllr Chris Mac Manus, 5 Mountain View, Maugheraboy, Co. Sligo

Cllr Declan Bree, 1 High Street, Sligo

Mr Frankie Brannigan, c/a Courthouse, Teeling Street, Sligo

Ms Sharon Boles, Altvelid, Ballintogher, Co. Sligo

Mr Conor Fitzgerald, Atlanta Place, Cluin Dara, Gurteen, Co. Sligo

Mr Gerry Creamer, The Blennicks, Rosses Point. Co. Sligo

⁴⁸ From "Sligo County Council Diary 2006".

Appendix 5 Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to the following people that contributed to this development Plan through correspondence or meetings.

Meetings

Mr Hubert Kearns, County Manager, Sligo County Council
Mr Tim Caffrey, Director of Housing, Social, Cultural, Corporate and Emergency Services.
Ms Dorothy Clarke, Director, Community & Enterprise
Mr Donal Tinney, County Librarian
Mrs Pauline Brennan, Executive Librarian, Sligo County Library
Library staff at all 4 branches & at Headquarters, Sligo County Library
Ms Bridie Conway, RAPID programme Co-ordinator, Sligo Town
Ms Siobhan Ryan, Heritage Officer, Sligo County Council
Ms Deirdre Finnerty, Special Projects, Sligo County Council
Ms Siofra Kilcullen, Sligo Community Forum, Sligo County Council
Mr Paul Hamilton, Sligo-Omagh Partnership, Sligo County Council
Ms Mary McAuliffe, Arts Officer, Sligo County Council
Mrs Norma McDermot, Director, An Chomhairle Leabharlanna, Dublin
Ms Rhona McGrath, Volunteer Development Programme Officer, Sligo County Council
Ms Ciara O'Hara, Sligo Volunteer Bureau
Ms Jennifer Murphy, Project Leader, Cranmore Regeneration Project

Correspondence, Email, Telephone

Mr Alun Bevan, Research Officer, An Chomhairle, Leabharlanna, Dublin
Mr Alan Hand, Acting Assistant Librarian, Louth County Library
Ms Ann Ward, County librarian, Louth County Library

Credits

Special thanks to the Cranmore Regeneration Project for allowing sight of their research into the social analysis of the estate and the Neighbourhood Centre Feasibility Study

Appendix 6 Contact Information

Mr Donal Tinney
County Librarian
Sligo County Library
Bridge Street
SLIGO

E-mail: sligolib@sligococo.ie

Web: www.sligolibrary.ie

- Central Library, Stephen Street, Sligo. Telephone 071 9111675.
- Reference and Local History, Bridge Street, Sligo. Telephone 071 9111850
- Ballymote Branch Library, The Courthouse, Ballymote. Telephone 071 9111663
- Enniscrone Branch Library, Pier Road, Enniscrone, Telephone 096 37199 or 071 9111653
- Tubbercurry Community Library, Teach Laighne, Humbert St., Tubbercurry Telephone 071 9111705

Appendix 7 Capital Projects

Sligo County and Central Library Estimate of Cost		
Site Cost	€600,000	
Building Construction:		
2400 sq.m. @ €3,108 per sq. m	€7,459,000	
V.A.T. @ 13.5%	€1,007,000	
Fees 11% *	€883,000	
Stock	€1,800,000	
Fixtures/Fittings	€750,000	
Equipment	€780,000	
Sub Total	€13,279,000	
1% Art	€64,000	
Total		€13,343,000

Sligo County Council	Dept. of Envir. Heritage & L.G.
€4,003,000	€9,340,000

Car Parking 30 Spaces		
30 Car park spaces @ €2,500 per space	€75,000	
V.A.T. 13.5%	€10,125	€85,000
Fees *		€9,000
Fixtures/Fittings		€40,000
<i>Total</i>		€134,000

* Architect 7% Gross, QS & Eng 4% + V.A.T. 21%

Ballymote Community Library Estimate of Cost		
Site Cost $\frac{2}{3}$ ^{rds}	€110,000	
Building Construction:		
400 sq.m. @ €3,000.00	€1,200,000	
V.A.T. @ 13.5%	€162,000	
Fees 11% *	€142,000	
Stock	€380,000	
Fixtures/Fittings	€100,000	
Equipment	€80,000	
Sub Total	€2,184,000	
1% Art	€21,840	
Total		€2,205,840

Sligo County Council	Dept. of Envir. Heritage & L.G.
€663,500.00	€1,542,340.00

Car Parking 15 spaces		
15 Car park spaces @ €2,500 per space	€37,500	
V.A.T. 13.5%	€5,060	€42,560
Fees *		€5,000
Fixtures/Fittings		€20,000
<i>Total</i>		€67,560

- * **Architect 7% Gross**
QS & Eng 4% + V.A.T. 21%

Mobile Library Estimate of Cost			
	<i>Total Expenditure</i>	<i>Grant Assistance</i>	<i>Total Cost to County Council</i>
Stock	€90,000.	€45,000.00	€45,000.
Mobile Library	€195,000.	€195,000.00	€00,000.
Total			€45,000.

Running Costs p/a.

Staff Costs	€38,000
Maintenance	€9,000
Stock Upkeep	€20,000
Total	€67,000