

Comhairle Chontae Ros Comáin

Roscommon County Council



Library Services

Seirbhísí Leabharlainne

Development Plan 2011 – 2014

Plean Forbartha 2011 – 2014

The Next Chapter

Roscommon County Council: Library Services

Development Plan 2011 – 2014

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Message from the Mayor: Cllr Ernie Keenan

As Mayor of Roscommon County Council, I am pleased to welcome this plan for the Library Services, which will inform and direct the necessary strategies, objectives and actions for the development of the service over the coming years. The Library Service continues to play a vital information, cultural, education, recreation and learning resource for all the people of the county, which is now more required than ever.

This Library Services Development Plan 2011 – 2014 charts the future direction, strategies and actions for the service that will enable it to address and respond to a range of issues that influence the modern provision of services in a changing environment.

The Public Library is a gateway to the world of knowledge, a central resource in the building of communities, a public interface for the local authority, a bridgehead for access and social inclusion, a vehicle for the utilisation of information communication technologies, a resource for lifelong learning, study and research and a focal, network point and venue for a range of local and national projects, promotions and events.

I would like to thank all the members of the council, the members of the Strategic Policy Committee, Director of Services and the represented groups and individuals who contributed and participated in the formation of this plan.

I would like to thank the library staff for their support and commitment to the future development of the service and look forward to seeing their implementation.

*Cllr Ernie Keenan
Mayor
Roscommon County Council*

Foreword by Director of Services

The position of the public library service through its broad functional roles embracing information, culture, education, recreation and learning for people of all ages still remains a potent symbol for democratic participation and an important social, cultural and recreational local authority access point for people of all ages in the county.

It is of great credit to the library staff that so many of the targets we set ourselves in the previous plan have been met, despite the many changes and the environment which we now operate. These are tangible indicators that public service staff remains committed and dedicated to the people they serve and the services they provide. All of the achievements within the Library Services over the last number of years have helped to raise both the status and profile of the service and this plan will continue to place the Library Services at the forefront of our social, cultural and community plans.

The plan has been progressed under corporate guidance through the Strategic Policy Committee, a consultation process with staff and all stakeholders to provide opportunities for discussion and widespread representation of views and submissions.

The preparation of the plan also fulfils legislative requirements and will allow Roscommon County Council: Library Services to build upon a strong tradition of service provision, initiatives and developments which include as outlined in this plan physical infrastructure, access and social inclusion, information communication technology, children's and schools, archives and local studies, management and resources, marketing and promotion, reading and learning and customer care.

The plan also reflects the embracing of a range of emerging issues which are essential for the continued development of a modern and up to date service. Measures such as developing online resources, digitisation, e books and social media formats as a means of extending and enhancing the communication of the service, which will become an integral part of future developments.

This public statement on how we intend to deliver our services reflects our commitment to the long-term strategy of developing a more proactive approach to service delivery and to ensure the full potential of the service is utilised.

*Tommy Ryan
Director of Services
Roscommon County Council*

Introduction and Context

Roscommon County Council: Library Services provides for the cultural, education, recreation, information and learning needs of people of all ages throughout the county and strives to provide and develop a comprehensive, quality, modern and accessible service. It acts as centre for knowledge and learning, as a resource for culture, reading and the imagination, as a resource for children and young people, as an access to information communication technologies and as a vital community facility and public space.

The Library Development Plan 2011 –2014 for Roscommon County Council has been prepared and researched during 2010 initially in the wider social context of the national and local government agendas for Transforming Public Services, Croke Park Agreement, Towards 2016 and a range of other reports produced in relation to the future delivery of Public Library services in Ireland.

More specific measures for the development of services are contained in the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government/An Chomhairle Leabharlanna report “Branching Out- Future Directions” policy produced in 2008. This report focuses on six key future issues such as the Infrastructure, Quality of Service, School Library Service, Libraries as Centres of Culture, Library Co-Operation and Marketing and Research, which are reflected in this plan.

The plan, in its preparation, is equally conscious of many other recommendations for the development of Library Services into the future contained in The Public Library and the School: Policies and Prospects for Library Services to Primary Schools in Ireland and Meeting the Challenges of Cultural Diversity

The research process involved the examination, analysis and reporting on the broad work programme of the previous plan, scoping of the local environment in which services are now being delivered, consultation with staff and the presentation of a draft to the Housing, Social, Cultural and Community Strategic Policy Committee in 2010.

The Public Library continues to play an active role in the life of the community and this plan outlines a range of further developmental measures over the next few years that are designed to consolidate its role and function. As a service we have much to be proud of in terms of the achievements of the service to date but in a constantly changing environment we cannot stand still and must be in a position to anticipate, evolve and respond actively to new needs. Rather than preparing a broad policy and strategy document this plan is a practical and functional document that clearly sets out the actions that are clearly defined and that will sustain its operations into the future. Library Services must be judged by what they do rather than what they are.

Richie Farrell
County Librarian

Analysis and Performance

As part of the plan preparation a process of analysis and assessment of performance is undertaken. The process involved auditing the environment in which our services operate and involved looking at social factors and changes, technological delivery, information provision, market surveys and functions of the library services. The process serves as a generator of ideas about the kind of issues and factors that may be important for the library service to analyse.

Over the last number of years much has been achieved in consolidating the position of the Library Services in the county through an ongoing work programme and it is important at this time to reflect on some of those achievements and performance. Other data on the performance of the Library Services are contained in the annual return under the Service Indicators.

- The Library Development Plan 2006 - 2010 has helped to structure the required development of the service and helped to build a better relationship with the local authority, elected members and public.
- Service has developed its various roles and in particular it's cultural role with a range of annual events, partnerships and projects.
- Considerable investment by the local authority in the Library Services over the period of the Library Development Plan from an operating budget in 2005 of 1.2million to 1.7million in 2009.
- There has been a 34% increase in budgets over the period 2004 - 2009
- All actions progressed out of the 80 contained in the plan across the 9 Service Provision sections including Infrastructure, ICT, Access & Social Inclusion, Children's & Schools, Archives & Local Studies, Management Marketing & Promotion, Reading & Learning and Customer Care.
- Implementation of a new Mobile Library Service now serving over 40 stops throughout the county and replacement of schools and delivery vehicle providing modern, reliable and supporting services.
- Opening of new Library at Castlerea Prison in conjunction with the Irish Prison Service.
- Library Expenditure per capita up from €22.83(2005) to a current of €28.95(2009) and one of the highest per capita spend on stock in the country at €6.55 over the period.
- Over €1.1 million of capital investment from various grant systems for Library Automation, Digitisation Strategy, Mobile Library, Optical Scanning, Local Authority Records & Archives, National Disability Strategy, Vehicle Replacement, County Library Project and Development Contributions.
- Upgrading of all information communication technology networks, equipment, website and online resources providing good quality service and range of public access resources.
- Substantial work conducted on the Archives in relation to policies, preservation, conservation, microfilming, oral history and appropriate listing of resources.

- Strategic partnerships with a range of external agencies and organisations such in developing projects and resources.
- Off site storage secured for Library Stock and other local authority records sectional requirements.
- Improvements throughout all service points in relation to Health & Safety and Disability access.
- 91% public satisfaction rating from last Public Library User Survey

As a result of the analysis, the actions as outlined in the body of the document reflect the response and direction intended. Some of the actions will be short term, some long term. Some will be regarded as more of a priority and others as options. All actions are regarded as vital to contributing to the library development plans objective.

Purpose and Background

The drafting of the library development plan has been prepared against the legislative requirements and other local authority plans.

Under section 78 of the Local Government Act 2001, library authorities are required to prepare and adopt a programme for the operation and development of its service to include

- (a) an outline of existing library services
- (b) the development objectives and priorities of the library service
- (c) the measures taken or proposed to be taken to secure those objectives
- (d) the financial or other implications of the library development programme
- (e) other such matters as are considered necessary by the library authority

The Plan has also been developed within the context of the Roscommon County Development Plan 2008 – 2014, which outlines the policy in relation to Libraries as continuing to develop and improve the services provided on an ongoing basis. The development of Library Services as one of the supporting strategies towards ensuring the economic, cultural and social development of County Roscommon through the integration of services at local level are identified in the Corporate Plan 2009 – 2014 which outlines its role at 5.5 to

Provide and develop a comprehensive, quality, modern and accessible library service by implementing and reviewing the Library Development Plan 2006 to 2010.

The actions designed to achieve these objectives and which underpin the Library Development Plan 2011 -2014 are

- To review the current and future direction of public libraries in the county under a new Library Development Plan strategy for 2010 -2014.
- To ensure that the Library Services continues to play an active role as a socially inclusive, community, cultural, educational, information and learning centre.
- To continue best practice in addressing the physical, social and disability access issues to ensure equitable participation and engagement with services.

- To further utilise Information Communication Technologies developments to provide and deliver greater access to the public libraries collections and resources.
- To continue to promote and market the service through a range of collaborations, partnerships and projects as a means of adding value to the service.
- To re-examine all service provisions in light of both the changing operating environment, flexibility measures, organisational changes and modernisation agenda.
- To provide for the management, development and access for the local authority records and archives.

This Library Development Plan is designed to cover a medium to long-term period, in this case 4 years. The objectives flow from both these other plans and issues raised to date during the preparation and consultation process. The delivery timeframe aligns, time-wise, with the Council's plan periods.

The purpose, therefore of this plan is to provide a documented structure 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 2011 - 2014 four year period. The preparation will also enable all partners in the process including elected members, management, staff and the public to participate and contribute to the formulation of Library Service objectives for the future.

Profile and Services

The library development plan is prepared in the context of the administrative area of the county, its population, urban and rural environments, demographics and social and cultural background. The infrastructure and delivery of library and information services within this geographical area in terms of its overall mission statements are considered. The provision of services in a changing social environment, in an ever-changing technological landscape, staff capacity, financial resources, user demand and public access requires future planning.

The county of Roscommon is administered over an area of 2,549 square kilometres. The county stretches approximately 100km from the top of the Arigna Valley in the north to Shannon Bridge in the south, 55km from Roosky in the east to beyond Ballinlough on the west border and 20km on the narrow horizontal between Athlone on the river Shannon and the river suck in the west. The county shares borders with Galway, Mayo, Sligo, Leitrim, Longford, Westmeath and Offaly. The county is characterised by its largely rural nature interspersed with the towns of Roscommon, Boyle, Castlerea, Strokestown, Ballaghaderreen, Elphin and the urban area close to Athlone.

The population of the county according to the Census 2006 stands at 58, 768, a 9.2% increase on the 2002 figures. Population densities vary considerably from low

densities in the rural areas in the northwest and west to high densities in the southern districts, dominated to a large extent by the influence and commuting proximity of Athlone. The five main towns, including the urban and their rural hinterlands account for some 24% of the population, leaving some 76% rural based.

Roscommon County Council; Library Services were established in 1930 under the Carnegie Trust Scheme, which enabled local authorities in Ireland to exercise its powers under the Public Libraries Act to establish a library service for its area in the 1920s.

The service is currently operated through six infrastructure branch locations at Roscommon, Castlerea, Ballaghaderreen, Boyle, Elphin, Strokestown and the Mobile Library Service. The library service also continues to deliver and develop a substantial Archives and Local Studies reference and research facilities at the County Library. Full time libraries were open on average 31.3 hours per week with part-time branches open 21.93 hours per week, with the Mobile Library servicing over 40 stops on a two weekly schedule.

The Library Service functions under the Director of Housing, Social and Cultural and Corporate Affairs. The County Librarian is the principal executive officer of the Library.

Policies & Strategies

Roscommon County Council: Library Services has developed the service under the previous plan and now plans to consolidate its position. Development must be viewed in the context of the changed environment nationally and the difficulties being experienced by local authorities. With reductions in the Library Services operating capacity both in terms of staff and financial resources the plan must be balanced and realistic in its ambitions. A review of past performance, delivery of services and identification of issues revealed the following key issues for the next four years.

- Consolidation of the current operation provisions
- Developing the social and cultural role and profile
- Supporting high quality access to information
- Maintaining access and opening hours throughout the service
- Applying good financial practices and procedures.
- Developing human resources staff roles and skills.
- Pursuing further grants and developing capital projects.
- Developing partnerships and collaborations with agencies.
- Enhancing the information communication technologies
- Continuing to promote and market the service.
- Continue to update and modernise services.
- Ensure that Public Libraries remain relevant and vital.

For the plan to be viewed in a purposeful and practical light it is important that the strategies are not just considered aspirational but that they are grounded. To that end the SMART method is considered relevant. This in effect means that strategies outlined are

Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely

Objectives and Actions

In order to deliver on the broad strategies for service development the following issues are considered in the plan.

INFRASTRUCTURE

While much has been achieved in providing a good quality Library Services infrastructure within the county efforts must be continued to ensure that the buildings and attributes are constantly upgraded as they have a direct effect on the Library's capacity to deliver good services. Modern libraries require space for study, exhibitions and Internet computers, in addition to book-stock, study and reading areas. Infrastructure for the purpose of this plan also extends to mobile library services.

Taking all these factors into account, and having reviewed current provision, Roscommon County Library proposes to address the infrastructure issues through the following actions.

Actions

1. Ensure listing of all planned projects with the DOEHLG under the period Capital Library Investment Programmes to secure funding for future works.
2. Continue to upgrade and modernise facilities under annual provision and improvements works.
3. Complete the current County Library Refurbishment Project being undertaken in 2011 under the DOEHLG approved schedule.
4. Support the relocation of the Boyle Library at King House to the ground floor under the current local authority reorganisation proposals.
5. Support the relocation of the Laboratory at the County Library Building under the Civic Offices development
6. Address and explore options for the continued operation of services at Elphin in the short term and retain the Courthouse as a potential infrastructural project.
7. Pursue and develop the provision of a centre location for the Archives and Record Management under the Civic Offices developments.
8. Identify and ensure that all works in relation to Health & Safety and Disability Access issues for all service points are addressed.
9. Support the local authority Energy Mapping programme to ensure that Library Services issues for buildings and operations are addressed.

Access and Social Inclusion

The public library service, through its broad functional role and by its nature and by definition is a socially inclusive one. Libraries and other public facilities are required to make special arrangements in both practice and policy for delivery of services to all people. Access in terms the physical, social and financial has been considered in framing these objectives.

Actions

10 Maintain the current opening hours of branch Library services through reassigning of staff from administration to support frontline operations
11 Develop a range of library information leaflets and promotional literature for service awareness and public information.
12. Monitor and review the current arrangements for all Library Services opening hours and access.
13. Address all disability access through signage, ramping, shelving and layout change under proposed project developments.
14. Support developments and programmes including stock resources in relation to Literacy and Numeracy
15. Maintain commitments to nationally agreed levels of per capita spending on stock.
16. Respond to national proposals and calls to participate and forward proposals for projects to ensure library participation and development.
17. Comply with NRB guidelines on access for disabled people and with Part M of the National Buildings regulations
18. Increase the number of opening hours per week for the County Library as part of the new refurbishment project subject to the full implementation of the Library Service Review for staffing.
19. Develop targeted service approach for the provision of library and information services to foreign/non nationals.
20. Continue involvement in projects for the provision of universal access to services and collections

Information Communication Technology

The development of high quality information and communication technology infrastructure and services is a vital component in constructing a modern and accessible library service. The power and versatility of ICT underpins many of the measures in the library development plan. Develop the network connectivity infrastructure including wireless and satellite for all service points.

Actions

21. Support and develop website as a major access point for all library and information services
22. Improve the network capacity at all service points to accommodate the day to day demand and requirements for additional services.
23 Support the policy of separating the networks for both the Public Internet Access Computers and Library Management System to address security and access issues.
24. Develop the further provision of online resources and provision of electronic methods for improved public services through the library network.

25. Provide and extend the use of the SMS text messaging system as a means of communicating services and creating efficiencies.
26. Complete the current newspaper digitisation projects for Roscommon Herald and Champion and provide EHD versions to branch network.
27. Support and participate in the national objectives for the Borrowbooks schemes as a means of providing stock resources.
28. Examine the use of RFID system in relation to self service options and book security measures at service points
29. Participate in the FAS E Learning programme at two locations at Roscommon and Boyle branch libraries.
30. Develop the potential for of digitisation of local history material and placing on expanded web services
31. Install electronic security and tagging of library stock and archival material and stock at county library.

Children's and Young People

The library acts as a gateway to the world of knowledge for children by providing a range of material and resources to stimulate minds and imaginations. It also acts as a seedbed for culture by introducing children to the world of reading at an early age, to the world of arts and to the oral and material culture of their community.

Plans and policies for the continued and future delivery of services to children and young people are a fundamental part of the Library Services social and educational agenda. As funding of the Schools Library Service is no longer provided by the Department of Education and Science, other avenues and programmes to continue our engagement and delivery of services to children and young people must be channelled through other means.

Actions

32. Strengthen and support the restructuring of Children's services through programme of stock provision and resources
33. Support delivery of schools service through the branch library network and provision of block loans facilities.
34. Continue the service engagement with children through the programme of children's activities, initiatives and collaborations for all branches.
35. Support and implement the principles of good practice for the protection of children and young people under the Child Protection Policy
36. To participate in the nationally coordinated events including World Book Day, Summer Activities Programme and Children's Book Festival.
37. To support and pursue the calls for the restoration of further department grant aid towards

the provision of specialist and remedial resources for children’s services.
38. Develop the provision of teenage readership collections, resources and spaces within our facilities
39. Support the national programmes for literacy and numeracy schemes for Library Services collaborations

Archives and Local Studies (5.6)

Statutory provision for the proper management, custody, care and conservation of local records and local archives for inspection by the public of local archives remains a key part of the plan. Local records include books, maps, plans, drawings, papers, files, photographs, films, micro-films, and other micrographic records, sound recordings, pictorial records, magnetic tapes, magnetic discs, optical or video discs, other machine readable records and other documentary material made or received and held in the course of its business by a local authority. The library service carries responsibility and a commitment for the management of these resources and services For the purpose of this plan the library service intends to build on the work to date and implement where possible the policies outlined in the policies produced.

Actions

40. Support and ensure that the proper policies, access procedures and practices for Archives are supported.
41. Address archival delivery through strategy of access, record management, equipment, preservation, digitisation, binding and storage
42. Develop a programme of microfilming for the primary local authority material held at county library.
43. Pursue the acquisition of material relating to the history and heritage of the county including special collections of Douglas Hyde, Percy French and others.
44. Promote and encourage the donation of private collections to the County Library
45. Provide for budgetary archiving allocations within the annual local authority estimates
46. Provide electronic security and tagging of archival collections and material at county library.
47. Make further application for Archivist and Records Management assistance in relation to the Civic Offices development.
48. Address the provision and development of related genealogical and local history services

Management and Resources

Roscommon County Council recognises that staff is the most valuable resource within the organisation, which plays a central and crucial role in the delivery of the objectives for the service and a fundamental resource in the delivery of change.

The current existing restrictions on staffing and the impact of a reduced figure for the annual operation costs will place even greater pressure on staff resources to sustain frontline operations over the coming years. While every effort will be made to minimise the impact to the public, though the continued policy of redeploying administrative staff

, periodic closures of branches, interruption to mobile services and reduced delivery of archives are inevitable and unavoidable with the current capacity.

Within the lifetime of this plan every effort must be made to revisit the Library Service Review structure for the Library Services and unfilled positions be addressed through making further cases to the local authority or through internal redeployment.

Actions

49. To maintain where possible and develop the staff capacity to deliver services across all areas
50. To re-examine and make the case for the filling of staff shortages within the library staff development under the Library Service Review
51. Continue the structured approach to regular information meetings, reporting of service developments and a forum for issue discussion.
52. Continue policy of release for the training development programme for further upskilling of staff and professional development.
53. Ensure that all staff are familiar with the policies in relation to Health & Safety and issues in respect of staff security, lone working, protocols and reporting are addressed.
54. Review and formalise the arrangements for temporary/casual staff cover for service delivery.

Roscommon County Council recognises that efficient and effective financial management of services is essential. The financial details of the library service expenditure and income is addressed under Recreation and Amenity. The revenue budget finances the day –to-day operation and delivery of library services and the capital budget pay for new investments and projects. Matched ratio funding from Roscommon County Council has enabled the library services to deliver these undertakings. Roscommon County Council has shown a consistent and sustained level of funding in its commitment to the provision of the library services. In order to build the financial capacity to deliver on the objectives over the lifetime of the plan current percentage increases will have to be sustained.

Reductions, savings and efficiencies have been made across all overhead and maintenance costs in order to provide an amount towards reinstating an allocation for the bookfund for the purchase of materials.

Following approval from the DOEHLG for the County Library Refurbishment Project (Stage 2) all works are scheduled for completion in 2011. The project also includes the provision of a technology suite which is being part funded through the Public Libraries Access and Services Improvements Support scheme.

Support from the Irish Prison Service for the staffing operation of the Castlerea Prison Library will continue in but provision for all other Library requirements at Castlerea has been significantly reduced.

Further increases in charges for registration to €700 and the introduction of a €1.00 per session charge for Internet usage will be applied to achieve an agreed income target.

Actions

55. Maintain targets for expenditure on library services as a percentage of total local authority expenditure.
56 Restore stock expenditure per head of population to provide comprehensive collections of materials
57. Seek to maximise grant aid support for departmental capital projects and other library-funded initiatives.

Marketing and Promotion

The library service must be involved in the deliberate, dedicated and pro-active approach to marketing and promotion of its services. This involves the positioning of library services in the mind of the public, through all media formats in a way that attracts support. These objectives are achievable through the continued annual programme of events that includes a variety of internal promotion, cross departmental programmes, national schemes and involvement in a range of local cultural festivals and commemorations.

Actions

58. Maintain and develop regular promotion of service and initiatives through all media formats
59. Continue the annual programme of events for all branches as part of promotion and publicity calendar
60. Maintain the library service commitment to the promotion of the Irish language and literature.
61. Prepare annual events programme for the library network in association with local and national agencies.
62. Support the Library Services collaborations with the Percy French Summer School, Douglas Hyde Centre, County Roscommon Heritage & Genealogy Company and other groups in the county.
63. Support cross departmental project and initiatives for the development of the literary and historical county trail.
64. Continue support and involvement in projects and promotions with arts and heritage office.
65. Expand opportunities to develop library role under the Public Library Research programme to develop a culture of research.
66. Promote the archival collections through exhibitions, launches and participation in national collection awareness programmes.
67. Maintain a photographic record and database of all launches and events for local authority archive.

Reading and Learning

The Library Service promotes interest in literature; books and materials for creative recreation by providing continually updated collections of fiction, non-fiction and audio visual, and multi media material for lending. The public library service has a role to play in supporting the development of reading skills and providing the environment and opportunities where resources can be availed of

Actions

68. Continue acquisition and collection development policies for all areas of stock provision, including special collections, audio visual, local history and multicultural usage.
69. Prepare and promote separate guides for the range of reading and stock resources and special collections.
70. Develop resources, materials and programmes for adult literacy in association with other agencies as proposed.
71. Continue the support for the establishment of book clubs and writers groups for all ages throughout the branch network.
72. Continue regular participation in the national reader development programmes as coordinated by An Chomhairle Leabharlanna
73. Support the participation and support of the annual poetry and literature reading events and activities
74. Engage in process to expand artist and writer in residencies schemes to include public libraries.
75. Support opportunities for adult education and lifelong learning through the public library service.

Customer Care and Focus

As the library service is engaged in interaction with the public, the customer care and service approach is an integral part of day-to-day delivery of services. Roscommon County Council is committed to providing a good quality customer orientated service in a professional, efficient, effective, courteous and professional manner and ensuring that our activities are based on the principles of good customer care and equity.

Actions

76. Continue best practice and policies in relation to customer care.
77. Ensure timely and formal response to all customer queries in relation to services provided.
78. Address, review and monitor performance under the national indicators as outlined in Delivering Value for People. Service Indicators in Local Government.
79. Address issues in relation to Health and Safety
80. Provide equity and choice for users in the delivery of our services.

Monitoring and Review

The plan will be reviewed on an annual basis both by the Library Services itself, through the Director of Services meetings, Library management meetings and the various sub working groups to which the actions are aligned. The plan will also inform the Annual Library Services Report, Service Indicators reports and quarterly local management reports in areas such as Health & Safety, Energy Mapping and annual estimates to ensure that actions are delivered and that outcomes are quantifiable and verifiable.

Bibliography

Towards 2016

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