Introducing our strategy 2005-2008

The Library is redefining itself to meet the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century. We are in the process of becoming a radically different organisation from that first envisaged by the British Library Act in 1972 – but one which our founders would recognise and welcome.

The services we provide to researchers are becoming more comprehensive, more integrated; our collection is extending into the digital arena and is focusing on the evolving needs of the wider research community. Our engagement with the public, both on our website and around our flagship St Pancras building, is as a result of the imaginative efforts we’ve made to open up access to the wealth of our collection, from contemporary dialects to ancient manuscripts.

In setting our strategy for 2005-2008, our first step was to speak to our main users – people who are doing research for academic, personal or commercial purposes and the organisations and institutions that support and benefit from their work. We also assessed the technological, economic and social pressures that we anticipate will have an impact on their way of working and on ours. We then consulted widely with staff, who are in daily contact with users and stakeholder groups and can identify changes in their behaviour and needs.

The result is a renewed commitment to our mission, a new vision, and a practical, achievable set of six strategic priorities. These strategic priorities are set within the context of our organisational values. The growing strength of purpose of the Library is linked to the clear articulation of our aims and objectives, and the values that inform staff behaviour and guide the contribution that each makes to the achievement of the team.

As staff collaborate to deliver the innovative outcomes that our users require, so too the Library works in a wider network of partnerships to deliver the strategic agenda. Our work with our numerous partners from the public, private and non-profit sectors encompasses both strategy and implementation.

Explaining our mission and vision

**MISSION**

Helping people advance knowledge to enrich lives

- We believe in the power and value of knowledge: it brings cultural, social, intellectual and economic benefits to society.
- It is not enough just to preserve knowledge: our task is to enable it to be used now and in the future. When knowledge is used, it adds to the sum of human understanding.
- We bring direct benefits to those who use our collection and services because we help them advance their own knowledge, and the whole body of knowledge, through their research.
- We bring indirect benefits to all UK citizens whose lives are enriched through the fruits of the work we have enabled.

**VISION**

We play a leading role in the changing world of research information

- As the national library, we’re a central resource in the UK research infrastructure, and underpin world-class UK research across all disciplines.
- The research information environment is undergoing rapid transformation. As a great library our evolution must keep pace, not only so we remain able to fulfil our users’ needs, but also to demonstrate the vision, innovation and leadership that helps the library network in the UK and overseas adapt in order to remain relevant to the new generation of digital adepts.
- Different types of research require different resources, with access provided in different ways.
- We tailor our services to support varied approaches.

We exist for everyone who wants to do research – for academic, personal or commercial purposes

- We support the research chemist in a multinational drug company, the postgraduate completing a PhD in museology, the entrepreneur wanting to expand the family business, the journalist filling in the background to a story and the local historian researching medieval land use.
- We're a hybrid library – that is, our collection includes print, digital and other media – and we strive to provide access to all information formats seamlessly, through interconnecting services.
- The expectations of the Google generation require that we give people access to information wherever they are, whenever they need it. This is a tough requirement but an important goal to focus on.
- We collaborate with new and established organisations in the information environment, across the public and private sectors, with the goal of enhancing the research process and advancing knowledge.

We promote ready access to our collection and expertise through integrated services which are increasingly time and space independent

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- In a world so rich in information, it’s not appropriate or possible for us to hold everything. Much better for us to harness our strengths to others’ capabilities and co-ordinate joint approaches that serve the gamut of researchers’ needs.
- Where we’re not best placed to help a researcher, we’ll connect them to the relevant resource.

**OUR MISSION**

Helping people advance knowledge to enrich lives

**OUR VISION**

We play a leading role in the changing world of research information

- We exist for everyone who wants to do research – for academic, personal or commercial purposes
- We promote ready access to our collection and expertise through integrated services which are increasingly time and space independent
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**OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

1. Enrich the user’s experience
2. Build the digital research environment
3. Transform search and navigation
4. Grow and manage the national collection
5. Develop our people
6. Guarantee financial sustainability

**OUR ORGANISATIONAL VALUES**

Open consultative organisation
Empowered flexible and diverse workforce
Non-hierarchical agile decision making
Staff who feel recognised and valued
Strong performance management
Delivering our strategy
Action plan for 2005/06

We have an innovative and exciting programme to deliver. These are the highlights for 2005/06, the first year of our new strategy. We will report progress and achievements in our next Annual Report.

**STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1**

*Enrich the user’s experience*
- Begin to reshape our Reading Room services to increase flexibility and to suit the needs of people researching in different ways.
- Transform the Business and Intellectual Property Centre using the award of £1 million from the London Development Agency.
- Develop the portal, British Library Direct, to enable free searching and credit card ordering from our top 20,000 research journals.
- Hold major temporary exhibitions; Hans Christian Andersen, and Beautiful Minds: capture the spirit of Nobel achievement.

**STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2**

*Build the digital research environment*
- Complete the first phase of the National Digital Library, and begin ingest of around 200 e-journal titles to the legal deposit pilot system.
- Digitise 1,200,000 pages of 19th century British newspapers and over 3,000 hours of archival sound recordings.
- Launch web archiving service for public use. Continue to identify and collect significant numbers of UK sites, in line with the published collection development policy. Procure a prototype automated smart crawler to enable large-scale harvesting of websites.

**STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3**

*Transform search and navigation*
- Complete the current project to streamline the processing of incoming collection items that will lead to savings of more than £1 million over the next two years.
- Complete the development of remote ordering of books delivered to Reading Rooms through the Integrated Catalogue.
- Investigate options and plan for an integrated systems solution to making our archives and manuscripts catalogues available online from 2006/07 in accordance with international archival standards.

**STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4**

*Grow and manage the national collection*
- With input from our stakeholders and other experts, complete our review of the collection materials we purchase.
- Achieve planning permission for a low-oxygen automated storage facility in Boston Spa to hold around 250 linear kilometres of collection materials. Begin the procurement process for a design and build contractor. Complete site preparation.
- Begin construction of the Centre for Conservation at St Pancras, following the approval of planning permission and achievement of the fundraising target.

**STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5**

*Develop our people*
- Define the Library's future needs for skills, knowledge and expertise relating to our collections.
- Through our Excellence in Leadership programme, enable managers to develop their leadership and management styles and foster high performing teams.

**STRATEGIC PRIORITY 6**

*Guarantee financial sustainability*
- Deliver agreed savings of over £7 million from internal efficiencies.
- Complete first year of the corporate Balanced Scorecard to enable the Library to measure performance against targets for 31 key corporate metrics.

*‘HAVING USED THE BRITISH LIBRARY AND SEEN SOME OF THE NEW AND EXCITING THINGS THAT THE LIBRARY IS DOING, I’M QUITE SURE THAT WE ARE AT THE FOREFRONT IN THE INFORMATION WORLD.’*

DAVID LAMMY MP  MINISTER FOR CULTURE

For the full text of our strategy please visit www.bl.uk. To order a printed copy please email strategy@bl.uk