Our key corporate goals for 1999-2002

In 1998 the British Library consulted its users in a comprehensive strategic review prompted by the opening of its new headquarters building at St Pancras in London, serious financial constraints, and the need to focus its objectives for the next century.

The Library is already changing as a result.

In its plans for 1999-2002, as submitted to Government, the Library says it will:

- maintain free access to its reading rooms: our users of today said that this remains vital
- spend more on acquisitions and conservation to maintain the quality of the Library's collection for our users of today and of the future
- place a high priority on collecting digital materials and developing digital library services: to ensure our users can consult new forms of publication, and can benefit from the new means of access available through digital and networking technologies
- forge new partnerships with other institutions, particularly in the higher education sector: we recognise the increasing need to work closely with other libraries to optimise use of resources, provide complementary collections and services, and minimise duplication
- make a major contribution towards the achievement of key Government objectives: we will support learning in the widest sense and provide access to knowledge and information for all who need to use our collection

This document summarises the reasons for these changes, shows how they will be put into effect, and explains how they will meet the needs of the Library's users, support Government policy, and benefit the British public.

The context for change

The British Library is the national library of the United Kingdom and aims to be the world's leading resource for scholarship, research, and innovation.

It provides internationally important reading room services, mainly from its new headquarters building at St Pancras in London, and the world's leading document supply services, mainly from its northern site at Boston Spa in Yorkshire. It provides essential support services for the UK library community, a range of services for the general public, and attracts substantial usage by customers from overseas.

The Library's services are based on its outstanding collection, developed over two hundred and fifty years, of more than one hundred and fifty million books, manuscripts, sound recordings, digital items, and works in other formats, representing every age of written civilisation, every written language, and every aspect of human thought. The core of the Library's collection is the comprehensive record of British publishing collected through legal deposit. Its treasures include Magna Carta and the Lindisfarne Gospels.

The Library is a keystone of the UK academic infrastructure and an important resource for business and industry. It underpins developments in the environment, health, defence, and other priority policy areas for the nation. It enriches Britain's cultural life and is one of the country's most important contributions to the world. It will be a powerhouse of the new 'knowledge society'. Millions of people access the Library's collection every year, either on-site in the reading rooms or the St Pancras galleries, or off-site in their universities, workplaces, laboratories, or local libraries. The Library's work is supported by the expertise of over two thousand staff and by links with other organisations worldwide.
While the Library receives substantial Government funding from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, it is unique among national libraries in earning over 25% of its annual gross expenditure from the sale of products and services.

A changing environment

In meeting its users’ needs for access to a comprehensive collection of research materials, the Library must be responsive to a continually changing environment, which is currently presenting major new opportunities, pressures, and demands.

The opening of the Library’s new headquarters building at St Pancras in London has presented the Library with a magnificent and widely-praised facility from which it can offer improved services, broaden access, and preserve its collection in controlled environmental conditions.

Among the changes currently affecting the Library and its users, and expected to exert a continuing influence over the next three years are:

- **Increasing demand on the Library.**
- **A continuing increase in the number of items published every year.**
- **The development of new electronic forms of publishing.**
- **The increasing importance of information and communication technologies.** Growing interest in library services for remote users has been fuelled by the rapid expansion of the Internet. The higher education sector is developing access to electronic publications, while publishers, telecommunications companies, and information providers have joined forces to explore new opportunities.
- **The emergence of new industrial sectors.** “Knowledge management” is becoming a vital aspect of political, social, and economic activity worldwide. Use of the Library will inevitably increase still further.
- **New Government objectives.** The Library wishes to respond appropriately to Government plans for a new role for public libraries and the call for publicly-funded institutions to broaden access to meet the needs of a wider public.
- **Continuing pressures on funding.** Although the table below shows that the overall level of grant-in-aid available to the Library fell in real terms by 10% over the five year period 1994-99, this understates the scale of the decline in funding for ongoing core library operations. If costs associated with the move to St Pancras are taken into account there was a 20% fall in net operational expenditure. At the same time the Library had to meet growing demand. The Library responded by improving its efficiency. However acquisitions and conservation spending, and therefore the quality of the Library’s collection, were hit by the continuing constraints. In 1997 the Government advised the Library that it should not plan for any cash increase on its 1998-99 grant-in-aid over the next three years. This presented the bleak prospect of a very significant funding shortfall by 2002.

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The **1998 strategic review**

Funding pressures, the changing external environment, and the imminent completion of the move to St Pancras provided the impetus for the Library's 1998 strategic review. The Library was determined that it should reflect the needs of its stakeholders, so the review included a wide consultation programme. Over eight thousand users and other stakeholders were sent a detailed consultation paper asking particularly for advice on the relative importance of different Library functions. The consultation paper was also made available on the World Wide Web. The bodies and individuals consulted covered the range of use of Library services, from scholarly research in the London reading rooms to urgent supply of documents to business. Well over a thousand stakeholders responded, assisting the Library greatly in prioritising its activities.

Our stakeholders gave highest priority to:
- the continued development and centrality of the Library's collection
- the inclusion of digital works as an integral part of the collection
- collection management
- preservation and care of the collection
- much greater collaboration with other libraries on collecting, record creation, access, preservation, and the national bibliography
- improved access through reading room services
- improved access through remote document supply services
- improved access through World Wide Web-based services
- no charging of readers for access to reading rooms
- continuing efforts to improve still further on the Library's income generation achievements

The Library concluded that its grant-in-aid income should be used first and foremost for these activities and that spending should be optimised through further efficiency savings and the generation of additional income.

Respondents to the consultation paper placed lower priority on:
- education services
- exhibitions
- publishing
- reproductions of images from the Library's reference holdings
- reference services which provide responses to general enquiries
- information services
- collaborative activities in areas other than collecting, record creation, access, preservation, and the national bibliography
- support activities such as finance and personnel

The Library concluded that in the event of inadequate overall funding it should reduce, but not necessarily eliminate, grant-in-aid expenditure on these activities. In some cases alternative funding could be sought, in others the scale of the activities reduced.

### The three year funding picture

The British Library Board presented the findings of the strategic review to Government in autumn 1998, highlighting users' concerns that the Library should reverse the erosion of spending on acquisitions and conservation. The Library is grateful to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport that he was subsequently able to announce an improvement in the Library's grant-in-aid for the next three financial years.

The additional funding will allow the Library to make the changes necessary to refocus on priority activities, to ensure increased spending on its collection, and to prepare for the programme of activity outlined in this
Refocusing of the Library’s activities was assisted by the December 1998 Department for Culture, Media and Sport document A new cultural framework. This proposed a new national strategic body, the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council. The Library’s administration of research funding transferred to the Library and Information Commission in April 1999 and will form part of the new body from the year 2000.

Planning: a shift in priorities

This document outlines the new direction being taken by the Library as a result of the 1998 consultation exercise and presented in more detail to the Government in the Library’s Corporate Plan for 1999-2002. The changes the Library is making are strongly influenced by its stakeholders’ views, will enhance its ability to fulfil its objectives, and will yield benefits to current and future users. Difficult decisions may need to be taken - while the Library wishes to do some things better, the range of services provided in other areas may fall. However, the Library will be guided by the priorities its stakeholders have defined.

In planning for 1999-2002 the Library has therefore decided to:
• attach greater importance to the development and management of its collection than to the improvement of services
• include digital works as an integral part of its collection
• give higher priority to grant-in-aid support for services for scholarship, research, and innovation than for services for a wider public audience
• attach greater importance to the provision of documents through reading rooms and remote supply than to information services
• refocus its cooperation and partnership activities onto collection development, record creation, preservation, access, and the national bibliography
• strive to increase revenue-generating opportunities and efficiencies still further

The first objective for the Library in the period covered by this document was to complete the occupation of its new building at St Pancras and the opening there of full services to readers and the public. This was achieved in June 1999, providing a foundation for much of the Library’s work over the next few years. The Library’s full programme for the remainder of 1999-2002 is explained in the following pages.

Building the Library’s collection

The Library acquires items for its collection to ensure that the national published archive is maintained and developed and to ensure that it can continue to serve the research needs of current and future generations of researchers.

However, the Library’s grant-in-aid expenditure on acquisitions fell from £15m to £10m in the five year period 1994-99, a drop of over 30%. Meanwhile, escalation in monograph and serial prices was far above the increase in the Retail Price Index. These financial pressures led to reduced intake and coverage and to deterioration of service, notably in fields where single copies of serial parts are now being used for reference in the London reading rooms and document supply from Boston Spa.

In their response to the 1998 consultation document our users made a number of clear recommendations on collection development, to which we are responding as follows:

• **Building the collection should continue to be a top priority.** Thanks to the improved Government support announced in December 1998 the Library will spend substantially more grant-in-aid on acquisitions in each of the next three years. However, the increases are less than would be necessary for an acquisitions programme fully meeting the needs of all the Library’s users.

• **Digital works should form an integral part of the Library’s collection.** The Library’s increased funding will support new subscriptions and purchases, and the acquisition of major titles not previously
purchased or subscribed to. Introduction by the Government, when parliamentary time becomes available, of legislation to extend legal deposit will also ensure that the Library can develop the national archive of digital materials.

- It should be recognised formally that collecting in all subjects, all languages, and from all nations cannot be sustained. The British Library Board has accepted this.
- There should be particular emphasis on material which is most used, or most likely to be much used in the future. This will be a priority.
- Cooperation on the collecting of legal deposit material should continue and develop further with the other legal deposit libraries. There should be increased cooperation with public libraries on the collection of, and provision of access to, local newspapers and other categories of local publications. We are pursuing this.
- There should be continuing emphasis on the extensive collecting of works published worldwide relating to the UK and the UK experience, and of English language materials of research level significance. This will guide our purchasing.
- Foreign language material should be collected to interpret and illuminate the non-UK material in the Library’s foundation and historic printed holdings, and its great special collections, or to add value or meaning to the existing collection, subject to expectation of need and use. The limits to the Library’s acquisitions budget mean that future collecting of relatively low priority foreign material should take place within cooperative frameworks. As a result the Library may share responsibility with other libraries for particular subjects or languages, and in some cases cease to collect. Any decisions will be taken in consultation with the higher education and other interested sectors. The Library will seek to ensure that other institutions will take lead responsibility in areas from which it withdraws. Discussions are already beginning in several pilot areas.
- The Library should seek to develop partnership arrangements with other institutions which would enable a more distributed approach to collection development. The Library will produce a clear statement of its collection development policies to inform others and provide a basis for dialogue. See also ‘Working with partners’ below.

### Grant-in-aid funding for acquisitions (cash): trends and projections

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Preserving the Library's collection

The Library preserves its collection to increase the life expectancy of individual items and to optimise the amount of material that can be made available to users. However, it has never been able to conserve all the items requiring treatment.

The Library's expenditure on preservation fell from £6.1m to £4.8m in the five year period 1994-99, a drop of over 20%. The St Pancras building provides more stable environmental storage conditions, but work is still needed to tackle the huge legacy of collection items on poor and/or disintegrating wood-pulp paper and to improve conditions at other sites.

In their response to the 1998 consultation document our users placed a high priority on preservation and care of the Library's collection. Thanks to the improved Government support announced in December 1998 the Library will spend over £1m more grant-in-aid on preservation in 1999-00 than it spent in 1998-99 and provide increased funding for preservation over the three-year period 1999-02. Even this is less than would be necessary to maintain the collection appropriately. However the funds will enable the Library to:

- Improve storage conditions.
- Treat 305,000 items per year, compared with 195,000 in 1998-99, an increase of 56%.
- Clean 810,000 books in 1999-00, compared with 750,000 in 1998-99, an increase of 8%.
- Increase awareness of how to treat the collection with care.
- Carry out a systematic condition audit of the collection.
- Identify and handle the preservation implications of digitisation projects and electronic material, in conjunction with other institutions.
- Obtain a more cost-effective balance between work undertaken internally and work undertaken externally on conservation copying, conservation, and binding.

Managing the Library's collection

The Library manages its collection cost-effectively to provide quick and easy access and to provide safe and secure storage facilities. In their response to the 1998 consultation document our users placed a high priority on collection management. The Library is therefore increasing funds for this function. In the next three years we will:

- Replace the Library's legacy systems for cataloguing, catalogue production, and information retrieval with a new integrated system which will simplify searching for items in the collection and contain more up-to-date information than the current systems.
- Make items available to users more quickly by reducing the main cataloguing backlog from an expected 145,000 items in 1999-00 to 64,000 items by 2001-02.
• Provide a new serials register of as high a standard as our monographs catalogues.
• Facilitate access by standardising common search terms in new catalogue records.
• Develop long term storage and estates strategies in view of the likelihood that all the Library’s storage buildings will be full soon after the period covered by this document.

Working with partners

The Library has a long tradition of working with other organisations. Significant existing partnerships include the ‘back-up’ library scheme supporting the Library’s document supply services, cooperation with the other ‘legal deposit’ libraries - the Bodleian Library, Oxford, the University of Cambridge Library, the National Library of Scotland, the National Library of Wales, and the Library of Trinity College Dublin - on receiving and cataloguing legal deposit material, and involvement in national and international activities such as NEW SPLEN (a cooperative programme for the identification and preservation on microfilm of UK and Irish newspapers), the English Short Title Catalogue (ESTC), and CoBRA (Computerised Bibliographic Record Actions, an EU project). The National Preservation Office and the BookNet service, which redistributes unwanted material from other libraries, are operated from the Library for the benefit of the wider library community.

There is a growing awareness within the library and information sector that organisations must work together to optimise resources. As the number of items published continues to grow, no library is able to meet the existing and potential information needs of all its users. This is as true for the Library as it is for much smaller libraries and information units.

Closer partnership in the library and information sector will result in a reduction in unnecessary duplication, an extension of provision in areas previously not covered, improved knowledge and awareness of major research collections, and improved value for money across the publicly-funded UK library system as a whole.

In their response to the 1998 consultation document our users urged the Library to align its cooperative approach more closely with the strategies being developed by other library and information organisations, both nationally and internationally.

They identified five major areas for closer collaboration:
• collection development
• preservation and retention
• access
• bibliographic services
• record creation

Digital developments will also create partnership opportunities.

The Library has therefore established a Cooperation and Partnership Programme to develop and coordinate its partnership activities. The programme team is already developing and consulting on a strategy for this work.

The Cooperation and Partnership Programme will administer a new fund that will help other institutions to participate in partnership activities. £250,000 will be allocated in 1999-00 on a targeted basis. A Call for Proposals for £500,000 to be available in 2000-01 will be issued in November 1999 following a consultation exercise designed to identify the areas most in need of support. A further £500,000 will be available in 2001-02.

The Library hopes that it can develop long term partnerships leading to more systematic distributed approaches to collection development, collection management, and access within the context of a national strategy for all publicly-funded UK libraries.

During 1999-2002 the Library will:
• Publish and promote its collection development policies.
• Work with the other legal deposit libraries to implement the findings of a 1998 pilot project on sharing legal deposit of mass-market leisure journals. This will provide a model for further rationalisation of collection development within the UK. The Library will pursue new pilot projects in the fields of natural history, German language materials, oriental and African studies, and medical materials.
• Work with others to improve collecting of, and access to, UK local publications.
• Seek agreements on shared collecting of, and access to, foreign publications.
• Support collaborative collection development and management projects, including those emanating from the Higher Education Research Support Libraries Programme.
• Work to develop shared responsibility for preservation of, and long term access to, the national intellectual and cultural record in both print and non-print formats.
• Help to improve access to collections through collaborative initiatives on digitisation and content creation.
• Participate in national initiatives on resource discovery and access, including support for a strategy on retrospective conversion of library and archive catalogues to digital form.
• Work with others on shared approaches to the bibliographic control of UK publications.
• Explore a more distributed approach to the compilation of the national bibliography.
• Consult the UK library and information sector on harmonisation of the UKMARC machine readable cataloguing format with its North American counterpart to facilitate the exchange of catalogue records between the two communities.
• Accelerate progress on cooperation with the public library sector, especially in connection with the planned New Library Network.
• Increase momentum on NEW SPLAN.
• Cooperate with the Library and Information Commission and, in due course, with the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council on partnership among libraries and work on a national information policy.
• Continue to administer the National Manuscripts Conservation Trust preservation funding scheme following the end of support from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.
• Continue partnership in major EU-funded projects, including CoBRA.

The Library wants comment on its partnership aims and priorities and to discuss with other organisations the most effective ways of achieving cooperation in the library and information services sector.

For more information, or to contribute to the dialogue, please contact, Geoff Smith, Director, Cooperation and Partnership Programme, The British Library, 96 Euston Road, London NW1 2DB telephone 020 7412 7584, fax 020 7412 7155, email geoff.smith@bl.uk

Access in the reading rooms

The Library’s reading rooms provide direct access to its vast collection. They are a nerve centre of worldwide intellectual enquiry attracting hundreds of thousands of visits a year by members of the academic community, people in business and industry, and other users. By providing the sources they need for their work the Library supports research in the universities and innovation in industry, and underpins the UK economy.

In the highly constrained financial climate prior to the 1998 strategic review the Library was forced to consider introducing charges for access to its reading rooms. Our users made it clear in their response to the consultation document that they regard continuing free access as vital. The Library is pleased to be able to fulfil their demand. In reaching this decision the British Library Board was encouraged by the Secretary of State’s clearly expressed view that ordinary readers should not have to pay to use the reading rooms.

We intend to maintain and if possible improve the speed of service, satisfaction levels, hours of operation, and ease of use of our reading room services. However, responses to the strategic review showed that the Library should attach greater importance to the development and management of its collection than to the improvement of services. The Library was able to increase reading room opening hours at St Pancras in June 1999, though the pattern is still more restricted than some of our users require.

The success of the St Pancras building, where eleven of the Library’s thirteen reading rooms are located, is demonstrated in considerable increases in use of many of the services transferred there. We expect reader and
Listener visits to increase by 28% to 539,000, demand for new or renewed reader passes by 74% to 87,000, and items consulted in the reading rooms by 20% to six million in the period covered by this document.

The Library will do all it can to meet the demand, but will need to assign staff and other resources according to the priorities identified in the strategic review. Funding constraints mean that it may be difficult to prevent some deterioration in service quality.

We will continue our existing policy of allowing access to the reading rooms to everyone who has a need to use our collection and cannot readily obtain the material elsewhere. The increasing demand may force us to adhere more rigidly to the policy than in the past.

Access to digital materials will be of growing importance in the reading rooms. The Library has already implemented an electronic storage and retrieval system to provide access to the electronic full text of more than nine hundred major science serial titles.

Also during 1999-2002 the Library will:

- Aim to supply 65% of books requested to the St Pancras reading rooms within 50 minutes.
- Implement the next phase of the reading room automated systems.
- Develop links with other organisations to help people use the Library more effectively.
- Survey reading room user satisfaction and develop further performance targets.

Access for remote users

Serving remote users is an essential part of the Library’s core function of providing access to the national collection. The Library is the world leader in remote document supply and has for many years played a central role within the UK. The Document Supply Centre, Patent Express, and BL Reproductions services reach into almost every university and college library, every laboratory, and every public library, while all major UK companies rely on the Library to supply information that will help them to develop new products and remain competitive.

The 1998 strategic review confirmed the overall importance that the Library’s stakeholders assign to its remote document supply services. However, the services are still largely print-based and must capitalise on digital technology if they are to remain effective. The Library has already implemented an electronic storage and retrieval system for more than nine hundred major science serial titles. Further digital developments will in part be dependent on the availability of significant funds.
Over the next three years the Library aims to:

- Secure and implement further agreements with publishers for electronic storage and delivery, including immediate delivery over the World Wide Web where possible.
- Seek alliances to handle storage and delivery of patents available in electronic form.
- Exploit digital reprography to provide a wider and cheaper range of services.
- Satisfy 85% of Document Supply Centre requests from stock, UK 'back-up' libraries, or overseas libraries.
- Supply 90% of items at the Document Supply Centre within 48 hours.
- Refocus the BL Reproductions service to achieve full cost-recovery.
- Make it easier and more cost-effective to use the Document Supply Centre, Patent Express, and BL Reproductions by integrating ordering, processing, and billing mechanisms and introducing more flexible pricing structures.
- Seek alliances which can add value to the document supply services.
- Improve links with other libraries to provide access to materials the Library does not hold.
- Develop services for the emerging end-user market.
- Establish a research and development programme with UK and international partners.

Access via the Internet

The Library has already been exploiting the Internet to provide services to existing and new users for a number of years. The Library's Website, offering information about its services, collection, and events, attracts three million 'transactions' a month. In 1998-99 users conducted 3.6 million searches on the Library's OPAC 97 system, which provides Web access to its most important automated catalogues. 6.3 million searches are projected for 2001-02.

The Library also offers Web access to the inside service, which provides contents information on journals and conference proceedings, and document ordering facilities.

In the 1998 consultation exercise our users attached particular importance to Web services. The Library will therefore improve Web access to its collection and to knowledge about its collection. Access to the Library's online catalogue over the Web will remain free.

Over the next three years the Library will:

- Replace its existing online catalogues with an integrated 'Z39.50 compliant' system, i.e. one which can be searched by users from their own systems and seamlessly linked with other catalogues. Existing free-standing systems such as the Library's manuscripts catalogue and the catalogues of the National Sound Archive and Newspaper Library will be included.
- Add important catalogues not already in machine-readable form, such as the Document Supply Centre's catalogue of older books, the catalogue of the Social Policy Information Service, the retrospective catalogue of the Library's science reference holdings, the Oriental and India Office Collections catalogue, and the catalogue of music used for document supply.
- Develop inside further.
- Introduce Web ordering for the supply of records and documents and the ordering of collection items for consultation in the reading rooms, and credit card payment facilities for priced services.
- Develop the Library's Website to improve its usefulness as an information source.
Access to the record of British publishing

The Library's National Bibliographic Service disseminates bibliographic information on the annual UK publishing output of more than 80,000 items and also on other items in its collection. Much of the Library's work in support of the National Bibliographic Service involves partnership with external bodies. The 1998 strategic review identified scope for further collaboration. Initiatives resulting from this are explained above in 'Working with partners'. Important Web developments are described above in 'Access via the Internet'.

Over the next three years the Library will also:

• Develop methods of presenting bibliographic data for electronic material in readiness for the introduction first of voluntary deposit of electronic publications and then legal deposit.
• Aim to maintain the BNBMARC ‘hit rate’, the independent measure of the timeliness of the Library's bibliographic services, at 80%. This will enable UK libraries to find 80% of items that they are about to catalogue on the Library's database, eliminating the need for them to create their own records.
• Implement a new bibliographic record supply service.
• Review bibliographic publishing in print and microfiche and on CD-ROM as Web services become established.

Access to reference and information services

The Library's information services range from essential core activities, such as answering enquiries in the reading rooms and helping readers to find items in the collection, to answering telephone and postal queries and providing priced information services. Overall, the Library spends about £3m a year on this work.

In their response to the 1998 consultation document our users suggested that the Library should put greater emphasis on acquisitions and preservation than on improving services, and attached greater importance to document supply than to information services. If, as seems likely, the Library cannot fund all of its work, reference and information services will be curtailed as a lower priority activity. Over the next three years the Library will therefore seek to reduce its expenditure in this area through:

• Achieving consistent practice across the Library in providing reference and information services to support on-site access to the collection. We will put tighter limits on the kind of enquiries answered, the time spent on handling them, and the hours during which they are accepted.
• Refocusing priced information services which do not cover costs to enable them to achieve full cost-recovery.
• Reducing grant-in-aid allocation to reference and information services.
• Redeployment of staff.

Access for the wider public

As principal custodian of Britain's outstanding literary heritage, and one of the prime guardians of the nation's cultural resources, the Library displays important items from throughout the world in its galleries, runs events and education programmes, and publishes books and other material for members of the public of all ages and interests.

The move to St Pancras has raised the Library's profile with the general public, and increased their expectations of access to the Library's collection. In anticipation of this the Library has for some years been expanding its programmes for the public. This aligns with the Government policy of encouraging publicly-funded institutions to broaden access.

The Library hopes to be able to expand on-site and remote access to its collection by the public and to increase understanding of the collection and its cultural and commercial significance to the UK. However, in the 1998 consultation exercise our users advised that in a restricted financial climate the Library should recover more of the costs of this work.
The Library will therefore seek alternative sources of funds. Income is already generated through charging for some activities and through sponsorship. Particularly generous sponsorship for the permanent galleries at St Pancras has been received from Pearson plc and John Ritblat and his family. The Library will seek sponsorship for its temporary exhibition programme and for an increasing proportion of its educational programmes. Events will normally be priced to cover costs unless full sponsorship can be achieved.

During 1999-2002 the Library also aims to:

- Promote its on-site services for the general public more widely.
- Attract a substantial number of additional visitors to its exhibitions each year.
- Conduct visitor satisfaction surveys and use the results to set new targets.
- Continue to offer educational sessions for schoolchildren and other groups.
- Expand its electronic publishing programme.
- Introduce new Web-based services for a general audience.
- Participate in collaborative digital network programmes by providing content from its collection and creative approaches to content structure and interfaces.
- Introduce a travelling exhibitions programme.
- Loan more items to exhibitions in other institutions.
- Expand its public events and publishing programmes.

### Supporting Government objectives

The British Library aims to foster the pursuit of knowledge for the benefit of scholarship, research, and innovation and to encourage the broadest possible awareness of, and access to, its collection of printed works, works on microform, manuscripts, sound recordings, digital items, and works recorded in other formats.

Achieving the aims outlined in this document will enable the Library to make a major contribution towards key Government objectives by:

- Contributing still more effectively to scholarship, research, and innovation.
- Supporting learning in the widest sense.
- Providing access to knowledge and information for all who need to use the Library’s collection.
- Improving further its already extensive services to business and industry.
- Reinforcing the UK’s achievement in science, technology, medicine, and innovation.
- Building closer links with public libraries, academic libraries, and others in such a way that the overall strength of library provision for research, scholarship, and innovation is sustained and enhanced.
- Providing access for the general public through exhibitions, education, events, and publishing programmes.

The public library ‘New Library Network’ and the schools’ ‘National Grid for Learning’ will enable the Library to broaden access to cultural materials to an even wider audience of all ages in the ‘learning society’.

The Library is pleased that the 1998 Department for Culture, Media and Sport document A new cultural framework indicates that the contribution it makes to the sectors for which the Scottish Office, the Welsh Office, the Department for Education and Employment, the Department of Trade and Industry, and the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions have responsibility will now be recognised.

### Access to digital materials

The Library has always been at the forefront in exploiting computer applications in libraries. Through pioneering work in the mid-1990s it became a world leader in the application of new digital and networking technologies to library materials.

It is now seeking to exploit these technologies to provide much wider access to its collection in the developing knowledge society and to satisfy its obligation of maintaining the national published archive, which
now includes digital items. The engine for much of the Library's work over the next three years will be its digital library programme.

The Library's aim is to provide:

- reading room access to digital materials
- remote supply of digital materials to users in the UK and worldwide
- access to digitised heritage items from its collection
- access to other libraries' digital collections and services

Substantial investment in technical infrastructure is needed to make this a reality. During 1997 and 1998 the Library pursued its requirements through the Government's Private Finance Initiative. However it was not possible to balance the Library's objectives with the commercial requirements of the bidders. The Library is determined to forge an alternative range of partnerships to ensure that its vision of the digital library becomes a reality.

The 1998 strategic review confirmed that if the Library's collection is to remain useful for research, it must include digital works. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport has indicated the Government's intention to legislate, when parliamentary time becomes available, to extend the existing legal deposit arrangements for print materials to safeguard UK non-print publishing for use by current and future generations. This will ensure that the Library can acquire appropriate digital materials on legal deposit.

In the meantime, the Library will continue to work with publishers to secure voluntary legal deposit and to seek further agreements to store electronic publications and provide access to them. A major step was implementation early in 1999-00 of an electronic storage and retrieval system for access to more than nine hundred major science serial titles in the reading rooms and by document supply.

During 1999-2002 the Library will:

- Hold more electronic works.
- Develop a digitisation policy to facilitate access and preserve collection items.
- Establish a collaborative approach to the digitisation of heritage items in its collection.
- Specify the digital library infrastructure it needs and begin the procurement process.
- Seek public sector funding for the hardware and software development required.
- Seek private sector alliances to maximise income from value-added service areas.
- Assess the burden on publishers of an extension of legal deposit to digital and other non-print forms of publication.

**How our objectives will be achieved**

The Library will use the priorities identified by its users in the 1998 consultation exercise to maintain a balanced budget while working towards the objectives outlined in this document. The additional support announced by the Government following the strategic review eases a difficult financial position and funds the restructuring required for the Library to focus on its priorities. However, considerable pressures remain, and there are major uncertainties over the funding for the digital library developments that are so essential to the Library's future.

Full funding of the programme described here is also dependent on substantial internal efficiencies to be identified at the conclusion later in 1999 of a Zero-Based Budget review of Library activities. External reviewers from the UK library and information sector have been of great assistance to the Library in validating the findings of this process. The Library has already made substantial savings in recent years, for example by streamlining collection development and collection management. Any shortfall in the Library's target for further savings will have to be balanced by a reduction in some lower priority activities.

Additional efficiencies may be obtained through outsourcing. 70% of the Library's binding and conservation spending, 33% of its operational IT spending, 20% of its IT development activities, and some accommodation services are already contracted out. The Library will pursue further outsourcing, which will allow it to consider
a wide range of partnerships that would increase its flexibility and responsiveness. The Library's ability to extend its current level of outsourcing is affected by a technical obstacle relating to its pension arrangements. This issue is in course of being resolved.

The Library will pursue with Government the recommendation arising from the 1998 Comprehensive Spending Review for a change in status for the Library and for national museums and galleries to allow them greater financial and managerial freedom.

Some areas of the Library's programme are dependent on additional sponsorship income and will benefit from strengthened fundraising activities the Library has put in place in view of the high profile of the St Pancras building. The immediate priorities are to provide support for an extended programme of digitisation, to raise the remaining funds needed to acquire the Sherborne Missal, to raise funds for major exhibitions in 2000 and 2001, and to develop a corporate sponsorship scheme for business users. Over £850,000 of additional income has already been secured.

The Library is setting up an Investment Fund to increase its net income generation through the development of existing and new priced products and services. Priorities for support include licensing the reproduction of heritage items in the Library's collection, extending premium document supply services to new markets, and information services backed up by remote document supply for small and medium-sized enterprises.

During 1999-2002 the Library will continue to manage its estate cost-effectively and in full support of its operations and services. In particular, it will seek to realise the benefits of the major investment made by Government in the St Pancras building. The Library will also continue to develop its case for the use of the land to the north of St Pancras as a site for complementary additional services.

Information systems underpin all aspects of the Library's work, including services to both on-site and remote users. Work to equip the eleven reading rooms at St Pancras with IT facilities recently came to an end, and the Library is about to complete a number of other large-scale projects. During 1999-2002 the Library will focus on digital library developments while implementing 'spend-to-save' changes that will allow it to gain greater value for money from its IT spending. Demand outstrips the resources available, so the Library will be selective in determining which other IT service improvements it can afford.

The move to St Pancras and the ongoing financial restrictions have increased pressures on staff significantly, so the Library will allocate high priority to training and development during 1999-2002 to create a high quality, well-motivated staff complement. The Library has set up an extensive internal programme to increase its focus on its users and to create a culture which is open to change, encourages innovation and initiative, and enables staff to make the most effective use of the Library's resources.

In seeking efficiencies to support its programme for 1999-2002 the Library will also:

- Reduce bureaucracy.
- Implement a benchmarking programme.
- Initiate studies into best practice and develop links with best practice organisations.
- Meet the provisions of the Government Efficiency Review on procurement.
- Reduce acquisitions processing costs and derive more records from external sources.
- Make the provision of International Standard Serial Numbers self-supporting.
A continuing commitment

1998 was a watershed for the British Library, both in terms of its recognition of the need to set a new direction for the future based on a realistic assessment of priorities and its unprecedented engagement with users during the strategic review. Following this exercise, and with the move to St Pancras now complete, the Library is equipped to meet the first challenges of the new Millennium – embracing the digital age, working more closely with others, and contributing to the achievement of Government objectives.

In reporting on the outcome of the 1998 consultation exercise this document represents a continuing commitment by the Library to communicating with its users and other stakeholders, listening to their views, and responding in a way that meets their needs. Advice was sought again in 1999 from the external assessors involved in the Zero-Based Budget review. We will be consulting once more in 1999 on our partnership and collection development policies.

Comments and suggestions about the Library and its work are welcome at all times. These can be directed to Andy Stephens, Head of Corporate Planning and Secretariat
The British Library, 96 Euston Road, London NW1 2DB
telephone 020 7412 7269, fax 020 7412 7093, email andystephens@bl.uk