

**PE1581/AA**

Scottish Government submission of 28 June 2017

Thank you for your letter of 5 June 2017 on plans to formulate a national strategy for school libraries as part of the Committee's consideration of petition PE1581 (Save Scotland's School Libraries).

Since the Deputy First Minister gave evidence on 20 April, officials have discussed initial plans for the development and delivery of the strategy with counterparts from the Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC) and COSLA. In order to ensure proper alignment with the existing national strategy for public libraries, '*Ambition and Opportunity: A Strategy for Public Libraries in Scotland 2015-2020*', SLIC will lead the development of the strategy in collaboration with key partner organisations. The strategy will build upon the work undertaken by SLIC with Education Scotland to develop and integrate librarian-focused guidance into the main *How Good Is Our School 4* (HGIOS4) whole school self-evaluation framework.

Development and engagement on the strategy will begin in the autumn, following the publication of the new "How Good is Our School 4" (HGIOS4) guidance on school libraries. It is important that the aims, objectives and content of the strategy are developed in a collaborative way. The engagement to develop the strategy will therefore include all key stakeholders, including the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals in Scotland (CILIPS) and the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES).

The aim is for the final strategy to be agreed and published ahead of the 2018/19 school year. The detailed timetable for the work will be developed and agreed with SLIC during the course of summer 2017. Officials will also contact the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals in Scotland (CILIPS) and the petitioner himself in order to clarify the timetable and the process to develop the strategy.

We understand that COSLA officials are looking at the potential for the COSLA Children and Young People Executive Group to consider the broad timetable and approach to developing the strategy as part of one of its regular meetings after the start of the 2017/18 academic term.

The Deputy First Minister meets representatives of COSLA and ADES on a regular basis. He has asked officials to ensure that the plans for the national strategy are included in discussion at an appropriate point, which is likely to be in the lead up to COSLA's consideration of the issue.