
Report To:	Education & Communities Committee	Date:	2 September 2025
Report By:	Ruth Binks Corporate Director Education, Communities and Organisational Development	Report No:	EDUCOM/57/25/SC
Contact Officer:	Sarah Christie Cultural Services Manager	Contact No:	
Subject:	Inverclyde Libraries Stock Management Policy		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 ☒ For Decision ☐ For Information/Noting
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to present to Committee for approval Inverclyde Libraries Stock Management Policy.
- 1.3 This policy formalises the Libraries Service's approach to Stock Management, reflecting the obligations of the service in a sectoral and strategic context.
- 1.4 The policy supports Council officers by establishing a clear framework for decision making regarding stock selection, underpinned by a commitment to intellectual freedom.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Education and Communities Committee is recommended to
- note the contents of this report; and
 - approve the Inverclyde Libraries Stock Management Policy in Appendix 1

Ruth Binks
Corporate Director, Education, Communities and Organisational Development

3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 Inverclyde Libraries Service comprises both the public library service and libraries in Inverclyde secondary schools. In total, there are six public library branches and five libraries in secondary schools. The James Watt Library which is managed within the Watt Institution sits outwith the scope of this policy.
- 3.2 In line with sector best practice, a Stock Management Policy outlines the basis on which library resources are acquired, selected and managed. The policy also reflects sector guidance on access to information and censorship. The policy will be subject to a five-year review.
- 3.3 Approval of the Inverclyde Libraries Stock Management Policy is sought in support of ongoing service improvement. The policy – attached as Appendix 1 – reflects guidance from both the Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC) and the Chartered Institution of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP).
- 3.4 The Stock Management Policy includes Inverclyde Libraries' stated position on access to information and censorship, and its commitment to upholding the CILIPs statement on intellectual freedom [originally issued in 1963, revised in 1997, 2005 and 2021), which states that 'access [to library resources] should not be restricted on any grounds except that of the law'.
- 3.5 The policy further outlines approaches to stock management that ensure accessibility for all customers, across the authority area. This includes the range of stock available in each branch; the circulation of stock between branches; stock requests; accessing age-appropriate stock; and the disposal of stock no longer required.
- 3.6 Adherence to the Stock Management Policy ensures that library users have access to a wide range of stock, alongside advice and guidance in their reading choices. It encourages diverse reading habits and promotes reading as a creative act within the wider lifelong learning agenda. The policy seeks to maximise the usage of available stock, encourage library membership, and support bringing readers together for reading and literature events.

4.0 PROPOSALS

- 4.1 It is proposed that this policy provides a transparent framework for the management of stock across Inverclyde Libraries Service. This includes decision making in the procurement of new stock and the disposal of old stock. The policy also provides a clearly stated position in terms of the Libraries Service's commitment to intellectual freedom.
- 4.2 It is proposed that Committee approve the Inverclyde Libraries Stock Management Policy, which reflects the operational needs of the library service.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed:

SUBJECT	YES	NO
Financial		X
Legal/Risk		X
Human Resources		X
Strategic (Partnership Plan/Council Plan)		X

Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People's Rights & Wellbeing	X	
Environmental & Sustainability		X
Data Protection		X

5.2 Finance

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A					

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
N/A					

5.3 Legal/Risk

N/A

5.4 Human Resources

N/A

5.5 Strategic

N/A

5.6 Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People

(a) Equalities

This report has been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) process with the following outcome:

X	YES – Assessed as relevant and an EqIA is required, a copy of which will be made available on the Council's website: https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/council-and-government/equality-impact-assessments
	NO – This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, assessed as not relevant and no EqIA is required. Provide any other relevant reasons why an EqIA is not necessary/screening statement.

(b) Fairer Scotland Duty

If this report affects or proposes any major strategic decision:-

Has there been active consideration of how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome?

	YES – A written statement showing how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed.
X	NO – Assessed as not relevant under the Fairer Scotland Duty for the following reasons: Provide reasons why the report has been assessed as not relevant.

(c) Children and Young People

Has a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – Assessed as relevant and a CRWIA is required.
X	NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve a new policy, function or strategy or recommends a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy which will have an impact on children's rights.

5.7 Environmental/Sustainability

Has a Strategic Environmental Assessment been carried out?

	YES – assessed as relevant and a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required.
X	NO – This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme, strategy or document which is like to have significant environmental effects, if implemented.

5.8 Data Protection

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.
X	NO – Assessed as not relevant as this report does not involve data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.

6.0 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 This policy has been prepared in discussion with colleagues across Inverclyde Libraries Service; it has been developed in line with sector guidance and reflects nationally agreed standards of good practice.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 [Managing Safe and Inclusive Public Library Services](#)

Organisational Development, Human Resources and Performance

INVERCLYDE LIBRARIES STOCK MANAGEMENT POLICY

Version No

1.0

Produced by:

Inverclyde Council
Municipal Buildings
GREENOCK
PA15 1LX

2025

Inverclyde Council is an Equal Opportunities employer

This document can be made available in other languages, large print, and audio format upon request.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Document Responsibility		
Policy Title	Corporate Group	Service
Inverclyde Libraries Stock Management Policy	CCER	Cultural Services

Change History		
Version	Date	Comments
1.0	25/7/2025	

Distribution
Education and Communities Committee; Director of Education and Communities; Head of Service Communities, Culture and Education Resources; Cultural Services Manager; Libraries Team Leader, Library Development Officers, Supervisors and Senior Library Assistants

Policy Review		
Updating Frequency	Next Review Date	Responsible Officer
5 years	July 2030	Cultural Services Manager

Policy Review and Approval			
Name	Action	Date	Communication

CONTENTS

Document control		Page
1.0	Introduction	4
1.1	Executive summary	
1.2	Background	
1.3	Strategic context	
1.4	Links to legislation	5
1.5	Aim	
2.0	Scope	
3.0	Policy Content	
3.1	Purpose	
3.2	Core Principles	6
3.3	Stock Acquisition	
3.4	Stock Selection	7
3.5	Access to Information and Censorship	8
3.6	Stock Management and Access to Stock	10
3.7	Stock and Reading Promotion	11
3.8	Monitoring and Review	
3.9	Enquiries	
4.0	Roles and Responsibilities	11
4.1	Chief Executive	
4.2	Directors	
4.3	Heads of Service	
4.4	Service Managers	
4.5	Officers	
5.0	Implementation	12
5.1	Training	
5.2	Communication of the policy	
6.0	Risk	12
6.1	Legislative risk	
6.2		
7.0	Equalities	12
7.1	Consultation and Engagement	
7.2	Equality Impact Assessment	

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Inverclyde Libraries Stock Management Policy outlines the principles by which library stock is acquired, selected, managed, promoted and made accessible for the benefit of the people of Inverclyde. In line with the role of publicly funded library services the policy includes a commitment to intellectual freedom, and to providing free access to information on a range of subjects for the whole community.

Members of library staff are responsible for the management of stock following the principles laid down in this stock policy and acting within current legal requirements.

This policy will be publicly available to view in all Inverclyde Libraries and on the Inverclyde Council website.

1.2 BACKGROUND

This Stock Management Policy has been developed in line with sector guidance. [Forward – Scotland's Public Library Strategy 2021-2025](#) states that library services should publish a stock policy detailing accessible options and diverse stock selection methods.

This policy will underpin procedures for stock selection, maintenance and disposal used by library staff across Inverclyde Libraries Service, including its public libraries and libraries within secondary schools.

1.3 STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The Stock Management Policy aligns with strategic priorities locally and nationally:

The vision of Inverclyde Libraries is for “an enriched, enhanced, empowered Inverclyde” and its mission is “to inform and inspire the people of Inverclyde by ensuring access to reading, learning and cultural opportunities for all.”

This policy will help ensure that Inverclyde Libraries Service meets the following strategic aims and/or associated local actions as outlined in *Forward – Scotland's Public Library Strategy*:

- Embed libraries as lead contributors to reading and literacy by closing the learning gap in communities, through national programmes and local initiatives
- Encourage active citizenship through access to trusted, accurate information which empowers communities to make informed decisions
- Reflect the rich and diverse communities in both library resources and programming to make them accessible to all
- Ensure investment in physical and digital stock reflects the needs of users through robust consultation
- Develop a service improvement culture which embeds consistent data measurement and self-evaluation practices

In addition, the role of the school library in curating a range of reading material, resources and activities to support teaching and learning, and promote information literacy across the curriculum, is highlighted by [Vibrant Libraries, Thriving Schools, a National Strategy for School Libraries in Scotland](#).

The Stock Management Policy is further informed by:

- [Scottish Reading Strategy](#)
- [A Culture Strategy for Scotland](#)
- [A Collective Force for Health and Wellbeing Action Plan](#) (produced by the Scottish Library and Information Council, the ALLIANCE, the Digital Health and Care Innovation Centre, and Scottish Government Self-Management and Health Literacy Team)

Furthermore, Inverclyde Libraries is committed to embedding the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) into its strategic planning. This policy supports Article 13 - Freedom of Expression; Article 17 - Access to Information; Article 28 - Right to Education; and Article 31 - Right to Leisure, Play, and Cultural Life.

1.4 LINKS TO LEGISLATION

Equality Act 2010
Human Rights Act 1998

1.5 AIM

This policy aims to ensure that library stock across Inverclyde Libraries Service is selected and managed in an effective manner, making the best use of resources, and meeting accessibility requirements. It also includes a statement on intellectual freedom and censorship which provides a clear rationale for appropriate responses to stock challenges.

2 SCOPE

This policy provides a framework for decisions covering the entire stock and resources of Inverclyde Libraries, including public libraries and libraries within secondary schools. It does not cover the James Watt Library which is managed within the Watt Institution, although the library service works with the Watt Institution to make local history material accessible across the library network.

The term 'stock' relates to all formats, including but not limited to physical books, audio books, newspapers and magazines, film, music, toys, tools, as well as electronic books and other electronic information resources.

3 POLICY CONTENT

3.1 PURPOSE

This policy outlines the basis on which library resources for Inverclyde Libraries are acquired, selected and managed.

This policy supports Inverclyde Libraries in:

- ensuring access to reading, learning, and cultural opportunities for all
- promoting reading for pleasure, literacy, and lifelong learning,
- providing information and ideas to support learning and teaching across the curriculum.
- promoting digital inclusion by providing access to digital services
- promoting economic wellbeing by providing free access to resources
- promoting health & wellbeing by providing access to a range of resources
- providing local opportunities for culture and creativity to flourish within Inverclyde's communities
- ensuring provision of excellent public services by offering access to a range of accurate, balanced, and current information in all appropriate formats.

3.2 CORE PRINCIPLES

Inverclyde Libraries aims to:

- provide a sufficient range of stock in order to meet learning, leisure and cultural, and health and wellbeing needs in a variety of formats (print, large print, audio, electronic)
- meet the library-related needs of the community in line with public sector equality duty. We will do this with due consideration to those with protected characteristics as specified in the Equalities Act 2010
- deliver free access to materials to all

3.3 STOCK ACQUISITION

- 3.3.1. Stock acquisition is dictated by budget allocation, space restrictions and the existing and planned use of libraries. Inverclyde Libraries develops an annual Stock Strategy, which informs the distribution of the annual budget for stock acquisition and ensures Best Value by purchasing the majority of stock items as part of a national consortium. Inverclyde Libraries positively welcomes suggestions for items of stock from both individuals and groups within our local communities. This forms part of our commitment to public involvement in service development.

The needs and profiles of the communities we serve are taken into account when stock is selected for purchase. We are committed to increasing use of our services by all, and active steps are taken to develop methodologies for identifying and addressing the needs of those who do not currently use library services, as well as meeting the needs of our existing members.

Each branch or school library aims to provide a broad-based and varied stock, appropriate to its size and the reading and information needs of its users. By providing a combination of new and older titles, we aim to ensure that a given library should be able to cater for the majority of everyday demands from its readers in

terms of subject coverage and depth of treatment. As a result, individual libraries may need to place different emphasis on certain areas or categories of stock in order to accommodate local reading demands. We consider it important not to stereotype a community or to distort the balance of stock. Smaller libraries cannot be fully comprehensive, but they stock a range of titles sufficient to stimulate wider reading habits.

- 3.3.2 Self-published materials - due to the lack of editorial and legal scrutiny involved in the production of self-published materials, Inverclyde Libraries will only purchase and stock this type of resource on very rare occasions. However, self-published material from local authors or material with local content will be considered for addition to stock. Consideration will also be given to self-published titles by established authors whose works have previously been published by recognised publishers.
- 3.3.3. Artificial Intelligence (AI) Generated Material - Inverclyde Libraries will consider critically whether a given piece of media is genuine in an increasingly AI-mitigated information flow. Inverclyde Libraries will only purchase and stock this type of resource on very rare occasions.
- 3.3.4 Donations - Inverclyde Libraries may accept donations of stock on the understanding that they are subject to the same selection criteria as applies to the purchase of stock. We therefore reserve the right to decide on the most suitable location for donated stock selected for retention, and to dispose of materials not required.

3.4 STOCK SELECTION

- 3.4.1 Printed Resources - knowledgeable and experienced staff manage the stock selection process and use evidence based approaches to inform their work. Items from the criteria listed below will generally – but not exclusively – be used to inform the process:
 - Popularity of author and subject
 - Quality
 - Cost
 - Format
 - Local and Scottish interest
 - New editions, particularly in fields subject to change
 - Requests from readers
 - Media coverage
 - Statistical evidence
 - Professional knowledge and expertise
 - Diversity of communities across Inverclyde
 - National and local literacy initiatives which improve literacy and numeracy
 - Relevance to the school curriculum

Inverclyde Libraries makes all reasonable attempts to achieve diversity of stock and will work in partnership with local and national agencies to represent the stock needs of the community in line with local and national priorities.

- 3.4.2 Electronic Resources – electronic information resources will be assessed and selected on an individual basis. Characteristics on which the resources will be assessed include quality and uniqueness of content, relevancy and currency of content, authority, overlap with other e-resources, frequency of updating, target audience, price, licence arrangements, website functionality, accessibility (IP address or password), customer support, reporting capabilities, etc.

Electronic books and periodicals will be assessed and selected according to both the criteria above for printed books and to that for electronic information resources.

- 3.4.3 In alignment with circular economy principles non-traditional lending resources, such as garden tools and toys, will be assessed and selected on an individual basis. Characteristics on which these resources will be assessed include:

- community demand and interest
- target audience
- educational or skill-building potential
- environmental impact
- robustness and durability
- ease of cleaning and sanitation
- maintenance requirements
- storage requirements
- safety standards
- ease of use
- clear instructions
- ergonomics (for tools)
- age appropriateness (for toys)
- price
- overlap with existing resources
- portability/transportation
- accessibility for pickup / return.

3.5 ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND CENSORSHIP

3.5.1 Public Libraries

Inverclyde Libraries adhere to the statement on intellectual freedom, access to information and censorship issued by The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) [statement originally issued in 1963, revised in 1997, 2005 and 2021]:

“It is the role of a library and information service that is funded from the public purse to provide, as far as resources allow, access to all publicly available information, whether factual or fiction and regardless of media or format, in which its users claim

legitimate interest.... Access should not be restricted on any grounds except that of the law. If publicly available material has not incurred legal penalties then it should not be excluded on moral, political, religious, racial or gender grounds, to satisfy the demands of sectional interest.”

The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals’ (CILIP) [Managing Safe and Inclusive Public Library Services \(2023\)](#) practical guide provides guidance to library authorities on the provision of library stock that may be considered controversial in nature. To reject stock solely because it is considered controversial would not be in the interests of intellectual freedom. Controversial material will be evaluated according to our selection criteria and the principles of this policy.

Whilst Inverclyde Libraries welcomes suggestions for stock, we will not add or remove any item of stock from our shelves solely at the request of any individual or group. Members of library staff do not label items to warn customers of ‘offensive’ or ‘harmful’ content.

Responsibility for the use of library materials from the adult lending collections by children rests with their parents or legal guardians, not with library staff. Procedures are in place, in line with legal requirements, to ensure that classified items such as DVDs are not issued to borrowers of inappropriate age. Similarly, parents or guardians must assume responsibility for guiding young people in their use of our digital and online services, whether these are accessed via the internet or apps. Inverclyde Libraries accepts no responsibility for materials accessed from the providers. The library only restricts access to material in order to protect it from damage or theft, not as a form of censorship. Some items of library stock are available for use in the library only and cannot be borrowed. These items are required for study, research or to answer customer enquiries and need to be available to all customers whenever required. They include directories and other reference resources and items for Local Studies, and these items are clearly marked as Reference Stock.

3.5.2. School Libraries

Inverclyde Libraries will make available in its school libraries materials which will enrich and support the curriculum, stimulate growth in learning and illuminate and illustrate different views, taking into consideration the varied interests, abilities, and maturity levels of individual learners. We will oppose censorship for any purpose other than for material that is proscribed by law.

This joint statement from the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP), the CILIP School Libraries Group, and the School Library Association is intended to provide clear guidance for library staff and school leadership when considering issues relating to intellectual freedom and censorship:

“As leadership organisations for School Libraries, we believe that:

- i) Intellectual freedom – the freedom to read, to learn, to question and to access information – is central to a functioning democracy*

- ii) *It is a core role of libraries, librarians, and other library staff to promote intellectual freedom on behalf of their users, to empower users to enact their information rights and to oppose censorship in all its forms – both tacit and explicit.*
- iii) *School librarians and library staff are responsible for promoting and preserving intellectual freedom by working with school leadership and teaching colleagues to support children and young people in their development as informed and responsible citizens."*

3.6 STOCK MANAGEMENT AND ACCESS TO STOCK

Inverclyde Libraries uses a range of strategies to ensure that stock is accessible to customers. Stock is managed as an Inverclyde-wide resource. Any item in stock at any public library is accessible to all customers through free reservations.

Inverclyde Libraries ensures that stock is circulated around the libraries to improve the range of titles available in each library and to increase the cost effectiveness of each purchase.

This is done using a range of strategies including, information gained from community profiles and evidence based stock management information taken from the Library Management System.

Inverclyde School libraries have a wide variety of fiction and non-fiction titles available for students to borrow covering many genres and suitable for all interests and abilities.

Titles which include mature themes and issues will be categorised as Senior Stock. S1-S3 pupils who request these titles may be required to obtain parental permission before borrowing.

Stock is routinely checked against agreed guidelines to ensure that it is current, in good condition and being used by library members. Inverclyde Libraries actively encourages readers to request items not currently in stock and gives all requests due consideration. Inverclyde Libraries operates a limited inter-library loan service whereby library members can access non-fiction resources not stocked within Inverclyde (charges apply).

Inverclyde Libraries will dispose of stock that is no longer required using a range of responsible and sustainable options.

3.7 STOCK AND READING PROMOTION

We seek to promote stock both to library users and to the wider public in order to:

- give the public access to a wide range of stock
- provide advice and guidance to individual borrowers in their reading choice
- encourage diverse reading habits
- promote reading as a creative act
- promote reading as part of the wider lifelong learning agenda
- maximise the usage of stock
- encourage library membership and use
- bring readers together for reading groups and literature events

3.8 MONITORING AND REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed regularly and in line with any legislative and organisational changes.

3.9 ENQUIRIES

Enquiries regarding this policy should be addressed to:

Team Leader – Libraries

Inverclyde Libraries HQ

Wallace Place

GREENOCK

PA15 1JB

Tel: 01475 712330

Email: library.central@inverclyde.gov.uk

4 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 ELECTED MEMBERS

Elected Members should be aware of the requirements of this policy, particularly with regards the role of the library service in upholding intellectual freedom.

4.2 CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Chief Executive should be aware of the requirements of this policy, particularly with regards the role of the library service in upholding intellectual freedom.

4.3 DIRECTORS

Directors should be aware of the requirements of this policy, particularly with regards the role of the library service in upholding intellectual freedom.

4.4 HEADS OF SERVICE

Heads of Service should be aware of the requirements of this policy, particularly with regards the role of the library service in upholding intellectual freedom.

4.5. SERVICE MANAGERS

The Service Manager has overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of this Stock Management Policy.

4.6 OFFICERS

Officers should be aware of the requirements of this policy and meet these in operational service delivery.

5 IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 TRAINING

Specific training on the content of this policy is delivered as required.

5.2 COMMUNICATION OF THE POLICY

This policy will be available publically via the Council website.

6 RISK

6.1 LEGISLATIVE RISK

N/A

7 EQUALITIES

7.1 CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

The library service commits to both consulting and engaging with users and non-users on a regular basis, continuously reviewing services in the light of feedback received, and telling users and non-users how the service is performing. These objectives will be achieved by adherence to the service's Consultation and Engagement Strategy.

7.2 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

There is no evidence to indicate that this policy could affect employees differently or less favourably, on the grounds of their Protected Characteristics.