



AN EXTERNAL REVIEW: SCOTLAND'S NATIONAL CENTRE FOR LANGUAGES (SCILT)

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1 Introduction

1.1

Scotland's National Centre for Languages, SCILT, was established in 1991 and originally based at the University of Stirling. Now part of the University of Strathclyde, SCILT is a very valuable resource for language learning in Scotland, and operates across schools, local authorities and universities the length and breadth of Scotland. Recognising the rapidly changing national context the centre is working in, the Director of SCILT commissioned an independent review that could advise how the organisation is best placed going forward. In carrying out this review I have been impressed with the openness and support of all staff at SCILT, the enormous amount of goodwill in the languages community in Scotland towards SCILT, the recognition by all that change is inevitable, and the excellent contributions all have made to my task. Those who have contributed are listed in Appendix 1.

1.2

The agreed brief for the review was developed in partnership with the Director (see Appendix 2) who has made available all the required documentation, access to staff and introductions to the key stakeholders. One very interesting aspect of the work was that at no time did any of those interviewed question the need for a national centre, in fact the vast majority indicated just how lucky Scotland is to have SCILT, albeit everyone recognised the need for change given the current context of Scottish education.

2 Background and context

2.1

The Scottish Education landscape is a fast moving and changing area with the current Scottish Government embracing a reform programme aimed at creating a system which will tackle the root causes and impacts of poverty, improve school attainment, and enhance opportunities for all children and young people. A 2016 Education Act introduced legislation which commenced some aspects of the reform programme and a planned 2018 Act will most likely continue the direction of travel. Significant system changes have been introduced and are likely to continue: the six Regional Improvement Collaboratives, nine attainment challenge authorities, pupil equity funding going directly to schools, all underpinned by a National Improvement Framework. At the very start of a child's learner journey we will see, from 2020/21, all pre-school children having an entitlement to 1140 hours of early learning and childcare as part of the Programme for Government.

2.2

Curriculum for Excellence is now more mature in Scotland with our Languages 1+2 policy, part of a set of curriculum experiences at school and learning community level. OECD in its 2015 report, 'Improving Schools in Scotland', was optimistic that the curriculum model could take Scotland forward, particularly with a strengthened middle tier supporting and challenging schools and greater use of evidence-led data.

The Languages 1+2 policy had been introduced in 2011 by the previous Scottish Government administration and a continued commitment has been established by the current Holyrood administration with a likely completion date of 2021. SCILT has played a pivotal role in the implementation of the Languages 1+2 policy particularly in the planning and delivery of professional learning across Scotland, the coordination of national networks and working closely with schools, local authorities, Education Scotland, SQA and Scottish Government.

2.3

On a wider, more global front, the work of SCILT has been significantly complemented with the introduction of the Confucius Institute for Scotland's Schools as part of the SCILT portfolio at the same University Campus (University of Strathclyde) with the same Director leading both organisations. This initiative has seen much energy, resource and commitment from both the Chinese and Scottish governments.

2.4

The UK is about to leave the European Union, with Brexit negotiations ongoing. Such a fundamental change of policy has potentially major ramifications for language learning in Scotland. There is little clarity on the future of a range of programmes, such as Erasmus, supported and encouraged by the EU which many Scottish educators have benefitted from historically. It seems inevitable, however, that there will be changes in policy as a consequence with a period of anxiety in the short to medium term regarding EU-related programmes and resources.

2.5

The public sector in Scotland and across the UK has faced significant financial constraint since the 2008 financial crisis. This seems very likely to continue until at least 2020 and despite targeted funding for specific educational priorities, this backdrop will require all agencies and organisations such as SCILT to ensure that financial decisions relate to clear strategic planning supported by good governance arrangements.

2.6

Against this national and international backdrop it is very wise and timely that SCILT has commissioned this review so that they can be as agile and responsive as possible within a strategic framework so that language learning in Scotland can continue to draw on their input moving forward.

3 Scope of the review

3.1

The review was conducted between January and March 2018 and involved a series of structured interviews with partners and partner agencies, a cross section of staff in SCILT, and University of Strathclyde personnel (the full list of participants is in Appendix 1). In addition, key documentation relating to the SCILT programme to the Scottish education community was studied, internal documentation relevant to the brief made available to me, including high level financial data, staff numbers and remits, work programmes and key external communication links. SCILT leadership adopted an open door policy to any information that was required to carry out the task.

3.2

It should be noted that this is very much an independent professional review of the outward facing work of SCILT across the education community in Scotland. It has not involved financial or best value audits or detailed analysis of the internal frameworks that support the work of a national centre such as SCILT.

4 Current operating model

4.1 Infrastructure and resources

4.1.1

Scotland's National Centre for Languages (SCILT) provides a range of services to the Scottish education community, but in particular those who work in the language learning, teaching and research area. The centre is financed predominantly through an annual Scottish Government specific grant which is paid on a quarterly basis and for the last four years the grant has been fixed at £700,000, with specific grant conditions applied as is the norm with such funding sources. There is a small income stream from the British Council based on a recharge for the secondment on a part-time basis of a member of staff from SCILT. Like most organisations dependent on public funds and grants in the current financial climate, only one-year funding agreements are available, thereby making forward planning difficult in many respects. Similarly while it has been excellent that Scottish Government has maintained grant levels, in reality rising costs have had to be absorbed, making budget planning challenging. This reflects in particular on staff costs and the programmes planned and delivered by SCILT. One interesting aspect of the SCILT operating model is the close partnership with Confucius Institute for Scotland's Schools (CISS) which is co-located in the University of Strathclyde, sharing accommodation and some staff resource, but mainly focused on its own primary function, that of developing the teaching and learning of Mandarin and Chinese culture across Scotland. In relation to SCILT, there is a contribution of CISS funds to reflect the role of the Director, who gives 50% of her time to CISS, and similarly the role played by the Senior Administrator in this regard.

It should be noted that the review was specifically focused on SCILT and while some background information on the CISS operation was necessary to understand the relationship between the two bodies, the review relates to SCILT only.

4.1.2

There is a small team based in SCILT which comprises the Director, six professional development officers (5.6 FTE), an information officer and the administration team. Staff salary costs, associated travel and accommodation are the main area areas of expenditure of SCILT along with a levy charged by the university who provide accommodation, HR, business support, and IT back up. A small amount of income is raised through a British Council part-time secondment, but overall, such income is a small portion of the budget. Once overhead costs are factored into the budget, very little by way of unrestricted funds for development-related activities is available, which has an implication on what SCILT specifically can provide. Moving forward, the SCILT leadership team will have to reflect on their fixed costs and explore income-generating potential. Similarly as staff turnover takes place, the balance of staffing between full-time permanent, full- and part-time seconded, and fixed term project-based, should be carefully monitored to ensure that the correct staffing profile is available for delivery of the business plan and areas of priority.

4.2 Areas of activity

4.2.1

SCILT has been very closely involved in supporting the development and delivery of two major strands of Scottish Government languages policy priorities: the 1+2 Languages initiative and the National Qualifications reforms, both relating to the overall backdrop of Curriculum for Excellence. SCILT in particular has provided a range of professional development opportunities for teachers and educators which have largely been very well received, and in most cases popular with staff. The programme for school session 2017/18 is in Appendix 3 of the report but in addition and during the school year, online learning programmes are made available, and bespoke activities for schools and local authorities are

also provided. The award-bearing nature of some of the courses along with GTCS accreditation, is particularly appealing for teachers looking to build their CLPL portfolio; the recently introduced Open University partnership course "Learning to teach Languages in the Primary School" being very well-received as is the 1+2 Languages Leadership Programme planned and delivered in conjunction with Education Scotland. As a consequence of the comprehensive range of opportunities made by SCILT, there is a very wide coverage of Scottish local authorities with, for example, by March 2018 of this current school year, 25 local authorities having received some sort of provision from SCILT to their staff. Careful monitoring of the uptake of the various courses and CLPL menu is required to ensure that it remains popular and fit for purpose. Joint planning and delivery of programmes with partner organisations is something that would add value to the offer that SCILT continues to make to the Scottish education community.

4.2.2

One of the important functions delivered by SCILT is the coordination of the national LANGS (Languages Network Group Scotland) network which is an important forum for a range of organisations and individuals involved in many aspects of language learning in Scotland. Those who make use of the range of opportunities afforded through the thrice yearly meetings of LANGS were very supportive of the role SCILT plays, finding these meetings and the range of agenda items covered extremely worthwhile.

SCILT publishes a weekly electronic news bulletin which carries a broad range of information for an equally broad range of professionals involved in language learning. This is an important communication for SCILT and for those who receive and value it, and one which takes a large investment of staff time. A challenge, as with all such communications activities, is to try to reach everyone in the education community who would undoubtedly benefit from its content.

SCILT has an extremely comprehensive website which contains much information on a great many dimensions of language learning and teaching in Scotland and beyond. However there was universal advice from those interviewed, including the staff member responsible for the site, that it should be refreshed; as one SCILT supporter said "it's a bit of a rabbit warren; all the rabbits are in there, it's just a bit difficult to find them!"

The recently completed eight Business Brunches aimed at linking businesses with schools and their learners have been well-received and these have certainly added a vocational element to opportunities for secondary school language students.

Increasingly, educationalists, their establishments, and their learners are accessing opportunities through digital learning; in the case of Scottish education there has been a significant investment in Glow as the national education intranet platform with a range of opportunities for all with the necessary access rights. Some very innovative usage has been made for language learning such as the e-Sgoil initiative led by the Western Isles Council. While some steps have been taken by SCILT into this area of delivery, more opportunities exist which should be investigated to ensure that a mix of delivery options are used, thereby reaching out across Scotland providing ease of access to the SCILT offer.

4.2.3

SCILT is able to provide support to schools and local authorities on the range of languages on offer across Scottish schools, either directly, or through associates and consultants. The Mother Tongue, Other Tongue initiative was well-received and Community Languages and ESL have also been part of SCILT's programme historically. Support for Gaelic language education is in principle part of the commitment of SCILT for its broad portfolio but to be effective, a dedicated member of staff with knowledge and experience of Gaelic education is required. Historically this has been delivered through part-time secondments. Bearing in mind the shortage of Gaelic teachers, this is likely to remain an ongoing challenge and more innovative solutions are required. Nevertheless SCILT remains committed to fostering and supporting Gaelic and Scots language.

4.2.4

There are planned inputs to the Initial Teacher Education (ITE) courses at the University of Strathclyde in collaboration with the School of Education. Similarly SCILT contributes to ITE courses at the Universities of Stirling, Edinburgh and UHI; ideally all universities with teacher education provision should tap into the expertise that SCILT has on the application of language learning in Scottish schools.

4.2.5

Research-based activities would certainly be a natural aspect of the SCILT potential given the link internally to the mother university, and although a small project is getting underway, there is no legacy of such work as yet. SCILT works well with the range of universities involved in the University Council for Modern Languages Scotland (UCMLS) network who value SCILT's contribution; there was much support expressed by those who took part in this review for inter-university research using SCILT as a medium for potential programmes; one particular suggestion, mooted by a number interviewed related to how best to mainstream the languages 1+2 initiative into everyday school practice. This particular challenge was highlighted by many as the most important issue facing language learning in Scotland at present.

4.3 Determining and evaluating the areas of activity

4.3.1

The arrangements for determining the annual priorities for SCILT and thereafter the annual programme of activities, are largely based on the conditions applied to the grant from Scottish Government. Stakeholders' views are sought through LANGS and other networks but generally these sit within the broad parameters of the national priorities. Bespoke and targeted activities to schools and local authorities are made available by the team. A more structured and inclusive approach to setting and agreeing the priorities and the annual plan, taking into account new national frameworks, would strengthen the governance arrangements of SCILT.

4.3.2

The vast majority of those interviewed felt that SCILT added value to the work of those schools, local authorities and individuals who used their services. As a note of caution, however, one supporter of SCILT said 'SCILT needs to go beyond the converted'. Many spoke of the need for a national languages centre particularly in the current scenario of Brexit and a potential vacuum resulting from withdrawal from the European Union. However SCILT needs to be far more systematic in demonstrating and evidencing the added value it undoubtedly delivers to the Scottish education community. Clear evaluative evidence of impact should be introduced into the planning and reporting processes of SCILT so that, internally and externally, measurable outcomes are prepared, shared and used for improvement planning purposes.

4.4 Leadership and governance

4.4.1

The Director works 50% on SCILT-related matters and the other 50% on CISS duties. There is a deputy Director for CISS but no such post in SCILT. The Senior Administrator also has a 50/50 split in duties to reflect her leadership of the admin and business support functions of both organisations. There are salary adjustments to reflect the split roles.

4.4.2

The recently introduced leadership and planning practices for SCILT will bring increased focus and rigour to the team and there is a recognition that improved planning, prioritising and evaluation of the work of SCILT was needed to improve outcomes. There is little doubt that leading SCILT and CISS has competing priorities and can bring pressures on her time, but the Director approaches her tasks with an open and can-do attitude; the recognition that there is a need currently to look carefully both at what SCILT offers as well as how it should best relate to new national governance arrangements is to be commended. There is a fairly arms-length approach by the university to the line management of the Director and the direction of SCILT generally; however a closer focus is placed on CISS-related activities.

4.4.3

Governance arrangements have evolved over the years and require to be improved. This is not the fault of any one individual or organisation, but rather is due to the nature of how SCILT is structured. Although part of the university, it is treated more as an arms-length body within their broader educational portfolio. The main funder, Scottish Government, have governance arrangements in place relating to the terms of the specific grant and meet regularly with the Director to monitor progress of the grant requirements. While there is consultation with the main partners and those who use the services of SCILT, these are not set in the formality of a governance structure; this leaves SCILT in a weak position in terms of best practice and improvements need to be introduced.

4.4.4

In a broader national context, SCILT will have to continually review its position in order to be part of a rapidly changing middle tier in the evolving world of the Scottish education reform programme. In particular the role it plays with local authorities, schools, and the emerging Regional Improvement Collaboratives, will have to be carefully monitored and continually reviewed so that SCILT continues to add value to the educators and educational establishments across Scotland. Particular focus is required on the Programme for Government; the link to addressing the impacts of poverty and inequality on educational outcomes, the role that language learning has to play in raising attainment of all 3-18 learners as well as the National Improvement Framework, should all be factored into future plans. Future leadership and governance approaches must reflect these priorities.

5 Review findings and recommendations

5.1 OVERALL

5.1.1

There is a significant amount of support and good will for SCILT in the community of educators involved in the planning, delivery and promotion of language learning in Scotland. The Scottish Government is to be commended for its continuing support for SCILT in the current climate of financial restraint and changes in national education governance arrangements. While the majority of those interviewed strongly valued its contribution, all, including staff within SCILT, identified ways in which it could adapt and strengthen its position as part of an emerging new middle tier, supporting and adding value to the work of schools, local authorities, regional improvement collaboratives, and of course the educators and learners in Scotland.

5.1.2

While the value of SCILT is very much appreciated by those who use its services, there are those within the education community who are unaware of the work of the organisation and how it can contribute and add value to their particular priorities. SCILT needs to broaden its appeal and coverage and in particular look at ways in which it can be more agile and play its part in the delivery of the education

priorities in the Programme for Government; SCILT could play an important role by demonstrating how language learning can play a key part in the tackling inequalities and raising attainment programmes and should factor this into future activities.

Recommendation 1

SCILT should build on the impressive contribution it already makes to language learning in Scotland, broaden its existing role and appeal, and adapt its priorities, thereby ensuring that it continues to play an active part in an evolving middle tier of Scottish education.

5.2 INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES

5.2.1

Public sector funding is not likely to increase in the foreseeable future and until such time that there is clarity on the outcomes of the Brexit negotiations, medium- to long-term budgeting is equally unlikely. This leaves SCILT in a position where Scottish Government funding for core activities is unlikely to increase while overhead costs will inevitably rise. Very careful budget planning will be required over the next few years with the need for a discerning set of priorities, particularly in terms of programming and staff deployment. New possibilities for generating income should be considered alongside working in formal partnerships with a range of public and private sector bodies. Building on the success of the Open University and 1+2 Languages Leadership programmes, SCILT should consider how new opportunities could be taken forward; one idea that gathered much support during the course of the review is a possible partnership programme with SCEL on Leading Language Learning in Scottish schools, aimed particularly at middle leaders in secondary.

5.2.2

Given that staff costs are the largest of the expenditure drivers, very careful consideration needs to be made towards the staffing profile of the organisation. Over the years, the balance between permanent and seconded staff has altered giving less potential for flexibility and staff turnover. As vacancies arise there has to be very careful consideration of how to deploy the associated budget costs. Given the emergence of new national governance arrangements there exists the possibility of rethinking the options available for how best to recruit and position staff, having consulted schools, local authorities and the regional improvement collaboratives on their particular needs and preferred modes of delivery.

5.2.3

Increasingly organisations consider their websites and online presence as a critical part of their front-line offer to their customers. SCILT already makes a significant commitment to maintaining its website using it to relate to and communicate with its customers. However the limitations of the website outlined above, and identified by those interviewed, will inhibit the possibility of using it as part of a SCILT improvement plan. Similarly there is little doubt that a mix of blended learning, including digital learning, for professional development, will increasingly feature as an integral part of the delivery mechanisms for teacher education. SCILT must position itself so that these options are increasingly available for its professional development offer across Scotland thereby allowing remote access for all educators no matter their location. Similarly, there exists through the use of technology, opportunities for SCILT to expand its links with Scottish learners.

Recommendation 2

Very careful budget and resource planning is required by SCILT as it further develops and reviews its offer to the Scottish education and business community. In so doing, striking the correct staffing profile and balance is required, thereby ensuring that SCILT can be as agile as possible in planning and delivering programmes.

Recommendation 3

SCILT should explore new avenues for income generation both for existing and new aspects of its programmes. While these would predominantly be with public sector organisations, the potential for private sector engagement should be explored.

Recommendation 4

An immediate refresh of the SCILT website should be commissioned in order to ensure that it can more easily and intuitively support the needs of its users. In addition SCILT should further develop its digital learning offer to ensure that there are as few barriers as possible to accessing the high quality teacher education programmes that are on offer. Running alongside this is the need to form partnerships with organisations that are using digital learning to expand curriculum opportunities for Scottish learners.

5.3 AREAS OF ACTIVITY

5.3.1

While SCILT has quite correctly been highly focused on the 1+2 Languages initiative as well as the changes in SQA national qualifications, other very well-received opportunities have continued to have been made available. While careful monitoring of the uptake and popularity of the SCILT programmes is required, there is also a need to consider how relevant these are moving forward. There is a need, for example, to link to the Scottish Government's priorities of tackling the impacts of social and economic inequalities on educational outcomes. Language learning has the potential of making a significant contribution to early learning and childcare, raising attainment, involving disengaged learners particularly in secondary schools, and connecting with the Developing the Young Workforce agenda. On the latter point, the recent highly successful round of business brunches demonstrates how SCILT can add value to such policies.

5.3.2

The delivery methods of the SCILT offer to the education community across Scotland should be under constant review and some good practice exists already in that respect. However, the speed and nature of these changes are such that very innovative thinking is required to ensure that SCILT can best meet needs; the increased devolved budgeting directly to schools, the Headteachers Charter and the six Regional Improvement Collaboratives being the main drivers for change. There is an appetite already in some of the collaboratives for the development of a bespoke relationship with SCILT; this should be explored across all six, and their relevant local authorities, but recognising that they are at different stages of development and will have different priorities. A named SCILT link with each collaborative and associated group of local authorities should be introduced and, depending on the local agreement for SCILT involvement, this could be a SCILT Associate. SCILT traditionally has delivered most programmes from its own resources and staff; however careful consideration of delivery mechanisms is now required. A balance between internally delivered programmes, externally sourced/commissioned programmes, and partnership programmes is recommended by those interviewed. The potential use of SCILT Associates in the planning and delivery of SCILT programmes is something that had some traction with interviewees and particularly commended was exploring their possible links to the six regional improvement collaboratives. Very careful and inclusive engagement approaches with local authorities and the collaboratives will be required, recognising in so doing that a 'one size fits all' solution will not work and that this is very much a transitional period in governance within Scottish Education.

5.3.3

Careful consideration on the capacity of SCILT to support minority and lesser-used languages is required. Particularly important is the need to clarify the role of SCILT in Gaelic Education and Gaelic

Medium Education. There were differing views expressed on how best this could be done; while it is essential that Gaelic is 'normalised' in its status, the reality of finite expertise and in particular, teacher shortages is recognised. While SCILT is correct to recruit Gaelic expertise for specific projects, it should not try to dilute existing sources of Gaelic educational expertise to further its aims. A more proactive and collaborative approach than currently exists is recommended so that SCILT adds value to Gaelic agencies and their programmes of work. The refreshed SCILT website could be very helpful in signposting those interested in Gaelic education to the range of agencies and organisations involved; similarly the weekly newsletter should continue to carry relevant information on current Gaelic education matters. Membership of the National Gaelic Education Forum would ensure that SCILT is kept abreast of Gaelic educational issues.

5.3.4

There was considerable support from across the different communities of interest of those interviewed for SCILT to become more involved in educational research into language learning. It does seem somewhat incongruous that the centre, based as it is in a university, is not in any great measure involved in research activities. Those from university settings were particularly enthusiastic about seeking ways in which collaborative research across a number of institutions could be brokered; initially with a particular focus on how best to mainstream the 1+2 Languages initiative into Curriculum for Excellence. That, alongside access to action research activities that SCILT could support as part of its ongoing work, seems to be a very natural part of what a national centre for languages should be about.

5.3.5

SCILT already has a track record in successful involvement with the private sector through its support for DYW events and there are also links through CISS relationships with business and commerce. With the uncertainty caused by Brexit and the continued need for commercial and business links abroad, opportunities will undoubtedly exist for training and ambassadorial related work that SCILT could either directly become involved in or consider brokering. Alongside this sits the possibility of SCILT extending its reach into the further education sector in Scotland, providing support for language learning to the college network.

Recommendation 5

When planning the future activities of SCILT, and while in discussion with Scottish Government and Education Scotland, SCILT should position itself to make contributions on the role of language learning in the national education priorities established in the Programme for Government.

Recommendation 6

SCILT should consult with key partners and stakeholders on the most appropriate delivery mechanisms that best suit their particular requirements moving forward. A blended approach to programme planning and delivery should be anticipated if SCILT is to be able to meet the needs of its stakeholders given the fast changing financial and governance arrangements in Scottish education. In particular, consultation with the six regional improvement collaboratives, and their local authorities, on how best SCILT can add value to their work should be taken forward during summer 2018.

Recommendation 7

A more proactive and collaborative approach to how SCILT best supports Gaelic language learning, within the most efficient and effective use of resources and skills, is recommended.

Recommendation 8

SCILT should become more actively involved in educational research activities, particularly as part of a collaborative research initiative across a number of Scottish universities. Funding sources which already exist for such activities should be explored.

Recommendation 9

Opportunities exist for expanding SCILT activity into the business and commerce sectors as well as further education. SCILT should include such potential in planning ahead but on an income generation basis with a view to extending its portfolio of interests.

5.4 LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

5.4.1

There is a direct link in any organisation between successful approaches to continuous improvement and its leadership and governance arrangements. SCILT recently introduced more robust approaches to planning and evaluating its work internally which will place the team in a much better position as it continually improves its outcomes. Building on this, and as part of the standard operating practices, SCILT should introduce a system which is shared outwardly, on how it assesses and demonstrates impact of its activities. In so doing a keen eye on the National Improvement Framework is required. The ability to provide measurable data will be something that will help SCILT prove its undoubted worth and further potential for future priorities.

5.4.2

There is a lack of structured governance arrangements for SCILT which will inhibit progress as it responds to the changing landscape it is working in. An advisory group with an independent chair should be established to oversee the strategic direction of SCILT focusing on high level planning priorities, monitoring and evaluating the outcomes of activities, ensuring that effective communications systems are in place, and which provides support and challenge to the leadership team. The advisory group should be representative of the key stakeholders but not too large for effective operation.

5.4.3

SCILT is based in the University of Strathclyde along with its close partner CISS. The leadership shown by the university to both organisations is variable as is line management. The university should review its approaches to its leadership responsibilities for SCILT and be a part of the advisory group recommended above. The Director of SCILT recognises that a more proactive leadership style is required and that there are real opportunities for SCILT as well as CISS to be more active across the Scottish education community. It is essential the Director and her leadership team maintain a close connection with local and national government as the Scottish Government education reform programme evolves. The proposed advisory group will be a helpful addition to the leadership capacity of SCILT.

5.4.4

Effective communications and engagement systems are an essential part of active and effective leadership approaches. Existing communications arrangements with those registered with SCILT are very comprehensive but it is now necessary to go beyond this group and seek new opportunities for communicating and also engaging with the wider Scottish education community. While reviewing the infrastructure for creating an improved website, running concurrently, should be a review of how best external communications are planned in order to extend the reach of SCILT beyond existing audiences. Included in this should be a clear statement on what SCILT's terms of reference and mission are.

Recommendation 10

A more focused improvement planning system should be introduced which sets clear priorities, provides measurable data and demonstrates measurable outcomes; this being a key component of the work of the SCILT team.

Recommendation 11

An advisory group with an independent chair should be established to improve leadership and governance arrangements and oversee the strategic direction of SCILT. This advisory group, representative of interests in the work of SCILT, should provide support and challenge to the leadership team.

Recommendation 12

Communications and engagement policies and practices should be reviewed to ensure the SCILT is able to reach out to a wider community of interest across Scotland outlining what it brings to Scottish Education.

6 Conclusions

6.1

There is no doubt that SCILT adds value to language learning and teaching in Scotland; many educators, the length and breadth of Scotland, have spoken very favourably of the SCILT contribution, particularly on teacher education and professional development, but all with an eye to the future, and the need for some changes in approach due to the backdrop it is working within.

6.2

Staff at SCILT have presented to me, and more importantly to their customers, as a very committed group who are extremely focused on their work and who always try to meet the needs of educators, schools, and local authorities despite the finite restrictions on their time. They also realise that their model has to further evolve to respond to national and local changes.

6.3

The leadership recommendations made above will add capacity and breadth to the current model; while no proposals are made to extend the executive leadership capacity, this should be kept under review given the increased demands of the CISS dimension of the Director's work. The proposed changes in accommodation within the University campus may require some dedicated capacity at that time, but could also lead to opportunities for revised approaches to how SCILT and CISS distribute their staff.

6.4

There are real opportunities for SCILT moving forward, building on the successes outlined earlier, to further engage with a broader, more diverse set of partners and customers, so that this valued National Centre is the 'go to' place for all aspects of language learning and teaching.

Bruce Robertson, OBE

April 2018

7 Appendices

APPENDIX 1

Those who generously gave of their time to be interviewed as part of this Review:

Fhiona Mackay, SCILT/CISS
Fan Lin, CISS
Mandy Reeman-Clark, SCILT/CISS
Louise Whyte, SCILT
Sarah Macfarlane, SCILT
Lynne Jones, SCILT
Hannah Doughty, SCILT
Janette Kelso, SCILT
Fiona Pate, Education Consultant
Douglas Ansdell, Scottish Government
Toria Fraser, Scottish Government
Joan Esson, Education Scotland
Maeve Mackinnon, Education Scotland
Louise Glen, Education Scotland
Jackie Gallacher, Education Scotland
JohnPaul Cassidy, Education Scotland
Ann Robertson, East Lothian Council
Fiona O'Hanlon, University of Edinburgh
Gillian Campbell-Thow, Glasgow City Council; Chair Scottish Association for Language Teaching
Bethan Owen, City of Edinburgh Council; Languages Lead, South East Collaborative; Chair of LANGS
Judith McClure, Chair, Scotland China Education Network
Laurence Findlay, Moray Council and Lead, Northern Alliance
Pam Tosh, Broughton High School
Catherine Mackenzie, Curry High School
Angela Davies, Gracemount High School
Natalie Martinez, Leith Academy
Jackie Burns, Stirling Council
Kevin McAdam, Stirling High School
Chris French, Braehead Primary School
Marion Spöring, University of Dundee and Chair UCMLS
Ian Rivers, University of Strathclyde
Lynn Crossan, South Ayrshire Council
Sarah Connolly, West Dunbartonshire Council
David Kerr, Dumfries and Galloway Council
Sylvia Georjin, Aberdeenshire Council
Julia D'eathe, Shetland Islands Council

I am particularly grateful to Louise Whyte of SCILT who supported me in setting up many of the interviews with the participants.

APPENDIX 2

SCILT COMMISSION: Terms of reference

The Review will inform the planning and future operation of SCILT taking into account:

- current Governance changes within the new Education landscape in Scottish education;
- the impact, to date, of SCILT on professional learning and other strands of its work;
- the national languages policy framework and associated curriculum and qualifications links;
- the continued public sector financial backdrop and its impact on education budgets and capacity.

The Review will take into account a range of evidence from a variety of sources including:

- background papers and key internal documentation regarding the range of work of SCILT and any associated evaluations prepared by the team;
- a broad range and mix of local authority leads;
- schools that have used SCILT services;
- some of the newly established improvement collaboratives;
- Scottish Government and Education Scotland;
- GTCS;
- the LANGS network;
- Scottish University links;
- the College sector
- University of Strathclyde as host institution.

Bruce Robertson 16 January 2018

SCILT PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PROGRAMME 2017-18

	Descriptor	Intended Audience
	CROSS-SECTOR WORKSHOPS	
1.	<p>Contextualising learning from P1 to S3</p> <p>Want to give young people memorable learning experiences that will spark and sustain their interest in modern languages, build on their prior learning and have a positive effect on motivation?</p> <p>We will share examples of relevant and challenging contexts for language learning from P1 to S3 and discuss how teachers can make meaningful connections between languages and other areas of the curriculum to address the current priorities of literacy and health and wellbeing as highlighted in the National Improvement Framework.</p>	Early years, primary and secondary colleagues
2.	<p>Transition: building bridges to support language learning</p> <p>This is an opportunity for you to self-evaluate the primary to secondary transition arrangements in your cluster in languages.</p> <p>In this workshop we will consider features of effective transition practice and how it can ensure continuity and progression in language learning for young people.</p>	Language leaders/development officers Primary and secondary colleagues
3.	<p>Recognising wider achievement in languages and learning for sustainability</p> <p>This workshop will demonstrate how the learning of additional languages and cultures can be combined with recognised awards for wider achievement in Scotland. The awards would make for an excellent project between schools in Scotland and their partner schools overseas. The awards/recognition include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Muir Award • Junior Award Scheme for Schools (JASS) <p>Where possible, one workshop per award is best to allow for exploration, discussion and understanding. We can also show you how the evidence submitted for one award may be applicable for the other.</p>	Language leaders/development officers Primary and secondary colleagues
	PRIMARY WORKSHOPS	
4.	<p>Whole school strategy for 1+2</p> <p>This professional learning opportunity comprises two sessions to allow participants to try out ideas and actions between workshops. In order to meet the needs of participants, this opportunity will be designed in consultation with the Development Officer or Senior Manager making the booking.</p> <p>In session 1, we will explore a range of themes which can contribute to a whole school strategy for the 1+2 approach to language learning. Themes include: raising the profile of languages and the place of languages within other priorities in Scottish education (eg NIF, Attainment Challenge, GIRFEC), staff development, progression in L2, collaborative cluster working, wider engagement, transition, and developing a plan for L3. You will be supported in the initial stages of developing a whole school strategy tailored to your context.</p> <p>In session 2, we will share examples of progress since session 1, discussing the challenges, successes and impact. We will consider ways to evaluate a whole school strategy. You will be supported in identifying next steps for your strategy action plan.</p>	SMT, language leaders/development officers

5.	<p>Assessing progress in primary languages</p> <p>This workshop is informed by the Modern Languages Benchmarks.</p> <p>In a flipped learning style, examples of assessment in listening and talking, reading and writing will be shared in advance with everyone who registers. During the workshop itself, you will be asked to share your thoughts on the different examples.</p> <p>We would like to facilitate some informal moderation in this workshop so please bring some examples of work produced by your learners in one or more of these skill areas. You may wish to bring written examples, audio recordings, film clips or work in some other format to share with the group.</p>	Primary and SfL colleagues
6.	<p>Raising Attainment: strengthening literacy skills across languages</p> <p>This two-part professional learning session provides the opportunity for you and your learners to try out teaching ideas between Part 1 and Part 2. We will explore how primary language learning can make an important contribution to raising attainment for all.</p> <p>Part 1: The chance to discuss experiences and share practical, transferable ideas which support the development of listening and talking, reading and writing skills in L2 and L3, as well as L1. Pledge to try out an approach or resource from this session to develop listening and talking, reading or writing skills in L2 and L3 with your learners in advance of Part 2.</p> <p>Part 2: Share the progress you've made with the pledge you made in the first session. What have been your successes and challenges? What will you do next time? What will be the next steps for your learners?</p>	Early years, primary and SfL colleagues
7.	<p>First steps in primary languages</p> <p>A little language does go a long way! Together we will try out practical ways of introducing and embedding an additional language into your classroom routine. In this workshop, we will consider approaches to engaging language learners to suit your own level of confidence and language ability.</p>	Early years, primary/ SfL colleagues who are new to teaching primary languages
8.	<p>Next steps in primary languages</p> <p>Move beyond classroom routines and bring language learning alive across the curriculum. Together we will explore practical ways of incorporating additional language learning into interdisciplinary contexts. We will also try out a range of activities and resources to develop children's intercultural understanding and awareness of cultural diversity.</p>	Early years, primary/ SfL colleagues who have some experience of teaching primary languages

	SECONDARY WORKSHOPS	
9.	<p>1+2 in the secondary context</p> <p>What does 1+2 look like in the secondary context and how does it fit within the Attainment Challenge? How will all learners have the opportunity to be exposed to a second additional language?</p> <p>This workshop will focus on the expectations of 1+2 with particular emphasis on L3 and will address some of the benefits of language learning in developing literacy skills. We will discuss ways of giving learners the opportunity to learn a second additional language by considering examples of emerging practice from across the country and by discussing what the 1+2 policy looks like in practice.</p>	Secondary ML colleagues and DHTs with responsibility for languages/ timetabling
10.	<p>Assessment and moderation in the broad general education</p> <p>Looking to revisit the broad general education? This workshop will focus on sound approaches to assessment that can be used as part of your on-going classroom practice, as you review Curriculum for Excellence programmes of work.</p> <p>We will consider recent and successful exemplification of involving young people in the assessment process in order to motivate them to take responsibility for their own learning and to track their own progress, as detailed in the National Improvement Framework.</p> <p>Participants are encouraged to bring along exemplars of assessment to share with colleagues.</p>	Secondary and ASN colleagues
11.	<p>Developing writing skills in the BGE and senior phase</p> <p>This workshop will focus on developing strategies to support writing.</p> <p>In the workshop we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> consider how to develop writing approaches in the BGE build upon these approaches in the senior phase, with particular focus on the requirements for the new National 5 writing assignment <p>There will be an opportunity to explore new exemplification provided by SQA.</p>	Secondary and ASN colleagues
12.	<p>Modern Languages for Life and Work Award</p> <p>Need something different to motivate learners, provide them with a vocational language learning experience and help you use languages to deliver <i>Developing Scotland's Young Workforce</i> agenda? Then this workshop is for you!</p> <p>We will look at the requirements for the Modern Languages for Life and Work Award; how it can develop employability skills through providing meaningful learning opportunities in a vocational context and help with the delivery of 1+2 in the secondary sector. There will be the opportunity to explore examples of good practice from across the country.</p>	Secondary and ASN colleagues
13.	<p>Supporting pupils with the Advanced Higher Portfolio</p> <p>This workshop will provide an opportunity to look at how to support candidates with the Advanced Higher Portfolio. Participants will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look at the requirements for the Advanced Higher Portfolio Consider approaches to learning and teaching Reach a shared understanding of standards by looking at a range of exemplification raise the profile of modern languages in the school and local community keep learners motivated and interested improve uptake in the senior phase <p>We will discuss a range of tried and tested ways of demonstrating to learners that languages are important and can open doors in all sorts of ways. We will showcase examples of successful strategies that have proved effective in schools across the country, and demonstrate ways of addressing the Attainment Challenge priorities through language learning.</p>	Secondary and ASN colleagues