LIBRARIES NI
The Northern Ireland Library Authority
11 February 2010

Minutes of a meeting of the Board of the Authority held in Limavady Council Offices on Thursday 11 February 2010 at 10.30 am.

PRESENT

Dr David Elliott              Chairperson
Alderman Hubert Nicholl      Vice Chairperson
Councillor Mrs Anne Brolly
Councillor Sam Cole
Mr Roger Dixon
Councillor Mrs Roberta Dunlop
Mr Alastair McDowell
Councillor Cathal Mullaghan
Councillor Mrs Evelyne Robinson
Councillor Jim Rodgers
Ms Helen Roulston
Councillor Seamus Shields
Ms Jane Williams

APOLOGIES FOR NON ATTENDANCE

Mr Pat Carvill
Councillor Charlie Casey
Councillor Allan Ewart
Councillor Miss Carla Lockhart
Mr Nigel Macartney
Ms Angela Matthews

IN ATTENDANCE

Chief Executive               Ms Irene Knox
Director of Planning & Performance Mrs Anne Connolly
Director of Service Delivery    Ms Helen Osborn
Director of Business Support   Mr Terry Heron
Director of Culture, DCAL       Mr Arthur Scott

1. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

1.1 The Chairperson reminded Members and Officers of the need to declare any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest associated with any item on the agenda either now or at the relevant stage during the meeting. No conflicts of interest were declared.
2. **CHAIRPERSON’S BUSINESS**

2.1 The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Seamus Shields to his first meeting of the Board of Libraries NI. He welcomed also Mr Arthur Scott, Director of Culture, DCAL and thanked him for his attendance.

2.2 The Chairperson informed Members that he had attended the following meetings and events in the past month:

- a meeting with Mr E Jardine, Deputy Secretary, DCAL (substituting for the Minister) on 12 January 2010 regarding the proposed budget allocation for 2010/11. The meeting had also been attended by representatives of The Arts Council, National Museums Northern Ireland and Sport NI.

- the official opening of Newtownstewart Library which had taken place on 20 January 2010

- a meeting with the Minister on 21 January 2010 regarding Commemorations. The aim of the meeting was to look at creative ways of celebrating our history. Others at the meeting included The Arts Council, National Museums Northern Ireland, The Ulster Scots Agency and PRONI.

- a Civic Reception hosted by the Mayor of North Down Borough Council on 21 January 2010 to acknowledge the success of Bangor Carnegie Library in the Public Library Building Awards. Thanks were extended to Councillor Mrs R Dunlop for organising this event.

- the launch of the “All Our Saturdays” exhibition at Grove Library on 2 February 2010.

2.3 It was noted that 3 Public Consultation Meetings had taken place on the strategic review of libraries in the Greater Belfast area. An update on the Public Consultation Meetings would be given to members at a later stage in the meeting.

2.4 The new Antrim Library opened to the public on Monday 1 February. Members acknowledged the work of everyone involved in ensuring the library opened on time and within budget.

2.5 The Chairperson informed Members that it was intended that the Board Members’ extranet site would be available from 1 April 2010. Work was currently being undertaken to update the Libraries NI website with details of the consultation on the strategic review in the Greater Belfast area. It was noted that the Board Minutes were now available on the website.
2.6 Members were informed that the post of Head of Strategic Marketing and Communications had been publicly advertised and that the closing date for receipt of applications was 19 February 2010.

3. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUSINESS

3.1 Members noted the Hansard Report of the meeting of the Culture, Arts and Leisure Committee held on 14 January 2010 in relation to the strategic review of libraries in the Greater Belfast area.

3.2 Members noted responses given by the Minister to Assembly Questions relating to Libraries NI since the last Board Meeting.

3.3 Members noted correspondence from Mr A Scott, Director of Culture, DCAL, dated 22 December 2010, in relation to the Financial Memorandum.

3.4 Members noted correspondence from Mr A Scott, Director of Culture, DCAL informing Libraries NI that Mr Alastair Hughes had replaced Ms Hazel Campbell as Head of Libraries Branch from 4 January 2010.

3.5 Correspondence from Mr P Sweeney, Permanent Secretary, DCAL, dated 6 January 2010, giving Departmental approval for the Libraries NI Corporate Plan 2009-11 and the Business Plan 2009-10 was noted.

3.6 Members noted correspondence from Mr B Robinson, Head of the Civil Service, dated 4 February 2010, regarding the appointment of Ms Rosalie Flanagan to the position of Permanent Secretary in DCAL. The Chief Executive reported that she had written to Ms Flanagan congratulating her on her appointment and that she and the Chairperson would be meeting Ms Flanagan on 3 March 2010.

3.7 Members noted that an exhibition, entitled “Glimpses of the Past”, using images from the Bigger and McDonald collection of photographs and glass negatives, had been launched in Derry Central Library on 1 February 2010. The exhibition had been mounted in partnership with the Foyle Civic Trust and had received Heritage Lottery Funding.

3.8 Members noted that the “All our Saturdays” exhibition had been launched on 2 February 2010 in Grove Library by the Minister, Lord Coe, Chairperson of the London Olympics Organising Committee and Dr Malcolm Brodie, former editor of “Ireland’s Saturday Night”. It was noted that exhibition would tour 48 libraries during 2010.

3.9 The Chief Executive, on behalf of Officers, welcomed Councillor S Shields to his first meeting of the Board of Libraries NI.
3.8 Members were informed that Ms Laura Brown, District Librarian would brief them at the end of the meeting on Limavady Library and specifically the Play and Learn Centre and her work with the Prison Library Service. Staff would also be present after lunch to show Members around the Library.

3.9 Members expressed their appreciation of the quality of papers and minutes produced for Board and Committee meetings and of the professional manner in which discussion and debate was carried on at meetings.

3.10 Members congratulated officers on the range of events being organised during the January – March period.

4. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD HELD ON 10 DECEMBER 2009 LNI 01.02.10

4.1 On a proposal by Alderman H Nicholl, seconded by Councillor J Rodgers, the minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2009 were agreed as an accurate record.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 10 DECEMBER 2009 LNI 02.02.10

5.1 Members noted the document which had been circulated detailing actions taken as a result of discussion at, and decisions of, the previous meeting.

5.2 Members noted the following dates for meetings to which all Board Members would be invited:

- 11 March 2010 10.30am Board Meeting
  1.30pm Workshop on Business Plan 2010/11
- 30 March 2010 10.30am Services Committee - Workshop for all Board Members on Belfast Central Library Strategic Outline Case
- 18 May 2010 10.30am Services Committee - Workshop for all Board Members on the outcome of consultation on the Strategic Review of libraries in Greater Belfast
6. BALLYNAHINCH REGIONAL ADMINISTRATION CENTRE: DEPUTATION FROM NIPSA

6.1 Members noted that correspondence had been received from NIPSA requesting speaking rights at the Board Meeting in relation to the proposed closure of the former SEELB Library Headquarters building in Ballynahinch. Members were informed that the delegation comprised Ms Alison Millar, Assistant Secretary, NIPSA and Ms Mary Bradley, Local Studies Librarian. The delegation entered the meeting at 11.00am.

6.2 The Chairperson welcomed the members of the delegation and reminded them that they were being received in accordance with Section 9 of Standing Orders, a copy of which they had been provided to them. He invited the delegation to make their presentation.

6.3 Ms A Millar thanked Members for receiving the delegation and tabled a statement setting out NIPSA’s position in relation to the proposed closure of the former Library Headquarters building in Ballynahinch. She made the following comments:

- the proposal to close the Ballynahinch building was not surprising given the terms of reference for the Economic Appraisal and the gradual stripping away of functions and posts by the South Eastern Education and Library Board from their Library Headquarters building over the last 5 years

- no decision should be made in relation to the Ballynahinch building until information had been received and considered regarding the location of the permanent Headquarters of Libraries NI

- Corporate Services staff currently located in temporary leased premises in Lisburn could be relocated to Ballynahinch thus releasing immediate savings

- the residual capital value of the Ballynahinch premises was unlikely to be realised in the current property market and, in any case, would not necessarily be reinvested in Libraries NI

- alternative garaging for mobiles currently located in Ballynahinch would lead to additional costs

- removal of Stock Services from Ballynahinch would mean that there was no Stock Services Centre in Business Area C

- the proposal to disperse the Local Studies collection would dilute the service available and showed a lack of understanding of the nature and role of a Local Studies Department
• information on the number of regular users provided to NIPSA was incorrect

• the Board should rescind its proposal to close the former Library Headquarters building in Ballynahinch and reconsider the options being put forward by NIPSA in the content of a recommendation on the future Regional Headquarters for Libraries NI.

6.4 Ms Bradley requested that the Board retain the Local Studies collection as one unit in one building, indicating that the collection had been built up over many years and included maps and microfilm. As such it provided a complete resource for studying County Down and could be used by school children, members of the public or people undertaking research. She indicated that staff would be willing to consider working different rotas, provided the collection was retained as a unit in Ballynahinch, to ensure that it was available outside normal office hours. She referred to the queries received by staff via email and telephone and invited Board Members to visit Ballynahinch and view the collection.

6.5 Following their presentation, the members of the delegation answered questions from Members of the Board on the following matters:

• Clarification was sought on the number of users of the Local Studies Department. Ms M Bradley replied that appointments were not always made to use the Local Studies collection but at times they could have 6 or 7 visitors per day. Ms Bradley added that the Local Studies Department was not a browsing library and the users needed help to use the resources

• Clarification was sought as to NIPSA’s view of the residual capital value of the site. Ms Millar replied that she did not have a figure, however the value cited in the Economic Appraisal was based on 2008 property values and was unlikely to be accurate any longer given the current property market. She added that the land on which the Library Headquarters building was located and the immediate area behind the current building had been considered previously for residential development but had since been zoned and this would impact on the value

• The delegation’s views were sought on the transfer of the Local Studies collection as a unit to another location. Ms Bradley indicated that this was a possibility but that it would be wrong for the Local Studies collection to be “stuck in a corner”. She added that there was plenty of room in Ballynahinch for expansion and that transport links to the town were good.

• The delegation’s views were sought on how accessible Ballynahinch would be from other areas of N Ireland if it were the Regional Headquarters of Libraries NI. Ms Millar replied that there
were good road links to Ballynahinch with travel time from Belfast in the region of 25 minutes. She added that good car parking facilities were available at the Ballynahinch premises.

- Clarification was sought on use of the Local Studies collection for research purposes. Ms Bradley replied that some researchers travelled from abroad as well as from the local area. She added that genealogy was a rising passion.

6.6 The Chairman thanked the deputation for their presentation and for answering questions. Ms Millar asked when the Board would make a decision regarding the future of the Headquarters building in Ballynahinch. The Chief Executive confirmed that a decision would not be made until the consultation period had ended on 16 March 2010. The delegation withdrew from the meeting at 11.20am.

6.7 Ms H Osborn, Director of Service Delivery updated Members on the consultation process currently taking place regarding the Local Studies Department in Ballynahinch. Members were informed that the consultation questionnaire was available on the Libraries NI website and at Library Headquarters in Ballynahinch. She added that to date 12 letters had been received regarding the proposal and that a few questionnaires had been returned. It was noted that, in relation to consultation with staff, meetings had taken place with each individual member of staff regarding their options if Ballynahinch were to close.

6.8 In response to a question on the posts and services which had been removed from Ballynahinch over the years, the Director of Service Delivery replied that the SEELB had built a number of new libraries eg Lisburn City Library and Bangor Carnegie Library and some services had been relocated to these libraries so that the public had greater access to the services.

6.9 In response to a question on the significance of the Local Studies collection and possible sites for its relocation, the Director of Service Delivery replied that, over the years, a range of resources had been collected on the basis of the former SEELB area – it was not specific to County Down and some the resources related to County Antrim, Ulster and Ireland as a whole. She indicated that responses from the questionnaires were split on whether the collection should be housed in a single location or dispersed. It was proposed to relocate resources and staff support to Lisburn, Downpatrick, Bangor and Newry. She said that the intention was that material would be dispersed in a sensitive and customer focused way. She added that the collection was currently not housed in a public building and was open office hours only. The Director of Service Delivery confirmed that she had analysed the levels of use and the figure previously given was correct.

6.10 Mr R Dixon indicated, that as a former Local Studies librarian, he had a particular interest in this area of work. He confirmed that over the
years the collection policies of Boards had grown to encompass material from outside their immediate area. He expressed the view that Ballynahinch was not a good location if one of the principal aims was to increase accessibility to the material by members of the public and it was very hard to see how a small specialist library in Ballynahinch could thrive in the longer term. He added that there were some items of material in the collection which were unique to County Down but the majority of material was likely to be of a broader Ulster / Irish interest. Heavily used material, such as newspapers, would be available on microfilm.

6.12 In response to a question on the terms of the lease of the Libraries NI premises in Haslem's Lane, the Director of Business Support confirmed that the lease could be ended with 3 months notice and could also be extended for two years. He also indicated that the residual capital value of the premises in Ballynahinch as specified in the Economic Appraisal was based on the most recent valuation figure but that if it were to be sold the valuation would be established by the District Valuer. It was noted also that all capital receipts had to be returned to the Department and were included in the notional ISNI 2 capital profile.

6.13 Members asked about difficulties associated with staff currently working in Haslem’s Lane relocating to Ballynahinch. The Chief Executive indicated that relocation to Ballynahinch would present travel difficulties for some staff located in Lisburn. Moreover there would be set-up costs associated with the transfer of ICT systems for Corporate Services. She confirmed that work was continuing on the Economic Appraisal for the Regional Headquarters of Libraries NI and that a range of options would be considered, including premises owned by Libraries NI as well as other publicly and privately owned property. It was noted that the Economic Appraisal would be considered by the Business Support Committee in March, prior to any decision being made about the closure of Library Headquarters in Ballynahinch.

6.14 Members noted the statement and presentation by the delegation.

6.15 On a proposal by Councillor Mrs R Dunlop, seconded by Councillor S Cole it was agreed that a visit would be arranged to the Local Studies Department in Library Headquarters, Ballynahinch.

7. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD ON 19 JANUARY 2010 (LNI 03.02.10)

7.1 In the absence of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson Ms Jane Williams, presented the minutes of the Services Committee held on 19 January 2010 for adoption.

7.2 The Vice-Chairperson informed members that a tour of Libraries had been arranged before the Committee meeting which had been
invaluable to Members and added that she would encourage all Board Members to visit libraries.

7.3 The Vice-Chairperson of the Services Committee drew attention to the following items:

Item 3.2 Culture, Arts and Leisure Committee
Members noted the report of the meeting with the Culture, Arts and Leisure Committee held on 14 January 2010.

Item 6 Public Library Authority Conference
Members noted the importance of the Public Library Authority Conference held in October 2009.

Item 7 Update on Business Plan Targets
Members noted progress in relation to the targets contained in the 2009/10 Business Plan.

Item 9 Stock Disposal
Members noted the agreed methods of stock disposal.

Item 10 Strategic Outline Case for Belfast Central Library
It was noted that the Strategic Outline Case for Belfast Central Library had been submitted to DCAL and had been signed off by DCAL officials before submission to the Minister. If approved by the Minister it would then be forwarded to DFP.

7.4 Members noted that the next meeting of the Services Committee would take place on 16 February 2010 at 10.30 am in LNI Regional Offices, Omagh.

7.5 It was agreed that a workshop would be held for Board Members on Tuesday 30 March 2010 at 10.30 am to discuss the Strategic Outline Case for Belfast Central Library – venue to be confirmed.

7.6 The Director of Planning and Performance updated Members on the public consultation regarding the strategic review of libraries in Greater Belfast. Members noted that:

- representatives of The Equality Company were attending public meetings to take notes and prepare summary documents of key issues which were being published on the website

- to date public consultation meetings had been held in Finaghy Library and Cregagh Library (3 February) and the Mount Conference Centre (8 February)

- to date approximately 600 consultation responses had been received online and approximately 560 in hard copy
• meetings were being arranged with focus groups representing Section 75 consultees and children

• meetings had been held with a number of political representatives

• the Chief Executive, Director of Service Delivery and Business Manager had attended a meeting of the Lisburn City Council Policy and Resources Committee

• meetings had been arranged with Belfast City Council, Castlereagh Borough Council and Newtownabbey Borough Council

• the consultation document and questionnaire were being translated into Polish at the request of a group representing the Polish community

• with the agreement of the Services Committee the closing date for responses to the consultation had been extended until 5 April

• a draft EQIA is in preparation and will be published during the week commencing 22 February with an 8 week period for responses.

7.7 It was agreed, in light of the amount of information that needed to be collated and analysed before recommendations could be made, that a workshop would be held for all Board Members on 18 May 2010 at 10.30am to consider the draft report of the public consultation and responses to the draft EQIA - venue to be notified.

7.8 It was agreed that a revised Schedule of Dates of Board and Committee meetings would be circulated to all Members.

7.9 It was agreed that a tour of libraries not previously visited would be arranged for Members.

7.10 On a proposal by Ms J Williams, seconded by Alderman H Nicholl Members agreed to adopt the minutes of the Services Committee held on 19 January 2010.

8. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE HELD ON 22 JANUARY 2010 LNI 04.02.10

8.1 The Chairperson, Mr A McDowell presented the minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee held on 22 January 2010 for noting.

8.2 The Chairperson advised Members that following the meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee on 22 January a tour of Belfast Central Library, including the Rare Book Collection, had been arranged.
8.3 The Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Committee then drew attention to the following items:

Item 9 Libraries NI Fraud Response Plan
Members noted the amendments to the Libraries NI Fraud Response Plan.

Item 10 Risk Management Group – Action Plan
Members noted the additional risk associated with the preparation of the annual accounts within the specified timeframe. This risk had been included because this was the first set of annual accounts for Libraries NI; a new financial system was in place; and the introduction of International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS). Information provided by the Education and Library Boards would form the opening balance for Libraries NI.

Item 11 Corporate Risk Register
Members noted the discussion on the management of the risks.

Item 12 Rare Book Collection
Members noted that the Risk Management Group had been asked to identify action which could be taken to improve the risks associated with the storage of the Rare Book Collection. Following discussion about the importance of the Collection, officers agreed to consider the inclusion of an additional risk relating to the opportunity costs of not optimising use of the Collection by displaying in secure, climate controlled facilities.

Item 13 DCAL Risk Register Template
The new template for the Corporate Risk Register supplied by DCAL was noted. It was agreed that a presentation would be made at a Board meeting within the first 3 months of the new financial year so that all Members would be aware of the risks and risk management processes.

Item 15 Governance and Accountability Meeting (October 2009)
Members noted the minutes of the Governance and Accountability meeting held in October 2009 and were informed that the minutes from the December Accountability meeting would be brought to the next Audit and Risk Committee meeting in March.

Item 16 Internal Audit Activity Report
Members noted that 5 audit reports had been completed since the last Audit and Risk Committee meeting. All had received a satisfactory rating.

Item 22 Belfast Central Library Capital Development Project
Members noted the governance arrangements and were informed that the Audit and Risk Committee would be seeking assurances that the project management structure was in place. Mr McDowell suggested that the Members of the Services Committee should assure themselves
that the project structure meets their requirements as they will be monitoring the project. The Chief Executive informed Members that a Project Manager had yet to be appointed.

It was noted that the first meeting of Project Board was being arranged by DCAL for March.

Item 24  **NIAO Issues**
Members noted that the NIAO Audit Strategy would be considered in detail at the next meeting.

8.4 It was noted that a trainee auditor had been appointed and it was hoped that the successful candidate would take up position upon completion of the relevant checks.

9. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUSINESS SUPPORT COMMITTEE HELD ON 27 JANUARY 2010**  

9.1 The Chairperson, Councillor Mrs E Robinson, presented the minutes of the Business Support Committee held on 27 January 2010 for adoption.

9.2 The Chairperson of the Business Support Committee drew attention to the following items:

Item 6  **Finance Report: December 2009: Recurrent**
The Chairperson informed Members that the bid made to the December monitoring round for additional funds to implement voluntary severance had been unsuccessful. She added that there was the possibility of internal funds being released by DCAL and supplemented by funding from Libraries NI which could be used to resource voluntary severance in 2009/10. Members noted that all staff released under voluntary severance must meet the payback period of 3.5 years.

Item 6  **Finance Report: Capital**
It was noted that the spend in 2009/10 on capital projects was higher than the cumulative spend on libraries by ELBs in any previous year.

Item 7  **Proposed Budget allocation**
Members noted that a meeting with the DCAL Minister to discuss the proposed budget allocation for 2010/11 would be arranged and that the Chairperson of the Board, the Vice-Chairperson of the Board, the Chairperson of the Business Support Committee and the Chairperson of the Services Committee would be invited to attend.

9.3 The Chief Executive drew attention to the Hansard Report of the Culture, Arts and Leisure Committee meeting held on 28 January 2010 at which the proposed budget for each of the DCAL Arms Length Bodies (ALBs) had been discussed. Members noted that it was
proposed to reduce the Libraries NI budget allocation by 2% or £600,000. Efficiencies were also proposed for other ALBs but these largely brought them back to their baseline funding.

9.4 Members asked that their concern regarding the proposed cuts to the public libraries 2010/11 budget be drawn to the attention of the Minister.

9.5 Mr A Scott, Director of Culture at DCAL informed Members that he had had a useful discussion with the Chief Executive regarding the proposed budget allocation for 2010/11 and understood the difficulties presented to Libraries NI, as a new organisation, by the level of cuts being proposed. He said that the impact on Libraries NI of the proposed additional efficiencies required in 2010/11 resulted in part from differential levels of increase in the budgets of the various ALBs in the Comprehensive Spending Review. Mr Scott commended Libraries NI on the progress made during 2009/10 and acknowledged the contribution that the public library service made to a range of targets within the Programme for Government. He added that he would continue within his role of Director of Culture to try and influence resource decisions to secure funding for Libraries NI.

9.6 The Chairperson of the Business Support Committee informed Members that the high level Business Plan had been submitted to DCAL along with the budget profile for 2010/11 and said that in order to engage Members in developing the detailed plan for 2010/11 it was proposed that the Board Meeting on 11 March be a full day with the Board meeting being held in the morning and a workshop on the draft 2010/11 Business Plan in the afternoon.

9.7 On a proposal by Councillor Mrs E Robinson, seconded by Mr R Dixon, Members agreed to adopt the minutes of the meeting.

10. MANAGEMENT STATEMENT

10.1 Members noted that a minor amendment had been made by the Department of Finance and Personnel to the Libraries NI Management Statement.

10.2 It was noted that a copy of the final document including all appendices would be provided to Members when it has been signed.

10.3 On a proposal by Ms H Roulston, seconded by Mr R Dixon, Members approved the revised Libraries NI Management Statement.
11. **FINANCIAL MEMORANDUM**

11.1 Members noted the amendments proposed by the Department of Finance and Personnel to the Libraries NI Financial Memorandum.

11.2 On a proposal by Councillor J Rodgers, seconded by Councillor Mrs E Robinson, Members approved the revised Financial Memorandum.

12. **ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS**

12.1 The Chief Executive introduced Ms Laura Brown, District Librarian based at Limavady Library. It was noted that the Library shared the same building as the Council.

12.2 Ms Brown briefed Members on the facilities offered at Limavady Library, and in particular the Play and Learn Centre and her work with the Prison Library Service.

12.3 Members thanked and commended Ms Brown and her staff for their work.

13. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

13.1 Members noted that the next Board meeting would take place on Thursday 11 March 2010 in Antrim Library commencing at 10.30 am with a Board Meeting and followed by a Workshop to be held in the afternoon regarding Business Planning.

14. **MEMBERS ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE TIMES**

14.1 The meeting ended at 12.56 pm.

14.2 All Members arrived for the commencement of the meeting and remained until it ended with the exception of:

   Councillor C Mullaghan arrived at 10.40 pm.

   Councillor S Shields left at 11.40 pm.

Signed: [Signature]

Date: 11/3/2010