Minutes of a meeting of the Board of Libraries NI held in the Lecture Room, Lisburn City Library on Thursday 30 April 2009 at 10.00am

PRESENT

Dr David Elliott      Chairperson
Mr Pat Carvill
Mr Alastair McDowell
Ms Jane Williams

IN ATTENDANCE

Chief Executive      Ms Irene Knox
Director of Planning & Performance    Mrs Anne Connolly
Director of Business Support    Mr Terry Heron
Director of Service Delivery    Mrs Helen Osborn
Business Manager      Ms Adrienne Adair
Business Manager      Mrs Trisha Ward
Corporate Governance Support Officer    Mr Brian Doherty

APOLOGIES FOR NON ATTENDANCE

Mrs Mandy Bryson      Business Manager

1. CHAIRPERSON’S BUSINESS

1.1 Welcome

The Chairperson welcomed Members and officers to the first meeting of the Board of Libraries NI.

1.2 The Libraries (2008 Act) (Commencement No 2) Order (N I) 2009

The Chairperson reminded Members that Commencement Order No 2 had come into effect on 1st April 2009, transferring responsibilities for the provision of a comprehensive and efficient public library service from the Education and Library Boards to Libraries NI (the Northern Ireland Library Authority). It was noted that the agenda for today’s meeting included key corporate and operational policies and procedures for Board approval. These policies and procedures needed to be in place to enable the organisation to function, but a further
review of them at the earliest practicable opportunity, when the Board was fully constituted, would be provided.

1.3 **Register of Board Decisions**

The Chairperson informed Members that, in addition to the minutes of Board meetings, a Register of Decisions would be kept, recording the proposer and seconder of all items of business on the Board agenda.

### 2. CHIEF EXECUTIVE’S BUSINESS

#### 2.1 DCAL Press Release

The Chief Executive tabled a copy of the Press Release issued by DCAL on 23 April (although dated 27 April) regarding the appointment of the current Board Members. Members noted the Minister’s statement that the results of the competition for Councillor Members of the Board would be announced in due course and that a new public competition would be initiated shortly to fill further places for members of the public on the Board.

#### 2.2 Chief Executive’s Forum: Seminar on Good Governance and the Role of the Audit Committee

The Chief Executive drew attention to the seminar to be held on Wednesday 20 May 2009, 9.30am – 1.00pm at Malone House, Belfast. The Corporate Governance Support Officer, Mr B Doherty would be attending and a place is available for a Board member to attend. It was agreed that Ms J Williams would attend this seminar.

It was noted that the Chairperson, Mr Carvill and Mr McDowell had recently received governance training.

#### 2.3 Assembly Question Oral (AQO) 2507/09

The Chief Executive tabled for information the response given by the Minister on 20 April 2009 to an Oral Question from Jim Shannon MLA regarding the establishment of Libraries NI. Members noted that copies of responses made to Assembly Questions (AQs) and Parliamentary Questions (PQs) would be brought to the Board for information.
2.4 CILIP Ireland/LAI Annual Joint Conference 29 April – 1 May

Members noted that the Chief Executive had spoken on Day 1 of the conference on the establishment of Libraries NI and that presentations were also to be given by:

- Adrienne Adair  Bangor Carnegie Library Building Project
- Trisha Ward  The One Book Project
- Stephen McFarlane  Business Information.

The Chairman and Chief Executive have been invited to the annual COLICO lecture at 2.00pm on 30 April being given by Professor Alistair McCleery, Scottish Centre for the Book.

Invitations have been issued to Board Members to attend the Conference Dinner on 30 April in the Harbour Commissioner’s Office.

On Friday 1 May conference delegates will be visiting Bangor Carnegie Library.

2.5 Health in Mind -

Members were pleased to note that The Big Lottery Fund would be announcing shortly the award of £1million over 5 years to “Health in Mind”, a project involving Libraries NI and four mental health voluntary organizations (MindWise, formerly known as Rethink; Cause; Action Mental Health; and Aware Defeat Depression). The project is concerned with improving access to information, learning and support for people with mental health difficulties in libraries across Northern Ireland. The Chairperson thanked Mrs Helen Osborn for her work on the project.

2.6 DCAL Change of Address

Members noted that DCAL had moved to new premises at Causeway Exchange, Belfast. Details will be forwarded to Members via e-mail.

3. STANDING ORDERS

Members considered the draft Standing Orders for the Board.

3.1 Paragraph 8.3: Registering and declaring interests

To ensure consistency with other documents, including the Code of Practice for Board Members it was agreed that the wording of this paragraph should be amended to read as follows:
“If any matter arises at a meeting of the Authority in which a member or employee of the Authority or other person in attendance at the meeting has a personal or business interest or family relationship, which may conflict with their responsibilities as Authority members or which members of the public might reasonably think could influence Authority Members’ judgment in relation to the matter under discussion, he/she shall declare that interest, and it will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting. The person in question will leave the room prior to discussion of that matter and will take no part in the discussion or decision-making on that matter.”

3.2 Paragraph 18.11 Duties of standing committees

It was agreed that the last sentence of the paragraph should be amended to read Audit and Risk Committee.

3.3 Paragraph 22.1 Quotations

To ensure consistency with the draft Financial Memorandum it was agreed that the wording of this paragraph should be amended to read as follows:

“Where the estimated cost of works to be carried out or goods or services to be purchased is between £1,000 and £30,000 (excluding VAT) written tenders shall be sought as follows:

£1,000 - £10,000     At least three selected tenders
£10,001 - £30,000   At least four selected tenders.”

3.4 Paragraph 28.0 Standing Orders to be given to members

It was noted that the Libraries Act (N Ireland) 2008 did not require Standing Orders to be approved by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure. Members agreed therefore to reword the paragraph as follows:

“A copy of these Standing Orders shall be given to each member of the Authority by the Chief Executive and copies of amendments shall likewise be issued as soon as possible after adoption by the Authority.”

While recognizing that the Department had no statutory role in the approval of Standing Orders, Members nevertheless requested that a copy is forwarded to the DCAL for comment.
3.5 Members asked that officers consider how the following matters might be clarified further within Standing Orders:
   • the admission or exclusion of the public and press from meetings of the Board and its committees
   • provision for the Board to convene ad hoc working groups to enable Members to engage in detailed discussion on matters before formal presentation to a committee or the Board
   • the recording in minutes of meetings of the arrival and departure times of Board Members.

3.6 Members asked that legal advice be sought on:
   • the revised Standing Orders
   • whether the minutes of a Remuneration Committee should be made public by circulation with the notice of a meeting of the Authority
   • whether the Board could delegate approval for staff appointments below a certain level in the structure to the Chief Executive
   • whether the Board could delegate approval for tenders/contracts below a certain monetary level to the Chief Executive.

3.7 Subject to the agreed amendments noted above, on a proposal by Mr A McDowell, seconded by Mr P Carvill, Members approved Standing Orders as an interim working document, noting that they may require to be revised as a result of the actions detailed in 3.5 and 3.6 above.

4. STAFFING

4.1 Staff Appointments: Permanent positions

All officers withdrew from the meeting.

Members considered the list of permanent appointments that had been circulated as well as two further permanent appointments made in the interim. On a proposal by Ms J Williams, seconded by Mr P Carvill Members approved the permanent appointment of staff as detailed in the Appendices.

Officers returned to the meeting.

The Chief Executive agreed to provide Members with details of the salary scales of senior officers.

It was also agreed that, in future, the relevant qualifications of successful candidates should be included in the approval documentation for the Board.
4.2 **Staff Transfer Scheme**

Members noted that the Libraries NI Staff Transfer Scheme was the first such Scheme to be agreed by any of the RPA affected organisations and is viewed as a model of good practice. The Chairman congratulated the Chief Executive and Mrs M Walker, Human Resource Manager for the work that they had done to achieve this successful outcome.

4.3 **Staff Appointments: Secondments and Temporary Posts**

Members noted that until 31 March 2009 staff had been seconded to DCAL as part of the NILA Implementation Team but with the establishment of Libraries NI, the contractual relationship passed to the new organisation. The retention of the seconded and temporary staff is important to ensure continuity in this transition period pending permanent appointments.

The Director of Business Support confirmed that:
- the Finance Manager had been appointed on a temporary contract as a result of a public advertisement; and
- it was anticipated that all posts in the Business Support Unit would be filled on a permanent basis by the end of August 2009.

On a proposal by Mr A McDowell, seconded by Ms J Williams Members approved the extension of the secondments and temporary contracts of staff detailed in the Appendix until 31 August 2009.

5. **CORPORATE GOVERNANCE**

5.1 **Byelaws**

Members noted that:
- DCAL, prior to confirming that it was content with proposed Byelaws, had sought advice from the Departmental Solicitor’s Office; and
- when approved by the Board, the Byelaws would be sealed and forwarded to the Department for signature. Copies would then be posted on the Libraries NI website and would be available for inspection in Branch Libraries.

On a proposal by Ms J Williams, seconded by Mr P Carvill Members approved the Byelaws and agreed that no charge should be made for the provision of a copy of the Byelaws to any person so requesting.
5.2 Draft Management Statement

A copy of the draft Management Statement had been provided to Board Members on 15 April and had not been re-circulated since no response had been received as yet from DCAL in relation to comments previously submitted by officers. It was noted that the Chief Executive had raised the necessity of having the Management Statement finalised as soon as possible with the Permanent Secretary at a meeting on 22 April.

Members commented on the following matters:

- **Paragraph 3.5.4:** The unrealistic timescale of 5 days suggested in the Management Statement for submission to the Department of draft minutes of Board and Committee meetings as well as the status of draft minutes and their value to the Department. Members were of the view that it was more appropriate for the Department to receive agreed minutes.

- **Paragraph 4.1.1:** Whether it was realistic for the first draft Corporate Plan to be finalized and approved within the first three meetings of the Board, given that the full Board had not yet been appointed. The Director of Planning and Performance indicated that the Budget Allocation Letter (dated 31 March 2009) had given approval to the Authority to incur expenditure to the end of May as an interim measure until the Board was fully operational and the Corporate and Business Plans had been agreed and that there was therefore a degree of urgency in finalizing the documents, at least as interim Plans. Members noted that the Chief Executive would be raising the issue of an extension of the approval to incur expenditure at a meeting with the Director of Culture in DCAL, scheduled for 7 May.

- **Paragraph 4.7.4:** Whether it was the role of the Finance Committee, rather than the Audit and Risk Committee, to comment on “the state of the Authority's finances”. The Director of Business Support Manager indicated that it was a requirement for the Audit and Risk Committee to consider the Statement of Internal Control which would identify any significant internal control problems, including those that might be associated with the financial situation, but that it would be the responsibility of the Finance Committee to consider the state of the Authority’s finances in detail. Members asked that the wording of Paragraph 4.7.4 be amended to ensure clarity between the respective roles of the Finance Committee and the Audit and Risk Committee.
Members noted the efforts that were being made by officers to progress agreement on the Management Statement and thanked them for their work on this matter.

5.3 Draft Financial Memorandum LNI 07.04.09

A copy of the draft Financial Memorandum had been provided to Board Members on 15 April and had not been re-circulated since no response had been received as yet from DCAL in relation to comments previously submitted by officers and the request for a meeting to discuss the document in detail. It was noted that the Chief Executive had raised the necessity of having the Financial Memorandum finalised as soon as possible with the Permanent Secretary at a meeting on 22 April.

Members commented on the following matters:

- Appendix 6, Paragraph 2: The need for clarity regarding the levels of authorisation required in relation to tenders
- Appendix 8: The restrictive nature of the provisions regarding the provision of hospitality. The Chief Executive replied that the guidelines were standard across public sector bodies and were helpful in ensuring a consistent approach.

Members noted the efforts that were being made by officers to progress agreement on the Management Statement and thanked them for their work on this matter.

5.4 Code of Practice for Board Members LNI 08.04.09

Members were informed that the draft Code of Practice reflected the contents of the draft Management Statement in relation to the responsibilities of the Chairperson, the Board and the Chief Executive, the need for the Board to act corporately and in line with the Nolan Principles with due regard to the need to safeguard public funds and the requirements for regularity, propriety and value for money.

Paragraphs 10 and 11: Delegation
Members requested that officers should produce proposals regarding delegation of responsibilities to Committees as well as to the Chief Executive and other officers, taking into account the draft Management Statement and Financial Memorandum.

Paragraphs 16 – 25: Handling conflicts of interest
The requirements regarding declarations of interests were noted.
Paragraphs 26 – 28: Personal Liability of Board Members

Members noted the position.

Paragraph 39: Audit Committees

Members agreed to give consideration at their next meeting to the establishment of an Audit and Risk Committee.

Paragraphs 40 – 41: The Board as Employer

Members noted that a draft Code of Conduct for Staff would be brought to the next meeting of the Board.

Paragraph 42: Remuneration Committee

Members requested that consideration be given to the role, membership and terms of reference of a Remuneration Committee.

On a proposal by Mr A McDowell, seconded by Mr P Carvill it was agreed to approve the Code of Practice for Board Members. Members noted that the Code of Conduct would be one of several documents to be included in the induction programme for all Board Members, when appointed.

5.5 Declaration of Interests

On a proposal by Ms J Williams, seconded by Mr McDowell members approved the proforma for Declaration of Interests.

Members were asked to complete and return their Declaration of Interests form before or at the next Board Meeting. It was noted that the Register of Interests would be publicized on the Libraries NI website under the Publications Scheme and that the Register would also be available for inspection.

5.6. Gifts and Hospitality

5.6.1 Guidance on the Acceptance of Gifts and Hospitality

Members noted the requirement imposed by DAO (DFP) 10/06 which provides the template for the Guidance on Acceptance of Gifts and Hospitality. It was noted also that the Guidance applied to both Members and staff.

It was agreed that the following amendments should be incorporated:

Paragraph 2.14: First line of the paragraph to read as follows:
“Apart from trivial/inexpensive seasonal gifts, such as diaries, no gifts or hospitality of any kind from any source should be accepted by anyone directly involved in the procurement or monitoring of a contract.”

**Paragraph 2.21:** Penultimate sentence to read as follows:

“Additionally, very occasional acceptance of meals or tickets to public sporting, cultural or social events be accepted if attendance is justified as being in the particular business interests of Libraries NI, provided that such acceptance has been approved by the relevant line manager and that acceptance places no obligation or perceived obligation on the recipient.”

**Paragraph 3.1:** It was agreed that all monitoring would be carried out quarterly.

On a proposal by Mr P Carvill, seconded by Mr A McDowell, Members agreed the Guidance on the Acceptance of Gifts and Hospitality subject to the amendments noted above.

5.6.2 **Guidance on the Provision of Gifts and Hospitality**

Members were informed that Guidance on the Provision of Gifts and Hospitality was also required by DAO (DFP) 10/06, although it only provides general advice, therefore DCAL’s policy had been used as the model. It was noted that the Guidance was applicable to both Board Members and staff.

**Paragraph 5.1:** It was agreed to amend the third sentence in the paragraph to provide for an entrance fee to be charged for attendance at an evening event that would cover the cost of refreshments.

On a proposal by Mr A McDowell, seconded by Mr P Carvill Members approved the Guidance on the Provision of Gifts and Hospitality, subject to the above amendment.

5.7 **Media Handling Policy**

Members were informed that the Chairperson and Chief Executive were the main media spokespersons and no one else (Board Member or staff member) should speak to the media about Libraries NI matters, unless delegated to do so. This did not preclude Branch staff, for example, developing good relationships with the local press to promote activities and events in their libraries.
On a proposal by Ms J Williams, seconded by Mr P Carvill Members agreed to approve the Media Handling Policy

5.8 Anti-Fraud

5.8.1 Anti-Fraud Policy

Mr B Doherty, Corporate Governance Support Officer informed Members that the prevention, detection and handling of fraud were a key priority for the public sector and a key aspect of internal control arrangements. DAO (DFP) 12/06 required all organisations to have an Anti-Fraud Policy in place. He added that anti-fraud measures would be a key area of work for the Audit and Risk Committee, when established.

On a proposal by Mr A McDowell, seconded by Ms J Williams Members approved the Anti-Fraud Policy and noted that this area would be considered in more detail by the Audit and Risk Committee, when established.

The Chief Executive briefed Members on the recent publication of a Northern Ireland Audit Office report on the investigation of suspected contract fraud in the Belfast Education and Library Board in 2003 which involved payments being made for work at 2 libraries which had not been done, as well as incomplete and poor quality work undertaken at other libraries. Members noted that procedures were in place in Libraries NI to ensure that work being undertaken on its behalf by contractors employed by Education and Library Boards was of an acceptable standard and that these procedures would be kept under review, in light of the findings of the NIAO report.

5.8.2 Fraud Response Plan

Members were informed that DAO (DFP) 12/06 required all organisations to have a Fraud Response Plan in place. Members noted in particular:

- the Memorandum of Understanding between the PSNI and the public sector
- the need to preserve and protect evidence
- the recommendation that anyone involved in gathering evidence should be accredited in investigative practice and that the personnel specification for the Head of Internal Audit in Libraries NI contained a requirement that applicants hold an accredited certificate in investigative practice
the proposed composition of the Fraud Investigation Oversight Group
the role of the Audit and Risk Committee.

Paragraph 3.10: It was agreed to amend the paragraph to read as follows:

“At this stage the Director of Business Support should advise the Chief Executive and the Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Committee of the findings of the preliminary investigation.”

On a proposal by Mr P Carvill, seconded by Mr A McDowell Members agreed to approve the Fraud Response Plan, subject to the above amendment and noted that the documentation would be considered in more detail by the Audit and Risk Committee when established.

5.9 Whistleblowing Policy

The Corporate Governance Support Officer introduced the draft policy and reported on a recent seminar on Whistleblowing, organized by the Department of Finance and Personnel that he had attended, at which it had been recommended that organisations become members of Public Concern at Work. It was noted that membership cost approximately £500 per annum.

External Disclosures: It was agreed to amend the first sentence in this paragraph to read as follows and to delete the second sentence:

“While we hope we have given you the reassurance you need to raise your concern internally with us, we recognize that there may be circumstances where you can properly report a concern to an appropriate regulator such as the Northern Ireland Audit Office or the Health and Safety Executive of Northern Ireland.”

On a proposal by Ms J Williams, seconded by Mr A McDowell, Members approved the Whistleblowing Policy subject to the above amendment and noted that the Policy would be considered in more detail by the Audit and Risk Committee, when established.

On a proposal by Mr P Carvill, seconded by Ms J Williams it was agreed that Libraries NI should become members of PCAW.
5.10 Risk Management Strategy

The Corporate Governance Support Officer introduced the paper and informed members that the Risk Management Strategy and its six appendices would be used in Libraries NI as a framework for risk management. It was noted that Libraries NI had inherited 5 different approaches to risk management and substantial training would be required so that all staff were aware of their responsibilities in relation to risk management. This would be a key priority during 2009/10 in order to ensure that the required information was available to enable the Chief Executive to comply with the requirements for the Statement of Internal Control. He asked Members to note the format being proposed for Risk Registers.

The Audit and Risk Committee, when established would consider Risk Management more fully and review, on a regular basis, the Corporate Risk Register. Members were informed that handover statements were being prepared by each of the 5 Education Boards and a summary of issues identified would be available at the next meeting.

Members noted that work still needed to be done to finalise the documents and that this would take place after consideration had been given to the Corporate Plan and Members’ views had been taken into account, particularly on risk appetite. Members noted that as a new NDPB it would be particularly important for Libraries NI to ensure that effective procedures and processes were in place to manage risk and that the risk appetite in relation to most issues was likely to be either “averse” or cautious”. Discussions would take place with DCAL to ensure an agreed understanding of the risk management and risk appetite issues.

Appendix 3: Risk Management Group: Terms of Reference

Paragraph 1.0: Constitution: It was agreed to refer to the Risk Management Group as an Officers’ Working Group to avoid confusion.

Paragraph 2.0: Membership: It was agreed, in order to avoid the potential for conflict of interest, to clarify that the Head of Internal Audit’s role was to provide advice and support with regard to risk management and to arrange for the audit arrangements for risk management.

On a proposal by Mr A McDowell, seconded by Mr P Carville Members agreed to approve the Risk Management Strategy as an interim document, subject to the above amendments and noted that the
documents would be considered in more detail by the Audit and Risk Committee, when established.

6. OPERATIONAL POLICIES/PROCEDURES

6.1 Scheme for Library Charges

The Chief Executive introduced the paper. Members noted that DCAL had given interim approval and that budgets for 2009/10 had been predicated on the basis of these charges.

Members noted the main differences between the current proposals and those that had existed in the Education and Library Boards prior to the establishment of Libraries NI, particularly in relation to the Belfast Central Music Library and the South Eastern Education and Library Board. Members were informed that DCAL required a Business Case in relation to the decision to reduce the charges for DVDs.

It was noted that approximately £1m had been received in 2008/09 from fines and charges. The Chairman enquired if any complaints had been received from Belfast Central Music Library users in relation to the withdrawal of the subscription scheme. The Chief Executive replied that there had been some complaints received by staff and that she had received one complaint regarding the matter. She added that a number of complaints had been received from SEELB library users regarding the introduction of charges for Music CDs. Members recognised that some staff might have concerns about the introduction of charges, where they had not existed previously, or changes to the level or method of charging but emphasised the importance of staff adhering to agreed Board policy. Members noted the importance, in the interests of equity, of library charges being standardised across Northern Ireland.

It was agreed that officers would

- investigate whether the policy of not charging children and senior citizens for overdue items had the potential to be discriminatory
- provide a breakdown of income received under the various categories.

On a proposal by Ms J Williams, seconded by Mr A McDowell Members approved the Scheme for Library Charges, retrospectively to 1 April 2009.
6.2 **Scheme of Charges – Hire of Rooms and Equipment**  
LNI 18.04.09

Members were informed that the harmonization charges for rooms and associated equipment was proving difficult because of the very different practices that existed across the five Boards. A balance would need to be struck between ensuring equity and at least covering costs, especially if rooms were hired outside normal opening hours. It was noted that proposals would also have to take account of whether the organisation hiring the room/equipment was a commercial or non-commercial enterprise and the availability of alternative meeting rooms in the area.

A Working Group was in place to standardize the methodology for charging for the hire of rooms and equipment across Northern Ireland and when the outcome of the working group is known the findings would be equality screened. At this stage an interim scheme was being brought to Members and it was hoped that revised proposals would be available by the end of the summer.

On a proposal by Mr P Carvill, seconded by Ms J Williams Members approved the Scheme of Charges – Hire of Rooms and Associated Equipment as an interim Scheme.

6.3 **Comments and Complaints Policy**  
LNI 19.04.09

The Chief Executive informed Members that a draft Comments Form is being used currently to enable customers to provide feedback as well as via the website.

Members noted the document and agreed that consultation should take place with staff and the Trade Unions.

6.4 **Policies and Procedures to ensure the Protection and Safety of Children**  
LNI 20.04.09

Members were informed that the five Library Services had already harmonised policies and procedures in relation to child protection and safety. The attached documents update those policies to take account of the move to a single organisation with four Business Units.

Advice and support to Designated Librarians was provided pre April 2009 by the Designated Officers in the Education and Library Boards who have high levels of expertise in child protection. A key priority in 2009/10 will be to implement a programme of training so that Libraries NI will have its own high level of internal expertise.
In response to a question on the issue of single staffing of branch libraries, the Director of Planning and Performance replied that strict procedures were in place where single staffing existed and that while the trade unions had raised issues in the past regarding single staffing, it was the case that single staffing often meant that a library could remain open which otherwise would have to close, because its usage did not justify more than one member of staff being on duty at a time.

In response to a question regarding vetting process for staff the Director of Business Support indicated that vetting procedures were undertaken by Human Resources. The system for vetting is being revised because of the establishment of the new Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) and the intention to have a new Vetting and Barring Scheme from July 2010. There will be a 5 year phased roll out for this new Scheme.

The Chief Executive informed Members that there are staff who have not been vetted because they had been employed prior to the introduction of vetting arrangements and while an exercise had been undertaken some years ago to update records, participation was voluntary. The new arrangements mean that the vetting process must be completed by 2010.

Members asked that statistics be provided on the number of staff who have been vetted and the number of staff who work regularly in a single staffing situation who have not been vetted.

On a proposal by Ms J Williams, seconded by Mr P Carvill Members approved the Policies and Procedures to ensure the Protection and Safety of Children.

6.5 **Stock Policy**

The Director of Service Delivery presented the document and informed Members that the policy covered all stock management processes and applied to all types of stock. It was based on the policy that existed in the Education and Library Boards and it was likely that it would require further development in due course once Libraries NI has developed its strategy for each of its key themes - learning, culture, information and heritage.

It was noted that stock selection was influenced by information collated from issue figures, community profiles and the views of customers received either verbally or on comments forms or via the website. It was noted also that in choosing stock, account was taken of the wider environment, including what other organisations were doing, in order
not to duplicate provision. It was for this reason that consideration needed to be given as to whether the provision of DVDs should be continued in the longer term. It was agreed that consideration should be given as to how the effectiveness of the stock selection process could be assessed.

Members requested that the final paragraph under the section, headed Selection should be reworded to state that Libraries NI will act within the law in relation to the selection of stock.

Members asked for a presentation in due course on the policies and procedures for stock selection.

On a proposal by Mr A McDowell, seconded by Ms J Williams Members approved the Stock Policy subject to the above amendment.

7. BUDGET 2009/2010

7.1 DCAL Allocation Letter  LNI 22.04.09

Mr T Heron, Director of Business Support introduced the correspondence from DCAL, dated 31 March 2009, on the Budget Allocation and Priorities 2009/10 and highlighted key points.

Members asked the Chief Executive to seek an extension until after their next meeting for submission of the Business Plan to DCAL.

Members queried whether the targets set by DCAL were achievable. The Chief Executive replied that Libraries NI would seek to meet the targets set in the Allocation letter; where targets were not met, it would be necessary to justify the reason. It was confirmed that the financial target of living within budget was not negotiable.

Members noted the Budget Allocation letter.

7.2 Proposals for Recurrent Budget  LNI 23.04.09

The Director of Business Support introduced the proposals for the recurrent budget allocation for 2009/10 and explained that the proposals were based on Education and Library Board’s cash actual spend at February adjusted to take account, for example, of one-off expenditure and earmarked allocations, as well as salary savings as a result of voluntary redundancies implemented at the end of March. The actual accrued spend in ELBs in 2008/09 would not be known until mid-May when Annual Accounts have been prepared.
An inflation factor had then been added for each category of expenditure to provide an uplifted base for 2009/10 and corporate costs and pressures identified, including the projected impact on income as a result of the reduction in charges for DVDs.

Members noted that Libraries NI acted as a “post box” for the funding allocation to Cardinal O’Fiaich Library and had no role in determining how the monies were spent or in monitoring the expenditure.

The Director of Business Support confirmed that the Libraries NI finance system would allow for accruals to be posted to the general ledger.

In response to a query the Director of Business Support indicated that the Department did not provide an indication of the rate of inflation that should be applied to any of the categories of spend.

The Director of Business Support indicated that a more detailed paper would be available for the next Board meeting, showing the profile of expenditure. He reported that he would also bring a paper to a later meeting of the Board in relation to the proposed planned maintenance programme.

The Chairperson asked if the issue of a carry forward deficit of £600k from the Belfast Education and Library Board had been resolved. Mr Heron reported on discussions with the Department on this matter and indicated that there did not appear to be a way of bringing this matter to a satisfactory conclusion. As a result the deficit would transfer to Libraries NI Reserves but it would have no budgetary implications.

Members noted that approval had been received from DFP in relation to VAT registration but HMRC had not yet provided the registration number or identified any concerns. Libraries NI had registered its concern about the delay with HMRC.

Members were informed that Libraries NI had been admitted to the NILGOSC pension scheme. The Scheme was in deficit and Libraries NI would inherit a share of that deficit. The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) and the Department of Education (DE) had agreed to underwrite the deficit and it had been agreed also that the deficit would be split between Education and Library Boards and Libraries NI in proportion to the number of active members. A paper on the Pension Scheme will be brought to the next meeting for Members’ information.
On a proposal by Ms J Williams, seconded by Mr P Carvill Members approved the proposal for the Recurrent Budget 2009/10, as an interim budget.

7.3 Proposals for Capital Budget

The Director of Business Support introduced the paper and drew attention to the following matters:

- in relation to the status of current capital projects, Members noted with concern the time taken between submission of Economic Appraisals to the Department and the approval to proceed. The Chief Executive indicated that she and Mr Heron were meeting with DCAL in early May to discuss the capital programme and would be seeking to find ways of accelerating the process. It was noted that consultants would be engaged to carry out Economic Appraisals for major projects whilst smaller schemes could be carried out in-house.

- the projected spend on Major Works in 2009/10, which exceeded the allocation received to date. It was noted that this matter had already been raised with the Department and that additional funding would be allocated when the profiles had been agreed.

- the projected spend in the Other Capital budget for 2009/10, which was in excess of the amount allocated to date. It was noted that this matter had also been raised with the Department and that the funding would be allocated when the profiles had been agreed.

The Director of Business Support sought approval for submission to DCAL of the proposed Capital budgets for 2009/10.

In response to a question on procurement processes the Director of Business Support confirmed that the Libraries NI would not have COPE status and would use the processes currently in place in the Education and Library Boards which had COPE status.

Members queried whether there were other capital projects being planned and whether these would be reviewed in light of the establishment of Libraries NI and the strategic review of the estate which was underway. The Chief Executive indicated that there were several other projects at various stages in the planning process and that it was likely that these would progress ahead of completion of the strategic review since they met Libraries NI requirements. Other projects included in the ISNI 2 capital profile had not progressed to any great extent and would be considered in light of the strategic review.
Members noted that substantial funding had been profiled in ISNI 2 for Belfast Central Library. It was noted that a full report on all planned capital projects would be brought to the Board in due course.

On a proposal by Mr A McDowell, seconded by Ms J Williams Members approved the capital budget proposals for 2009/10 for submission to DCAL. The ‘Other Capital’ proposal which exceeded the 09/10 Allocation is subject to the preparation and approval of individual Business up to this amount and the communication of these to the Board for approval.

8. LIBRARIES NI BANKING ARRANGEMENTS

Members noted that Libraries NI’s main banking arrangements were with the Northern Bank and confirmed a minute of 15 April 2009 regarding the use of the Alliance and Leicester Building Society for those branches which were unable to use the Northern Bank.

On a proposal by Ms J Williams, seconded by Mr P Carvill Members approved the banking arrangements.

9. DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN 2009 – 2012

The Director of Planning and Performance introduced the draft Corporate Plan. She informed Members that the Department was seeking submission of the Business Plan for 2009/10 by the end of May 2009. The Business Plan must flow from the Corporate Plan as would the Corporate Risk Register. Given the importance of these documents to the work of the Board over the next year and the importance of a shared understanding of their contents she suggested that some time be set aside at the next meeting to enable more detailed consideration to be given to the suite of documents as a whole i.e. the Corporate Plan, the Business Plan and the Corporate Risk Register.

Members asked that consideration be given to the following:

- Accounting for our leadership: rewording the second bullet point
- Performance Management Framework Summary: the role of the Board
- The inclusion of a glossary of abbreviations
- Ensuring consistency between targets contained in the main body of the Plan and those detailed in Appendix 3
- Ensuring that the targets were stretching, but achievable
• Ensuring the inclusion of an appropriate target in relation to cultural events

Members noted the importance of developing appropriate qualitative measures to demonstrate the value of the library service and that the Senior Management Team would be giving consideration to this matter during the year.

Members congratulated the Director of Planning and Performance on the Draft Corporate Plan which they felt was very easily read. It was noted that a revised draft of the Corporate Plan together with the proposed Business Plan for 2009/10 would be brought to the next meeting.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members noted that the next meeting of the Board would take place on Friday 5 June 2009 at 2.00 pm. The venue will be notified to Members.

11. ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS

There was no other notified business.

12. MEMBERS ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE TIMES

The meeting ended at 1.20pm. All Members arrived for the commencement of the meeting, and remained until it ended.

Signed: __________________________________________

Date: __________________________________________