LIBRARIES NI
The Northern Ireland Library Authority

30 September 2009

Minutes of a meeting of the Board of the Authority held in the Libraries NI Regional Offices, Ballymena on Wednesday 30 September 2009 at 10.30am

PRESENT

Dr David Elliott
Councillor Mrs Anne Brolly
Mr Pat Carvill
Councillor Charlie Casey
Councillor Sam Cole
Councillor Mrs Roberta Dunlop
Councillor Allan Ewart
Mr Alastair McDowell
Councillor Cathal Mullaghan
Alderman Hubert Nicholl
Councillor Mrs Evelyne Robinson
Councillor Jim Rodgers
Ms Jane Williams

Chairperson

APOLOGIES FOR NON ATTENDANCE

Councillor Miss Carla Lockhart
Councillor Seamus Shields

IN ATTENDANCE

Chief Executive
Director of Planning & Performance
Director of Service Delivery
Director of Business Support
DCAL Observer

Ms Irene Knox
Mrs Anne Connolly
Ms Helen Osborn
Mr Terry Heron
Mrs Hazel Campbell

1. CHAIRPERSON’S BUSINESS

1.1 Declarations of Interests
The Chairperson reminded Members of the need to disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest in relation to any matter on the agenda of the meeting either now or at the relevant time during the meeting. No interests were declared.
The Chairperson asked Members who had not already done so to complete the Declaration of Interests proforma and return it to the Chief Executive's office as soon as possible.

1.2 **DCAL observer**
The Chairperson welcomed Hazel Campbell who had recently been appointed as Head of Libraries Branch in DCAL and was attending the meeting that day in an observer capacity. Ms Campbell thanked the Chairperson for giving her the opportunity to be present and explained that she would attend meetings of the Board on an ad hoc basis in an observer capacity as well as meetings of the Audit and Risk Committee on a more regular basis.

1.3 **New Appointment of Director of Culture**
The Chairperson reported that Linda Wilson, formerly Director of Culture, had left the Department and been replaced by Arthur Scott. Councillor Rodgers enquired as to whether formal notification had been received from the Permanent Secretary in relation to the staff changes and was informed that while correspondence had been received from Linda Wilson herself about her departure from the Department, no formal notification had been received from the Permanent Secretary in relation to either her replacement or the appointment of Hazel Campbell as the Head of Libraries Branch. The Chief Executive agreed to raise this matter with the Department.

1.4 **Appointment of Remaining Board Members**
The Chairperson reported that the Minister was expected to make an announcement in the next few days about the appointment of the remaining 4 Board Members and that their appointment would be effective from 1st October 2009. It was expected that at least 3 of the new Members would be in attendance at the induction day on 12th October.

1.5. **Strategic Partnerships Forum**
The Chairperson reported that he and the Chief Executive had attended a meeting of the Strategic Partnerships Forum, established by DCAL. It was anticipated that the Forum, which comprised the Chairpersons and Chief Executives of all the Department’s Arms Length Bodies, would meet twice a year to discuss issues of common interest.

At the meeting the Permanent Secretary had updated those present on the following matters:

- the work being done by the Department to strengthen governance and accountability arrangements;
- the Minister’s desire to engage with the ALBs on how they might contribute to one of his key priorities, i.e. the advancement of a shared and better future through culture and on the basis of equity, diversity and interdependence;
the difficult financial situation likely to be faced by all ALBs in 2010/11 as a result of the economic situation.

2. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUSINESS

2.1. Financial Position
The Chief Executive reported that no information had been received from DCAL as yet as to what might be required in relation to the budget for next year. She indicated that work was underway on the business case for funding to implement Phase 2 of the voluntary severance programme which was required to complete the restructuring necessary as a result of the establishment of a single library authority and to realise the associated efficiencies which had already been factored into the current CSR settlement. These efficiencies, which amounted to £600k in 2009/10 and a further £600k in 2010/11, were RPA related and were separate and distinct from any further reductions which would be required as a result of the current economic situation. The efficiencies required in 2009/10 had already been achieved as a result of the voluntary severance programme implemented in March 2009 and a further tranche of voluntary redundancies would be required during this financial year to meet the 2010/11 target. However without additional funding the voluntary severance programme could not take place, thus placing additional pressures on the budget for next year.

In response to questions from Members the Chief Executive confirmed that:

- the purpose of the voluntary severance programme, which would be targeted principally at middle management level, was to release funding to improve services in line with the principles of RPA;
- redundancies would be implemented on a voluntary basis; and
- due attention would be paid to the need to retain the required levels of expertise and experience.

2.2. Assembly Question (AQ 130/010)
The Chief Executive tabled for information the response to a Written Assembly Question from John O'Dowd, MLA.

2.3. Minor Works
The Chief Executive reported that as part of the programme of Minor Works, a small extension was planned for Keady Library. The work would commence in December and the library would need to close for approximately 16 weeks. It was appreciated that the closure would cause inconvenience to library users, but it was necessary in order to allow the work to progress in a safe manner and would result in a much improved library space. A mobile library would be rerouted to serve Keady during the period that the library was closed.
2.4. **Universal Membership of Public Libraries**
On 26 September the Society of Chief Librarians, a local government association made up of the Chief Librarians from England, Wales and Northern Ireland, announced the introduction of universal membership. As a result membership of any library service in England, Wales and Northern Ireland entitled that person on production of their library membership card to use any other public library service in the 3 countries. Members welcomed the positive development and urged officers to continue discussions with colleagues in Scotland and the Republic of Ireland to facilitate similar reciprocal arrangements.

2.5. **Autumn Events Programme**
The Chief Executive tabled a draft copy of the Autumn Events programme which listed a wide range of cultural events taking place in libraries during October and November.

2.6. **Tall Ships Event**
The Chief Executive informed Members that as part of its promotional activities, Libraries NI had a stand at the recent Tall Ships Event in Belfast and vouchers had been distributed which if returned to a library were included in a draw for iPods sponsored by Rondo, the Libraries NI main book supplier. There had been 4 winners - 1 each from Hollywood Arches, Lurgan, Carrickfergus and Tullycarnet libraries and photo opportunities would be arranged.

2.7. **National Bookstart Day**
It was noted that on 9th October, National Bookstart Day, a number of MLAs would be visiting libraries and participating in Rhyme Time events with parents and young children.

3. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 AUGUST 2009**

3.1. On a proposal by Alderman Hubert Nicholl, seconded by Mr Pat Carvill, the minutes of the meeting held on 26 August 2009 were agreed as an accurate record.

4. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 AUGUST 2009**

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

4.2. **Governance and Accountability Meeting**
The Chief Executive drew attention to the undernoted matters in the minutes of the Governance and Accountability Meeting which she and the Director of Business Support had attended on 18th June 2009:
• **Item 3.2, Risk Management and Risk Register**
The training session planned by DCAL for 9th September to roll out a new risk register template had been cancelled and a new date had not yet been arranged. Members expressed concern about the impact of the cancellation of the training session on the roll out of the risk management process within Libraries NI and requested the Chief Executive to press the Department to reschedule the training as a matter of urgency.

• **Item 3.8, Conflicts of Interest**
The Chief Executive asked that Members complete and return their individual Registers of Interest as soon as possible so that copies could be provided to DCAL as required.

• **Item 3.11, Suspected Contractor Fraud – PAC – BELB**
The Public Accounts Committee had now published its report on the suspected contractor fraud in the Belfast Education and Library Board and it would be discussed at the meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee scheduled for 7th October 2009.

• **Item 4.6, Statement of Internal Control**
The Chief Executive’s Quarterly Assurance Statement for the period July – September 2009 would be considered at the Audit and Risk Committee scheduled for 7th October 2009.

• **Item 5.2, Pay Remits**
The NJC national pay award for 2009/10 had been agreed at 1% and the pay remit exercise would now be completed showing the implications of the settlement for the overall pay bill. The pay remit must be approved by DCAL and DFP before any payments can be made.

• **Item 5.3, Pay Remits – Senior Management**
The Chairperson and Chief Executive had met with the Permanent Secretary on 1st September 2009 to discuss the way forward. The Permanent Secretary had indicated that the Department would be engaging consultants to develop proposals for the Performance Related Pay Scheme for Senior Officers and would ensure that there was full consultation with the Chairperson and the staff concerned.

4.3 **O’Fiaich Library**
Members were pleased to note that the Department would fund the O’Fiaich Library directly and not through Libraries NI.

4.4 **Induction Day**
The Chief Executive informed members that the Permanent Secretary would be in attendance at the Induction Day on Monday 12 October in the Hilton Hotel, Templepatrick.
4.5 In response to questions from Members, clarification was provided regarding additional matters arising from the minutes of the last Board meeting as follows:

- **Item 1.4:** The Chief Executive indicated that a draft Business Case setting out options for the location of the Libraries NI HQ was being finalised and it was hoped that it would be available for discussion at the October meeting of the Finance and Business Support Committee.

- **Item 2.9:** The Chief Executive confirmed that there had been no further complaints received about the car park at Glengormley Library.

- **Item 4.1.7:** The Chief Executive confirmed that Libraries NI had an emergency plan to deal with the potential impact of swine flu, which included contingency arrangements to ensure that salaries were paid.

- **Item 4.2.1:** The Director of Service Delivery confirmed that while only a few libraries were single staffed for the majority of the time, there were also libraries where single staffing occurred on occasions. In single staffing situations risk assessments were undertaken to ensure that any potential risks had been identified and addressed through, for example, CCTV and / or panic buttons. Officers confirmed that they were not aware of any serious incidents in single staffed libraries.

- **Item 4.2.3:** Officers withdrew from the meeting at 11.20am and returned at 11.25am. The Chairperson outlined the discussion with the Permanent Secretary of DCAL regarding establishing a PRP scheme for the SMT. DCAL would appoint consultants who would be tasked with supplying DCAL and the Board with a number of potential PRP Schemes. These potential Schemes would be presented to the Board, and the Board would decide on the most appropriate scheme for Libraries NI.

- **Item 7.2:** The Chief Executive confirmed that work was progressing on the strategic review of the estate, with priority being given to the Greater Belfast Area initially, but that capital programmes would also continue to be progressed throughout N Ireland.

- **Item 10.2:** The Director of Service Delivery indicated that the job evaluation process was still underway for the post of Head of Marketing.
5. FINANCE REPORT (August 2009)

5.1 The Director of Business Support presented the recurrent and capital reports for the period ending 31st August 2009. Members noted an underspend situation at this stage of £1,296k or 9.9% of the recurrent budget. The Director of Business Support elaborated on the context for the underspend situation as set out in the report and noted that the budget profile would be revisited to take account of a number of factors including:

- the implications of the 2009/10 pay settlement of 1%
- the fact that posts had not been filled as quickly as had initially been anticipated
- a lower than expected rates bill
- actual rather than estimated costs associated with services being provided by Education and Library Boards through Service Level Agreements.

He indicated that plans for essential one-off spend were being prepared to ensure that Libraries NI met its financial targets for 2009/10 and did not end the year in an underspend situation.

5.2 Members noted that the capital budget showed an underspend to date of £188k which related mainly to Dungiven Library where the tender process had taken longer than originally forecast. Discussions had taken place with DCAL regarding the capital profile and adjustments would be made to ensure that the full budget was spent.

5.3 In response to questions from Members the Director of Business Support provided clarification as follows:

- Service Level Agreements with the Education and Library Boards would transfer to ESA on its establishment and continue to operate until March 2010. In the interim officers were considering how best to secure the necessary support post March 2010

- DCAL, in its Allocation Letter had indicated target spend in certain areas (e.g. stock and maintenance) but otherwise it was a matter for Libraries NI to allocate its recurrent funding in order to meet its strategic priorities

- Arrangements with Education and Library Boards for the provision of response maintenance were working well but progress in relation to planned maintenance was slower and that Libraries NI would be considering its options for the provision of these services post March 2010.

5.4 Members sought clarification on the process for allocating new stock across libraries and ensuring equity of provision. The Director of Service Delivery explained that the Stock budget of £3,574k equated to £2 per head of population.
Stock was seen as a service-wide resource and new stock was distributed across all libraries relative to their size. A specific budget had also been set aside this year to purchase stock for new and substantially refurbished libraries (Antrim, Newtownstewart and Whitehead). It was noted that each Board had adopted a different approach to stock management and that the recently appointed Stock Manager was currently reviewing options to ensure the most effective approach was being adopted by Libraries NI.

5.5 Members enquired whether work on capital projects could be accelerated during this financial year to ensure that available capital funding was fully utilised. The Director of Business Support undertook to review this matter and report to the Finance and Business Support Committee.

5.6 Members noted the Financial Report (August 2009).

6. BUSINESS PLAN 2009/10

6.1 The Director of Planning and Performance introduced the Business Plan, explaining the context and the rationale for the various targets and actions that had been included. It was noted that the Business Plan required DCAL approval.

6.2 In response to questions from Members the Director of Planning and Performance and other officers provided clarification as follows:

- Current information would indicate that issues had increased in the year to date by 0.8%, with the target being an increase of 1% by year end. It was noted that spend on stock would increase in the second half of the year and that improved stock together with strategies such as reader development activities and effective marketing contributed to an increase in borrowing activity.

- Decisions on stock acquisition were influenced by a range of factors including the views of customers as expressed to branch library staff, the CIPFA Plus Survey, the comments and complaints procedure and the request system.

- Libraries NI aimed to have new books available in libraries on the day of publication.

- Practice across the Education and Library Boards in relation to provision of services for people who were confined to their home or who lived in residential care or sheltered accommodation varied. A baseline exercise was currently being undertaken to inform the development of Libraries NI strategy in this area.
• Libraries NI would be undertaking a baseline exercise this year to determine the extent to which the target of DCAL 6 public access terminals per 10,000 head of population was being met

• Work on the strategic review of the library estate was on-going and proposals would be brought to the Services Committee in due course

• Extended opening hours were a key priority for Libraries NI, but work needed to be done to ensure that the opening hours of individual libraries met the needs of the communities that they served. It was noted, for example, that the pilot scheme of Sunday opening in Coleraine Library had been very successful with the library being well used by families on that day, but that it might be necessary to review one or more of the late night openings since they were not proving so popular. Equally there were other areas where Sunday opening would not be a viable option but more late evenings or longer opening on Saturdays might be more appropriate.

6.3 Members commended the Director of Planning and Performance on the high quality of the Business Plan.

6.4 On a proposal by Ms Jane Williams, seconded by Mr Alastair McDowell, Members approved the Libraries NI Business Plan 2009/10.

7. CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME: BELFAST CENTRAL LIBRARY

LNI 05.09.09

7.1 The Chief Executive introduced the paper, explaining the current costs associated with the provision of services in Belfast Central Library, some of the constraints that existed and possible options for a new model of service provision which might be developed in partnership with other organisations.

7.2 It was noted that the ISNI 2 profile contained a notional sum of £52 million for a major capital development programme for the Library, but that there was no additional revenue allocation to meet initial costs associated with preparatory work necessary to progress the project or to facilitate the decant of staff, stock and services to another location while work was underway. Belfast Education and Library Board had submitted an Economic Appraisal to DCAL on 31\textsuperscript{st} March 2009 for the refurbishment of the building, but the Appraisal required significant revision. Officers were anxious to ensure that any plans for refurbishment of the building were developed as soon as possible to maximise the opportunity for capital funding, but also needed to be satisfied that the new model of service provision would be both strategically and financially viable in the long term.

7.3 Members noted that all capital development associated with libraries in the Belfast Education and Library Board area fell within the remit of the Belfast Strategic Partnership Agreement which would transfer to ESA on its
establishment and that particular governance arrangements would need to be put in place to ensure that Libraries NI’s interests were adequately protected into the future. A paper with proposals on this matter was currently with the Department for consideration. It was noted also that Libraries NI intended to appoint a Project Manager specifically to manage proposals regarding Belfast Central Library.

7.4 Members welcomed the consideration being given to the refurbishment of Belfast Central Library and recognised the importance of ensuring that services provided in the future were viewed in the context of library provision generally in the Greater Belfast area as well as Northern Ireland as a whole. They noted that a paper would be brought to the November meeting of the Services Committee with proposals on how this vision might be realised, with a view to submitting a Strategic Outline Case to DCAL by the end of December 2009 and engaging in wider consultation early in the New Year.

7.5 The Chief Executive agreed to arrange for meetings of the Board to be held in Belfast Central Library so that Members would have an opportunity to see the building. It was further agreed that visits should be arranged to other libraries in the Belfast area.

8. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

8.1 The membership of Committees was agreed as follows:

Audit & Risk Committee
Councillor Charlie Casey
Mr Alastair McDowell
Councillor Jim Rodgers

The Audit and Risk Committee will meet on Wednesday 7th October at 10.30am in Lisburn City Library.

Services Committee
Councillor Mrs Anne Brolly
Mr Pat Carvill
Councillor Samuel Cole
Councillor Allan Ewart
Alderman Hubert Nicholl
Ms Jane Williams

The Services Committee will meet on Tuesday 20 October 2009 at 10.30am in Belfast Central Library.

Finance and Business Support Committee
Councillor Mrs Roberta Dunlop
Councillor Cathal Mullaghan
Councillor Mrs Evelyn Robinson

The Finance & Business Support Committee will meet on Wednesday 28th October at 10.30am in Belfast Central Library.

8.2 The Chairman indicated that he would contact those Members not present at that day's meeting and the new Members when appointed to seek preferences for Committee membership.

9. STANDING ORDERS LNI 07.09.09

9.1 Members considered the revised Standing Orders which had been prepared in accordance with Paragraph 10 (Schedule 1) of the Libraries Act (Northern Ireland) and following consultation with DCAL.

9.2 Following discussion, on a proposal by Alderman Hubert Nicholl, seconded by Councillor Mrs Evelyn Robinson, Members approved Standing Orders subject to the following amendments:

Paragraph 1.3, b. final bullet point
Insert "with the prior approval of the Chairperson" at the end of the sentence.

Paragraph 7.8
Add an additional point as follows:
"e. to move to the next business."

Paragraph 17.5, c.
Insert "with the prior approval of the Chairperson" at the end of the sentence.

9.3 It was agreed that Standing Orders would be reviewed after one year to ensure that they remained fit for purpose.

10. CARRICKFERGUS LIBRARY: LEASE OF TEMPORARY PREMISES LNI 08.09.09

10.1 Following discussion, on a proposal by Ms Jane Williams, seconded by Councillor Allan Ewart, Members approved the lease of temporary premises at the De Courcy Centre for a period of 16 months to facilitate the refurbishment of Carrickfergus Library.

11. PORTSTEWART LIBRARY: RENEWAL OF LEASE LNI 09.09.09

11.1 On a proposal by Councillor Jim Rodgers, seconded by Councillor Charlie Casey, Members approved the renewal of the lease for Portstewart Library by means of a Supplemental Lease for 10 years.
12. ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS

12.1 There was no other notified business.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

13.1 The next meeting of the Board will take place on Thursday 12 November at 10.30am in Cookstown.

14. MEMBERS ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE TIMES.

14.1 The meeting ended at 1.10 pm.

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

- Councillor Allan Ewart arrived at 11.10am.

Signed: [Signature]

Date: 12/11/10