LIBRARIES NI

The Northern Ireland Library Authority

27 May 2010

Minutes of a meeting of the Board of the Authority held on Thursday 27 May 2010 at 10.30 am in Antrim Library

PRESENT

Dr David Elliott Chairperson
Alderman Hubert Nicholl Vice Chairperson
Councillor Charlie Casey
Councillor Sam Cole
Mr Roger Dixon
Councillor Mrs Roberta Dunlop
Councillor Allan Ewart
Councillor Miss Carla Lockhart
Mr Nigel Macartney
Ms Angela Matthews
Councillor Cathal Mullaghan
Mr Alastair McDowell
Councillor Mrs Evelyne Robinson
Ms Helen Roulston
Councillor Seamus Shields
Ms Jane Williams

APOLOGIES FOR NON ATTENDANCE

Councillor Mrs Anne Brolly
Mr Pat Carvill
Councillor Jim Rodgers

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
Assets Manager Mr Desi Miskelly
Deputy Principal, Libraries Branch, DCAL Mr David Polley

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 interests were declared.
2. **CHAIRPERSON’S BUSINESS**

**Board Members’ Performance Appraisal**

2.1 Members were reminded that dates had been agreed for their performance appraisals to be carried out. Those who had yet to confirm a date and time were asked to contact the Chief Executive’s Office as soon as possible.

**Review of the operation of the Board**

2.2 Members noted that a meeting would be held on Thursday 10 June 2010 at 2.00 pm in Lisburn City Library to review the operation of the Board and its Committees. Any Member who wished to submit comments should do so by Friday 4 June to the Chief Executive’s office.

**DCAL Correspondence**

2.3 Members noted that a letter had been received from the DCAL Permanent Secretary confirming that with effect from 4 May 2010 responsibility for Libraries NI within DCAL had transferred from Arthur Scott to Mick Cory.

2.4 The Chairman welcomed Mr David Polley, Deputy Principal, Libraries Branch, DCAL to his first meeting of the Libraries NI Board.

3. **CHIEF EXECUTIVE’S BUSINESS**

**DCAL Business Plan for 2010-11**

3.1 Members noted the DCAL Business Plan 2010 -11.

**Assembly Questions**

3.2 The Chief Executive referred Members to the responses given by the Minister to Assembly Questions from 30 April 2010 – 14 May 2010. Members noted that, as well as the documentation which had been published, an extensive amount of information had been placed in the Assembly Library and that collating the information required for the responses had taken considerable time.

3.3 In response to a question as to whether the information had been provided at disproportionate cost, Mr Polley indicated that, as a general rule, work involved in collating information in response to an Assembly Question was costed at £25 per hour with a ceiling of £800 per question. In the case of some of the Questions asked in this case, when the amount of work undertaken by Libraries NI and the Department was taken together, the limit may have been exceeded.

3.4 The Director of Business Support agreed to provide Councillor Mrs R Dunlop with an estimate of the amount of time that it had taken Libraries NI to produce the information required and the associated cost.
Key Performance Indicators

3.5 The Chief Executive agreed to produce a quarterly report on Key Performance Indicators as an appendix to her report to the Board.

4. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD HELD ON 29 APRIL 2010 (LNI 01.05.10)

On a proposal by Councillor S Cole, seconded by Ms H Roulston, the minutes of the meeting held on 29 April 2010 were agreed as an accurate record.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 29 APRIL 2010 (LNI 02.05.10)

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

Item 2.7 Meeting with Minister

5.2 The Vice Chairperson of Services Committee, Ms J Williams, informed Members that she had found the meeting to be constructive and positive. The Minister had been briefed on the recommendations being made to the Board in relation to the proposed closure of the former SEELB Library Headquarters building and the relocation of the local studies material and on the proposals regarding the permanent locations for corporate services. The deputation had also briefed the Minister on the proposals resulting from the strategic review of provision in Greater Belfast. He had demonstrated an understanding of the challenges being faced and a genuine interest in the public library service and the work that was being done.

Item 2.8 Culture, Arts and Leisure Committee

5.3 The Chief Executive reported that the Director of Service Delivery and she had attended a meeting of the Culture, Arts and Leisure Committee on 13 May to brief the members of the Committee regarding the proposed closure of the former SEELB Library Headquarters building in Ballynahinch and the proposed new location of the core Co Down collection.

5.4 Members noted that the Chairperson of the Board, Chairperson of the Services Committee, Director of Planning and Performance and Chief Executive had attended a meeting of the Culture, Arts and Leisure Committee on 20 May to brief the Committee on the results of the consultation process regarding the strategic review of provision in Greater Belfast. The Chairperson of the Services Committee, Mr N Macartney, reported that, in his view, the questions asked of Libraries NI had been well judged and low key. He added that the members of the Culture, Arts and Leisure Committee had shown an informed interest in the consultation process and he felt that they understood the need for the review.
5.5 It was noted that, on the day, the Culture, Arts and Leisure Committee had postponed the briefing on cultural heritage, also scheduled for 20 May, due to time constraints. A new date was being arranged.

Item 5.1 Interim Allocation Letter 2010/11

5.6 The Chief Executive reported that the Business Support Committee had met prior to the Board Meeting to discuss the proposed working budget. A more indepth review of the budget would take place at the next meeting of the Business Support Committee and a report of the discussions that morning would be made later in the meeting.

5.7 In response to a query about the ARNE formula, the Director of Business Support explained that the formula had been put in place to distribute funding across the 5 Education and Library Boards, but in the context of a single organisation, ARNE was no longer relevant in the longer term. The Director of Business Support added that he was working with the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure to identify a different methodology to ensure equitable distribution of funding, taking account of factors such as social need and rurality, and, in the meantime, Libraries NI continued to operate the principles of ARNE, in line with the approach taken previously by the Education and Library Boards.

6. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUSINESS SUPPORT COMMITTEE HELD ON 7 MAY 2010 (LNI 03.04.10)

6.1 The Chairperson, Councillor Mrs E Robinson, presented the minutes of the meeting and drew Members’ attention to the undernoted items.

Item 3.1 Final Allocation Letter

6.2 A proposed draft budget had been considered in detail by the Business Support Committee prior to the meeting of the Board and a summary was tabled for the information of all Members. Members were asked to note that this was an interim budget to allow figures to be uploaded onto the system so that monitoring reports for May month end could be produced for budget holders.

6.3 The Director of Business Support explained that the draft budget had been prepared in conjunction with budget holders using a zero-based approach, with adjustments being made by the senior management team to ensure a balanced budget. Discussions would continue with budget holders over the next few weeks to ensure a shared understanding of the reductions which had been made and the action to be taken to meet financial targets. The Director of Business Support drew attention, in particular, to the following matters:

- it was anticipated that income would remain flat, due to a number of factors, including buildings being out of commission during the year because of capital works; the introduction of text messaging as a way of reducing the number of items that were overdue; and
concerns about the continued use of library premises by Education and Library Boards, given the impact of the current financial situation on their budgets

- payroll costs were based on staff in post, or anticipated to be in post during the year, with allowances for a 1% pay increase, increments, additional hours, Saturday and Sunday enhancements and the increase in employer contributions for National Insurance and Pension

- concerns had been expressed by the Business Support Committee about the reduction in budgets for stock and planned maintenance. Both budgets had been reduced in 2009/10 to enable a contribution to be made to the costs of the voluntary severance programme and the Committee was of the view that further reductions in these budgets could seriously impact on the service. The stock spend had been set at £1.60 per head which was less than the target set by DCAL of £1.75 per head

- the budget for premises had been increased to take account of projections in relation to a rise in the cost of utilities

- a sum of £75k had been set aside for consultancy to support the work needed to replace the ELFNI contract.

6.4 It was noted that further detailed discussion would take place at the Business Support Committee in June and the final budget would be brought to the July Board meeting for approval. Members also noted that there was no indication yet as to the extent of any further reductions that might be required as a result of the new government’s proposals for budget reductions. It was hoped that the situation might be clearer by the time the Business Support Committee met at the end of June.

6.5 In response to a question from Mr McDowell regarding the impact of further budget reductions on the planned maintenance programme, the Assets Manager replied that there were a number of statutory requirements which must be fulfilled e.g. lift maintenance, fire extinguisher testing etc. which left little for improvements to the estate. Other planned maintenance was prioritised on the basis of condition surveys. Libraries NI had little flexibility in relation to response maintenance e.g. broken windows, missing roof tiles etc must be repaired to ensure that buildings remained secure and weather proofed.

6.6 In response to a question from Ms Williams about the impact of a reduced stock budget, the Director of Service Delivery informed Members that there would be serious implications for the ability of Libraries NI to meet its Business targets in relation, for example, to the
Councillor Casey queried whether the cost of fuel, and particularly electricity, was likely to decrease, given the introduction of a competitor to the marketplace. The Assets Manager replied that there was the possibility that, with more competition, NIE might lower its business rates, however until the situation became clearer, it would be prudent to assume that costs would increase, or at least remain at a similar rate as currently. Moreover with new larger buildings such as Antrim, costs would be higher in any case.

Ms Roulston queried the reason for an increase in the budget for training and development. The Director of Business Support indicated that £150k had been set aside for training and development because, as a new organisation with a number of members of staff assuming new roles, it was important to ensure that these people were prepared for the future and that they could contribute effectively to the change processes necessary as a result of the merger of 5 very different cultures. Moreover most of the training and development budget would be required to meet a range of statutory training requirements e.g. in relation to child protection and health and safety.

Councillor Shields asked whether PFI costs were a significant drain on the budget. The Director of Business Support indicated that the PFI costs related to the ELFNI system and Lisburn City Library. The respective contracts provided for an annual increase in the unitary charge by reference to the Retail Price Index. In both cases the services provided were of the required standard and in line with the contract.

Councillor Casey sought clarification on the proposed increased budget for professional fees. The Director of Business Support indicated that £75k had been included in the budget for specialist consultancy support associated with the replacement of the ELFNI contract and a further £75k had been set aside for marketing. It was felt that there was a need to invest in marketing in order to raise the profile of libraries and library services, particularly at this time.

Councillor Cole referred to the proposed increase in the budget for telephone costs and queried whether fixed lines or mobiles were better value for money. The Assets Manager indicated that voice calls using land lines accounted for a relatively small part of the cost of telephone lines but that land lines were required because alarms and emergency lift installations required a link to a fixed telephone line. It was anticipated that telephony would be included in the replacement ELFNI contract with a view to achieving a reduction in the cost of calls between public service points.

Members noted the tabled draft budget.
6.13 The Chairperson of the Business Support Committee referred to the recommendation of the Committee regarding the permanent locations for core corporate services. Members noted that the Economic Appraisal had been revised in light of comments from Members at the workshop held on 29 April 2010 and had been considered in detail by the Business Support Committee.

6.14 Members noted that the recommended option (use of surplus accommodation in Portadown Library for the Director of Business Support and the Finance, HR and ICT functions and in Lisburn City Library for the Chief Executive’s Unit and the Assets Unit) had been discussed with the Minister on 12 May. Staff had been informed of the recommendation of the Business Support Committee (subject to Board approval).

6.15 The Chairperson of the Business Support Committee reminded Members of the workshop held on 29 April 2010 at which the results of the consultation on the proposed closure of the former SEELB Headquarters and the relocation of the Local Studies material had been discussed. She noted that the Committee had given detailed consideration to the report of the consultation process and indicated that the Committee’s recommendations were as follows:
- closure and disposal of the former SEELB Library HQ in Ballynahinch
- relocation of the functions in Ballynahinch in line with business need
- staff should be offered suitable alternative employment; and
- the local studies provision should be relocated in line with the findings of the consultation process i.e. the core Co Down collection and supporting works to be relocated to Downpatrick; Co Antrim material to be relocated to Lisburn; duplicate material to be located in local libraries including Bangor and Newry; and Irish fiction and general non-fiction to be considered in the context of the service wide approach to such stock.

6.16 It was noted that the recommendation of the Committee had been discussed with the Minister at the meeting on 12 May 2010 and that staff had been informed that the recommendation was subject to Board approval.

6.17 Mr McDowell queried whether it was intended to carry out a similar review of the other former Library Headquarters buildings. The Chief
Executive indicated that Stage 2 of the strategic review of library provision would include all other buildings in the Libraries NI estate.

6.18 Councillor Casey enquired if the 17 staff currently working in Ballynahinch could be relocated satisfactorily and by mutual agreement; if there would be additional costs associated with relocation; and whether it would be possible to facilitate voluntary redundancy if any members of staff could not be relocated satisfactorily and were prepared to be released. The Director of Service Delivery indicated that there would be some minimal costs associated with excess mileage but these costs would be outweighed by the savings made from the closure of the building. She confirmed also that discussions would now commence with staff on an individual basis to explore options, including the viability of voluntary redundancy.

6.19 Alderman Nicholl enquired as to the timescale for relocation of the stock and closure of the building. The Director of Service Delivery indicated that it was hoped that the relocation of the Co Down collection could be achieved by the early autumn and certainly no later than the end of this calendar year. Some internal reorganization would be required in Downpatrick library and some additional shelving would need to be purchased.

6.20 Councillor Cole sought clarification on the process for disposing of vacant premises and enquired if the capital receipt could be retained by Libraries NI. The Director of Business Support indicated that the procedures for disposing of surplus public sector property were set out in guidance material produced by the DFP Central Advisory Unit. Any capital receipts were surrendered to DCAL and, currently, the benefit of such receipts is returned to Libraries NI over the spending review period.

6.21 The Chairperson of the Business Support Committee thanked officers for the work that had been undertaken in relation to the consultation process and the comprehensive report that had been produced. It was noted that, if the recommendation of the Committee was accepted by the Board, the Chief Executive would write formally to the Minister to convey the outcome.

Item 8.1 Finance Report: Recurrent

6.22 It was noted that Libraries NI had achieved its efficiency savings for 2009/10 and was projecting an underspend at the end of March of £189k (0.57%) of the budget (subject to audit).

6.23 It was further noted that the Committee undertook a review of the format of the financial information made available to the Committee and had decided to receive more detailed information on a quarterly basis at the sub-total by category level.
Item 8.2 Finance Report : Capital

6.24 Members noted the underspend at end of March of £1,968k against budget.

6.25 On a proposal by Councillor Mrs E Robinson, seconded by Mr R Dixon, Members adopted the minutes of the Business Support Committee held on 7 May 2010 and in doing so approved the recommendations of the Committee regarding the former SEELB Library Headquarters, Ballynahinch and the permanent locations for the core corporate functions of Libraries NI.

7. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD ON 18 MAY 2010 (LNI 04.05.10)

7.1 The Chairman of the Services Committee presented the minutes of the meeting held on 18 May 2010. He informed Members that 4 key items had been brought to the Services Committee for consideration i.e. Meeting the Demands for a Modern Public Library Service within Northern Ireland – Stage 1: Belfast and Greater Belfast area, the Libraries NI Business Plan 2010/11, the Learning and Development Plan and the Data Protection Policy.

Item 8 Business Plan 2010/11

7.2. Members noted that the Business Plan 2010/11 had been approved by the Services Committee subject to the amendment as detailed in the minutes.

7.3. Ms Williams drew attention to the first key measure on page 8 of the Business Plan and indicated that the figure given for per capita spend on stock should be amended in light of the earlier discussion about the draft budget. Members agreed to this amendment.

7.4. In response to a question from Mr McDowell regarding the key measure identified in relation to the Sustainable Development Strategy (page 11) the Director of Planning and Performance indicated that one local engagement group had been established in each Business Area as well as a young people’s group to enable discussion on the way forward for the public library service in that area.

7.5. Mr McDowell also referred to the key measures identified in relation to the Anti-Poverty Strategy (page 11) and requested that regular reports should be made to the Board on Key Performance Indicators, which should include measures in relation to uptake of the library service in areas of high TSN.

Item 9 Learning and Development Plan

7.6 It was noted that the Learning and Development Plan had been approved by the Committee subject to the conditions specified in paragraph 9.3 of the minutes.
Item 10 Data Protection Policy

7.7 It was noted that this Policy had been approved by the Committee.

Item 7 Meeting the Demands for a Modern Public Library Service within N Ireland – Stage 1: Belfast and Greater Belfast

7.8 The Chairperson of the Committee referred Members to Item 7 of the minutes. He noted that all Members had received a copy of the report on the consultation and the appendices and thanked Members for their attendance at the workshop where discussion had taken place on this matter. In light of the fact that a few Members had been unable to attend the workshop, he asked the Director of Planning and Performance to repeat the presentation made at the workshop.

7.9 The Director of Planning and Performance, Mrs A Connolly, gave a presentation to Members, highlighting, amongst other things, the background to the need to rationalise and modernise public library services, the requirement from DCAL to undertake a strategic review, the aims and objectives of the review, the consultation process, responses received and the options that were considered.

7.10 The Chairperson of the Services Committee drew Members’ attention to paragraph 7.3 of the Minutes. He thanked all the staff involved in the consultation process. Members expressed their appreciation of the comprehensive documentation provided.

7.11 Members noted that, prior to the Board meeting, the Chairperson of the Board had received a petition from NIPSA representatives opposing the closure of libraries in general and specific petitions in support of Ballyhackamore Library, Ballymacarrett Library, Belvoir Park Library, Braniel Library, Dunmurry Library, Sandy Row Library, Suffolk Library and Woodstock Library. The petitions were made available for Members’ perusal.

7.12 The Chairperson of the Committee referred Members to paragraph 7.9 of the minutes of the Services Committee and noted that Options 1, 2 and 3 had been unanimously rejected by the Committee. He noted that Members of the Committee had discussed Option 4 and each library in considerable detail taking into account all the available information and the criteria set out in the consultation document. He noted that the Committee’s recommendations in respect of each library were recorded in the minutes.

7.13 The Chairperson of the Board expressed his appreciation of the work undertaken by the Committee and indicated that, with Members’ agreement and because of the importance of this item, it would be his intention that the Board should review individually the Committee’s recommendations.
7.14 The Chairperson of the Board asked Members for their views on the Committee’s recommendation that Option 1 (Do nothing) should be rejected. Members agreed the Committee’s recommendation.

7.15 The Chairperson of the Board asked Members for their views on the Committee’s recommendation that Option 2 (Close all 14 libraries) should be rejected. Members agreed the Committee’s recommendation.

7.16 The Chairperson of the Board asked Members for their views on the Committee’s recommendation that Option 3 (Retain Ballyhackamore Library and close the remaining 13 libraries) should be rejected. Members agreed the Committee’s recommendation.

7.17 In light of the decision to reject Options 1, 2 and 3, the Board agreed to consider the Committee’s recommendations regarding each library, commencing with the 4 libraries named in Option 4 for retention (i.e. Ballyhackamore, Cloughfern, Tullycarnet and Woodstock).

7.18 **Ballyhackamore Library**

Discussion on Ballyhackamore Library included consideration of the following points:
- the widespread community support evidenced throughout the consultation period.
- it is one of the busier libraries in Belfast
- it is used on a cross community basis
- the building is limited in terms of development potential but some minor internal reorganisation could be effected which would improve the facilities

7.19 Having discussed Ballyhackamore Library, Members agreed the Committee’s recommendation that it should remain open, service hours should be reviewed and consideration should be given to improvements in the internal layout of the library with a view to increasing the amount of space available for public use.

7.20 **Cloughfern Library**

Discussion on Cloughfern Library included consideration of the following points:
- the low cost per issue
- a low level of maintenance backlog
- the use of the library by schools from different communities for joint projects and the evidence of cross community support
- concerns regarding the suitability of alternative static provision in Rathcoole for some users of Cloughfern from a community safety perspective

7.21 Having discussed Cloughfern Library, Members agreed the recommendation of the Services Committee that it should be retained until such times as suitable alternative provision can be made on the
Shore Road / Whiteabbey area, taking into account current provision at Rathcoole and Cloughfern.

7.22 **Tullycarnet Library**
Discussion on Tullycarnet Library included consideration of the following points:

- the good physical condition and spaciousness of the building which lends itself to a range of support and outreach activities
- the difficulties presented by the condition of the area in the vicinity of the library and the annual bonfire
- the timescale for the development of the site beside the library for mixed housing / retail purposes
- the importance of marketing the building and the services provided and of working in conjunction with the Council and other organisations in the area in respect of outreach services and in order to seek to improve usage.

7.23 Having discussed Tullycarnet Library Members agreed the recommendation of the Services Committee that it should be retained subject to further review in 2 years. Targets are to be established to see if usage levels can be improved and against which performance improvement can be monitored. The opening hours are to be reviewed and the potential for partnerships with Castlereagh Council and others in the area are to be explored.

7.24 **Woodstock Library**
Discussion on Woodstock Library included consideration of the following points:

- the fact that the library is spread over 3 floors and there are associated staffing implications in order to ensure adequate levels of supervision
- the damage caused annually by the location of a bonfire outside the entrance to the library
- progress in relation to the proposed Templemore Avenue school development and its potential for co-location of facilities and to be accessible to all sections of the community in the wider area
- the level of support for the library as demonstrated by the response to the consultation
- the EQIA which identified the importance of the library in supporting the integration of members of migrant communities, particularly the Polish community.

7.25 Members agreed to retain Woodstock Library. It was agreed that a review should be undertaken in 2 years and that service hours should be reviewed. Further consideration should also be given to the feasibility of the Templemore Avenue School project.
7.26 Members agreed that regular updates (at a minimum every 6 months) should be brought forward on the work being done in these 3 libraries to effect the Board’s decisions.

7.27 Councillor C Mullaghan indicated that he would have to leave the meeting due to another appointment and asked that his opposition to the closure of libraries in Belfast be noted in the minutes of the meeting. In particular he wished to register his concern at the proposed closure of Andersonstown Library and Ligoniel Library. He indicated that, in his view, Ligoniel Library constituted shared space and that the suggested alternative of Ardoyne was not suitable for some people in the area. He acknowledged that the building was not ideal but indicated that the population in the area was growing and mobile library provision was unlikely to meet needs.

7.28 Members agreed to proceed to discuss the Committee’s recommendations regarding the other libraries proposed for closure.

7.29 **Andersonstown Library**

Discussion on Andersonstown Library included consideration of the following points:

- the poor state of repair of the building, the maintenance backlog and the outstanding DDA issues inherited from BELB
- the location of the library and the current mobile provision which had been put in place at the request of users who had difficulties with access to the current site
- the declining active membership and usage
- the needs of the Irish speaking population as identified in the EQIA
- the potential for partnership working with DSD and the West Belfast Partnership on the Andersonstown Barracks site.

7.30 Councillor Casey enquired about alternative provision for users of Andersonstown Library. The Director of Planning and Performance indicated that alternative static provision was available at Suffolk Library, Finaghy Library, Whiterock Library and Falls Road Library and that there were already mobile library stops in the Andersonstown area which would be reviewed in consultation with users to ensure that they were in the right location. In response to a question from Ms Matthews regarding action that would be taken to address the issue identified in the EQIA of provision for Irish speakers, the Director of Planning and Performance indicated that a commitment had been given, in the event that the Board decided to close the library, to return to meet users to seek their views on proposed alternative provision and this would include provision for Irish speakers.

7.31 Members agreed the recommendation of the Services Committee to close Andersonstown library by 30 June 2010 or as soon as possible thereafter. It was further agreed that officers should consult with
library users regarding alternative provision in the area, including support for Irish speakers. The potential for partnership with West Belfast Strategic Partnership and the Department of Social Development in relation to the former Andersonstown Barracks site should be explored.

7.32 **Ballymacarrett Library**
Consideration was given to the recommendations of the Services Committee in relation to Ballymacarrett Library. Concern was expressed at the condition of the building and the declining usage. It was noted that Holywood Arches Library was 0.7 miles from Ballymacarrett.

7.32 Members agreed that Ballymacarrett Library should close with effect from 30 June 2010 or as soon as possible thereafter and that the potential for a partnership with the East Belfast Community Development Agency in relation to the former Templemore Avenue School should be explored.

7.33 **Belvoir Park Library**
Consideration was given to the recommendations of the Services Committee in relation to Belvoir Park Library. It was noted that the building was in poor condition, usage had been declining and the adjacent health centre had closed. Officers confirmed that existing mobile library provision in the area could be extended if necessary.

7.34 Members agreed that Belvoir Park Library should close by 30th June 2010 or as soon as possible thereafter.

7.35 **Braniel Library**
Consideration was given to the recommendations of the Services Committee regarding Braniel Library. Members noted that usage was declining, facilities are inadequate and the health centre, which had operated from adjacent premises, was now located at Forestside.

7.36 Members agreed that Braniel Library should close by 30th June 2010 or as soon as possible thereafter.

7.37 **Dunmurry Library**
Members considered the recommendations of the Services Committee in relation to Dunmurry Library. They noted its close proximity to Finaghy Library in particular and the existing mobile provision in the area.

7.38 Councillor A Ewart asked that his opposition to the closure of Dunmurry Library be recorded in the minutes of the meeting. Members agreed that Dunmurry Library should be closed by 30 June 2010 or as soon as possible thereafter. Councillor Ewart asked that users be contacted to ensure that the alternative of mobile provision was appropriate to their needs.
7.39 **Gilnahirk Library**
Members considered the recommendations of the Services Committee in relation to Gilnahirk Library, noting in particular the high levels of car ownership in the area and the fact that Gilnahirk was one of the most affluent wards in Northern Ireland. It was felt that suitable alternative provision was available in Dundonald, Tullycarnet and Ballyhackamore.

7.40 Members agreed that Gilnahirk Library should close by 30 June 2010 or as soon as possible thereafter.

7.41 **Ligoniel Library**
Discussion on Ligoniel Library included consideration of the following matters:
- the appropriateness of the suggested alternative static provision at Ardoyne
- whether Ligoniel Library constituted shared space and was used by both communities
- the physical condition of the building, including the fact that the upstairs rooms could not be used because of the lack of an appropriate fire escape
- the levels of usage.

7.42 Councillor Casey expressed reservations regarding the decision to close Ligoniel Library. The Director of Planning and Performance indicated that there was no evidence from the EQIA which demonstrated particular concerns about the proposals in relation to Ligoniel Library and at the public meeting in Chichester, it was evident that some users of Ligoniel also used Chichester and Ardoyne libraries. Mr McDowell asked that his concerns should be registered, while recognising that there are alternative libraries in the area which were accessible.

7.43 Having considered the recommendations of the Services Committee, Members agreed to close Ligoniel Library by 30 June 2010 or as soon as possible thereafter.

7.44 **Oldpark Library**
Members noted that correspondence had been received from the Lower Oldpark Community Association following their deputation to the Board at its last meeting and their request to be informed of the Board’s decision after the meeting. The correspondence was circulated to Members.

7.45 Consideration was given to the recommendations of the Services Committee regarding Oldpark Library. Members noted that the library was open for 6.5 hours per week and that the building was in a poor condition and suffered frequent vandalism. It was further noted that outreach work was already being planned, in conjunction with the
Community Association, following contact made at the public meeting in Chichester Library.

7.46 Members agreed to close Oldpark Library with effect from 30 June 2010 and to continue to develop outreach services in the area. Mr McDowell requested that every effort be made to secure the building to deter further vandalism.

7.47 Sandy Row Library
Members considered the recommendation of the Services Committee in relation to Sandy Row Library, noting the very low response to the consultation, the poor condition of the building and the low usage.

7.48 Members agreed to close Sandy Row Library by 30th June 2010 or as soon as possible thereafter.

7.49 Whitewell Library
Members considered the recommendations of the Services Committee in relation to Whitewell Library, noting in particular the limitations presented by its location within a school and the very low usage. It was further noted that mobile provision already existed in the area and that alternative static provision was available at Grove and Glengormley.

7.50 Members agreed to close Whitewell Library by 30th June 2010.

7.51 Colin Glen and Suffolk Libraries
Members agreed that Suffolk and Colin Glen Libraries should remain open until plans for this area became clearer, at which stage the proposal for clustering would be reconsidered.

7.52 The Director of Planning and Performance referred Members to the EQIA indicating that the final decisions made by the Board would be incorporated into the final EQIA report, including the consideration given to mitigating actions. It was noted that in most cases the mitigating actions would relate to additional mobile library stops, door to door provision for those who were physically unable to access a static library or visit a mobile stop and an increase in outreach services, in partnership where appropriate with other providers e.g. Sure Start. Members requested that a quarterly report should be provided to the Services Committee with monitoring information on the impact of the decisions taken and the implementation of the mitigating actions. It was further agreed that an annual report would be prepared for Board consideration.

7.53 Members expressed regret that it had been necessary to close some libraries. They also acknowledged the direction given by DCAL to review library provision, particularly in the Greater Belfast area.
7.54 It was noted that a press release would be prepared setting out the decisions of the Board and that a press conference had been arranged for that afternoon. A copy of the press release would be emailed to Members. It was also noted that all staff would be informed that afternoon of the Board’s decision.

7.55 On a proposal by Mr N Macartney, seconded by Councillor S Cole, Members adopted the minutes of the Services Committee held on 18 May including the recommendations resulting from the review document, Meeting the Demands for a Modern Public Library Service within N Ireland – Stage 1: Belfast and Greater Belfast.

8. ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS

8.1 There was no other notified business.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

9.1 Members noted that the next Board Meeting would take place at 10.30am on Thursday 8 July 2010 at the former SELB Library Headquarters, Armagh.

10. MEMBERS ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE TIMES

10.1 The meeting ended at 1.02 pm.

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

Councillor S Shields arrived at 10.48 am.
Councillor A Ewart arrived at 10.52 am
Councillor C Mullaghan left at 12.35 pm
Councillor Miss C Lockhart left at 12.35 pm

Signed: 

Date: 8 July 2010