LIBRARIES NI
The Northern Ireland Library Authority
9 December 2010

Minutes of a meeting of the Board of the Authority held on Thursday 9 December 2010 at 10.30 am in Lisburn City Library

PRESENT

Dr David Elliott                  Chairperson
Alderman Hubert Nicholl         Vice Chairperson
Councillor Mrs Anne Brolly
Mr Pat Carvill
Councillor Charlie Casey
Mr Roger Dixon
Councillor Mrs Roberta Dunlop
Councillor Allan Ewart
Mr Nigel Macartney
Councillor Cathal Mullaghan
Mr Alastair McDowell
Councillor Mrs Evelyne Robinson
Councillor Jim Rodgers
Councillor Seamus Shields
Ms Jane Williams

APOLOGIES FOR NON ATTENDANCE

Councillor Sam Cole
Councillor Miss Carla Lockhart
Ms Angela Matthews
Ms Helen Roulston

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
Assets Clerical Support Officer  Ms Belinda Goodes

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. The Chairperson declared a potential conflict of interest relating to the ElfNI 2 Project and the Belfast
Central Library Project and indicated that he would withdraw at relevant stages during the meeting.

2. **CHAIRPERSON’S BUSINESS**

2.1 There was no Chairperson’s Business.

3. **CHIEF EXECUTIVE’S BUSINESS**

**AQs 2\textsuperscript{nd} October – 26 November 2010**

3.1 Members noted the Minister’s response to Assembly Questions during the period 2 October – 26 November 2010.

It was noted that in response to the Assembly Question from Paul Givan MLA regarding usage of Lisburn City Library, the Mayor of Lisburn City Council, accompanied by Councillor Paul Givan MLA and Minister of the Environment, Edwin Poots MLA, had visited the library on 24 November to celebrate the 5\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of its opening and to thank the staff for the work that they were doing. Members recorded their thanks to Lisburn City Council for the recognition given to the role of the Library in the community.

**Accountability Meeting**

3.2 Members noted that the minutes of the last Accountability Meeting held on 27 October 2010 were still in draft and would be brought to the next Audit and Risk Committee meeting in January. In response to a request from Members the Chief Executive agreed to circulate a copy of the agreed minutes to all Members for information.

**Strategic Partnerships Forum**

3.3 Members noted the meeting of the DCAL Strategic Partnerships Forum held on 2 November 2010 and attended by the Chairperson and Chief Executive. The Chief Executive drew attention, in particular, to the review of Arms Length Bodies being undertaken by the Department at the request of the Minister and the work being taken forward by the Department in relation to Asset Management and Commercialisation Strategies. Members noted that Mr D Miskelly, Assets Manager, is a member of the Department’s Steering Group on Asset Management and Commercialisation Strategies.

**CAL Committee**

3.4 It was noted that a meeting of the CAL Committee had been held in Antrim Library on 25 November 2010. The Chief Executive, Ms Helen Osborn, Director of Service Delivery and Mrs Muriel Todd, Business Manager had made a presentation to the CAL Committee on Cultural Heritage. The Committee had been impressed by Antrim Library and recognized the good work taking place in the library.
3.5 Members noted the brochure. The Chairperson suggested that the next edition of the brochure should include a photograph of the Board.

**On Board**

3.6 The Chief Executive asked that Members take with them a copy of the latest version of “On Board – A Guide for Board Members of Public Bodies in Northern Ireland”.

**Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**

3.7 The Chief Executive updated Members on the Key Performance Indicators. At the request of Members the Chief Executive agreed to bring to the Board a quarterly report on the usage of each library with comparative figures for the same period in the previous year. It was noted that not all libraries had people counters at present and steps were being taken to address this situation. In those libraries without people counters, visitor figures were currently based on the CIPFA methodology of using a sample week.

**Glossary of Acronyms, Abbreviations, Terminology**

3.8 Members noted the Glossary of Acronyms, Abbreviations and Terminology provided for their information.

**Libraries NI Business Plan 2010/11**

3.9 Members noted the correspondence from the Minister approving the Libraries NI Business Plan 2010/11.

**Strategic Approach to Commemorations**

3.10 Members noted the Minister’s letter and that a working group at Departmental level had been established to co-ordinate the approach to commemorations. Libraries NI would be represented on the group by Mrs Muriel Todd and Mrs Patricia Walker.

4. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD HELD ON 14 OCTOBER 2010** (LNI 01.12.10)

4.1 On a proposal by Alderman H Nicholl, seconded by Councillor A Ewart, the minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2010 were adopted.

5. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 14 OCTOBER 2010** (LNI 02.12.10)

5.1 Members noted the document which had been circulated detailing actions taken as a result of discussions at, and decisions of, the Board at the previous meeting.
Item 3.6: Young Sports Journalist of the Year

5.2 Members extended congratulations to Majella McParland, the winner of the Young Sports Journalist of the Year competition, and to Ben Wylie and Rebecca McTier, who were runners-up.

Item 3.7: Official Openings

5.3 The Chief Executive thanked Members for their support at the official opening of Antrim Library by Minister McCausland on 20 October 2010.

Item 5.3: Declaration of Interest

5.4 Members agreed to consider this item under Item 11 of the agenda for this meeting.

Item 9: Presentation of Corporate Risk Register

5.5 Members noted that the Risk Management Group would be meeting after the Board Meeting to review the Corporate Risk Register which would then be considered by the Audit and Risk Committee at its meeting in January 2011.

Item 6.4: Vandalism

5.6 In response to a question about the vandalism at Ballymena Regional Administrative Centre, the Director of Planning and Performance indicated that she had met on several occasions with the PSNI and had also written to them regarding the matter. She reported that the PSNI had not been able to pursue the issue of further action against the culprits since the CCTV images were unclear. She confirmed that a written response had been received from the PSNI and that police patrols in the area had been increased. No further incidents had taken place.

Item 5.6: Deputations

5.7 In response to a question about the subject of the judicial review referred to in the minutes, the Chief Executive clarified that the application for a judicial review had been made by Mr Leo Wilson in relation to the closure of Andersonstown Library but that it had subsequently been withdrawn. It was noted that information on associated costs was not yet available from the solicitors.

6. MINUTES OF THE SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD ON 4 NOVEMBER 2010

(LNI 03.12.10)

6.1 The Chairperson of the Services Committee, Mr N Macartney presented the minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2010 for approval and drew Members’ attention to the undernoted items:
6.2 The following policies were approved by the Services Committee:

- Item 10: Sponsorship Policy
- Item 11: Room Hire Policy
- Item 12: Records Management Policy
- Item 13: Freedom of Information Policy
- Item 14: Customer Feedback Policy.

6.3 It was noted that procedural guidance would be produced in relation to the operation of the Sponsorship Policy and that the guidance would be brought to the Business Support Committee in due course for approval.

Item 6: Stage Two Strategic Review

6.4 The Chairperson reminded Members that, in line with the target established by DCAL and the Corporate Plan, the strategic review of library provision in Northern Ireland was being progressed. A report on Stage 2 had been considered at a workshop attended by Board Members and subsequently at the meeting of the Services Committee. He reminded Members that 77 libraries had been included in the Stage 2 review and had been assessed against the same criteria as had been used for Stage 1, i.e.

- Fit for purpose
- Capable of delivering on the vision
- In the right location
- Sustainable

6.5 Having applied these criteria, the review found that:

- 44 libraries met the criteria for future use and no further action should be taken, although in some cases minor works may be required, mainly to refresh buildings
- 21 libraries were deemed to be sustainable, but required investment, either on the current or a new site
- Provision in Armagh could be consolidated by the clustering of Armagh Library and the Irish and Local Studies Service on an existing or new site
- 10 libraries were deemed to be unsustainable and were being recommended for closure, subject to the outcome of a public consultation exercise and an Equality Impact Assessment.

6.6 Members noted that the review document contained 4 options and that the Services Committee had recommended that Option 4 be adopted and that Libraries NI move to public consultation. It was noted that the public consultation would run for a 12 week period commencing on 10 January 2011. During that time a series of public meetings would be held and survey questionnaires would be made available. The dates, times and venues for the meetings, which would be held in the areas where libraries were recommended for closure,
would be published in the press and on the Libraries NI website in due course.

6.7 Members discussed the review document and sought clarification on a number of points, including the following:

- Comparative usage figures for Tandragee Library and Richhill Library were provided which showed that usage of Tandragee Library is higher than Richhill Library
- It was agreed to publish comparative information for all of the libraries in the strategic review
- It was confirmed that there are a number of shared property arrangements between Libraries NI and the Education and Library Boards, including in Omagh, and that these would continue.

6.8 The Chairperson enquired about the process for informing staff and the media of the outcome of the review and was informed that an e-mail would be issued to all staff following the Board meeting and that officers would meet with staff who would be most affected. Members noted that a Press Release would also be issued on this matter. The Chief Executive added that she would be writing to each of the Councils in which a library was proposed for closure and would also be writing to the relevant MPs and MLAs with an offer to meet and discuss the recommendation. It was noted that the Minister had been made aware of the recommendations and that the Culture, Arts and Leisure Committee would also be informed of the recommendations.

6.9 On a proposal by Councillor A Ewart, seconded by Councillor Mrs A Brolly, Members agreed to adopt the minutes of the Services Committee meeting held on 4 November 2010 and proceed to public consultation on the proposals resulting from Stage 2 of the Strategic Review.

7. MINUTES OF THE BUSINESS SUPPORT COMMITTEE HELD ON 24 NOVEMBER 2010 (LNI 04.12.10)

7.1 Councillor C Mullaghan, Vice Chairperson of the Business Support Committee, presented the minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2010 for approval and drew attention to the following items:

Item 7.10: Capital Report

7.2 The Assets Manager informed Members that due to an outstanding legal challenge on a vehicle procurement exercise the Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) had advised him that they could not proceed with the procurement of the delivery vans and mobile library. Consequently Libraries NI had to revert back to the Service Level Agreement which existed with the Education and Library Boards in order to proceed. Two delivery vans would be delivered in January
but unfortunately, due to the delay caused by the issue with CPD, there was only time to purchase the chassis and not the bodies of the mobile library vehicles in this financial year. In response to a question, he confirmed that the chassis would manufactured to Libraries NI’s specification and would be stored safely and securely until such time as it was possible to proceed to procure the bodywork.

**Item 6: Annual Report and Accounts**

7.3 The Director of Business Support informed Members that the audit of the 2009/10 Annual Accounts had still not been completed. He reported that he had met with representatives from the 5 Education and Library Boards and had further discussions with the Northern Ireland Audit Office and added that all parties were keen to have the audit completed as soon as possible.

**Item 7.1: Finance Report: Recurrent**

7.4 Members noted that a projected underspend of £144K had been identified for the year end and that contingency plans would be put in place to address this projected underspend. The contingency plans would be brought to the Business Support Committee for approval. Members recommended that as far as possible any underspend should be used to address deficiencies in the stock and maintenance budgets.

**Item 7.3: Finance Report: Capital**

7.5 Members noted the concern expressed regarding the uncertainty about the capital budget allocations as a result of the on-going Budget 2010 process and the implications for completing work that had started in 2009/2010. The Director of Business Support informed Members that:

- Approval had now been received regarding the refurbishment of Falls, Shankill and Whiterock Libraries with the majority of work having to be completed in this financial year
- In respect of the refurbishment of Newry City Library DCAL had approved a reduced scale option and that all spend for Newry City Library must be completed in 2010/11. It was noted, however, that the reduced scale option would still allow for the refurbishment of one lift which would give users with disabilities full access to the building
- Funding was available in this financial year to purchase the site for the new Lisnaskea library, but that there was no clarity as to whether funding would be available in the next financial year to commence the new build.

**Item 14: Procurement Report**

7.6 Members noted the difficulties associated with having urgent tenders approved because of the timing of Business Support Committee meetings and the proposal for addressing this issue. It was suggested that consideration should be given to increasing the level of delegation
to the Chief Executive as a means of dealing with this matter. On a proposal by Mr A McDowell, seconded by Mr P Carvill, Members agreed to refer this matter back to the Business Support Committee for further consideration.

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

8. REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS (LNI 05.12.10)

8.1 The Chief Executive reminded Members that when Standing Orders had been agreed in September 2009 it had also been agreed that they would be reviewed after one year to ensure that they remained fit for purpose. She drew attention to a number of additions and amendments that were being proposed, mainly to provide greater clarity. She also reminded Members that changes to Standing Orders required the consent of the majority of the Members present at each of two consecutive meetings of the Board. Therefore any changes agreed at this meeting would need to be approved again at the next Board meeting before they would become effective.

8.2 Members considered each of the proposed amendments as follows:

- Item 5.2 - will now read as follows:
  “No discussion shall take place upon the minutes except in relation to their accuracy or where the Chairperson considers discussion appropriate. Any amendment to the minutes shall be agreed and recorded in the minutes of the next meeting.”

- Item 6.1 - insert “working” between “10” and “days” in line 3

- Item 6.8 - insert “the Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Committee” after “Chairperson” in line 4

- Item 8.2 - insert “the same or” after “propose” in line 2

- Insert a new Item 9.4 to read as follows:
  “No deputation shall appear before the Board / Committee at successive meetings or within six months of any previous appearance on the same or a similar topic. Deputations may not request that a decision already taken by the Board should be reopened.”

- Item 10.1 - insert “in a manner that cannot be perceived to influence subsequent discussions or decisions” after “interest” in line 7

- Item 13.3 – insert a new sentence at the end of current sentence as follows:
“The number of members of the public and press to be admitted to a meeting will be in compliance with the health and safety regulations applicable to the venue of the meeting.”

- Insert a new item 13.5 as follows:
  “Taking photographs of proceedings at a Board or Committee meeting, or the use of any other audio or visual recording equipment during a meeting, is prohibited without the prior permission of the Chairperson of the meeting. Except with the consent of the Chairperson of the meeting, no organisation or member or members of the public shall display banners, posters or signs at meetings.”

- Item 14.1 – insert an additional sentence at the start as follows:
  “Every item or question at a meeting shall be determined by the Chairperson seeking the general assent of voting members or the expression of a wish to proceed to a vote.”

Insert the following phrase at the end of c. “and any such request should always be recorded.”

- Item 14.4 – insert the following sentences at the beginning:
  “A vote shall be determined by the majority of the members present and voting on the question. An absent member may not vote by proxy. In this context absence is defined as being absent at the time of the vote.”

- Insert a new item 17.12 as follows:
  “Attendance at Committee meetings
  Any member of the Board may attend as an observer at meetings of committees or sub-committees to which he / she has not been appointed as a member. If given permission by the Chairperson of the meeting, a member attending as an observer may speak, but not vote, on any matter.”

- Item 20.1 - insert a new sentence as follows:
  “The Chairperson or the Chief Executive may nominate designates authorised to act as spokespersons for the Board within agreed policy positions.”

8.3 On a proposal by Mr N Macartney, seconded by Mr A McDowell, Members agreed to approve the proposed changes to the Standing Orders and noted that they would be brought back to the next meeting for confirmation.

9. GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY: GUIDANCE FOR BOARD MEMBERS
   (LNI 06.12.10)

9.1 The Chief Executive drew attention to the proposed guidance for Board Members on the acceptance of offers of gifts and hospitality. She
reminded Members that the Code of Practice for Board Members recognized that there was a need for Board Members to observe the highest standards of impartiality and objectivity in the exercise of their duties and that, in this context, perception is as important as reality.

9.2 It was noted that the Board had agreed previously guidance on the acceptance of offers of gifts and hospitality which applied mainly to staff. The proposed guidance for Board Members being considered today was similar and was based on the relevant DAO, but it took account of the fact that some of the approvals processes which applied to staff, were not relevant to Board Members.

9.3 The Chairperson explained that each Member would be required to complete a Gifts and Hospitality Register recording offers of gifts and hospitality, whether accepted or declined. The Registers would be reviewed on a quarterly basis. It was noted that Gifts up to the value of £10.00 did not need to be included on the form. The Chairperson of Audit and Risk Committee reminded Members that careful consideration should be given to the acceptance of any gifts and hospitality from any company or organisation which was in a contractual relationship with Libraries NI and drew attention to the appendix which contained a list of the major suppliers to Libraries NI. It was noted that this list was not exhaustive and would change regularly. Members were reminded that if in doubt, they should seek advice from the Chief Executive or the Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Committee about the acceptance of an offer of a gift or hospitality.

9.4 On a proposal by Councillor C Casey, seconded by Alderman H Nicholl, Members approved the Gifts and Hospitality: Guidance for Board Members.

10. MANAGEMENT OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST (LNI 07.12.10)

10.1 The Chairperson declared a conflict of interest regarding this item and withdrew from the meeting. The Vice-Chairperson, Alderman H Nicholl assumed the chair.

10.2 On a proposal by Councillor A Ewart, seconded by Councillor C Casey, Members agreed to go into Committee.

10.3 On a proposal by Councillor C Casey, seconded by Councillor C Mullaghan, Members agreed to come out of Committee.

10.4 The Chairperson returned to the meeting and resumed the Chair.

10.5 The Vice-Chairperson reported that, while in Committee, the Board had agreed that the Chief Executive would report back to the Department the views of the Board on the issue of conflict of interests and seek advice on the way forward.
11. **PLA CONFERENCE 2010: REPORT BY CHAIRPERSON OF SERVICES COMMITTEE** (LNI 08.12.10)

11.1 Mr N Macartney, Chairperson of the Services Committee, presented a report on his attendance, to represent Libraries NI, at the Public Libraries Authority Conference in Leeds on 20 – 22 October 2010.

11.2 Members thanked Mr Macartney for a very comprehensive and useful report.

12. **STAFFING MATTER** (LNI 09.12.10)

12.1 All officers, with the exception of the Chief Executive, withdrew from the meeting.

12.2 On a proposal by Alderman H Nicholl, seconded by Mr N Macartney, the meeting went into committee.

12.3 On a proposal by Alderman H Nicholl, seconded by Mr N Macartney, the meeting came out of committee.

12.4 The Chairperson reported that, while in committee, the Board had considered a staffing matter and approved the recommendation as detailed in the relevant paper.

13. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

13.1 There was no other notified business.

14. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

14.1 Members noted that the next Board Meeting would take place on Thursday 10 February 2011 at 10.30 am in Antrim Library.

15. **MEMBERS ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE TIMES**

15.1 The meeting ended at 1.15 pm.

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

Councillor Mrs E Robinson arrived at 10.39 am
Councillor J Rodgers left at 12.09 pm
Councillor C Casey left at 1.05 pm
Councillor C Mullaghan left at 1.05 pm
Councillor Mrs A Brolly left at 1.10 pm

Signed: [Signature]
Date: 10th February 2011