LIBRARIES NI
The Northern Ireland Library Authority

19 January 2012

Minutes of a meeting of the Board of the Authority held on Thursday 19 January 2012 at 10.30 am in Lisburn City Library

PRESENT

Mr Nigel Macartney Chairperson
Councillor Mrs Anne Brolly
Mr Pat Carvill
Councillor Charlie Casey
Councillor Sam Cole
Councillor Allan Ewart
Councillor Ms Carla Lockhart
Mr Alastair McDowell
Councillor Mrs Evelyne Robinson
Councillor Jim Rodgers
Councillor Seamus Shields
Ms Jane Williams

APOLOGIES FOR NON ATTENDANCE

Councillor Hubert Nicholl Vice Chairperson
Mr Roger Dixon
Ms Angela Matthews
Ms Helen Roulston

IN ATTENDANCE

Chief Executive Ms Irene Knox
Director of Business Support Mr Terry Heron
Director of Library Services Ms Helen Osborn
Organisational Development Manager Mrs Pauline Martin

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

2.1 The Chairperson referred Members to the DCAL Press Release regarding his appointment to the position of Chair of Libraries NI effective from 1 January 2012 until 31 December 2015. He expressed his appreciation for the support which he had received from Board Members and senior staff during his time as Interim Chairperson and added that he looked forward to working closely with everyone in Libraries NI over the coming years. Board Members congratulated the Chairperson on his appointment.

2.2 The Chairperson congratulated Ruairí Kirk (Strathfoyle), Gabrielle O’Neill (Ballycastle) and Glenn McKibbin (Comber) who won the 5 – 11, 12 – 18 and adult age groups respectively in the Libraries NI Christmas Quiz Competition, sponsored by Britannica. The quiz was designed to encourage communities throughout Northern Ireland to support their local libraries and discover the vast range of resources on offer. More than 1,400 entries were received and the prizes included iPods and Kindle 3G readers.

2.3 The Chairperson reported that Falls Road Library had been officially opened by the DCAL Minister Carál Ni Chuilín on 11 January 2012. He thanked all staff involved in bringing the project to fruition and preparing for this very successful event.

2.4 The Chairperson reported that the Chief Executive and he had met the Minister on 17 January 2012, at her request to discuss a range of matters, including the following:

- progress in relation to the Business Plan 2011/12
- her priorities for inclusion in the Business Plan 2012/13 (see Item 14 below)
- the impact on staff morale and motivation of the uncertainty created by the need to undertake strategic reviews of provision and consider a reduction in opening hours
- the need to include DCAL branding on relevant projects and activities
- the importance that the Minister placed on the Board Members’ appraisal process
- the Minister indicated that she hoped that that appointments would be made to the vacant Councillor positions prior to the next Board Meeting.
- the vacancy for an independent Member of the Board, created by the appointment of the Chairperson
- the forthcoming review of Delivering Tomorrow’s Libraries, which would be undertaken by the Department and the role of Libraries NI in this review.
He reported also that the Minister had indicated her intention to meet with the Chief Executive and him on a 6 monthly basis to review progress in relation to the Business Plan.

2.5 Following discussion it was agreed that a paper outlining options for the term of office of Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons of Committees and the possible rotation of these positions should be prepared by the Chairperson and the Chief Executive and brought to the next meeting for consideration. On a proposal by Councillor J Rodgers, seconded by Councillor Mrs E Robinson, it was agreed that the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson positions on each Committee should be representative of both Councillor and independent Members i.e. if the Chairperson was a Councillor, the Vice Chairperson should be an independent Member and vice versa.

3. CHIEF EXECUTIVE’S BUSINESS

3.1 On behalf of officers the Chief Executive offered her congratulations to Mr Macartney on his appointment as Chairperson and said that the Libraries NI Senior Management Team looked forward to working with him over the term of his appointment.

Assembly Questions

3.2 Attention was drawn to the response given by the Minister to the Assembly Question asked during the period 2 December to 30 December 2011.

Official Opening of Falls Road Library

3.3 The Chief Executive expressed her thanks to everyone who had been involved in the Falls Road Library project, indicating that the refurbished building had been very well received by the community.

Meeting with DCAL Minister on 17 January 2012

3.4 The Chief Executive indicated that the meeting with the Minister had been very positive and timely, given that priorities were now being considered for inclusion in the Business Plan 2012/13.

DCAL Correspondence, 11 January 2012

3.5 The Chief Executive drew attention to the tabled letter which indicated that the Minister shared the views of those who responded to the public consultation on the review of opening hours that libraries are an important public service with an essential role in communities and had taken forward work to relieve the financial pressures being faced by Libraries NI during the Budget 2012 period. Members noted that the letter provided confirmation that the resource budget would be increased by £2.39 million, split across the CSR period as follows:
2011/12  Nil
2012/13  £0.15 million
2013/14  £0.99 million
2014/15  £1.25 million.

In addition the Minister had decided that the Libraries NI budget would not be reduced further to contribute to the student fees pressures.

3.6 Members noted that the funding was in recognition of the additional costs that would be incurred from the decision to retain 7 libraries, following the outcome of the Stage 2 Strategic Review. This included the need to work intensively with local communities to ensure that these libraries were sustainable into the future. The funding had also been provided to reduce the savings requirements detailed in the Staffing Savings Delivery Plan, which were predicated on reduced opening hours.

3.7 The Director of Business Support reported that the additional monies would relieve the financial pressures, although savings would still be required. He indicated that the Department had also confirmed an allocation of £709k, to be spent in this financial year, to implement voluntary redundancies, noting that Libraries NI had budgeted initially for this pressure in 2012/13. Members noted also that notification had been received from the Department of additional funding in this financial year of £620k for stock and £250k for maintenance. The Director of Business Support confirmed that the additional allocations meant that the Savings Delivery Plans would require revision.

3.8 The Chairperson congratulated staff on the work that had been carried out to achieve the additional funding.

3.9 In response to a question regarding capital funding, the Chief Executive confirmed that some preliminary discussions had taken place with DCAL in relation to capital funding requirements over the next three years. The Director of Business Support added that some monies may be available from the re-profiling of the budget for the E2 project and that plans regarding spend were being drawn up. The Chief Executive confirmed that if additional funds were made available a number of projects which are currently at an advanced stage in development could be progressed.

4. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 DECEMBER 2011**

LNI 01.01.12

4.1 On a proposal by Councillor A Ewart, seconded by Ms J Williams, Members approved the minutes of the Board meeting held on 21 December 2011.
5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE BOARD 
MEETING HELD ON 21 DECEMBER 2011 

5.1 There were no matters arising that would not be considered under 
substantive items on the agenda.

5.2 In response to a question from Mr A McDowell the Chief Executive 
confirmed that presentations on the E2 Project and Marketing would 
take place at the March Board meeting.

5.3 In response to a question from Mr A McDowell regarding the 
vandalism which had occurred at the Regional Administration Offices 
in Ballymena in June 2010, the Chief Executive confirmed that an 
update would be brought to the March Board meeting.

6. MINUTES OF THE SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD ON 
20 DECEMBER 2011 

6.1 The Chairperson of the Services Committee, Ms J Williams, presented 
the minutes of the meeting held on 20 December 2011 and drew 
attention to the undernoted items.

Item 6: Review of Opening Hours

6.2 Members were reminded of the need to carry out this review and of 
the in-depth discussions which had taken place at both the Services 
Committee and at the Board Meeting the next day. As a result of 
additional funding being granted from DCAL a revised paper had been 
drawn up showing new proposals for reduced opening hours in 
libraries and this new proposal would be discussed later at Agenda 
Item 12 of this meeting.

Item 7: Review of Mobile Library Services

6.3 Members noted the decision to defer the Review of Mobile Library 
Services until September 2012.

Item 8: Service Plan Progress Reports

6.4 Members noted the progress reports on Service Plans.

Item 9: Strategic Review Stage 2 Action Plan

6.5 Members noted that an action plan was in place and that the Services 
Committee would monitor progress on a regular basis.

6.6 Councillor S Shields stated that, due to ill-health he had been unable 
to attend meetings of the Board and its Committees for a period of 
time since his reappointment and thanked Members for their good 
wishes. He indicated that, with the Board’s approval, he now wished 
to resume his seat on the Services Committee. The Board agreed to 
Councillor Shield’s request.
On a proposal by Councillor S Cole, seconded by Mr P Carvill, the minutes of the meeting of the Services Committee held on 20 December 2011 were adopted by the Board.

7. MINUTES OF THE BUSINESS SUPPORT COMMITTEE HELD ON 21 DECEMBER 2011

7.1 The Chairperson of the Business Support Committee, Councillor Mrs E Robinson, presented the minutes of the meeting held on 21 December 2011, and drew attention to the undernoted items.

Item 6: Finance Reports

7.2 Members noted additional monies had been received in the sum of £709,000 to assist with forthcoming voluntary redundancies, £620,000 for stock and £250,000 for maintenance.

7.3 Members noted that current figures showed a projected year end underspend of £519,000 and were reassured that contingency plans were being put in place to ensure that full spend for the year was achieved.

7.4 Members also noted that an additional allocation of £151,000 had been received on the basis of the planned sales of Andersonstown and Ballymacarret Libraries. It was hoped that the contracts for the sale of these two libraries would be completed by the end of January.

7.5 In response to a question on the approval processes for voluntary redundancy, the Director of Business Support reported that a Business Case was prepared detailing relevant information in relation to those members of staff who had expressed an interest in voluntary redundancy (e.g. grade, post and the savings to be made) and who could be considered for release, based on an assessment of the needs of the service. The Business Case required DCAL approval, and if the amount involved exceeded DCAL’s delegated limit, it also required DFP approval. No redundancies could be implemented until the relevant approvals had been received.

Item 7: Fees and Charges

7.6 Members welcomed the recommendation not to increase fees and charges for the year 2012/13.

Item 8: Procurement Report

7.7 Members noted the report on Single Tender Actions and the proposal regarding a de minimis limit for Single Tender Actions of £500.

Item 9: Tender Report for Brownlow Library and Lurgan Library

7.8 Members noted approval to accept the tender for minor capital works in relation to Brownlow Library and Lurgan Library in the sum of £139,470 from W R Jenkins & Co.
It was also noted that approval had been granted to accept the tender for coach building services in relation to 4 mobile libraries in the sum of £245,318 from Leicester Carriage Builders.

**Item 10: Potential Development of Alternative Library Provision (Templemore Avenue and East Belfast Community Development Agency)**

7.9 The Board was reminded that, in making decisions on the review of libraries in the Greater Belfast area and the closure of Ballymacarrett Library, it had been agreed that discussions should take place with East Belfast Community Development Agency regarding their proposals for the redevelopment of the former Templemore Avenue School. Officers had been in discussion with the East Belfast Community Development Agency in relation to this matter but the view now held by the Committee was that further work on this option should cease on the basis that:

- demand for library services in the area was insufficient in relation to the sustainability of Ballymacarrett library and there was no certainty that a library facility in Templemore Avenue would be sustainable
- the introduction of new facilities in Templemore Avenue was likely to have a detrimental impact on existing libraries at Holywood Arches and Woodstock, both of which were showing increased usage
- ongoing financial savings are required from Libraries NI over the current CSR period and the additional costs associated with equipping and running new facilities at Templemore Avenue, although currently unquantified, would place further pressures on the budget
- the physical constraints and limitations imposed by the listed building status of Templemore Avenue School would pose a number of difficulties in terms of adequately staffing and operating a library.

7.10 Councillor J Rodgers expressed his disappointment that the Project would not progress any further, but recognised that the financial climate had changed since decisions on the Greater Belfast review had been taken. He sought clarification on the amount of space that was being offered to Libraries NI and its location within the Templemore Avenue building indicating that the Business Support Committee had been told that the space would be over 2 floors, but that it was his understanding that sufficient space could be made available on the ground floor.

7.11 The Director of Business Support agreed to clarify the situation and report back to the next meeting.

**Item 11: Health and Safety Report**

7.12 It was noted that a report on this item had been received by the Committee and that a further report detailing claims made against
Libraries NI and the amount of money involved would be brought to the next meeting of the Business Support Committee.

**Item 12: Dungiven Library Trespass**

7.13 Members noted the work which had been undertaken to recover the payment of damages and the progress which had been made to date. It was also noted that the Committee had recommended that the outstanding debt be written off as to proceed further would incur additional expense with little chance of recovery of the original debt.

**Item 13: Policies**

7.14 Members noted that the Joint Declaration of Protection Policy would be amended to incorporate reference to the Bullying and Harassment Policy following agreement with the Trades Unions.

7.15 Members noted the following corrections to the minutes:

- Date of the meeting to be changed from 26 December 2011 to 21 December 2011
- Item 8.3: correction to the spelling of de minimis on line 3
- Item 10: correction to the spelling of the word Avenue in the title of the agenda item.

7.16 On a proposal by Councillor Mrs E Robinson, seconded by Mr A McDowell, the Board adopted the minutes of the Business Support Committee subject to the above corrections.

8. **MINUTES OF THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE HELD ON 7 DECEMBER 2011**

8.1 The Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Committee Mr A McDowell, presented the minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2011 and drew Members’ attention to the undernoted matters.

**Item 4.3: Bribery Act**

8.2 Members noted the work which had been undertaken by the Risk Management Group to review implications and risks for Libraries NI and the view that existing controls currently in place were appropriate.

**Item 4.5: Suspected Fraud**

8.3 It was noted that this matter was under investigation and a report would be brought to the March meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee.

**Item 6.1: Libraries NI Internal Audit External Audit Quality Review**

8.4 Members noted that a copy of the final report had been received from the DCAL Internal Auditor which confirmed that the Libraries NI Internal Audit function is compliant with Government Internal Audit Standards. The Chairperson confirmed that the report would be
considered at the next meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee. Members welcomed the report and expressed their congratulations to the Head of Internal Audit for maintaining such a high standard of auditing services within Libraries NI.

**Item 6.7: Valuable Book Collection**

8.5 It was noted that the valuation of the valuable books portion of the stock assets would be completed by the end of March 2012 and that work was progressing to complete a new fine books room before the end of the year.

**Item 7: Internal Audit Activity Report (March-May 2011)**

8.6 Members noted that 7 reports had been considered by the Audit and Risk Committee including one consultancy and all received a satisfactory assurance rating.

**Item 8: Report to Those Charged with Governance**

8.7 Members noted that the Committee had reviewed progress in relation to the Action Plan to address recommendations in the 2009/10 Report to those Charged with Governance and that an Action Plan in relation to recommendations in the 2010/11 Report to those Charged with Governance would be considered at the next meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee.

**Item 9: Outstanding Recommendations**

8.8 The progress in relation to the review of outstanding recommendations was noted.

**Item 10: Quarterly Assurance Statement**

8.9 Members noted the Chief Executive’s report on the Quarterly Assurance Statement for the period July – September 2011.

**Item 11: Governance and Accountability Meeting – Minutes**

8.10 The Minutes of the Governance and Accountability meeting which had taken place on 5 September 2011 were noted.

**Item 12: Internal Audit Plan Progress Report**

8.11 Members noted the report from the Head of Internal Audit.

**Item 13: Risk Management Report and Review**

8.12 Members noted the review of the Risk Register and that a summary of the Register would be prepared and attached to the Register and both documents would be brought to the Board on a quarterly basis.

**Item 17: NIAO Issues**

8.13 Members noted that a review had been carried out of the Northern Ireland Audit Office Audit Strategy in respect of the 2011/12 Accounts.

8.14 On a proposal by Councillor C Casey, seconded by Mr A McDowell Members adopted the minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee held on 7 December 2011.
9. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE INFORMATION SYSTEMS COMMITTEE HELD ON 8 DECEMBER 2011 LNI 06.01.12

9.1 On a proposal by Councillor A Ewart, seconded by Councillor Miss C Lockhart Members agreed to go into committee to consider the minutes of the meeting which were commercial in confidence.

9.2 On a proposal by Councillor A Ewart, seconded by Councillor Miss C Lockhart Members agreed to come out of committee.

9.3 The Chairperson reported that while in committee the Board had considered the Minutes of the Information Systems Committee held on 9 December 2011 and received a report from the Director of Business Support on progress in relation to the Competitive Dialogue process.

9.4 On a proposal by Ms J Williams, seconded by Mr N Macartney Members agreed to adopt the minutes of the Information Systems Committee held on 9 December 2011 subject to correction of the date at paragraph 7.8.

9.5 The Director of Business Support reminded Members of the confidential nature of the minutes and asked that copies be returned to officers for secure disposal.

A separate non-disclosable note of the discussion in committee has been retained for the record

10. SCHEME OF DELEGATION – INFORMATION SYSTEMS COMMITTEE LNI 07.01.12

10.1 The Director of Business Support explained the reasons for the previously agreed composition of the Information Systems Committee, indicating that it was now considered appropriate that the Chairperson of the Board should also be a member.

10.2 On a proposal by Councillor Mrs E Robinson, seconded by Mr A McDowell, Members agreed to amend the Scheme of Delegation to include the Chairperson of the Board as a member.

10.3 It was noted that a vacancy still existed for another Board Member to join the Information Systems Committee.

11. OPENING HOURS REVIEW LNI 08.01.12

11.1 The Director of Library Services reminded Members that a decision on reducing opening hours had been deferred at the last Board meeting to enable discussions to take place with the Department on the
response to the consultation process and the implications of the proposals. She drew Members’ attention to the paper which has been circulated detailing revised proposals for opening hours taking into account the additional funding allocated by the Minister, responses to the extensive consultation on proposed changes to opening hours, including the outcome of the Rural Impact Assessment and the Equality Impact Assessment, and the continued need to harmonise the opening hours inherited from the 5 Education and Library Boards. She noted the five guiding principles that had been agreed by the Board at the outset of the process, indicating that these still remained relevant.

11.2 Members noted that the revised proposals differed from the original proposals in three mains ways:

- the number of bands had been increased from 4 to 6
- the thresholds for the bands had been lowered
- the number of hours allocated to the middle bands had been increased.

11.3 Members noted also that some libraries were excluded from the bands e.g. those that had been closed for refurbishment during the period when levels of use were calculated or had been affected by the Stage 1 Strategic Review.

11.4 Members acknowledged the amount of work which had gone into producing the new proposals and thanked all staff involved.

11.5 In response to a question from Councillor J Rodgers on the difference between the total number of libraries included in the tables at 4.2 and 4.3, the Director of Library Services explained that:

- the original proposals had included the 3 libraries, which the Board had since agreed should close, following Stage 2 of the Strategic Review; and
- libraries that were excluded from banding because they had been closed for a period of time or were impacted by the Stage 1 review accounted for the remaining difference.

11.6 Councillor C Casey, while welcoming the increase in opening hours proposed for Newry City Library, expressed his disappointment that the opening hours in Crossmaglen library would be cut by 9.5 hours per week and asked if this could be reviewed as it was an area of high deprivation. Councillor Casey added that Crossmaglen Library was positioned quite high in band 6 according to usage figures but had the third highest reduction in hours. He also expressed concern regarding the reduction of 7 hours per week in relation to Warrenpoint.

11.7 The Director of Library Services said that she understood Councillor Casey’s concern and explained that libraries in Band 6 had a total
activity level of less than 50,000 in 2010/11 and that Crossmaglen Library had a total activity level of 39,350 in 2010/11, despite being open for longer hours during that period than other libraries with higher activity levels.

11.8 Councillor S Shields welcomed the restoration of opening hours in Irvinestown and Lisnaskea Libraries, noting that Fermanagh had only 3 branch libraries in total.

11.9 Councillor S Cole queried the rationale for the number of opening hours that had been assigned to each band. The Director of Library Services explained that in determining the total number of opening hours in each band, cognisance had to be taken of the need for appropriate numbers of staff, particularly at busier times, and the complexities associated with staff rotes, as well as ensuring the best spread of opening hours to provide a mix of morning, afternoon, evening and Saturday opening.

11.10 In response to a question from Mr P Carvill in respect of the level of savings that would now be made from the revised opening hours, the Director of Business Support confirmed that the proposals would reduce the level of savings from approximately 1,200 staff hours per week to 500 staff hours equating to approximately £300,000 per annum.

11.11 Councillor Mrs E Robinson expressed concerns about the impact of the proposals on Ballymoney Library which would still lose 17 hours per week. The Chief Executive recognised the concerns expressed by Councillor Mrs E Robinson and noted that the hours allocated to Ballymoney were in line with other libraries doing similar levels of business. She indicated that Ballymoney library was a viable library which served its population well and that the allocation of hours to Ballymoney would mean that a full programme could still be offered, with a spread of opening hours to meet customer needs.

11.12 The Chairperson queried whether, if more funding became available over the next 3 years, it would be possible to revisit the opening hours. The Chief Executive said that such a process would mean engaging again in a full consultation process and that it would again cause anxiety and uncertainty. It was her view that the focus over the next few years should be on bringing stability to the system, so that staff could concentrate on increasing participation and on improving the range of services available.

11.13 Mr P Carvill noted that the environment in which libraries now operated was changing significantly, particularly with the increase in online resources. He queried whether the current means of measuring activity levels (i.e. based on issues, members and computer use) would continue to be relevant into the future. The Chief Executive stated that the Senior Management Team had already had
discussions about this issue and that she had raised this issue with the Department as something that should be considered in their planned review of Delivering Tomorrow’s Libraries.

11.14 On a suggestion from Ms J Williams, the Board agreed that the Chief Executive should write to Minister Ní Chuilín thanking her and her officials for the sympathetic manner in which they had responded to the results of the public consultation process and for the additional funding which has eased the financial pressures resulting from the Budget 2010 process.

11.15 Following further discussion, Councillor Mrs A Brolly proposed that the Board should adopt the revised proposals for opening hours. The proposal was seconded by Councillor S Cole. The Chairperson put the proposal to the meeting and voting was recorded as follows:

For 11
Against 0
Abstentions 1

11.16 The revised proposals regarding opening hours, to be implemented with effect from June 2012, were adopted by the Board. Members noted that there would now be engagement at individual library level with users to determine the pattern of opening hours in order to best meet needs. Consultation would also take place with staff regarding the implications for staff timetables etc.

11.17 Councillor C Casey asked that his concerns regarding Crossmaglen Library be recorded in the minutes and indicated that his preference was for Crossmaglen Library to be in Band 5 rather than Band 6.

11.18 Councillor Mrs E Robinson reiterated her concerns regarding the impact of the revised hours on Ballymcney Library and asked that it be recorded in the minutes that she had abstained due to the planned reduction in the opening hours of Ballymoney Library.

11.19 Members considered a draft Press Release regarding the revised proposals on opening hours and proposed a number of amendments.

11.20 The Director of Library Services drew attention to a further matter identified in the tabled paper relating to Sunday opening in Coleraine Library, which had proved successful in attracting borrowers who would not use the library at other times. She noted that Sunday opening was not considered within the review of opening hours, because of the costs involved, but sought permission to develop proposals to implement Sunday opening in a number of libraries on a pilot basis, in light of the additional funding that was now available.

11.21 Councillor A Ewart expressed concern regarding Sunday Opening, including about the additional costs which would be involved and the impact on staff, and asked that a detailed paper be prepared about its
operation in Coleraine before any decision was taken to extend Sunday opening to other libraries.

11.22 In response to a question from Councillor J Rodgers regarding the payment of staff who worked on Sundays the Director of Library Services confirmed that staff were paid double time and that there was no requirement for staff to work on Sunday.

11.23 Members agreed that a paper regarding Sunday opening would be brought to the Services Committee.

The meeting adjourned at 12.35pm and resumed at 1.00pm.

12. PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT / INVESTMENT STRATEGY: DRAFT BOARD RESPONSES LNI 09.01.12

Programme for Government

12.1 The Chief Executive drew attention to the proposed response to the draft Programme for Government, noting with concern the limited mention of the public library service, in contrast to the draft Investment Strategy, where the important role played by public libraries in terms particularly of learning and social inclusion had been recognised.

12.2 Members considered the draft response and agreed a number of additional comments to be included, relating particularly to areas of the draft Programme for Government where there were gaps and where libraries made a significant contribution.

12.3 It was noted that the closing date for responding to the draft Programme for Government was 22 February 2011 and agreed that Members would forward any further comments to the Chief Executive by mid February for inclusion in the final response.

Investment Strategy

12.4 Members were pleased to note the recognition given in the Strategy to the important role played by libraries in terms of the economy, improved health and well-being, education, lifelong learning and social inclusion. Members noted also reference to the possibility of deferred investment in the regional library (Belfast Central) being undertaken in the 2012 – 2021 period.

12.5 Members noted the draft response and agreed to forward any additional comments for inclusion to the Chief Executive by mid February.
13. BUSINESS PLAN 2011 – 12: PROGRESS REPORT  LNI 10.01.12

13.1 The Chief Executive reported on the progress in relation to the Business Plan 2011-12 and said that although significant progress had been made in relation to the majority of targets it was anticipated that usage targets would not be met.

13.2 The Chief Executive referred to the earlier discussion (Item 11.12) noting that the system used for measuring activity levels in libraries needed to be reviewed as traditional measures of use did not necessarily take account of changes in the way that people used libraries and important factors such as the social impact of libraries in communities or the added value of some services. Members were of the view that these matters needed to be considered in conjunction with the Department.

13.3 Members discussed the report and expressed their satisfaction with the work that had been done during the year and progress in relation to the majority of targets.


14.1 The Chief Executive noted that the draft Business Plan must be submitted to DCAL by the end of March in order for the budget to be approved for 2012/13. She reported also that the Minister hoped to meet with the Chairperson and her again at the beginning of March to discuss a draft Business Plan 2012/13.

14.2 The Chief Executive drew Members’ attention to the circulated paper and explained that as a result of the strategic reviews and the widespread public consultations which had taken place over the past two years, the profile of the public library service had never been higher. She emphasised the importance of capitalising into the future on the interest that had been shown by the public and ensuring that services meet identified needs. She noted that there was a need for all libraries to engage actively with local communities and to build partnerships in order to sustain and improve library use.

14.3 The Chairperson referred to the meeting with the Minister on 17 January at which she had made reference to issues which she would wish to see included in the Business Plan, many of which were identified in the circulated paper, namely:

- an analysis of the landscape in which libraries operate, including target groups where work could add value, including in areas of social deprivation, rural areas and with people who are unemployed
the challenges being faced and the action that will be taken to address them

• bringing stability to the system and addressing issues of staff morale and motivation which had been impacted by the uncertainty associated with the strategic reviews and the opening hours review

• ensuring that staff have the skills and confidence to work effectively in a changing environment

• the need for effective measures of performance

• promoting libraries as shared space, which was seen as being particularly relevant in relation to the Decade of Commemorations

• Líofa 2015

• STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics)

• supporting the curriculum.

14.4 Members discussed the circulated paper and agreed that the following issues should also be considered for inclusion in the Business Plan, namely:

• building partnerships with the business community

• contributing to the development of Essential Skills

• the development of literacy skills among marginalised groups e.g. prisoners.

14.5 Mr A McDowell asked for information on work being done to raise awareness of human trafficking. The Director of Library Services agreed to provide an update at the next meeting.

14.6 The Chief Executive thanked Members for their views and suggestions. It was noted that there would be a presentation from the Head of Strategic Marketing and Communications at the next meeting which would also inform the business planning process. A draft Business Plan with actions, targets and measures would be prepared for consideration at the March Board meeting.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

15.1 The Chairperson asked that at the next meeting nominations be sought for the vacant position on the Information Systems Committee.

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

16.1 The next meeting will be held on Thursday 8 March 2012 at 10.30 am in Lisburn City Library.
17. MEMBERS ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE TIMES

17.1 The meeting ended at 2.00 pm.

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

   Councillor S Shields left at 12.35 pm.
   Councillor A Ewart left at 12.35 pm
   Councillor Miss C Lockhart left at 12.35 pm
   Councillor Mrs E Robinson left at 1.24 pm
   Councillor S Cole left at 1.32 pm.

Signed: _______________________

Date: 8th March 2013