LIBRARIES NI
The Northern Ireland Library Authority
25 May 2011

Minutes of a meeting of the Board of the Authority held on Wednesday 25 May 2011 at 10.30 am in Lisburn City Library

PRESENT
Dr David Elliott Chairperson
Mr Pat Carvill
Mr Roger Dixon
Mr Nigel Macartney
Mr Alastair McDowell
Ms Angela Matthews
Ms Jane Williams

APOLOGIES FOR NON ATTENDANCE
Ms Helen Roulston

IN ATTENDANCE
Chief Executive Ms Irene Knox
Director of Library Services Ms Helen Osborn
Director of Business Support Mr Terry Heron
Organisational Development Manager Ms Pauline Martin
Business Manager (Area B) Mrs Mandy Bryson
Assets Manager Mr Desi Miskelly
Finance Manager Mrs Rita McNamee

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 advised that Item 7 (Minutes of the Information Systems Committee) and the relevant papers relating to ICT / ICU under Item 15 (Service Plans) would be taken together later on the agenda and that he would withdraw for these items.
2. **CHAIRPERSON’S BUSINESS**

2.1 The Chairperson reported that Roberta Dunlop and Cathal Mullaghan had not been re-elected as Councillors and therefore would not be eligible to be considered for reappointment to the Board. Members agreed that the Chairperson should write to them, on behalf of the Board, expressing thanks for their contribution as Board Members and wishing them well for the future.

2.2 The Chairperson noted that he and the Chief Executive had a positive meeting with the new Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, Carál Ni Chuilín, on 18th May 2011. The Chief Executive reported that the Minister had been briefed on the role and value of libraries, the Key Themes, the savings that had been made already by Libraries NI through voluntary redundancy and the implications of the budget settlement, particularly in relation to capital investment, including in Belfast Central Library. The Chairperson had raised also the issue of the appointment of Councillors to the Board. The Minister had expressed an interest in visiting libraries.

3. **CHIEF EXECUTIVE’S BUSINESS**

3.1 The Chief Executive drew attention to the following matters:

- the membership of the Assembly’s Culture, Arts and Leisure Committee, noting that a date was being arranged for the Committee to be briefed on the strategic review of library provision (Stage 2)
- the launch of Silver Surfer’s Day which took place in Ormeau Library on 20 May 2011, noting that the initiative was run in partnership with Business in the Community and the Department of Finance and Personnel and that 56 libraries were taking part this year
- the retirement of Edgar Jardine, Deputy Permanent Secretary, DCAL and the appointment of Cynthia Smith as his successor.

4. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD HELD ON 14 APRIL 2011**

4.1 On a proposal by Mr N Macartney, seconded by Mr R Dixon, the minutes of the meeting held on 14 April 2011 were approved as an accurate record subject to the undernoted amendment:

Paragraph 13.2: At the end of the first bullet point, insert "...and supporting public safety awareness raising."
5. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 14 APRIL 2011** (LNI 02.05.11)

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. Attention was drawn in particular to the undesignated matters.

**Item 5.6: Vandalism**

5.2 Members noted that the Chief Executive had written to the District Commander and that a response was awaited.

**Item 5.8: Gifts and Hospitality: Guidance for Board Members**

5.3 The Chief Executive asked any Member who had not yet done so to complete a Gifts and Hospitality return for the period January – March 2011, including a nil return if applicable, and return it to her as soon as possible. Template forms were made available at the meeting.

5.4 **Item 5.6: Management of Conflict of Interest**

The Chief Executive tabled a copy of the report received from John Hunter indicating that the report had been received the previous day. Members agreed to discuss this item later on the agenda and that the Chairperson should remain for the discussion.

5.5 **Item 10: Annual Report and Accounts 2009/10**

Members noted that the Comptroller and Auditor General had certified the 2009/10 Accounts on 10th May 2011. A signed copy had been forwarded to DCAL to arrange laying before the Assembly.

5.6 **Item 15.8: Receipt of Delegations**

The Chief Executive reported that a letter had been sent to each of the campaign groups and to relevant MLAs, MPs and Councils regarding the decision to postpone decisions on the outcome of the consultation on Stage 2 until September.

6. **MINUTES OF THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 18 MAY 2011**

6.1 Members noted that the minutes of the meeting held on 18th May 2011 had not yet been finalised. It was agreed to defer this item until the next meeting.

7. **BUSINESS PLAN 2010/11: REPORT ON OUTCOMES** (LNI 05.05.11)

7.1 The Chief Executive presented the report on the outcomes of the 2010/11 Business Plan, drawing attention in particular to the following matters:
• as a result of additional funding provided by DCAL at year end the spend on stock was £1.80 per capita compared to the initial target of £1.70 per capita
• issues had increased by 0.78% compared to 2009/10
• 50.01% of requests had been satisfied within 7 days, the target set by DCAL being 50% satisfied within 7 days
• as a result of the budget pressures over the next 4 years it had not been possible to implement the proposal to increase opening hours in line with the vision outlined in Meeting the Demands for a Modern Public Library Service
• the number of visits to libraries had increased by 8% compared to the baseline year (2008/09)
• there were 7.3 Public Access Terminals per 10,000 head of population, the target set by DCAL being 6 per 10,000
• while a number of capital projects had been completed on time and within approved budget, others had been put on hold because of budget pressures over the next 4 years.

7.2 In noting the report Members expressed their satisfaction with the outcomes achieved in 2010/11 and asked that their thanks be extended to all staff who had contributed to a successful year. Members asked also that a higher profile be given to the requests service, which was considered to be of a high standard.

7.3 Members noted that quarterly reports would be made to the Board on Key Performance Indicators and progress towards achieving the targets in the Business Plan.

8. PSA TARGETS 2008 – 2011: REPORT ON OUTCOMES IN 2010/11 (LNI 06.05.11)

8.1 The Chief Executive advised Members that DCAL had established a number of targets and milestones for Libraries NI related to the Public Service Agreements (PSAs) contained in the Programme for Government 2008 – 2011. She drew attention to the report which showed progress in 2010/11 in relation to each of the milestones, noting that, with the exception of capital spend associated with PSA 5, all milestones had been achieved.

8.2 Members noted that the initial target set in relation to PSA 5 of delivering £25.5 million of capital investment in libraries by 31 March 2011 had been totally unrealistic given that, in many instances, the necessary preparation work had not been carried out by Education and Library Boards prior to the establishment of Libraries NI.

8.2 Members noted the report.
9. BUDGET 2011/12

9.1 The Director of Business Support introduced the paper setting out the context for the 2011/12 budget and the headline assumptions that had been taken into account in preparing the budget, including the target spend on stock and an increased budget for maintenance in recognition of the concerns expressed by Members about cuts to the maintenance budget in previous years and the current lack of capital funding. Members noted also the proposed allocations for consultancy support for the E2 project and the Stock Assets Valuation exercise.

9.2 The Finance Manager explained the process by which the budget had been developed and confirmed that, while some costs had been estimated centrally, budget holders had been involved also by providing information on anticipated costs within their areas of responsibility. Attention was drawn to the summary Revenue Budget 2011/12 and the detailed allocations on an expense code basis.

9.3 Members considered the proposed budget in detail. In responding to questions, the Director of Business Support and the Finance Manager indicated that:

- a decrease in income from fines was anticipated as a result of the roll out of text messaging
- a review would be undertaken during the year of CDs/DVDs
- the policy of holding sales of withdrawn stock would continue but income was projected to fall due to the current economic climate which was impacting detrimentally on second hand booksellers
- the income relating to Health in Minc covered the costs of the staff team which was now in place
- staffing costs included actual increases in employers’ costs as well as provision for incremental drift and £250 pay increase for low paid staff
- consultancy costs associated with capital projects could not be capitalised until approval had been received for the project and a sufficient capital budget allocated.

9.4 Members expressed their thanks to the Finance team for their work in developing the budget and for the clear manner in which it had been set out. On a proposal by Mr P Carvill, seconded by Mr A McDowell, the Board approved the 2011/12 recurrent budget.

10. CORPORATE PLAN 2011/15

10.1 The Chief Executive presented the draft Corporate Plan 2011/15 reminding Members that a first draft had been considered at the previous meeting and that the final draft would require Ministerial approval. She drew attention to the proposed corporate objectives for the next 4 years, recognising that challenging targets had been set
in relation to increasing library usage against a backdrop of budget cuts which would certainly constrain service development opportunities. Members expressed the view that the targets would need to be carefully monitored to ensure that they were achievable and might need to be revised mid-term in light of experience.

10.2 Following discussion, on the proposal of Mr N Macartney, seconded by Ms A Matthews, Members approved the Corporate Plan 2011/15 for submission to the Department.

11. BUSINESS PLAN 2011/12 (LNI 09.05.11)

11.1 The Chief Executive presented the draft Business Plan 2011/12 highlighting changes that had been made to the document considered by the Board at its last meeting and noting that the Business Plan required Ministerial approval.

11.2 Following discussion, on a proposal by Mr Dixon, seconded by Ms Matthews, Members approved the Business Plan for submission to the Department, subject to the budget information being updated in line with the paper agreed at today’s meeting.

12. CORPORATE RISK REGISTER (LNI 10.05.11)

12.1 The Chief Executive introduced the Corporate Risk Register, noting that it had been reviewed by the Audit and Risk Committee at its meeting on 18 May 2011. While recognising the role of the Audit and Risk Committee in monitoring and reviewing the Corporate Risk Register, she emphasised also the importance of the Board as a corporate body understanding the risks detailed in the Corporate Risk Register and taking ownership of them.

12.2 Attention was drawn in particular to the following threats to the achievement of objectives:

- the impact on the estate of the reduced capital budget
- the impact on stock of the reduced recurrent budget
- the impact of the implementation of Savings Delivery Plans on opening hours, stock and staffing.

12.3 Members noted also the additional threat that had been identified, namely the impact on library usage of competition from other providers, particularly in relation to online services and the actions being taken to mitigate those risks.

12.4 Following discussion, Members noted the Corporate Risk Register.
13. SERVICE PLANS AND RISK REGISTERS 2011/12 (LNI 11.05.11)

13.1 It was noted that the planning process required a Corporate Plan, an annual Business Plan and annual Service Plans setting out the actions to be taken by various sections within Libraries NI to achieve the targets, together with associated risk registers. Progress in achieving the targets in the Service Plans and Service Risk Registers would be monitored by the relevant Committees.

Business Areas A, B, C and D (Papers 1 – 5)

13.2 The Director of Library Services presented the Service Plans for each of the Business Areas. She indicated that the Plans were broadly similar as far as the targets were concerned with particular emphasis in each Plan on a few named libraries where it was proposed to initiate a major membership drive. She presented also the Risk Register for the Business Areas, drawing attention to the impact of budget constraints on service delivery.

Finance Department (Papers 6 & 7)

13.3 The Director of Business Support presented the Service Plan for the Finance Department and the associated Risk Register. Discussion of the content of the Service Plan was deferred until later in the meeting due to a potential conflict of interest (see Item 16 below).

Human Resources Department (Papers 8 & 9)

13.4 The Director of Business Support presented the Service Plan for the HR Department and the associated Risk Register. He drew attention, in particular, to the work that was ongoing in relation to harmonisation of practices inherited from the Education and Library Boards and to the challenges presented by implementation of the Savings Delivery Plans.

Assets Department (Papers 10 & 11)

13.5 The Director of Business Support presented the Service Plan for the Assets Department and the associated Risk Register. Members noted that papers being considered later in the meeting provided background to actions contained in the Plan.

ICU/IS Department (Papers 12, 13a & 13b)

13.6 Consideration of these items was deferred until later in the meeting due to a potential conflict of interest. See item 16 below.

Planning and Performance (Papers 14 & 15)

13.7 The Chief Executive presented the Service Plan and associated Risk Register for the Planning and Performance Unit, drawing attention to the role played by the Unit in collating information resulting from the consultation on Stage 2 of the strategic review of library provision. Members noted also that a statistician had recently been seconded from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA)
who would have a key role to play in quality assuring and validating statistical information produced in the future.

13.8 On a proposal by Mr N Macartney, seconded by Mr R Dixon, the Board approved the Service Plans and noted the associated Risk Registers.

*The meeting adjourned at 12.30pm and resumed at 1.00pm.*

14. **REVIEW OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

*Officers, with the exception of the Chief Executive, the Director of Business Support and the Director of Library Services, withdrew from the meeting.*

14.1 On a proposal by Mr R Dixon, seconded by Ms J Williams, the Board went into committee.

14.2 On a proposal by Mr R Dixon, seconded by Ms J Williams, the Board came out of committee.

14.3 While in committee, on the proposal of Mr A McDowell, seconded by Mr P Carvill, Members discussed, noted and accepted the report by John Huntor and agreed to issue it to DCAL for their consideration and urgent response. Members also agreed that if a meeting with the Department was necessary, the Chairperson of Audit and Risk Committee and the Chief Executive should attend.

*A separate note of the discussion in committee has been prepared for agreement by the Board.*

*The Chairperson withdrew from the meeting. Officers returned to the meeting. Mr R Dixon assumed the chair.*

15. **INFORMATION SYSTEMS COMMITTEE**  
(LNI 03.05.11)

15.1 On a proposal by Mr N Macartney, seconded by Ms J Williams, the Board went into committee to consider the minutes of the Information Systems Committee. While in committee the Board discussed and adopted the minutes of the Information Systems Committee.

*A separate note of the discussion in committee has been prepared for agreement by the Board. This note is commercial in confidence and is not disclosable.*
16. SERVICE PLANS AND RISK REGISTERS 2011/12 (cont’d)  
(LNI 11.05.11)

16.1 While in committee the Board considered and approved the ICU/IT Department Services Plan and associated Risk Register and discussed elements of the Finance Services Plan.

*A separate note of the discussion in committee has been prepared for agreement by the Board. This note is commercial in confidence and is not disclosable.*

16.2 On a proposal by Mr N Macartney, seconded by Ms J Williams, the Board came out of committee.

*The Chairperson returned to the meeting and resumed the chair.*

17. REVIEW OF OPENING HOURS  
(LNI 12.05.11)

17.1 The Director of Library Services reminded Members that one of the Savings Delivery Plans developed to ensure that Libraries NI could live within its reduced financial allocation over the next 4 years proposed a reduction in the opening hours of libraries. She drew attention to the proposed guiding principles that would be applied to the review of opening hours and sought approval to proceed to develop detailed proposals in line with these guiding principles, which would then form the basis for public consultation.

17.2 Members discussed the proposals and agreed, reluctantly, that the work should proceed along the lines being proposed. They indicated their concern that at a time when the public library service had an even more important role to play in the lives of individuals and communities impacted by the austerity measures, the services being provided should be curtailed. They recognised, however, that the alternative to reducing opening hours, i.e. the closure of more libraries, was not acceptable. They indicated also their expectation that at the end of this budget period, or earlier if possible, every effort should be made to restore opening hours to an appropriate level.

17.3 Members were reminded of the confidential nature of the paper and the proposals which was still under development and which would be subject to public consultation in due course.

18. SUMMER OPENING HOURS  
(LNI 13.05.11)

18.1 The Director of Library Services presented the paper setting out proposals for reduced opening hours in branch libraries and mobile libraries during July and August when patterns of library use differed from the rest of the year. Members noted that the proposals were
designed to make the best use of staff resources and the available budget over the holiday periods. It was noted also that the proposals would be subject to consultation with the trades unions and the detail would be worked out on a library by library basis.

18.2 On a proposal by Mr R Dixon, seconded by Mr N Macartney, the Board approved the proposal to reduce the number of late night openings and to take mobile libraries off the road as appropriate.

19. EAST BELFAST COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY: FORMER TEMPLEMORE AVENUE SCHOOL (LNI 14.05.11)

19.1 The Chief Executive reminded Members that when the decision was taken to close Ballymacarrett Library, the Board agreed to explore the potential for a partnership with East Belfast Community Development Agency. She drew attention to the correspondence from Michael Briggs, dated 3 May 2011, setting out progress made by the Agency in securing funding to progress the redevelopment of the former Templemore Avenue School.

19.2 Having considered the correspondence, Members agreed that offices should continue discussions with the Agency in relation to their proposals and seek detailed information about timescales and costs.

20. STOCK ASSETS PROJECT (LNI 15.05.11)

20.1 The Director of Library Services presented the Project Initiation Document (PID) and Project Plan for the Stock Assets Project. She drew attention also to the proposed definition, for accounting purposes, of stock assets, noting that it was based on the definition of heritage assets in the Financial Reporting Manual (FReM).

20.2 Members considered and agreed the documentation, subject to the inclusion in the PID of information about the Project Manager.

21. LONE WORKING POLICY (LNI 16.05.11)

21.1 The Director of Service Delivery introduced the Lone Working Policy. She reported that, in the majority of the Education and Library Boards, library staff had routinely worked alone for some or all of the opening hours of a branch or mobile library and that lone working had been recognised in the generic job descriptions for frontline staff. It was noted that single staffing / lone working was a necessary part of service provision as some libraries did not attract a level of use which would justify having more than one member of staff present at least some of the time. Members noted the various policies and
procedures that were in place to address issues associated with lone working.

21.2 On a proposal by Mr N Macartney, seconded by Ms J Williams, Members approved the Lone Working Policy, subject to finalisation of the consultation with Trades Unions.

22. FLEXIBLE RETIREMENT POLICY (LNI 17.05.11)

22.1 The Director of Business Support presented the proposed policy on Flexible Retirement. He informed Members that changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations (Northern Ireland) meant that employees who were members of the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers Superannuation (NILGOS) Scheme could request flexible retirement after the age of 55 years. There was no automatic right, however, for employees to be granted flexible retirement and each case would have to be considered on its own merits, with the economic and / or operational interests of the service and cost implications being of paramount importance.

22.2 On the proposal of Mr R Dixon, seconded by Mr N Macartney, Members approved the Flexible Retirement Policy.

23. MAJOR WORKS CAPITAL PLAN 2011/12 (LNI 18.05.11)

23.1 The Assets Manager reminded Members that the budget allocation for the 2011/12 – 2014/15 periods did not provide for any new capital projects to be taken forward in relation to the Libraries NI estate. He emphasised the importance, however, of continuing to plan and prepare for resources becoming available in the future, including as a result of additional funding in year. He noted that in taking forward preparation work, Libraries NI would incur costs associated, for example, with professional fees and that those costs could not be capitalised until DCAL / DFP approval had been received for the project and a specific budget provided.

23.2 Members noted the criteria that had been applied to prioritise projects already at various stages of preparedness and the associated recommendations. On a proposal by Mr A McDowell, seconded by Mr R Dixon, Members approved the Plan.

24. MINOR WORKS CAPITAL PLAN 2011/12 (LNI 19.05.11)

24.1 The Assets Manager introduced the proposed Minor Works Capital Plan 2011/12 and explained the criteria that had been applied in order to prioritise potential schemes. Members noted also the reserve list of
projects which had been produced and which could be progressed if slippage occurred or additional in-year funding became available.

24.2 On a proposal by Ms J Williams, seconded by Mr N Macartney, Members approved the Minor Works Capital Plan 2011/12.

25. RECURRENT MAINTENANCE PLAN 2011/12 (LNI 20.05.11)

25.1 The Assets Manager briefed Members on the proposed Recurrent Maintenance Plan 2011/12, explaining the process and rationale for the prioritisation. Members noted that the budget allocation for maintenance work had been increased in 2011/12 in light of the lack of capital funding.

25.2 Following discussion, on the proposal of Mr N Macartney, seconded by Mr R Dixon, Members approved the Recurrent Maintenance Plan.

26. SURPLUS PROPERTY: DISPOSAL PROGRESS REPORT (LNI 21.05.11)

26.1 Members noted the report on progress in relation to the disposal of surplus property.

27. SIGNING OF CONTRACTS: HOLYWOOD, NEWRY AND BALLYNAHINCH LIBRARIES (LNI 22.05.11)

27.1 The report on contracts that had been signed and sealed was noted.

28. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS JUNE 2011 – JUNE 2012 (LNI 23.05.11)

28.1 Members noted the proposed schedule of meetings of the Board and Committees. It was noted also that the proposed date for the Board meeting in September may have to be changed depending on progress in relation to the reappointment of Councillors and the need to ensure that Members were fully briefed on the outcome of the consultation on Stage 2 of the strategic review of provision prior to decisions being made.

29. ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS

29.1 There was no other notified business.
30. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

30.1 It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Thursday 7 July 2011 at 10.30am in Antrim Library.

31. MEMBERS' ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE TIMES

31.1 The meeting ended at 3.35pm

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

Ms A Matthews left at 1.50pm
Mr P Carvill left at 2.45pm

Signed: ____________

Date: 7th July 2011