LIBRARIES NI

The Northern Ireland Library Authority

8 March 2012

Minutes of a meeting of the Board of the Authority held on Thursday 8 March 2012 at 10.30 am in Lisburn City Library

PRESENT

Mr Nigel Macartney
Councillor Mrs Anne Brolly
Councillor Charlie Casey
Councillor Sam Cole
Mr Roger Dixon
Ms Angela Matthews
Mr Alastair McDowell
Councillor John O’Kane
Councillor Mrs Marion Smith
Councillor Mrs Evelyne Robinson
Councillor Jim Rodgers
Ms Jane Williams

Chairperson

APOLOGIES FOR NON ATTENDANCE

Mr Pat Carvill
Councillor Allan Ewart
Councillor Hubert Nicholl
Ms Helen Roulston
Councillor Seamus Shields

Vice Chairperson

IN ATTENDANCE

Chief Executive
Director of Business Support
Director of Library Services
Organisational Development Manager
Business Manager
Head of ICU and ICT
Head of Strategic Marketing and Communications

Ms Irene Knox
Mr Terry Heron
Ms Helen Osborn
Mrs Pauline Martin
Trisha Ward
Desi Curry
Glenn Beattie

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 welcomed Councillor John O’Kane and Councillor Marion Smith to their first meeting of the Libraries NI Board.

2.2 The Chairperson referred Members to two letters which had been received from the DCAL Minister as follows:

- letter dated 22 February 2012 regarding Revised Budget Allocations (Resource). It was noted that the date for the revised Savings Delivery Plans to be submitted to DCAL was 16 March and not 16 February as stated in the letter.

- letter dated 22 February 2012 regarding the meeting which had taken place on 17 January to review performance in relation to the 2011-12 Business Plan and to hear priorities put forward by the Minister for inclusion in the 2012 -13 Business Plan. Members noted the Minister’s comments in this letter regarding the roles and responsibilities of the Chairperson and Board Members and that the Minister would be seeking evidence that the Chairperson and Board Members had provided a clear “challenge” function when necessary to the Chief Executive and Senior Management Team of Libraries NI. It was noted that a follow up meeting with the Minister to discuss the draft Business Plan had been arranged for 26 March 2012.

2.3 The Chairperson reported on the visit by the Princess Royal to Holywood Library on 7 March 2012 in relation to Project 500 and thanked all staff involved in making the visit a success.

2.4 The Chairperson reported that the Minister had toured Belfast Central Library on 16 February 2012.

Members commented on plans by the University of Ulster for the relocation of facilities from the Jordanstown campus to Belfast and the implications for Belfast Central Library. In response to a question, the Chief Executive confirmed that there was liaison with the University regarding their plans through regular meetings with Professor Alastair Adair.

2.5 The Chairperson reported on a visit by the Minister to Derry Central Library on 1 March 2012 to celebrate World Book Day and the work of the cross-border Sensory Engagement Project. The Project, which is a partnership with RNIB and RNID, seeks to ensure that libraries are accessible to people with sight and hearing loss and is aimed at
improving the engagement levels and confidence of blind, partially sighted, deaf and hard of hearing people.

2.6 The Chairperson informed Members’ that the CILIP / LAI Joint Conference would be held on 19 and 20 April in The Merchant Hotel, Belfast. He drew attention to the draft programme which had been tabled and asked if anyone wished to attend the event to contact the Chief Executive’s Office as soon as possible.

2.7 The Chairperson informed Members that, together with the Chief Executive, he had visited libraries in Ballycastle, Portrush, Portstewart, Coleraine and Ballymoney on 22 February 2012. He added that he had been impressed with the commitment and enthusiasm of the staff who were on duty in the libraries. He noted also his intention to visit libraries in the Derry–Londonderry area later in the month and expressed the hope that opportunities would be available for all Board Members to visit some libraries in the near future, adding that it was important that the Board was visible to staff.

3. CHIEF EXECUTIVE’S BUSINESS

3.1 On behalf of Officers the Chief Executive welcomed Councillors Marion Smith and John O’Kane to the Board of Libraries NI and said that the Libraries NI Senior Management Team looked forward to working with them.

Assembly Questions

3.2 The Chief Executive drew Members’ attention to the Assembly Questions received and the Ministers response given during the period 6 January 2012 to 17 February 2012.

DCAL Press Release regarding new Board Members

3.3 Members noted the Press Release which had been issued by the Department in relation to the appointment of Councillor Marion Smith and Councillor John O’Kane to the Board of Libraries NI.

Forthcoming Events

3.4 The Chief Executive drew attention to a number of tabled documents relating to events taking place over the next period, as follows:

- the Dickens 2012 NI Festival
- Creativity Month in Libraries – March 2012
- a select reading list of books on early 20th Century Irish history, entitled ‘Interpreting our Past, Moving Forward’, which had been produced to support a series of lectures being promoted by DCAL as part of the Commemorations Strategy.
Gifts and Hospitality Registers

3.5 The Chief Executive reminded Members that Gifts and Hospitality Registers for Quarter 4 (January – March 2012) should be completed and returned in the stamped addressed envelopes provided as soon as possible.

Key Performance Indicators

3.6 Members noted the Quarter 3 Report on Key Performance Indicators which included a detailed financial breakdown as requested. The Chief Executive drew attention, in particular to the following matters:

- in Quarter 3 issues had increased considerably, but the target of a 1% increase overall compared to the previous year was unlikely to be achieved
- the use of ebooks was increasing
- PAT (Public Access Terminals) use had decreased, due to a number of factors including a decrease in the number of migrant workers and problems with bandwidth which impacted on the speed of the service. Members noted that this was a major issue which would be addressed through the E2 project
- the amount of press coverage received during the period, some of which related to the opening hours review, but much also relating to events in individual libraries.

Members queried whether the imposition of fines for the late return of items impacted on library use and how much money was outstanding in relation to unpaid fines. The Chief Executive indicated that research showed that fines were considered by the public to be a major barrier to library use. It was noted that a text and email notification system was in place to remind users when items were due for renewal to help them to avoid fines, but, inevitably some people still did not return items on time. The Director of Business Support reported that the amount of outstanding fines in the 2010/11 year was approximately £18,000, made up of a large number of small amounts and that it was not cost-effective to pursue individuals other than through the normal reminder process. In response to a question the Chief Executive indicated that a number of the Education and Library Boards had employed a debt collection agency for a period of time on a pilot basis to seek to retrieve non-returned items but that it had not been successful.

Members suggested that it might be appropriate to introduce an amnesty on fines in order to encourage people to return their items and rejoin the library. The Chief Executive explained that just prior to the establishment of Libraries NI, the issue of an amnesty had been raised with the Department as a means of promoting the service and encouraging library use, but the Department had rejected the idea. Members asked that the issue of an amnesty should be raised again with the Department.
Discussion took place on the current approach to lending items for a specified period of time and other approaches which might be more appropriate into the future to reflect current lifestyles. Members agreed that Officers should prepare a paper exploring different approaches to the lending of books and other items for consideration initially by the Services Committee.

4. MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 19 JANUARY 2012
   LNI 01.03.12

4.1 On a proposal by Councillor Mrs A Brolly, seconded by Mr A McDowell, Members approved the minutes of the Board Meeting held on 19 January 2012.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 19 JANUARY 2012
   LNI 02.03.12

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.

5.2 Item 3.7: Chief Executive's Business
   Members noted that a Business Case had been submitted to DCAL to release 28 staff under the terms of the Voluntary Redundancy Scheme. The redundant posts arose from 2 sources ie the continued roll-out of the agreed organizational structure and the outworkings of the Opening Hours Review. Subject to DCAL approval of the Business Case it was hoped that staff in redundant posts in the organisational structure would be released at 31 March 2012 and the remaining staff whose posts would be redundant as a result of the Opening Hours Review would be released either at 31 March 2012 or at some date prior to June 2012. Members noted that costings for all staff being proposed for release were within the pay back period set by DCAL.

5.3 Item 5.3: Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Board meeting held on 21 December 2011
   Members noted the update from the Chief Executive regarding the vandalism which had occurred at the Regional Administrative Centre in Ballymena during the period March – June 2010. It was noted that since June 2010 one other minor incident had occurred. Members asked that their disappointment, that no-one had been brought to justice for this act of vandalism despite good video evidence being made available to the PSNI, be recorded.
5.4 **Item 7.11: Potential Development of Alternative Library Provision (Templemore Avenue and East Belfast Community Development Association)**

Members noted the tabled documentation which would be considered further under the minutes of the Business Support Committee (Agenda Item 15).

5.5 **Item 11: Opening Hours Review**

5.5.1 The Chief Executive referred Members to the final report on the Strategic Review of Opening Hours and reported that two further issues required consideration, namely:

- the opening hours of The Heritage Libraries (Irish and Local Studies, Armagh and Mellon Centre for Migration Studies Library, Omagh) had been subject to consultation as part of the Opening Hours Review. The Services Committee had considered the outcome of the consultation at its meeting on 21 February 2012 and had recommended that:
  - the opening hours for the Irish and Local Studies Library in Armagh should be set at 40 hours per week (previously 38.5 hours) and
  - the opening hours for the Mellon Centre in Omagh should be set at 30 hours per week (previously 32.5).

- during the consultation process and in the final proposals document, a number of libraries had been identified as exceptions to the Banding process, either because they were new or had undergone major refurbishment or they had been affected by the outcome of the Stage 1 Strategic Review, including already having their opening hours revised. Various review dates had been established for these libraries. Officers were now recommending, in order to ensure a period of stability, that the opening hours of the 13 libraries concerned should be reviewed at the end of March 2013, based on total activity levels in 2012/13, with a report to Services Committee in June 2013 and recommendations to the Board in July 2013.

5.5.2 Following discussion, on a proposal by Mr A McDowell, seconded by Mr R Dixon, Members agreed to adopt the final report on the Strategic Review of Opening Hours, thereby approving the opening hours for The Heritage Libraries and the review date for libraries which were exempt from the Banding process.

5.5.3 Members noted that the revised proposals had generally been welcomed by members of the public but that concern had been expressed regarding Bangor, Crossmaglen, Holywood, Newtownards, Castlederg and Strabane libraries. The Chief Executive and Director of Library Services reported on correspondence received and meetings that had taken place.
5.5.4 The Director of Library Services reported that a joint working group had been set up between Libraries NI and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) to consider ways in which Libraries NI might work more closely with DARD to promote libraries in rural areas. She added that, while discussions were still at an early stage, there may be opportunities, to source additional funding.

5.5.5 Councillor Mrs M Smith reported that considerable discussion had taken place at North Down Borough Council regarding the review of opening hours in libraries in the area and suggested that Officers might wish to meet with the Council to present the case for the strategic review. The Chief Executive responded that a detailed letter had been sent to the Chief Executive of North Down Borough Council explaining the rationale behind the cuts to library opening hours but that she would be happy to meet with Councillors, if necessary.

5.5.6 In response to a question from Councillor Mrs E Robinson regarding the need to ensure that the opening hours of libraries best meet the needs of customers, the Chief Executive explained that consultation on the actual pattern of opening hours had taken place at an individual library level and the results were currently being collated. The new patterns of opening hours would be implemented in libraries in June 2012 and 4 weeks notice would be given of the changes. It was noted that a report on the patterns of opening hours would be brought to the next meeting of the Services Committee.

5.6 Item 12: Programme for Government/Investment Strategy: Draft Board Response
Members noted that comments received at the last Board meeting had been incorporated into the respective responses and these had been submitted.

5.7 Item 14.5: Business Plan 2012-13
The Director of Library Services updated Members on the work which had taken place to raise awareness of human trafficking.

In response to a question from Mr A McDowell regarding domestic violence posters, the Director of Library Services confirmed that she would source some posters and arrange for them to be displayed in libraries.

Members thanked Ms Osborn for her update on this serious issue.

6. MARKETING PRESENTATION

6.1 The Head of Strategic Marketing and Communications, Mr G Beattie gave a presentation to Members on the marketing analysis which had been undertaken to inform the draft Business Plan 2012 -13. Mr
Beattie gave an insight into the analysis of Libraries NI customer information and the marketing environment.

6.2 Members thanked the Head of Strategic Marketing and Communications for a very interesting presentation and agreed that he should return at a later date to give a further presentation.

7. **E2 PRESENTATION**

7.1 Mr Desi Curry, Head of ICU and ICT and Ms Trisha Ward, Business Manager gave a presentation on the ongoing work in relation to the E2 project and answered questions from Members.

7.2 Members were reminded that all matters relating to the E2 project are commercial in confidence.

7.3 The Chairperson thanked Ms Ward and Mr Curry for their useful and informative briefing to the Board.

8. **INFORMATION SYSTEMS COMMITTEE VACANCY** LNI 04.03.12

8.1 Members considered the paper setting out the Scheme of Delegation for the Information Systems Committee, noting that there were was currently one vacancy on the Committee.

8.2 Following a discussion regarding the importance of the work of this Committee Ms Angela Matthews indicated that she would give consideration to joining the Committee.

9. **LIBRARIES NI DRAFT BUSINESS PLAN 2012-13** LNI 03.03.12

9.1 The Chief Executive reminded Members that a paper had been considered at the last Board meeting setting out a number of key issues to be considered for the Business Plan 2012-13 and that a meeting had taken place with the Minister to discuss her priorities for inclusion in the Plan. She referred also to the Minister’s correspondence, dated 22 February 2012 on this subject.

9.2 The Chief Executive drew attention to the draft Business Plan which had been circulated, noting in particular:
- inclusion in Section 2 (The Planning Context) of feedback received from customers during the strategic reviews
- that the resource budget for 2012-13 had been confirmed by DCAL, but that the capital budget was still in draft (Section 5)
- the universal nature of the public library service, but also the need (as identified in Section 7) to target services at specific groups where the impact might be greatest.
• the specific targets which had been established in relation to the 4 Corporate Objectives.

9.3 It was noted that the Chairperson and Chief Executive would be meeting the Minister again on 26 March 2012 to discuss the draft Business Plan and that the final Plan required Ministerial approval.

9.4 Following discussion, Mr A McDowell proposed that the Draft Business Plan 2012-13 be adopted subject to DCAL approval. The proposal was seconded by Ms J Williams. The Chairperson put the proposal to the meeting and voting was recorded as follows:

For 10
Against 0
Abstentions 0

10. CUSTOMER FEEDBACK REPORT OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2011

LNI 06.03.12

10.1 Members noted the Customer Feedback report for the period October – December 2011 and agreed that a similar report should be brought to Members on a six monthly basis.

11. LIBRARIES NI DISPOSAL AND RETENTION SCHEDULE

LNI 07.03.12

11.1 The Chief Executive referred to the Disposal and Retention Schedule and informed Members that as a public body LNI was required by law to manage its records and to have in place a Records Management Policy and a Disposal and Retention Schedule. She added that the proposed Libraries NI Disposal and Retention Schedule had been quality assured by PRONI and would be laid before the NI Assembly.

11.2 Mr R Dixon asked that Ms L Givan, Records Management Officer be commended for producing such an excellent document.

11.3 On a proposal by Mr R Dixon, seconded by Councillor J O’Kane, Members agreed to adopt the Libraries NI Disposal and Retention Schedule.

12. TERM OF OFFICE OF CHAIRPERSONS AND VICE CHAIRPERSONS

LNI 05.03.12

12.1 Members agreed to defer this item until the next meeting.
13. MINUTES OF THE SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 21 FEBRUARY 2012

13.1 The Chairperson of the Services Committee, Ms J Williams, presented the minutes of the meeting held on 29 February 2012 and drew attention to the undernoted items.

Item 6: Review of Opening Hours

13.2 Members noted that the consultation on patterns of opening hours ended on 4 March 2012 and that collation of the results of the consultation was currently underway.

Item 7: Strategic Review Stage 2: Update

13.3 Members noted that good progress had been made in relation to Draperstown and Carnlough libraries, however, there was some concerns regarding Killicheagh and Fintona libraries. It was noted also that work was progressing satisfactorily in relation to providing alternative library provision in Gilford although some campaigners continue to oppose the closure of Gilford Library.

Item 8: Health in Mind

13.4 Members noted that a very informative and useful presentation on the Health in Mind project had been given by the Project Manager, Ms Frances Dowds.

Councillor S Cole reported that the Health and Wellbeing Officer in Coleraine Borough Council would be interested in holding discussions with Libraries NI and he would pass their details to Ms H Osborn, Director of Library Services.

Item 10: Service Plan Progress Reports and Risk Registers

13.5 Members noted the update on the Service Plan Progress Reports and Risk Registers. It was noted also that compared with the same quarter in 2010/11 there had been an increase in issue figures and new members, a decrease in PAT use and renewals and a steady increase in ebook use and agreed that the PAT usage figures should be reviewed periodically.

13.6 On a proposal by Councillor S Cole, seconded by Councillor Mrs A Brolly, the minutes of the meeting of the Services Committee held on 21 February 2012 were adopted by the Board.

14. MINUTES OF THE BUSINESS SUPPORT COMMITTEE HELD ON 29 FEBRUARY 2012

14.1 The Chairperson of the Business Support Committee, Councillor Mrs E Robinson, presented the minutes of the meeting held on 29 February 2012, and drew attention to the undernoted items.
14.2 Item 3: Chairperson’s Business
Members noted the tabled copies of the Annual Report and Accounts 2010/11.

14.3 Item 6: Voluntary Redundancies
It was noted that the update on this item had been received under Matters Arising from the Board minutes.

14.4 Item 7: Procurement Report
Members noted the update in relation to the Procurement Report and Single Tender Actions.

14.5 Item 8: Tender Report: Lisnaskea Library: Design Team Appointment
It was noted that the recommended tender in relation to the appointment of the Design Team for Lisnaskea Library had been approved and that the Committee had asked for more detail to be included in future tender reports to assure them of the robustness of the process.

14.6 Item 9: Potential development of alternative library provision (Templemore Avenue) with East Belfast Community Development Agency – Updated Report
Members noted the tabled correspondence in relation to this item and the Committee’s recommendation to the Board to cease efforts to progress this proposal further.

14.7 Following discussion, it was proposed by Councillor Mrs E Robinson, seconded by Councillor Mrs A Brolly to accept the recommendation made by the Business Support Committee to refrain from progressing this proposal any further. The Chairperson put the proposal to the meeting and voting was recorded as follows:

- For: 9
- Against: 0
- Abstentions: 0

14.8 Item 10: Disposal of Surplus Property – Status Update Report
Members noted the report on the planned disposals in the current year and the status and estimated sale proceeds for future disposals.

14.9 Item 11: Finance Reports
Members noted the detailed Recurrent Report to January 2012 and that the projected spend to year end included the full cost of the proposed redundancies. The report showed an underspend, at this stage, of £136,000 or 0.41% of the annual budget.

14.10 Members noted the Capital Report to January 2012 and that plans were in place to fully spend the budget.

14.11 Members noted the update on current developments in Armagh, Camlough, Colin Glen and Draperstown Libraries.

14.12 Members further noted that due to lack of progress on the current proposal to relocate Coleraine Library to the Market Yard development, consideration had been given to recommending withdrawal from this project, and to concentrate on bringing forward plans for improvements to the current building. The Chief Executive explained that difficulties had arisen in obtaining DCAL approval for the business case because of the costs associated with the very specific design of the proposed building and queries about value for money. The Chief Executive confirmed that discussions had taken place with the Chief Executive of Coleraine Borough Council about the proposal to withdraw from the Market Yard project.

14.13 On a proposal by Councillor Mrs E Robinson, seconded by Mr N Macartney, Members agreed to adopt the minutes of the Business Support Committee held on 29 February 2012.

15. ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS

15.1 The Chairperson suggested to Members that consideration be given to the Board undertaking a self-evaluation process in the Autumn to ensure that it was carrying out its role effectively.

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

16.1 The next meeting of the Board will be held on Thursday 10 May at 10.30 am in Dungannon Library

17. MEMBERS ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE TIMES

17.1 The meeting ended at 1.35 pm.

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

Ms A Matthews arrived at 10.38 am
Councillor C Casey left at 11.07 am
Ms A Matthews left at 12.50 pm
Councillor Mrs M Smith left at 1.10 pm

Signed: [Signature]
Date: 10 May 2012