LIBRARIES NI
The Northern Ireland Library Authority

8 September 2011

Minutes of a meeting of the Board of the Authority held on Thursday 8 September 2011 at 10.00 am in Lisburn City Library

PRESENT

Dr David Elliott Chairperson
Councillor Mrs Anne Brolly
Mr Pat Carvill
Councillor Charlie Casey
Councillor Sam Cole
Councillor Allan Ewart
Councillor Miss Carla Lockhart
Mr Alastair McDowell
Mr Nigel Macartney
Councillor Mrs Evelyne Robinson
Ms Jane Williams

APOLOGIES FOR NON ATTENDANCE

Mr Roger Dixon
Ms Angela Matthews
Councillor Hubert Nicholl
Councillor Jim Rodgers
Ms Helen Roulston
Councillor Seamus Shields

IN ATTENDANCE

Chief Executive Ms Irene Knox
Director of Library Services Ms Helen Osborn
Director of Business Support Mr Terry Heron
Assets Manager Mr Desi Miskelly

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 E2 Project and the Belfast Central Library Project.
2. **CHAIRPERSON’S BUSINESS**

2.1 The Chairperson welcomed back Councillor Members to their first meeting of the Board of Libraries NI since the Local Government elections. He expressed his disappointment that Mrs Roberta Dunlop and Mr Cathal Mullaghan had not been re-elected and were therefore not eligible for reappointment. He recorded his thanks to them for their hard work and support during their time on the Board and wished them well for the future.

2.2 The Chairperson congratulated the following:

- Councillor Hubert Nicholl on his election as Mayor of Ballymena Borough Council
- Councillor Charlie Casey on his election as as Mayor of Newry and Mourne District Council
- Councillor Carla Lockhart on her recent marriage
- Ms Angela Matthews on the birth on a baby boy.

2.3 The Chairperson informed Members of his decision to resign as Chairperson of the Board of Libraries NI with immediate effect. He thanked Members for their support since the early days of Libraries NI and added that he had enjoyed working with them and appreciated their support. He acknowledged also the support that he had received during that period from the 3 DCAL Ministers (Gregory Campbell MLA, Nelson McCausland MLA and Carál Ni Chuilín MLA). Dr Elliott further thanked the Libraries NI Senior Management Team and wished Members, SMT and all involved in Libraries NI well into the future.

Members thanked Dr Elliott for his leadership, guidance and commitment to Libraries NI over the past number of years and wished him well for the future.

The Chief Executive thanked Dr Elliott, on a personal level and on behalf of the Senior Management Team and all staff in Libraries NI, for the support that he had provided since his appointment as Chairperson in December 2008. She wished him every success into the future.

Members noted the Press Release which would be issued by DCAL that day.

Dr Elliott withdrew from the meeting.

2.4 The Chief Executive requested, in accordance with Standing Orders, that the Board nominate an Acting Chairperson to chair the meeting. On a proposal by Councillor C Casey, seconded by Mr A McDowell, Members agreed that Mr Nigel Macartney should chair the meeting. Mr Macartney assumed the chair.
Process for nomination of interim Chairperson

2.5 The Chief Executive drew Members’ attention to correspondence, dated 7 September 2011, from the Permanent Secretary, which stated that the Department would begin the process immediately to recruit a Chairperson and asking the Board to nominate an appropriate person from among its membership to act as Interim Chairperson. Members noted that the nomination for Interim Chairperson should be with the Department by 22 September 2011.

2.6 Discussion ensued as to the process for nominating an Interim Chairperson. Councillor C Casey proposed that the nomination of an interim Chairperson be deferred, since it was not a substantive item on the agenda and a number of Board Members had submitted apologies for the meeting and that a special meeting of the Board should be held prior to the Workshop on 21 September 2011 at which a nomination should be made”.

The proposal was seconded by Mr A McDowell.

2.7 Councillor Mrs E Robinson proposed an amendment to the motion as follows: that nominations be sought for an Interim Chairperson at this meeting, that absent Members be notified of the nominations and that it be confirmed at a Special Meeting of the Board prior to 21 September 2011.

The amendment was seconded by Councillor Ewart.

2.8 Following discussion and in accordance with Standing Orders, the amended motion was put to the meeting and voting was recorded as follows:
   - For: 4
   - Against: 5
   - Abstentions: 1

The amendment was lost.

2.9 In accordance with Standing Orders the substantive motion was put to the meeting and voting was recorded as follows:
   - For: 6
   - Against: 0
   - Abstentions: 4

The motion was carried.

2.10 Members agreed that:
   - a Special Meeting of the Board should be held on 21 September 2011
   - the Chief Executive should seek clarification from the Department as to the intent of the last paragraph of the Permanent Secretary’s letter and, in particular, the eligibility of Councillors to be
nominated for the position of Interim Chairperson and that the Department be asked to send a representative to the meeting to be held on 21 September 2011 to answer any questions that may arise about the process.

- the Chief Executive notify all Board Members of the resignation of Dr Elliott as Chairperson, the process for nominating an Interim Chairperson and the date of the Special Board meeting.

3. **CHIEF EXECUTIVE’S BUSINESS**

**Nomination of Independent Member to the Selection Panel for Councillor Members**

3.1 The Chief Executive drew attention to correspondence from DCAL, dated 2 September 2011, regarding the recruitment of 2 new Councillors to the Board of Libraries NI to replace Councillor Mrs Roberta Dunlop and Councillor Cathal Mullan who had not been re-elected at the local government elections held in May 2011. Members noted the request from DCAL that the Board nominate an independent Member to sit on the selection panel for the Councillors and noted also the email with proposed dates for shortlisting and interviews.

3.2 Following a detailed discussion it was agreed that the Chief Executive should inform DCAL that the Board was not in a position to make a nomination at today’s meeting and that this matter would be discussed further at the Special Board Meeting to be held on 21 September 2011.

**Assembly Questions**

3.3 Attention was drawn to the responses given by the Minister to Assembly Questions during the period 1 – 8 July 2011.

**Culture, Arts and Leisure Committee**

3.4 Members noted the Hansard Report of the meeting held on 30 June 2011. It was noted that the CAL Committee had requested a further briefing on 6 October 2011 regarding the consultation on Stage 2 of the Strategic Review.

**Meeting with Minister**

3.5 Members noted that a meeting had taken place with the Minister on 16 August 2011 to brief her regarding Stage 2 of the Strategic Review. The Minister has requested a further briefing in October prior to the Board Meeting.

**Health in Mind**

3.6 It was noted that the official launch of Health in Mind would be jointly hosted by the Culture, Arts and Leisure Committee and the Committee for Health, Social Services and Public Safety in the Long

4. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD HELD ON 7 JULY 2011 (LNI 01.09.11)

On a proposal by Ms J Williams, seconded by Mr A McDowell, the minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2011, including Appendix A, were agreed subject to the following amendment:

Paragraph 5.4: the final sentence should read as follows:

"Mr McDowell requested that consideration be given to providing management information, including financial and statistical information usage of libraries on a regular basis on the Board Members' Extranet site."

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 7 JULY 2011 (LNI 02.09.11)

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.

5.2 Item 3.4: Meeting with Minister
Members noted correspondence from DCAL, dated 2 August 2011 regarding the Corporate and Business Plan and further correspondence, dated 25 August, which included DCAL's Corporate Balanced Scorecard 2011 – 2015 and objectives and targets relevant to Libraries NI that were expected to be included and monitored for the Programme for Government. It was noted that a meeting had been arranged with DCAL Statisticians for the following week to discuss the targets and relevant measurements and that, as requested by DCAL, an updated version of the Business Plan would be prepared if necessary, taking account of any issues raised.

5.3 Item 7: Draft Annual Report and Accounts
The Chief Executive reported that the Draft Annual Report and Accounts 2010/11 had been submitted to both DCAL and the Northern Ireland Audit Office on 30 June 2011. Auditors had been working with Libraries NI staff over the summer period and the audit was due to finish on 9 September. A report on progress would be made at the next meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee.

5.4 Item 14: Information Systems Committee
The Director of Business Support reported that a meeting of the Information Systems Committee would be arranged for the following in order to progress a number of documents, including the Outline
Business Case, in advance of the Gateway Review, planned for the
week beginning 19 September 2011.

6. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRPERSON OF THE BOARD
       (LNI 03.09.11)

6.1 It was noted that the position of Vice-Chairperson of the Board,
previously held by Councillor Hubert Nicholl, had become vacant
when the term of office of Councillors ended at the time of the local
government elections in May. The Acting Chairperson asked
Members to consider whether they wished to nominate a Vice-
Chairperson at this meeting or defer a decision until the special
meeting of the Board to be held on 21 September 2011.

6.2 Councillor Mrs E Robinson proposed that the matter of the election of
a Vice Chairperson be progressed at this meeting and nominated
Councillor Hubert Nicholl as Vice-Chairperson of the Board. The
proposal was seconded by Councillor Allan Ewart.

6.3 Councillor Mrs A Brolly proposed that Ms J Williams be elected as
Vice-Chairperson of the Board. The proposal was seconded by
Councillor C Casey. Ms J Williams thanked her proposer and
seconder but declined to stand as Vice Chairperson.

6.4 Mr P Carvill proposed an amendment to the motion i.e. that the
election of the Vice-Chairperson be deferred until the Special Meeting
of the Board, scheduled for 21 September 2011. Councillor Mrs A
Brolly seconded the amendment.

6.5 In accordance with Standing Orders, the amendment was put to the
meeting and voting was recorded as follows:
   • For:      5
   • Against:  4
   • Abstentions:  1

The amendment was carried. In accordance with Standing Orders the
motion as amended was put to the meeting and voting was recorded
as follows:
   • For:       6
   • Against:   0
   • Abstentions:  4

6.6 Members agreed that the election of the Vice Chairperson of the
Board should be a substantive item on the agenda for the Special
Meeting to be held on 21 September 2011.
7. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES

7.1 On a proposal by Councillor Mrs A Brolly, seconded by Mr P Carvill Members agreed to defer this item to the Special Meeting of the Board to be held on Wednesday 21 September 2011.

7.2 Councillor Mrs E Robinson expressed disquiet that important business was not being transacted at this meeting, despite the fact the meeting was quorate.

8. MINUTES OF THE AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 29 JUNE 2011

8.1 The Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Committee presented the minutes of the meeting held on 29 June 2011 and drew attention, in particular, to the following matters:

Item 5: Libraries NI Draft Annual Report and Accounts 2010/11
It was noted that Members of the Audit and Risk Committee had reviewed the 2010/11 Draft Annual Report and Accounts before being sent to DCAL and the Northern Ireland Audit Office. Members noted also that all Members of the Board had been invited to the Audit and Risk Committee.

8.2 On a proposal by Mr A McDowell, seconded by Mr N Macartney Members agreed to adopt the minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee held on 29 June 2011.

9. KEY ISSUES SINCE APRIL 2011

9.1 The Chief Executive drew Members’ attention to the paper that had been circulated summarising key issues that had been considered by the Board in the period since the last meeting at which Councillor Members had been present (April 2011).

Budget 2011/12
The Director of Business Support drew attention to the outcome of the Budget 2010 process and the allocations made to Libraries NI for the period 2011/12 – 2014/15. Members noted that Libraries NI would face a difficult financial situation, particularly in Years 2 – 4 of the CSR with a reduction in real terms in respect of the recurrent budget and a poor capital allocation. He explained the process whereby the recurrent budget for 2011/12 had been developed and the planned spend in relation to capital allocations.
Savings Delivery Plans

9.3 The Chief Executive reminded Members that four draft Savings Delivery Plans, amounting to £13.819 million cumulatively over the four year period, had been considered by the Board in January 2011 and had been published as part of the Executive’s consultation on the draft budget. Following the consultation, Libraries NI had received additional funding over the 4 years, reducing the quantum of cumulative savings required to £10.285 million. Subsequently the four draft Savings Delivery Plans had been revised and combined into three Plans relating to Premises, Staff and Stock. Members noted that progress in relation to implementation of the Savings Delivery Plans would be monitored on a regular basis by the Department.

Corporate and Business Plans

9.4 The Chief Executive informed Members that the Corporate and Business Plans had been submitted to DCAL and referred Members to the correspondence from the Department submitted under Matters Arising. Members noted the high level objectives for the 4 year period and the challenging targets that had been agreed. Members recognised the difficulties that would be presented in achieving the targets, given the financial constraints but the importance also of continuing to work to increase usage of libraries and improve the delivery of library services despite the financial situation.

Opening Hours Review

9.5 The Director of Library Services reported that in order to meet the substantial savings required by the Department one of the measures that had to be considered was a reduction in opening hours of libraries. In order to achieve the level of savings necessary it was proposed that opening hours overall should be reduced by approximately 20% or the equivalent of 1,200 staff hours per week.

9.6 Ms Osborn noted that the Board had taken the decision very reluctantly to consult on a reduction in opening hours but recognised that a reduction in opening hours was preferable to a substantial number of library closures and would protect a sustainable library network. In making the decision to consult on a reduction in opening hours, the Board had also made it clear that opening hours should be restored to appropriate levels as soon as possible when the financial situation improved.

9.7 Ms Osborn explained the guiding principles that had been established for the review and the proposals, noting a number of exceptions. She explained that the public consultation would close on 2 December and, following decisions by the Board, there would be engagement locally with users at individual library level to ascertain the actual pattern of opening hours. Members noted that discussions would also take place with staff since the proposals would mean significant changes for them.
9.8 Mr A McDowell stated that the Culture, Arts and Leisure Committee had been critical of Libraries NI in relation to campaigns to attract new Members and enquired about approaches to marketing. The Director of Library Services confirmed that the Marketing Team had been carrying out focused local campaigns working with staff in a number of libraries, including those that had been refurbished, to increase library usage. There had also been a number of other promotions, including in shopping centres and schools and in recent months there had been substantial promotion of the new E Books service.

Mobile Library Review

9.9 The Director of Library Services drew attention to the proposed review of mobile library provision, noting that Libraries NI had inherited very different approaches to many aspects of this service. A number of operational issues had been addressed since 2009, but there were a range of strategic issues that needed to be considered e.g. in relation to the role and purpose of the mobile library service, the target groups to be served, the criteria for stops and the most appropriate approach to ICT provision. Members noted that consultation documentation was currently being prepared.

9.10 Members noted the remainder of the report.

10. EXPENDITURE REPORT – RECURRENT AND CAPITAL (LNI 07.09.11)

10.1 The Director of Business Support presented the Expenditure Report – Recurrent and Capital as at July 2011 noting that at this stage in the year the assumption is that the budget would be fully spent.

10.2 Members noted the Expenditure Report.

11. LIBRARIES NI CREDIT CARD (LNI 08.09.11)

11.1 Members noted that there were some instances where companies only accepted payment by credit card e.g. as part of the approach to marketing library services, it was proposed to open a Libraries NI account on Flickr Pro at an annual cost of £50 and this could only be paid by credit card.

11.2 The Director of Business Support sought approval to enter into an agreement with the Northern Bank for one credit card with a limit of £1,000. Members noted that use of the credit card would be strictly controlled, with each instance of use being approved by the Director of Business Support.
11.3 On a proposal by Mr A McDowell, seconded by Councillor Mrs A Brolly Members agreed that Libraries NI could proceed to apply for a credit card with a £1000 limit.

12. CARNLOUGH LIBRARY: RECEIPT OF DEPUTATION  
(LNI 09.09.11)

12.1 Members noted that a request had been received from Carnlough Library Action Committee to send a deputation to the September Board Meeting. A copy of the submission provided by the Action Committee has already been circulated to Members with their papers for this meeting. Members were informed that the deputation comprised Mr Brian Kelly, Ms Mary Watson and Ms Judy O’Loan.

12.2 The Acting Chairperson welcomed the members of the deputation and reminded them that they were being received in accordance with Section 9 of Standing Orders, a copy of which had been provided to them. He invited the deputation to make their presentation.

12.3 Mr B Kelly thanked Members for receiving the deputation and referred them to the Group’s submission. Key points made by the deputation are noted below:

- The Group had attended a meeting of the Village Forum the previous evening at which they had been informed by Council representatives that the Council had been in correspondence with Libraries NI and that it was proposed that the Council would invest £50k in improvements to the Town Hall in which the library was located. The proposal, which would be put before the Council at its meeting on 12 September, included purchase of land at the back of the Town Hall and internal improvements e.g. to the ceiling of the building, with a view to services being provided also by other bodies, e.g. Citizen’s Advice Bureau and Northern Ireland Housing Executive
- Retention of the library was voted the number one priority by the Village Forum at the meeting the previous evening
- The Village Plan includes reference to retention of the library as an important community resource
- The Campaign Group was representative of the community as a whole which felt passionately about the library and its importance to the village. Those involved in the Campaign Group made regular and good use of the library for a range of material. They noted the importance of the library for all sections of the community but particularly for children and the elderly and those with learning difficulties
- Loss of the library would mean the loss of educational opportunities in the community
• The importance of good literacy skills in ensuring equal opportunities for all and progress within the educational environment
• Poor transport links between Carnlough and other towns / villages with libraries that are being suggested as alternatives (Cushendall, Ballymena, Larne)
• Levels of unemployment in the area are high
• The importance of ensuring that the opening hours of the library reflected the times when people make use of the library — if the opening hours were changed, usage may increase
• Importance of stock matching the needs of the community
• Library is a shared space, accessible to all sections of the community
• High number of disabled people and unemployed who use the internet access provided by the library. Poor broadband coverage in the area
• For a time the library had no manager and this may have contributed to fluctuation in usage
• New enthusiastic teachers in the village schools who had started an accelerated reading programme and who are promoting the use of the library
• The library is used by parents from outlying areas between pick-ups from school. Children use it for completing homework.

12.4 Following the presentation members of the deputation answered questions and left a copy of the Carnlough Village Plan.

12.5 The Acting Chairperson thanked the deputation for attending the Board meeting and for the work that they had done on behalf of the community to support the library. The deputation withdrew from the meeting.

13. ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS

13.1 The Chief Executive drew Members’ attention to the revised Schedule of Meetings covering the 12 month period July 2011 to June 2012.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

14.1 Members noted dates for future meetings as follows:

• Wednesday 21 September 2011, 10.00 am, Whiterock Library: Special Board meeting followed by Workshop 2 on Stage 2 Strategic Review

• Thursday 20 October 2011, 2.00 pm, Performance Space, Lisburn City Library
• Wednesday 26 October 2011, 10.30am (venue to be confirmed): All Board Members to be invited to the Business Support Committee to receive and approve the final audited Annual Report and Accounts 2010/11, to allow them to be signed.

15. **MEMBERS ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE TIMES**

15.1 The meeting ended at 12.02 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 A Brolly arrived at 10.09 am
- Dr D Elliott left at 10.20 am
- Councillor Ms C Lockhart arrived at 11.42 am

Signed: [Signature]

Date: 21st December 2011