LIBRARIES NI

The Northern Ireland Library Authority

14 March 2013

Minutes of a meeting of the Board of the Authority held on Thursday 14 March 2013 at 10.30 am in Lisburn City Library

PRESENT

Mr Nigel Macartney Chairperson
Councillor Hubert Nicholl Vice-Chairperson
Mr Pat Carvill
Councillor Charlie Casey
Councillor Sam Cole
Mr Roger Dixon
Councillor Allan Ewart
Mr Alastair McDowell
Councillor John O’Kane
Councillor Jim Rodgers
Councillor Mrs Marion Smith
Ms Jane Williams

IN ATTENDANCE

Ms Irene Knox Chief Executive
Mr Terry Heron Director of Business Support
Ms Helen Osborn Director of Library Services
Mr Damien Quinn Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL)

1. APOLOGIES FOR NON ATTENDANCE

Ms J Andrews
Councillor Mrs Anne Brolly
Councillor Ms Carla Lockhart
Ms Angela Matthews
Councillor Mrs Evelyne Robinson
Ms Helen Roulston
Mr M Cory DCAL

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

2.1 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.

3. **CHAIRPERSON’S BUSINESS**

3.1 The Chairperson reported on the bilateral meeting with the Minister which he and the Chief Executive had attended on 20 February 2013. He informed Members that the Minister had expressed her appreciation of the work being undertaken by Libraries NI and recognised the substantial achievements made. She had congratulated Libraries NI on the successful conclusion of the e2 procurement process and has since approved the Full Business Case for the project. The Minister had discussed her priorities for inclusion in the Libraries NI Business Plan and in particular the important role that libraries play in addressing issues associated with poverty and social exclusion.

3.2 The Chairperson reported that he had briefed the Minister on the outcome of the public consultation on the Mobile Library Strategy and had also raised the issue of the position of Members whose term of office was due to come to an end at 31 March 2013. The Minister indicated that she was aware of the situation and that a paper setting out a number of options had been submitted by her officials and was currently being considered.

3.3 The Chairperson reminded Members that he had written to the Department regarding this matter and tabled a copy of the correspondence, noting in particular his concern about the implications for the operation of the Board and its Committees, and consequently corporate governance, if the Department did not act quickly to resolve the issue. He added that he would continue to press the Department for a solution to this matter.

3.4 Councillor J Rodgers congratulated the Chairperson of the Board on the content of his letter and said that he felt the situation was unfair to those Members attending today who did not know if this was to be their last Board meeting.

3.5 The Chairperson stated that it was his hope that this was not the last Board meeting which Mr P Carvill, Mr A McDowell and Ms J Williams would attend, but, in the event that this was the case, on behalf of Board Members, he expressed sincere thanks to them for their service to Libraries NI over the past four years and for the diligence with which they had attended meetings and participated proactively and constructively in the work of the Board.

3.6 Ms J Williams, Mr P Carvill and Mr A McDowell thanked officers and Members for their support in this matter and said that they had enjoyed their time on the Libraries NI Board. Mr McDowell expressed his thanks to officers and Members for their help over the years in his role as Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Committee.

3.7 Councillor S Cole reminded Members that the Review of Public Administration (RPA) had been ongoing for a number of years with the aim
of making public bodies more efficient and said that, in his view, Libraries NI was an RPA success story, with Councillor and non-Councillor Members working together corporately to deal with some difficult issues. He proposed that the Board should record its deep concern at the lack of progress in resolving the issue of the term of office of the non-Councillor Members of the Board and endorse the recommendation in the Chairperson's letter to DCAL that the Members concerned should have their term of office extended for a prescribed period to provide continuity. The proposal was seconded by Councillor J Rodgers and agreed, with no objections. Mr Carvill, Mr McDowell and Ms Williams abstained.

3.8 The Chairperson thanked Councillor Ms C Lockhart for her support for the very successful Teenage Health and Wellbeing Day held on 29 January 2013 in Lurgan Library.

3.9 Members noted that the Chairperson and Chief Executive had met with Mr M Cory and Mr A Hughes (DCAL) on 27 February 2013, at their request, to discuss the Quarterly Assurance Statement (QAS). He reminded Members of discussions at a previous Board meeting where they had expressed concern at the requirement for the Board to approve the Quarterly Assurance Statement. The position taken by Members then had been that the assurances given in the QAS were from the Chief Executive, as Accounting Officer, and that the Board, while having a critical role in challenging and questioning the Chief Executive on the content of the QAS, did not have a role in approving it. Members felt that the requirement to approve the QAS blurred the lines of responsibility and accountability between the Accounting Officer and the Board.

3.10 The Chairperson noted that, at the meeting on 27 February, DCAL had indicated that it required the Board to approve formally the QAS, thus demonstrating that the Board was both aware of, and fully engaged with the organisation's performance, risks and controls. He reported that he had referred the DCAL representatives to the Permanent Secretary's letter to him, dated 12 September 2012, regarding the assurance process in which she had noted "the role of the Board in discharging a challenge function in respect of the assurances provided by the Accounting Officer to satisfy itself that the disclosures contained therein are comprehensive and accurate" and indicated to them that there was evidence that the Board discharged their responsibilities in relation to this matter. He referred to the Permanent Secretary's attendance at the last Board meeting where she had witnessed the discussions which had taken place on the QAS and had indicated, afterwards, that she had found it useful to see first-hand how the Board transacted its business and the evidence that the Board had robust challenge processes in place. Nevertheless it appeared that the Department was not satisfied unless the Board formally approved the QAS.

3.11 The Chairperson reported that a file note of the meeting with DCAL had been received by email just the previous evening and that neither he, nor the Chief Executive, had, as yet, been able to consider its contents. He
proposed, therefore that further discussion on this matter should be deferred until the next meeting. Members agreed this proposal.

3.12 The Chairperson reported that, together with the Chief Executive and the Director of Library Services, he had attended the Edge 2013 Conference held on Thursday 28 February 2013 and Friday 1 March 2013 in Edinburgh. He reported that he had found the Conference to be very interesting and informative. He thanked the Director of Library Services for preparing a comprehensive report of the Conference, which was tabled for Members’ information. In presenting the report, the Director of Library Services noted that Edge 2013 had been the best conference she had attended in many years. She drew Members’ attention to key presentations and indicated the most relevant points for Libraries NI. She added that there had been a lot of interest shown by delegates in Libraries NI with requests for information and visits. Ms Osborn added that she felt attendance at the Conference should be considered annually as a way to keep staff updated with what is happening in the wider library sector.

3.13 The Chairperson reported on his attendance at the Health in Mind One Book Launch, which had taken place on Thursday 7 March 2013, noting that some other Members had also been present. The launch had also been attended by Rachel Joyce, the author of the chosen book, *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry*, the Permanent Secretary, members of the selection panel and partner organisations. It was noted that, in order to maintain the momentum, four local launches had also been planned. Members noted the target which had been set of 5,000 people reading the book by September 2013. The Chairperson commended the book to Board Members.

3.14 The Chairperson referred Members to the tabled paper regarding the LAI/CILIP Conference due to take place in the Croke Park Conference Centre, Dublin on Wednesday 10 and Thursday 11 April 2013. He asked that anyone wishing to attend this Conference should contact the Chief Executive’s Office.

4. CHIEF EXECUTIVE’S BUSINESS

Assembly Questions

4.1 The Chief Executive drew Members’ attention to the Assembly Questions received and the Minister’s response given during the period 18 January – 1 March 2013.

Ministerial Visits

4.2 Members noted that the Minister had visited Derry Central Library on 30 January 2013 to view the exhibition of artwork from the Interfaith Project, a cross border initiative which brought together young people from different communities who produced a limited edition book, *The Peace Generation*. Members also noted that on the evening of 30 January she had visited Dungiven Library to mark the unveiling of ‘Finvola, the Gem of The Roe’, created by world-renowned sculptor Maurice Harron, which is located at the
entrance to the library. Members thanked Councillor Mrs A Brolly for all her hard work to ensure a successful evening at Dungiven Library.

**Accountability Meeting**

4.3 Members noted that the Chief Executive’s Accountability Meeting had taken place on 14 February 2013 and that a copy of the draft minutes of the meeting would be taken to the next Audit and Risk Committee meeting. The Chief Executive reported that she had raised the issue of the position of the three non-Councillor Members at that meeting and on behalf of officers, expressed her appreciation of the contribution made by Ms J Williams, Mr P Carvill and Mr A McDowell during their time on the Board of Libraries NI.

**Bi-lateral Meeting**

4.4 This matter had been reported under Chairperson’s Business.

**Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure (CAL) Committee**

4.5 The Chief Executive informed Members that the Culture, Arts and Leisure (CAL) Committee had held its meeting on 21 February 2013 in Lisburn City Library. She reported that the CAL Committee had been briefed on the outcome of the public consultation on the Mobile Library Strategy and also on Child Protection. She reported that the CAL Committee was carrying out an inquiry into child protection arrangements and taking evidence from all the DCAL Arms’ Length Bodies. The Committee was particularly interested in child internet safety. Members noted the Hansard Report on the briefing, which had been circulated. The Chief Executive reported also that the CAL Committee was due to visit Belfast Central Library that afternoon.

**Children’s Laureate**

4.6 Members noted that the Children’s Laureate, Julia Donaldson was visiting Coleraine, Lurgan, Lisnaskea and Irvinestown libraries during the week commencing 11 March 2013. The week-long visit had been funded by the Arts Council and arranged in conjunction with Dog Ears. The Children’s Laureate had visited HMP Magilligan on 11 March where she had met staff and prisoners involved in The Big Book Share.

**e2 Project**

4.7 Members noted that the Minister had now approved the Full Business Case for e2. An OGC Gateway 3 Review of the e2 procurement would take place from 26 – 28 March 2013 and a meeting of the Information Systems Committee would take place on 29 March 2013 at 10.00 am in Lisburn City Library to review the report from the Gateway Team. Subject to a satisfactory report contract signature would take place on the afternoon of 29 March.

**Creativity Month Brochure**

4.8 Members noted the Creativity Month brochure listing the events being held during March 2013 to celebrate Creativity Month.
4.9 Insight Newsletters
Members noted the January and February editions of the Staff Newsletter: Insight.

4.10 Stakeholder Engagement Document 2011/12
Members noted the 2011/12 Stakeholder Engagement Document, Libraries NI: A Year of Challenge.

5. MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 24 JANUARY 2013
   LNI 01.03.13

5.1 On a proposal by Councillor C Casey, seconded by Councillor S Cole, Members approved the minutes of the Board Meeting held on 24 January 2013.

6. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 24 JANUARY 2013
   LNI 02.03.13

6.1 Members noted the schedule which had been circulated, detailing actions taken as a result of discussions at, and decisions of the Board at the previous meeting. The Chief Executive drew attention, in particular, to the undenoted matters.

   Item 5.11: Kilkeel Library

6.2 Members noted the response received from the SELB in respect of the Kilkeel Library Project and that a Lessons Learned Report was in the process of being completed for consideration by the Business Support Committee. It was noted also that, since the last meeting, substantial progress had been made on the project. The tender had been let in February and DCAL had moved quickly to provide the necessary approvals, enabling contractors to be on site on 1 March. Confirmation had been received from the Department that funds would be available to complete the project in 2013/14. While the work on the new building is underway, the library is operating from temporary premises at the Nautilus Centre in Kilkeel.

   Item 6.2 – 6.5: Staff Sickness Absences

6.3 Members noted that in the draft LNI Business Plan 2013/14 greater emphasis was being placed on the issue of Managing Attendance and the various targets that had been set.

   Item 6.15: Management Report: Summary Corporate Risk Register

6.4 Members noted that at the next meeting of the Risk Management Group to be held on 21 March 2013 consideration would be given to amending the Corporate Risk Register to reflect the risks relating to arrangements for planning, monitoring and reporting of recurrent and capital spend in excess of, or significantly under, the agreed budget.
Item 7.1: Board Effectiveness Review

6.5 Members noted that work was ongoing on this matter and that a report for consideration by Members would be brought to the next Board Meeting.

Item 9.3: Minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held on 12 December 2012: Internal Audit Activity Report

6.6 Members noted that a meeting had been arranged with the Area Managers to take place during April 2013 at which the concerns of Members of the Audit and Risk Committee in relation to the number of similar issues arising in branch library audits would be addressed.

7. MOBILE LIBRARY SERVICE STRATEGY

Ms H Osborn, Director of Library Services presented the report on the outcome of the consultation on the draft Mobile Library Service Strategy, including recommendations in relation to the final strategy and its implementation. She reminded Members that, in July 2011, the Board had considered a report which provided an overview of the current mobile library service, identified the issues which needed to be addressed and set out a process for addressing those issues, including the need to develop a new strategy for the general mobile service. She referred Members to the reasons why a new strategy had been considered necessary and the Board’s agreement as to the issues that the strategy should address. She outlined the public consultation process and indicated that in general there had been a high level of support for the draft mobile strategy, although concerns had been expressed about some aspects of the proposals. In presenting the proposals and the outcome of the consultation process, she referred to the concerns expressed and the proposed mitigation as set out in Section 5 of the report.

7.2 Members discussed and considered each of the proposals in turn as well as the responses received during the public consultation process including the outcome of the Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) and the Rural Impact Assessment. They noted also that DCAL, in its on-going review of Delivering Tomorrow’s Libraries, was giving consideration to Public Library Standard 2 which related to access to services, including mobile library services. It seemed likely that DCAL would decide to retain the Standard and if this was the case, it would need to be taken into account in implementing the strategy.

7.3 Members proceeded to consider in detail each of the recommendations in the report as detailed in the following paragraphs.

7.4 Recommendation 1: Target groups
The Libraries NI mobile service should serve mostly the needs of older people, children and their parent/carers. In doing this the needs of people with disabilities will be taken into account as with all library services e.g. stock for people with visual impairments, access for people who use wheelchairs, appropriate staff training.
7.5 **Recommendation 2: Services to be provided**
Mobile libraries should mainly provide book lending services. However, given the response to the consultation and the opportunities afforded by e2, it is recommended that the Libraries NI strategy should be to provide internet access on mobile libraries, where possible and where there is a demand, but in a way that does not reduce the provision of books.

7.6 **Recommendation 3: Criteria for service delivery**
The proposed criteria for mobile stops should be implemented but that special circumstances may need to be recognised from time to time e.g. the closure of a branch library, the commitment to existing customers, temporary circumstances that may reduce the accessibility of a branch library, DCAL or Board priorities.

7.7 **Recommendation 4: Services to schools and playgroups**
The mobile service to schools and playgroups should be extended with the aim of increasing access to library services for children and schools which have difficulty in accessing branch libraries, with account also being taken of social need.

7.8 **Recommendation 5: Increasing use**
Following implementation of the mobile strategy a promotional plan should be developed and implemented.

7.9 **Recommendation 6: EQIA**
In implementing the mobile strategy, Libraries NI will take into account the evidence available from the EQIA and will consider what alternative measures might be put in place in order to reduce the impact of the removal of stops on people in the various Section 75 categories.

7.10 **Recommendation 7: Rural Impact Assessment**
In implementing the mobile strategy, Libraries NI should take into account the evidence available from the Rural Impact Assessment.

7.11 **Recommendation 8: Public Library Standard**
In implementing the mobile library strategy, Libraries NI should take account of the relevant Standard in *Delivering Tomorrow’s Libraries*.

7.12 Members were pleased to note that respondents, both adults and children had expressed a high level of appreciation of the mobile library service and emphasised the importance of retaining this level of support and commitment throughout the implementation of the strategy.

7.13 In response to a question regarding the type of promotion which would be undertaken to ensure that mobile library users know about changes to stops etc, the Director of Library Services confirmed that posters would be placed in local shops advertising the location and time of mobile stops. The new service would also be promoted by word of mouth. She reminded Members of the work that was on-going with the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development regarding rural communities and indicated that opportunities
would be taken to promote the service by that means as well as through rural support networks.

7.14 Members discussed the costs of the mobile library service and the importance of ensuring that it was operating as efficiently as possible. It was noted that the implementation of the proposed strategy, as well as work that was being undertaken to address various operational issues, would result in a more efficient service, but at this stage it was not possible to quantify the level of savings that might be made, because a lengthy process now needed to take place to review the 700+ routes in light of the Board’s decision on the proposed strategy. Following a discussion on the running costs of the mobile library service, and the need to reduce these whilst improving its efficiency, Members agreed that a further recommendation should be added to the report as follows:

- the costs and usage of the mobile library service should be reviewed on a regular basis.

7.15 Having discussed the proposed Mobile Strategy, on a proposal by Councillor Hubert Nicholl, seconded by Mr A McDowell, Members agreed to approve the Mobile Library Service Strategy and the recommendations contained therein including the additional recommendation as at point 7.14 above with the voting recorded as follows:

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8. **BUSINESS PLAN 2013/14**

8.1 The Chief Executive introduced the Libraries NI Draft Business Plan 2013/14 and explained the plan in detail to Members. She noted that, in developing the draft Plan, account had been taken of the DCAL Draft Business Plan and the Ministerial priorities for the next year, as discussed at the bilateral.

8.2 Members discussed the draft Business Plan in detail and noted that it set an ambitious work programme for the year. They expressed their appreciation of the work that had been undertaken by officers in developing the draft Plan. Members noted that Ministerial approval was required for the Plan.

8.3 On a proposal by Mr R Dixon, seconded by Councillor J O’Kane, Members agreed to approve the Libraries NI Business Plan 2013/14 and submit it to DCAL for approval.

9. **BUDGET 2013/14**

9.1 The Director of Business Support drew attention to the papers setting out the capital and recurrent budgets for the 2013/14 financial year.
**Capital**

9.2 The Director of Business Support explained that the allocated CSR capital budget for 2013/14 was £344,000 of which £170,000 was required to meet inescapable expenditure associated with the capital element of the unitary charge for Lisburn City Library and contractual commitments arising from outstanding final accounts on 2012/13 projects. Members noted that two projects, included in the 2012/13 capital plan, had not been progressed i.e. Moira Library and Fivemiletown Library and, as sufficient funds were not available to complete both projects, it was agreed to prioritise the replacement of the life expired temporary building housing Moira Library with a modern efficient modular construction. It was noted that the refurbishment of Fivemiletown Library would be taken forward as planned maintenance.

9.3 The Director of Business Support drew attention to the capital funding allocated in 2013/14 specifically for the e2 project noting the very challenging timescale and the associated risks, including that most of the spend was forecast to happen at year end.

9.4 On a proposal by Councillor J Rodgers, seconded by Mr A McDowell, Members agreed to approve the Capital Budget as presented by the Director of Business Support.

**Recurrent**

9.5 The Director of Business Support confirmed that the draft recurrent budget for the 2013/14 financial year was £32,009,000, which represented an increase on last year's budget. He presented both a high level summary and detailed breakdown of the budget for 2013/14, explained the assumptions underpinning the proposals and responded to questions from Members.

9.6 Following discussion, on a proposal by Mr P Carvill, seconded by Councillor S Cole, Members agreed to approve the draft Budget for 2013/14.

10. **REVISED BYELAWS**

10.1 The Chief Executive drew attention to proposed amendments to the existing Libraries NI Byelaws and explained the reasons for the proposals, including the introduction of e2. She explained the process required by statute for amending the byelaws and noted that any amendments would require Departmental approval.

10.2 On a proposal by Ms Jane Williams, seconded by Mr R Dixon, Members approved the proposed amendments to the Libraries NI Byelaws.

11. **FUTURE PRESENTATIONS FOR THE BOARD**

11.1 Members discussed the proposed schedule of presentations at future Board Meetings and suggested additional areas for consideration as follows:
• IT Support for Older People
• e2
• Health and Wellbeing
• How the organisational structure supports service delivery

11.2 It was agreed that the schedule should be revisited every six months, so that any additional areas of interest to Members might be considered for inclusion.

11.3 On a proposal by Councillor S Cole, seconded by Mr R Dixon Members agreed to approve the schedule outlining future presentations for the Board and to incorporate the above suggestions into the schedule.

12. MINUTES OF THE SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD ON 19 FEBRUARY 2013 LNI 08.03.13

12.1 The Chairperson of the Services Committee, Ms J Williams presented the minutes of the Services Committee meeting held on 19 February 2013 and drew attention, in particular, to the undernoted items.

Item 6.1: DCAL’s Review of Delivering Tomorrow’s Libraries

12.2 Members noted the update on progress of the review of Delivering Tomorrow’s Libraries and that it seemed likely that there would not be a review of the overall policy but that the Standards would be updated.

Item 7: Making a Difference in Belfast Libraries – Targeting Poverty and Social Exclusion

12.3 Members noted the presentation by Ms H Poston, Operations Manager on ‘Making a Difference in Belfast Libraries – Targeting Poverty and Social Exclusion’ and the difference events like these designed to help people who suffer poverty and social exclusion can make on the quality of their lives.

12.4 Ms J Williams referred to the event in Dungiven Library held on 30 January 2013 when "Finvola, the Gem of The Roe" had been unveiled and expressed thanks to Councillor Mrs A Brolly for her involvement. She also thanked Councillor Ms C Lockhart for her involvement in the success of the Teenage Health and Wellbeing event in Lurgan Library on 29 January 2013 and added that it was hoped that something similar could be organised and held in Lisburn City Library.

Item 8: Mobile Strategy: An Update

12.5 Members noted that this item had already been discussed under Agenda Item 7.

12.6 Ms J Williams took the opportunity to thank Members for their help and support over the past four years and said that it had been a pleasure to serve with them on the Libraries NI Board and added that a lot had been achieved since the implementation of Libraries NI Board.
12.7 The Chairperson of the Board, Mr Nigel Macartney thanked Ms Williams and Mr Carvill for their hard work and diligence over the past four years and wished them well for the future.

12.8 On a proposal by Mr N Macartney, seconded by Mr P Carvill, the Board approved and adopted the minutes of the Services Committee held on 19 February 2013.

13. MINUTES OF THE BUSINESS SUPPORT COMMITTEE HELD ON 27 FEBRUARY 2013

13.1 The Vice-Chairperson of the Business Support Committee, Mr R Dixon presented the minutes of the meeting of the Business Support Committee held on 27 February 2013, and drew attention to the undernoted items.

Item 6: Procurement Report – Tenders over £1,000

13.2 Members noted the reports on tenders over £1,000, the tender reports for Kilkeel Library and Rathfriland Library and Single Tender Actions over £1,000.

Item 7: Finance Reports

13.3 Members noted the financial position at the end of January 2013 in respect of recurrent and capital spend and the projected position at year end.

Item 9: Long Term and Short Term Sickness Absence

13.4 Members noted the report by the Human Resources Manager on managing long term and short term sickness absence and the proposed targets for 2013/14.

Item 10: Accounting for Stock

13.5 Members noted the Committee’s recommendation to approve the current process of Accounting for Stock.

13.6 On a proposal by Mr R Dixon, seconded by Mr N Macartney, the Board approved and adopted the minutes of the Business Support Committee held on 27 February 2013, including the recommendations contained therein.

14. ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS

14.1 There was no other notified business.

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

15.1 Members noted that the next meeting of the Board would be held on Thursday 9 May in Derry Central Library. It was agreed that the meeting would commence at 11.00 am and after lunch visits would be arranged to the other libraries in the City (Creggan, Shantallow, Strathfoyle and
Waterside). The day would end at approximately 4.00pm. Further details would be sent to Members nearer the time.

16. **MEMBERS ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE TIMES**

16.1 The meeting ended at 12.34 pm

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

- Councillor Mrs M Smith left at 11.40 am
- Councillor C Casey left at 11.50 am
- Councillor A Ewart left at 12.00 noon
- Ms H Osborn left at 12.19 pm

Signed: [Signature]

Date: 01 May 2013