LIBRARIES NI
The Northern Ireland Library Authority

22 August 2013

Minutes of a special meeting of the Board of the Authority held on Thursday 22 August 2013 at 10.30 am in Lisburn Central Library

PRESENT

Mr Nigel Macartney  
Chairperson

Councillor Mrs Anne Brolly
Councillor Charlie Casey
Mr Roger Dixon
Councillor Allan Ewart
Councillor Carla Lockhart
Mr Alastair McDowell
Councillor John O’Kane
Councillor Evelyne Robinson
Ms Helen Roulston
Ms Jane Williams

IN ATTENDANCE

Ms Irene Knox  
Chief Executive
Mr Terry Heron  
Director of Business Support
Mrs Mandy Bryson  
Assistant Director

1. APOLOGIES FOR NON ATTENDANCE

Councillor Hubert Nicholl  
Vice-Chairperson
Mr Pat Carvill
Councillor Sam Cole
Ms Angela Matthews
Councillor Jim Rodgers
Councillor Marion Smith

Ms Helen Osborn  
Director of Library Services

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. **ZERO BASED BUDGET: DRAFT DCAL SUBMISSION**  
LNI 01.08.13 (S)

3.1 The Chief Executive explained the background to the zero based budgeting exercise, noting the correspondence that had been received from the Permanent Secretary setting out the Department's intention to mainstream the delivery of statutory and public obligations in relation to promoting equality and tackling poverty and social exclusion, which was its key priority. She drew attention to the DCAL Business Plan 2013/14 which had recently been published and reminded Members of the requirement that the Business Plan of each of DCAL's Arms Length Bodies should reflect the Department's key priorities. She informed the Board that confirmation had been received from DCAL that the Libraries NI Business Plan 2013/14 had been approved, subject to inclusion of the Foreword from the DCAL Business Plan 2013/14.

3.2 The Chief Executive explained the structure and content of the draft submission to DCAL, noting that the main activities undertaken by Libraries NI had been referenced to the legislation and Delivering Tomorrow's Libraries, the Department's policy framework for the public library service and the Ministerial priorities. She indicated that the draft submission had been discussed with Department officials the previous week and they had confirmed that they were content with the approach taken.

3.3 The Director of Business Support explained the financial elements of the draft submission, indicating that the main activities had been costed, based on the 2013/14 profiled budget. Each of the main elements associated with the activities had been categorised in line with the various headings in the template provided by the DCAL Libraries Branch. The 2014/15 and 2015/16 budget profiles had been compiled using inflation of 1% for staff costs and 3% for all other costs. He confirmed that the exercise had demonstrated that only a small percentage of funding was expended on discretionary activities i.e. planned maintenance, some marketing activity and staff training and development.

3.4 Councillor Mrs E Robinson expressed the view that, while training and development might be discretionary, it was essential in order to ensure that staff had the necessary knowledge and skills to carry out their roles effectively, particularly with the implementation of the new ICT systems. Councillor Mrs Robinson, supported by other Board Members, also expressed concern that postponing spend on planned maintenance would have consequences for the condition of the library estate and would not prove to be value for money in the long term.

3.5 In response to a question from Councillor A Ewart, the Chief Executive confirmed that the tender documents for the new Lisnaskea Library had been issued and, subject to a successful procurement process, it was expected that the contract would be awarded within the next few weeks.
3.6 The Chief Executive drew attention to Appendix 4 of the draft submission which identified existing and potential collaborative working with other DCAL Arms’ Length Bodies, noting that this work was undertaken as part of the normal activities associated with providing a comprehensive and efficient public library service and therefore associated costs were subsumed within core business. She drew attention also to Appendix 5 which outlined proposals for ways in which Libraries NI’s work to address poverty and social exclusion could be enhanced and extended if additional funding was made available.

3.7 Members discussed ways in which Libraries NI could encourage greater use of libraries, including by individuals and communities suffering from disadvantage. Councillor Mrs E Robinson felt that the social aspect of libraries was important, particularly for older people and those living on their own. She asked that consideration be given to a ‘visit your local library day’, to make people aware of the services available. Councillor Ms C Lockhart expressed support for this suggestion noting that it would be useful for Libraries NI to meet with Translink to seek to have bus stops located as near as possible to libraries to facilitate easy access. Councillor J O’Kane indicated that community transport schemes operated in a number of areas to help people to access public services and suggested that such schemes might facilitate people without transport to come to the library.

3.8 Ms H Roulston referred to a recent radio programme on the need for IT programmers for the future and the interest being shown in this area by young children. She expressed support for the proposal in relation to Coding and Gaming for Teenagers, but noted the difficulties in securing people with the right skills and background to take such courses. Councillor Mrs E Robinson suggested that students were often seeking work placements or summer work and they might usefully assist in this work.

3.9 Councillor Mrs A Brolly expressed the view that each individual library needed to focus on the particular needs of its community and in doing so should engage in outreach and promotion work. She asked if job descriptions included reference to undertaking activities to promote the library e.g. through outreach, attending local events, having stands in the local supermarket etc. The Chief Executive indicated that job descriptions did include reference to undertaking promotional activities, but that they would not necessarily be specific as to the actual work that should be undertaken.

3.10 Members agreed a suggestion from Councillor Ms C Lockhart that a workshop should be held in due course to provide an opportunity for Board Members to consider ways in which library usage could be increased, particularly in areas of social disadvantage.

3.11 The Chairperson thanked officers for the huge amount of work that had been completed in a short time to prepare the draft submission. On a proposal by Ms H Roulston, seconded by Mr R Dixon, Members approved the document for submission to DCAL.
4. EXPOWEST: ANDERSONSTOWN BARRACKS DEVELOPMENT

LNI 02.08.13 (S)

4.1 The Chief Executive reminded Members that the initial paper had been considered by the Business Support Committee at its meeting in June 2013 and had been referred to the Board for consideration. Members noted that the initial paper has been revised to reflect the strategic position in West Belfast and also discussion which had taken place with the MP for the area on 5 July 2013.

4.2 The Chief Executive provided the background to the paper, noting that the Department of Social Development (DSD) had published a design brief in 2010 which incorporated a library as the core element. Libraries NI had no input into the final content of the design brief and was not made aware that it had been published with this core requirement included. The design competition was subsequently subject to a legal challenge which centred on the procurement process and had been halted. DSD had now resolved the challenge and proposed to redo the design brief and was seeking input from Libraries NI. Members were reminded that Andersonstown Library had been closed in 2010 and since then substantial improvements had been made to other libraries in West Belfast, which were within two miles of the former Andersonstown Library. Moreover the financial situation had changed substantially, as had approaches to the delivery of services now and into the future.

4.3 The Chief Executive referred to the discussions that had taken place with the local MP and other developments that were taking place in West Belfast, including the new stadium at Casement Park, which may have community facilities.

4.4 Councillor Mrs A Brolly suggested that the former Andersonstown Barracks site may not be the ideal location for a new library and that Casement Park, with its other facilities, may be a better option for outreach work. Mr R Dixon added that digital exclusion remains a big issue and to many people the term ‘library’ still suggests shelves of books. He felt that providing access to digital resources was important and that this could be facilitated by Libraries NI in any location with internet access, through the use of iPads and other tablet devices.

4.5 Following discussion, on a proposal by Councillor Mrs A Brolly, seconded by Ms J Williams, Members agreed that:

- DSD should be informed that Libraries NI was not in a position to agree to a library being the central component of the ExpoWest development
- Libraries NI was prepared to work with the local community to consider the feasibility of using any multi-purpose centre that might be located in the area to provide outreach services to supplement existing library facilities in West Belfast
- the Board should be kept informed of developments.
5. INFORMATION SYSTEMS COMMITTEE: PROPOSED SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

5.1 Members noted the schedule which had been circulated, setting out proposed dates for forthcoming meetings of the Information Systems Committee. It was noted that these meetings had been scheduled to take place on the same day and location as the Services Committee, in order to accommodate those Members attending both meetings.

5.2 Members noted that a Business Support Committee meeting had previously been scheduled to take place on Wednesday 25 September 2013 in Larne Library. It was agreed to change the date of this meeting to Thursday 19 September 2013 at 10.30 am in Lisburn City Library, to be followed by an Information Systems Committee meeting at 1.30 pm also in Lisburn City Library.

6. TRAINING FOR BOARD MEMBERS

6.1 Members noted the details of the Northern Ireland Public Bodies Conference to be held on 21 October 2013 in the Hilton Hotel, Templepatrick. Board Members wishing to attend the Conference should inform the Chief Executive’s office by Thursday 6 September 2013. The Chief Executive confirmed that the cost of the conference was £195.00 per person which would be met by Libraries NI.

7. ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS

7.1 Official opening of Draperstown Library
The Chief Executive reminded Members that the official opening of Draperstown Library would take place on Tuesday 11 September 2013 at 10.30 am. Invitations had been sent to Members and she encouraged as many as possible to attend. Members noted that the new library was a joint initiative with Workspace, with funding provided through South West Area Rural Development (SWARD) and The Big Lottery.

7.2 Celebration event to mark 125 years of Belfast Central Library
Members noted that a programme of events to mark the 125th anniversary of Belfast Central Library would take place over the forthcoming year. The launch of this programme would take place on Tuesday 9 October 2013 and further details would be notified to Members and invitations issued in due course.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

8.1 The next scheduled Board Meeting will take place on Thursday 17 October 2013 at 10.30 am in Lisburn City Library.
9. MEMBERS ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE TIMES

9.1 The meeting ended at 12.00 noon.

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

Councillor Ms C Lockhart arrived at 10.45 am.

Signed: [Signature]

Date: 17th October 2013