LIBRARIES NI
The Northern Ireland Library Authority

17 December 2015

Minutes of a meeting of the Board of the Authority held on Thursday 17 December 2015 at 10.30 am in Lisburn City Library

PRESENT

Professor Bernard Cullen Chairperson
Alderman Thomas Burns
Alderman Tom Campbell Vice-Chairperson
Councillor Dr Janet Gray
Councillor Garath Keating
Mrs Deirdre Kenny
Ms Angela Matthews
Mr Alastair McDowell
Councillor Séan McGuigan
Councillor Stephen McIlveen
Councillor Jenny Palmer
Mr Harry Reid
Dr Margaret Ward
Ms Jane Williams

IN ATTENDANCE

Ms Irene Knox Chief Executive
Mr Terry Heron Director of Business Support
Ms Helen Osborn Director of Library Services
Ms Trisha Ward Assistant Director

1. APOLOGIES FOR NON ATTENDANCE

Councillor Cathal Mallaghan
Alderman Stephen Martin
Alderman Marion Smith

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. Councillor Dr J Gray recorded her membership of the Northern Ireland Museums Council.
3. CHAIRPERSON’S BUSINESS

3.1 The Chairperson drew attention to the following:

- the Remuneration Committee would meet immediately after the Board Meeting
- Mid and East Antrim Borough Council had postponed the official opening of Carnlough Library which had been scheduled for 10 December 2015. A provisional date of 24 February 2016 has been suggested as a possible alternative but is still to be confirmed.

4. CHIEF EXECUTIVE’S BUSINESS

4.1 The Chief Executive referred Members to the paper which had been circulated, drawing attention, in particular, to the undernoted items.

Assembly Questions

4.2 The Minister’s response to Written Assembly Questions during the period 9 October to 4 December 2015 inclusive was noted.

Promoting the Culture, Arts and Leisure Sectors / ALB Round Table

4.3 Correspondence from the Permanent Secretary, Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) dated 30 October 2015 regarding key points emerging from an ALB Round Table meeting as a result of the Public Accounts Committee Hearings on the Events Company was noted. The Chief Executive and the Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, Ms D Kenny had attended the Round Table meeting. Members noted that the Permanent Secretary would be attending the Board Meeting scheduled for 11 February 2016.

4.4 Members noted also the report of the DCAL Transition Programme ALB Co-Design Workshop which was held on 8 September 2015. The Director of Library Services, Ms H Osborn would represent Libraries NI on the working group which aims to promote the Culture, Arts and Leisure sectors.

Belfast Central Library Redevelopment Outline Business Case

4.5 Correspondence had been received from Mr F Devitt, Director of Sports, Museums and Recreation Division, DCAL dated 23 November 2015, confirming that the Outline Business Case (OBC) for Belfast Central Library had been submitted to the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) for consideration. Members noted that an e-mail had been received from DCAL on 11 December 2015 enclosing an initial response from the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) stating that the OBC ‘is a well-presented business case with plenty of detail to emphasise the need for investment’. Officials from DFP have asked to visit Belfast Central Library and a visit will be arranged.
Appointment of Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Co-opted Member

4.6 The Chief Executive reported that the term of office of Ms J Andrews who had been co-opted onto the Libraries NI Audit and Risk Assurance Committee for four years had now ended. Members recorded their thanks to Ms Andrews for her work and commitment to the Libraries NI Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and to the Board during her term of office.

4.7 The Chief Executive referred to correspondence from DCAL approving the co-option of Ms N McAuley to the Libraries NI Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. It was hoped that Ms McAuley would be able to attend the next meeting of this Committee to be held on 20 January 2016.

Department for Communities Stakeholder Event

4.8 Attention was drawn to correspondence from Ms T Meharg, Senior Responsible Officer, Department for Communities Project regarding a Stakeholder Information Event held on Wednesday 16 December 2015. The Chief Executive tabled a brief report on the meeting, including the proposed structure of the new Department and relevant senior staff.

Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) Restructuring Programme

4.9 Members noted correspondence dated 4 December 2015 from Mr D Baker, Permanent Secretary for the Department of Employment and Learning (DEL) and Senior Responsible Officer for the NICS Restructuring Programme setting out the revised functions of the new Departments.

Business Plan 2016/17

4.10 The Chief Executive drew attention to correspondence received from DCAL dated 23 November 2015, regarding the timetable for production and approval of the Libraries NI Business Plan 2016/17.

Strategy for Arts and Culture 2016 – 2026

4.11 The Chief Executive informed Members that the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure had published a consultation document on 23 November 2015 seeking views on how arts and culture can best promote equality and tackle poverty and social exclusion. Responses are due by 12 February 2016. Members agreed to delegate responsibility to the Services Committee to consider a draft response at its January Meeting and to bring a recommendation to the Board Meeting on 11 February 2016.

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

4.12 Members noted that a hundred copies of a workbook and accompanying guide aimed at helping children understand and come to terms with bereavement has been donated to Libraries NI by Funeral Services Northern Ireland. Copies of the workbooks would be available from every library and DVDs were being added to stock. The Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety visited Lisburn City Library on 12 November 2015 along with Ms B Brown from Funeral Services Northern Ireland to hand over the books.
4.13 Lisnaskea Library
The Chief Executive reported that Lisnaskea Library had won the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) Northern Ireland Planning for Rural Areas Award. Congratulations were extended to all involved in the planning and operation of the Library.

4.14 The Chief Executive drew attention to the tabled report which had been published on 16 December 2015. She reported that a total of 309,756 participants engaged in 20,386 core and regular activity sessions run by Libraries NI during 2014/15, an increase of 3% in participation levels compared to 2013/14. Members were reminded that, during 2014/15, there had been a significant budget cut in-year, resulting in opening hours being reduced, agency staff being released and some programmes being curtailed. Given this situation, staff were to be commended on their continued commitment to service delivery.

5. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD HELD ON 15 OCTOBER 2015 LNI 01.12.15
5.1 On a proposal by Councillor S McGuigan, seconded by Councillor S McIlveen, Members approved the minutes of the Board Meeting held on 15 October 2015.

6. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD HELD ON 15 OCTOBER 2015 LNI 02.12.15
6.1 The Chief Executive drew attention to the circulated paper detailing action taken as a result of discussions at, and decisions of, the Board at the previous meeting. She drew attention in particular to the matters noted below, not already addressed elsewhere on the agenda or in the minutes.

Item 4.7: Chief Executive’s Business
6.2 Members noted that the Chief Executive, the Director of Business Support and the Director of Library Services had attending the meeting of the Culture, Arts and Leisure (CAL) Committee on 22 October 2015. Members could listen to the briefing on the Committee’s ‘Listen Again’ section of the Northern Ireland Assembly website.

Item 9.5: Libraries NI Annual Report and Accounts 2014/15
6.3 The Chief Executive reported that a review of Standing Orders was currently underway and that consideration would be given to insertion of a clause in relation to non-attendance of Board Members at Board and/or Committee Meetings. A paper would be brought to the next Board Meeting in February 2016.
Item 12.4: Management Report, Finance Report: August 2015

6.4 The Chief Executive confirmed that capital funding in respect of the Lisburn City Library PFI had been received on 3 November 2015.

Item 16.3: Minutes of the Business Support Committee held on 1 October 2015

6.5 The Chief Executive reported that the former Oldpark Library building had been sold at auction on 20 November 2015 for the reserve price.

7. BOARD EFFECTIVENESS AND COMPLIANCE REVIEWS

LNI 03.12.15

Board Effectiveness Review

7.1 The Chairperson reminded Members that the Board and its Committees are required to undertake an Effectiveness Review annually and that the Chief Executive and he are required to confirm accordingly in their respective Assurance Statements. He noted that the 2015 Review had been deferred until this meeting to enable new Board Members, appointed with effect from April 2015, to become familiar with their roles and responsibilities and the current operation of the Board and its Committees. It was noted that the Business Support and Services Committees had commenced reviews of their effectiveness in November 2015 and would complete the process at their meetings scheduled for January 2016. Feedback from these reviews would also be used to inform the overall Board Effectiveness Review.

7.2 Following an initial discussion on the process it was agreed that Officers should withdraw from the meeting so that Board Members could discuss issues freely.

7.3 Officers withdrew from the meeting at 11.02 am and re-joined the meeting at 12.15 pm.

7.4 The Chairperson reported that Members had considered in detail the checklist for the Board Effectiveness Review and were content that the Board was operating effectively, albeit that there may be some areas where improvements could be made. He agreed to provide the Chief Executive with a note of the discussion in order to inform the development of an action plan, which would be considered at the next Board Meeting.

7.5 Discussion ensued on the proposed timetable for Board and Committee meetings 2016/17, which had been circulated. It was noted that the Business Support Committee had agreed to reschedule its meetings to the last Thursday of alternate months with effect from the new financial year. Members of Services Committee and the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee agreed to discuss the most suitable day for meetings at the next meeting of the respective Committees in January 2016.

Corporate Governance Code of Good Practice NI

7.6 The Chief Executive drew attention to Corporate Governance in Central Government Departments: Code of Good Practice NI, published by DFP.
She reminded Members that the Chairperson had to confirm in his Annual Assurance Statement that the Board had undertaken an assessment of its compliance with the Code and that she had to confirm in her Bi-Annual Assurance Statement that the organisation complied with the key principles of the Code.

7.7 The Chief Executive reminded Members that, following publication of the Code, the Board had drawn up a Board Operating Framework, documenting its understanding of its roles and responsibilities, including a formal schedule of matters reserved to the Board for decision. The Board Operating Framework was agreed in October 2013 and must be reviewed biennially.

7.8 She referred Members to the Executive Summary of an internal audit report on the operation of the Board Operating Framework which has been undertaken to assist with providing assurance regarding compliance with the Corporate Governance Code. It was noted that Internal Audit had concluded that controls with regard to the Framework were operating in a satisfactory manner and that management had accepted all of the recommendations made by Internal Audit to enhance the controls. The Internal Audit Report would be considered in detail by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee at its meeting in January 2016.

7.9 The Chief Executive indicated, that while the Internal Audit report provided assurance regarding compliance with the Code, the Board needed to satisfy itself that the Board Operating Framework was comprehensive and in line with the key principles of the Corporate Governance Code.

7.10 Following discussion Members confirmed that they were content that the Board was compliant with the Corporate Governance Code. They noted that Officers would be reviewing the Board Operating Framework in line with the recommendations of the Internal Audit report and that a revised document would be brought to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee for consideration and to the Board for approval.

8. **BUDGET EXERCISE 2016/17**

8.1 The Director of Business Support referred Members to correspondence from the DCAL Finance Director, dated 19 October 2015, commissioning Savings Delivery Plans (SDPs) and a Voluntary Exit Scheme (VES) bid for 2016/17 on the assumption of 5% and 10% cuts on the 2015/16 baseline budget. He noted that this was a scenario planning exercise only at this stage, since there had not yet been agreement on the 2016/17 budget. He referred also to an additional pressure of approximately £250,000 in 2016/17 arising from Government’s decision to end the National Insurance contracting-out rebate from April 2016, noting that this pressure had been factored into the Savings Delivery Plans.
8.2 The Director of Business Support Committee noted that the Business Support Committee had considered the draft SDPs at its meeting in November and had recommended them to the Board for approval. He briefed the Board on the various measures which had been proposed to deliver the potential savings. He referred to the High Level Impact Assessments (HLIAs) which set out the impact that the savings would have in each area where cuts were being proposed. He reported that this would be the eighth year of voluntary redundancies in order to make savings; that there was very little remaining to be trimmed from budgets; and that the stage had been reached for consideration of serious reductions in the services currently being provided.

8.3 The Director of Business Support presented the Voluntary Exit Scheme (VES) bid 2016/17 based on the assumption of cuts of 5% and 10% on the 2015/16 baseline. He noted that the VES bid for funding contributed to the cost of redundancies but did not meet the full cost of the Libraries NI Scheme for redundancies. He reported that DCAL had submitted the bid, based on 10% savings, to DFP for funding.

8.4 It was noted that, in order to meet the DCAL timetable, the draft SDPs had been submitted to DCAL subject to Board approval.

8.5 Members discussed the SDPs and the HLIAs in detail and expressed grave concern at the impact of further budget reductions on front-line services, including services to the most vulnerable people in society.

8.6 On a proposal by Ms D Kenny, seconded by Mr A McDowell, with great reluctance, the Board approved the Savings Delivery Plans and noted the Voluntary Exit Scheme Bid and the High Level Impact Assessments. The Board agreed also to hold a special meeting, if necessary, when there was greater clarity about the Budget 2016/17 position, in order to consider any necessary amendments to the Savings Delivery Plans and the way forward.

9. CORPORATE PLANNING 2016 – 2020

9.1 The Chief Executive referred to the Board Planning Day held on 17 September 2015 at which Members authorised Officers to develop a set of high level strategic objectives that would encompass the priorities discussed at the Planning Day and to bring them back to the December Board Meeting for consideration.

9.2 She reported that a series of workshops had been held with senior managers in the organisation to explore options. These workshops were facilitated by a Principal Consultant from the Business Consultancy Service in DFP. Briefing sessions had also taken place with middle managers across the organisation to seek their views on the proposals.

9.3 Members noted that, in line with the Annual Business Plan Guidance referred to in paragraph 4.10 above, an initial discussion had taken place
with DCAL on the proposed corporate objectives. While a detailed response was awaited from DCAL, officials had indicated that they were generally content with the proposed corporate objectives, as set out in the circulated paper.

9.4 Members discussed the proposed corporate goals and associated high level objectives and agreed the following:

- Corporate Goal: Contribute to social wellbeing
  - amend to Contribute to social and community wellbeing
  - include reference to the role of libraries in supporting the travelling and ethnic minority communities

- Page 2 paragraph 3 remove the word 'all' from second sentence as follows: Libraries are spaces where cultural traditions, both local and in the wider national and world context, can be encountered, experienced, examined and celebrated in a neutral environment, increasing understanding of similarities and differences and contributing to greater community cohesion.

- Corporate Goal: Promote economic wellbeing
  - include reference to the role of libraries in respect of lifelong learning as an important contributor to economic wellbeing

9.5 On a proposal by Councillor G Keating, seconded by Dr M Ward, Members approved the proposed corporate objectives subject to the above amendments.

10. MANAGEMENT REPORT LNI 06.12.15

10.1 The Chief Executive and Director of Business Support briefed the Board on the Management Report.

Key Performance Indicators Quarter 2: July to September 2015

10.2 The Chief Executive drew attention to the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) Report for Quarter 2 (July to September 2015) and reported that the two 'red' KPIs related to sickness absence and the payment of invoices within 30 days and 10 days. She explained to Members that action was being taken to address both KPIs but it was highly unlikely that the targets would be met within this financial year.

Finance Report: October 2015

10.3 The Director of Business Support presented the Finance Reports for Capital and Recurrent spend to October 2015 which had been reviewed at the Business Support Committee meeting held on 25 November 2015.

10.4 In respect of the Capital Report the Director of Business Support confirmed that the additional capital allocations had been received for the Lisburn City Library unitary charge, Coleraine Library fees and essential minor works. Approval had also been given for the retention of the sale proceeds of
Ligoniel Library. He confirmed that plans were in place so that all budgets would be spent by year end.

10.5 The Director of Business Support presented the Recurrent Report to October 2015 in line with the Revised Recurrent Budget 2015/16 and confirmed that plans were in place so that all budgets would be fully spent by year end.

10.6 Members noted the report.

11. **MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE AUDIT AND RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON 15 OCTOBER 2015** LNI 07.12.15

11.1 The Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, Ms D Kenny, presented the minutes of the special meeting held on 15 October 2015. She reminded Members that this was a single item agenda to review the Bi-Annual Assurance Statement for the period 1 April to 30 September 2015.

11.2 Ms D Kenny reported that the Chief Executive had explained the Statement in detail and had answered all questions from Members.

11.3 On a proposal by Ms D Kenny, seconded by Mr A McDowell, Members adopted the minutes.

12. **MINUTES OF THE SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD ON 18 NOVEMBER 2015** LNI 08.12.15

12.1 The Chairperson of the Services Committee, Mr H Reid, presented the minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2015 and drew attention, in particular, to the undernoted items.

**Item 7: Community Information Policy**

12.2 A revised Community Information Policy had been discussed and agreed by the Committee and recommended to the Board for approval.

**Item 8: Social Media Policy**

12.3 The Director of Library Services had presented a revised Social Media Policy to the Committee, noting that it was subject to consultation with the trades unions and may be amended as a result. The Policy would come back to the Committee for further consideration when that consultation process was completed.

**Item 9: Decade of Commemorations 2012 – 2022 Presentation**

12.4 The Committee had received a presentation on the Decade of Commemorations by the Head of Themes, Ms P Walker.
12.5 Item 10: Committee Effectiveness and Compliance Review

It was noted that the Chairperson of the Committee would lead a discussion on the Effectiveness and Compliance review at the next meeting of the Committee to be held on 20 January 2016.

12.6 Item 11: Service Plan Progress Report and Risk Register

The Service Plan Progress Report had been discussed and noted by the Committee.

12.7 Item 13: Customer Feedback Report

The Customer Feedback Report April to September 2015 had been noted by the Committee.

12.8 Item 14: Experience of the Public Library Service by Adults in Northern Ireland 2014/15

The Director of Library Services had presented the DCAL publication ‘Experience of the Public Library Service by Adults in Northern Ireland'. She had highlighted key findings from the report and identified areas of achievement and areas for improvement. The Committee had expressed concern that the report, along with other publications and research, failed to capture the experience of library users under the age of 11 years.

12.9 Item 15: Summer Reading Challenge

The Committee had received a report on the Summer Reading Challenge 2015. Approximately 15,000 individuals had participated in the challenge which was connected with the Guinness World Records™.

12.10 On a proposal by the Chairperson of the Committee, Mr H Reid, seconded by Councillor S McIlveen, the Board approved and adopted the minutes of the Services Committee held on 18 November 2015, and in doing so, approved the Community Information Policy.

13. MINUTES OF THE BUSINESS SUPPORT COMMITTEE HELD ON 25 NOVEMBER 2015

13.1 The Chairperson of the Business Support Committee, Ms A Matthews, presented the minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2015 and drew attention, in particular to the undernoted items which had not been dealt with elsewhere on the agenda for the Board Meeting.

13.2 Item 3: Chairperson’s Business

The Committee had reviewed the Scheme of Delegation for the Business Support Committee. After discussion and subject to the inclusion of two amendments proposed by Members, the draft Scheme was agreed and recommended to the Board for approval.
Item 7: Belfast Central Library Redevelopment Project: Outline Business Case

13.3 The Committee had received an update from the Assets Manager on the development of the Outline Business Case for the redevelopment of Belfast Central Library. It was agreed that the Assets Manager would provide regular updates to the Committee.

13.4 Item 8: Finance Report: Revised Recurrent Budget

The Committee had considered a Revised Recurrent Budget 2015/16, taking account of the in-year budget cut of £350,000 and the changes that had taken place in relation to revised opening hours and staffing hours with effect from November 2015, as well as the receipt of additional VES funding. The Committee was content to recommend the revised recurrent budget to the Board for approval.

Item 9: Elizabeth Saul Trust

13.5 The Committee had received a report regarding the Elizabeth Saul Trust and had agreed the proposal for a separate bank account in the name of the Trust to be recommended to the Board for approval.

Item 10: National Living Wage

13.6 The Committee had considered a report on the potential impact of the National Living Wage for Libraries NI and noted that the cost pressure facing Libraries NI was not significant.

Item 11: Update on Disposals

13.7 The Committee had received an update on the status of various disposal proceedings relating to surplus land and property from the Assets Manager. Members were reminded that the sale of the former Ligoniel Library had been completed in November 2015 and the sale of the former Oldpark Library had been agreed. It was expected that the sale of the former Lisnaskea Library would be completed by February 2016.

Item 12: Redundancy Limit

13.8 Members noted the update from the Director of Business Support regarding the proposed cap to the value of redundancy payments at £95,000.

Item 13: Sickness Absence Report to October 2015

13.9 The Committee had received an update on the Sickness Absence Report to October 2015. It was noted that although progress was being made in lowering the sickness absence level, especially with long term sickness absence, the target of 9.07 days lost was unlikely to be achieved. The Director of Business Support outlined plans to the Committee which he hoped would result in an improvement to these figures over the next few months.

Item 14: Procurement Report

13.10 The Committee had received an update regarding Procurements for the period 19 September to 16 November 2015 and a report on tenders/single tender actions over £1,000 during the same period.
13.11 The Committee had agreed to change the day of the Business Support Committee meetings from the current Wednesday to a Thursday with effect from the new financial year.

13.12 On a proposal by the Chairperson of the Committee Ms A Matthews, seconded by Councillor G Keating, the Board approved and adopted the minutes of the Business Support Committee held on 25 November 2015 and, in doing so, approved the following documents:

- Revised Scheme of Delegation for the Business Support Committee
- Revised Recurrent Budget
- Elizabeth Saul Trust

14. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS: APRIL 2016 – MARCH 2017 (DRAFT) LNI 10.12.15

14.1 This item had been discussed earlier in the meeting as part of the Board Effectiveness and Compliance Review (Agenda Item 7).

15. ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS

15.1 There was no other notified business.

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

16.1 It was agreed to call a special meeting of the Board to consider necessary action if notification was received in relation to the 2016/17 budget.

16.2 Members noted that the next scheduled meeting of the Board would take place on Thursday 11 February 2016 at 10.30 am in Lisburn City Library.

17. MEMBERS ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE TIMES

17.1 The meeting ended at 1.15 pm.

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

Alderman T Burns left at 12.17 pm
Councillor J Palmer left at 12.27 pm
Alderman T Campbell left at 12.28 pm
Councillor Dr J Gray left at 1.00 pm
Councillor S McGuigan left at 1.00 pm