Libraries NI

The Northern Ireland Library Authority

Minutes of the Board Planning Meeting held on Thursday 17 September 2015 at 10:30 am in Lisburn City Library.

PRESENT

Professor Bernard Cullen
Alderman Tom Campbell
Alderman Thomas Burns
Councillor Janet Gray
Councillor Garath Keating
Alderman Stephen Martin
Mr Alastair McDowell
Councillor Séan McGuigan
Councillor Jenny Palmer
Mr Harry Reid
Alderman Marion Smith
Dr Margaret Ward
Ms Jane Williams

Chairperson
Vice Chairperson

IN ATTENDANCE

Ms Irene Knox
Mr Terry Heron
Ms Helen Osborn

Chief Executive
Director of Business Support
Director of Library Services

1. APOLOGIES FOR NON ATTENDANCE

Mrs Deirdre Kenny, Councillor Cathal Mallaghan, Ms Angela Matthews and Councillor Stephen McIlveen

2. PURPOSE OF MEETING

To enable the Board to consider key issues that will need to be taken into account in establishing the overall direction of the organisation in the period 2016 – 2020.
To explore the substance of a small number of high level objectives for the new Corporate Plan and authorise officers to undertake further development work on these objectives for presentation to the Board at a future date.

3. PRESENTATIONS

The Chief Executive, Director of Business Support and Director of Library Services delivered presentations outlining the strategic and financial context and key service themes that would need to be considered in the new corporate planning period. Officers answered questions from Members.

4. DISCUSSION

The Chairperson facilitated a discussion during which a number of points were made, including the following:

(i) Digital inclusion
- libraries continue to play an important role in relation to digital inclusion, particularly for older people.
- libraries have a key role to play in helping people with disabilities to access technologies and to interface with screen-based technology.
- the speed of technological change means many people have difficulty keeping abreast of developments
- possible use of young people as volunteers to complement, but not substitute for existing expertise within the organisation, with the advantage for the young people being able to include the experience on their CVs
- the importance of facilitating content creation, not just consumption

(ii) Reading and literacy
- unique selling point of public libraries
- the value of reading for pleasure and developing a love of reading
- impact of literacy levels on social inclusion, employment, health and wellbeing and general life skills
- unique core activities for children – giving every child the best start
- connections with schools / curriculum.

(iii) Partnerships
- increasing importance of strategic partnerships in order to contribute to a new Programme for Government which is likely to be more integrated and outcome focused
• importance of engaging with other organisations that will form part of the new Department for Communities
• opportunities presented by community planning
• delivering services that complement, not duplicate, those provided by other organisations

(iv) **Learning and Information**
• empowering individuals and communities – contributing to social cohesion
• developing social capital
• family learning
• health information / literacy
• ‘The Learning Exchange’ – libraries as learning brokers; informal learning

(v) **Economic Wellbeing**
• cultural / academic / heritage tourism – Irish and Local Studies Library and Mellon Centre for Migration Studies
• the regeneration impact of a redeveloped Belfast Central Library
• employability
• skills development
• financial capability / literacy

(vi) **Network of libraries**
• a key resource, particularly in a new Department for Communities
• trusted, shared community space / community hub
• need to continue to raise the profile of what is on offer
• ‘sweating the asset’ – explore potential of ‘Open Libraries’
• affordable community meeting space.

5. **WAY FORWARD**

It was agreed the officers would consider the points made by Members and seek to develop four – five high level corporate objectives for further discussion, one of which would encompass the governance processes.

In relation to a question from the Chairperson regarding extending the statutory basis for the provision of library services to people visiting Northern Ireland, the Director of Business Support explained the voluntary reciprocal arrangements that were in place with England, Wales and the Republic of Ireland.
6. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

7. **MEMBERS ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE TIMES**

The meeting ended at 1:00 pm.

All Members arrived for the commencement of the meeting and remained until it ended.

Signed: [Signature]

Date: 15/10/15