Meeting the Demands for a Modern Public Library Service within Northern Ireland – Stage 2
1. **Foreword**

1.1 Libraries NI has responsibility for public library service provision across Northern Ireland. As libraries are now part of a regional service, no longer constrained by Education and Library Board (ELB) boundaries, there is an opportunity to review provision in a Northern Ireland wide context.

1.2 This review of provision is being undertaken in three stages:

- A review of Greater Belfast;
- A review of provision in the rest of Northern Ireland; and
- A review of mobile provision across Northern Ireland, which will include current routes within the Greater Belfast area, including consideration of whether additional provision may be required as a result of the proposals outlined in this paper.

1.3 This paper outlines the findings and proposals as a result of the Stage 2 review of provision in the rest of Northern Ireland. The review of library provision in the Greater Belfast area was completed in June 2010.

1.4 The proposals contained in this paper will be subject to consultation with current and potential users and other stakeholders, including an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA), before any decisions are made.

2. **Strategic Context**

2.1 A number of key strategic documents influence the future shape of library provision in Northern Ireland. These are:

- The Libraries NI Corporate Plan;
- The Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland; and
- Department of Culture Arts and Leisure’s (DCAL) policy framework for public libraries entitled ‘Delivering Tomorrow’s Libraries’.

3. **Libraries NI Corporate Plan**

3.1 Libraries NI, as a new Authority, outlined a clear vision and direction for the future of libraries in Northern Ireland in its Corporate Plan. This plan has an overall vision of enabling libraries to be at the heart of communities – to deliver for them on leisure, on culture and on learning. Against this inspiring vision there is the reality of economic downturn and its impact on public spending and the need to deliver efficiencies for the public purse.

3.2 In the Corporate Plan the organisation has committed to being guided by our five values:

- Customers come first;
- Nurturing staff;
- Innovating and improving;
- Decisiveness; and
- Accountability.
3.3 This review works in the interests of all of these values in that:

- Putting customers first means delivering the services they want and need and at times that they wish to access them within the constraints of available resources;
- Nurturing staff means that we will provide a minimum accommodation standard for them and that their roles are expanded to deliver on the 4 themes outlined in the Corporate Plan;
- Innovating and improving is central to the way that Libraries NI will do its business. There will be a programme of continuous improvement to meet the evolving needs of customers, staff and other stakeholders. We look positively to the future and wish to provide modern services delivered in modern, public, neutral space;
- Decisiveness means that we will take difficult decisions to ensure that services are delivered according to the vision; and
- We will be accountable for these decisions by investing and using public monies appropriately and in the best interests of the service.

4. Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2008-2018

4.1 The Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland outlines the following key strategic objective in respect of library infrastructure:

- Modernisation of libraries in our cities and key towns.

5. DCAL’s Delivering Tomorrow’s Libraries

5.1 This strategy sets out a vision for public libraries in the future that play a fundamental role in communities through the provision of resources, services and opportunities to support learning, access to information, cultural and creative development and preservation and exploitation of heritage material. A range of standards for libraries is outlined as measures of a modern service. The report states:

“New library buildings should be located where they are most easily accessed by the communities they service, in neutral locations, close to centres of population and other amenities” *(Delivering Tomorrow’s Libraries, Page 12)*

5.2 This document also sets standards including targets to ensure that libraries are available to the public outside normal business hours.

“Larger libraries serving significant population centres should be open at least 2 evenings per week to at least 8pm, and all day Saturday. Smaller libraries should be open at least 1 evening per week up to at least 8pm, and at least part of Saturday. All static libraries should be open for a minimum of 7 hours weekly outside 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.” *(Page 22)*
Libraries NI aspires to deliver on the DCAL targets for longer opening hours and has drawn its vision from the DCAL document.

6. **Introduction**

6.1 This report outlines the findings of a strategic review of library provision for Northern Ireland (excluding the Greater Belfast area) within the context of a regional public library service.

The document outlines:

- The business context;
- The need for a review;
- Format of the review;
- Findings of the review;
- Option appraisal; and
- Conclusions and recommendations.

7. **The Business Context**

7.1 Libraries NI has the vision of being a flexible and responsive library service which provides a dynamic focal point in the community and assists people to fulfil their potential.

7.2 There are 99 branch libraries across Northern Ireland providing a range of services including:

- Books and other resources including online information, newspapers, DVDs, CDs, talking books, newspapers and magazines;
- Learning opportunities;
- Local studies;
- Cultural events;
- Information;
- Computers with Internet access and other resources;
- Reading activities and groups; and
- Storytimes and other activities for children.

7.3 In addition there are 2 standalone heritage libraries, the Centre for Migration Studies at the Ulster American Folk Park and the Irish and Local Studies Library in Armagh.

7.4 In order to ensure that the public library service delivers on this vision the service needs to be reviewed taking into account the changing and evolving political, social and economic landscape today. The pressures of economy, efficiency and service effectiveness are key and equally important drivers in delivering even better public services and deriving more value from the public purse. Furthermore the image of libraries as purely book borrowing centres needs to be addressed to take account of customers’ expectations and the trends in library use across the UK as well as the vision articulated in the DCAL paper Delivering Tomorrow’s Libraries.
8. **The Need for a Review**

8.1 There are a number of drivers for change within the current organisation of Libraries NI including:

- The opportunity, for the first time since 1973, to conduct a review of library provision across the entire public library service. (Whilst it is acknowledged that a review was conducted in some areas previously this was not the case across Northern Ireland);
- A unique opportunity to review this service as a regional service and not constrained by former ELB boundaries;
- The need to deliver on business efficiencies identified in the rationale for creating Libraries NI;
- The need for more suitable buildings in locations that serve the population and reflect demographic shifts in populations;
- The need to recognise that some libraries are simply located too close together which may have been appropriate historically and is now no longer necessary;
- The need to derive much more effective use of staff in a customer support capacity;
- The need to make best use of staff resources and proactively drive down relief staffing costs;
- The need to modernise and upgrade buildings;
- The provision of opening times to reflect modern lifestyles;
- Concentration on provision of stock where it is needed;
- Improved security and reduced costs;
- Increasing diversity in the workforce;
- A working environment more fully compliant with Health & Safety legislation;
- The need for re-structured, more streamlined services incorporating flexible working patterns and closer integration of departments; and
- The need for libraries to be more than “just books”.

8.2 There are specific difficulties associated with:

- Trying to sustain a very large number of branch libraries some of which have a very low level of usage;
- Offering the full range of library services in smaller, more limited buildings;
- Utilisation of scarce staffing resources over a large number of library locations;
- A surplus of old stock and lack of proper storage;
- Many buildings with inadequate facilities and in a poor state, requiring significant refurbishment to bring them to a state of compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) requirements;
- The high cost of maintaining buildings which are significantly under-utilised;
- Outdated custom and practice and inflexible working arrangements; and
- Complete absence of any formal strategic review and long-term failure or inability to plan in line with resources available.
8.3 To capitalise on the key drivers for change and reduce some of the difficulties outlined above Libraries NI sees the need for two different types of Library:

- **Medium-sized libraries** which will open a minimum of 30 hours per week, 10 of which will be outside normal business hours and offering:
  - Specialist Collections (e.g. Local studies)
  - Dedicated meetings room space
  - Flexibility for community space
  - Public Access Terminals (PATs) configured in a way which can be used as a learning space
  - One-to-one support
  - Regular activities covering the key themes (learning, culture, information and heritage)
  - Zoning e.g. teenage, quiet study space

- **Large libraries** which will open a minimum of 50 hours per week of which 15 hours will be outside normal business hours and offering:
  - The same as medium libraries **PLUS**
  - Specialist Collections (with appropriate storage for same)
  - Microfilm/other media collections
  - Specialist ICT facilities
  - Radio Frequency Identification (RFID)
  - Wi-Fi
  - Refreshment facilities
  - Meeting rooms
  - Dedicated exhibition space

8.4 It is proposed that in Northern Ireland library services should be provided in the main through a combination of a number of large libraries, strategically located and supplemented by a range of medium sized libraries as described above. Whilst this is the vision to which we aspire it is recognised that it will be necessary to have a number of libraries operating less than the 30 hour model. A review of opening hours across all libraries is currently underway.

9. **Strategic Review – Evaluation Criteria**

9.1 Mostly, though not exclusively, library services are delivered in the public library buildings. A strategic review of assets has been conducted with a view to creating high performing facilities that are:

- Fit for purpose;
- Capable of delivering on the vision of Libraries NI;
- In the right location; and
- Sustainable.

9.2 The following report sets out to establish a sustainable and affordable framework for the service of the future. It urges a beginning to the investment needed to facilitate the re-design of the service, to address present weaknesses in our ability to meet customers’ expectations regarding access to services and the quantity and quality of stock provided.
10. **Summary of the Review Process**

10.1 Libraries NI is responsible for 101 fixed public library service locations (including the 2 standalone heritage libraries) and 28 mobile services. For the first time the public library service has the opportunity to review provision across the region of Northern Ireland.

10.2 The review is being conducted in three stages:

- **Stage 1:** A review of Greater Belfast;
- **Stage 2:** A review of provision in the rest of Northern Ireland; and
- **Stage 3:** A review of mobile service provision across Northern Ireland.

10.3 Stage 1, the review of Greater Belfast was completed in June 2010. The scope of Stage 2 is the rest of Northern Ireland.

10.4 The review process is made up of a number of processes:

- **10.4.1** Information collection and analysis of current provision;
- **10.4.2** Provision of an initial discussion paper to the Services Committee and to the Board;
- **10.4.3** Public consultation on the proposals, including consideration of equality issues; and
- **10.4.4** Draft of final proposals and recommendations to the Board.

10.5 The public consultation on Stage 2 will run from 10 January 2011 – 8 April 2011 inclusive and it is envisaged that the Board will make a decision on the proposal by the end of June 2011.

11. **Format of the Review**

11.1 This review has measured current provision against the evaluation criteria outlined above. These criteria are further defined and outlined in the following sections.

12. **Fit for Purpose**

12.1 Putting customers first and delivering a modern public library service will depend on having well maintained, modern and fit for purpose library buildings. Ideally, a fit for purpose building is one, owned by Libraries NI, which may be invested in for the future as part of our commitment to the provision of a range of services. This criterion assesses the infrastructure and property condition. It provides specific information on the ownership of the property, any development restrictions in force as well as age and floor area. Overall an assessment is made on whether the property can be developed to meet the needs of the organisation.

13. **Capable of Delivering the Vision of Libraries NI**
13.1 The ability to deliver on the vision of Libraries NI includes:

- Being able to provide the full range of services;
- Being accessible; and
- Providing opportunities to develop partnerships.

13.1.1 Being able to provide a full range of services

The services offered by Libraries NI very much depend on having a suitable environment and the appropriate space to deliver them. If libraries are to be dynamic focal points in communities and deliver a range of services which meet the needs and expectations of the public the buildings must be well designed and equipped, attractive, welcoming and flexible.

13.1.2 Being accessible

Accessibility of libraries from many perspectives makes this an important indicator of the assessment of the current estate.

- Is the building compliant with existing legislation e.g. DDA?
- Across Northern Ireland can people reasonably access libraries i.e. meeting the accessibility standard contained in Delivering Tomorrow’s Libraries of 85% of the population living within a 2 mile radius of a library service (fixed or mobile provision)?
- Are the opening times flexible to suit the different needs of the population?
- Are libraries located in a neutral space?

13.1.3 Providing opportunities to develop partnerships

The image and role of libraries as being simply about lending books has long since passed. The modern library service has a full range of services that it must deliver to meet the needs of local people and to fulfil the corporate vision of being a hub in local communities, providing not only constructive leisure opportunities but learning, information, heritage and culture services. Partnership working is a key strategy for moving forward – providing a link between government and communities. Libraries can accommodate, in the right environment, other services that need to be delivered to the public. Kiosks, one-stop-shops, information gateways are all part of the overall strategy of enabling and empowering people.

14. In the Right Location

14.1 In the right location means:

- Can 85% of the population access a public library service (fixed or mobile) within 2 miles?
- Are people actually using the services?
- Is the population in an area using the services?
14.2 As a regional service Libraries NI is committed to parity of provision across Northern Ireland – urban or rural – so that 85% of library users need travel no more than 2 miles to access a library service (either fixed location or mobile service provision). The geographic boundaries of the ELBs coupled with the historical political context means that libraries have not been developed in a regional way - resulting in the current uneven pattern of library provision across Northern Ireland.

14.3 Performance information on issues activity, cost per issue and the use of computers in libraries are some of the measures examined to indicate the use patterns of service.

14.4 Active borrower data shows the numbers of people in an area using the service.

15. **Sustainable**

15.1 Sustainability into the future will depend on having public libraries that are of a high standard, capable of delivering a full range of services and that can be resourced and deliver value for money. It is important to build a service that can be taken into the future rather than attempt to stretch already scarce resources on buildings that will never be suitable to deliver the range of services the public are offered in other locations. A key measure in this area will be the use made of current libraries in respect of issues activity that will serve as a guide to sustainability into the future. As the cost per issue rises the ability to sustain the service in a particular library becomes more difficult.

16. **Findings of the Review of Libraries in Stage 2.**

16.1 The libraries identified as the scope for this review are all public libraries not considered as part of Stage 1. Each library has been examined in detail and key facts collated.

16.2 The libraries within the scope of this review are:

- Antrim
- Armagh
- Ballycastle
- Ballyclare
- Ballynahinch
- Ballymena Central
- Ballymoney
- Banbridge
- Bangor Carnegie
- Bessbrook
- Broughshane
- Brownlow
- Carnlough
- Carrickfergus
• Castlederg
• Castlewellan
• Coalisland
• Coleraine
• Comber
• Cookstown
• Creggan
• Crossmaglen
• Crumlin
• Cushendall
• Derry Central
• Donaghadee
• Downpatrick
• Draperstown
• Dromore
• Dungannon
• Dungiven
• Enniskillen
• Fintona
• Fivemiletown
• Garvagh
• Gilford
• Greenisland
• Greystone
• Holywood
• Irvinestown
• Keady
• Kells & Connor
• Kilkeel
• Killeglah
• Kilrea
• Larne
• Limavady
• Lisburn City
• Lisnaskea
• Lurgan
• Maghera
• Magherafelt
• Moira
• Moneymore
• Moy
• Newcastle
• Newry City
• Newtownards
• Newtownstewart
• Omagh
• Portadown
• Portaferry
• Portglenone
- Portrush
- Portstewart
- Randalstown
- Rathfriland
- Richhill
- Saintfield
- Shantallow
- Strabane
- Strathfoyle
- Tandragee
- Warrenpoint
- Waterside
- Whitehead

16.3 The total net cost of running these libraries in 2009/2010 was £10,620,732.

16.4 A detailed analysis of these libraries has been conducted. The criteria looked at measures including:

- Fit for purpose;
- Capable of delivering on the vision of Libraries NI;
- In the right location; and
- Sustainable.

16.5 In assessing whether a library can form a building block for delivering the future vision for service provision it is important to note that *no single indicator can be considered in isolation. It is these factors taken in the round and in combination that determine whether a library has the potential to deliver the Libraries NI Vision.*

16.6 Appendix 1 shows the categorisation of the libraries as follows:

- Libraries that meet the key criteria for future use and have been recently refurbished and are well placed geographically to remain;
- Libraries that require new builds or major refurbishments;
- Libraries that require to be clustered to consolidate a single viable entity rather than a number of libraries unable to meet the vision; and
- Libraries that are no longer viable from a strategic perspective.

17. **Libraries that meet the key criteria for future use and may have been recently refurbished and are well placed geographically to remain.**

17.1 The review indicates that the following locations are capable of delivering the service to meet the strategic vision. At this time no major refurbishments are planned, although in some cases minor works may be required, mainly to refresh the buildings.
These libraries are:

- Antrim
- Ballynahinch
- Ballymena Central
- Bangor Carnegie
- Bessbrook
- Broughshane
- Brownlow
- Carrickfergus
- Castlederg
- Castlewellan
- Comber
- Cookstown
- Crossmaglen
- Crumlin
- Cushendall
- Donaghadee
- Downpatrick
- Dungannon
- Dungiven
- Greenside
- Holywood
- Irvinestown
- Keady
- Kilrea
- Larne
- Lisburn City
- Lurgan
- Magherafelt
- Newcastle
- Newry City
- Newtownstewart
- Omagh
- Portadown
- Portaferry
- Portglenone
- Portrush
- Portstewart
- Randalstown
- Rathfriland
- Saintfield
- Strabane
- Tandragee
- Warrenpoint
- Whitehead
18. Libraries that require new builds or major refurbishments

18.1 The review would indicate that the following libraries are sustainable but require significant investment, either on the current or a new site:

- Ballycastle
- Ballyclare
- Ballymoney
- Banbridge
- Coalisland
- Coleraine
- Creggan
- Derry Central
- Dromore
- Enniskillen
- Fivemiletown
- Garvagh
- Kilkeel
- Limavady
- Lisnaskea
- Maghera
- Moira
- Newtownards
- Shantallow
- Strathfoyle
- Waterside

18.2 While it is recognised that, in the current financial climate, capital funding to take forward development work on these libraries may not be available, nevertheless it is important to identify the need so that the relevant planning can be undertaken in due course.

19. Libraries that require to be clustered to consolidate provision into a single viable entity rather than a number of libraries unable to meet the vision

19.1 Clustering is considered where:

1. the Delivering Tomorrow’s Libraries standard of providing access to static or mobile provision within a two mile radius could not be met if the libraries were closed; and
2. there is a genuine belief that enhanced provision could be achieved through deploying the savings gained from amalgamation providing a range of services in a single location to be determined following consultation with the communities concerned.

19.2 Provision in Armagh

19.2.1 Libraries NI currently operates through three premises in the City of Armagh, the branch library, Irish and Local Studies and the former SELB Library Headquarters. The review recognises that, in Armagh
City, a cluster approach would provide a more accessible, effective and sustainable service and that in considering such an arrangement, the functions carried out on all three sites would need to be taken into account.

19.2.2 From the analysis in Appendix 1 and in the interests of providing equitable services it is proposed that the consolidation of the following libraries into a cluster, either on an existing site or a new site, would provide enhanced provision in the area:

- Armagh Library and the Irish and Local Studies service.

20. Libraries that are considered to be no longer viable from a strategic perspective

20.1 The assessment shown in Appendix 1 would indicate that the following libraries do not support the vision of Libraries NI into the future. These libraries are underperforming and are not capable of delivering the range of services to which Libraries NI aspires.

- Carnlough
- Draperstown
- Fintona
- Gilford
- Kells and Connor
- Killyleagh
- Moneymore
- Moy
- Richhill

20.2 Key reasons why these libraries fail to meet the criteria are shown below.

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<th>Criterion</th>
<th>Reasons</th>
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| Fit for purpose | • Limited floor space;  
| | • Constraints in place that inhibit development;  
| | • No space for additional development; and  
| | • Lack of public amenities. |
| Capable of delivering on the vision of Libraries NI | • Unable to deliver the range of services outlined in the Corporate Plan because of limitations in the building. |
| In the right location | • There is available and enhanced library provision for 85% of the population within a two mile radius (either fixed or mobile provision); and  
| | • Customer use profiles suggest decline. |
| Sustainable | • Anticipated budgetary forecast suggest that there will be a limited ability to continue to afford poorly performing service points. |
20.3 Greystone Library in Antrim has also been assessed as no longer viable from a strategic perspective, given its close proximity to the new library in Antrim. There is a commitment in the economic appraisal for the new Antrim Library to review provision at Greystone. Consequently the Board of Libraries NI has agreed to proceed to public consultation on the future of Greystone library.

20.4 Further information on each of these libraries is shown in the following paragraphs and Appendix 2 summarises the performance data for these libraries.

20.5 **Carnlough Library**
Carnlough Library is a small library (107m²) open 18 hours a week. The premises are rented and in poor condition. The property has a maintenance backlog of £14,619. The property has a suitability rating of 38 (out of 100) and has a net cost of £30,292. The library has 365 active borrowers and has a cost per issue of £3.88. The cost per active borrower in this library is £82.99. Computers are in use in this library 40.76% of the time. Carnlough Library is 6.71 miles from Cushendall Library. There is mobile library service provision 1.9 miles away in Glenarm.

20.6 **Draperstown Library**
Draperstown Library is a small library (120m²) open 18 hours a week. The premises are leased and the property has a maintenance backlog of £14,709. Access for people with disabilities is limited. The property has a suitability rating of 44 (out of 100) and has a net cost of £39,879. The library has 752 active borrowers and has a cost per issue of £3.35. The cost per active borrower in this library is £53.03. Computers are in use in this library 46.17% of the time. Draperstown Library is 5.63 miles from Maghera Library. There is mobile library provision 3.6 miles away at Tobermore.

20.7 **Fintona Library**
Fintona Library has 167m² available space and is open 23 hours a week. The property has a maintenance backlog of £54,125. It has three floors; the library operates on the ground floor and the upper floors and roof are in very poor condition. The property has a suitability rating of 43 (out of 100) and has a net cost of £26,475. The library has 506 active borrowers and has a cost per issue of £3.07. The cost per active borrower in this library is £52.32. Computers are in use in this library 50.37% of the time. Fintona Library is 7.11 miles away from Omagh Library and 3 miles from a mobile library stop on the Tyrone mobile route.

20.8 **Gilford Library**
Gilford Library has 269m² available space and is open 25.5 hours a week. The property has a maintenance backlog of £27,670 and lacks disabled access. It is a Georgian building with three floors plus a basement. The library operates on the ground floor and makes limited use of the first floor. The basement has flooded on numerous occasions. The property has a suitability rating of 38 (out of 100) and has a net cost of £56,599. The library has 416 active borrowers and has a cost per issue of £8.18. The cost per active borrower in this library is £136.06. Computers are in use in this library 30.83% of the time. Gilford
Library is 2.54 miles from Tandragee Library and 0.85 miles from a mobile library stop on the Brownlow mobile route.

20.9 Greystone Library
Greystone Library was built in 1970 and is owned by Libraries NI. It has 281m² of available space and is located beside a small shopping development serving the Greystone Road. The library is open 44 hours each week. The property has a maintenance backlog of £12,976. The property has a suitability rating of 63 (out of 100) and has a net cost of £93,634. The library has 1,709 active borrowers and has a cost per issue of £3.65. The cost per active borrower in this library is £54.79. Computers are in use in this library 43.68% of the time. Greystone Library is 1.3 miles from Antrim Library.

20.10 Kells and Connor Library
Kells and Connor Library is a small library (115m²) open 18 hours per week, situated in Kells Village. The library opened as a partnership with the local community and is in a leased building. It is in good condition with disabled access and has a maintenance backlog of £495. The property has a suitability rating of 60 (out of 100) and has a net cost of £28,730. The library has 481 active borrowers and has a cost per issue of £3.74. The cost per active borrower in this library is £59.73. Computers are in use in this library 35.82% of the time. Kells and Connor Library is 4.52 miles from Ballymena Central Library and 0.15 miles from a mobile stop on the Ballymena mobile route.

20.11 Killyleagh Library
Killyleagh Library has 204m² of available space and is open 21 hours a week. The library is sited on the ground floor of a narrow two storey building owned by South East Regional College (SERC). The building does not comply with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) in regard to access - the entrance area is stepped with 2 manual doors and disabled access is through the rear fire door. Staff facilities are below standard and are not equipped for people with disabilities. The property has a maintenance backlog of £23,940. The property has a suitability rating of 44 (out of 100) and has a net cost of £41,988. The library has 950 active borrowers and has a cost per issue of £2.86. The cost per active borrower in this library is £44.20. Computers are in use in this library 44.99% of the time. Killyleagh Library is 5.83 miles from Downpatrick Library and is 0.73 miles from a mobile stop on the Down mobile route.

20.12 Moneymore Library
Moneymore Library is a small library (134m²) open 22 hours a week. The property is leased and is in poor condition and has no disabled access and has a maintenance backlog of £23,025. The property has a suitability rating of 38 (out of 100) and has a net cost of £40,474. The library has 443 active borrowers and has a cost per issue of £3.95. The cost per active borrower in this library is £91.36. Computers are in use in this library 38.28% of the time. This library is 4.36 miles from Cookstown Library and 2.53 miles from a mobile stop on the Dungannon mobile route.
20.13 **Moy Library**
Moy Library is a small library (76m²) open 22 hours a week. The property is rented and has a maintenance backlog of £900. The property has a suitability rating of 41 (out of 100) and has a net cost of £33,323. The library has 486 active borrowers and has a cost per issue of £2.92. The cost per active borrower in this library is £68.57. Computers are in use in this library 25.06% of the time. Moy Library is 5.11 miles from Dungannon Library and 2.53 miles from a mobile stop on the Armagh mobile route.

20.14 **Richhill Library**
Richhill Library has 138m² of available space and is open 28.5 hours a week. It is a two storey building with no wheelchair access to the first floor. The property has a maintenance backlog of £2,525. The property has a suitability rating of 60 (out of 100) and has a net cost of £39,567. The library has 836 active borrowers and has a cost per issue of £2.78. The cost per active borrower in this library is £47.33. Computers are in use in this library 47.53% of the time. Richhill Library is 4.39 miles from Armagh Library and 1.46 miles from a mobile stop on the Brownlow mobile route.

20.15 The distances from each library to the closest alternative library were calculated using Mapinfo (mapping software) and are straight line distances.

21. **Financial Implications**
21.1 The libraries outlined:
- are provided at a cost of £430,961;
- use 426 hours of staff time; and
- provide for 2.60% of total library business.

21.2 Whilst the financial allocations for future years are not known the pressure on sustaining services at all locations would prove difficult.

22. **Option Appraisal**
22.1 In order to address the issues and investments needed for Libraries NI a number of options has been considered.

23. **OPTION 1: Do Nothing**
23.1 Option 1 is the status quo or Do Nothing option and is used for comparative purposes. This option is defined as library provision remaining the same as currently with little or no additional investment being made in maintaining or improving buildings and services. This option can be discounted as a valid way of moving forward as the current pattern of provision is neither affordable nor sustainable into the future and does nothing to assist in the delivery of the vision for library services.

24. **OPTION 2: Reduce Services**
24.1 This option maintains the current complement of libraries and reduces staffing and opening hours in all libraries (including better performing libraries) to
ensure that services continue to be provided within budget. This option is discounted on the basis that not only does it not meet the strategic vision for library services but it also drains resources away from libraries that are performing well and meeting the needs of their customers.

25. **OPTION 3: Rationalisation of Provision**

25.1 Option 3 would entail closing a number of the poorest performing libraries. This option, while reducing costs, would not meet the strategic vision of Libraries NI – wanting to provide an accessible and responsive service.

26. **OPTION 4: Strategic Review of the Library Estate**

26.1 This option sets out the vision for a strategic pattern of library provision across the estate. This option differs from option 3 in that it also identifies the need, in due course, for an investment programme for libraries that are performing well but have been identified in need of major refurbishment and development. In doing so prioritised plans can be prepared to enable capital funding to be accessed when available. The balance of reviewing provision in this way to ensure accessibility and high quality provision meets the vision of Libraries NI to provide responsive, high quality and local services.

27. **Summary Evaluation of Options**

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<th>Option</th>
<th>Meets Libraries NI’s Vision</th>
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28. **Conclusions and Recommendations for Action**

28.1 Progressing Option 4 – Strategic Review of the entire library estate is the only option that delivers on the agreed Libraries NI vision and at the same time secures services within budget.

28.2 This recommendation to take forward the review of the estate needs to be managed. Due to the financial pressures facing all public services at this time particularly with regard to capital spend it is only possible to identify priorities for development as short, medium and longer term. These are identified in Appendix 1.

29. **Recommendation and Summary**

29.1 The overall impact of this review will result in a network of high performing, well designed, well positioned public places that people will want to come and
in which they will be able to access the full range of library services. The recommendation of this report is to endorse the findings and proceed to public consultation.
## Appendix 1: Assessment of Libraries for Future Provision

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<td>DS = Develop</td>
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<td>R = Rationalise</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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# Appendix 2: 2009/10 Performance Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Branch</th>
<th>Loans</th>
<th>Visitors</th>
<th>Active Borrowers</th>
<th>Cost per Issue</th>
<th>Cost per Active Borrower</th>
<th>PAT USE</th>
<th>Maint Backlog £</th>
<th>Staff Hours</th>
<th>% of Library Business</th>
<th>Suitability Score</th>
<th>Net Cost £</th>
<th>Alternative Library</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carnlough</td>
<td>7,807</td>
<td>17,300</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>82.99</td>
<td>40.76%</td>
<td>14,619</td>
<td>29.50</td>
<td>0.17%</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>30,292</td>
<td>Cushendall</td>
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<tr>
<td>Draperstown</td>
<td>11,890</td>
<td>19,864</td>
<td>752</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>53.03</td>
<td>46.17%</td>
<td>14,709</td>
<td>30.00</td>
<td>0.26%</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>39,879</td>
<td>Maghera</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fintona</td>
<td>8,623</td>
<td>12,220</td>
<td>506</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>52.32</td>
<td>50.37%</td>
<td>54,125</td>
<td>43.50</td>
<td>0.19%</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>26,475</td>
<td>Omagh</td>
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<td>Gilford</td>
<td>6,920</td>
<td>10,192</td>
<td>416</td>
<td>8.18</td>
<td>136.06</td>
<td>30.83%</td>
<td>27,670</td>
<td>45.75</td>
<td>0.15%</td>
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<td>56,599</td>
<td>Tandragee</td>
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<td>Greystone</td>
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<td>56,857</td>
<td>1,709</td>
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<td>54.79</td>
<td>43.68%</td>
<td>12,976</td>
<td>103.50</td>
<td>0.56%</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>93,634</td>
<td>Antrim</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kells &amp; Connor</td>
<td>7,680</td>
<td>13,377</td>
<td>481</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>59.73</td>
<td>35.82%</td>
<td>495</td>
<td>24.00</td>
<td>0.17%</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>28,730</td>
<td>Ballymena</td>
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<tr>
<td>Killyleagh</td>
<td>14,680</td>
<td>16,900</td>
<td>950</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>44.99%</td>
<td>23,940</td>
<td>45.00</td>
<td>0.32%</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>41,988</td>
<td>Downpatrick</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moneymore</td>
<td>10,254</td>
<td>6,760</td>
<td>443</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>91.36</td>
<td>38.28%</td>
<td>23,025</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moy</td>
<td>11,420</td>
<td>4,628</td>
<td>486</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>68.57</td>
<td>25.06%</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>30.38</td>
<td>0.25%</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>33,323</td>
<td>Dungannon</td>
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<td>Richhill</td>
<td>14,256</td>
<td>14,404</td>
<td>836</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>47.33</td>
<td>47.53%</td>
<td>2,525</td>
<td>40.38</td>
<td>0.31%</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>39,567</td>
<td>Armagh</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>119,175</strong></td>
<td><strong>172,502</strong></td>
<td><strong>8,362</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.78</strong></td>
<td><strong>47.33</strong></td>
<td><strong>47.53%</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,525</strong></td>
<td><strong>40.38</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.31%</strong></td>
<td><strong>60</strong></td>
<td><strong>39,567</strong></td>
<td><strong>Armagh</strong></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notes:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Staff hours are as at October 2010 and are reflective of Frontline staffing levels in 2009/10.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Net costs for 2009/2010 include maintenance costs where appropriate.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. In smaller libraries staff hours are for core services. Additional hours for staff cover and events are provided from larger libraries.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>