

LIBRARIES NI

The Northern Ireland Library Authority

Minutes of a meeting of the Services Committee held in Lisburn City Library and remotely via video link (Zoom) on Thursday, 17 November 2022 at 10:30am

PRESENT

Councillor Cathal Mallaghan	Chairperson
Professor Bernard Cullen	
Councillor Julie Gilmour	
Ms Deirdre Kenny	
Councillor Donal Lyons (remotely)	
Mr John Peto	Vice-Chairperson
Mr H Reid	
Dr M Ward (remotely)	

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr Jim O'Hagan	Chief Executive
Ms Adrienne Adair	Director of Library Services
Ms Julie Reid	Deputy Head of Service
Mr Sean Beattie	Deputy Head of Service
Ms Judith Norris (remotely)	District Manager
Mr Edwin Johnston (remotely)	District Manager
Ms Diane McGlynn	Minutes

The Chairperson welcomed Members and staff to the meeting, in particular he welcomed Ms J Norris and Mr E Johnston who were attending the meeting as observers.

1. APOLOGIES FOR NON ATTENDANCE

1.1 An apology was received from Ms S Millar, Boardroom Apprentice.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

2.1 The Chairperson reminded Members of their obligation to declare any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest associated with any item on the agenda, either now or at the relevant stage during the meeting. No conflicts of interest were declared.

3. CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS

- 3.1 The Chairperson referred to the launch of the Cultural Heritage service in Armagh that he recently attended and was honoured to speak at. He reported that the event was well attended and that he was very impressed with the resources and space.
- 3.2 On behalf of the Committee, the Chairperson congratulated Ms A Adair on her new role as Director of Library Services.

4. OFFICERS' BUSINESS

SC.01.11.22

- 4.1 The Director of Library Services referred to the sudden death of Dr Éamon Phoenix and informed Members that a letter of condolence had been sent to his wife from the Chief Executive on behalf of Libraries NI. She described Éamon as a great friend to Libraries NI, always obliging and enthusiastic when approached to deliver talks and highlighted his contribution to the Heritage from Home online series of talks.
- 4.2 Ms A Adair then referred to the report that had been circulated and drew attention to a number of items. She gave an overview of Libraries NI's cost of living service offer and reported that in addition to offering a welcoming, free and inclusive space to everyone and promoting libraries as warm spaces, Libraries NI is also engaging with new and existing customers to help combat loneliness and social isolation through a range of services, activities and hard copy and online resources. The Director of Library Services highlighted the crucial role as a library service in providing access to trusted information and signposting customers to local support such as Government Departments, Councils, charities, community and voluntary groups, advice centres, churches, Make the Call, food banks and social supermarkets. She also described the Chatty Library Scheme taking place in Dungannon and Magherafelt libraries and the Creative Space initiative in Belfast Central and Omagh libraries.
- 4.3 The Director of Library Services informed the Committee that an £82,000 funding bid to DAERA was successful and the Out of Hours Service will now be extended to include Banbridge Library. Site visits have already been undertaken and work plans are being finalised. She reported that the installation of doors, management software and controls will be completed in March 2023 and when the service starts in Banbridge, it will be the eighth Out of Hours library for Libraries NI.
- 4.4 Ms A Adair confirmed that plans were in place to notify customers of the Christmas and New Year closure and also promote Libraries NI's online offer and double lending privileges during the closure.
- 4.5 The Director of Library Services reported that in September over 90 library locations participated in the annual Macmillan Cancer Support Coffee Morning with approximately £13,677 raised for cancer support.

- 4.6 Ms A Adair referred to the School of Sanctuary book launch in Ormeau Road Library on 22 October 2022 with a reading by Khanyisa Mafumo, Belfast City of Sanctuary. The Director of Library Services reported that the application to pilot Ormeau Road Library as a Library of Sanctuary is awaiting approval with Belfast City of Sanctuary.
- 4.7 The Director of Library Services then referred to Literature Month, a reader development initiative designed to build on the success of Book Week NI and further engage people with books and reading which will take place from 7 – 26 November. With the strapline banner ‘Check It Out’ a number of events and activities will take place to supplement Libraries NI’s core service delivery. It was noted that the number of author visits was scaled back due to budget constraints.
- 4.8 Ms A Adair drew attention to the forthcoming CILIP Ireland Open Day to be held on 7 December 2022 and asked Members to contact her if they would like to attend. She also noted the following recent meetings:
- Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Department for Communities and Libraries NI Working Group on 22 September 2022
 - County and City Librarians Seminar, 6 October 2022
 - Libraries NI and Libraries Connected, 27 October 2022.
- 4.9 The Director of Library Services then highlighted the following recent publications:
- Engagement in Culture, Arts and Sport by Adults in Northern Ireland: Findings from the Continuous Household Survey 2021/22
 - Libraries Connected Strategic Plan 2023 – 2027.
- 4.10 Ms A Adair referred to the challenging budget situation and highlighted the impact on services including book stock, reservations and programming.

5. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15 SEPTEMBER 2022 SC.02.11.22

- 5.1 On a proposal by Ms D Kenny, seconded by Councillor J Gilmour, the minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2022 were agreed as an accurate record.

6. MATTERS ARISING

- 6.1 There were no matters arising.

7. REVIEW OF READING AND READER DEVELOPMENT POLICY SC.03.11.22

- 7.1 Ms J Reid introduced the Reading and Reader Development Policy which has been in operation for eight years and was being presented to the Committee in line with the policy review cycle. She explained the purpose of the policy, to ensure a consistent approach to the provision of reading and reader development activities and therefore providing a framework for initiatives such as Book Week NI.

- 7.2 The Deputy Head of Service confirmed that there were no significant changes as a result of the policy review and that minor amendments were made to reflect organisational changes and add relevant policies and procedures.
- 7.3 On a proposal by Mr J Peto, seconded by Ms D Kenny, the Services Committee agreed to recommend the approval of the Reading and Reader Development Policy to the Board.

8. SERVICES RISK REGISTER AND SERVICE PLAN PROGRESS REPORT **SC.04.11.22**

- 8.1 Mr S Beattie presented the Services Risk Register and reported that three risks were categorised as high, five as medium and one as low:
- high: participation and relevance, resources, planning
 - medium: stakeholder engagement, staff, information security, business continuity, business continuity: coronavirus COVID-19
 - low: corporate governance.
- 8.2 The Deputy Head of Service highlighted the increase in risk rating for Risk 1 (Participation and Relevance) and Risk 5 (Resources), as a result of the current financial environment and challenging budget in which Libraries NI is operating. Mr S Beattie also drew attention to the separate coronavirus COVID-19 risk and confirmed that consideration would be given to combining this with the business continuity risk going forward.
- 8.3 The Deputy Head of Service then spoke to the Service Plan Progress Report indicating progress as at the end of September 2022 in implementing the 2022/23 Service Plan. He stated that all targets were on track for achievement at the end of September but highlighted that the challenging budget environment may adversely impact on delivery of the plan in the next six months. Mr S Beattie went on to describe the Libraries of Sanctuary initiative and significant achievements in respect of library participation, social inclusion, joint projects and planning in relation to cultural heritage class visits.
- 8.4 In response to a question, the Chief Executive gave an overview of joint working with the Education Authority and agreed to follow up on the potential to promote library services to student teachers.
- 8.5 The Services Committee noted the Services Risk Register and Progress Report and congratulated the Deputy Head of Service on the visual presentation of the risk register.

9. INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF LIBRARY ASSOCIATIONS (IFLA) 2022 CONGRESS

- 9.1 Ms J Reid, Deputy Head of Service, gave a presentation on the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) 87th World Library and Information

Congress which was held in Dublin from 26 – 29 July 2022. She reported that eight members of Libraries NI staff attended together with some 2000 delegates from around the world. The congress theme was Inspire, Engage, Enable and Connect and in addition to the programme, delegates also had an opportunity to engage in social activities providing an invaluable networking opportunity. Members were informed of the successful poster presentations that were submitted by Ms J Reid and Mr S Beattie on the virtual choir project and Book Week NI. The posters have been filed in the IFLA repository.

- 9.2 The Deputy Head of Service advised that the Congress brings together high-level speakers, experts in every aspect of the profession, and library and information workers from around the world to establish the international agenda for the profession and to explore issues and developments of interest to the global library field. The Congress had a full and diverse programme, with key note addresses, plenary sessions, open sessions, workshops and demonstrations. Ms J Reid gave a summary of some highlight sessions including the keynote address by the former President of Ireland, Mary Robinson and presentations from the Master of Ceremonies and Delegate from the IFLA Governing Board, Halo Locher, the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Caroline Conroy, IFLA President Barbara Lison and IFLA President-elect Vicki McDonald.
- 9.3 The Deputy Head of Service referred to the Public Library of the Year award presented by IFLA in collaboration with the Danish software company Systematic and gave an overview of the shortlisted libraries and showed a short video of Missoula Public Library, Montana, USA, the winning library. She then went on to outline the IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto.
- 9.4 Ms J Reid informed the Committee of some of the out workings as a result of the networking opportunities at the congress including visits to Belfast Central Library by Karen Latimer, a library building consultant, and Libraries Connected Chief Executive and President, Isobel Hunter and Ayub Khan.
- 9.5 It was noted that the 2023 IFLA World Congress will be held in Rotterdam from 21 – 25 August 2023 and the Deputy Head of Service reiterated the value for Libraries NI staff to attend. Furthermore, she indicated that the aspiration for 2023 would be for Libraries NI to present at the congress.
- 9.6 Members thanked Ms J Reid for an encouraging and comprehensive presentation and acknowledged the worth of attendance and participation in the congress.

10. BOOK WEEK NI 2022

- 10.1 Ms J Reid provided the Committee with a preliminary overview of Book Week NI 2022 which she described as a now well-established and well-loved feature of the literary and cultural calendar in Northern Ireland. She highlighted the importance of this year's event as the first following two years of COVID restrictions and which impressively commenced with a BBC NI/Ulster Orchestra Concert.

- 10.2 The Deputy Head of Service outlined the ambitious programme of events which took place across the network of libraries, some of which were recorded and are available to view on the Libraries NI website and YouTube channel. She then highlighted eight headline author events which included Colin Bateman, Steve Cavanagh, Wendy Erskine, Kathy Klugston, Bernie Magill, Stuart Neville, Richard O'Reilly, Donal Ryan, John Self, and Serena Terry.
- 10.3 The Deputy Head of Service drew attention to the wider BBC engagement this year which included outside broadcasts on Good Morning Ulster, the Conor Philips Show and Newslane and the increased stakeholder engagement with Book Week Ambassadors. It was noted that analysis to date indicated a 59% increase across social media for reach with stakeholders and followers and a 99% increase in the number of new borrowers added in October on the previous year.
- 10.4 Ms J Reid confirmed that the partnership agreement between Libraries NI and BBC NI was renewed during Book Week and highlighted the achievement of this following an internal review of partnerships by BBC. The Deputy Head of Service thanked colleagues and Board Members for their support in the delivery of Book Week NI and advised that a meeting is scheduled with BBC NI on 22 November 2022 to fully evaluate the programme.
- 10.5 The Services Committee thanked Ms J Reid for the update and congratulated everyone involved in delivering another highly successful Book Week NI.

11. ONLINE SERVICES AND SERVICE SUPPORT PRESENTATION

- 11.1 Ms K Aiken introduced herself as the Service Development Manager with responsibility for Online Services and Service Support, a new pillar in the organisational structure which supports operational staff across the organisation.
- 11.2 The Service Development Manager highlighted the main areas of work to date as:
- research and development
 - sharing best practice and information
 - evaluation and outcome based accountability
 - Department of Finance partnership and delivery of the Go On programme
 - programming to support customers e.g. Make the Call, GamCare
 - Give it a Go initiative.
- 11.3 Ms K Aiken explained the team's role in keeping abreast of new and innovative ideas and to highlight these to managers. She went on to describe three recent initiatives that were researched and shared, the Cubbie Sensory Hub, the Reader Pen and the Eco Library Card. The Service Development Manager then gave an overview of the evaluation remit of the team and outlined recent evaluations including the Customer Survey, a SAD Lamp pilot and a Film Club. She advised that an evaluation toolkit was being developed and would be rolled out to staff to ensure that evaluation was embedded in everything we do.

11.4 The Service Development Manager then outlined the outcome based accountability (OBA) approach, capturing what we do, how well we do it and the impact of what we do. Ms K Aiken gave an overview of the findings from the OBA evaluation of the Summer Reading Challenge.

11.5 The Services Committee thanked Ms K Aiken for a very informative presentation.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

12.1 There was no other business.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

13.1 It was noted that the next meeting of the Services Committee would take place on Thursday 19 January 2022 at 10:30am in Derry Central Library.

14. MEMBERS' ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE TIMES

14.1 The meeting ended at 12:27pm.

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

Signed: Councillor Cathal Mallaghan

Date: 19 January 2023