

LIBRARIES NI

The Northern Ireland Library Authority

Minutes of a meeting of the Board of the Authority held in Lisburn City Library and by remote video link (Zoom) on Thursday 9 February 2023 at 10:30 am

PRESENT

Professor Bernard Cullen	Chairperson
Councillor Julie Gilmour	Vice Chairperson

Alderman Thomas Burns
Councillor Alistair Cathcart
Mrs Deirdre Kenny
Councillor Donal Lyons
Councillor Cathal Mallaghan
Mrs Wendy Osborne OBE
Mr John Peto
Mr Harry Reid
Dr Margaret Ward
Councillor Billy Webb MBE JP
Miss Linda Wilson

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr Jim O'Hagan	Chief Executive
Mrs Adrienne Adair	Director of Library Services
Mr Desi Miskelly	Director of Business Support
Mrs Jacqui McKinstry	Head of Human Resources (Items 13 and 14)
Ms Nikki Terlik	Senior Services Manager, Customer Experience
Mr Matthew Dickinson	Assets
Ms Stefani Millar	Boardroom Apprentice

1. APOLOGIES FOR NON ATTENDANCE

None

2. MEMBERS' DECLARATION OF POTENTIAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- 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 from Members.

3. CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS

- 3.1 The Chairperson welcomed Ms S Millar, Board Room Apprentice to the meeting. He reminded Members that as part of the Leadership Development Plan it had been agreed that some staff should attend Board and Committee meetings as part of their personal development and in that capacity welcomed Ms N Terlik, Senior Services Manager, Customer Experience and Mr M Dickinson, Assets Officer.

4. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUSINESS

- 4.1 The Chief Executive referred Members to the paper which had been circulated, drawing attention to the undernoted items:

- Confirmation of Budget Allocation 2022/23
- Public Libraries Strategy (England)
- Libraries NI, Department of Finance and Education Authority - Support Sessions for Primary School Admissions
- Gallery Spaces in Libraries
- New Year's Honours List
- Assembly Questions

- 4.2 In response to a question regarding the partnership working with the Department of Finance and the Education Authority to facilitate digital support sessions which enabled the completion of online applications for pre/primary school places the Director of Library Services, Ms A Adair agreed to provide an update to Mr J Peto on the support sessions including the number of participants.

- 4.3 The Chairperson on behalf of Members and Officers congratulated Mr S Bleakley, retired Area Manager who had been awarded an MBE in the New Year's Honours for services to libraries and to the community in Fermanagh, Omagh and Fivemiletown. The Chief Executive will arrange for a letter to be sent to Mr Bleakley on behalf of the Board to offer its congratulations.

5. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD HELD ON 8 DECEMBER 2022 **LNI 01.02.23**

- 5.1 On a proposal by Mrs D Kenny, seconded by Alderman T Burns, the minutes of the Board Meeting held on 8 December 2022 were approved.

**6. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING OF THE BOARD HELD ON
8 DECEMBER 2022 LNI 02.02.23**

6.1 The Chief Executive drew attention to the circulated paper noting that an update would be provided on all matters arising except for those which were on the Agenda for further discussion.

6.2 Item 3.3: Chairperson's Business

The Chief Executive reported that he had been in contact with DfC in relation to the terms of appointment of Board Members. The Department had clarified that, in line with the Commissioner for Public Appointments guidance, appointments for the same position are restricted to two terms. If there is an exceptional reason a term can possibly be extended for a short period of time (e.g. to ensure the Board remains quorate whilst new Members are recruited). The term of appointment for a Councillor Board Member will end at the date of the next elections irrespective of length of time served. The Chief Executive added that a Board Member can apply for a different role on the Board e.g. the position of Chairperson even if they have served two terms as a Board Member.

6.3 Following discussion it was agreed that the Chairperson and Chief Executive would discuss the issue and make appropriate representation to DfC and/or the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

6.4 Councillor B Webb reminded Members of his question asked at the December meeting of the Board which still remained unanswered. He asked for clarification in relation to the appointments process whereby if appointments to the Board were advertised by an open recruitment process and a Board Member had completed two terms as a Councillor on the Libraries NI Board, could they reapply for appointment. Officers indicated that DfC advice was that appointments were restricted to two terms in total.

6.5 In relation to a query from Councillor A Cathcart regarding signage for the Bangor Carnegie Library, the Director of Library Services reported that officers will bring forward a proposal to amend the name of the library to reflect Bangor's City status. The Assets Manager has applied for planning permission for a sign to be erected which within the restrictions imposed by the listed building status will more clearly identify the library to visitors.

7. DRAFT ANNUAL BUSINESS PLAN 2023/24 LNI 03.02.23

7.1 The Chief Executive presented the first draft of the Annual Business Plan, including proposed targets for 2023/24. He reported that the document had been drafted against a backdrop of uncertainty and challenges, noting that although the focus is shifting away from the Covid-19 coronavirus pandemic the cost of living crisis is set to continue and the economic outlook for next year remains pessimistic with public finances set to be severely constrained.

- 7.2 It was noted that the draft Annual Business Plan 2023/24 takes cognisance of the Libraries NI Corporate Plan 2020 – 2024, planning frameworks including the draft Programme for Government (PfG) and the Outcomes Delivery Plan and the DfC Strategy 2020 – 25: Building Inclusive Communities. Work on a new Strategic Programme for Government had taken place during 2021/22 but has not yet been completed and is unlikely to be in place or published by the time the Annual Business Plan 2023/24 is finalised.
- 7.3 The Chief Executive reported that the draft Business Plan targets for 2023/24 would be shared with the Department and may be revised and updated to take account of Departmental priorities. Information has been provided to the Department setting out the funding needed, including for book stock, to maintain and develop services and to meet the statutory obligation to deliver a comprehensive and efficient public library service. The key planning assumption on which the draft plan has been developed is that funding will as a minimum be at a similar level to that approved for 2022/23. However, as notification of a funding allocation for 2023/24 has not yet been received, Section 6: Financing Our Services has not been updated in the draft plan. A number of objectives / targets and KPIs may also need to be reviewed and updated when a budget allocation is known.
- 7.4 Members discussed the document and it was agreed on a suggestion by the Chairperson that additional wording should be added at paragraph 1.6: Our Network and Services on page 5 in relation to cultural experiences provided by libraries such as art and music. It was also agreed to amend the graphic on page 6 to reflect these additions. Members noted that a further iteration of the Annual Business Plan would be brought to the Board for approval, when more information and clarification on the financial position for 2023/24 has been received.
- 7.5 Members noted the report.

8. BOARD EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW 2022/23

LNI 04.02.23

- 8.1 The Chairperson informed Members that individual Committees had reviewed their effectiveness, including the continued relevance of the Schemes of Delegation. The review papers are appended to the minutes of the meetings at which the review was undertaken.
- 8.2 It was noted that at its meeting on 18 January 2023, the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee had completed an effectiveness review using the National Audit Office Self-Assessment Checklist.
- 8.3 Members considered the Effectiveness Review and draft Action Plan and agreed to add some additional points in relation to the attendance of the Chairperson of the Libraries NI Audit and Risk Assurance Committee at the Departmental Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Meetings. In addition a note was added to the draft Action Plan to consider the development of a skills matrix to assist in identifying Board training needs.

8.4 On a proposal by Councillor B Webb, seconded by Miss L Wilson, Members confirmed that they were content that all reviews had been completed, agreed the draft Action Plan and concluded the review of effectiveness by confirming it is content that the Board and its Committees were operating effectively.

9. MANAGEMENT REPORT

LNI 05.02.23

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

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) 2022/23: Quarter 3: October – December 2022

LNI 05.02.23 (i)

9.2 The Chief Executive drew attention to the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) Report for Quarter 3: October to December 2022. He explained that at the end of Quarter 3 progress continued to be made in respect of the achievement of targets. He discussed the areas where targets had not been achieved providing an update of actions being taken.

Finance Report: December 2022

LNI 05.02.23 (ii)

9.3 The Director of Business Support presented the Finance Reports for Capital and Recurrent Spend to December 2022 which had been reviewed by the Business Support Committee at its meeting held on 26 January 2023.

9.4 He drew attention to the Capital Report noting that all capital projects were progressing and at the end of December 2022 a variance of £4.00 was projected against the allocated budget. The Director of Business Support commended the work of the Assets Department in managing projects within budget and departmental colleagues in working with Libraries NI to be flexible in their approach to capital projects.

9.5 He then drew attention to the Resource Report noting that an additional allocation of £2.194 million had been received in December 2022 to address a shortfall in book stock funding and to alleviate other in-year pressures. Members noted that these additional allocations were not reflected in the year-to-date profile for December, and while the report indicates a projected underspend of £149,000, action in January had further reduced this to £99,000 equivalent to 0.3% of the total resource budget.

Corporate Risk Register

LNI 05.02.23 (iii)

9.6 The Director of Business Support then drew attention to the Corporate Risk Register which had been reviewed by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee at its meeting held on 18 January 2023 noting that there had been some changes to the levels of treated risks largely due to the timing of the report within the financial year i.e. the reduction in probability of the risk occurring as the end of the financial year approached. He discussed each of the risks in turn and updated Members on changes to the Register since it was last seen by the Board in December 2022. It was noted that the relevancy of Risk 9: Business Continuity – Coronavirus Covid-19 would be reviewed and a

decision made if it should be incorporated into Risk 8: Business Continuity as part of the review for 2023/24.

9.7 On a proposal by Mrs W Osborne, seconded by Mr J Peto, the Board approved and adopted the Corporate Risk Register as at January 2023.

**10. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BUSINESS SUPPORT COMMITTEES HELD ON 24 NOVEMBER 2022 AND 26 JANUARY 2023
LNI 06.02.23**

10.1 The Director of Business Support reminded Members that a point of order had been raised at the December meeting of the Board querying if it was correct for the draft minutes of a Committee meeting to be adopted by the Board ahead of formal review and approval by the Committee at its next scheduled meeting. He reported that after some research into accepted practice in other public sector organisations it was determined that it was common practice for committee minutes to be adopted by a Board/Council ahead of the next meeting of the Committee at which the minutes were to be formally approved as a correct record of proceedings. This approach would allow the Board to be informed of business conducted by the Committee and for matters considered at Committee but requiring further Board approval to be brought forward in an expedient manner and without undue delay arising from the alignment of Board and Committee meeting schedules. The Board would adopt the minutes on an 'as read' basis.

10.2 The Director of Business Support confirmed that Officers were of the opinion that it was acceptable for the Board to consider and adopt Committee minutes and approve specific matters brought to its attention in advance of formal signing of minutes by the Committee Chairperson. Standard drafting would be added to the Committee minutes template under the appropriate item to clarify that the minutes were being approved by the committee as a 'correct record of the meeting' and of their prior adoption by the Board.

10.3 Members agreed to the above process for the adoption of Committee minutes by the Board prior to them being formally approved at the next meeting of the Committee as a correct record of proceedings.

10.4 The Chairperson of the Business Support Committee, Alderman T Burns, presented the minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2022.

10.5 On a proposal by the Committee Chairperson, Alderman T Burns, seconded by Miss L Wilson, the minutes of the Business Support Committee held on 24 November 2022 were adopted as an 'as read' record of the meeting and it was noted that no other items considered at the Committee Meeting required Board approval.

10.6 On a proposal by the Committee Chairperson, Alderman T Burns, seconded by Miss L Wilson, the minutes of the Business Support Committee held on 26 January 2023 were adopted as an 'as read' record of the meeting.

10.7 On a proposal by the Committee Chairperson, Alderman T Burns, seconded by Miss L Wilson the Board approved and adopted the following:

- Committee Effectiveness Review 2022/23
- Sponsorship Policy (Review)
- Statement of Corporate Social Responsibility (Review)

11. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AUDIT AND RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON 18 JANUARY 2023 **LNI 07.02.23**

11.1 The Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, Mrs W Osborne, presented the minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2023.

11.2 On a proposal by the Committee Chairperson, Mrs W Osborne, seconded by Mrs D Kenny, the minutes of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee held on 18 January 2023 were adopted as an 'as read' record of the meeting.

11.3 On a proposal by the Committee Chairperson, Mrs W Osborne, seconded by Councillor B Webb, the Board approved and adopted the following:

- Amendment to the Internal Audit Annual Plan
- Revised Corporate Risk Register Format
- Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Effectiveness Review

11.4 On a proposal by the Committee Chairperson, Mrs W Osborne, seconded by Mrs D Kenny, the Board approved and adopted the following:

- Updated Gifts and Hospitality Policy and Guidance
- Officials to engage with DfC on the appointment of an additional co-opted Member to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

12. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD ON 19 JANUARY 2023 **LNI 08.02.23**

12.1 The Chairperson of the Services Committee, Councillor C Mallaghan, presented the minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2023.

12.2 On a proposal by the Committee Chairperson, Councillor C Mallaghan, seconded by Mr J Peto, the minutes of the Services Committee held on 19 January 2023 were adopted as an 'as read' record of the meeting.

12.3 On a proposal by the Committee Chairperson, Councillor C Mallaghan, seconded by Mr J Peto, the Board approved and adopted the Review of Effectiveness of Services Committee 2022/23.

12.4 On a proposal by the Committee Chairperson, Councillor C Mallaghan, seconded by Dr M Ward, the Board approved and adopted the revised Stock Policy.

13. STAFFING MATTER (IN COMMITTEE)

13.1 Officers with the exception of the Chief Executive and the Head of Human Resources withdrew from the meeting.

13.2 On a proposal by the Chairperson of the Board, Professor B Cullen, seconded by the Vice-Chairperson of the Board, Councillor J Gilmour the Board resolved to consider 'In Committee' the Staffing Matter (Item 13).

13.3 While in Committee the Chief Executive updated the Board on recent appointments to senior staff positions. Mr S Beattie took up the Tier Three post of Head of Service, South and East, on 1 January 2023. Following the approval of delegated authority at the Board Meeting on 8 December 2022, the appointment had been approved on behalf of the Board by the Chairperson. Mrs K Aiken was appointed Deputy Head of Service, North and West, on 6 February 2023. Managers will now consider the vacancy arising from that appointment.

13.4 On a proposal by the Chairperson of the Board, Professor B Cullen, seconded by the Vice-Chairperson of the Board, Councillor J Gilmour the Board resolved to come out of Committee.

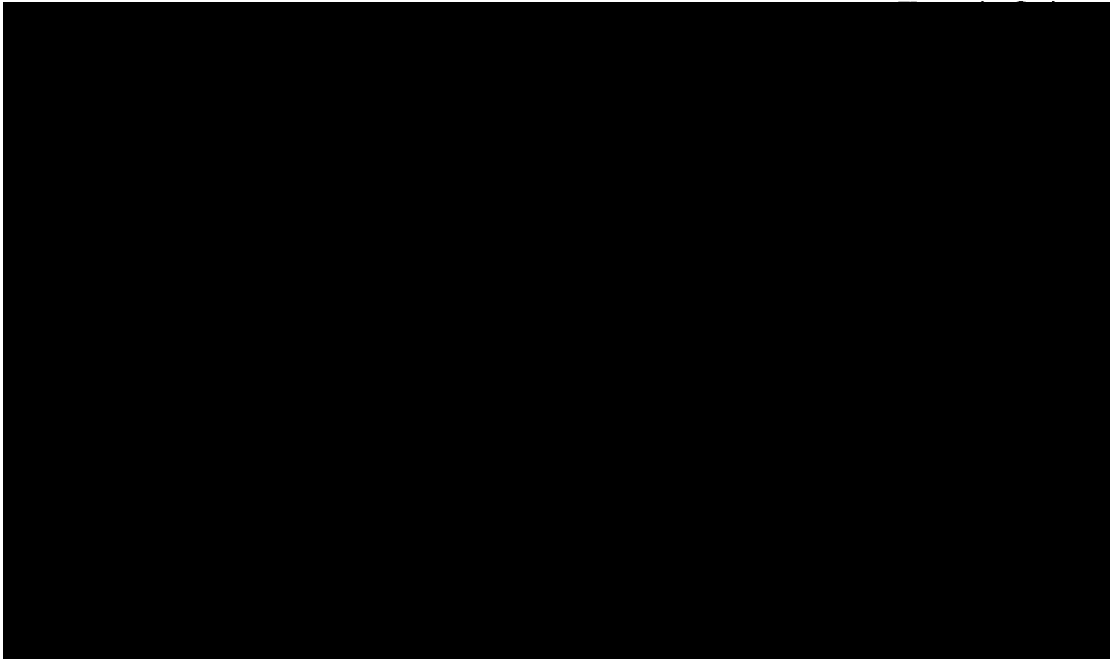
13.5 The Chief Executive withdrew from the meeting.

14. REMUNERATION COMMITTEE (IN COMMITTEE)

14.1 On a proposal by Councillor B Webb, seconded by Mrs W Osborne, the Board resolved to consider 'In Committee' Item 14: Remuneration Committee, Report of work undertaken in 2022/23.

14.2 

14.3 



- 14.4 The Chairperson provided an update on the JNC Pay Agreement 2022 for Chief Officers, which increased all salaries by £1,925 from 1 April 2022. A Business Case was subsequently submitted to DfC and was approved by the Permanent Secretary on 23 January 2023. The salary increase will be applied for the Senior Management Team from February 2023, and arrears owing from 1 April will also be paid in February 2023.
- 14.5 The Chairperson referred the Board to the Remuneration Committee's Effectiveness Review, which was completed at its meeting on Thursday 8 December 2023. The Effectiveness Review was approved by the Board.
- 14.6 On a proposal by Councillor B Webb, seconded by Mrs W Osborne, the Board resolved to come out of Committee.

15. ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS

- 15.1 There was no other notified business.

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 16.1 Members noted that the next scheduled meeting of the Board would take place on Thursday 27 April 2023 at 10:30 am in Lisburn City Library or remotely via video link.

17. MEMBERS ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE TIMES

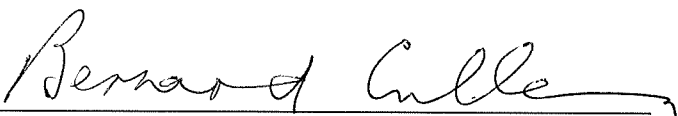
- 17.1 The meeting ended at 12:30 pm.

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

Councillor D Lyons joined the meeting at 11.07 am, left at 11.23 am and re-joined at 11.25 am

Mrs J McKinstry arrived at 12 noon

Councillor C Mallaghan left the meeting at 12.06 pm

Signed: 
Professor Bernard Cullen, Chairperson

Date: 27 April 2023
27 April 2023