

LIBRARIES NI

The Northern Ireland Library Authority

Minutes of a meeting of the Services Committee held in Derry Central Library
on Thursday 16 May 2024 at 10:30am

PRESENT

Mr John Peto	Chairperson
Ms Bonnie Anley	
Councillor Julie Gilmour	
Councillor Andrew McAuley	
Mrs Wendy Osborne OBE	

IN ATTENDANCE

Dr Jim O'Hagan	Chief Executive
Ms Adrienne Adair	Director of Library Services
Mr Sean Beattie	Head of Service
Ms Kirsty McClelland	Service Development Manager
Ms Diane McGlynn	Minutes

The Chairperson welcomed everyone to Derry Central Library, in particular he welcomed Mrs W Osborne to her first meeting of the Services Committee and thanked her for joining. He also welcomed Ms K McClelland, who would be giving a presentation later in the meeting.

1. APOLOGIES FOR NON ATTENDANCE

- 1.1 An apology was received from Ms Finola Guinnane, Boardroom Apprentice.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

- 2.1 The Chairperson reminded Members of their obligation 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 conflicts of interest were declared.

3. CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS

- 3.1 On behalf of the Services Committee the Chairperson extended condolences to Ms M Bell on the recent bereavement of her father.

4. DIRECTOR'S BUSINESS

SC.01.05.24

- 4.1 The Director of Library Services referred to the report that had been circulated and informed Committee Members that all libraries had returned to standard opening hours (including late evenings) on 3 April 2024 and that the summer opening hours would commence on Monday 1 July through to Saturday 31 August.
- 4.2 The Director of Library Services gave an overview of ad hoc closures for the period February to April 2024 with a comparison to the same period in 2023. She confirmed that work was ongoing to find a better format to present the closure information.
- 4.3 Ms A Adair confirmed that the planned launch for the provision of period products in libraries took place on 13 May to coincide with the date the new legislation ensuring universal access to free period products came into effect. It was noted that the Chief Executive and Deputy Head of Service attended the photoshoot held at Stormont with The Executive Office represented by Junior Ministers, Aisling Reilly and Pam Cameron.
- 4.4 The Director of Library Services gave an update on ongoing projects at Ballymoney, Bessbrook and Killyleagh libraries. In response to a question she confirmed that stakeholder engagement was in hand in respect of the new Killyleagh Library building.
- 4.5 The Director of Library Services then went on to highlight the following recent events and initiatives:
- Give it a Go Month
 - BBC Comes to Town
 - Autism Acceptance Week
 - Changing Attitudes to Ageing
 - Armstrong Storytelling Trust Rebranding Launch and Celebration Event
 - Belfast Learning Festival.
- 4.6 The Director of Library Services also drew Member's attention to a variety of forthcoming events:
- Dementia Action Week
 - Mental Health Awareness Week
 - The Walk featuring Little Amal
 - Empathy Day
 - Many Memories, Many Voices: workshop and exhibition launch in Belfast Central Library.
- 4.7 Ms A Adair informed the Committee of Libraries NI's attendance at the recent Edge Conference and the Chartered Institute of Library and Information

Professionals (CILIP)/Library Association of Ireland (LAI) Joint Conference. She also gave an overview of participation in recent meetings with Libraries Connected, CILIP UK, the Department of Education, the Education Authority and a recent presentation to the Department for Communities.

4.8 Following a discussion the Chief Executive confirmed that Libraries NI is keeping abreast of developments in a new public library strategy for England.

4.9 Members thanked the Director of Library Services for a very positive report.

5. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 MARCH 2024 SC.02.05.24

5.1 On a proposal by Ms B Anley, seconded by Councillor J Gilmour, the minutes of the Services Committee held on 21 March 2024 were approved as a correct record of the meeting. It was reported that these minutes had been adopted by the Board at its meeting held on 25 April 2024.

6. MATTERS ARISING

6.1 There were no matters arising.

7. READING AND READER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY SC.03.05.24

7.1 Mr S Beattie, Head of Service, introduced the Reading and Reader Development Strategy that was discussed at the last meeting of the Services Committee and as requested was presenting the strategy again with additional detail in the action plan.

7.2 He highlighted the following and gave an overview of work in progress and ideas being explored to expand the reach of each:

- Summer Reading Challenge
- Reading Groups
- Online Reading Groups
- eBooks.

7.3 The Head of Service went on to outline new initiatives being explored such as podcasts and 'Read the Library' and plans to carry out research on reading preferences. He also referred to the importance of stakeholder engagement with examples of those identified as key to supporting specific actions and work with the Marketing Team to create promotional content.

7.4 Services Committee were informed that due to the financial constraints combined with the scheduled January Committee not being quorate impacted on the draft strategy only being presented to Services Committee in March 2023. However, it

was noted that the original year one actions had proceeded in preparation for the launch as these were part of the Business and Service Plan targets.

- 7.5 Services Committee discussed the strategy and action plan noting that the action plan was resource intensive with marketing being fundamental to the success of initiatives. Members also highlighted a lack of engagement with young adults aged 20 – 25 years old and sought reassurance that an evaluation of the work to date had been carried out. Mr S Beattie confirmed this with an overview of the evaluations that had been completed.
- 7.6 Following the discussion it was agreed that the three-year timeframe for the strategy would be amended to 2024 – 2027 in line with the approval.
- 7.7 Subject to the above amendments to timescale, on a proposal by Mrs W Osborne, seconded by Ms B Anley, the Services Committee agreed to recommend the approval of the Reading and Reader Development Strategy to the Board.

8. SERVICE PLAN 2023/24 PROGRESS REPORT SC.04.05.24

- 8.1 The Director of Library Services presented the Service Plan Progress Report 2023/24 which demonstrates progress on achieving targets as at 31 March 2024. She reported that the majority of targets were achieved. Ms A Adair referred to the book stock fund at the start of the year which equated to £0.14 per capita, the most challenging starting point for many years and highlighted that additional in-year funding brought the stock spend to £1.55 per capita.
- 8.2 The Director of Library Services went on to highlight a number of significant achievements such as:
- Book Week NI
 - increased usage of electronic resources
 - implementation of e3
 - Belfast Central Library 135 celebrations
 - Library of Sanctuary
 - reimagining the Children's Library at Whiterock Library.
- 8.3 Ms A Adair reminded Services Committee that the Service Plan targets were set within a period of industrial action, reduced funding and reduced library opening hours. She provided an update on the ongoing conciliation with the Labour Relations Agency to reach an agreement to end the current industrial dispute.
- 8.4 Following discussion Committee Members requested a reminder of the duties included in action short of strike.
- 8.5 The Services Committee paid tribute to the volume and range of work carried out and noted the Service Plan 2023/24 Progress Report.

9. COLLECTIONS DEVELOPMENT POLICY

SC.05.05.24

- 9.1 Mr S Beattie, Head of Service, presented the Collections Development Policy highlighting that it updates, combines and replaces three existing policies, namely the existing Heritage, Loan and Use of Heritage and other Assets and Stock Policies. It was noted that the changing nature of publishing across a range of resources was a key element in developing this new policy.
- 9.2 He reported that the purpose of the Collections Development Policy is to provide a framework for how the resources held by Libraries NI are selected, curated, developed, preserved and managed to meet the needs of communities and individuals in Northern Ireland. The policy applies to all resources including electronic and physical formats. The Head of Service drew attention to key elements informing the policy such as not restricting collections to purchased or published items only, Libraries NI will proactively seek to obtain material which will meet the needs of current or future library customers for example, blogposts.
- 9.3 In response to a question about the ability for Libraries NI to generate income through charging for access to digitised material the Chief Executive outlined the scope available within the Libraries Act for commercial activities.
- 9.4 Following a discussion, Services Committee, requested amendments as follows:
- 4.3 – change wording to generic referral of ‘current legislation relevant to Northern Ireland’
 - 7.6 – additional wording ‘which have been withdrawn because the information or item is no longer relevant or current, due to lack of use or the item is in poor physical condition’ for clarity
 - addition of the Data Protection Policy to the related documents section.
- 9.5 Subject to the above amendments, on a proposal by Mrs W Osborne, seconded by Councillor J Gilmour, the Services Committee agreed to recommend the approval of the Collections Development Policy to the Board.

10. LIBRARIES IN THE DERRY CITY AND STRABANE DISTRICT COUNCIL AREA

- 10.1 Ms K McClelland, Service Development Manager, gave a presentation to the Services Committee on library services in the Derry City and Strabane District Council Area. She gave an overview of the geographical area informing the Committee of services provided through eight libraries, a public mobile service, a homecall service and a cross border mobile. She highlighted that the cross border mobile, a joint initiative with Donegal County Council, was the first cross border service in Europe and remains Ireland's only cross border service.
- 10.2 The Service Development Manager then drew attention to the demographic data

from the 2021 Census. Ms K McClelland went on to give a flavour of the range of programming in each library, some partnerships individual to each, the volume of use and a history of each of the buildings.

- 10.3 The Chairperson thanked Ms K McClelland for the informative presentation.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 11.1 There was no other business.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 12.1 It was noted that the next meeting of the Services Committee would take place on Thursday 12 September 2024 following the Board Planning Day in Omagh Library.

13. MEMBERS' ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE TIMES

- 13.1 The meeting ended at 1.05pm and was followed by a tour of Derry Central Library.
- 13.2 All Members arrived for the commencement of the meeting and remained until it ended.