

## **LIBRARIES NI**

### **The Northern Ireland Library Authority**

Minutes of a meeting of the Board of the Authority held in Lisburn City Library and remotely via video link (Zoom) on Thursday 7 July 2022 at 10:30 am

#### **PRESENT**

Professor Bernard Cullen  
Councillor Julie Gilmour

Chairperson  
Vice-Chairperson

Alderman Thomas Burns  
Councillor Alistair Cathcart  
Councillor Cheryl Brownlee  
Mrs Deirdre Kenny  
Councillor Cathal Mallaghan  
Ms 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  
Ms Adrienne Adair  
Mr Desi Miskelly  
Mrs Jacqui McKinstry  
Mrs Michelle Anderson  
Ms Angela Hodkinson

Chief Executive  
Head of Services  
Director of Business Support  
Human Resource Manager  
Head of Internal Audit  
Boardroom Apprentice

No observer from the Department for Communities (DfC) attended the Board Meeting.

#### **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.

### **3. CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS**

#### **3.1 The Chairperson drew attention to the following:**

- the death of Councillor G Finlay, Board Member on 15 June 2022. He confirmed that a letter of condolence had been sent on behalf of Members and Officers to Councillor Finlay's wife and family. Members took a moment to quietly reflect on Councillor Finlay's passing
- Mrs W Osborne would present the minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee held on 27 April 2022 and he would present the minutes of the meeting of 8 June 2022
- he welcomed Mrs M Anderson, the Head of Internal Audit to her first Board Meeting and thanked Mr B Doherty who had retired on 10 June 2022 for his contribution and commitment to Libraries NI and wished him a long and healthy retirement
- this was the last Board Meeting for Ms A Hodkinson, the Boardroom Apprentice, and on behalf of Members and Officers the Chairperson thanked Ms Hodkinson for her contribution and participation over the past year and wished her every success for the future. Ms Hodkinson thanked the Chairperson, Members and Officers for the opportunity to attend the Board and Committee meetings adding that she had found the experience very enjoyable. In particular she thanked Mrs W Osborne the 'Board Buddy' for her guidance during the year as mentor. Ms Hodkinson stated that she had been very fortunate to be placed with Libraries NI
- a new process for the recruitment of Councillor Board Members would commence in August 2022 and continue through the autumn.

### **4. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUSINESS**

#### **4.1 The Chief Executive referred Members to the papers which had been circulated, drawing attention in particular to the undernoted items:**

- Library Services – renewing, refocusing and re-energising (formerly reported as Covid-19 Update)
- Queen's Birthday Honours – former Director of Library Services, Ms Helen Osborn was awarded an MBE
- Boardroom Apprentice 2022 and Host Board Impact Study
- Cost of Living Crisis – recent engagement with DfC on this
- World Library and Information Congress 26 – 29 July 2022
- Branch Library Manager Job Evaluation
- Libraries NI Summer Activities and Outreach
- NIAO Good Practice Guide – Board Effectiveness
- Ukrainian Welcome Information Leaflet
- Assembly Questions

- 4.2 The Chief Executive reported that the incoming Boardroom Apprentice for 2022 would be Ms S Millar and thanked Mrs W Osborne who once again had agreed to act as mentor. It was noted that the new Boardroom Apprentice would formally take up her role from the 1 September 2022.

**5. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD HELD ON 28 APRIL 2022**  
**LNI 01.07.22**

- 5.1 On a proposal by Councillor B Webb, seconded by Mrs D Kenny, the minutes of the Board Meeting held on 28 April 2022 were approved.

**6. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD HELD ON 28 APRIL 2022**  
**LNI 02.07.22**

- 6.1 The Chief Executive drew attention to the circulated paper noting the following:

Items 6.2 Matters arising from the minutes of the Board Meeting held on 10 February 2022, Draft Annual Business Plan 2022/23

- 6.2 Members noted that this item would be discussed at Agenda Item 7.

Items 9.5 and 9.8: Management Report

- 6.3 The Chief Executive confirmed that the signed Bi-Annual Assurance Statement for the period ended 31 March 2022 and the Annual Board Assurance Statement 2021/22 had been forwarded to the Department on 28 April 2022.

**7. REVISED DRAFT ANNUAL BUSINESS PLAN 2022/23**  
**LNI 03.07.22**

- 7.1 The Chief Executive drew attention to the revised draft Annual Business Plan 2022/23 reminding Members that it had been presented to the Board at its meeting held on 10 February 2022. Since then Libraries NI has received notification of an indicative financial allocation for 2022/23 and the draft Annual Business Plan has now been updated at Sections 5: Key Performance Indicators and Section 6: Financing our Services to reflect this allocation.

- 7.2 An early draft of the Annual Business Plan 2022/23 was shared with the Department following the Board Meeting in February.

- 7.3 On a proposal by Mrs W Osborne, seconded by Mr J Peto, the Board approved the updated draft Annual Business Plan 2022/23 and for its formal submission to the Department for Communities for Departmental approval.

**8. DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS 2021/22 LNI 04.07.22**

- 8.1 The Chief Executive presented the draft Annual Report and Accounts 2021/22 which sets out in detail information on Libraries NI's activity and work during the year. He noted that 2021/22 had continued to be a challenging year due to the on-going effects of the coronavirus/Covid-19 pandemic adding that Libraries NI had continued to provide services throughout the year albeit at the start of the year on a reduced level.
- 8.2 He reported that the draft Annual Report and Accounts 2021/22 was submitted to the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) for audit on 4 July 2022 and confirmed that they had been scrutinised by Members of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee at its meeting held on 8 June 2022 and only minor amendments had been made to the document since that meeting.
- 8.3 Members noted that it was anticipated that the audit of the annual accounts would be completed over the summer and prior to certification by the Northern Ireland Audit Office the final audited Annual Report and Accounts would be brought to the next meeting of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee to be held on 12 October 2022 and then to the Board for approval on 13 October 2022.
- 8.4 Members thanked all staff involved in the preparation of the draft Annual Report and Accounts 2021/22 which reflected good performance and financial management in another challenging year.

**9. BELFAST CENTRAL LIBRARY – UPDATED STRATEGIC OUTLINE CASE (SOC) LNI 05.07.22**

- 9.1 The Chief Executive presented the updated Strategic Outline Case (SOC) for Belfast Central Library noting that it had been submitted to the Department for consideration on 27 May 2022.
- 9.2 The Director of Business Support gave a brief summary of the background to the SOC. He reported that some initial comments had been received from the Department which he would work through and respond to the Department in due course.
- 9.3 In response to a query from Councillor A Cathcart regarding the location of a Café in the proposed plans for Belfast Central Library, the Director of Business Support confirmed that it had been proposed that provision be made for some commercial activity within the project.
- 9.4 Members noted the report.

## 10. MANAGEMENT REPORT

LNI 06.07.22

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

- 10.2 Key Performance Indicators 2021/22: End of Year Report LNI 06.07.22 (i)  
Members noted the end of year report for the Key Performance Indicators 2021/22.

- 10.3 Libraries NI Business Plan 2021/22: End of Year Report LNI 06.07.22 (ii)  
Members noted that the Libraries NI Business Plan End of Year Report 2021/22 had included 38 separate objectives and targets. The end of year report shows that 28 of the targets in the Business Plan were achieved in full, with a further 5 partially achieved and 5 recorded as not achieved. The Chief Executive drew attention to the targets which had not been achieved providing additional information.

- 10.4 Finance Report: May 2021 LNI 06.07.22 (iii)  
The Director of Business Support presented the Finance Reports for Capital and Recurrent Spend to May 2022. He reported that in relation to capital expenditure the majority of the projects were progressing as planned. The Fivemiletown Library project was subject to delay as a result of the main contractor's withdrawal from the project. Libraries NI, DfC and CPD were working to re-procure the contract, adjust funding profiles and bringing forward potential contingency projects.

- 10.5 The Director of Business Support then drew attention to the Recurrent Spend report noting that it was still relatively early in the financial year. He reported that at present there was an over spend of £150,000 on Premises costs. This was as a result of the increasing rise in utility costs such as gas, oil and electricity. If this trend continues a projected overspend of £727,000 was predicted at year end. The Director of Business Support confirmed that contact had been made with the Department to highlight this issue.

- 10.6 Corporate Risk Register LNI 06.07.22 (iv)  
The Director of Business Support drew attention to the Corporate Risk Register which had been reviewed by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee at its meeting held on 8 June 2022. He reported that the risk profile was relatively stable despite various challenges and that two risks remained red i.e. Risk 1: Participation and Relevance and Risk 6: Planning.

- 10.7 On a proposal by Mrs D Kenny, seconded by Alderman T Burns, the Board approved and adopted the Corporate Risk Register as at May 2022 and noted the Management Report.

## **11. ANNUAL BUDGET AND SPENDING PLAN 2022/23: UPDATE**

**LNI 07.07.22**

- 11.1 The Director of Business Support reminded Members that in April 2022, based on the indicative resource allocation for 2022/23 of £29,125,000 that they had considered and approved a draft Spending Plan for 2022/23 as a framework within which expenditure could be monitored and controlled until such times as a formal budget proposal could be brought forward for consideration.
- 11.2 The Director of Business Support informed Members that Libraries NI continued to operate within the constraints of contingency measures and largely without access to the in-year monitoring rounds which in the past would have provided the opportunity to address financial pressures. In preparing the draft Spending Plan 2022/23 it was recognised that the business environment would continue to present multiple challenges which were likely to place significant strain on the financial position. In the first quarter of the financial year many of the anticipated challenges had materialised or their impacts have escalated and as a consequence pressure on our resources continued to mount. Few options were available to address the current financial pressure, and if no additional resources are forthcoming from the Department savings measures would have to be introduced. The timing of the introduction of any saving measures and their extent would be critical both to ensure they were effective in reducing expenditure within the current financial year and also to minimise negative impacts on service delivery.
- 11.3 Members discussed the issue in detail and the recommendations suggested by Officers to address the emerging issues. It was agreed that officers should commence work on contingency plans.
- 11.4 On a proposal by Councillor B Webb, seconded by Mrs W Osborne, the Board approved the following course of action:
- to formally approach the Department for Communities (DfC) highlighting the financial pressures and seeking to secure sufficient additional resources to address current issues
  - pending the outcome of discussions with DfC, Libraries NI Officers to commence preparation of a savings measures contingency plan sufficiently flexible to be able to address current pressures in full or part
  - existing internal financial allocations, i.e. 'budgets' to be reviewed and the necessity of expenditure re-examined and re-prioritised with a view to ensuring resources are focused on the delivery of essential core services only
  - a report is brought to the next meeting of the Board detailing the outworking and impacts of the actions above and proposing appropriate/further actions to be taken at that time.

**12. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AUDIT AND RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON 27 APRIL 2022** **LNI 08.07.22**

12.1 The Vice-Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, Mrs W Osborne, reminded Members that at the Board Meeting held on 28 April 2022, she had presented an oral report on the meeting of the Committee held on 27 April 2022. At the Board Meeting of 28 April 2022, Members had approved the following documents:

- Bi-Annual Assurance Statement for the period ended 31 March 2022
- Annual Board Assurance Statement 2021/22
- Corporate Risk Register as at March 2022

12.2 On a proposal by the Vice-Chairperson of the Committee, seconded by Mrs D Kenny, the Board approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee held on 27 April 2022.

12.3 On a proposal by the Vice-Chairperson of the Committee, seconded by Mrs D Kenny, the Board approved and adopted the following:

- Internal Audit Strategy 2022/25
- Internal Audit Strategy for Branch and Mobile Libraries 2022/23
- Internal Audit Annual Plan 2022/23

**13. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AUDIT AND RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON 8 JUNE 2022** **LNI 09.07.22**

13.1 The Chairperson of the Board, Professor B Cullen, presented the minutes of the Committee meeting held on 8 June 2022.

13.2 On a proposal by the Chairperson of the Board, seconded by Mrs D Kenny, the Board approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee held on 8 June 2022.

13.3 On a proposal by the Chairperson of the Board, seconded by the Vice-Chairperson of the Committee, Mrs W Osborne the Board approved and adopted the:

- Libraries NI Draft Annual Report and Accounts 2021/22 (submission for audit)

13.4 On a proposal by the Chairperson of the Board, seconded by Mrs D Kenny, the Board approved and adopted the following:

- Anti-Fraud Policy (Revised)
- Fraud Response Plan (Revised)

- Code of Conduct for Board Members
- Conflicts of Interest Policy (Revised)

13.5 On a proposal by the Chairperson of the Board, seconded by Councillor C Brownlee, the Board approved and adopted the following:

- Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Scheme of Delegation

**14. MINUTES OF THE INFORMATION SYSTEMS COMMITTEE HELD ON  
4 MAY 2022 LNI 10.07.22**

14.1 The Chairperson of the Board, Professor B Cullen, presented the minutes of the Information Systems Committee held on 4 May 2022, noting that there had been two items of business for the Committee to consider and approve.

14.2 On a proposal by the Chairperson of the Board, seconded by the Committee Vice-Chairperson Mr J Peto the Board approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Information Systems Committee held on 4 May 2022.

**15. REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE INFORMATION SYSTEMS COMMITTEE  
HELD ON 30 JUNE 2022**

15.1 The Vice-Chairperson of the Committee, Mr J Peto provided an oral report on the meeting of the Committee held on 30 June 2022.

15.2 It was noted that the Committee had approved a recommendation to award the e3 contract to Fujitsu and that confirmation had been received from DfC giving approval for the Full Business Case. Committee Members had recognised the amount of work and length of time it had taken to reach this point in the project and thanked everyone involved.

15.3 The Chief Executive advised the Board that a Gate 3 review of the e3 Project had taken place on 1, 4 and 5 July and was pleased to report that the project had been awarded a Stage Gate Assessment of Green.

15.4 Members thanked Mr Peto and the Chief Executive for the update.

**16. MINUTES OF THE SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD ON 19 MAY 2022  
LNI 11.07.22**

16.1 The Chairperson of the Services Committee, Councillor C Mallaghan presented the minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2022.

16.2 On a proposal by the Chairperson of the Committee, seconded by the Vice-Chairperson, Mr J Peto, the Board approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Services Committee held on 19 May 2022.

- 16.3 On a proposal by the Chairperson of the Committee, seconded by Dr M Ward, the Board approved and adopted the:

- Review of Digital Inclusion Policy

**17. MINUTES OF THE BUSINESS SUPPORT COMMITTEE HELD ON 26 MAY 2022**  
**LNI 12.07.22**

- 17.1 The Chairperson of the Business Support Committee, Alderman T Burns, presented the minutes of the meeting held on 26 May 2022.

- 17.2 Councillor B Webb asked that an amendment be made to paragraph 4.7 of the minutes which should now read as follows:

*Councillor B Webb commented that given the impact of the timing of Elections there would be better continuity if a non-elected member became Chairperson*

- 17.3 On a proposal by the Chairperson of the Committee, seconded by Ms L Wilson the Board approved and adopted the minutes of the meeting of the Business Support Committee held on 26 May 2022 subject to the amendment at paragraph 17.2 above.

- 17.4 On a proposal by the Chairperson of the Committee, seconded by Mrs W Osborne, the Board approved and adopted the election of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Committee.

- 17.5 On a proposal by the Chairperson of the Committee, seconded by Ms L Wilson, the Board approved and adopted the following:

- Adoption Leave Policy Review
- Business Support Service Plan 2022/23
- Business Support Risk Register 2022/23
- Resource Maintenance and Capital Development Programme 2022/23

**18. REMUNERATION COMMITTEE: UPDATE (IN COMMITTEE)**

- 18.1 Officers withdrew from the meeting and the Head of Human Resources, Ms J McKinstry joined the meeting as Secretary to the Remuneration Committee.

- 18.2 The Chairperson, Professor B Cullen proposed that the meeting go into Committee for this item and all Members agreed.

- 18.3 The Chairperson was pleased to report to the Board that the long standing Business Case for the Senior Management Team's (SMT) revised Salary Scheme has now been approved in full and he read the letter of approval dated 4 July 2022 from Mr J McCord, Acting Director of Culture, DfC. It was noted

the Remuneration Committee would now consider and agree implementation of the SMT Salary Scheme for post holders and arrangements to progress a new appointment to the role of Director of Library Services.

- 18.4 On a proposal by the Chairperson and agreed by all Members the Board came out of Committee.

**19. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- 19.1 There was no other notified business.

**20. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

- 20.1 Members noted the agreed dates for the following meetings which would take place either in Lisburn City Library and/or remotely via video link:

- Board Planning Day, Thursday 8 September 2022 at 10.30 am
- LNI Board Meeting, Thursday 13 October 2022 at 10.30 am

**21. MEMBERS ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE TIMES**

- 21.1 The meeting ended at 12.40 pm.

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

Councillor T Burns joined the meeting at 10.36 am

Ms J McKinstry joined the meeting at 12.22 pm

Councillor B Webb left the meeting at 12.07 pm

Signed:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Professor Bernard Cullen, Chairperson

Date:

\_\_\_\_\_  
12 October 2022