

## **LIBRARIES NI**

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

Minutes of a meeting of the Services Committee held remotely via video link (Zoom)  
on Thursday 19 January 2023 at 10:30am

#### **PRESENT**

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

#### **IN ATTENDANCE**

Mr Jim O'Hagan	Chief Executive
Ms Adrienne Adair	Director of Library Services
Ms Margaret Bell	Head of Service
Mr Sean Beattie	Head of Service
Mr Glenn Beattie	Head of Strategic Marketing and Communications
Mr Michael Lynn	Service Development Manager
Ms Carole Devine	District Manager
Ms Danielle Thomas	District Manager
Ms Bernadette Conway	District Manager
Ms Diane McGlynn	Minutes

The Chairperson welcomed Members and staff to the meeting, in particular he welcomed Mr Glenn Beattie, Head of Strategic Marketing and Communications and Mr Michael Lynn, Service Development Manager. He also welcomed District Managers, Ms Carole Devine, Ms Danielle Thomas and Ms Bernadette Conway who were attending the meeting as observers.

#### **1. APOLOGIES FOR NON ATTENDANCE**

1.1 An apology was received from Ms S Millar.

#### **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 On behalf of the Committee, the Chairperson congratulated Mr S Beattie on his new role as Head of Service.

### **4. DIRECTOR'S BUSINESS**

**SC.01.01.23**

- 4.1 The Director of Library Services referred to the report that had been circulated and drew attention to a number of items. She confirmed that £1.5 million of in-year funding was received for stock in early December and that the allocation has been committed.
- 4.2 The Director then gave an overview of libraries as cultural hubs within communities, offering access to a range of Culture, Heritage and Arts and as gateways to wider cultural activities locally. With a network of 98 libraries, a reach into and across diverse local communities and the flexibility to respond to local needs, the cultural experiences that libraries offer reach people who may not normally participate and help develop a love for and appreciation of the arts. Libraries are also perfectly placed to help more people access art and high quality participatory activities, helping to ignite a lifelong interest in or pursuit of arts, culture, heritage and creativity.
- 4.3 Ms A Adair then reminded the Committee of Libraries NI's Creative Spaces initiative which offers a cultural bursary to support the creative industries by way of free use of available space in pilot libraries.
- 4.4 The Director continued by describing the Belfast Central Library Creative Space. Belfast Central Library sits within the Cathedral Quarter (CQ) Business Improvement District (BID) and is a member of the BID. When the Cathedral Buildings fire happened, Libraries NI made contact with the CQ BID with a view to exploring how support might be provided primarily by way of temporary accommodation in Belfast Central Library for some of the Cathedral Buildings artists and creatives. Consequently, a proposal was developed aimed at enabling creative businesses to remain operational within the Cathedral Quarter in Belfast, strengthening the partnership between Belfast Central Library and the CQ BID and enhancing Belfast Central Library as a venue at the heart of the creative community in Belfast. On Tuesday 13 December 2022 a formal Use of Premises Agreement was signed with four of the creative businesses displaced from Cathedral Buildings. The agreement gives the businesses free use of space on the sixth floor of Belfast Central Library for one year from 3 January 2023 to 31 December 2023. The businesses include: Excalibur Press, Form Native, Landmark and Watson and Co/Training Matchmaker. Ms A Adair highlighted the potential future opportunities and out workings from the initiative.
- 4.5 The Director of Library Services then referred Members to the extensive list of exhibitions taking place from January to March 2023 and highlighted the availability of gallery spaces and professional hanging systems in 37 libraries

across the network which host a diverse mix of artists - amateur, students, emerging, professional, groups and collectives exhibiting art, photography, sculpture, crafts across the range of genres and mediums.

- 4.6 She drew particular attention to a new British Library exhibition co-curated by Dr Lucienne Loh, University of Liverpool, and Dr Alex Tickell, Open University, in collaboration with the British Library which is touring Ballymena, Omagh and Enniskillen libraries from January to April 2023.
- 4.7 Ms A Adair then updated the Committee on one of the out workings of Book Week NI 2022 and our partnership with BBC NI which has been to explore ways for Libraries NI to work with the Ulster Orchestra to bring music to library customers in a very relaxed and informal way. The Ulster Orchestra will work with Libraries NI to deliver five free events including two Wellbeing Workshops and three informal lunchtime recitals in libraries before the end of March 2023.
- 4.8 Ms A Adair reported that Libraries NI is funded by the Department of Finance (DfC) through a Digital Inclusion programme to widen digital access and to provide digital skills to those experiencing digital exclusion. An agreed annual action plan, delivered through the Go On Team provides events promoting digital inclusion. She reported that the Go On Team is currently working with the Education Authority (EA) to facilitate EA digital support sessions in libraries to enable the completion of online applications for pre/primary school places and that Libraries NI staff also take the opportunity at these events to promote library resources to parents.
- 4.9 The Director of Library Services then referred to work with the Simon Community. On Saturday 10 December libraries in the Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council Area (Carrduff, Dundonald, Lisburn City, Moira and Newtownbreda) welcomed food donations for the Simon Community Christmas Hamper appeal. The hampers provided essential goods and some extra items to over 600 people over the Christmas period. She also advised that staff from the Simon Community will attend the Health and Wellbeing Fair in Lisburn City Library on 24 February 2023 to provide information, support and to signpost other services.
- 4.10 Ms A Adair highlighted forthcoming events and initiatives including:
- Holocaust Memorial Day
  - Give it a Go Month
  - Safer Internet Day.
- 4.11 Ms A Adair then highlighted Libraries NI's attendance at the launch event of two recent reports, 'Conversations Research Report' by Queens University Belfast Innovation Zones and Shankill Children and Young People Zone and 'Inequalities Experienced by Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Traveller people residing in Belfast' commissioned by Belfast City Council, with partners in the Public Health Agency and Belfast Health and Social Care Trust.

- 4.12 The Director of Library Services then highlighted the following recent publications:
- Journal of Librarianship and Information Science: The value of digital and physical library services in UK public libraries and why they are not interchangeable
  - Statement on Children’s Rights in Northern Ireland.
- 4.13 Ms A Adair informed the Committee of the recent appointment of Libraries NI officers to the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) Ireland Committee at the Annual General Meeting on 25 November 2022. Julie Reid, Deputy Head of Service, was elected as Chair, Nikki Terlik, Senior Services Manager, as Secretary, and Stuart Temple, District Officer, as Student and New Professionals Officer.
- 4.14 The Director of Library Services also informed the Committee that Mr Stephen Bleakley was awarded an MBE in the New Year Honours for services to libraries and to the community in Fermanagh, Omagh and Fivemiletown. Mr Bleakley retired from Libraries NI as Area Manager, Fermanagh and Omagh, in March 2022.
- 4.15 Members congratulated the officers on their appointment to the CILIP Ireland Committee, discussed the volume and breadth of activities taking place in libraries and thanked the Director of Library Services for a very encouraging and comprehensive report.

**5. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 NOVEMBER 2022 SC.02.01.23**

- 5.1 On a proposal by Ms D Kenny, seconded by Dr M Ward, the minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2022 were agreed as an accurate record.

**6. MATTERS ARISING**

- 6.1 Item 8.4: Service Plan Progress Report  
Adrienne Adair confirmed that an approach to the promotion of library services to student teachers was in hand. The Director of Library Services will keep the Committee informed of progress.

**7. REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS OF SERVICES COMMITTEE 2022/23 SC.03.01.23**

- 7.1 The Chairperson introduced the Committee Effectiveness and Compliance Review papers that had been circulated including the draft Scheme of Delegation for Services Committee. The Director of Library Services spoke to the draft Scheme of Delegation for Services Committee and proposed an addition at para. 4.1 for consistency in line with the Board Standing Orders to clarify the minimum number of members required to meet quorum as three.

- 7.2 On a proposal by Councillor C Mallaghan, seconded by Councillor J Gilmour, the Committee agreed to recommend approval of the Scheme of Delegation to the Board.
- 7.3 The Committee considered the checklist for the Committee Effectiveness Review. The completed checklist appears at Appendix One.
- 7.4 A discussion followed and the Committee agreed that the comments provided on the 2021/22 review remained relevant for 2022/23 with the following additions:
- question 9 – the Services Risk Register is presented to Services Committee bi-annually and is aligned to the Corporate Risk Register
  - question 17 – N/A to Services Committee. For Board consideration.

## **8. REVIEW OF STOCK POLICY SC.04.01.23**

- 8.1 Mr M Lynn, Service Development Manager with responsibility for Collections, introduced the Stock Policy which was being presented to the Committee in line with the policy review cycle. He explained the purpose of the policy, to outline how library stock in all formats will be provided to meet the needs of the community in Northern Ireland.
- 8.2 The Service Development Manager outlined the minor amendments to the policy to update available resources, reflect organisational changes and add relevant policies and procedures.
- 8.3 Members discussed the policy and suggested further amendments as follows:
- 2.1: purpose of policy to be amended to '*...how library stock will be provided in a range of formats to meet the needs of communities in Northern Ireland.*'
  - 3.1.2: remove '*suitability for age of audience*' as the understanding is inherent with amended wording in the purpose as noted above.
- 8.4 On a proposal by Mr J Peto, seconded by Ms D Kenny, the Services Committee agreed to recommend the approval of the Stock Policy to the Board subject to the above amendments being incorporated.

## **9. SUMMER READING CHALLENGE 2022: REVIEW SC.05.01.23**

- 9.1 Mr S Beattie, Head of Service, introduced the report on the review of the Summer Reading Challenge 2022. He provided a background to the Summer Reading Challenge, a summer reading promotion aimed at encouraging children to read through the summer holidays. He informed the Committee that since the formation of Libraries NI, the delivery model has been consistent, an overarching theme, libraries delivering complementary events across the summer to encourage participation, the use of cards, stickers (or stamps) and a small gift e.g. wristband or medal with a certificate for completing the challenge.

- 9.2 He reported that the cost for the Summer Reading Challenge material in 2022 was £24,988 and that these resources were purchased from The Reading Agency. He gave an overview of the targets and results demonstrating the reach for the target age range of four to eleven. The Head of Service highlighted that the promotion connects with a relatively small proportion of children in the target group but that the evaluation demonstrates that those that do participate, place a high value on participation.
- 9.3 The Head of Service drew attention to the sign up and borrower statistics over the period of the Summer Reading Challenge and drew comparisons to a pilot junior reading promotion held in Larne and Magherafelt libraries in March and April 2022 which highlights the challenge of maintaining a reading promotion over an extended period of time.
- 9.4 Mr S Beattie referred to the development of a three year Reader Development Strategy and associated annual action plan which will deliver a programme of reading activities for all. He confirmed that lessons learned from the Summer Reading Challenge and the junior reading promotion will help to inform the strategy and that Members will be kept informed of progress.
- 9.5 Members noted the Summer Reading Challenge 2022: Review and thanked Mr S Beattie for the report.

## **10. BOOK WEEK NI PRESENTATION**

- 10.1 Mr G Beattie, Head of Strategic Marketing and Communications, introduced the presentation on Book Week NI, a partnership between Libraries NI and BBC Northern Ireland in its seventh year which is showing a steady growth in profile and impact year on year. He drew attention to the highly recognised tree graphic which is central to the branding and was widely used throughout the week both by BBC NI and Libraries NI.
- 10.2 The Head of Strategic Marketing and Communications gave an overview of the partner organisations that advocate Book Week NI and gave examples of the ways in which they engage and promote the events and activities of the week. He referred to the valuable role of Book Week NI Ambassadors and noted some new high profile Ambassadors that had come on board this year and the ways in which they were participating during the week. Mr G Beattie also reported on other positive stakeholder engagement.
- 10.3 The Head of Strategic Marketing and Communications went on to outline the themes of the week and give a flavour of the events and activities held in libraries, online and TV and radio coverage. He highlighted the renewal of the partnership agreement between Libraries NI and BBC NI as significant following a recent internal review of partnerships by the BBC.
- 10.4 Mr M Lynn, Service Development Manager, gave an overview of the feedback received from those attending events both in person and via online platforms

including a breakdown of attendee's age profile. He reported that 88.5% of those who provided feedback were existing library members and that work to engage with non-members would continue.

10.5 Mr G Beattie gave a breakdown of the interaction across Libraries NI's social media platforms and reported that by the end of the week, the total reach/impressions was over 1.1 million. He also gave an overview of the BBC content on TV, radio and iPlayer and highlighted the following growth in particular from 2021:

- 59% increase on Libraries NI's Corporate Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts
- 99% increase in new borrowers
- 116% increase in issues and renewals during October
- 33% increase on TV reach
- 100% increase on iPlayer requests.

The Head of Strategic Marketing and Communications thanked colleagues and Board Members for their support in the delivery of Book Week NI 2022.

10.6 The Services Committee commended the reach and impact in the delivery of another highly successful Book Week NI and congratulated everyone involved. On behalf of the Committee, the Chairperson thanked Mr G Beattie and Mr M Lynn for the 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 16 March 2023 in Lisburn City Library.

12.2 The Committee discussed the rotation of Services Committee venues and agreed that meetings to be held in alternative locations to Lisburn City Library should be scheduled in May and September.

12.3 The Director of Library Services agreed to present a list of potential locations at the next meeting to inform future planning.

## **13. MEMBERS' ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE TIMES**

13.1 The meeting ended at 11:59am.

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

- Mr John Peto joined the meeting at 10:35am.

Signed: Councillor C Mallaghan

Date: 16 March 2023



## Board and Committee Effectiveness Review 2022/23

		Yes	No	Partly	Comments/Action Points
1.	Do we have a shared understanding of strategy and objectives and the challenges facing Libraries NI and are we clear about what we are trying to achieve?	√			
2.	Does our strategic direction align with the Programme for Government and Ministerial priorities?	√			Draft Programme for Government. Department for Communities Strategy 'Building Inclusive Communities 2020 – 2025'. Other departmental strategies to include Anti-poverty and Social Inclusion.
3.	How well do we understand the views of the public, service users, staff and other stakeholders?	√			Members would like reports and presentations on this to continue to Services Committee.  The Committee noted there will be a need for further work to better understand the views of the public, service users, staff and other stakeholders in the context of a post COVID-19 world and the development of a new public library strategy by DfC.
4.	Is there open and regular communication between the Board and the Department and between officers and the Department?				N/A to Services Committee.
5.	Is our decision-making based on informed discussion and debate supported by appropriate documentation?	√			
6.	Do we exercise sufficient levels of challenge when considering key issues and information?	√			
7.	Do we receive information in a timely fashion?	√			
8.	Is the information we receive of good quality, appropriate and sufficient in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• keeping us abreast of relevant developments both in Libraries NI and the broader library world?</li> <li>• setting key targets?</li> <li>• monitoring performance?</li> <li>• financial reporting and monitoring?</li> <li>• determining value for money?</li> <li>• gaining assurance?</li> </ul>	√			Members valued the opportunity to receive a presentation from a speaker from another library organisation. The Director of Library Services to continue to engage speakers from other organisations.

		Yes	No	Partly	Comments/Action Points
9.	Are we confident that the risks facing the organisation have been effectively assessed and that appropriate plans are in place and being delivered to manage those risks?	√			The Services Risk Register is presented to Services Committee bi-annually and is aligned to the Corporate Risk Register.
10.	Does the Board collectively have the right mix of skills and expertise, including an in-depth understanding and experience of public sector financial matters? Could the Board benefit from additional expertise provided by a co-opted member?	√			Acknowledge that Services Committee can co-opt if required.
11.	Are appropriate levels of delegation in place which makes clear when Board approvals are required?	√			
12.	Are Members' training needs being identified and addressed?	√			
13.	Is the organisation complying with the requirements to identify and manage conflicts of interest which may arise?	√			
14.	Are appropriate business cases/economic appraisals produced to justify expenditure? Are post-project evaluations completed as required?				N/A to Services Committee.
15.	Are there appropriate procurement, tendering and contract letting and management arrangements in place?				N/A to Services Committee.
16.	Are there appropriate arrangements in place to handle whistleblowing concerns?	√			
17.	Do we have the right Committees?				N/A to Services Committee. For Board consideration.
18.	Are the Committees operating effectively?	√			
19.	Does the Committee structure enhance our scrutiny work?	√			
20.	Is the Scheme of Delegation for each Committee, including the composition of the Committee appropriate?	√			
21.	Are there clear channels of communication: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• between the Committees and the Board?</li> <li>• between the Board and stakeholders?</li> <li>• between the Board/Committees and officers?</li> </ul>	√			
22.	Is the frequency of Board and Committee meetings appropriate?	√			

		Yes	No	Partly	Comments/Action Points
<b>23.</b>	Are the dates, times and venues for Board/Committee meetings suitable?	√			Services Committee recognises the benefits for Board Members of seeing libraries first hand and will continue to circulate the venue for Services Committee meetings.
<b>24.</b>	Is the length of Board/Committee meetings sufficient to enable key strategic issues to be discussed and debated fully?	√			
<b>25.</b>	Are the minutes of Board and Committee meetings sufficiently detailed to record key decisions?	√			