

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 6 July 2023 at 10:30 am

PRESENT

(IP) Professor Bernard Cullen	Chairperson
(IP) Councillor Julie Gilmour	Vice-Chairperson
(VL) Councillor Cheryl Brownlee	
(VL) Councillor Alistair Cathcart	
(VL) Councillor Peter Johnston	
(VL) Councillor Andrew McAuley	
(VL) Councillor Martin McRandal	
(IP) Ms Wendy Osborne OBE	
(VL) Mr John Peto	
(IP) Miss Linda Wilson	

IN ATTENDANCE

(IP) Mr Jim O'Hagan	Chief Executive
(IP) Mr Desi Miskelly	Director of Business Support
(IP) Ms Adrienne Adair	Director of Library Services
(IP) Mrs Jacqui McKinstry	Human Resource Manager for Item
(VL) Ms Lily Gillis	Senior Services Manager, Stock
(IP) Ms Stefani Millar	Boardroom Apprentice

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

Note: IP denotes 'in-person' attendance, VL denotes 'virtual' attendance.

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 reported that Mr J Peto and Mrs W Osborne had been re-appointed to the Libraries NI Board for a second term until 30 June 2027.
- 3.2 He welcomed Ms Lily Gillis, Senior Services Manager, Stock and Reader Development who was attending the meeting as a staff observer. He added that Ms J McKinstry, HR Manager would be in attendance for Item 18: Remuneration Committee: Update (In Committee).
- 3.3 The Chairperson noted that this would be the last Board Meeting for Ms S Millar, the Boardroom Apprentice, and on behalf of Members and Officers thanked Ms Millar for her contribution to the Board over the past year and wished her every success for the future.
- 3.4 The Chairperson reminded Members that Councillor J Gilmour had completed two years in the post of Vice-Chairperson of the Board. The Chief Executive had written to Councillor Members seeking nominations and as none had been received Councillor Gilmour had agreed to continue in the role for another year. On a proposal by Mrs W Osborne, seconded by Councillor A Cathcart the Chairperson declared that Councillor J Gilmour had been re-elected as Vice-Chairperson of the Libraries NI Board for another year until July 2024.

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:
- Confirmation of Budget Allocation 2023/24
 - Boardroom Apprentice 2023
 - Covid Enquiry Correspondence
 - Assembly Questions
- 4.2 He reported that the incoming Boardroom Apprentice for 2023 would be Ms F Guinnane and thanked Mr J Peto who had agreed to act as mentor. It was noted that the new Boardroom Apprentice would formally take up her role from 1 September 2023 although induction will take place before then.
- 4.3 Members noted that the launch of a new three year charity partnership agreement with Action Mental Health had taken place in Lisburn City Library on 29 June 2023. Action Mental Health was chosen as the official charity partner for Libraries NI from a shortlist of other charities which had been suggested by staff.
- 4.4 Members noted the report.

5. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD HELD ON 27 APRIL 2023
LNI 01.07.23

5.1 On a proposal by the Chairperson, Professor B Cullen, seconded by the Vice-Chairperson Councillor J Gilmour, the minutes of the Board Meeting held on 27 April 2023 were approved as a correct record of the meeting. Following a suggestion from Ms L Wilson, Members agreed that the mode of attendance i.e. Virtual (VL) or In-Person (IP) should be recorded in the minutes.

6. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD HELD ON 27 APRIL 2023
LNI 02.07.23

6.1 The Chief Executive drew attention to the circulated paper noting that all items had been completed as follows:

Items 3.9: Chairperson's Business

6.2 This item has been dealt with at paragraph 3.4 above.

Management Report,

Item 8.5: Bi-Annual Assurance Statement (1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023) and Item 8.8: Annual Board Assurance Statement 2022/23

6.3 The Chief Executive confirmed that the signed Bi-Annual Assurance Statement for the period ended 31 March 2023 and the Annual Board Assurance Statement 2022/23 had been forwarded to DfC on 28 April 2023.

Item 11.8: Indicative Financial Allocation 2023/24

6.4 A special Board Meeting had been held on 1 June 2023 to consider the indicative financial / budget allocation.

7. MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD HELD ON 1 JUNE 2023
LNI 03.07.23

7.1 On a proposal by the Chairperson, Professor B Cullen, seconded by the Vice-Chairperson Councillor J Gilmour, the minutes of the Board Meeting held on 1 June 2023 were approved as a correct record of the meeting.

8. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD HELD ON 1 JUNE 2023
LNI 04.07.23

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

Department for Communities (DfC) Budget 2023/24 Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

8.2 Items 5.5 – 5.7 - Members noted that this item had been completed and a revised response to the EQIA taking account of discussion at the special Board Meeting on 1 June 2023 had been submitted to DfC on 7 June 2023.

Update on Indicative Financial Allocations 2023/24 and Expenditure Control Proposals

8.3 Item 6.9 - The Chief Executive reported that this item had been completed and the paper on Indicative Financial Allocations 2023/24 and Expenditure Control Proposals had been updated to reflect the discussion at the special meeting of the Board held on 1 June 2023.

8.4 Item 6.11 - The Chief Executive confirmed that the process had commenced to implement and progress expenditure control measures and will be monitored on an on-going basis.

9. BOARD OPERATING FRAMEWORK: REVIEW 2023 LNI 05.07.23

9.1 The Chief Executive drew attention to the circulated document and informed Members that it was last considered and approved by the Board in July 2021. He reported that after review only minor revisions had been suggested.

9.2 On a proposal by Ms L Wilson, seconded by Mrs W Osborne, the Board approved and adopted the updated Board Operating Framework.

10. REVISED DRAFT ANNUAL BUSINESS PLAN 2023/24 LNI 06.07.23

10.1 The Chief Executive drew attention to the revised draft Annual Business Plan 2023/24 reminding Members that it had been presented to the Board at its meeting held on 9 February 2023. Since then Libraries NI had received notification of its financial allocation for 2023/24 and the draft Annual Business Plan had now been updated at Section 5: Key Performance Indicators and Section 6: Financing our Services to reflect this allocation.

10.2 Members discussed the revised Draft Annual Business Plan and it was agreed to add additional wording in the 'Foreword' to reflect the impact inflationary pressures would have on the organisation and the repercussions on all aspects of the service if stock was not purchased during the year.

10.3 An early draft of the Annual Business Plan 2023/24 had been shared with the Department following the Board Meeting in February.

10.4 On a proposal by the Vice-Chairperson, Ms J Gilmour, seconded by Miss L Wilson, the Board approved the updated draft Annual Business Plan 2023/24 subject to the addition at paragraph 10.2 above and for its formal submission to the Department for Communities for departmental approval.

11. DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS 2022/23 LNI 07.07.23

11.1 The Chief Executive presented the draft Annual Report and Accounts 2022/23 which sets out in detail information on Libraries NI's activity and work during the year noting that 2022/23 had been another challenging year.

- 11.2 He reported that the draft Annual Report and Accounts 2022/23 would be submitted to the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) for audit on 24 July 2023 and confirmed that they had been scrutinised by Members of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee at its meeting held on 21 June 2023 and only minor amendments had been made to the document since that meeting.
- 11.3 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 11 October 2023 and then to the Board for approval on 12 October 2023.
- 11.4 Members noted the report.

12. MANAGEMENT REPORT

LNI 08.07.23

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

- Key Performance Indicators 2022/23: End of Year Report **LNI 08.07.23 (i)**
- 12.2 Members noted the end of year report for the Key Performance Indicators 2022/23.

- Libraries NI Business Plan 2022/23: End of Year Report **LNI 08.07.23 (ii)**
- 12.3 Members noted that the Libraries NI Business Plan End of Year Report 2022/23 had included 37 separate objectives and targets. The end of year report showed that 30 of the targets in the Business Plan were achieved in full, with a further four partially achieved and three recorded as not achieved. The Chief Executive drew attention to the targets which had not been achieved providing additional information.

- Finance Report: May 2023 **LNI 08.07.23 (iii)**
- 12.4 The Director of Business Support presented the Finance Reports for Capital and Recurrent Spend to May 2023. He reported that in relation to capital expenditure the report showed relatively little spend so early in the financial year. He noted that the e3 Project was largely on track with some milestones still to be approved and signed off and that a contractor had been appointed for the Fivemiletown replacement facility project with work due to commence on site in late summer. The Director of Business Support reported that since the report was produced some additional funding had been received to deal with emergency works at Enniskillen Library and some other small works in relation to health and safety.

- 12.5 The Director of Business Support then drew attention to the Recurrent Spend report noting that it presents the results for the two months to 31 May 2023, against the then indicative allocation of £29,013,000. He noted that income to date is on track with budget and although staff costs were running ahead of profile to date Managers were reviewing in line with the agreed financial

control measures and budgets and profiles would be updated as the outworkings of that exercise becomes available. He reported that it would be the end of July / beginning of August before the impacts of the financial control measures would begin to be seen.

Corporate Risk Register

LNI 08.07.23 (iv)

- 12.6 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 21 June 2023. He reported that seven out of the nine corporate risks were in the 'High' to 'Medium' category after actions had been put in place to control the risks. He noted that this reflected the current position in the operating environment, continuing uncertainties and challenges faced.
- 12.7 On a proposal by Mrs W Osborne, seconded by Councillor M McRandal, the Board approved and adopted the Corporate Risk Register as at May 2023 and noted the Management Report.

13. CONFIRMATION OF RESOURCE FUNDING ALLOCATION AND PROPOSED BUDGET AND SPENDING PLAN 2023/24 **LNI 09.07.23**

- 13.1 The Director of Business Support reported that following completion of the first stage of an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) on the Department for Communities (DfC) 2023/24 budget the DfC Permanent Secretary had written on 22 June 2023 to confirm the Libraries NI opening budget allocation for 2023/24.
- 13.2 The confirmed resource allocation of £29,013,000 remains unchanged from the indicative level of funding presented by the Department in May 2023 and continues to reflect the 5% reduction in baseline funding previously proposed.
- 13.3 While confirmation of the allocation allows Officers to move forward and consider setting a budget for the organisation, with no change in the total funding available the resourcing challenges and financial pressures previously discussed continue to impact. A funding gap of some £1,157,000 in general operating costs is compounded by the absence of specific library stock funding equivalent to a further £2,000,000.
- 13.4 In order to manage within the current budget envelope Libraries NI will need to continue to apply the financial control measures previously agreed and these measures will continue to be monitored.
- 13.5 The Director of Business Support drew attention to the draft 2023/24 Budget and Spending Plan which has been drawn up to reflect the funding position as of 26 June 2023 and the impacts of expenditure controls previously implemented.
- 13.6 Following discussion of the draft Budget and Spending Plan, on a proposal by the Chairperson Professor B Cullen, seconded by Mrs W Osborne, the Board

approved and adopted the Budget and Spending Plan 2023/24 and the continuing application of expenditure controls.

14. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AUDIT AND RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON 26 APRIL 2023 **LNI 10.07.23**

14.1 The Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, Mrs W Osborne, presented the minutes of the Committee meeting held on 26 April 2023. She reminded Members that at the Board Meeting held on 27 April 2023 she had presented an oral report on the Committee meeting of 26 April 2023 and the Board had approved the following:

- Bi-Annual Assurance Statement for the period ended 31 March 2023
- Annual Board Assurance Statement 2022/23 (as presented)
- Corporate Risk Register as at March 2023
- Proposed change to the way risks and risk appetite is evaluated and expressed which would result in a move away from a numerical score to colour coding

14.2 On a proposal by the Committee Chairperson, Mrs W Osborne, seconded by the Chairperson of the Board, Professor B Cullen, the minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee held on 26 April 2023 were adopted as an 'as read' record of the meeting.

14.3 On a proposal by the Committee Chairperson, Mrs W Osborne, seconded by the Chairperson of the Board, Professor B Cullen, the Board approved and adopted the Internal Audit Strategy and Annual Plan 2023/24.

15. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AUDIT AND RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON 21 JUNE 2023 **LNI 11.07.23**

15.1 The Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, Mrs W Osborne, presented the minutes of the Committee meeting held on 21 June 2023.

15.2 On a proposal by the Committee Chairperson, Mrs W Osborne seconded by Councillor A Cathcart, the minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee held on 21 June 2023 were adopted as an 'as read' record of the meeting.

15.3 On a proposal by the Committee Chairperson, Mrs W Osborne, seconded by Councillor A Cathcart, the Board approved and adopted the following:

- Internal Audit Charter (Revised)
- Libraries NI Draft Annual Report and Accounts 2022/23
- Risk Management Policy and Strategy (Review)

15.4 On a proposal by the Committee Chairperson, Mrs W Osborne, seconded by Councillor M McRandal, the Board approved and adopted the following:

- Anti-Bribery Policy (Review)
- Whistleblowing Policy (Review)

16. MINUTES OF THE SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD ON 11 MAY 2023

LNI 12.07.23

16.1 The Vice-Chairperson of the Services Committee, Mr J Peto presented the minutes of the meeting held on 11 May 2023. He informed Members that in the absence of both himself and the Committee Chairperson, Professor B Cullen chaired the meeting.

16.2 On a proposal by the Chairperson of the Board, Professor B Cullen, seconded by the Vice-Chairperson of the Board, Councillor J Gilmour the minutes of the meeting of the Services Committee held on 11 May 2023 were adopted as an 'as read' record of the meeting. It was noted that no items considered at the Committee Meeting required Board approval.

17. MINUTES OF THE BUSINESS SUPPORT COMMITTEE HELD ON 25 MAY 2023

LNI 13.07.23

17.1 The Vice-Chairperson of the Business Support Committee, Miss L Wilson, presented the minutes of the meeting held on 25 May 2023.

17.2 On a proposal by the Vice-Chairperson of the Committee, Miss L Wilson, seconded by Mrs W Osborne, the minutes of the meeting of the Business Support Committee held on 25 May 2023 were adopted as an 'as read' record of the meeting.

17.3 On a proposal by the Vice-Chairperson of the Committee, Miss L Wilson, seconded by Mrs W Osborne the Board approved and adopted the following:

- Maternity Leave Policy Review
- Paternity Leave Policy Review
- Parental Leave Policy Review
- Shared Parental Leave Policy Review
- Business Support Risk Register 2023/24

17.4 On a proposal by the Vice-Chairperson of the Committee, Miss L Wilson, seconded by Councillor P Johnston the Board approved and adopted the following:

- Student Workplace Policy Review
- Business Support Service Plan 2023/24

- Resource Maintenance and Capital Programme 2023/24

The Staff Observer *withdrew from the meeting and it was agreed to change the order of the next two Agenda Items which were taken In Committee beginning with Item 19: Staffing Matters followed by Item 18: Remuneration Committee Update.*

On a proposal by the Chairperson, Professor B Cullen, seconded by Mrs W Osborne the Board agreed to go into Committee.

18. REMUNERATION COMMITTEE: UPDATE (IN COMMITTEE)

- 18.1 Officers and the Boardroom Apprentice withdrew from the meeting. The Head of Human Resources, Ms J McKinstry joined the meeting as Secretary to the Remuneration Committee.
- 18.2 The Chairperson reminded Members that they were still in Committee and provided an update on the two main Agenda items the Remuneration Committee would consider at its next meeting in relation to the performance and remuneration of the Senior Management Team.
- 18.3 On proposal by the Chairperson, Professor B Cullen, seconded by Mrs W Osborne the Board came out of Committee.

19. STAFFING MATTERS (IN COMMITTEE –TAKEN PRIOR TO ITEM 18)

- 19.1 The Chairperson reported that while in Committee the Chief Executive had confirmed that following a recruitment process it was proposed to appoint the successful applicant to the position of co-opted Member to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. He confirmed that Departmental approval was required for this appointment and had been received. On a proposal by Mrs W Osborne, seconded by the Chairperson, Professor B Cullen the Board approved the appointment of the successful applicant to the position of co-opted member to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. It was hoped that the appointee would attend the next scheduled meeting of the Committee to be held on 11 October 2023.
- 19.2 The Chairperson also reported that while in Committee the Chief Executive had updated Members on the industrial dispute by Branch Library Managers. Members had been briefed on the meetings which had taken place with Trade Unions and the steps being taken to seek a resolution to the matter.
- 19.3 Members thanked the Chief Executive for his report.

20. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 20.1 There was no other notified business.

- 20.2 Ms S Millar, Boardroom Apprentice took the opportunity to thank Members for their encouragement and support during her time on the Libraries NI Board. She said that she had felt very welcomed to the Libraries NI Board and the experience had provided her with a practical oversight into a pressurised environment. She then thanked in particular the Chief Executive, the Chairperson of the Board and Mrs W Osborne who had acted as her 'Boardroom Buddy'.
- 20.3 Members thanked Ms Millar and wished her well for the future.

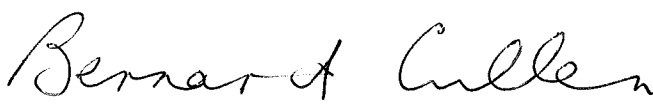
Members returned to Agenda Item 18: Remuneration Committee: Update (In Committee)

21. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 21.1 Members noted the agreed dates for the following meetings which would take place in Lisburn City Library and remotely via video link (Zoom):
- Board Planning Day, Thursday 14 September 2023 at 10.30 am
 - LNI Board Meeting, Thursday 12 October 2023 at 10.30 am
- 21.2 The Chairperson encouraged as many Members as possible to attend the forthcoming Board Planning Day on 14 September 2023.

22. MEMBERS ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE TIMES

- 22.1 The meeting ended at 12.30 pm.
- 22.2 All Members arrived for the commencement of the meeting and remained until it ended with the exception of the following:
- Mr J Peto joined the meeting at 10.35 am
Councillor C Brownlee joined the meeting at 10.35 am
- Councillor C Brownlee left the meeting at 11:52
Ms L Gillis left the meeting at 11:53 am

Signed: 
Professor Bernard Cullen, Chairperson

Date: 12 Oct 2023