

LIBRARIES NI

The Northern Ireland Library Authority

Minutes of a meeting of the Services Committee held remotely via Zoom
on Thursday, 24 March 2022 at 10:30am

PRESENT

Councillor Cathal Mallaghan	Chairperson
Professor Bernard Cullen	
Councillor Glenn Finlay	
Ms Deirdre Kenny	
Councillor Donal Lyons	
Mr John Peto	Vice-Chairperson
Mr Harry Reid	
Dr Margaret Ward	

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr Jim O'Hagan	Chief Executive
Ms Margaret Bell	Head of Service
Ms Adrienne Adair	Head of Service
Mr Glenn Beattie	Head of Strategic Marketing and Communications
Mr Sean Beattie	Deputy Head of Service
Ms Julie Reid	Deputy Head of Service
Ms Evelyn Hanna	Area Manager
Ms Eileen McVerry	Senior Services Manager
Ms Linzie King	District Manager
Ms Maria Diamond	District Manager
Ms Angela Hodkinson	Boardroom Apprentice
Ms Diane McGlynn	Minutes

The Chairperson welcomed Members and staff to the meeting.

1. APOLOGIES FOR NON ATTENDANCE

1.1 An apology was received from Councillor J Gilmour and Ms T Ward.

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 The Chairperson noted Trisha Ward's pending retirement and on behalf of the Services Committee he extended thanks to the Director of Library Services for her service to libraries, in particular her contribution to the Services Committee.
- 3.2 The Chairperson drew attention to HRH Duchess of Cornwall's visit to Hollywood Arches Library on Wednesday 23 March 2022. The Chief Executive gave an overview of the activities that took place celebrating books, reading and library services and thanked the staff involved for their contribution to a very successful visit.

4. OFFICERS' BUSINESS

SC.01.03.22

- 4.1 Ms A Adair, Head of Service, advised that as Libraries NI upgraded to Microsoft Teams an upgrade to Exchange Online also took place. She reported that Exchange Online did not automatically bring across forwarding e-mail addresses for security reasons and unfortunately, emails sent to Board Members at their Libraries NI address between 14 and 23 March were impacted. Ms A Adair confirmed that mail forwarding had been enabled again.
- 4.2 The Head of Service then referred to the report that had been circulated and provided an update on library services and COVID mitigations in place following the Health Minister's announcement that all COVID-19 legal restrictions in Northern Ireland would be replaced by guidance, effective from 15 February 2022. She also highlighted work to support potential refugees as a result of the Ukrainian crisis including promotion of social activities, IT and Wi-Fi access and stock resources in Ukrainian and Russian.
- 4.3 Ms A Adair gave an overview of the planned summer opening hours that will be implemented from Monday 27 June to Saturday 3 September 2022.
- 4.4 The Head of Service drew attention to the appended schedule of planned maintenance work for 2021/22 including a number of projects through additional funding streams. She highlighted the new Fivemiletown Library, the relocation of the Armagh Heritage Service and internal redecoration of Hollywood Arches Library and thanked the Assets Team for their work in progressing the projects.
- 4.5 Ms Adair reported on the marketing campaign that went live this week with posters on display in 80 locations across Northern Ireland including Adshels on bus stops on major thoroughfares, radio advertisements and graphics on social media promoting free events and activities for children, free access to eBooks and audiobooks and the library as a welcoming space.
- 4.6 The Chief Executive highlighted the purchase of new, age appropriate membership cards for children to encourage them to join the Library. Initially the cards will be deployed through an initiative to register children in Year One and

Year Four across all primary schools to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic which prevented the class visit and nursery activity programmes in our libraries.

4.7 Ms A Adair went on to highlight the following recent and upcoming events and initiatives:

- Tales from Across the Pond, 27 January 2022
- NI Science Festival, 17 – 27 February 2022
- Celebrating Books and Reading, March 2022
- Reader Champions, 7 March – 30 April 2022
- The Art that Made Us Festival, April 2022
- Healing Through Remembering Exhibition, April 2022
- Stephen Lawrence Day, 22 April 2022
- 23rd Ulster-American Heritage Symposium, 19 – 22 June 2022
- Heritage from Home
- Big Bedtime Read
- Irish Servicewomen in the Great War
- Make the Call.

4.8 The Head of Service then drew attention to a meeting held with the Department for Communities on 27 January 2022 to progress the work on a new Public Library Strategy and also noted the following meetings that had been attended recently by Officers:

- Mellon Centre for Migration Studies (MCMS), 3 February 2022
- Enniskillen Library, 4 February 2022
- Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), 10 February 2022
- Scottish Libraries and Information Council (SLIC), 17 February 2022
- Education Authority (EA), 1 March 2022.

4.9 Ms A Adair highlighted the publication of 'We Are CILIP', a five year strategy and action plan by the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) for the Library Sector which was launched in February.

4.10 The Chairperson thanked the Head of Service for a very comprehensive report.

5. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20 JANUARY 2022 SC.02.03.22

5.1 On a proposal by Mr J Peto, seconded by Ms D Kenny, the minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2022 were agreed as an accurate record.

6. MATTERS ARISING

6.1 There were no matters arising.

7. DRAFT RURAL NEEDS ANNUAL REPORT SC.03.03.22

- 7.1 Ms M Bell, Head of Service, introduced the Rural Needs Annual Report 2021/22 reminding Members that The Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016 has applied to Libraries NI since 1 June 2018. She explained that the Act requires Libraries NI 'to have due regard to rural needs when developing, implementing or revising policies, strategies and plans, and when designing and delivering public services'.
- 7.2 Ms M Bell explained that 29 libraries are classified as rural libraries i.e., they are based in communities of 5,000 or less and that all libraries have active library members defined as rural dwellers.
- 7.3 The Head of Service reported that no specific rural needs were identified in 12 policies, strategies or plans which were subject to a Rural Needs Impact Assessment.
- 7.4 The Chairperson commended Libraries NI on its consideration of rural needs in delivering library services.
- 7.5 On a proposal by Councillor C Mallaghan, seconded by Dr M Ward, the Services Committee agreed to recommend the approval of the Rural Needs Annual Report to the Board.

8. REVIEW OF SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY SC.04.03.22

- 8.1 Mr G Beattie, Head of Strategic Marketing and Communications, introduced the Social Media Policy which was presented to the Committee in line with the policy review cycle. He explained that the policy sets out Libraries NI's approach to the use of corporate Social Media and establishes parameters for staff in relation to their personal use of Social Media in order to protect Libraries NI and individual members of staff.
- 8.2 He drew attention to minor amendments to the policy, namely to update the platforms used by Libraries NI and reflect the use of social media to engage with stakeholders and deliver services.
- 8.3 On a proposal by Ms D Kenny, seconded by Mr J Peto, the Services Committee agreed to recommend the approval of the Social Media Policy to the Board.

9. REVIEW OF PARTNERSHIP POLICY SC.05.03.22

- 9.1 Mr S Beattie, Deputy Head of Service, introduced the Partnership Policy which was presented to the Committee in line with the policy review cycle. He highlighted the purpose of the policy, to ensure that partnership work is carried out in a way that maximises the benefits for library users and services and referred to best practice guidance from the Northern Ireland Audit Office.

- 9.2 The Deputy Head of Service gave examples of existing strategic partnerships such as BBC NI, Macmillan Cancer Support, The British Library, Department of Finance (DoF) and Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA).
- 9.3 Mr Beattie then highlighted minor changes which were largely to align the Policy with the Corporate Plan 2020 – 2024.
- 9.4 On a proposal by Ms D Kenny, seconded by Mr J Peto, the Services Committee agreed to recommend the approval of the Partnership Policy to the Board.

10. DRAFT SERVICE PLAN 2022/33 SC.06.03.22

- 10.1 Ms M Bell, Head of Service, introduced the draft Service Plan for 2022/23 and outlined the key targets. Ms M Bell confirmed that the Service Plan will be finalised once Libraries NI has been notified of its financial allocation and that an updated version of the plan will be brought to a future meeting of the Services Committee for approval.
- 10.2 She referred to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic and the continued level of uncertainty as we move into 2022/23, which may result in the service plan being adjusted and/or updated to reflect changes within the operational landscape.
- 10.3 After the challenges of the pandemic there was opportunity to renew, refocus and re-energise the library offer whilst continuing to rebuild active membership, attract new library members, increase use and widen participation in our customer focussed services.
- 10.4 Ms M Bell drew attention to four key initiatives to develop the customer base and increase participation including Book Week NI, the Big Summer Read, Literature Month and Give it a Go Month.
- 10.5 The Services Committee discussed the plan and in response to questions, Ms J Reid, Deputy Head of Service, explained the out workings of drafting a Collections Development Policy.
- 10.6 The Services Committee noted the draft Service Plan 2022/23.

11. LIBRARY AND HERITAGE SERVICES IN THE ARMAGH CITY, BANBRIDGE AND CRAIGAVON BOROUGH COUNCIL AREA

- 11.1 Ms E Hanna, Area Manager with responsibility for libraries in the Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Council area, introduced the presentation on library and heritage services in the area. She set the scene by explaining she has

responsibility for Armagh Regional Administration Centre, 10 branch libraries, two mobile libraries and a Homecall Service. She introduced Ms E McVerry, Senior Services Manager for Cultural Heritage, who would outline the Heritage Services in the area.

- 11.2 The Area Manager confirmed that all branch libraries were delivering core activities such as Rhythm and Rhyme, Tea and Newspapers and Knit and Natter. She then outlined each library in turn describing the area, the volume of use and specific projects that are delivered in each library in order to meet the needs of individual communities. She also highlighted a number of successful local partnerships. Ms E Hanna went on to describe the two public mobile library services which serve some 20 primary schools each as well as rural communities and the Homecall service which serves 160 individual readers and 33 residential homes.
- 11.3 The Senior Services Manager for Cultural Heritage then reported on the Cultural Heritage Collection in Armagh. She reminded Members of the outcome of the public consultation in 2021, to relocate the collection to the Armagh Regional Administration Centre (ARAC) and provide an enhanced Heritage offer in both Armagh City and Lurgan libraries. She noted that a low-key opening took place on 22 March 2022 and that a formal opening would be scheduled in due course. Ms E McVerry reported that although extensive work has been undertaken to create an attractive user-friendly environment in ARAC, the ultimate aim is to bring the branch library and heritage service together in one location.
- 11.4 Ms E McVerry reported that the collection in ARAC is one of nine collections in Libraries NI and the second largest. She gave an overview of the resources available covering all aspects of Irish life and learning with particular emphasis on Co Armagh, South Down, South and East Tyrone and bordering counties in the Republic of Ireland. The Senior Services Manager drew attention to the extensive programme of events planned to increase participation and reported that stakeholder engagement has been positive with a high level of support being shown by local service users.
- 11.5 The Services Committee thanked Ms E Hanna and Ms E McVerry for a very comprehensive and positive presentation.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 12.1 There was no other business.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 13.1 It was noted that the next meeting of the Services Committee would take place on Thursday, 19 May 2022 at 10:30am.

14. MEMBERS' ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE TIMES

14.1 The meeting ended at 11:54am.

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

- Councillor Donal Lyons arrived at 10:51am
- Councillor Glenn Finlay left at 11:48am.

Signed: Councillor Cathal Mallaghan

Date: 19 May 2022