

LIBRARIES NI

The Northern Ireland Library Authority

Minutes of a Meeting of the Business Support Committee held on

Thursday 30 September 2021 at 10:30am via Video Link

PRESENT

Councillor Billy Webb MBE JP	Chairperson
Mr Neil Bodger	Vice Chairperson
Professor Bernard Cullen	Chairperson of the Board
Councillor Cheryl Brownlee	
Miss Linda Wilson	
Alderman Thomas Burns	
Councillor Garath Keating	

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr Jim O'Hagan	Chief Executive
Mr Desi Miskelly	Director of Business Support
Mr Tim Neeson	Assets Manager
Ms Rita McNamee	Finance Manager
Mr Desi Curry	Head of ICU/ICT
Ms Jacqui McKinstry	Head of Human Resources

OBSERVERS

Mr Conor McKenna	Area Manager
Ms Maura Craig	Area Manager
Ms Kirsty McClelland	Service Development Manager

1. APOLOGIES FOR NON-ATTENDANCE

Ms Angela Hodkinson	Boardroom Apprentice
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2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

- 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.

3. CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS

- 3.1 The Chairperson reminded Members that as part of the Leadership Development Plan it had been agreed that some staff should attend and observe Board and Committee meetings as part of their personal development and welcomed Area Managers Conor McKenna and Maura Craig and Kirsty McClelland, Service Development Manager.

4 DIRECTOR'S BUSINESS

- 4.1 The Director of Business Support reported that Management had been working with Trade Unions to resolve the Branch Library Managers Industrial Dispute. An independent job evaluation panel had been established, industrial action had ended on 24 September 2021 and the process of job evaluation had begun. The Committee would be kept informed of progress.
- 4.2 The Chairperson commented that this was good news and enquired regarding the duration of the industrial action.
- 4.3 The Director of Business Support advised that industrial action commenced in May 2018.
- 4.4 The Director of Business Support reported that a bid had been submitted to the October Monitoring Round for additional funding for stock.
- 4.5 The Chairperson requested that Members be advised when the outcome of the Monitoring Round is confirmed.
- 4.6 The Director of Business Support advised that by January 2022 the Committee would be required to elect a new Chairperson, normally the Vice Chairperson would step into the roll requiring a replacement Vice Chairperson to be elected; under normal rotation this would be a Councillor member.

5. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE BSC.02.09.21 HELD ON 27 MAY 2021

- 5.1 On a proposal by Mr Neil Bodger, seconded Alderman T Burns, the minutes of the meeting of the Business Support Committee held on 27 May 2021, which had been submitted to the Board on 8 July 2021, were approved.

6 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE BSC.03.09.21 27 MAY 2021

- 6.1 The Director of Business Support advised that there were no specific matters arising from the minutes of the meeting on 27 May 2021. There had been discussion regarding the challenges of financial allocations/funding and a Department for Communities presentation entitled 'Funding Opportunities' was shared. The paper outlined external funding opportunities, while Libraries NI was not eligible to apply in some cases, Management would continue to consider funding opportunities.
- 6.2 The Chairperson advised that the Ulster Garden Villages Scheme could provide a potential funding opportunity for projects such as the Belfast Central Library redevelopment.

- number, nature, severity and impact of accidents occurring and claims experienced between April 2020 and March 2021.
- 10.2 Mr N Bodger enquired if statistics had been compared on an adjusted basis to provide a meaningful comparison between accident rates prior to the onset of the Covid pandemic and during restricted service delivery periods.
 - 10.3 The Director of Business Support advised that adjusted for the periods of intermittent closure throughout 2020/21 the accident rate appeared to have remained fairly stable.
 - 10.4 Members noted the Report.

11 POST PROJECT EVALUATION (PPE) LESSONS LEARNED REPORT 2020/21 PPE.08.09.21

- 11.1 The Director of Business Support presented the Post Project Lessons Learned Report 2020/21, advising on lessons learned from evaluations carried out between April 2020 and March 2021. The Report provided examples of good practice and highlighted areas for improvement in business case development and project delivery process.
- 11.2 Mr N Bodger welcomed the evaluation of project financing throughout the process, noted that project objectives change with time which resulted in greater difficulty doing the Post Project Evaluation.
- 11.3 The Director of Business Support reported that the timescales between business case preparation, departmental approval and funding made it difficult to keep the business case and post project evaluation relevant.
- 11.4 Professor B Cullen advised while it was necessary to be very careful about how public money is spent, the current business case approach was at times disproportionate to the value of expenditure and that there was a need to reduce, where possible the bureaucratic process to reflect the robust governance regimes already in place within Libraries NI.
- 11.5 Members noted the Report.

The Chairperson, Councillor Billy Webb having a conflicting prior appointment left the meeting at 11:17am and Mr N Bodger, Vice-Chairperson assumed the role of Chairperson for the remainder of the meeting

12 2020/21 ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS (DRAFT) BSC.09.09.21

- 12.1 The Director of Business Support presented the 2020/21 Draft Annual Report and Accounts and advised that the external audit had been completed.
- 12.2 The Finance Manager advised that there had been minor revisions made following feedback in the course of the audit but that it was expected that the accounts would be certified without qualification or significant recommendations being made by NIAO. It was expected that the C&AG's report would note as an Emphasis of Matter the potential impacts of Covid in relation to property valuations, however this issue of uncertainty was common to most public sector organisations at this time.

12.3 Members noted the draft Report and Accounts

13 FINANCE REPORTS

13.1 RESOURCE EXPENDITURE REPORT TO AUGUST 2021 BSC10.09.21

13.2 The Finance Manager presented the Resource Expenditure and Income Report, advised that recurrent expenditure was currently running 3% under budget and that a full spend was projected.

13.3 Mr N Bodger enquired where energy costs were detailed.

13.4 The Finance Manager advised that energy costs were included within premises costs.

13.5 CAPITAL EXPENDITURE REPORT TO AUGUST 2021 BSC.11.09.21

13.6 The Finance Manager presented the Capital Expenditure Report

13.7 Councillor G Keating enquired regarding the disparity between budgets allocated and actual expenditure for the projects at Newcastle and Strabane libraries.

13.8 The Director of Business Support advised that the variances reflected the actual cost of substantively completed projects against estimated budgets and that the settlement of final accounts would allow for budget figures to be adjusted.

13.9 Members noted the Reports.

14 PROCUREMENT REPORT – TENDERS OVER £1,000 AND SINGLE TENDER ACTIONS OVER £1000 BSC.12.09.21

14.1 The Finance Manager presented the Procurement Report informing the Committee of procurement activity over £1,000 and single tender actions for the period from 15 May 2021 to 14 September 2021.

14.2 Members noted the Report.

15 SICKNESS ABSENCE REPORT TO AUGUST 2021 BSC.13.09.21

15.1 The Head of Human Resources presented the Sickness Absence Report detailing sickness absence levels to end of August 2021 which continued to be below the target of 9.50 FTE days and provided information on the specific impacts of Covid-19 on the workforce.

15.2 Mr N Bodger enquired regarding any developing trends related to Long Covid. No trends had been identified to date. It was noted that the levels of non-work related anxiety and stress continued to be a significant contributing factor to absence in general.

15.3 Members noted the Report.

16 TENDER REPORTS

16.1 INTEGRATED DESIGN TEAM – VARIOUS MINOR WORKS PROJECTS NORTH AND WEST REGION BSC.14.09.21

16.2 The Assets Manager presented a Report on the procurement of an integrated design team for minor works projects in the North and West Region.

16.3 Members noted the Report.

16.4 INTEGRATED DESIGN TEAM – VARIOUS MINOR WORKS PROJECTS SOUTH AND EAST REGION BSC.15.09.21

16.5 The Assets Manager presented a Report on the procurement of an integrated design team for minor works projects in the South and East Region.

16.6 Members noted the Report.

16.7 APPOINTMENT OF MAIN CONTRACTOR BALLYHACKAMORE LIBRARY – HEATING PLANT REPLACEMENT AND ASSOCIATED WORKS BSC.16.09.21

16.8 The Assets Manager presented a Report on the appointment of a main contractor to carry out heating plant replacement and associated works at Ballyhackamore Library.

16.9 Members noted the Report.

17 REPORT ON THE USE OF THE COMMON SEAL BSC.17.09.21

17.1 The Assets Manager presented the Report on the Use of the Common Seal, detailing the four occasions on which the Common Seal had been applied between May 2021 and September 2021.

17.2 Members noted the Report.

18 ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS

18.1 There was no other notified business.

19 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

19.1 Members noted that the next scheduled meeting of the Business Support Committee would be held on Thursday 25 November 2021 at 10:30am.

20 MEMBERS ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE TIMES

20.1 The meeting ended at 11:52am.

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

- Councillor C Brownlee joined the meeting at 10:37am
- Councillor B Webb left the meeting at 11:17am
- Professor B Cullen left the meeting at 11:47am

Signed: 

Dated: 25 November 2022

During the current Covid-19 pandemic and with remote working in place, these minutes, which were approved at the Business Support Committee Meeting held on 25 November 2021, are published with an e-signature