LIBRARIES NI

The Northern Ireland Library Authority

Minutes of a Meeting of the Business Support Committee held on

Thursday 26 March 2026 at 10:30am

(Hybrid via Video Link and in person at Lisburn City Library)

VL – Attendance via video link
IP – Attendance in person

PRESENT

Ms Bonnie Anley (VL)	Chairperson of Libraries NI Board
Councillor Martin McRandal (IP)	Chairperson
Councillor Roisin Lynch (VL)	
Ms Ursula O'Hare (VL)	
Miss Linda Wilson (IP)	

IN ATTENDANCE

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

1. APOLOGIES

1.1 Apologies were received from Councillor J Gilmour and Mr J Peto.

1.2 Councillor M McRandal thanked Miss L Wilson for her work as Chairperson.

1.3 The Director of Business Support reported that this would have been Mr J Peto's first Business Support Committee meeting, but he was unable to attend due to a diary conflict.

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.

2.2 Councillor M McRandal asked that his position as a Councillor on Ards and North Down Borough Council be noted in relation to the update to be provided under Directors Business on the Newtownards Library redevelopment project.

2.3 No other interests were declared.

3. CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS

3.1 There was no Chairperson's business.

4. DIRECTOR'S BUSINESS BSC.01.03.26

4.1 The Director of Business Support reported that there continued to be significant uncertainty regarding the timing, quantum and mechanism of funding allocations being made for 2026/27 and it was possible Libraries NI would begin the new financial year without confirmation of funding allocations. Authority to continue to incur normal business-related expenditure had been requested from DfC ahead of 1 April 2026**.**

4.2 The Director of Business Support advised that the Assets Team had continued to work with Ards and North Down Borough Council on proposals to redevelop Newtownards Library and in conjunction with Council plans to redevelop the adjoining Queen's Hall community facilities. Considerable progress had been made in resolving outstanding issues and DfC had now confirmed approval of the Outline Business Case for re-development of Newtownards Library paving the way for Libraries NI and Ards and North Down Borough Council to reengage and progress development of the project.

4.3 The Chief Executive thanked the Director of Business Support and the Assets Manager for their work to progress this project.

5 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON 29 JANUARY 2026 BSC.02.03.26

5.1 On a proposal by Miss L Wilson, seconded by Councillor Roisin Lynch, the minutes of the meeting of the Business Support Committee held on 29 January 2026, were approved as a correct record of the meeting.

5.2 It was reported that these minutes had been adopted by the Board at its meeting on 12 February 2026 as an as read record of the Business Support Committee's proceedings of 29 January 2026.

6. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON 29 JANUARY 2026 BSC.03.03.26

6.1 The Director of Business Support advised that the Board had ratified the election of Councillor M McRandal as Chairperson of the Committee. The role of Vice Chairperson was vacant but would not be considered in the absence of Mr J Peto, who was the only independent member eligible to assume the role.

6.2 The Director of Business Support asked Members to consider the amended draft minutes of the Business Support meeting on 27 November 2025.

6.3 On a proposal by Ms B Anley, seconded by Councillor R Lynch, the minutes of the meeting of the Business Support Committee held on 27 November 2025, were approved as a correct record of the meeting.

6.4 The Director of Business Support reported that the Business Support Committee's Effectiveness Review 2025/26 had been submitted to the Board and incorporated into the Board's Effectiveness Review, concluding the process.

6.5 The Committee enquired regarding the status of the independent Board Effectiveness Review.

6.6 The Chief Executive reported that Ms D Reynolds, Corporate Governance and Assurance Director, NI Fire and Rescue Service, had concluded her independent review, and feedback would be provided at the next Board meeting.

6.7 It was noted that NI Fire and Rescue Service may seek similar support from Libraries NI in undertaking their own independent Board effectiveness review.

6.8 The Head of Human Resources reported that the Investors in People (IIP) surveys, We Invest in Our People and We Invest in Health and Wellbeing, had been completed with a 58% response rate. IIP had provided an initial high-level overview, and further meetings had been arranged to undertake detailed analysis with a view to developing an action plan.

6.9 Miss L Wilson suggested that given the importance of this matter to the organisation that it should be a standing item on the committee's agenda going forward and enquired if Libraries NI intended to work towards formal IIP accreditation?

6.10 The Director of Business Support agreed to add strategic workforce planning as an item on future committee agenda. The Head of Human Resources advised that while formal IIP accreditation may be a long term aim the focus of activity at present would be on investing in and developing our people rather than the achievement of a specific certified standard.

6.11 The Business Support Committee enquired if feedback from the IIP survey would be available for the Board meeting in April.

6.12 The Director of Business Support advised it would be the May Business Support Committee meeting before further information would be available from IIP.

6.13 Councillor M McRandal thanked the Head of Human Resources and Director of Business Support for the update and supported the proposed standing agenda item.

7. RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY BSC.04.03.26

7.1 The Head of ICU/ICT presented the reviewed Records Management Policy which provided a framework for the management of records, in all formats and media, created or received and maintained by Libraries NI in the conduct of its business. In keeping with best practice and the scheduled review period the contents and intent of the Policy had been reviewed, no revisions or updates were suggested, and the Policy was considered to remain fit for purpose.

7.2 The Committee discussed the implications and potential impacts of cyber security and developments in AI on this policy.

7.3 The Head of ICU/ICT clarified that cyber security and developments in AI did not directly impact this policy, but these matters were addressed in a number of other organisational policies.

7.4 On a proposal by Miss L Wilson, seconded by Councillor R Lynch, the reviewed Records Management Policy was approved and recommended to the Board for adoption.

8. REVISED DISPOSAL AND RETENTION OF RECORDS SCHEDULE 2026 BSC.05.03.26

8.1 The Director of Business Support presented the Revised Disposal and Retention of Records Schedule which had been updated to reflect current organisational structures and procedures, updated PRONI guidance and a revised PRONI Template.

8.2 Members highlighted the potential imminent change of Permanent Secretary which could impact on the formal approval of the schedule.

8.3 The Director of Business Support advised that following Board approval the Schedule would be submitted to PRONI for ratification and subsequently to the DfC Permanent Secretary for approval prior to laying with the NI Assembly and submissions could be timed to coincide with the new Permanent Secretary taking up post.

8.4 On a proposal by Ms B Anley, seconded by Ms U O’Hare, the Disposal and Retention of Records Schedule 2026 was approved and recommended to the Board for adoption.

9. CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STAFF REVIEW 2026 BSC.06.03.26

9.1 The Head of Human Resources presented the Code of Conduct for Staff which had been reviewed in keeping with best practice, The intent and the purpose of the Code/Policy remained unchanged and the Code/Policy was considered to remain fit for purpose.

9.2 On a proposal by Miss L Wilson, seconded by Councillor R Lynch, the reviewed Code of Conduct for Staff was approved and recommended to the Board for adoption.

10. STATEMENT OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY REVIEW BSC.07.03.26

10.1 The Director of Business Support presented the reviewed Statement of Corporate Social Responsibility which provided a good practice framework within which Libraries NI sought to undertake business in ways which take consideration of the interests of society and the impact of activities on customers, suppliers, employees, communities and the environment.

10.2 The Committee discussed the substantive changes under the "Our Values" section of the statement noting this now reflect the updated Corporate Plan 2025 - 2030 and enquired if Libraries NI had a modern slavery statement.

10.3 The Director of Business Support advised Libraries did not have a standalone modern slavery statement but that following previous discussions with the Committee slavery in modern times was included in section 3.6 of the statement.

10.4 The Finance Manager confirmed that as part of the procurement process assurances in respect of modern slavery were sought and provided.

10.5 On a proposal by Ms B Anley, seconded by Councillor R Lynch, the Statement of Corporate Social Responsibility was approved and recommended to the Board for adoption.

11. BUSINESS SUPPORT SERVICE PLAN PROGRESS REPORT BSC.08.03.26

11.1 The Director of Business Support presented the Progress Report which detailed progress to date in delivering on a range of targets as set out in Business Support Service Plan 2025/26. Individual actions and targets had been assigned a Red/Amber/Green status reflecting the position at 31 March 2026.

11.2 Members noted the Report.

12. BUSINESS SUPPORT RISK REGISTER UPDATE BSC.09.03.26

12.1 The Director of Business Support advised that the Register had been updated to reflect the current business environment and take account of mitigating actions implemented to date and new or emerging risks which had been identified since November 2025. Where relevant revisions have been introduced to reflect the current Corporate Risk Register.

12.2 The Committee acknowledged the link to the Corporate Risk Register and asked how recently the Risk Management Group had met.

12.3 The Director of Business Support confirmed that the Risk Management Group met quarterly, most recently on 23 March 2026. ARAC were scheduled to meet on 22 April 2026 and would review the Corporate Risk Register before it went to the Board.

12.4 Members noted the Register Update.

13. INFORMATION SYSTEMS REPORT MARCH 2026 BSC.10.03.26

13.1 The Head of ICU/ICT presented the report updating Members on the e3 project, performance against contractual service levels and the management of information security.

13.2 Members noted the Report.

14. INFORMATION SECURITY ANNUAL REPORT 2025/26 BSC.11.03.26

14.1 The Head of ICU/ICT presented the Information Security Annual Report 2025/26 informing Members of information/cyber security arrangements in place and activities undertaken throughout the previous year to ensure information was managed appropriately and data/cyber security risks were addressed.

14.2 The Committee noted that a lot of work had been done on cyber security and enquired what expertise was drawn on?

14.3 The Head of ICU/ICT advised that in house there were two dedicated IT Security Managers and that expertise within the PSSN and Managed Service providers teams could be accessed as needed.

14.4 Members enquired if the Board had seen the Cyber Incident Response Plan and if an arrangement could be put in place to enable those Board Members with information/cyber security experience to be informed of the plan.

14.5 The Director of Business Support advised that, as the Incident Response Plan contained personal data and referred to confidential matters, distribution was restricted.

14.6 The Chief Executive advised that the Board would be informed if the Plan had to be initiated and that appropriate arrangements to further inform those Board Members with information/cyber security experience would be considered.

14.7 Member noted the Report.

15. FINANCE REPORTS

15.1 RESOURCE EXPENDITURE REPORT TO 28 FEBRUARY 2025
BSC.12.03.26

15.2 The Finance Manager presented the Resource Expenditure Report detailing results for the 11 months to 28 February 2026.

15.3 Members noted the Report.

15.4 CAPITAL EXPENDITURE REPORT TO 28 FEBRUARY 2025
BSC13.03.26

15.5 The Finance Manager presented the Report detailing capital expenditure for the 11 months to 28 February 2025.

Members noted the Report.

16. PROCUREMENT REPORT - GOODS AND SERVICES TENDERS OVER £1,000 AND SINGLE TENDER ACTIONS OVER £1,000 BSC.14.03.26

16.1 The Finance Manager presented the Procurement Report informing the Committee of procurement activity over £1,000 and Single Tender Actions for the period 10 January 2026 – 05 March 2026 which included an appendix detailing newspaper supply arrangements.

16.2 Members enquired regarding expenditure for a Passivhaus Certifier and noting variations in newspaper spend between libraries asked if the data reflected annual spend and if there was a list of approved newspapers.

16.3 The Assets Manager advised that the engagement of a Passivhaus Certifier related to the independent certification of a number of energy related Assets projects.

16.4 The Finance Manager advised that the figures provided were annual, that individual library opening hours impacted newspaper spend, libraries were given a budget and decided in consultation with their customers which newspapers to buy.

16.5 Members noted the Report.

17. SICKNESS ABSENCE REPORT TO FEBRUARY 2026 BSC.15.03.26

17.1 The Head of Human Resources presented the Sickness Absence Report to 28 February 2026. The performance target set for the 2025/26 year was to maintain sickness absence (composite average Full Time Equivalent days lost) at or below 11.5 days by 31 March 2026. The current absence rate was 12.98 FTE days. Work was continuing to support staff, to provide managers with the tools to manage absence effectively and encourage a culture of support.

17.2 Miss L Wilson enquired if the short-term absences could correlate to something other than sickness e.g. childcare issues.

17.3 The Head of Human Resources advised that this was unlikely as carers' leave was available in unforeseen circumstances.

17.4 Members noted the Report.

18. REPORTS ON THE OUTCOMES OF PROCUREMENT EXERCISE

BSC.16.03.26

18.1 The Assets Manager presented the Report detailing the outcomes of the procurement and tender process for appointment of an economic operator to undertake passenger lifts upgrade works at Belfast Central Library.

18.2 The Committee discussed the ongoing issues with escalators in Lisburn City Library and the entrance doors at Bangor Carnegie Library.

18.3 The Assets Manager advised that one of the escalators in Lisburn City Library was working but work to fix the second escalator was outstanding. The entrance doors to Bangor Carnegie Library were currently operating and any issues that arose were being addressed where possible.

18.4 The Committee queried whether following the presentation at a previous Committee meeting if long term solutions to the reoccurring issues with access to Bangor Carnegie Library were being investigated.

18.5 The Director of Business Support confirmed that potential long-term solutions continued to be considered.

18.6 Members noted the Report.

19. ANNUAL BUSINESS SUPPORT COMMITTEE WORK PLAN 2026/27

BSC.17.03.26

19.1 The Director of Business Support presented The Annual Business Support Committee Work Plan 2026/27 informing Members of meeting dates and proposed business items to be considered throughout 2026/27. It was noted that the work plan may be subject to revision or addition in response to developing business needs.

19.2 Members noted the Plan.

20. ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS

20.1 There was no other notified business.

21. DATE OF THE NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING

21.1 Members noted the next scheduled meeting of the Business Support Committee would be held on Thursday 28 May 2026 at 10.30am.

22. MEMBERS ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE TIMES

22.1 The meeting ended at 12:23pm.

22.2 All members arrived for the commencement of the meeting and were present throughout.