

LIBRARIES NI

The Northern Ireland Library Authority

Minutes of a meeting of the Board of the Authority held in Lisburn City Library and by remote video link (Zoom) on Thursday 2 July 2026 at 10:40 am (the meeting commenced 10 minutes late due to unforeseen traffic disruption)

PRESENT

(IP) Ms Bonnie Anley	Chairperson
(IP) Councillor Roisin Lynch	Vice-Chairperson
(IP) Mr Adrian Driscoll	
(IP) Councillor Rosie Kinnear	
(VL) Councillor M McRandal	
(IP) Ms Wendy Osborne OBE	
(VL) Mr John Peto	
(IP) Miss Linda Wilson	

IN ATTENDANCE

(IP) Dr Jim O'Hagan	Chief Executive
(IP) Mr Desi Miskelly	Director of Business Support
(IP) Ms Adrienne Adair	Director of Library Services
(IP) Mrs Ciara Gault	Deputy Head of Service, South and East

OBSERVER

(IP) Alderman Paul Greenfield

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

1. APOLOGIES FOR NON-ATTENDANCE

Councillor Alistair Cathcart
Councillor Julie Gilmour
Councillor Andrew McAuley
Ms Ursula O'Hare

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 welcomed Alderman P Greenfield to his first Libraries NI Board Meeting and on behalf of Members congratulated him on his appointment to the Libraries NI Board. Alderman Greenfield attended the meeting in an observer role.
- 3.2 The Chairperson reported that two items would be taken In Committee: Staffing Matters: Head of Service North and West and Remuneration Committee 25 June 2026: Update.
- 3.3 The Chairperson thanked the Members who had returned their appraisal documentation and asked that outstanding forms be returned to the Chief Executive's Office as soon as possible.
- 3.4 The Chairperson briefed Members on the DfC/ALB Chairs Forum which had taken place on 17 June 2026. She reported that matters discussed at the meeting had included funding allocation for the second quarter of 2026/27 and added that she had found the meeting very informative.

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:
 - Correspondence with the Permanent Secretary – Funding Allocation
 - Interim Budget Allocation Quarter 2, 2026/27
 - Legal Deposit Library visits
 - Partnership Meeting – 27 May 2026
 - Dungannon Library flooding
 - Impact of civil unrest – week commencing 8 June 2026
 - PRONI Book Launch – Ulster American Treasures
 - Belfast Central Library – reopening of the first floor Reading Room
 - Big Summer Read 2026
 - Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann, 2 – 9 August 2026
 - Assembly Questions
- 4.2 On behalf of the Board the Chairperson thanked staff and Councillors from Mid Ulster Council for their assistance and support to enable library services to be temporarily relocated to Ranfurly House while emergency repairs were undertaken to Dungannon Library. Thanks, were also extended to local MLAs who were supportive during this time. The Chief Executive informed the Board that he had written letters of thanks to the Council and Mr C Gildernew MLA.

- 4.3 Mr A Driscoll commended staff on their response to the flooding incident at Dungannon Library and during the period of civil unrest in June. He also drew attention to the Big Summer Read initiative and congratulated all staff involved in promoting the event.
- 4.4 Members enquired as to the outlook for resolution of the financial/funding situation. The Chief Executive advised that while a second Interim Budget Allocation, covering the period July to September, had been confirmed there had been no indications of a likely timescale for the confirmation of annual budget allocations.
- 4.5 Members noted the report.

5. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD HELD ON 23 APRIL 2026
LNI 01.07.26

- 5.1 On a proposal by Miss L Wilson, seconded by Councillor R Lynch, the minutes of the Board Meeting held on 23 April 2026 were approved as a correct record of the meeting.

6. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD HELD ON 23 APRIL 2026
LNI 02.07.26

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

Item 6.1: Matters arising from the minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 23 April 2026

- 6.2 The Chief Executive confirmed that further guidance on the acceptance of Gifts and Hospitality had been e-mailed to all Board Members on 19 May 2026.

Management Report

Item 8.5: Bi-Annual Assurance Statement (1 October 2025 to 31 March 2026) and Item 8.8: Annual Board Assurance Statement 2025/26

- 6.3 The Chief Executive confirmed that the signed Bi-Annual Assurance Statement for the period ended 31 March 2026 and the Annual Board Assurance Statement 2025/26 had both been forwarded to DfC on 24 April 2026.

Item 9.5: Interim Financial Allocation 2026/27

- 6.4 The Chief Executive confirmed that a joint letter signed by himself and the Chairperson regarding the initial Interim Financial Allocation for 2026/27 highlighting concerns raised and discussed at the April Board meeting had been issued to DfC on 14 May 2026.

Item 12.3: External Review of Board Effectiveness

- 6.5 Members noted that the Chairperson had written to DfC on 27 April 2026 enclosing a copy of the External Review of Board Effectiveness.

7. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AUDIT AND RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON 22 APRIL 2026
LNI 03.07.26

7.1 In the absence of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, Mrs W Osborne presented the minutes of the Committee meeting held on 22 April 2026. She reminded Members that at the Board Meeting held on 23 April 2026 an oral report on the Committee meeting had been provided and the Board had approved the following:

- Bi-Annual Assurance Statement for the period ended 31 March 2026
- Annual Board Assurance Statement 2025/26
- Corporate Risk Register as at March 2026
- Internal Audit Strategy and Annual Plan 2026/27

7.2 On a proposal by Councillor M McRandal seconded by Mrs W Osborne, the draft minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee held on 22 April 2026 were adopted as an 'as read' record of the meeting.

8. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AUDIT AND RISK ASSURANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON 17 JUNE 2026
LNI 04.07.26

8.1 In the absence of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, Mrs W Osborne presented the minutes of the Committee meeting held on 17 June 2026.

8.2 On a proposal by Councillor M McRandal, seconded by Mrs W Osborne, the minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee held on 17 June 2026 were adopted as an 'as read' record of the meeting.

8.3 On a proposal by Councillor M McRandal, seconded by Mrs W Osborne, the Board approved and adopted the Internal Audit Charter (Annual Review).

8.4 On a proposal by Councillor M McRandal, seconded by Mrs W Osborne, the Board approved and adopted the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee draft Annual Report 2025/26.

8.5 On a proposal by Councillor M McRandal, seconded by Mrs W Osborne, the Board approved and adopted the Anti-Bribery Policy (Review).

8.6 On a proposal by Councillor M McRandal, seconded by Mrs W Osborne, the Board approved and adopted the Raising Concerns Policy (Review).

8.7 It was noted that the Libraries NI Draft Annual Report and Accounts 2025/26 and the Corporate Risk Register would be discussed at Agenda Items 9 and 10 respectively.

9. DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS 2025/26 LNI 05.07.26

- 9.1 The Chief Executive presented the draft Annual Report and Accounts 2025/26 which sets out in detail information on Libraries NI's activity and work during the year.
- 9.2 He reported that the document would remain in draft until the completion of the external audit, noting that the annual accounts would be submitted to the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) prior to commencement of the audit which was scheduled to begin on 24 August 2026. He confirmed that the draft Annual Report and Accounts 2025/26 had been scrutinised by Members of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee at its meeting held on 17 June 2026 and that the Committee had been content to recommend the document to the Board for approval. Since that meeting a number of minor amendments had been made to the document to correct typographical errors and he drew attention to each of the amendments in turn.
- 9.3 Members noted that it was anticipated that the audit of the annual accounts would be completed by the end of September 2026 and prior to certification by the NIAO 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 14 October 2026 and then to the Board for approval on 15 October 2026.
- 9.4 Members noted the information relating to staff turnover contained in the draft Annual Report and suggested that a more detailed analysis of the underlying reasons would be of interest. The Director of Business Support agreed to draw up a report for consideration by the Business Support Committee
- 9.5 The Chairperson thanked the Chief Executive, Director of Business Support, Director of Library Services, Finance Manager and the Finance Team and all senior managers for their work in producing the report in a timely manner adding that the addition of the graphics made the document more visually appealing to readers.
- 9.6 On a proposal by Mrs W Osborne, seconded by Mr A Driscoll and on the recommendation of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee the Board approved the draft Annual Report and Accounts 2025/26 to be submitted to the NIAO for audit.
- 9.7 Members noted the report.

10. MANAGEMENT REPORT LNI 06.07.26

- 10.1 The Chief Executive and the Director of Business Support briefed the Board on the Management Report.
- 10.2 Key Performance Indicators (KPI) Guidance and Approach LNI 06.07.26 (i)
The Chief Executive referred to the updated guidance on the approach and use of Key Performance Indicators (KPI)s. He reminded Members that when

reporting on KPIs a colour coded traffic light system (Red, Amber and Green: RAG) was used to indicate performance against targets. The new guidance provides a wider definition of each of the colour coded result areas and was intended to provide more information and clarity in the reporting environment.

- 10.3 On a proposal by Mrs W Osborne, seconded by Mr A Driscoll, the Board approved and adopted the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) Guidance and Approach and authorised Officers to adopt this process going forward.

- 10.4 Key Performance Indicators 2025/26: End of Year Report LNI 06.07.26 (ii)
The Chief Executive drew attention to the end of year report for the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) 2025/26 and reported that the majority of targets had been achieved.

- 10.5 Members noted the report.

- 10.6 Libraries NI Business Plan 2025/26: End of Year Report LNI 06.07.26 (iii)
The Chief Executive explained that the Libraries NI Business Plan 2025/26 had included some 51 separate objectives and targets, including sub-targets. The end of year report shows that 39 of the targets in the Business Plan were achieved in full, with a further seven partially achieved and five recorded as not achieved.

- 10.7 Finance Report to End of May 2026 LNI 06.07.26 (iv)
The Director of Business Support presented the Finance Reports for Capital and Recurrent Spend to the end of May 2026 against the three month interim budget allocation.

- 10.8 He confirmed that as of 31 May 2026 the total resource expenditure, adjusted for income of £92,364 was £5,554,906 equivalent to 65% of the total interim funding allocation of £8,504,000. Expenditure throughout June was forecasted to be of a similar level to that seen in April/May generating a further £2,777,500 of expenditure resulting in a projected total expenditure to 30 June of some £8,332,400 equivalent to 98% of the available interim budget.

- 10.9 He also confirmed that all capital projects were progressing and based on current projections expenditure to 31 March 2027 was anticipated to be some £2,974,00 against a total budget allocation of £3,434,000, a process of budget adjustment was underway with DfC to realign budgets to actual project demands (easements and pressure bids submitted).

- 10.10 Corporate Risk Register May 2026 LNI 06.07.26 (v)
The Director of Business Support then drew attention to the Corporate Risk Register which had been reviewed by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee at its meeting held on 17 June 2026. He explained that at the time the risk register had been reviewed Officers were unaware that a further interim funding allocation would be awarded for Quarter 2 of the 2026/27 financial year. He reported that the majority of risk levels remained static with the exception of Risk 5: Resources and Risk 6: Planning and changes were as a result of the interim three-month funding allocation being received for

Quarter 1 and the absence of clarity on when annual budget allocations might be confirmed.

- 10.11 On a proposal by Mrs W Osborne, seconded by Mr A Driscoll, the Board approved and adopted the Corporate Risk Register as at May 2026 and noted the Management Report.

11. FUNDING ALLOCATIONS (RESOURCE/CAPITAL) AND PROPOSED BUDGET AND SPENDING PLAN 2026/27

- 11.1 The Director of Business Support updated Members on the current position regarding the funding allocation for 2026/27.
- 11.2 Following detailed discussion by Members the second interim allocation of £8,504,000 was noted by the Board.
- 11.3 Mrs W Osborne informed the Board that the funding allocation had been discussed by Members of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee at its meeting held on 17 June 2026 and Committee Members had expressed their concern at the challenges and potential risks the short-term interim funding approach had for the organisation and the delivery of public library services.
- 11.4 Members noted the update.

12. PRESENTATION: ERASMUS+ SWEDEN

- 12.1 Mrs C Gault, Deputy Head of Service, South and East provided a presentation on the Erasmus+ study programme she had attended in Sweden in November 2025.
- 12.2 She thanked the Chairperson for the opportunity to share her learning experience and insights gained during her visit. She reported that it was a unique opportunity to explore the innovative techniques used in Sweden. The visit was organised by the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA) and had brought together 20 colleagues from various library services in the Republic of Ireland. During the visit delegates had the opportunity to visit a number of Swedish libraries and explore the Swedish approach to providing public library services. She provided a high-level overview of key themes explored and highlighted five areas which she felt were important i.e. leadership development, digital innovation, support for adult learners, social engagement and library design.
- 12.3 Mrs Gault reported that she had found the experience collaborative and enriching and it had influenced her thinking in relation to the on-going micro refurbishment of Belfast Central Library and thanked Libraries NI for the opportunity to attend.

- 12.4 On behalf of the Board the Chairperson thanked Mrs Gault for the interesting and informative presentation.

13. MINUTES OF THE SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD ON 21 MAY 2026

LNI 07.07.26

- 13.1 In the absence of the Committee Chairperson, Councillor A McAuley, the Vice-Chairperson of the Services Committee, Mr A Driscoll, presented the minutes of the meeting held on 21 May 2026.

- 13.2 On a proposal by Mrs W Osborne, seconded by Mr J Peto, the draft minutes of the meeting of the Services Committee held on 21 May 2026 were adopted as an 'as read' record of the meeting. There were no items considered for which the Committee was required to make specific recommendations on or to seek approval of the Board.

14. MINUTES OF THE BUSINESS SUPPORT COMMITTEE HELD ON 28 MAY 2026

LNI 08.07.26

- 14.1 The Chairperson of the Business Support Committee, Councillor M McRandal, presented the minutes of the meeting held on 28 May 2026.
- 14.2 On a proposal by Mr J Peto, seconded by Miss L Wilson, the draft minutes of the meeting of the Business Support Committee held on 28 May 2026 were adopted as an 'as read' record of the meeting.
- 14.3 The Board noted the election of Mr J Peto to the position of Vice-Chairperson of the Business Support Committee.
- 14.4 On a proposal by Councillor R Lynch, seconded by Mr J Peto, the Board approved and adopted the Student Work Placement Policy Review.
- 14.5 On a proposal by Miss L Wilson, seconded by Councillor R Lynch, the Board approved and adopted the Career Break Policy - Review.
- 14.6 On a proposal by the Chairperson of the Board, Ms B Anley, seconded by Councillor R Lynch, the Board approved and adopted the Workplace Substance Abuse Policy Review 2026.
- 14.7 On a proposal by Mr J Peto, seconded by Councillor R Lynch, the Board approved and adopted the Staff Appraisal Policy - Review.
- 14.8 On a proposal by Miss L Wilson, seconded by Councillor R Lynch, the Board approved and adopted the Grievance Policy (New).
- 14.9 The Board noted that the Committee had approved the Business Support Risk Register 2026/27.

***Members agreed to move to Agenda Items 17 and 18 as follows:
(Item 17 on the Meeting Agenda)***

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 15.1 There was no other notified business.

(Item 18 on the Meeting Agenda)

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 16.1 Members noted that the Board Planning Day would take place on Thursday 10 September 2026 at 10.30 am in the Public Record office of Northern Ireland (PRONI).

Members agreed to return to the running order of the Agenda at Items 15 and 16 as follows:

(Item 15 on the Meeting Agenda)

17. STAFFING MATTER IN COMMITTEE: HEAD OF SERVICE NORTH AND WEST

- 17.1 Officers with the exception of the Chief Executive withdrew from the meeting.
- 17.2 On a proposal by Miss L Wilson, seconded by Mr A Driscoll, the Board agreed to go Into Committee.
- 17.3 While in Committee the Chief Executive provided an update on a staffing matter relating to a senior position.
- 17.4 On a proposal by Mr A Driscoll, seconded by Councillor R Lynch the Board approved the matter be progressed in line with the Board Operating Framework.

(Item 16 on the Meeting Agenda)

18. REMUNERATION COMMITTEE 25 JUNE 2026: UPDATE IN COMMITTEE

- 18.1 The Chief Executive withdrew from the meeting and the Chairperson reminded Members that the meeting was still in Committee.
- 18.2 She reported that while in Committee, she had provided an update on the meeting of the Remuneration Committee, which had taken place on 25 June 2026 in relation to the review and approval of performance and remuneration of the Senior Management Team.

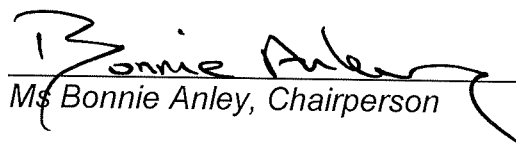
- 18.3 On a proposal by Mr A Driscoll seconded by Councillor R Lynch, Members agreed to come out of Committee.

19. MEMBERS ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE TIMES

- 19.1 The meeting ended at 1:50 pm.
- 19.2 All Members arrived for the commencement of the meeting and remained until it ended with the exception of the following:

Mrs W Osborne left the meeting at 13:36 pm

Signed:


Ms Bonnie Anley, Chairperson

Date:

15/10/2026