

Annual Report and Accounts 2022/23



Libraries NI

The Northern Ireland Library Authority

Annual Report and Accounts For the year ended 31 March 2023

Laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly
under Schedule 1, clauses 16 and 17 of the Libraries Act (Northern Ireland) 2008
by the Department for Communities on 14 November 2023



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This publication is also available on our website at www.librariesni.org.uk.

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Foreword

I am pleased to present this Annual Report and Accounts for the year 2022/23. The Report includes an overview of the programme of work to fulfil the Authority's terms of reference, deliver its Business Plan, and continue to be responsive to the environment in which it operates, at the very heart of Northern Ireland's communities.

Yet again we faced another challenging year in 2022/23 as we continued to operate in a climate of financial, societal and economic uncertainty. We continued our journey of recovery from the disruption of the Covid-19 pandemic only to be confronted with a new challenge as global events and uncertainty took a turn for the worse and sent prices and inflation soaring, creating a deep and widespread cost of living crisis. It is at times of crisis like this that the work we do in libraries is more important than ever and makes a difference to the lives of people in our local communities. The local library, once again, proved to be a safe, welcoming and inclusive space; a place where people were able to meet, connect and make use of a comprehensive library service, including the wide range of free events, activities and resources available there.

It has also been another uncertain financial year with the public sector in general facing many financial challenges. For much of the year we operated on the basis of an indicative allocation of funding and had to work hard to maintain service provision in the face of the exceptional inflationary pressures and increases in energy costs that were experienced. The absence of a functioning Executive and delays in setting a budget until late in the year only added to the challenges faced in 2022/23. Despite all of these challenges and constraints, libraries continued to deliver a wide range of services and support for local communities.

During 2022/23, significant work took place to re-engage with library customers post Covid as we delivered a full programme of core activity sessions across the whole of the library network, including the ever popular Rhythm and Rhyme sessions, which continued to attract substantial numbers of children, parents and carers. Other activities for children included class visits and the Summer Reading Challenge; while activities for adults included Reading Groups, GOT IT, Creative Writing, Knit and Natter, and Tea and Newspapers.

The Covid-19 pandemic illustrated how easy it is for so many in society to get left behind, or to be excluded from the opportunity to access services and resources. The importance of genuine digital choices and inclusion remains high on our agenda, and throughout 2022/23, Libraries NI offered a range of programmes and activities aimed at facilitating digital inclusion and helping people to carry out more day-to-day tasks online, access resources effectively and engage with government departments and bodies through official websites. In particular there was a focus on showing people how to stay connected and how the internet can make life easier, cheaper, healthier and more fun.

For younger library members, Libraries NI again took part in the Reading Agency's Summer Reading Challenge, with the theme of science and innovation promoted in partnership with the Science Museum. The Reading Challenge was delivered through a variety of supporting events held in libraries over the summer months, including a series of workshops with STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Ambassadors and Story Camps on a science theme delivered using Zoom by Vicky

McFarland from the Armstrong Storytelling Trust. This vitally important initiative, which helps to combat dips in children's literacy levels over the summer months, was once again highly popular, with some 13,049 young people registering to participate, reading 160,264 books.

As part of our partnership with BBC Northern Ireland, from 17 to 23 October 2022, the highly successful Book Week NI celebrated the benefits and pleasures of reading and of course the importance of libraries. This year the line-up of free events in libraries was bigger and better than ever with the main programme comprising an exciting mix of author talks and readings to entertain, challenge and inspire. Writers such as the Reverend Richard Coles, Donal Ryan, Leesa Harker and Serena Terry joined us to celebrate Book Week and to talk about their work. Each day during the week there was a different literary theme including Inspiring Stories, Children's Books, Poems and Plays, Wide and Wonderful World, Stories in Picture, Sound and Classics Old and New and of course, Love Your Library Day, when people were encouraged to pay a visit to their local library and to sign up for membership; while an impressive array of Book Week Ambassadors played a proactive role on social media to encourage others to participate. The success of Book Week NI continues to grow, promoting the benefits and joys of literacy and reading, and it is one of the highlights in the calendar of both Libraries NI and BBC Northern Ireland.

I was delighted to see our Heritage Services, including Irish and Local Studies, relocate to the newly refurbished premises at Markethill Road, Armagh, including in October 2022, a launch and open day to raise awareness of the service.

The above is just a snapshot of some of the highlights from a typically busy year. Further details on the range of events and activities delivered by Libraries NI during 2022/23 can be found in the Performance section of this Report.

Libraries NI was pleased to continue its participation in the Boardroom Apprentice programme in 2022/23. This innovative programme provides individuals who wish to become Board Members within the public and third sectors the opportunity to gain practical experience, training and support through a non-voting placement with a host Board.

Especially in these troubled and challenging times, it is important to recognise the tremendous work carried out by our staff right across the service on a daily basis, against a backdrop of wider societal upheaval and an uncertain and unpredictable environment. All staff, ably led by the Senior Management Team, are to be commended for their continuing commitment, professionalism and consistently high levels of achievement in delivering a top-quality public library service in Northern Ireland. The tantalising fact is that, with better and more consistent levels of resourcing, we know we could deliver even more to the Northern Ireland communities that badly need us.

I am ever conscious that the success of our service to our communities depends also on the continuing co-operation with our many partner organisations within the public, community, voluntary and trade union sectors. In particular, I wish to thank Departmental officials, whose support was vital in enabling the Authority to operate successfully in such a difficult and challenging environment during the year under review.

In June we were saddened by the sudden death of Councillor Glenn Finlay and Glenn's contribution to the work of the Board has been missed. Throughout the year, the Board and its several committees continued to meet virtually and on a hybrid basis to ensure that the governance and oversight of Libraries NI continued uninterrupted. In this regard I would like to record my gratitude to my fellow Board Members for their continued support and their dedication to the work of the Northern Ireland public library service in what has been another challenging year.

Bernard Cullen

Professor Bernard Cullen
Chairperson

Date: 12 October 2023

Performance Report

Performance Overview

This Overview aims to provide sufficient information to allow the reader to understand the organisation, its purpose, the key risks to the achievement of its objectives and how it has performed during the year.

Chief Executive's Statement

In the absence of the NI Executive it was not possible for the Department for Communities to set an opening budget for Libraries NI and the financial year 2022/23 commenced with an indicative resource allocation of £29,125,000, providing a contingency planning envelope to allow spend to be incurred. While initially providing an increase of some £990,000 on the opening baseline allocation from the previous financial year, the impacts of rising inflation and escalating energy costs gave rise to an extremely challenging financial environment necessitating a constrained approach to service delivery for much of the year with the opening book stock budget being set at an historic low of £500,000. A budget allocation was confirmed in December 2022 providing a further £1,500,000 of earmarked stock funding along with £694,000 to address inflationary pressures. The confirmed budget of £30,987,000 (adjusted for a reduction of £170,000 relating to the accounting treatment of property leases) facilitated a spend on library stock of £2,334,000 in 2022/23, compared to £3,503,000 in 2021/22.

In 2022/23, reported net expenditure for the year was £40,085,000. After subtracting non-cash expenditure and other expenditure not counting against budget, recurrent net expenditure was £30,762,000 against an adjusted allocated budget of £30,987,000. Capital expenditure was £5,153,000 within an allocated budget of £5,179,000.

The capital allocation for 2022/23 was £5,179,000, which allowed for the completion of a number of projects started in 2021/22, as well as expenditure on a number of new minor works and small estates projects, including procurement of a contractor to deliver a replacement library for Fivemiletown, acquisition of a development site for Banbridge library and investment in replacement IT systems, services and infrastructure. In addition a range of projects aimed at contributing positively to addressing climate change issues were undertaken including the installation of low energy LED lighting and photovoltaic (solar) panels. Global supply chain issues continued to impact on investment activities and a planned switchover of vehicles from fossil fuel to electric could not be delivered.

Wider global economic, societal and political factors combined to create an extraordinarily challenging operational context and environment in 2022/23. Double digit inflation, rapidly rising costs and a cost of living crisis combined to cause unprecedented disruption to peoples' lives, society and public services, including library services. Despite the extraordinary challenges during 2022/23, we largely recovered from the disruption of the Covid-19 pandemic, we adjusted to new ways of working and library activities and services returned to a more normal footing with good

progress made in respect of delivering against many aspects of the 2022/23 business plan.

I was greatly encouraged by the response of our staff, right across the library network as we emerged from the Covid-19 pandemic and then had to contend with a cost-of-living crisis. The achievements this year are testimony to their professionalism, dedication and commitment against a backdrop of challenging and changing circumstances. I want to place on record my sincere appreciation to staff across the service, in both frontline and support services, for the contribution that they have made to the delivery of the 2022/23 Business Plan and for their continued support in difficult and uncertain times. This Annual Report gives a flavour of the range of programmes, activities and services which have taken place during the year to support delivery against our key outcomes and corporate objectives.

Recognising that the most significant opportunities to improve life opportunities exist in the form of early interventions, activities aimed at children and young people are a key element of Libraries NI's approach to tackling social exclusion. Rhythm and Rhyme sessions designed to help develop pre-literacy and early learning skills continued to be popular, attracting substantial numbers of children and their parents and carers. Support and resources within library settings as well as online resources, providing tools, tips and fun learning activities, were available to give parents and carers increased confidence to support their young children with the early stages of reading and emotional development. Storytimes, reading groups, a new initiative called Readers Champion and the Summer Reading Challenge 2022, delivered in partnership with The Reading Agency, are examples of activities that encourage reading for pleasure, which, research shows, is linked to improved educational outcomes.

As a statutory partner in the Community Planning process, Libraries NI continued to engage with each of the Councils on delivering long term community planning objectives, helping to work to mitigate impacts of the cost of living crisis and contributing to the review and update of community plans and statements of progress.

Supporting literacy and promoting a love of reading remains at the core of our work. In 2022/23 we spent £2,334,000 on book stock (£3,503,000 in 2021/22) in a variety of formats across a range of genres with some in different languages, reflecting the multi-cultural background of library users. This equated to a spend of £1.23 per capita, based on official 2021 mid-year population estimates, against a public library standard of £2.25. While we maintained an emphasis on providing eBooks, eMagazines and audiobooks, as the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic eased and services began to return to a more stable operating environment we saw a strong recovery in loans and issues relating to physical books.

Our work is informed by the Department for Communities Building Inclusive Communities strategy, community planning and wider government priorities. A key focus of our Corporate Plan 2020-2024 is the contribution that libraries make to social, community and economic wellbeing as community hubs where people can access a wide variety of learning, information and social resources that make a difference to their quality of life in both the short and long term.

The extensive network of libraries is strategically important and we believe that its importance will strengthen as we continue to work collaboratively with organisations across government departments, public bodies and the voluntary and private sectors. In this way Libraries NI continues to play its role in the response to wider societal challenges, including recovery from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and the cost of living crisis and can support the delivery of other services, providing local access points and helping customers to connect with information and services that contribute to social and economic wellbeing. All of this is only made possible by our dedicated and professional staff who are committed to delivering high standards of service and providing help and support to assist people using libraries, no matter what their background or circumstances.

I am grateful to the Chairperson and the Board of Libraries NI for their continued interest in, and support for, the public library service over the past year. There is no doubt that the next few years will continue to be challenging and like all public bodies, Libraries NI will need to continue to change, improve and become more efficient in what it does.

Our Purpose

The Northern Ireland Library Authority, known as Libraries NI, was established as a body corporate on 1 April 2009 as a result of the Review of Public Administration. Its functions are laid down in The Libraries Act (Northern Ireland) 2008. The primary duty of Libraries NI is to provide a comprehensive and efficient public library service for persons living, working or studying in Northern Ireland. In doing so the organisation is required to:

- ensure that facilities are available for the borrowing of, or reference to, library materials sufficient in number, range and quality to meet the general requirements of adults and children (whether by keeping adequate stocks, by arrangements with other bodies concerned with library services or by any other means)

- have regard to the desirability of:
 - encouraging both adults and children to make full use of the library service
 - providing advice as to the use of the library service and making available such bibliographical and other information as may be required by persons using the service
 - promoting literacy and lifelong learning
 - maintaining a collection of library materials relevant to the cultural heritage of Northern Ireland
 - making library premises available for cultural and community activities
 - meeting any special requirements of adults and children by any appropriate means.

Our Corporate Goals

Our corporate goals are articulated through three outcome areas and eleven associated strategic actions and are set out in the Libraries NI Corporate Plan 2020 – 24.

Outcome area:

Strategic actions:

A shared, inclusive public library service supporting communities and societal wellbeing

- Provide a customer focused public library service to people living, working or studying in Northern Ireland which contributes to societal wellbeing
- Create strong mutually beneficial regional and local partnerships, including with other public services and community planning partners, to develop libraries as access points for a wide range of services
- Reduce barriers to library use especially for those at risk of being socially excluded
- Raise awareness and increase understanding of library services with customers, the general public and stakeholders.

Inspired, informed and literate children and adults

- Promote reading, literacy and lifelong learning through delivery of resources, services, programmes, activities and initiatives for children and adults
- Provide access to Heritage resources and services to the widest possible audience
- Improve digital services, access and literacy
- Promote access to information, information literacy and support children and adults to become more informed citizens.

Effective Governance and delivery

- Maintain an effective organisational and governance framework and support and develop our people to enable delivery of high quality public services
- Make best use of available resources to support identified priorities and deliver an effective and valued public library service
- Develop and implement an Outcome Based Accountability (OBA) approach to business planning and performance measurement.

The Libraries NI outcome areas and strategic actions provide the context and framework for delivery of priorities and services with more detailed annual objectives and targets being set in the Annual Business Plan to ensure the aspirations and ambitions articulated in the four-year Corporate Plan are achieved. Both the Business and Corporate Plans are closely linked to wider government priorities with the aim of making a lasting and sustainable contribution to improving the societal wellbeing of individuals and communities in Northern Ireland.

Delivery of library operations and services are structured around a number of key pillars, including the Network of Libraries, Collections, Online Services and Service Support, Customer Experience and Customer Groups. In seeking to deliver against the outcome areas and strategic actions, we maintain a focus on services through the library network and online in a number of areas including:

- **Children and Young People**

The most significant opportunities to improve people's health, wellbeing and life opportunities exist in the form of early interventions particularly, though not exclusively, designed for children and young people. Children's and young people's services and programmes are a key element in Libraries NI's approach to tackling poverty, social exclusion, literacy, language development, social skills and a love of books and reading.

- **Cultural Heritage**

Libraries have a long tradition of collecting and preserving material which relates to our cultural heritage. Access to cultural heritage, both local and national, can enrich society through nurturing creativity, imagination, reflecting our past and a sense of place and this can help promote community cohesion and increase understanding of cultural diversity. Our unique Heritage collections include books, maps, archives, newspapers, journals, microfilm and other materials and complement collections held by other institutions. Through acquisition, curation, preserving and conservation we exploit the Collections to widen access and increase participation.

- **Digital, Information and Learning Services**

Libraries have a critical role to play in the provision of lifelong learning opportunities and helping to promote greater equality of access to the skills, confidence, technology and connectivity necessary to operate in an increasingly online and digital world. Libraries provide free local access to broadband, Wi-Fi and information technology hardware. More importantly, library staff support library users in accessing online services and have the skills to understand customer needs to help them navigate through, and make sense of, the myriad of resources that are available. The provision of learning opportunities and the development of people's digital and information literacy skills remains a priority for the service and the increased reliance on being able to access resources and services online highlighted during the Covid-19 pandemic and the cost of living crisis served to emphasize the importance of the work we do in this area.

- **Support for Health and Wellbeing**

Libraries promote health literacy and positive well-being through the provision and signposting of accessible health related information through eResources and book formats including Shelf Help and Read Yourself Well, through partnerships, information clinics, events and programmes. The health and well-being benefits of reading and of social programmes are well documented. The library network provides welcoming, locally accessible and stigma-free environments for health promoting activities.

- **Shared, Safe Spaces for Culture and Creative Development**

Libraries are uniquely placed as cultural hubs within communities offering access to a range of Culture and Arts, and as gateways to wider cultural activities locally. With a network of 98 libraries, a reach into and across diverse local communities, and the flexibility to respond to local needs, the experiences that libraries offer help to develop a love for and appreciation of the arts and engage people who may not normally participate in cultural activities. Libraries are also perfectly placed to help more people access art and high quality participatory activities, helping to ignite a lifelong interest in, or pursuit of, arts, culture, heritage and creativity.

Libraries NI has Gallery Spaces in a number of libraries equipped with professional hanging systems and museum quality exhibition cases. On an ongoing basis the Gallery Spaces host a diverse mix of artists - amateur, students, emerging, professional, groups and collectives exhibiting art, photography, sculpture and crafts across the range of genres and mediums.

- **Reading and Reader Development**

Reading is an essential life skill, a gateway to learning and information, a source of enjoyment, inspiration and relaxation. Research demonstrates that developing a love of reading is important for children's life chances and is one of the most effective ways of leveraging social change. Reading expands

knowledge, vocabulary, leads to more developed language and writing skills and can help improve analytical and thinking skills, focus and concentration. Research also shows that reading and taking part in social reading activities such as reading groups has a beneficial effect on health and wellbeing, including mental health, self-esteem, confidence and stress reduction. The value of reading stretches far beyond the benefits to the individual.

Active promotion of reading for pleasure and activities associated with reading is at the heart of our reader development programming encouraging people of all ages to read, to read more widely and to get more from their reading. It enriches lives by improving confidence and enjoyment of reading, opening up reading choices and opportunities to share reading experiences.

Our Customer Promise

The Staff Customer Promise – welcoming, supportive, learning, fun and connecting was implemented and embedded during the year.

Staff Customer Promise

Welcoming

We will foster a warm and friendly atmosphere creating safe and trusted locations.

Learning

We will provide learning opportunities and nurture our customers so they can thrive, achieve or simply be inspired to try something new.

Supportive

We will listen to each customer to help us understand and respond to their individual needs.

Connecting

We will communicate with each other and other organisations to build relationships which help to develop our customer offer.

Fun

We will facilitate a variety of events encouraging communities to come together, forging friendships and reducing loneliness.



Key Issues and Risks

The threat from the Covid-19 global pandemic was greatly diminished during 2022/23 with many library services and activities returning to a more normal mode of operating. Nevertheless the risk continued to be monitored.

The impacts of the UK's exit from the European Union have been assessed as low for Libraries NI. While we continue to be subject to the wider economic, political and social effects of the UK exiting the European Union, no notable disruption to business or supply chains, directly attributable to the exit, has been experienced during 2022/23. Libraries NI will continue to take steps to monitor, manage and mitigate issues where possible.

The absence of normal budget approval mechanisms at NI Executive and Departmental level, including a delay in setting a budget until December 2022, combined with unprecedented inflation and cost increases created significant financial pressures, risk and organisational stress during 2022/23.

The level of uncertainty about longer term planning and budget setting, global economic and political uncertainty, rising inflation and constraints on public finances represent further risks and issues that will continue to impact into 2023/24 and will be monitored and where possible actions taken to manage and mitigate them.

Going Concern

Libraries NI is an Executive Non-Departmental Public Body, sponsored by the Department for Communities (DfC), having been established by statute under the Libraries Act (NI) 2008. Libraries NI received its core resource and capital funding from the DfC during 2022/23, and an allocation has been made for 2023/24. While the financial environment remains challenging, Libraries NI is of the opinion that the going concern basis of preparation of the Annual Report and Accounts is appropriate. Libraries NI is not aware of any events which would impact upon the entity's status as a going concern. For these reasons Libraries NI has adopted the going concern basis in preparing the Annual Report and Accounts.

Performance Report

Performance Analysis

This section of the Performance Report provides an analysis and summary of performance against key targets and performance indicators.

How we measure performance

The performance management framework consists of:

- the Corporate Plan which sets out the corporate objectives linked to relevant priorities in the draft Programme for Government and the Department's strategies for the public library service
- an annual Business Plan which sets out the actions to be taken and the associated targets
- Key Performance Indicators which are used to report quarterly at Board level and to the Department on progress.

Information on performance is drawn from a range of sources. A statistician, seconded from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA), worked closely with senior management to maintain and support a database which is used to hold data on Libraries NI activities. Financial information is taken from the audited Financial Statements. Other management information is extracted from information systems which are subject to regular internal audit.

During 2022/23, Libraries NI continued to deliver against corporate goals, strategic objectives, targets and key performance indicators. The 2022/23 business plan was developed in a climate of financial, societal, political and economic uncertainty following the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Public health restrictions were largely lifted during the year and library services returned to a more normal mode of operating with a focus on reinstating services and recovering ground lost during the pandemic. All branch libraries delivered a full range of library services and the achievement against targets and KPIs reflects the good progress made in this regard during 2022/23. The performance against targets and objectives is all the more impressive given the budget and financial challenges and uncertainty in-year.

The targets set for loans and renewals was met while eLoans, at 1,467,331 against the target of 1,400,000, was also achieved. Overall the level of borrowing for the online offering for eBooks, eMagazines and audiobooks was slightly down on the 2021/22 figure of 1,500,010 but it nevertheless remains significant and represents some 28% of all loans and issues for the year. During 2022/23 the focus on driving up membership numbers continued with 78,592 new members joining and the number of active members at 271,275 exceeding the target of 240,000 reflecting a commendable performance. There was a strong performance in respect of social media followers with a 9.52% increase against the target of a 3% increase. All other library services targets were achieved.

The resource underspend at 0.7% met the target of minimising underspend to within 1% of budget. While external procurement and supply factors continued to impact on

capital spending, the 0.5% underspend reflects the substantive investments delivered. The KPI target relating to sickness absence at 13.90 FTE days lost against a target of 9.5 FTE days was missed, largely due to increases in long term sickness absences in the latter part of the year. Details of achievement against the KPIs for 2022/23 are set out in the table below.

Performance Analysis and Summary

<u>Outcome area / Targets:</u>	<u>Achievement against target / KPI:</u>																		
A shared, inclusive public library service supporting communities and societal wellbeing																			
No. of loans and renewals against target of 3,400,000	Achieved: Loans 2,730,736 Renewals 1,015,486 Total 3,746,222																		
No. of new members against target of 50,000	Achieved – 78,592 (including 13,014 virtual)																		
No. of active members against target of 240,000	Achieved – 271,275																		
95% of branch libraries reopened and/or providing services	Achieved - 99% (Excludes libraries closed for planned refurbishment)																		
No. of eLoans against target of 1,400,000	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>2021/22</th> <th>2022/23</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>eBooks incl eAudiobooks</td> <td>760,009</td> <td>839,531</td> </tr> <tr> <td>eMagazines</td> <td>416,319</td> <td>341,585</td> </tr> <tr> <td>eNewspapers</td> <td>323,682</td> <td>286,215</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>1,500,010</td> <td>1,467,331</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total % against target</td> <td colspan="2">104.81%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		2021/22	2022/23	eBooks incl eAudiobooks	760,009	839,531	eMagazines	416,319	341,585	eNewspapers	323,682	286,215	Total	1,500,010	1,467,331	Total % against target	104.81%	
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Total	1,500,010	1,467,331																	
Total % against target	104.81%																		
Increase social media followers - against target of 3%.	Achieved – 9.52%																		
Inspired, informed and literate children and adults																			
Participation in reading challenges – measured against target - 12,500 children.	Achieved – 13,049 children participated in the Summer Reading Challenge.																		

Number of learning opportunities to improve digital literacy – measured against target - 400	Achieved - 66 Online Learning Opportunities and 413 face to face sessions delivered. Total 479 sessions.								
95% of branch libraries providing Wi-Fi/Public Access Terminals	Achieved - 100% (excludes libraries closed for planned refurbishment)								
No. of Wi-Fi/Public Access Terminal uses - measured against targets of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wi-Fi 75,000 • PAT 275,000 	Achieved - No. of Wi-Fi Sessions: 128,265 No. of PAT Sessions: 308,140								
Effective Governance and delivery									
Annual net spend (resource and capital) will be within budget. Underspend will be minimized (<1%)	<p>Achieved – Resource Budget: (0.7% underspend against 1% target)</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>2022/23 Budget</td> <td>£30,987,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Year End spend</td> <td>£30,762,000</td> </tr> </table> <p>Achieved – Capital Budget: (0.5% underspend against 1% target)</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>2022/23 Budget</td> <td>£5,179,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Year End spend</td> <td>£5,153,000</td> </tr> </table>	2022/23 Budget	£30,987,000	Year End spend	£30,762,000	2022/23 Budget	£5,179,000	Year End spend	£5,153,000
2022/23 Budget	£30,987,000								
Year End spend	£30,762,000								
2022/23 Budget	£5,179,000								
Year End spend	£5,153,000								
Capital and minor works programmes will be implemented in accordance with the agreed timetable and budget	The 2022/23 capital and minor works programme was delivered in line with agreed timescales and financial allocations.								
Maintain overall sickness absence levels at or below 9.50 FTE days	Not achieved - Composite Average FTE days lost at 31 March 2023 was 13.90 days (46% above the 2022/23 target of maintaining sickness absence levels at or below 9.50 days FTE days).								
95% of ICT service provision standards will be met	Achieved - As at 31 March 2023, 99% of ICT service provision standards were met								
95% of Internal Audit service targets and standards will be met	Achieved - All Internal Audit Service targets and standards have been met								

Development and Performance

In planning for the 2022/23, year, a significant focus was placed on the need to re-engage with our customers, attract new library members and maximise participation in library services and programming. A membership drive initiative, utilising key partnerships and established events like Book Week NI, Summer Reading Challenge and Give it a Go Month, was developed to attract new members and increase active membership numbers. The membership drive recognised that the customer groups with the most active users of libraries, families and older people, were also those who were most impacted by the pandemic. These customers were identified as target groups and programming such as Open Days and Family Fun Days were tailored specifically towards them.

Promotions such as Love Your Library Day (as part of Book Week NI) and a pilot membership promotion with primary schools in Larne and Magherafelt, using child friendly uniquely designed membership cards, highlighted the potential of events and promotions to both raise the profile of Libraries NI, provide rewarding experiences for our users and attract new members.

The following paragraphs provide a flavour of the highlights, events and activities and serve to illustrate the diversity and breadth of library services delivered in 2022/23.

The Library as a Welcoming, Trusted Space for all

Through the network of libraries located in cities, towns and villages we continued to offer welcoming, free and inclusive spaces to our diverse customers.

We promoted the **cost of living crisis service offer** through engaging with new and existing customers to help combat loneliness and social isolation through our range of services, activities, hard copy and online resources including:

- books, audiobooks, daily and local newspapers, magazines
- computers, Internet, Wi-Fi
- access to heritage resources
- study spaces and spaces to work from
- a programme of events, clubs and activities, Rhythm and Rhyme, Storytimes, Tea and Newspapers, Knit and Natter, Lego Clubs, digital learning, reading groups, author visits, creative writing, Yarnspinning sessions and some libraries using newly purchased board games to offer intergenerational activities
- digital support to save money online, including Scamwise and giving people the skills to make online savings.

Crucially throughout the crisis libraries, provided access to trusted information and signposted customers to other support including food banks and social supermarkets through the Community Helpdesk - connecting people with useful information.

Community Planning

Libraries NI continues to be closely involved as a statutory partner in community planning with senior staff participating in roles of Chair and/or Vice-Chair and other relevant staff actively involved in sub-groups and/or action groups. The ability of community planning to make a positive difference in the lives of local residents was ably demonstrated this year as Libraries NI and its community planning partners worked together to mitigate against the impact of the Cost of Living Crisis.

We worked with Community Planning partners to scope opportunities to help people of all ages during the crisis including the provision of Period Dignity products and the Magherafelt, Cookstown and Dungannon Chatty Library Scheme, a space where people can come and relax, chat, read newspapers and avail of the free resources.

We promoted through Community Planning partners our programming, services and stock resources that contribute to tackling and positively mitigate against Child Poverty:

- Rhythm and Rhyme and Storytime sessions offer an entertaining opportunity for children to engage with others, while providing a good foundation to develop their reading, listening and language skills
- Children and Young People's Reading Groups assist in the development of children's love of reading, social and language skills
- Board Game Clubs encourage social interaction
- Lego and Duplo Clubs help develop children's social skills and creativity
- Libraries NI's book collections are aimed at children of all ages and are available in all libraries. Libraries NI's book offer supports and nurtures a child's reading development and supports children with their homework and hobbies. All libraries stock Shelf Help books, a dedicated collection that provides quality assured information and advice to help young people understand and manage their mental health
- study space for children and students.

In addition occasional activities such as film clubs, provision for period dignity and health fairs all contribute to the child's health, education, social interaction and well-being.

Enhancing the Culture and Creativity offer in libraries - Creative Space Initiative

Recognising the impact of the costs of living crisis on artists, the use of space in libraries to support the creative industries was explored with the Creative Space Initiative implemented in Belfast Central and Omagh libraries.

Belfast Central Library

On 3 October 2022 a fire caused extensive damage to Cathedral Buildings in Donegal Street, Belfast. The building provided workspace for over twenty creative businesses and new enterprises. In the short term, local organisations stepped in to offer

temporary accommodation while longer term solutions were explored. Libraries NI Creative Space Initiative launched on 3 January 2023 with four creative industries relocating to Belfast Central Library.

Omagh Creative Space

Working in partnership with Omagh and Fermanagh District Council, Libraries NI creative bursary offered a year-long residency with the first recipient being the author/illustrator Clive McFarland.

Launch of Con Auld Gallery – Holywood Library

A new, equipped exhibition space named in memory of the Reverend McConnell Auld, artist, historian, teacher, Mayor, Friends of Holywood Library, was launched in Holywood Library on 28 January 2023. Attendees enjoyed music from Sullivan Upper School, poetry, reflections and a celebration of Con Auld's vibrant life.

Make the Call

Make the Call Wraparound Service and Libraries NI developed a partnership to deliver benefit entitlement clinics in 12 libraries including Bangor Carnegie, Derry Central, Grove, Omagh, Ormeau Road and Rathcoole. Make the Call Community Outreach Officers offered appointments to support and guide the public through their potential entitlements to financial assistance including benefits, support and services. The clinics offered opportunities for all members of the community to access a range of free services in a neutral and accessible library venue. The first clinic was launched in Ormeau Road Library on 11 August 2022 with Department for Communities Minister, Deirdre Hargey in attendance.

Other highlights contributing to improving access to library services during the cost of living crisis included:

Removal of Reservation Charges and identification requirement for membership

In 2022/23 we continued to review procedures to identify and remove barriers preventing people using library services. Initiatives progressed during 2022/23 included the streamlining of identification requirements when becoming a library member and the removal of charges to reserve items. The removal of barriers encourages library membership and engagement with the library service.

Library of Sanctuary

Ormeau Road Library was accredited as Northern Ireland's first Library of Sanctuary in March 2023. The award recognised the library as a safe and welcoming space for migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and other newcomers and endorses our welcoming and inclusive service.

Services for Refugees from Ukraine

During 2022 Libraries NI worked with partners, contributed content to Council welcome packs, provided Ukrainian information listings of libraries, services including computers, Wi-Fi, resources including eBooks, Ukrainian and Russian language newspapers and magazines, Reachdeck translation software and ensured Ukrainians had a smooth transition to library membership.

Lisburn City Library Working with The Simon Community

Partnering with the Simon Community, libraries in the Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council area supported people impacted by homelessness through welcoming food donations for the Simon Community Christmas 2022 Hamper appeal. The hampers provided essential goods and some extra items to over 600 people over the Christmas period. Donations included chocolates, tea, socks, shower gel, hot water bottles and jigsaws.

Positive Ageing Month

During October 2022, we supported, delivered and participated in 179 Positive Ageing Month events and activities including arts, crafts, fitness, digital support, local history, poetry, reading and storytelling in library and community venues.

Macmillan Coffee Morning

Libraries NI works in partnership with Macmillan Cancer Support and participated again in the World's Biggest Coffee Morning held in September 2022 when over 90 library locations hosted Macmillan coffee mornings raising over £13,000 for the charity. The event was both an opportunity to raise the profile of libraries and to make a positive contribution to cancer support. Libraries NI continues to make Macmillan Cancer Support information available to the public in libraries.

Death Positive Libraries and CRUSE NI

Compassionate Communities provided three collections of 18 Death Positive books for adults in Derry Central, Omagh and Newry City libraries and we worked with CRUSE NI to create book collections on loss and grief for children. Pilot collections for children and young people dealing with bereavement were located in Derry Central and Omagh libraries to complement the Death Positive Library collections in these libraries.

Greening Our Libraries

A number of local programmes supporting the environment and biodiversity were delivered across Libraries during the year. Seed Libraries were developed in Antrim, Belfast Central and Killyleagh libraries using repurposed card catalogue furniture. As well as offering free seeds, the seed libraries also offered growing instructions and advice with the aim to promote a borrow, grow, donate ethos. Two wildflower planting projects were delivered at Ormeau Road and Whiterock libraries with local school children working with a facilitator to learn about the benefits of wildflowers for insect

habitats and biodiversity and wildflower seeds were planted in the library grounds. Rathcoole Library started a Community Gardening Club to support people who wanted to grow their own vegetables from seed. The library provided space, containers, tools and free seeds. Antrim Library started a Gardening Club using the library garden as a community growing space. Nine swift nesting boxes were installed on the external east wall of Portadown Library to protect and enhance an established breeding site of swifts. It is hoped that the nesting boxes installed at the library will attract breeding pairs of swifts.

Climate Change Exhibition

Climate Change exhibitions devised in partnership with Climate NI highlighting key impacts of climate change and detailing ten actions to mitigate/lessen the impact of climate change toured 66 libraries. To complement the exhibition, resources from Libraries NI's collections on climate change including patents on wind and solar energy were displayed in Belfast Central Library. At the end of the year, it is hoped to offer the exhibition to partner organisations and schools.

Reading Challenges

The Gadgeteers Summer Reading Challenge 2022, delivered in partnership with The Reading Agency commenced in June. This year the theme was science and innovation and the delivery partner was the Science Museum. Once again children aged 4 – 11 years were invited to challenge themselves to read any number of books during the summer months and were awarded a certificate and medal when they reached their personal goal. A variety of supporting events were held in libraries throughout July and August including 11 workshops with STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) Ambassadors, four coding workshops with the Nerve Centre Belfast and 18 workshops with Dog's Trust. Story Camps on a science theme with Vicky McFarland from the Armstrong Storytelling Trust were delivered by Zoom in July and August. At the end of the challenge 13,049 children had participated and 160,264 books were read.

We also conducted a survey with 717 participants to measure the impact of the Summer Reading Challenge. The survey identified that 85% of children who completed the survey reported that they read more widely as a result of participating, with 59% of children indicating that they will use the library service more often as a result of participating in the Summer Reading Challenge.

A children's reading promotion, Readers Champions was held in Larne and Magherafelt for pupils in year four, five, six and seven in eight schools (four in each town) from 7 March to 30 April 2022. Pupils were asked to visit the library and read as many library books as possible. There were prizes for the pupils who borrowed the most books in each year group and school and an additional prize for the pupil who borrowed the most books per year group per town.

Celebrating Books and Reading

Libraries NI continued its work to support readers and promote reading to all ages through 2022/23. Reading events were held in libraries across the service featuring a

mix of established, emerging and new writers. Among the highlights from the last 12 months were:

Crime Reading Month

Libraries NI worked in partnership with The Reading Agency to deliver two events for Crime Reading Month in June 2022. Local writers Sharon Dempsey, James Murphy, Kelly Creighton and Simon Maltman appeared in Lisburn Road and Ballyhackamore libraries on 7 and 20 June respectively to discuss their work with an enthusiastic audience.

Belfast Book Festival

As part of the Belfast Book Festival, Libraries NI created a pop-up library in the Crescent Arts Centre from Monday 13 to Friday 17 June 2022. Visitors were able to join the library service, borrow material and return items. Libraries NI were on site to staff the library, deliver Book Clinics, recommend book titles and deliver multiple Rhythm and Rhyme sessions.

Read With Pride (Belfast and Foyle Pride Festivals)

To celebrate Belfast Pride Festival, Belfast Central Library held a Read with Pride programme of events. Tartan Noir writer Val McDermid appeared in conversation with local crime writer Stuart Neville followed by a performance with poets Micheál McCann, Pdraig Regan and Conor Cleary. Poetry with local poets Cat Brogan and Mel Bradley also provided the focus for events in Derry Central Library to celebrate Foyle Pride.

Elmer's Big Belfast Trail

Belfast City Council hosted a family friendly art trail as a collaboration between Northern Ireland Hospice, Wild in Art and Anderson Press, which brought to life the David McKee children's book character Elmer the patchwork elephant. Uniquely decorated Elmers were positioned at key landmarks in Belfast during the summer and also travelled around Northern Ireland. At the end of the Trail the Elmers will be auctioned to raise funds for the Northern Ireland Hospice. To tie in with this, Libraries NI celebrated Elmer the Elephant story times in libraries across Northern Ireland during July and August.

Joseph Coelho Visit to Finaghy Library

Poet Joseph Coelho, Waterstones Children's Laureate visited Finaghy Library and delivered an inspiring poetry event and highlighted the vital role libraries play in inspiring a love of reading with Finaghy Primary School primary five pupils. He also gifted the children a copy of his Smile Out Loud 25 Happy Poems.

Literature Month

In November a new initiative Literature Month – Check it Out, a reader development initiative to engage people with books and reading delivered over 250 events with

3,800 people attending. Events, workshops and exhibitions included writing book reviews, Book of the Month, Belfast author Elizabeth (Betty) May, the Sam Thompson Archive and Dickens: Irish Friends and Family.

BBC Radio 2 Book Club

Libraries NI continues to work with colleagues across the UK on national reading promotions and initiatives. A key feature of this work is the Radio 2 Book Club. To mark the switch of the Book Club to the Breakfast Show, Peter Hughes joined the Breakfast Show in January and was interviewed by presenter Zoe Ball about his reading choices, favourite books, and libraries.

World Book Day

There was something for everyone on World Book Day 2 March 2023. In Derry Central Library, award-winning local author Jane Buckley spoke about her three novels to a packed audience whilst in Bangor Carnegie Library, Fionola Meredith talked about her debut novel gleaned from her career as a journalist. For children in Portglenone, Carnlough and Creggan, Andrew Whitson and Paul Howard talked about their books and the illustrations involved, taking the children through a creative session to create characters and book covers.

World Poetry Day

World Poetry Day was celebrated on 21 March 2023 with a number of libraries hosting poetry writing workshops and poetry readings for all age groups. Other libraries encouraged customers to share their favourite poems. Three libraries hosted poetry book launches during March. Bangor Carnegie hosted Maureen Anne Browne, Dundonald welcomed Paula Reel and Lynda Tavakoli visited Lisburn City Library.

Cross Border Reading Group Projects

Funded by the International Fund for Ireland, Libraries NI working in partnership with library services in Leitrim and Cavan delivered a programme of author visits and talks to a Cross Border Reading Group A Bridge Across Difference. Authors included Martina Devlin, Rachel English, Gerard Smith and Nuala O'Connor.

Education Authority (EA) Schools Admission Clinics

Clinics were delivered in partnership with the Department of Finance Go On NI Team and the Education Authority to offer help with applications for both pre/primary and post primary school places in January and February 2023. The Online Services and Service Support Team worked in partnership with staff from the Go On NI Team at the Department of Finance to timetable sessions across 29 library locations. A photo call to launch the scheme took place in Antrim Library and promoted the partnership working between Libraries NI, Department of Finance and the Education Authority. Feedback from customers showed that the added support gave them the confidence and skill to complete the complex online process.

Customer Survey 2022

Between Monday 12 September and Saturday 1 October 2022, Libraries NI conducted its fourth customer survey. The survey is held every three years and is carried out in a third of our libraries, with 34 libraries involved in 2022.

A total of 2,700 respondents completed the questionnaire either fully or in part. One of the aims of the survey is to record Libraries NI's performance against three Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The findings against these KPIs were positive as follows:

- 92% of adult library users (aged 16+) who browsed through or borrowed stock in the last 12 months agreed/strongly agreed that there was a wide variety of items available. (The KPI target is 90%)
- 98% of adult library users (aged 16+) who browsed through or borrowed stock in the last 12 months agreed/strongly agreed that the items were in good condition. (The KPI target is 90%)
- 82% of library users who had been supported by library staff to access/use library IT services or equipment in the last 12 months agreed/strongly agreed that their ability to access and use online resources/services was improved due to support provided by library staff. (The KPI target is 80%).

The survey was also used to gauge the positive impact of library programmes and service offers. At least one third of respondents reported that visiting the library had helped them with:

- feeling less isolated/meeting new people (66%)
- their studying (48%)
- learning a new skill (45%)
- understanding/knowledge of a health condition (35%)
- their career or job (35%)

Finally the survey sought to measure the positive impact reading can have on an individual's wellbeing. 87% of respondents replied that reading helped them to relax.

Give it a Go Month

A varied programme of events delivered both in libraries and virtually to encourage and inspire people of all ages to try something different or to learn a new skill during February. Topics included creative writing, photography, knitting, yoga and dance as well as classes to help get people online, family history workshops, craft sessions and chess for beginners. In total 189 events were delivered to 1,617 participants. Virtual events delivered on Zoom included a Women in Triathlon talk and three sessions delivered by Mourne Heritage Trust who provided both practical and inspirational tips and information about this stunning environment.

Stock Resources

Supporting literacy and promoting a love of reading remains at the core of our work. In 2022/23 we spent £2,334,000 on book stock (£3,503,000 in 2021/22) in a variety of formats across a range of genres with some in different languages, reflecting the multi-cultural background of library users. This equated to a spend of £1.23 per capita, based on official 2021 mid-year population estimates, against a public library standard of £2.25. While we maintained an emphasis on providing eBooks, eMagazines and audiobooks, as the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic eased and services began to return to a more stable operating environment we saw a strong recovery in loans and issues relating to physical books.

Working in Partnership

Book Week NI

Book Week NI is a joint initiative between Libraries NI and the BBC in Northern Ireland which celebrates the pleasures and benefits of books, reading and libraries. This year was the seventh annual Book Week which ran from 17 to 23 October 2022.

There were four headline events with authors in libraries across the network and online. Writers included Serena Terry, Colin Bateman, the Rev Richard Coles, John Self, Wendy Erskine and Bernie McGill. The events were live streamed, recorded and made available on the Libraries NI website. The total event attendance at these events was 542 people and the total online viewing figures was 3,622 views. This year the Open University came on board as a Book Week partner, delivering events with screenwriter Leesa Harker, Professor Teresa Cremin and author Csilla Toldy.

Love Your Library Day was celebrated on Wednesday 19 October 2022 when people were encouraged to pay a visit to their local library and to sign up for membership.

The Book Week Ambassadors who were active throughout the week included Communities Minister - Deirdre Hargey, Education Minister - Michelle McIlveen, the Head of Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) - Jayne Brady, Permanent Secretary Department of Education (DE) - Dr Mark Brown, Permanent Secretary Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) - Katrina Godfrey, Deputy Secretary Department for Communities (DfC) - Moira Doherty, Executive Dean Ulster University Business School - Professor Mark Durkin, Chief Executive Education Authority NI (EANI) - Sara Long, Director Ireland Open University - John D'Arcy, Chief Executive Translink NI - Chris Conway, NI Commissioner for Children and Young People - Koulla Yiasouma, Chief Executive of National Museums NI - Kathryn Thomson, Chief Executive Officer Parenting NI - Charlene Brooks, Children's Laureate Joseph Coelho and author - Emma Heatherington.

2022 was the first year post-Covid-19 when Book Week could be delivered without health protection restrictions in place, and the impact of the week is evident in the statistics, with a 99% increase in the number of new borrowers added and a 116% increase in book issues and renewals.

Ulster Orchestra

Libraries NI worked with the Ulster Orchestra to provide a number of informal and free classical music events in libraries during February and March 2023. Two wellbeing workshops were delivered in Chichester and Tullycarnet libraries in early February highlighting the relaxing benefits of music. During March, four lunchtime recitals took place in Carrickfergus, Coleraine, Downpatrick and Warrenpoint libraries. The recitals were enjoyed by over 250 people.

BBC in Lisburn Road Library: My Belfast Stories in Sound

In February, Lisburn Road Library facilitated the recording of a short series of talks by the BBC of local authors talking about Belfast, its people, stories and changing streetscapes. Incorporating an eclectic mix of sound recordings from the BBC's archives – some of which would not have been heard since their original broadcast - Patricia Craig, Gerry Dawe and Malachi O'Doherty talked about their childhood memories and reflected on the role of writers, musicians and the arts in shaping the city's sense of itself. This initiative was developed in association with the Belfast Civic Trust and forms part of the BBC's ongoing work with Libraries NI.

The Art that Made Us Festival

In April 2022, Libraries NI participated in the Art That Made Us Festival. As part of the festival museums, libraries, archives and galleries told the stories behind some of their collections. Libraries NI hosted exhibitions in Belfast Central Library and Armagh Heritage Library titled The Splendid Press which detailed the work of the Marcus Ward printing firm. The exhibition was comprised of a large selection of their many beautiful products, including illustrated books, cards and calendars, with the jewel in the crown being their collection of unique and lavish illuminated manuscripts.

British Film Institute (BFI) Replay Pilot

BFI Replay is a brand-new video streaming platform from the BFI designed to give access to thousands of newly digitised programmes and videos from across the 20th Century. The aim is for it to be available through public libraries across the UK. Belfast Central Library is participating as part of a core group of 12 libraries in the pilot stage of the project.

Armstrong Storytelling Trust

This year Libraries NI continued to work with the Armstrong Storytelling Trust and Libraries NI's Storyteller in Residence, Liz Weir MBE, to deliver over 201 storytelling events and activities reaching over 4,946 participants.

Libraries NI and the Armstrong Storytelling Trust work to provide storytelling activities for people of all ages throughout Northern Ireland both in libraries and within communities. Monthly Yarnspinning events run in Bangor Carnegie, Lisburn City and Tullycarnet libraries which promote the tradition and art of storytelling. Yarnspinning sessions feature guest storytellers from the island of Ireland and across the world. Special storytelling events are also held across the library network to mark initiatives

such as Good Relations Week and the Big Summer Read. This partnership is a firm foundation for storytelling to continue as an important and enduring art-form in Northern Ireland.

Mood Matters workshops delivered by AWARE NI

AWARE NI in partnership with Libraries NI delivered six Mood Matters workshops in Bangor Carnegie, Derry Central, Lisburn City, Newry City, Omagh and Suffolk libraries. The sessions aimed to improve the knowledge and skills of those attending in order to maintain or regain good mental health and also to build resilience to deal with life's challenges.

Safer Internet Day

Safer Internet Day took place on the 8 February 2023 with a mix of workshops and promotional events in 10 libraries during the week 6 – 10 February. The events promoted safer online activity, scam awareness, privacy and safer shopping online.

Out of Hours

The Out of Hours Service offering an additional 33 hours library access was launched in Omagh Library in early April. The infrastructure was funded by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) with Omagh an addition to the original six rural Out of Hours locations. The launch event highlighted library services to stakeholders, partners and customers. Further capital funding from DAERA provided the infrastructure for an additional Out of Hours service in Banbridge Library.

Online Services and Programmes

Digital Inclusion Activities

We delivered over 479 digital inclusion sessions focusing on modules including Introduction to iPad, Scam Awareness, Researching your Family Tree along with support to use the wide range of e-resources available to customers. eClinics offering advice and support to customers experiencing issues across a range of mobile devices proved very popular.

Cultural Heritage Services

Libraries NI's Cultural Heritage collections offered services from the nine main Heritage locations which now include Armagh Regional Administration Centre, the new home of the relocated Cultural Heritage Service Library. Launched in October by the Chairperson of Services Committee, Councillor Cathal Mallaghan, attendees included elected representatives, (MP, MLA, Councillors), representatives from local museums, Armagh Observatory and Planetarium, local historical and family history societies and schools.

Cultural Heritage resources were promoted through four new pop up exhibitions showcasing the Marcus Ward and Sam Thompson archives in Belfast Central Library, the Bigger and McDonald photographic collection in Derry Central Library and the

Ireland's Saturday Night newspaper collection from the Newspaper Library, Belfast Central Library.

The Built Heritage

Libraries NI has 98 libraries with 10 of these listed buildings and three original Carnegie Libraries. Recognising the importance of conserving and preserving our built heritage and protecting the Carnegie Libraries, Bangor, Falls Road, Lurgan social and architectural legacies, a booklet Heritage Place-shaping Case Study: Lurgan Carnegie Library (<https://www.librariesni.org.uk/libraries/county-armagh/lurgan-library/>) was drafted, produced and circulated to the Heritage community in March 2023.

Heritage from Home

Following the success of the last two Heritage from Home series of online talks, Heritage from Home 3 was delivered from September 2022 to March 2023, attracting audiences of over 850. The theme was migration and the talks explored the movement of people, contemporary and historical in, out of and across Ireland. Topics covered culture, the environment, family history, census, literature and historical events.

Healing Through Remembering Exhibition “Everyday objects transformed by the conflict”

This exhibition told unique and everyday stories through a range of objects including a bin lid and a bulletproof clipboard and offered a glimpse into the memories of individuals. The exhibition helped visitors explore the nature, causes and effects of conflict. The exhibition was on loan to Libraries NI for 12 months from April 2022 and toured 25 libraries.

Chinese and British Exhibition

A British Library exhibition co-curated by Dr Lucienne Loh, University of Liverpool, and Dr Alex Tickell, Open University, in collaboration with the British Library drew on personal stories and moments of national significance to ask what it means to be Chinese and British. The exhibition reflected on the long history of Chinese communities who have been calling the UK home and have played an active part in British society for over 300 years. The exhibition also celebrated the lasting impact of Chinese communities from wartime service and contributions to popular cuisine, to achievements in literature, sport, music, fashion and film. The exhibition, which traces this history through photographs and manuscripts toured Ballymena, Belfast Central, Enniskillen and Omagh libraries.

Health Activities

Health Fairs

Libraries NI worked with partners to deliver health fairs in Ballymena, Lisburn City, and Portadown libraries. The fairs enable the public to engage with up to 30 health partner organisations and allows us to promote our positive health and well-being resources.

Children's Mental Health Week

As part of the Children's Mental Health Week initiative (6-12 February 2023) all libraries provided postcards for children to write an uplifting and welcoming message which were subsequently displayed in each library. Children from Ormeau Road Library also completed Let's Connect postcards, writing messages of welcome to refugee children living in local hotel provision. Thirty postcards were then distributed to the children by the EA's Intercultural Education Team.

Shelf Help and Reading Well collections in libraries were promoted through an interview published in the Belfast Telegraph. Other programming during the week included Catherine Wells, Occupational Therapist providing daily well-being messages posted on social media.

Other Events and Activities

European Heritage Open Days

European Heritage Open Days (EHOD), Northern Ireland's annual celebration of local architecture, history and culture took place in September 2022, with more than 200 of Northern Ireland's historic buildings and monuments, landmarks and hidden gems offering free entry. Libraries NI participated with two tours of Belfast Central Library on Saturday 10 September. Belfast Central Library is a fine example of a Victorian public building and the tours showcased the architectural features and the history of the library.

Good Relations Week

Many library events delivered on an ongoing basis across the year naturally have an emphasis on promoting good relations between individuals and groups. So whilst Libraries NI did not officially take part in Good Relations Week 2022, activities were delivered each month where groups of people come together to share common interests and skills. These included Pride Festivals, author/speaker events, newcomer and refugee activities, focus group sessions, Men's Shed activity mornings, book launches and exhibitions.

Burns Night

Seven events were delivered as part of Burns Night including storytelling with the Ulster Scots Agency, craft sessions and a tasting event with haggis, neeps and tatties. Banbridge Library hosted a talk by Matthew Warwick, Ulster Scots Agency, with highland dancers and a piper. Belfast Central Library hosted an exhibition and Carrickfergus Library held a special Knit and Natter event celebrating the life of Robert Burns.

Holocaust Memorial Day

Holocaust Memorial Day took place on 27 January 2023. Events took place in 31 libraries celebrating the theme of Ordinary People ranging from film screenings, book group readings, displays and a special Holocaust storytime delivered by Sharon

Dickson, Armstrong Storytelling Trust in Chichester Library. A Holocaust themed community art exhibition was launched by the Mayor in Bangor Carnegie Library and Belfast Central Library hosted artwork produced by Hydebank Wood College in partnership with the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust.

Stephen Lawrence Day

Libraries NI participated in Stephen Lawrence Day on 22 April 2022, the 29th anniversary of Stephen's murder at a bus stop in South East London when he was aged 18. Stephen Lawrence Day celebrates the part we all play in creating a society in which everyone can flourish. It is an opportunity for children and young people to have their voices heard, make the changes they would like to see and create a society that treats everyone with fairness and respect. Ballymena, Dungannon, Ormeau Road and Portadown libraries all hosted a display to mark this date. For more details see www.stephenlawrenceday.org.

Northern Ireland Science Festival

During NI Science Festival 2023 Science Starz delivered two practical and fun sessions for children aged 8 - 12 years in Colin Glen and Holywood Arches libraries. These were well attended and were a great opportunity for children to be engaged and enthused by Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) activities. Science Starz also provided 150 science packs, each containing a safe and simple science activity including make your own bath bomb to growing seed head characters.

Belfast Festival of Learning

A range of learning opportunities were available to adults and children in libraries across Belfast as part of the annual Belfast Festival of Learning Week lead by Belfast City Council to celebrate the UNESCO Learning City Award. Highlights included digital learning sessions, an author visit and two science workshops from the Royal Academy of Engineering. The events were launched in Belfast City Hall and Libraries NI's presence in the programme of events was noted with over 35 events submitted across all libraries in the city.

Rural Needs

Libraries NI serves the rural population through its network of libraries, mobile libraries and Homecall Service. 29 libraries are designated as rural, serving populations of up to 5,000 and there are also 19 libraries with over 40/50% of the catchment areas rural.

In providing services to rural areas, Libraries NI collaborates, co-designs and works in partnership to host, facilitate and deliver relevant library services and programmes.

All libraries in rural areas offer activities for adults and children which address language, literacy, social skills, social isolation, and Digital Choices. Additionally some rural libraries offer galleries, meeting rooms, creative spaces, host exhibitions, reading groups, storytelling sessions and participate in village and town community festivals.

In 2022/23, libraries continued to provide important services to rural dwellers including Mobile Library services, Homecall and BookBox as well as online resources such as eBooks, eNewspapers and eMagazines which are available to everyone.

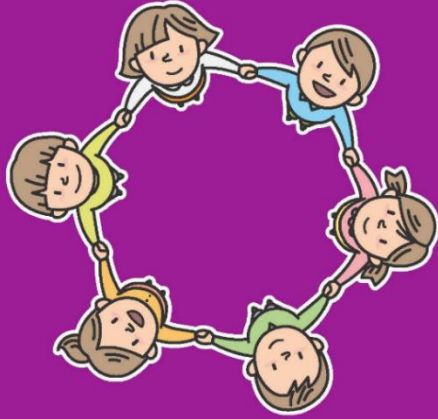
The Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 has applied to Libraries NI since 2018 requiring the organisation to have due regard to rural needs when developing, implementing or revising policies, strategies and plans, and when designing and delivering public services. Of the 17 policies/strategies/plans which were subject to a Rural Needs Impact Assessment during 2022/23, no specific rural needs actions were identified.

Outcome-Based Approach (OBA)

We continued to implement an OBA approach to performance measurement with the Summer Reading Challenge 2022 and SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder) Lamps.

Summer Reading Challenge 2022

How much?



13,049
children took part
in branches

393
events

7,502
children completed
in branch

3,741
instances of
participation



160,264
books were borrowed



238,817
reach/impressions

2,851
engagement

How well did we do?

99.3%

said that they enjoyed taking part

85.1%

said that they read different types of books

59.2%

said that they would visit the library more often

“The Summer Reading Challenge has deepened my child's love for books and made the returning of this books even more exciting. Good job to all involved.”

- A Larne Mum

“Coming and borrowing new books every week has been one of the highlights of our summer and we will keep coming even after the scheme has finished.”

- A Muckamore Mum

So what?

“The Summer Reading Challenge was a great way for my kids to keep up their reading skills during July and August. The targets set helped them stay focused and the acknowledgement at the end of the challenge gave them great confidence. This enjoyment continued as they have gone back to school in September. A thoroughly enjoyable and positive experience for all four of my children.”

- A Portaferry Mum

“This has really built on their reading skills and confidence in reading.”

- A Saintfield Mum

What does taking part in the Summer Reading Challenge mean to children and parents?



SAD Lightbox



How Much

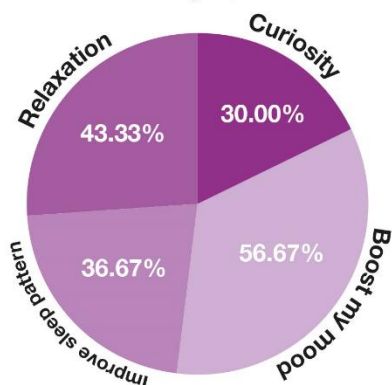
36 SAD Lamps
loaned via the Home Call Service

Loan period was for around
5 Months

Evaluation at the end of the loan showed that

51.61% of respondents used the lamps every day
16.13% used it a few times a week (3+).

Reasons for taking up the loan offer:



How Well

When asked if they would use a SAD lamp again during the winter months
76.92% of respondents said

When asked if they would like to keep the SAD lamp for longer than the winter months
72.22% of respondents said

Yes Yes

Only **36.4%** rated their mood as Good to Excellent before use, while **77.3%** did after use.

So What

Just generally makes me feel much better. Noticed the difference from the first time I used it. I haven't been physically outside since 2017, and this has made a huge difference to my life.

Regulated sleep pattern very well, pretty much worked for the first time in years. I'm so impressed, I can't believe how well it makes me feel. I'm recommending to all my friends! Helped me get through dark days of winter and much more easily.

It helped me sleep better. Also I found my energy level had improved.

Residential home, so used it in groups of 4/5 as they got their tea in the morning.

Liaison with Library Services Elsewhere and Professional Library Organisations

During the year we continued to maintain contact with other library services and library organisations to share information, best practice, trends in the Library and Information world, and approaches to developing new services and professional practice. This included Senior Manager engagement on a number of UK and ROI professional organisations including the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) UK, CILIP Ireland, the Library Association of Ireland (LAI), Libraries Connected and the British Library.

The Chief Executive, Jim O'Hagan, presented on Libraries NI's success and challenges as the largest single library authority in the UK at the Irish County and City Librarians Seminar in the Autumn 2022 as well as meeting with Isobel Hunter and Ayub Khan, Chief Executive and President of Libraries Connected, in October 2022 and discussing a new Public Library Strategy for Northern Ireland, the new English Public Library Strategy and training and development opportunities.

Ms Julie Reid, Deputy Head of Service, was elected as Chair of CILIP Ireland at the Annual General Meeting held in November and during her period in office will develop activities that promote the library and information profession, advocate among key decision makers in Government and support CILIP Ireland members to develop their professional skills and standards. Two other Libraries NI Officers also serve on the Committee, Nikki Terlik, Senior Services Manager, as Secretary, and Stuart Temple, District Officer, as Student and New Professionals Officer. Libraries NI staff also attended the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) World Congress in Dublin and the Edge Conference in Edinburgh.

Marketing and Communications

As our services continued to recover from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic the focus of marketing and communications activity in 2022/23 was on connecting with our users, re-engaging with established customers and encouraging new people to visit our libraries, borrow books, attend events and use services such as computers and Wi-Fi.

Despite the challenging financial environment, 2022/23 saw the delivery of the second year of a committed advertising programme. The first phase of this integrated campaign focused on promotion through advertising in Adshels/Adshel Live (at public transport stops) and exterior poster sites, with an emphasis leading up to Book Week NI. There were also digital advertising initiatives during this phase which supported social media on the corporate platforms during Book Week NI delivering an increased reach of 59% over the previous year. The second phase of the campaign utilised radio advertising to support and promote the Give it a Go programme of events and activities held in February.

The theme of Opening Minds Together underpinned the images, graphics and narrative content of the advertising campaign and radio segments, emphasising the benefits of joining and using the library to inform and educate children, as a source of support during the cost of living crisis, a free access point to online eResources and a

place of entertainment and relaxation. During the key periods of advertising, it was evident that significant numbers of people became members of the library with the number of people joining during the key months of advertising: September and October 2022, January and February 2023 being some 54% higher on average compared against similar periods in the previous six years.

The amalgamation of individual Branch Library Facebook pages into local Council groupings was also completed during the year and this facilitates improved promotion of library events and news in individual council areas whilst also encouraging greater communication links with local community planning partners. 2022/23 also saw an increase in collaboration with the Department for Communities internal communications teams to promote library services and activities within the department and wider NI Civil Service whilst also, in return, there was improved promotion of departmental and central government communications to the general public in libraries through digital messaging and literature distribution.

Assets

While resourcing the maintenance and upgrading of the estate continued to present challenges a range of projects aimed at improving public library facilities were delivered, including the following:

- design works were completed to pre-tender stage for replacement of Fivemiletown and Enniskillen libraries
- projects to install LED lighting at Ballycastle, Strathfoyle, Castlederg, Maghera, Cushendall and Glengormley libraries were completed, and solar PV panels installed at Newry, Shantallow and Omagh libraries
- feasibility design studies for future projects aimed at creating highly efficient low energy buildings were commenced for Ballymoney, Bessbrook and Killyleagh libraries
- upgraded and enlarged toilet facilities were created in Warrenpoint and Tullycarnet libraries
- Downpatrick and Limavady libraries benefited from the installation of new standalone energy efficient heating systems, energy efficient lighting and improved ventilation systems
- remedial works to address water penetration were completed at Falls Road Library and repairs to external masonry undertaken at Belfast Central Library, securing and preserving the fabric of these important historic listed buildings
- a significant refurbishment of Greenisland library was delivered upgrading the external fabric of the building, installing a new energy efficient heat pump heating system and refreshing the internal finishes and staff accommodation
- work was completed at Dundonald library to create a new pedestrian path from the car park, remodelling of the car park, upgrading of fascia and verges and the installation of LED lighting internally.

Finance, Payroll and Procurement

Libraries NI is a designated body for the purposes of the Whole of Government Accounts. Recovering from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Whole of Government Accounts (WGA) consolidation exercise for 2020/21 and 2021/22 were completed during 2022/23.

The indicative 2022/23 financial resource allocation was initially insufficient to meet the full needs of the service and the influence of high inflation generally and increased energy and utilities costs created significant pressures for the organisation. While the government Energy Support Scheme provided some assistance it was not until a confirmed budget was allocated in December that sufficient resources were available to allow expenditure to be managed within the 2022/23 budget envelope.

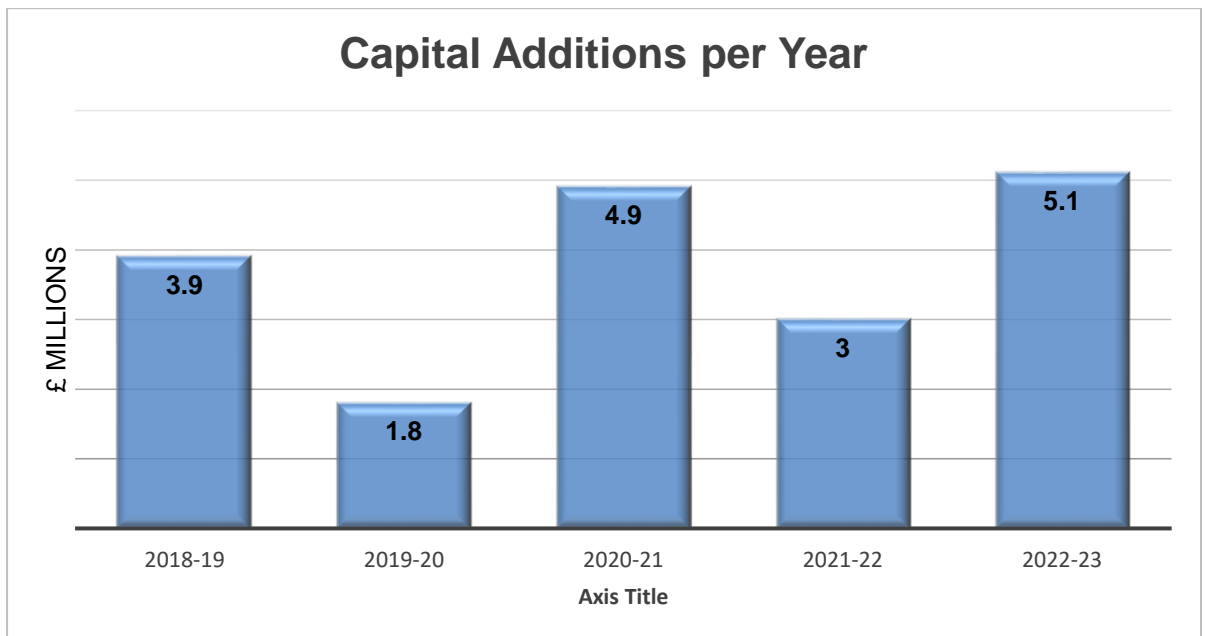
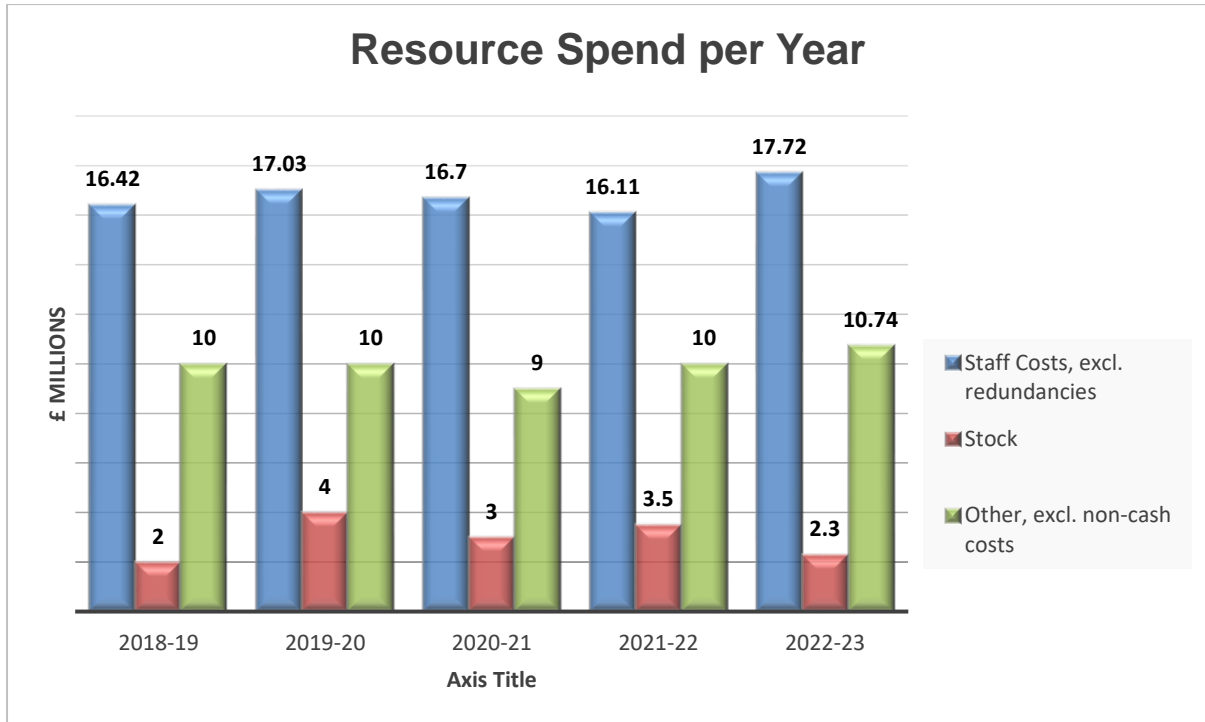
Following implementation of a new payroll system in April 2022, the Payroll Team continued to work with the Intelligent Customer Unit (ICU) and the Managed Services provider teams to develop and successfully bed-in the new system. In February 2023, Libraries NI went live with running a payroll service for the Maze Long Kesh Development Corporation.

2022/23 saw the finance team develop the specification for and complete procurement of a suite of new software systems to support planning, budgeting, financial accounting, reporting, card and online payments, with increased levels of integration and automation. The team worked with the successful suppliers to design, develop and test systems. The new core system – Microsoft Business Central – went live on 1 April 2023, with a second phase of development due to be completed in 2023/24.

The Procurement Team conducted a number of in-house procurements and supported managers on larger procurement exercises by liaising between Libraries NI management and the Education Authority CoPE, the Construction and Procurement Delivery CoPE and the Procurement Team in DfC, to deliver value for money and propriety in the procurement of goods and services.

The Finance and Payroll teams took part in the biannual 2022/23 National Fraud Initiative data matching exercise, to assist the government in identifying potential fraud. The results will be investigated and reported by March 2024.

The following tables show the long-term spend trends in relation to resource and capital and reflect the reducing baseline resource budgets available and the variability of capital allocations.



Finance, Payroll and Procurement teams continued to successfully operate hybrid home/office working throughout 2022/23, making use of appropriate ICT technology to ensure efficient and effective working.

The performance of payment of suppliers within 30 working days was maintained at 98% (2021/22 98%), however performance on the average 10-day payment target fell to 82% (2021/22 90%).

Human Resources

The HR department is responsible for the coordination of staff-related functions for Libraries NI. It has key functional areas pertaining to resourcing, equality and diversity, induction, learning and development, employee relations, and the health, wellbeing and engagement of staff. The HR department works closely with other departments to ensure compliance with government legislation, to support the development of our people and create an inclusive workplace culture.

Resourcing

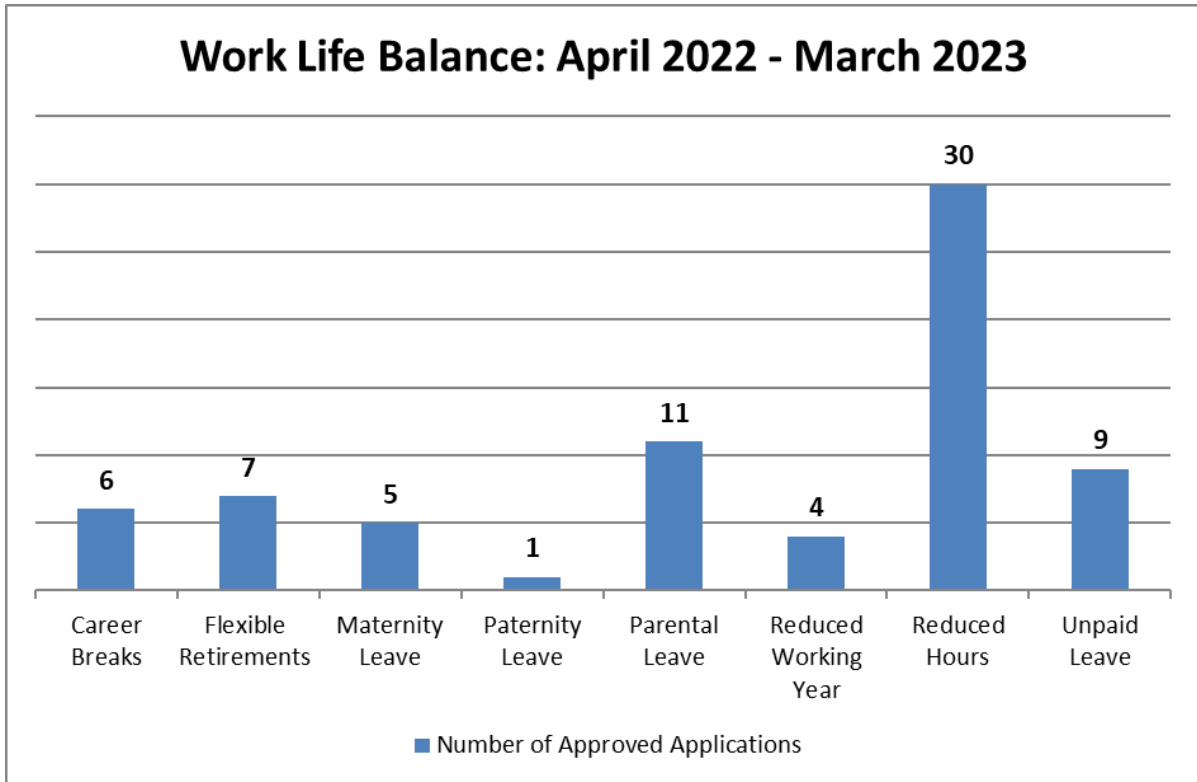
During 2022/2023 there were 123 recruitment exercises carried out with a total of 995 application forms received. This compared to 118 recruitment exercises carried out in the previous year when a total of 918 applications were received.

Agency Support

Agency supply was obtained under the Libraries NI Temporary Agency Worker Framework. In 2022/2023, HR processed a total of 422 requests for agency workers, equating to 62 full-time posts for the year. Agency workers were used predominantly to support short-term business needs including sickness cover, project backfill and vacancies. The majority of requests were for customer service roles at first entry recruitment grade.

Employee Relations

Libraries NI is committed to providing a range of flexible working arrangements which create more inclusive, diverse and productive workplaces that suit both the needs of the organisation and its staff and has a range of policy and procedures to support staff. During 2022/23, 73 applications for Work Life Balance adjustments were approved, as shown by type in the following graph (62 applications were approved in 2021/22).

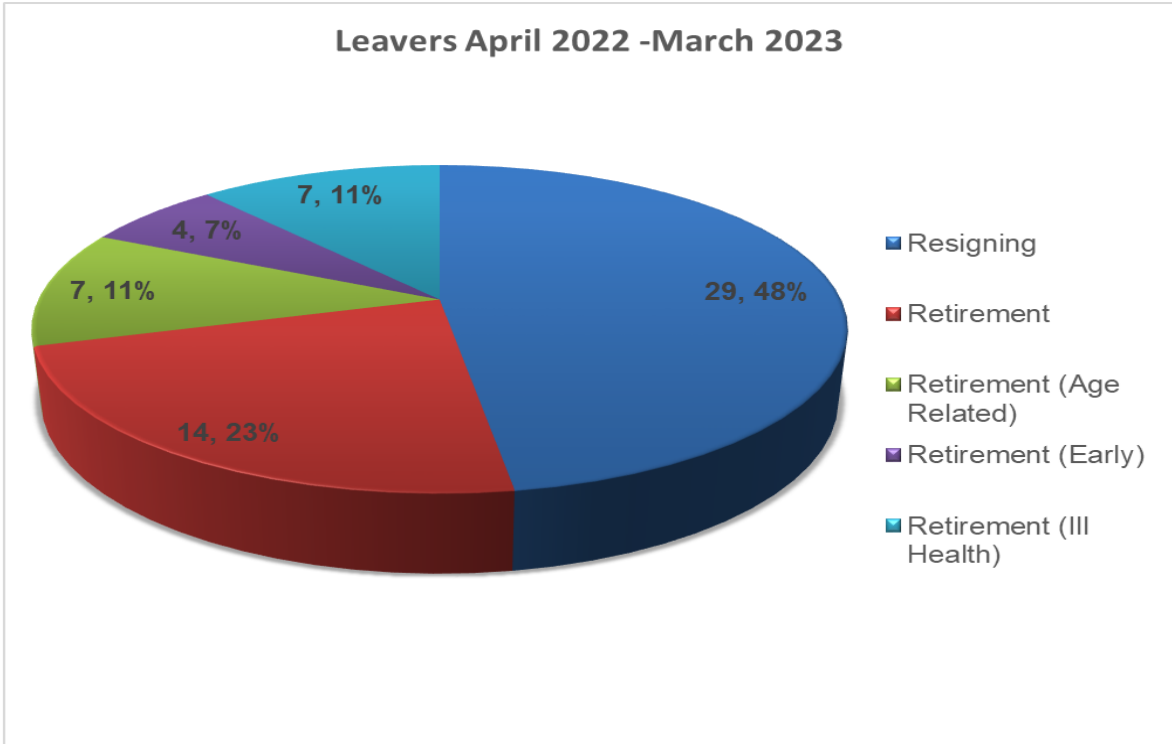


Employee Engagement and Trade Union Relationships

Employee engagement and Trade Union consultation takes place regularly in Libraries NI to promote and support a culture motivated to contribute to organisational success, engendering positive employment relationships and an enhanced sense of employee wellbeing. Libraries NI works closely with recognised Trade Unions through the forum of a Negotiating Committee which formally meets quarterly and includes representation from the recognised independent Trade Unions and Management. In 2022/23, time off with pay equating to FTE 0.9 was granted to elected Trade Union representatives to attend industrial relations duties.

Leavers

During 2022/23, 61 staff left the employment of Libraries NI. The reasons are shown in the chart below. This was a decrease of 18.67% from 2021/22, when 75 employees left employment with Libraries NI.



Pension

During 2022/23, HR reassessed pension contribution bandings for all staff who were members of the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers’ Superannuation Scheme (NILGOSC). Following reassessment, all members were notified of their specific pension contribution rate. This resulted in 130 pension banding changes being processed. In addition, six members returning from an authorised unpaid period of absence were notified of their eligibility to apply to pay Additional Pension Contributions (APC) to cover lost pension. Three members took up this opportunity.

Health and Wellbeing

During 2022/23, HR Health and Wellbeing continued to provide staff with a work environment and opportunities that encouraged and enabled them to lead healthy lives and make choices that support their overall wellbeing inside and outside of work. Libraries NI recognised the continued challenges posed to staff post Covid-19 and a wide range of health and wellbeing information and initiatives were regularly communicated to staff through the Health and Wellbeing area of the Staff Intranet, email communications, HR News and the staff newsletter ‘Inform’. This included information about employee assistance programmes, support agencies and material to promote and support good mental health, a healthy lifestyle and access to not-for-profit private healthcare and staff engagement days.

HR continues to work collaboratively with managers and trade unions to manage sickness absence and provide a supportive employee culture. Libraries NI saw an increase in its overall absence rates compared to the previous year. It is recognised that Covid-19 gave rise to different working practices which contributed to the low absence levels experienced in the preceding year and that as these influences wane a post-pandemic rise in absence rates is evident. Libraries NI Managing Attendance

at Work Policy, access to Occupational Health and Employee Assistance and the development of line managers continues to play an important role in the proactive support of employees and management of attendance at work.

In 2022/23, the confidential counselling service provided by Inspire Workplaces was accessed by employees on 107 occasions compared to 69 during 2021/22. HR facilitated 10 eye tests. The Occupational Health Service is accessed under the Education Authority CoPE, and provided by Birmingham Hospital Saturday Fund (BHSF). During 2022/23, 141 medical referrals were attended by 65 employees and were predominantly carried out using remote video technology. Of the 141 referrals, 121 related to employees who were absent from work through illness; 15 were for various other health related matters and five pre-employment medical checks were completed. Some employees attended more than one medical assessment. In 2022/23 medical referrals increased by 19.1% when compared to 2021/22.

Following medical assessment, workplace adjustments were facilitated for 31 employees, 23* on a temporary basis and 11* on a permanent basis and 22 employees returned to work through a phased return to work programme. All remaining cases were kept under review resulting in a return to work or ill health retirement or redeployment. (*three staff had both a temporary and permanent adjustment).

Staff Learning and Development

In-house learning and development continued to play a key role in equipping staff with the necessary information and support to deliver their roles. During 2022/23 a range of training programmes were delivered both virtually and in-person by various teams. Topics included delivering Rhythm and Rhyme, procurement, business case drafting and recruitment and selection.

Delivery of other training interventions were facilitated by external resources, including First Aid at Work, Driver CPC, a programme of Customer Service Training to frontline managers, facilitation skills, report writing, minute taking and managing cancer in the workplace.

Staff were given the opportunity to attend a range of professional development courses, workshops and conferences. These included: CILIP/LAI Joint Conference, Edge Conference, ABC Culture Conference, Harkin Conference and Conducting Focus Group training with the Social Research Association.

In 2022/23 two senior members of staff commenced the Chief Executives' Forum's Transformative Leader programme.

The Service Level Agreement with the Centre for Applied Learning for access to their suite of online learning modules continued to be used during 2022/23 both for mandatory modules (Fire Safety Awareness, Responsible for Information) as well as providing opportunities for staff to enhance their knowledge and skills through the Click and Learn initiative, resulting in a total of 543 modules completed in 2022/23. These included Customer Care - Managing Customer Expectations, Managing Personal Stress and Resilience, Effective Time Management, Dealing with Difficult Situations, Unconscious Bias.

Information Systems

The major information systems maintained and supported during 2022/23 in Libraries NI were:

- a Public Access Network which delivers services to library users and includes:
 - provision of public access computer terminals (public computers), including appropriate technology to facilitate use by people with disabilities
 - wireless (Wi-Fi) access in libraries to support the use of customers' own devices
 - a Virtual Library on a multi-platform basis to enable 24/7 access to library services outside the library environment, including a suite of electronic information resources e.g., eBooks and downloadable audiobooks
 - a Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) enabled Library Management System
 - delivering a more integrated approach to resource management and facilitating greater stock security as well as enabling customers to access services
 - RFID enabled kiosks in selected libraries to enable self-service facilities for library users to release staff to provide added value programmes
 - provision of an Out of Hours service using RFID and related technology
- a corporate network and series of business applications to facilitate the work of the Finance, Human Resources and Assets Management units
- service-wide telephony
- a management information and business intelligence solution to enable the production of better qualitative data and information to support decision-making.

All these systems and associated support services are delivered through managed service contracts administered by the Libraries NI Intelligent Customer Unit with an extensive list of performance criteria and availability of service levels monitored each month. During 2022/23 overall performance was good against the contractual service model and all major service levels were met with only very minor exceptions.

As part of an overall Information Systems (IS) Programme, a major project was completed during 2022/23 to improve the Libraries NI ICT network. This improved network is being delivered through the Public Sector Shared Network (PSSN) contract and provides enhanced systems performance through increased bandwidth to all public libraries across Northern Ireland.

A major project continued during 2022/23 to secure replacement arrangements for the e2 managed service contract which terminated on 30 September 2022. The procurement process for this project, known as e3, was completed with the new

contract commencing on 1 October 2022. A major e3 project implementation phase followed, and development of new and improved business applications continued throughout the remainder of 2022/23 with systems and services scheduled to “go live” early in the 2023/24 financial year.

Sustainability

Sustainable development is based on balancing social, economic and environmental costs and benefits to ensure that human activities do not irreversibly damage the environment. The Libraries NI Environmental Policy supports the work undertaken to manage energy consumption and CO₂ emissions and to comply with best practice and statutory requirements.

Throughout 2022/23, Libraries NI have continued to contribute to the Department for Communities Climate Change Working Group, a forum which facilitated the sharing of information and learning and the development of collective approaches to addressing climate change issues.

While 2022/23 saw a return to pre-Covid-19 levels of activity and service provision, the alternative approaches to working and delivering services developed during the pandemic (hybrid working, online service delivery etc.) continued to have a positive impact on our energy consumption and CO₂ emissions.

Information on Libraries NI’s approach and achievements in relation to sustainability is shown below:

- CO₂ emissions from the Libraries NI estate decreased by 0.29% in comparison to 2021/22
- all new major construction projects received a sustainable design brief with appropriate design parameters and criteria including sustainable and legal timber sourcing, site waste management plans and promotion of the Achieving Excellence in Construction initiative. New buildings were designed to include measures to minimise energy in construction and in use, eliminate pollution and minimise waste, preserve and enhance biodiversity, conserve water resources and make the best use of local transport links. In line with the Department’s policy, all new construction projects were set a target of achieving a Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) ‘Excellent’ rating to describe the building’s environmental performance
- projects were completed at Downpatrick and Limavady libraries to disconnect from the existing shared fossil fuelled heating systems and replace these with highly efficient air to air heat pumps to provide the libraries with their own dedicated heating systems. The fabric to the buildings were also upgraded to improve thermal efficiency
- work at Belfast Central Library to replace the roof finish at the rear of the building concluded providing high performance roof insulation to improve the thermal efficiency of the building
- feasibility and preparatory projects were undertaken to design future low

carbon retrofit and refurbishment schemes to PassivHaus standard at Ballymoney, Bessbrook and Killyleagh Libraries aimed at making these buildings as energy efficient as possible

- schemes were completed at Ballycastle, Castlederg, Cushendall, Dundonald, Falls Road, Glengormley, Maghera, Strathfoyle, Tullycarnet and Warrenpoint Libraries to install LED lighting throughout to improve energy efficiency
- work was also completed to install Photovoltaic panels at Newry and Shantallow Libraries
- the refurbishment of Greenisland Library was completed which included improvements to thermal efficiency by upgrading roof insulation and the installation of an energy efficient heat pump system
- statutory servicing and maintenance was carried out to all heating appliances across the library estate to ensure all systems were running at optimum efficiency
- energy assessments were undertaken, Display Energy Certificates and Energy Performance Certificates together with Air Conditioning Inspection Certificates were supplied to all appropriate sites with 100% of all applicable properties receiving a non-default rating
- a new vehicle commissioned in 2022/23 was fitted with EURO6 compliant engines and an AdBlue exhaust additive system, increasing fuel efficiency and reducing our nitrogen dioxide and diesel particulate emissions
- further development of the Libraries NI Single Use Plastics Reduction Action Plan took place with a view to identifying actions, setting timescales and providing guidance to support the reduction and eventual elimination of single use plastics from our estate, business and procurement activities



Dr Jim O'Hagan
Chief Executive

Date: 12 October 2023

Accountability Report

Corporate Governance Report

Directors' Report

The Board of Libraries NI, when fully constituted, comprises a Chairperson and 18 Members, of whom a majority are Councillors, within the meaning of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972. All Members of the Board are appointed by the Minister of the Sponsor Department.

The following served as Members of the Board during the year:

Professor Bernard Cullen	Chairperson
Alderman Thomas Burns	
Councillor Alistair Cathcart	
Councillor Glenn Finlay ¹	
Councillor Julie Gilmour	Vice-Chairperson
Councillor Cheryl Brownlee	
Mrs Deirdre Kenny	
Councillor Donal Lyons	
Councillor Cathal Mallaghan	
Mrs Wendy Osborne OBE	
Mr John Peto	
Mr Harry Reid	
Dr Margaret Ward	
Councillor Billy Webb MBE JP	
Miss Linda Wilson	

¹Councillor Glenn Finlay, sadly died on 15 June 2022

Organisational Structure

In the period covered by this Annual Report, Libraries NI was structured on the basis of the Chief Executive's Department and two Directorates, as detailed in the following paragraphs.

Chief Executive's Department

The Chief Executive's Department provides services to Board Members, other Departments, libraries and the general public and comprises:

- the Board Secretariat, which provides administrative and secretarial support for the Board and the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee
- Internal Audit, which provides assurance to the Chief Executive, as Accounting Officer, on the adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation's systems of risk management, control and governance.

Library Services Directorate

Director: Adrienne Adair (from 1 November 2022)

The Director of Library Services is responsible for the leadership, management, development and delivery of high quality, effective and efficient services to the public through:

- the Public Library Network, comprising branch, mobile and heritage libraries and related online and outreach services
- the service priorities, which are concerned with:
 - encouraging people to read, to read more widely and to get more from their reading
 - providing services and programmes which encourage children to become confident readers who enjoy reading
 - promoting digital inclusion through supported access to computers and Wi-Fi and to skills development opportunities
 - preserving, promoting and improving the accessibility of important material related to our cultural heritage
 - providing and supporting formal and informal learning experiences and opportunities for children and adults
 - providing people with access to current and relevant information in printed and online formats and developing information literacy skills
 - facilitating greater community participation in, and access to, cultural activities
 - providing access to information and activities which promote health and wellbeing
- Resources and Bibliographic Services which include the acquisition and cataloguing of stock, the request and inter-library loan service and the exploitation, editing, circulation, promotion and disposal of stock
- Marketing and Communications which is concerned with internal and external communications and promotion, developing the Libraries NI brand and market research.

Business Support Directorate

Director: Desmond Miskelly

The Director of Business Support is responsible for the leadership, management, development and delivery of a range of services which support the provision of high-quality public library services:

- the Assets Management Unit is responsible for the management, maintenance and development of the organisation's physical assets including land, property and vehicles and for progressing capital development programmes
- the Finance Unit, consisting of Finance, Payroll and Procurement, is responsible for the provision of quality financial information to support

decision-making, with the aim of meeting financial targets and reporting requirements, while complying with corporate governance requirements in relation to financial and procurement matters

- the Human Resources Unit is responsible for advice, support and guidance on employment practices, people management, health and wellbeing, trade union and staff engagement and staff learning and development issues, with the aim of achieving a skilled, motivated, flexible and diverse workforce
- Information Systems comprising of:
 - the Intelligent Customer Unit (ICU) which is responsible for managing the delivery of all services relating to electronic library information systems through the e2 and from October 2022, the e3 contracts
 - the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Unit which is responsible for the support of information systems in Libraries NI
 - Information Governance which ensures that Libraries NI fulfils its responsibilities in respect of the requirements of Freedom of Information and Data Protection legislation and implements best practice in the discipline of records management
 - Business Analysis which ensures that Libraries NI is provided with appropriate management information and produces official statistics.

Register of Interests

None of the Board Members, members of the key management staff or other related parties have undertaken any material transactions with Libraries NI during the year.

A Register of Members' Interests and a Register of Interests of the Chief Executive and Directors has been published on the Libraries NI website (www.librariesni.org.uk) and can also be inspected on application to the Chief Executive's Department.

Libraries NI have arrangements in place to manage the reporting on and recording of conflicts of interest, details of the policy and process governing the management of conflicts of interests is available on the Libraries NI website (www.librariesni.org.uk).

Personal Data

There were no incidents of data loss during 2022/23 which required notification to the Information Commissioner.

Corporate Governance Arrangements

Libraries NI, through its Committee structure, maintains and reviews the system of internal control within the organisation by continually monitoring the service being provided to customers to ensure that it meets its objectives. The Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee reports to the Board on audit activity, including risk management.

The organisation has complied with the terms of current relevant Dear Accounting Officer (DAO) letters issued by the Department of Finance (DoF). In particular, grant

and grant in aid received from the Sponsor Department has been used for the purposes intended. There was no novel or contentious expenditure for which relevant Departmental approval was not obtained. All other financial transactions conformed to the authorities which governed them, including delegated authority to commit or incur expenditure, and approvals were sought from the Department where required.

An Anti-Fraud Policy, Fraud Response Plan, Fraud Risk Analysis, Anti-Bribery Policy and Whistleblowing Policy (Raising a Concern) are in place. In accordance with agreed procedures all suspected and proven frauds should be notified to the Sponsor Department and other relevant bodies. There were no suspected frauds reported during 2022/23.

An Internal Audit function, which is compliant with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) is in place within Libraries NI. At each meeting of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, the Head of Internal Audit reports on issues arising from internal audit reports and provides an opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the systems of risk, control and governance together with recommendations for improvement. The Head of Internal Audit's opinion is a key element of the framework of assurance that the Chief Executive needs to inform the completion of the Governance Statement.

The Libraries NI Head of Internal Audit is a qualified fraud investigator and will conduct all fraud investigations unless, by exception, additional resources or advice are required from the Department which has a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the NICS Group Internal Audit and Fraud Investigation Service to conduct fraud investigations.

Four Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meetings were held during the year. The Chief Executive, the Director of Business Support and the Head of Internal Audit attended all meetings. Representatives of the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) and the Department are invited to attend all meetings of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and are provided with a full set of papers for each meeting, including copies of all Internal Audit reports.

The Board of Libraries NI, via the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, received periodic reports concerning risk management, internal control and governance. During the year, specific attention was given to the control arrangements relating to mission critical projects.

Essential Contractual Arrangements

Libraries NI uses a number of collaborative framework contracts to purchase goods and services. Procurement for the supply of goods and services, including estate-related services, is facilitated by the DfC Procurement Team, a Centre of Procurement Excellence (CoPE) or in line with procurement advice provided by a CoPE. All contracts are evaluated on a best value for money basis, which may consider cost and quality factors. All contracts awarded by Libraries NI are a matter of public record and details are available on the Libraries NI website (www.librariesni.org.uk).

For the period under review, Libraries NI was involved in a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) contract for the provision of a serviced facility at the Lisburn City Library and an agreement to use the Public Sector Shared Network Contract. In October 2022 the managed services contract for the provision of IT services to all library locations was replaced by e3. The new contract is for seven years, with options to extend for a further three years.

Customer Feedback

Libraries NI welcomes feedback from its customers about their experiences of our services. Feedback allows us to identify and repeat what is good, address any problems with the service, and helps us improve what we do and how we do it.

2022/23 again saw a rise in the overall number of items of feedback received to 668 (387 in 2021/22) reflecting the post-pandemic return to normal service delivery and the increased direct interactions between our staff and library users. The percentage of complimentary feedback remains high at 63% with customers continuing to express appreciation for services offered and received along with thanks to particular members of staff or teams of staff for excellent customer service

Customer feedback continues to provide a valuable point of contact with those who use our services and a source of learning for the organisation, highlighting good practice and high levels of customer service while also bringing to our attention aspects of our services where improvements can be made. Although we have moved beyond the severest impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic there will undoubtedly be new challenges in the years ahead and the views and opinions of the people who visit libraries or use our online resources will continue to shape our responses and the services we deliver.

A summary of feedback received during 2022/23 is shown in the table below:

Items of feedback received:	668
Nature of feedback:	
complimentary	421
complaint	155
comment	92
Category of feedback:	
Staff	191
Library Services	376
Online Services	32
Facilities and Buildings	41
Stock	28
Average number of days taken to respond:	3.5 days

Access to Information

Libraries NI is committed to making information about its business and how it operates available to service users, the public and staff. The specific categories of information that Libraries NI is required to publish under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 can be viewed in the About Us section of the website (www.librariesni.org.uk). Individuals are permitted, under the Data Protection Act 2018, to request a copy of the personal information that Libraries NI holds about them. Requests for information can be submitted electronically via the Freedom of Information Mailbox, the Enquiries Mailbox, and the Data Protection Mailbox on the Libraries NI website or by contacting any service point and/or office within the organisation. The majority of requests for information are dealt with routinely as part of normal business. Under the formal access to information regime, 27 requests were received under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and 15 requests were received under the Data Protection Act 2018 during 2022/23.

Preparation of the Accounts

The Accounts are prepared in accordance with a Departmental Accounts Direction and comply with the Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) 2022/23. They are prepared on an accruals basis and give a true and fair view of Libraries NI's financial position and of its comprehensive net expenditure, changes in taxpayers' equity and cash flows for the financial year.

Public Sector Payment Policy – Measure of Compliance

Libraries NI's payment policy in respect of trade creditors is consistent with the Northern Ireland Executive's commitment to paying suppliers as quickly as possible and we aim to pay 90% of invoices within ten working days. Libraries NI is bound by the terms of the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998, which allows suppliers to charge interest and costs in respect of undisputed invoices unpaid after 30 days. Libraries NI paid no interest charges in relation to late payment during 2022/23

Based on invoice Date	2022/23		2021/22	
	Invoices Paid	Paid within Target %	Invoices Paid	Paid within Target %
Total invoices paid	9,171	-	11,380	-
Paid within 30 days	8,946	98%	11,175	98%
Paid within 10 days	7,496	82%	10,298	90%

Charitable Donations

Libraries NI made no donations for charitable or political purposes during the year.

Statement of Accounting Officer's Responsibilities

The Accounting Officer of the Department for Communities has designated the Chief Executive as Accounting Officer for the Northern Ireland Library Authority (Libraries NI). The responsibilities of an Accounting Officer, including responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public finances for which the Accounting Officer is answerable, for keeping proper records, and for safeguarding Libraries NI's assets, are set out in Managing Public Money Northern Ireland issued by the Department of Finance.

Under the Libraries Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 (Paragraph 16), the Department, with the consent of DoF has directed Libraries NI to prepare for each financial year a statement of accounts in the form and on the basis set out in the Accounts Direction.

The accounts are prepared on an accruals basis and must give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of Libraries NI and its comprehensive net expenditure, changes in taxpayers' equity and cash flows for the financial year.

In preparing the accounts the Accounting Officer is required to comply with the requirements of the FReM and in particular to:

- observe the Accounts Direction issued by the Department, including the relevant accounting and disclosure requirements and apply suitable accounting policies on a consistent basis
- make judgments and estimates on a reasonable basis
- state that applicable accounting standards, as set out in the FReM, have been followed and disclose and explain any material departures in the financial statements
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis
- confirm that the Annual Report and Accounts as a whole is fair, balanced and understandable
- confirm that he takes personal responsibility for the annual report and accounts and the judgement required for determining that it is fair, balanced and understandable.

As the Accounting Officer, I have taken all the steps that I ought to have taken to make myself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that Libraries NI's auditors are aware of that information. So far as I am aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the auditors are unaware.



Dr Jim O'Hagan
Chief Executive

Date: 12 October 2023

Governance Statement

Introduction/Scope of Responsibility

As Accounting Officer for the Northern Ireland Library Authority (hereafter referred to as Libraries NI), I have responsibility for maintaining a sound system of internal governance that supports the achievement of the organisation's statutory duties, aims, objectives and policies, whilst safeguarding the public funds and the assets for which I am personally responsible, in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to me in Managing Public Money (Northern Ireland). My responsibilities as Accounting Officer are also set out in the Libraries NI Management Statement.

I am required to provide assurance in respect of expenditure incurred by Libraries NI and funded by the Sponsor Department, in delivering the agreed objectives and targets set out in the Libraries NI Corporate Plan and annual Business Plan. The Corporate and Business Plans are developed and agreed by the Board of Libraries NI taking into account Departmental priorities, identified through meetings with Departmental officials.

The Corporate and Business Plans are approved by the Department and progress in relation to agreed KPIs incorporated within the annual Business Plan is reported on a quarterly basis to the Board of Libraries NI and discussed at regular Partnership Meetings with Departmental officials.

Compliance with Corporate Governance Best Practice

During 2022/23 the Libraries NI Board completed a review of its effectiveness and compliance, taking into account best practice guidelines in relation to corporate governance, including the Corporate Governance in Central Government Departments: Code of Good Practice. Although the Code was written specifically with government departments in mind, Libraries NI seeks to comply with it to the extent it is relevant and meaningful for it to do so as a Non-Departmental Public Body. A substantial level of compliance with the key principles of the Code was established by the review of effectiveness. In order to continue to enhance the Board's effectiveness an action plan will be implemented.

During 2022/23 Internal Audit also undertook reviews of corporate governance arrangements including a review of Conflicts of Interest, Gifts and Hospitality and the Corporate Risk Register. These reviews concluded that controls were operating in a satisfactory manner. No material issues were identified.

Governance Framework

The governance framework of Libraries NI comprises the following elements:

The Chief Executive is the designated **Accounting Officer** and is personally responsible for:

- safeguarding the public funds for which he has charge
- ensuring propriety and regularity in the handling of those public funds
- the day-to-day operation and management of the organisation, including maintaining administrative structures which enable Libraries NI to discharge its statutory responsibilities efficiently and effectively and for ensuring that all legitimate decisions of the Board are implemented.

The **Board** consists of a non-executive Chairperson and, when fully constituted, 18 other non-executive Members, of whom at any time a majority are Councillors (within the meaning of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972). The Chairperson and Board Members are appointed by the Sponsor Department.

The Board is a corporate body and its role is set out in the Management Statement drawn up by the Department in consultation with Libraries NI. The Board has corporate responsibility for ensuring that Libraries NI fulfils the aims and objectives set by the Department and for promoting the efficient, economic and effective use of staff and other resources by the organisation. In setting strategic direction the Board takes account of Ministerial and Departmental priorities, the Draft PfG and the NICS Outcomes Delivery Plan.

The Board has agreed Standing Orders, setting out the procedures by which it transacts its business and has adopted a Code of Conduct for Board Members. Board Members complete Declarations of Interest which are published on the Libraries NI website. In addition, at each Board and Committee meeting, Board Members are required to declare if they have any actual or potential conflicts of interest associated with any matter being considered at that meeting.

No conflicts of interest were declared at any Board or Committee meetings during 2022/23.

The Board met on six occasions during 2022/23. The April 2022 meeting was held fully on Zoom while the following meetings adopted a hybrid approach with attendance either in person or remotely via Zoom. One meeting took the form of a workshop at which consideration was given to longer term planning issues. The membership of the Board during 2022/23 was as follows:

- Professor Bernard Cullen (Chairperson)
- Julie Gilmour (Vice Chairperson)
- Councillor Donal Lyons
- Councillor Cheryl Brownlee
- Alderman Thomas Burns

- Councillor Alistair Cathcart
- Councillor Glenn Finlay¹
- Mrs Deirdre Kenny
- Councillor Cathal Mallaghan
- Mrs Wendy Osborne OBE
- Mr John Peto
- Mr Harry Reid
- Dr Margaret Ward
- Councillor Billy Webb MBE JP
- Miss Linda Wilson

¹*Councillor Glenn Finlay, sadly died on 15 June 2022*

Key issues considered by the Board during 2022/23 included the following:

- the revised Annual Business Plan 2022/23
- draft Annual Business Plan 2023/24
- Budget and Spending plan 2022/23
- the Annual Report and Accounts 2021/22
- Corporate Risk Register
- Key Performance Indicators
- the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee's Annual Report 2021/22
- Board effectiveness review and action plan
- Belfast Central Library – Updated Strategic Outline Case
- e3 Programme
- Bi-Annual Assurance Statements
- Annual Board Assurance Statement
- Business Plan 2022/23 Progress Report
- Board and Committee meeting schedule
- Update on Libraries NI's financial position and budget management options 2022/23
- Recommendation concerning the appointment of a second and a third tier officer.

Libraries NI participated in The Boardroom Apprentice scheme, hosting an apprentice in a designated non-voting capacity. The scheme is aimed at providing opportunity for individuals aspiring to future membership of a Board to develop judgement and decision-making skills as well as the transfer of knowledge such as strategy, governance, audit and risk.

The **Audit and Risk Assurance Committee** is responsible for advising the Board and the Accounting Officer on the Libraries NI framework of governance, risk management and control including the governance statement and financial reporting. To facilitate the discharge of this responsibility the Committee reviews on a regular basis:

- the Chief Executive's Assurance Statements
- the minutes of the Chief Executive's Partnership Meetings with the Department
- the Corporate Risk Register
- the Internal Audit Strategy and Annual Plan
- the External Audit Strategy
- Internal and External Audit reports and management's response to audit recommendations
- relevant policies, processes and procedures including those relating to the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Scheme of Delegation, the Risk Management Strategy and the Internal Audit Charter.

The Committee provides the Board and the Accounting Officer with an annual report summarising its conclusions from the work that it has carried out during the year and providing assurance regarding the governance framework.

Membership of the Committee during 2022/23 was as follows:

- Mrs Wendy Osborne OBE (Chairperson from October 2022)
- Councillor Glenn Finlay¹ (Chairperson until June 2022)
- Councillor Alistair Cathcart (Vice Chairperson from October 2022)
- Mrs Deirdre Kenny
- Professor Bernard Cullen
- Ms Nuala McAuley (Co-opted Member)
- Councillor Billy Webb MBE JP (from January 2023)

¹*Councillor Glenn Finlay, sadly died on 15 June 2022*

The Chief Executive, the Director of Business Support and the Head of Internal Audit attended all meetings of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. Representatives of the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO), the External Auditors ASM and the Department for Communities are invited to attend all meetings of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and are provided with a full set of papers for each meeting, including copies of all Internal Audit reports.

During 2022/23 the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee met on four occasions. The April meeting was held fully on Zoom while the following meetings adopted a hybrid approach with attendance either in person or remotely via Zoom. The Committee considered and reported to the Board on the following:

- the Internal and External Audit Strategies
- the annual and assignment specific reports from Internal Audit with assurance levels provided
- reports of the Risk Management Group and its own review of the Corporate Risk Register
- reports from the Chief Executive and Senior Management Team on procedures for monitoring Mission Critical Projects
- reports from Senior Managers on the implementation of Internal Audit recommendations
- its review of the Assurance Statements completed by the Accounting Officer and forwarded to the Department
- reports on Direct Award Contracts
- the report on the External Quality Assessment of Internal Audit
- the Accounting Officer's Governance Statement for 2021/22
- the Annual Report and Accounts and the Comptroller and Auditor General's Report to those Charged with Governance for 2021/22
- revisions and updates to various corporate governance policies and documents, including the Anti-Fraud Policy, the Fraud Response Plan, the Conflicts of Interest Policy
- Internal Audit staffing arrangements.

During the year the Committee carried out a review of its own effectiveness, using the National Audit Office (NAO) Self-Assessment Checklist, and determined that it was operating effectively and had added value to corporate governance and control systems.

The **Business Support Committee** makes recommendations to the Board of Libraries NI in relation to a range of issues including:

- financial matters, including the robustness of the process for setting the budget, reporting and monitoring arrangements
- internal and external financial statements, including reviewing the annual accounts prior to, and on completion of, the external audit
- procurement and tendering arrangements, including Direct Award Contracts
- staffing policies, procedures and processes
- Capital investment strategies and planned maintenance programmes
- management information requirements and information governance arrangements.

The membership of the Business Support Committee during 2022/23 was as follows:

- Alderman Thomas Burns (Chairperson from May 2022)
- Miss Linda Wilson (Vice Chairperson from May 2022)

- Councillor Billy Webb MBE JP
- Councillor Cheryl Brownlee
- Mrs Wendy Osborne OBE (member from May 2022)
- Professor Bernard Cullen

During the year the Committee met (in a hybrid remote/live format) on five occasions and considered and reported to the Board on a range of matters within its remit including the following:

- capital and recurrent budget plans and expenditure monitoring reports 2022/23
- the Annual Report and Accounts 2021/22
- the NIAO Report to Those Charged with Governance 2021/22
- prompt payment targets and performance
- procurement, including a review of procurement activity and Direct Award Contracts
- public and employer liability claims
- absence management monitoring reports
- the Annual Progress Report on Equality and Good Relations Duties 2021/22
- policies and reviews on Corporate Social Responsibility, Bullying and Harassment, Adoption Leave, Job Transfer and Hybrid Working
- customer feedback
- capital works 2022/23
- the estate maintenance programme 2022/23
- tender reports for the appointment of contractors for various remedial and energy conservation works at Newry, Omagh, Bessbrook, Killyleagh and Greenisland libraries
- the Health and Safety Annual Report
- use of the common seal of Libraries NI
- delivery of the e2 managed services contract
- procurement of and transition to the e3 managed service contract
- transition to the Public Sector Shared Network (PSSN)
- policies and procedures in relation to Data, Information and Records Management.

The Committee reviewed and monitored the Service Plan relating to the work of the Business Support Directorate (i.e. Assets, Finance, Human Resources and ICT/ICU) and reviewed the related Risk Register. It also carried out an Effectiveness and Compliance review of its functions.

The **Services Committee** advises the Board on strategy and policy in relation to library provision and makes recommendations to the Board on a range of matters including:

- its statutory duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient public library service
- the facilities that should be available for the provision of a library service
- the acquisition, exploitation, retention and disposal of library stock
- encouraging full use of the library service and its facilities
- the development and implementation of service priorities
- strategic marketing and communications.

The membership of the Services Committee during 2022/23 was as follows:

- Councillor Cathal Mallaghan (Chairperson)
- Mr John Peto (Vice-Chairperson)
- Professor Bernard Cullen
- Councillor Glenn Finlay ¹
- Councillor Julie Gilmour
- Mrs Deirdre Kenny
- Councillor Donal Lyons
- Mr Harry Reid
- Dr Margaret Ward

¹*Councillor Glenn Finlay sadly died on 15 June 2022*

During the year the Committee met five times and considered and reported to the Board on a range of matters within its remit including the following:

- policies for digital inclusion, reading and reader development, room hire and stock
- fees and charges 2023/24
- a new membership model
- review of the Summer Reading Challenge 2022
- customer survey 2022
- customer feedback
- Rural Needs Annual Report 2022/23
- the effectiveness and compliance review.

The Committee received presentations on a number of topics including:

- Customer Experience
- Customer Groups

- IFLA 2022 Congress
- Book Week NI 2022
- Online Services and Service Support
- Library Services in the following areas:
 - Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council
 - Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council
 - Derry City and Strabane District Council
 - Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
 - Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council
 - Mid and East Antrim Borough Council
 - Mid Ulster District Council.

The Committee also reviewed and monitored the Services Plan relating to the work of the Services Directorate and reviewed the related Risk Register.

The **Remuneration Committee** is responsible for monitoring the annual performance objectives of the Chief Executive and Directors and for determining the appropriate levels of performance related pay to be awarded annually to the Chief Executive and Directors in accordance with their terms and conditions of employment and the agreed performance related pay scheme. Any such award must be within the limits set by the Department of Finance and approved by the Department for Communities (DfC).

The membership of the **Remuneration Committee** during 2022/23 was as follows:

- Professor Bernard Cullen (Chairperson of Libraries NI Board)
- Councillor Julie Gilmour (Vice Chairperson of Libraries NI Board)
- Alderman Thomas Burns (Chairperson Libraries NI Business Support Committee)
- Councillor Cathal Mallaghan (Chairperson Libraries NI Library Services Committee)
- Ms Wendy Osborne (from December 2022, Chairperson Libraries NI Audit and Risk Assurance Committee).

During 2022/23 the Committee met on three occasions and considered the following matters:

- Business Case related to the revision of the Salary Scheme for Libraries NI Senior Management Team
- Approval and implementation to the revised Salary Scheme for Libraries NI Senior Management Team
- NJC 2022/23 Pay Award for First and Second Tier Officer

- Remuneration Committee Effectiveness Review including the Scheme Specifying the Duties and Responsibilities to be Discharged and the Procedure to be followed by the Remuneration Committee
- a report from the Chairperson on the performance assessment of the Chief Executive in 2021/22 and targets set for 2022/23
- a report from the Chief Executive on the performance assessment of Directors in 2021/22 and targets set for 2022/23
- agreed schedule of meetings in 2022/23 and options for additional meetings if required.

An **Information Systems Committee** has been established with the appropriate delegated decision making authority to support the procurement and implementation phases of the e3 information systems and managed services project.

The membership of the **Information Systems Committee** during 2022/23 was as follows:

- Professor Bernard Cullen (Chairperson)
- Councillor Donal Lyons
- Alderman Thomas Burns (member from June 2022)
- Mr John Peto
- Dr Margaret Ward
- Councillor Billy Webb
- Councillor Cathal Mallaghan

During 2022/23 the Committee met on two occasions and considered matters relating to the procurement phase and business case for the e3 information systems and managed services project.

Attendance at Board and Committee Meetings

	Board	Audit and Risk Assurance Committee	Services Committee	Business Support Committee	Remuneration Committee ³	Information Systems Committee
Number of Meetings Held	6	4	5	5	2	2
Professor Bernard Cullen (Chairperson)	6	2	5	4	2	1
Councillor Julie Gilmour (Vice-Chairperson)	6	-	5	-	2	-
Councillor Cheryl Brownlee	4	-	-	5	-	-
Alderman Thomas Burns	6	-	-	5	2	1/1
Councillor Alistair Cathcart	6	4	-	-	-	-
Councillor Glenn Finlay ¹						
Mrs Deirdre Kenny	6	3	5	-	-	-
Councillor Donal Lyons	4	-	2	-	-	-
Councillor Cathal Mallaghan	6	-	5	-	2	-
Mrs Wendy Osborne OBE	6	3	-	3	1/1	-
Mr John Peto	5	-	5	-	-	2
Mr Harry Reid	6	-	4	-	-	-
Dr Margaret Ward	5	-	4	-	-	1
Councillor Billy Webb MBE JP	6	1/1	-	5	-	1
Miss Linda Wilson	6	-	-	4	-	-
Ms Nuala McAuley (Co-opted ARAC Member)	-	4	-	-	-	-

¹Councillor Glenn Finlay, sadly died on 15 June 2022.

The **Senior Management Team** comprises the Chief Executive, the Director of Business Support and the Director of Library Services.

Other elements of the corporate governance structure include:

- an agreed **Organisation Structure** with detailed job descriptions for staff at all levels and associated processes, including a staff appraisal scheme, to ensure that all members of staff are clear about their respective roles and responsibilities
- a **Corporate Plan** for the period 2020 - 2024
- an annual **Business Plan** approved by the Department, setting out, among other things, the vision, mission, aims and corporate objectives of Libraries NI as well as key activities and targets
- a **Board Operating Framework** which sets out the role and responsibilities of the Accounting Officer, the Board and its Committees, including matters reserved to the Board for decision-making and those delegated to Committees and the Chief Executive as Accounting Officer
- a range of **policies, strategies and procedures**, which guide the work of the organisation and are regularly reviewed
- a **Risk Management Framework**, incorporating a Risk Management Strategy, endorsed by the Accounting Officer and the Board through the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. The Strategy specifies the risk management process within Libraries NI and sets out the roles and responsibilities of Members of the Board and officers
- an **Internal Audit Section**, which provides assurance to the Accounting Officer and the Board on the adequacy and effectiveness of governance arrangements
- **Assurance Statements**, completed bi-annually by the Accounting Officer based on similar stewardship statements from the Directors, who in turn receive assurances from the managers who report to them. The Accounting Officer's Assurance Statements are scrutinised by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and the Board. When the Board has satisfied itself as to the assurances provided in the Assurance Statement it is submitted to the Department
- an **Annual Board Assurance Statement** completed by the Chairperson and agreed by the Board, providing assurance about the exercise of his responsibilities as Chairperson and those of the Board itself.

Business Planning and Risk Management

Business Planning

During 2022/23 business planning took place in a climate of uncertainty as the recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic continued and new financial, societal and economic challenges emerged in the form of unprecedented inflationary pressures, cost increases and a cost of living crisis. The learning from our response to the Covid-19 pandemic, including the new and different ways of working, new services, use of technology and development of online programming, continued to influence and shape much of our

effort during 2022/23 under a theme of renewing, refocusing and re-energising library services. Within Libraries NI, business planning is an iterative process involving a number of stages including the following:

- consideration of relevant priorities in the draft Programme for Government, the Outcomes Delivery Plan, the Department's Corporate and Business Plans and Delivering Tomorrow's Libraries as well as the statutory responsibilities placed on Libraries NI by relevant legislation
- Board review of the high-level corporate objectives for continued relevance
- Senior Management Team review of performance against the previous year's targets and KPIs, identifying areas where further work might be undertaken
- Board consideration of reports on performance against the previous year's Business Plan and KPIs
- review of feedback from consultations with library users and other stakeholders
- preparation of an annual Business Plan for consideration and approval by the Board and the Department
- the development of Service Plans which translate the high-level activities and targets contained in the Business Plan into more specific activities and targets
- the setting of objectives and targets at individual staff member level through the staff appraisal process.

Risk Management

Within Libraries NI, Risk Management is designed to:

- identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of aims, objectives and policies
- evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised
- manage risks efficiently, effectively and economically.

The Risk Management framework is set out in the following documents which are subject to regular review:

- a Risk Management Strategy
- a Risk Management Policy
- a Risk Appetite
- a Corporate Risk Register
- a Corporate Risk Horizon Scanning document.

The Risk Management framework is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level and recognises that it is not possible to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve the aims, objectives and policies; it can therefore only provide reasonable, not absolute, assurance of effectiveness.

The Corporate Risk Register identifies the key risks directly related to the achievement of Libraries NI's corporate objectives and is linked to the annual Business Plan. The Risk Management Group meets quarterly to review and revise the Corporate Risk Register to ensure that it remains relevant. In doing so, the Risk Management Group considers new risks that have been identified through management channels and changes in the operating environment, and the actions necessary to mitigate them as well as the success of actions taken to address existing risks. During 2022/23 the Risk Management Group comprised the Chief Executive, the Head of Service for South and East Region (for a temporary period), Director of Library Services and the Director of Business Support (Chairperson).

The Corporate Risk Register is reviewed in detail at each Audit and Risk Assurance Committee meeting and is considered on a quarterly basis by the Board. The Corporate Risk Register is also discussed with the Department at Partnership Meetings. The relevant Committees consider risk registers relating to Service Plans.

During 2022/23 there were additions to, and removals from, the Corporate Risk Register, as well as updates to mitigating measures. The format of the Corporate Risk Register was reviewed and a revised format agreed for implementation in April 2023. Significant risks identified during the year, and associated mitigating actions, are detailed in the section on Internal Control Divergences.

Training on corporate governance and risk management is provided for staff and Board Members to assist them in understanding the governance framework. The Risk Management Strategy and associated documentation is available to all staff on the Intranet. Internal Audit provides a consultancy service to managers concerning the evaluation of risks and the completion of the required documentation. Staff are held accountable for risk management through the performance management (staff appraisal) system. In addition, the management of risk is discussed at the Partnership meetings held between the Sponsor Department and the Libraries NI Accounting Officer.

Libraries NI's risk appetite is conditioned by many issues. Among the more important of these are government statute and guidelines and the attitude of the Sponsor Department. Overall Libraries NI has adopted a "cautious" approach to the management of risk but a specific risk appetite has been identified in respect of each corporate objective and this is reflected in the Risk Management Strategy and Corporate Risk Register.

Fraud Risk and Information Risk

Fraud Risk

Libraries NI has a number of policies in place, designed to minimise the risk of fraud.

These include:

- Anti-Fraud Policy
- Anti-Bribery Policy
- Conflicts of Interest Policy

- Gifts and Hospitality Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy and associated guidance (Raising a Concern)
- Code of Conduct for Staff
- Code of Conduct for Board Members
- Risk Management Policy.

Associated procedures have been established to assist with the prevention of fraud and the management of actual or potential frauds, including:

- Finance, Cash Handling, Pay Related and Procurement procedures
- Travel and Subsistence Reimbursement Claim procedures
- Declaration of Interests (Board Members, relevant staff and suppliers)
- Fraud Response Plan
- Risk Management Strategy.

Relevant staff have received Fraud Awareness training. The Libraries NI Head of Internal Audit is trained in fraud investigation. Additional assistance is available to investigate suspected frauds should this be required. This assistance was not required during 2022/23. There were no suspected frauds identified or whistleblowing concerns raised during 2022/23.

Information Risk

Information technology remains a key area of operations for Libraries NI and a range of policies are maintained to ensure the security and integrity of information and information systems, including:

- an Information Technology Security Policy to ensure business continuity and to minimise the risk of damage by preventing security incidents and reducing impact if these were to occur
- a Corporate Acceptable Use Policy which details how Libraries NI will manage and monitor the use of its information assets and systems and the standards required from users
- a Microsoft Windows Security Policy which sets out the minimum security standards applicable to Libraries NI Personal Computers (PCs)
- an Application Security Policy which sets out the minimum security standards applicable to applications used by Libraries NI
- an Internet Security Policy setting out the minimum security standards applicable to the interconnection of the Libraries NI environment to the Internet
- a Server Security Policy to establish the minimum security standards applicable to all servers within the Libraries NI IT environment
- a Network Security Policy to establish the minimum security standards applicable to the Wide Area and Local Area Networks within the Libraries NI IT environment

- revised records disposal and retention schedules are in place and the Data Protection Officer is available to provide guidance and support to managers at all levels throughout the organisation.

Operational responsibility for information security rests with the Information Security Manager, reporting to the Director of Business Support.

There were no incidents of personal data loss which required notification to the Information Commissioner.

Governance and Accountability

Board Members are supplied with reports and information prior to each meeting of the Board and its Committees. Quarterly management reports are also submitted to the Board by the Chief Executive, which include information on KPIs and financial information, as well as the Corporate Risk Register. In addition, the Board receives and discusses the Chief Executive's Bi-Annual Assurance Statements. The Board exercises a robust challenge function in order to satisfy itself regarding the quality and comprehensiveness of the information contained in these reports.

Financial information provided is subject to audit by the external auditors. Validation of KPIs and Stewardship Reporting is also included in the Internal Audit Strategy.

During 2022/23 the Chief Executive met on three occasions with Departmental officials for partnership meetings.

No ministerial directions were received during the year.

Sources of Independent Assurance

Independent assurance is provided to Libraries NI by its Internal Audit Section and by the Northern Ireland Audit Office.

Internal Audit

Internal Audit is an independent and objective appraisal function within Libraries NI which provides a service to the Board and all levels of management. Internal Audit's primary responsibility is to provide an annual assurance to the Chief Executive, as Accounting Officer, on the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance systems, by measuring and evaluating their effectiveness in achieving the organisation's objectives.

The Internal Audit work completed was based on the Internal Audit Strategy and the Internal Audit Plan for 2022/23, which was approved by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee. System audits are undertaken through a risk based approach which considers the organisation's objectives, risks and controls. Compliance testing against established processes was also undertaken at a number of branch and mobile libraries.

Assurance is reported by way of the Head of Internal Audit's professional opinion which is given in each assignment report and an overall opinion provided in the Annual Audit Report. During 2022/23 Internal Audit carried out:

- audits of six branch libraries and three mobile libraries. A 'satisfactory' level of assurance was provided on each occasion
- six system reviews, each providing a 'satisfactory' level of assurance
- an evaluation of branch / mobile library best practice self-assessments
- a review of the Corporate Risk Register which identified a number of improvement opportunities.

There were no Priority One recommendations made during the year. The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee received a report at each meeting on the actions being taken to implement all internal audit recommendations.

In the Internal Audit Annual Report for 2022/23, the Head of Internal Audit provided an overall 'satisfactory' level of assurance on the risk, control and governance framework within Libraries NI.

Internal Audit has established a Quality Assurance Framework. In March 2021 the Internal Audit Service was externally assessed by independent assessors and found to be in compliance with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. In addition, an agreement is in place with the NICS Group Internal Audit Service to carry out a peer review of a sample of audits completed by the Head of Internal Audit. The 2022/23 Peer Review concluded that the work undertaken in the sample examined demonstrated compliance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.

Northern Ireland Audit Office

The Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) to the Northern Ireland Assembly is responsible for the statutory audit and certification of the Libraries NI Annual Report and Accounts. It should be noted that the NIAO has sub-contracted the external audit of the Libraries NI financial statements to ASM.

The Certificate and Report are included in this Annual Report and Accounts document.

The C&AG certified the 2022/23 Annual Report and Accounts with an unqualified audit opinion.

Review of Effectiveness

As Accounting Officer, I have responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of the system of internal control within Libraries NI. My review is informed by the work of the internal auditors as well as by the Directors, Heads of Service and Heads of Department who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework, and by comments made by the external auditors in their Report to Those Charged with Governance. I have been regularly updated by my senior management team on progress made in relation to action taken to implement recommendations contained in Internal Audit Reports and the Report to those Charged with Governance. The review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control is informed by:

- regular performance information provided by Directors, Heads of Service, Deputy Heads of Service and Heads of Department
- advice and assurances from the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, including its Annual Report which includes the Committee's opinion on Libraries NI's corporate governance arrangements and the management of risk
- the subsidiary Assurance Statements provided by Directors, who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework in their respective areas
- Internal Audit's independent and objective appraisal of risk management, control and governance arrangements operating within Libraries NI
- comments made by the external auditors in their Report to Those Charged with Governance.

Internal Governance Divergences

Prior Year Issues which have been resolved

Stock Audit

Stock, other than Stock Assets, is expensed in the period in which it is bought. Stock is recorded and controlled as it is bought, loaned to the public, circulated around libraries and eventually disposed of when it is no longer considered useful for loan purposes. The process to update the catalogue of stock records has been recommenced following a temporary suspension of activity brought about by the coronavirus pandemic.

Prior Year Issues which remain relevant

Response to Covid-19 and Re-connecting services

The Covid-19 pandemic represented a significant risk during 2021/22 and caused significant disruption to normal library operations and services. During 2022/23 significant progress was made in terms of a return to a more normal level of operational delivery and service and this will require a sustained and ongoing response to return business activities to pre Covid-19 levels.

Impact of change and budget cuts on staff morale and motivation

Libraries NI has undergone significant change since its inception in 2009. Against a backdrop of planning uncertainty, an increased breadth of service delivery and pressures on resources, this state of change is likely to persist. While Libraries NI has engaged in a significant amount of positive activity to support staff's health and wellbeing, approaches have developed organically over time. It is therefore proposed to develop a three year HR Health and Wellbeing Strategy to build on existing and develop new opportunities for staff to take action and invest in their own mental and physical health.

Strategic Planning

During 2022/23, a Business Plan for 2023/24 was drafted. Planning took place during a period of uncertainty in relation to longer term funding although it was anticipated that there would be a continued real-term decline in funding levels for the public sector during the lifetime of the new Corporate Plan. The draft Programme for Government and the developing priorities of DfC continue to inform planning priorities, however ongoing financial, societal and economic uncertainty makes longer term strategic planning difficult.

Belfast Central Library

A revised and updated Strategic Outline Case (SOC) was approved by the Minister for Communities on 25 October 2022. The Minister reiterated that the further progression of the project would 'be subject to further approvals and obtaining necessary funding' and underscored the significant challenges in respect of the latter. Approval of the SOC paves the way for a review and update of the previously approved Outline Business Case (OBC). Early discussions with the Strategic Investment Board (SIB) have taken place with a view to securing specialist support to take forward the review and updating of the OBC. It is planned to reengage with SIB early in 2023, to further develop the project resourcing plan and framework to support this next stage of the development process.

Business Continuity and Capacity

The on-going budget pressures and uncertain future resourcing models have and continue to constrain effective business continuity planning. Mechanisms are in place to secure and if necessary respond to issues arising from the operation of our core Information Technology Systems. However, the management of potential threats to the remainder of the physical network essential to the delivery of Library Services (property, vehicles and other assets) relies upon there being both sufficient resources available to respond to issues and there being flexibility within the organisation to adapt to changing circumstances. The cumulative effect of the reduction in numbers of staff over a period of years is that staffing levels are now very lean, which presents risks in respect of the organisation's ability to respond to business continuity threats.

New Issues 2022/23

A continuing climate of financial, societal and economic uncertainty combined with the impact of global events and uncertainty have sent prices and inflation soaring, creating a real and deep cost of living crisis and this is set to persist well into 2023/24.

The constrained outlook for public finances will make 2023/24 one of the most challenging business years we are likely to face. We will work closely with officials from the Department for Communities to secure adequate levels of investment to maintain and develop services and to meet our statutory obligation to deliver a comprehensive and efficient public library service while remaining alert to the potential impacts of a reduced funding allocation.

Due to Local Government Elections and the expiry of terms of office of Board Members there will be a number of appointments and reappointments to the Libraries NI Board during 2023/24. This will result in a loss of experienced Board members and presents a risk that will be managed through the training and induction process.

Remuneration and Staff Report

Remuneration Policy

Board Members

The Chairperson of Libraries NI is paid by Libraries NI for duties carried out as Chairperson at a rate and on such conditions determined by the Department of Communities (DfC), with the approval of the Department of Finance (DoF). Libraries NI makes payments to other Board Members in relation to their functions as Members at rates and on conditions determined by DfC. Board Members also receive travel and subsistence allowances, at rates and on conditions determined by Libraries NI subject to Departmental approval.

Chief Executive and Second Tier Officers

The remuneration of the Chief Executive and second tier officers is based on incremental salary progression within the salary range on effective performance. The Remuneration Committee approves performance pay progression to be awarded annually to the Chief Executive and second tier officers in accordance with the agreed pay scheme for Libraries NI Senior Management Team within the contractual salary pay range. The Department for Communities considers the recommendations of the Remuneration Committee and approves the pay progression to be applied. Any award of pay shall be in line with DoF Public Pay Policy.

Service Contracts

Staff are employed in accordance with the National Joint Council for Local Government Services Terms and Conditions of Employment and local agreements reached through the Negotiating Committee for Libraries NI. Recruitment is carried out in accordance with the Libraries NI Code of Procedures on Recruitment and Selection. Unless otherwise stated below, the employees covered by this report hold appointments which are open-ended. Early termination, other than for misconduct, would result in the individual receiving compensation as set out in the Local Government Regulations and the agreed redundancy provisions.

Remuneration (including Salary) and Pension Entitlements

The following sections provide details of the remuneration and pension interests of the Board members and most senior management of Libraries NI.

Remuneration - Board Members (Audited Information)

	Salary £'000		Benefits in Kind (to the nearest £100)	
	2022/23	2021/22	2022/23	2021/22
Professor Bernard Cullen	10 - 15	10 – 15	-	-
Mr Neil Bodger ²	0	0 - 5	-	-
Alderman Thomas Burns	0 – 5	0 – 5	-	-
Councillor Alistair Cathcart	0 – 5	0 – 5	-	-
Councillor Glenn Finlay	0 - 5	0 – 5	-	-
Councillor Julie Gilmour	0 - 5	0 – 5	-	-
Councillor Cheryl Johnston	0 - 5	0 – 5	-	-
Councillor Garath Keating ³	0	0 – 5	-	-
Mrs Deirdre Kenny	0 - 5	0 – 5	-	-
Councillor Donal Lyons	0 - 5	0 – 5	-	-
Councillor Cathal Mallaghan	0 - 5	0 – 5	-	-
Mrs Wendy Osborne OBE	0 - 5	0 – 5	-	-
Mr John Peto	0 - 5	0 – 5	-	-
Mr Harry Reid	0 - 5	0 – 5	-	-
Dr Margaret Ward	0 - 5	0 – 5	-	-
Councillor Billy Webb	0 - 5	0 – 5	-	-
Miss Linda Wilson	0 - 5	0 – 5	-	-

²Mr Neil Bodger resigned 31 March 2022

³Councillor Garath Keating resigned 31 January 2022

Remuneration (including salary) and pension entitlements – Senior Post Holders (Audited Information)

Single total figure of remuneration										
Senior Management Team	Salary (£'000)		Performance Related Payments* (£'000)		Benefits in kind (to nearest £100)		Pension Benefits* (to nearest £1000)		Total (£'000)	
	2022-23	2021-22	2022-23	2021-22	2022-23	2021-22	2022-23	2021-22	2022-23	2021-22
Dr Jim O'Hagan**	130 – 135	100 - 105	-	-	-	-	23	18	155 - 160	115 - 120
Mr Desmond Miskelly**	105 – 110	70 - 75	-	-	-	-	85	4	190 - 195	75 - 80
Ms Adrienne Adair***	30 – 35 (Full year equivalent 70-75)	-	-	-	-	-	21	-	50 - 55	-
Mrs Patricia Ward****	10 – 15 (Full year equivalent 70-75)	70 - 75	-	-	-	-	(24)	59	(15) – (10)	130 - 135
<p>* The value of pension benefits accrued during the year is calculated as the real increase in pension multiplied by 20 plus the real increase in any lump sum less the contributions made by the individual. The real increases include increases due to inflation and any increases or decreases due to a transfer of pension rights.</p> <p>** In 2022/23 the revised Salary Scheme for Libraries NI SMT was approved by the Department for Communities, post holders were aligned to the relevant salary point in the contractual pay range. Salary disclosed above includes arrears.</p> <p>*** Ms Adrienne Adair was appointed to the post of Director of Library Services on 1 November 2022.</p> <p>**** Mrs Patricia Ward retired as Director of Library Services from 30 April 2022.</p>										

Salary figures are based on salary paid during the year in respect of service on the Senior Management Team. Salary includes gross salary and essential travel allowance, where applicable.

Fair Pay Disclosures

Pay Ratios (Audited Information)

Reporting bodies are required to disclose the relationship between the remuneration of the highest paid post holder and staff who are paid on the 25th percentile, the median and the 75th percentile.

The banded remuneration of the highest paid post holder in 2022/23 was £130,000 - £135,000 (2021/22: £95,000 - £100,000).

The relationship between the mid-point of this band and the remuneration of the organisation's workforce is set out below:

2022-23	25 th percentile	Median	75 th percentile
Total Remuneration £	21,968	21,968	26,845
Pay Ratio	6.03:1	6.03:1	4.94:1

2021-22	25 th percentile	Median	75 th percentile
Total Remuneration £	20,043	20,043	24,920
Pay Ratio	5.11:1	5.11:1	4.11:1

For 2022/23, the 25th percentile, median and 75th percentile remuneration values consisted solely of salary payments.

Remuneration ranged from £20,441 to £132,500 (2021/22 £18,500 to £102,500). No-one received remuneration in excess of the highest paid post holder.

Percentage Change in Remuneration

Reporting bodies are required to disclose the percentage change from the previous financial year in the salary and allowances of the highest paid director and their employees as a whole. The percentage for the highest paid director is based on the salary due in each year.

The percentage change in remuneration for the organisation is set out in the following table:

Percentage Change for:	2022/23 v 2021/22	2021/22 v 2020/21
Average employee salary and allowances	9.2%	1.75%
Highest paid Director's salary and allowances	30.7%*	1.75%

*following belated approval of an incremental pay scale.

Benefits in Kind (Audited Information)

Board Members and Senior Post Holders receive no non-cash benefits (benefits in kind).

Pension Benefits – Board Members (Audited Information)

No Board Members receive pension benefits or make pension contributions in their capacity as Board Members.

Pension Benefits - Senior Post Holders (Audited Information)

	Accrued pension at pension age, as at 31/03/23 and related lump sum £'000	Real increase in pension and related lump sum at pension age £'000	CETV at 31/03/23 £'000	CETV at 31/03/22 £'000	Real increase in CETV £'000
Dr Jim O'Hagan ⁴ Chief Executive	30 - 35 -	1.5 - 2.0 -	465	386	26
Mr Desmond Miskelly Director of Business Support	35 - 40 50 - 55	4.0 - 4.5 5.5 - 6.0	767	618	77
Mrs Adrienne Adair Director of Library Services appointed 1 November 2022	40 - 45 75 - 80	1.0 - 1.5 2.0 - 2.5	890	847	4
Mrs Patricia Ward Director of Library Services retired 30 April 2022	40 - 45 65 - 70	(1.0) - (1.5) (2.0) - (2.5)	822	797	(16)

⁴Dr J O'Hagan's lump sum is Nil since he joined the pension scheme after the lump sum element was discontinued

CETV figures are calculated using the guidance on discount rates for calculating unfunded public service pension contribution rates that was extant at 31 March 2023. HM Treasury published updated guidance on 27 April 2023; this guidance will be used in the calculation of 2023-24 CETV figures.

Pension Arrangements

Libraries NI's employees including Senior Post Holders belong to the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers Superannuation Committee (NILGOSC) Scheme. The NILGOSC Scheme is of the defined benefits type; the assets of the scheme being held in separate trustee-administered funds. The scheme is administered by NILGOSC, Holywood Road, Belfast. The pension costs are assessed in accordance with the advice of independent qualified actuaries using the projected unit method.

Employee contribution rates are based on pensionable pay and were in the range 5.5% to 10.5% during 2022/23, as detailed below.

Band	Range	Contribution Rate
1	£0 - £15,400	5.5%
2	£15,401 - £23,700	5.8%
3	£23,701 - £39,500	6.5%
4	£39,501 - £48,000	6.8%
5	£48,801 - £95,100	8.5%
6	More than £95,100	10.5%

Libraries NI's contribution rate is determined by the fund actuary, based on a triennial valuation. The most up-to-date valuation was carried out as at 31 March 2022, at which date the funding ratio was 111%. This valuation was used to determine employer contribution rates from April 2023. As part of the March 2022 valuation, the actuary certified that for 2023/24, the employer contribution rate would be 19%, down from 19.5% for 2022/23. The contribution rates are set to meet the cost of benefits accruing during 2022/23 to be paid when members retire.

For any membership accrued before 1 April 2009, benefits accrue at a rate of 1/80th of the employee's final year pensionable pay, with an automatic tax-free lump sum of three times their annual pension. For all membership accrued from 1 April 2009, benefits accrue at a rate of 1/60th of final pensionable pay for each year of service but with no automatic lump sum (members can choose to give up some of their pension to provide a lump sum).

Since 1 April 2015, members accrue benefits normally at a rate of 1/49th of the employee's career average pensionable pay. Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVCs) may be made through the NILGOSC in-house AVC provider.

Further details about the NILGOSC pension scheme can be found at the website <https://nilgosc.org.uk/> and Notes 1 and 19 to the accounts.

Cash Equivalent Transfer Values

A Cash Equivalent Transfer Value (CETV) is the actuarially assessed capitalised value of the pension scheme benefits accrued by a member at a particular point in time. The benefits valued are the member's accrued benefits and any contingent spouse's pension payable from the scheme. A CETV is a payment made by a pension scheme, or arrangement to secure pension benefits in another pension scheme, or arrangement when the member leaves a scheme and chooses to transfer the benefits accrued in their former scheme. The pension figures shown relate to the benefits that the individual has accrued as a consequence of their total membership of the pension scheme, not just their service in a senior capacity to which disclosure applies. The CETV figures include the value of any pension benefit in another scheme or arrangement which the individual has transferred to Libraries NI's pension arrangements. They also include any additional pension benefit accrued to the member as a result of their purchasing additional years of pension service in the scheme at their own cost. CETVs are calculated in accordance with Occupational Pension Schemes (Transfer Values) (Amendment) Regulations 2015, and do not take account of any actual or potential reduction to benefits resulting from Lifetime Allowance Tax which may be due when pension benefits are taken.

Real Increase in CETV

This reflects the increase in CETV effectively funded by the employer. It does not include the increase in accrued pension due to inflation, contributions paid by the employee (including the value of any benefits transferred from another pension scheme or arrangement) and uses common market valuation factors for the start and end of the period. However, the real increase calculation uses common actuarial factors at the start and end of the period so that it disregards the effect of any changes in factors and focuses only on the increase that is funded by the employer.

McCloud Remedy

Discrimination identified by the courts in the way the 2015 pension reforms were introduced must be removed by the Department for Communities. It is expected that, in due course, eligible members with relevant service between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022 may be entitled to different pension benefits in relation to that period. This is known as the McCloud Remedy and will impact many aspects of the Local Government Pension Scheme. At this stage allowance has not yet been made within CETVs for this remedy. More information on the McCloud remedy can be found on the NILGOSC website <https://nilgosc.org.uk/employers/administering-the-scheme/mccloud-remedy/>

Staff Report

Staff Numbers and Costs Average Numbers Employed (Audited Information)

Staff Costs (Audited Information)

	Permanent employees 2022/23 £'000	Temporary employees 2022/23 £'000	Others 2022/23 £'000	Total 2022/23 £'000	Total 2021/22 £'000
Wages and salaries	12,368	97	2,086	14,551	12,920
Social Security Costs	1,058	4		1,062	920
Pension costs	5,432	8		5,440	5,495
Other staff costs			157	157	161
Total	18,858	109	2,243	21,210	19,496

Pension costs include £3.043 million in relation to non-cash current service costs (2021/22: £3.218m).

Average Number of Persons Employed

The average number of Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) persons employed during the year is shown in the following table:

	Permanent employees 2022/23 FTE	Temporary employees 2022/23 FTE	Agency/ Seconded 2022/23 FTE	Total 2022/23 FTE	Total 2021/22 FTE
Directly Employed	445	4		449	466
Other			66	66	40
Total	445	4	66	515	506

These costs and numbers include Senior Post Holders.

Staff costs above include £337,000 which was capitalised during 2022/23 (2021/22: £197,000). Other staff costs include unfunded pension payments under legacy arrangements of £0.157 million (2021/22: £0.161 million). Wages and salaries include Agency staff costs of £2.024 million (2021/22: £0.945 million).

Some former public library service staff were given termination benefits by the former Education and Library Boards which were not funded, and these continue to be paid by Libraries NI.

Staff Composition – Employed (Full-Time Equivalents) (Audited Information)

Females 2022/23 FTE	Males 2022/23 FTE	Total 2022/23 FTE	Females 2021/22 FTE	Males 2021/22 FTE	Total 2021/22 FTE
315	134	449	330	136	466

Gender Balance – (based on headcount) (Audited Information)

	At 31 March 2023		
	Female	Male	Total
Board	6	8	14
Senior Managers	1	2	3
Employees	454	155	609

In carrying out its functions, Libraries NI has a statutory responsibility to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity:

- between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation
- between men and women generally
- between persons with a disability and persons without
- between persons with dependents and persons without.

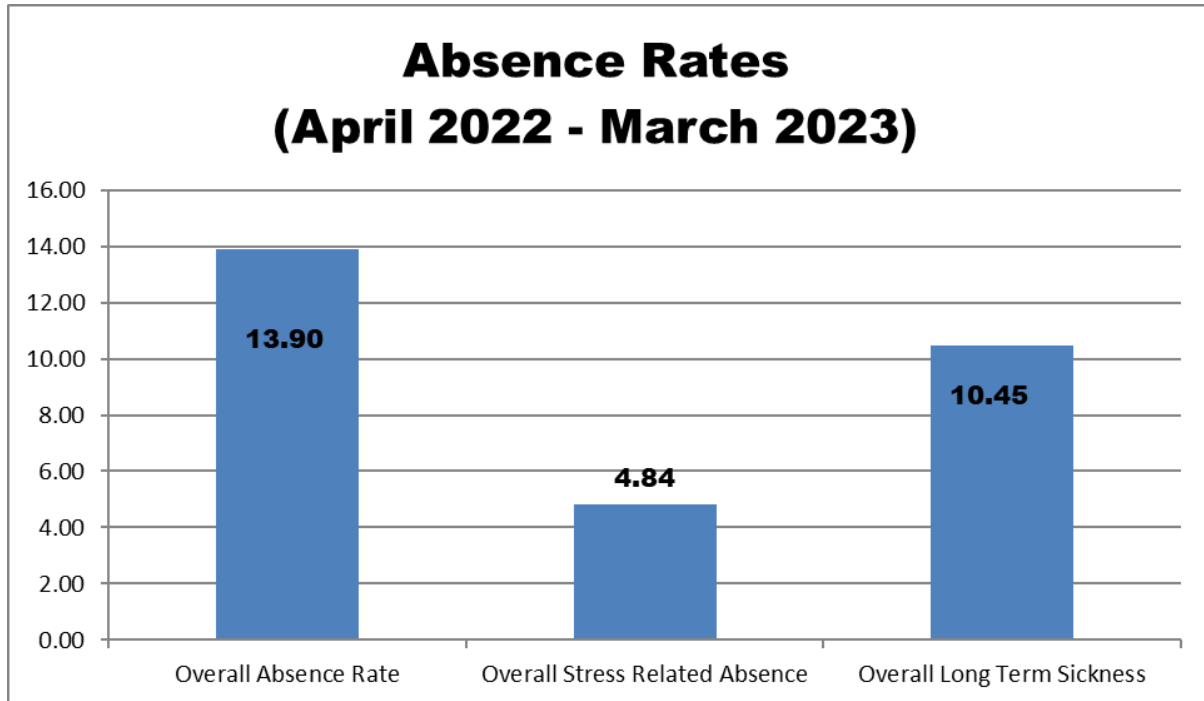
In addition, without prejudice to the above obligation, Libraries NI has regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinions or racial group.

Staff Turnover

The percentage staff turnover for 2022/23 is 13.59%. This is calculated based on the number of leavers (61) divided by the average number of persons in employment (449) during the 2022-23 financial year.

Sickness Absence Data

Sickness absence is collated on a financial year. In March 2023 the composite average Full Time Equivalent (FTE) days lost through sickness absence was 13.90 days. Long term sickness accounted for the majority of days lost.



Employees with a Disability

Libraries NI actively seeks applications for employment from people with a disability where the requirements of the job may be adequately performed. Where existing employees acquire a disability it is Libraries NI's policy, whenever reasonably possible, to provide continuous employment under normal terms and conditions and to provide training and career development and promotion, where appropriate.

Expenditure on Consultancy

Expenditure on consultancy during the year was £1,900 (2021/22: NIL).

Off-payroll Engagements

No "off-payroll" engagements were entered into between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023.

Exit Packages (Audited Information)

Exit Package cost band	Number of compulsory redundancies 2022/23	Number of other departures agreed 2022/23	Total number of exit packages by cost band 2022/23	Total number of exit packages by cost band 2021/22
<£10,000	-	-	-	-
£10,001 - £25,000	-	-	-	-
£25,001 – £50,000	-	-	-	-
£50,001 - £100,000	-	-	-	-
£100,001 - £150,000	-	-	-	-
£150,001 - £200,000	-	-	-	-
Total number	-	-	-	-
Total resource cost £	-	-	-	-

There were no compensation payments for early retirement in 2022/23 (2021/22: £NIL).

Flexible Retirements (Audited Information)

Seven flexible retirements were supported during 2022/23, one of which incurred costs for early release of pension to effect efficiencies.

During 2022/23, seven people (2021/22: 12 people) retired early on ill-health grounds. Ill-health retirement actuarial costs are met by the pension scheme and are not included in the table.

Assembly Accountability and Audit Report

Statement of Losses and Special Payments

Losses (Audited information)

	2022/23	2022/23	2021/22	2021/22
	No of Cases	£'000	No of Cases	£'000
Claims abandoned	529	0.5	13,023	42
Stores losses	163,521	256	21,067	44
Total	164,050	256.5	34,090	86

Claims abandoned relate to unpaid borrower charges which are abandoned after two years (£499).

Stores losses for 2022/23 relate to 148,315 items of stock which were borrowed and due for return between October 2021 and September 2022, but had not been returned by year end (£226,439), and 15,206 items which were identified as being lost or missing during catalogue tidy exercises during 2022/23 (£29,342). Limited stock deletion exercises were conducted during 2022/23 due to the implementation of the new library management system. The number of items not returned has increased significantly compared with the previous year (2,121 items). This was due to the previous year's figures being impacted by extended borrowing periods and auto renewals that were introduced as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Special Payments (Audited Information)

	2022/23	2022/23	2021/22	2021/22
	No of Cases	£'000	No of Cases	£'000
Compensation Payments	1	16	-	-

Compensation Payments relate to Employer and Public Liability claims.

Fees and Charges

Libraries NI generates most of its operating income from ancillary services such as photocopying, printing, room hire and recovery of shared services costs. No individual income stream is material in the context of these financial statements. Total income for the year is as disclosed in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure.

Remote Contingent Liabilities (Audited Information)

A request for re-evaluation of the Branch Library Manager post remains under review.

Compliance with Regularity of Expenditure Guidance (Audited)

Libraries NI's Business Plan targets for 2022/23 were approved by the Department for Communities, and Libraries NI has developed budgets to ensure that spend is directed to achieving these targets. Libraries NI reports monthly to the Department on spend, and quarterly on achievement of targets.

Libraries NI operates within the terms of an agreed Management Statement and Financial Memorandum with the Department and subsequent Departmental letters, which set out, inter-alia, appropriate delegations of authority.

Libraries NI has an internal regularity framework in place, including delegated budget authority, policies, procedures and systems for the justification and control of spend, and ex-post review of projects. Operation of the framework is kept under regular review.

During the period under review, procurement in Libraries NI was conducted within a framework of legislation and guidance from The European Union, the UK and the NI Executive. All procurement activity was supported by a Centre of Procurement Expertise (CoPE) and all procurement activity over £5,000 was administered by either the Departmental procurement team or a CoPE. Procurement activity is subject to regular review and is reported to the Board.

I am not aware of any irregularities or divergences from guidance on regularity of expenditure.



Dr Jim O'Hagan
Chief Executive

Date: 12 October 2023

NORTHERN IRELAND LIBRARY AUTHORITY

THE CERTIFICATE AND REPORT OF THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL TO THE NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

Opinion on financial statements

I certify that I have audited the financial statements of the Northern Ireland Library Authority for the year ended 31 March 2023 under the Libraries Act (Northern Ireland) 2008. The financial statements comprise: the Consolidated Statements of Comprehensive Net Expenditure, Financial Position, Cash Flows, Changes in Taxpayers' Equity; and the related notes, including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and UK adopted international accounting standards as interpreted and adapted by the Government Financial Reporting Manual.

I have also audited the information in the Accountability Report that is described in that report as having been audited.

In my opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the Northern Ireland Library Authority's affairs as at 31 March 2023 and of the Northern Ireland Library Authority's net expenditure for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the Libraries Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 and Department for Communities' directions issued thereunder.

Opinion on regularity

In my opinion, in all material respects the expenditure and income recorded in the financial statements have been applied to the purposes intended by the Assembly and the financial transactions recorded in the financial statements conform to the authorities which govern them.

Basis for opinions

I conducted my audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (ISAs) (UK), applicable law and Practice Note 10 'Audit of Financial Statements and Regularity of Public Sector Bodies in the United Kingdom. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of this certificate.

My staff and I are independent of the Northern Ireland Library Authority in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the Financial Reporting Council's Ethical Standard, and have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

I believe that the audit evidence obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinions.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, I have concluded that the Northern Ireland Library Authority's use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work I have performed, I have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the Northern Ireland Library Authority's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

The going concern basis of accounting for the Northern Ireland Library Authority is adopted in consideration of the requirements set out in the Government Reporting Manual, which require entities to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements where it anticipated that the services which they provide will continue into the future.

My responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Board and the Accounting Officer with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other Information

The other information comprises the information included in the annual report other than the financial statements, the parts of the Accountability Report described in that report as having been audited, and my audit certificate and report. The Board and the Accounting Officer are responsible for the other information included in the annual report. My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in my report I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

My responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or my knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If I identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, I am required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact.

I have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matters

In my opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the parts of the Accountability Report to be audited have been properly prepared in accordance with Department for Communities' directions made under the Libraries Act (Northern Ireland) 2008; and
- the information given in the Performance Report and Accountability Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements.

Matters on which I report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the Northern Ireland Library Authority and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, I have not identified material misstatements in the Performance Report and Accountability Report. I have nothing to report in respect of the following matters which I report to you if, in my opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept; or
- the financial statements and the parts of the Accountability Report to be audited are not in agreement with the accounting records; or
- certain disclosures of remuneration specified by the Government Financial Reporting Manual are not made; or
- I have not received all of the information and explanations I require for my audit; or
- the Governance Statement does not reflect compliance with the Department of Finance's guidance.

Responsibilities of the Board and Accounting Officer for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of Accounting Officer Responsibilities, the Board and the Accounting Officer are responsible for:

- the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view;
- such internal controls as the Accounting Officer determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error;

- ensuring the annual report, which includes the Remuneration and Staff Report is prepared in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework; and
- assessing the Northern Ireland Library Authority's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Accounting Officer anticipates that the services provided by the Northern Ireland Library Authority will not continue to be provided in the future.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

My responsibility is to examine, certify and report on the financial statements in accordance with the Libraries Act (Northern Ireland) 2008.

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error and to issue a certificate that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

I design procedures in line with my responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of non-compliance with laws and regulation, including fraud.

My procedures included:

- obtaining an understanding of the legal and regulatory framework applicable to the Northern Ireland Library Authority through discussion with management and application of extensive public sector accountability knowledge. The key laws and regulations I considered included the Libraries Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 and Department for Communities directions issued thereunder;
- making enquires of management and those charged with governance on the Northern Ireland Library Authority's compliance with laws and regulations;
- making enquiries of internal audit, management and those charged with governance as to susceptibility to irregularity and fraud, their assessment of the risk of material misstatement due to fraud and irregularity, and their knowledge of actual, suspected and alleged fraud and irregularity;

- completing risk assessment procedures to assess the susceptibility of the Northern Ireland Library Authority's financial statements to material misstatement, including how fraud might occur. This included, but was not limited to, an engagement director led engagement team discussion on fraud to identify particular areas, transaction streams and business practices that may be susceptible to material misstatement due to fraud. As part of this discussion, I identified potential for fraud in the following areas: revenue recognition and management override of controls;
- engagement director oversight to ensure the engagement team collectively had the appropriate competence, capabilities and skills to identify or recognise non-compliance with the applicable legal and regulatory framework throughout the audit;
- documenting and evaluating the design and implementation of internal controls in place to mitigate risk of material misstatement due to fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations;
- designing audit procedures to address specific laws and regulations which the engagement team considered to have a direct material effect on the financial statements in terms of misstatement and irregularity, including fraud. These audit procedures included, but were not limited to, reading board and committee minutes, and agreeing financial statement disclosures to underlying supporting documentation and approvals as appropriate; and
- addressing the risk of fraud as a result of management override of controls by:
 - performing analytical procedures to identify unusual or unexpected relationships or movements;
 - testing journal entries to identify potential anomalies, and inappropriate or unauthorised adjustments;
 - assessing whether judgements and other assumptions made in determining accounting estimates were indicative of potential bias; and
 - investigating significant or unusual transactions made outside of the normal course of business.

A further description of my responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of my certificate.

In addition, I am required to obtain evidence sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the expenditure and income recorded in the financial statements have been applied to the purposes intended by the Assembly and the financial transactions recorded in the financial statements conform to the authorities which govern them.

Report

I have no observations to make on these financial statements.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dorinnia Carville". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D'.

Dorinnia Carville
Comptroller and Auditor General
Northern Ireland Audit Office
106 University Street
BELFAST
BT7 1EU

20 October 2023

Financial Statements

Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2023

	Note	2022/23	2021/22
		£'000	£'000
Income			
Revenue from Contracts with Customers		(17)	(10)
Other Operating Income	4	(672)	(427)
Total Operating Income		<u>(689)</u>	<u>(437)</u>
Expenditure			
Staff Costs		20,873	19,299
Purchase of Goods and Services		13,579	14,072
Depreciation/Amortisation/Impairment		5,448	5,036
Provision expense		131	4
Other Operating Expenditure		(27)	16
Total Operating Expenditure	3	<u>40,004</u>	<u>38,427</u>
Net Operating Expenditure		<u>39,315</u>	<u>37,990</u>
Finance Expense	5	770	889
Net Expenditure for the year		<u>40,085</u>	<u>38,879</u>
Other Comprehensive Net Expenditure			
Items that will not be reclassified to net operating costs:			
Net (gain) on revaluation of property, plant and equipment	9.1	(7,209)	(4,276)
Net (gain) on revaluation of intangible assets	9.2	(87)	(83)
Net (gain) on revaluation of Heritage Assets	9.3	(2,370)	(137)
Net actuarial (gain) on pension scheme assets and liabilities	19.3	(30,096)	(17,198)
Comprehensive Net Expenditure for the year		<u>323</u>	<u>17,185</u>

All amounts above relate to continuing activities.

The notes on pages 99 to 129 form part of these accounts.

Statement of Financial Position as at 31 March 2023

	Note	2023 £'000	2022 £'000
Non-current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	6	115,076	107,542
Intangible assets	7	2,197	1,374
Heritage assets	10	12,669	10,299
Pension assets	19.1	2,666	-
Financial assets	11	719	779
Total non-current assets		133,327	119,994
Current assets			
Trade and other receivables	11	1,436	1,252
Cash and cash equivalents	12	1,342	146
Total current assets		2,778	1,398
Total assets		136,105	121,392
Current Liabilities			
Trade and other payables	13	(4,955)	(4,233)
Provisions	14	(131)	(67)
Total current liabilities		(5,086)	(4,300)
Total assets less current liabilities		131,019	117,092
Non-current liabilities			
Provisions	14	(145)	(95)
Pension liabilities	19.1	-	(23,757)
Other liabilities	13	(3,405)	(2,950)
Total non-current liabilities		(3,550)	(26,802)
Total assets less total liabilities		127,469	90,290
Taxpayers' equity and other reserves			
General reserve	*	56,536	53,170
Pension reserve		2,666	(23,757)
Revaluation reserve		55,598	50,578
Heritage assets reserve		12,669	10,299
		127,469	90,290

The Financial Statements on pages 95 to 129 were approved by the Board on 12 October 2023 and were signed on its behalf by:



Dr J O'Hagan
Accounting Officer:

Date: 12 October 2023

The notes on pages 99 to 129 form part of these accounts.

Statement of Cash Flows for the year ended 31 March 2023

	Note	2022/23 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net Operating Expenditure		(40,085)	(38,879)
Adjustments for non-cash transactions	3, 19ii	3,511	3,780
Finance expense	5	140	137
Depreciation/Amortisation	6/7	5,714	5,246
(Increase) in trade and other receivables	11	(124)	(89)
Increase in trade and other payables	13	622	122
Use of Provisions	14	(16)	-
<i>Net cash outflow from operating activities</i>		(30,238)	(29,683)
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment		(4,040)	(2,699)
Purchase of intangible assets	7	(868)	-
Interest on PFI	5	(55)	(60)
Proceeds of disposal of property, plant and equipment		63	39
<i>Net cash outflow from investing activities</i>		(4,900)	(2,720)
Cash flows from financing activities			
Grants from sponsoring department		36,731	32,694
Capital element of payments in respect of finance leases and on-SoFP PFI contracts	16/17	(312)	(144)
Interest on finance leases	5	(85)	(77)
<i>Net financing</i>		36,334	32,473
Net increase / (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the period		1,196	70
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the period	12	146	76
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period	12	1,342	146

The notes on pages 99 to 129 form part of these accounts.

Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity for the year ended 31 March 2023

	Note	General Reserve	Pension Reserve	Revaluation Reserve	Heritage Assets Reserve	Total Reserves
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Balance at 1 April 2021		53,348	(36,985)	48,223	10,162	74,748
Changes in taxpayers' equity 2021/22						
Grants from Sponsoring Department		32,694	-	-	-	32,694
Comprehensive Net Expenditure for the year		(38,879)	17,198	-	-	(21,681)
Transfers between reserves	19.2/19.5	3,970	(3,970)	-	-	-
Revaluation gains		-	-	4,359	137	4,496
Realised element of revaluation reserve		2,004	-	(2,004)	-	-
Auditors Remuneration – notional	3	33	-	-	-	33
Balance at 31 March 2022		<u>53,170</u>	<u>(23,757)</u>	<u>50,578</u>	<u>10,299</u>	<u>90,290</u>
Opening balance at 1 April 2022		53,170	(23,757)	50,578	10,299	90,290
Changes in taxpayers' equity 2022/23						
Adjustment 1 April 2023 for peppercorn leases (IFRS 16)		737	-	-	-	737
Grants from Sponsoring Department		36,731	-	-	-	36,731
Comprehensive Net Expenditure for the year		(40,085)	30,096	-	-	(9,989)
Transfers between reserves	19.2/19.5	3,673	(3,673)	-	-	-
Revaluation gains		-	-	7,296	2,370	9,666
Realised element of revaluation reserve		2,276	-	(2,276)	-	-
Auditors Remuneration – notional	3	34	-	-	-	34
Balance at 31 March 2023		<u>56,536</u>	<u>2,666</u>	<u>55,598</u>	<u>12,669</u>	<u>127,469</u>

The notes on pages 99 to 129 form part of these accounts.

Notes to the Accounts

1. Statement of Accounting Policies

These financial statements are prepared in accordance with the 2022/23 Government Financial Reporting Manual (FReM) issued by the Department of Finance (DoF). The accounting policies contained in the FReM apply International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) as adapted or interpreted for the public sector context, and include early adoption of standards not yet effective where it is judged appropriate, and with the approval of DoF.

Where the FReM permits a choice of accounting policy, the accounting policy which is judged to be the most appropriate to the particular circumstances of Libraries NI for the purpose of giving a true and fair view has been selected. The particular policies to be adopted by Libraries NI are described below. They are applied consistently in dealing with items that are considered material to the accounts.

1.1 Accounting Convention

These accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention modified to account for the revaluation of property, plant and equipment, intangible assets and heritage assets.

1.2 Recognition of Income and Funding

1.2.1 Departmental Funding

The main source of funding for Libraries NI is grant-in-aid. All grants-in-aid, whether for revenue or capital purposes, are treated as contributions from controlling parties giving rise to financial interest in the residual interest of Libraries NI and are credited to the SoCNE Reserve. Grant-in-aid is recognised in the financial period in which the funding is received.

1.2.2 Income from Activities

Income from activities relates to the operating activities of Libraries NI and the sale of goods and services which includes fees and charges for services provided to library users, the recovery of shared costs for premises, staff and other income. Income from fees and charges and from the sale of goods and services is recognised in the period in which fees are incurred or services are provided. Debts relating to library fees which are over two years old, having been through the normal debt collection procedure, are abandoned.

1.2.3 Grant Income

In addition to grant-in-aid, Libraries NI receives revenue grants which are credited to reserves other than where Department for Communities (DfC) and DoF approval is obtained to treat them as income in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure (SoCNE). Revenue grants received for specific purposes are shown as income in the SoCNE to the extent of matching the related expenditure incurred during the period. Any income received but not matched to related expenditure during the period is shown as deferred income on the Statement of Financial Position (SoFP).

1.3 Foreign Currency Transactions

Foreign Currency transactions are translated at the exchange rate ruling at the date of payment.

1.4 Taxation

Libraries NI is not within the scope of Corporation tax.

Libraries NI is VAT registered and input tax on purchases is generally recoverable. Income and expenditure figures are stated net of VAT.

1.5 Property, Plant and Equipment

Items of property plant and equipment costing in excess of £3,000 per individual item, which are held for use on a continuing basis in delivering Libraries NI activities, and which yield a benefit for a period of more than one year, are treated as capital expenditure in the accounts. Related items of property plant and equipment may be grouped for aggregation purposes.

1.5.1 Land and Buildings

All land and buildings are carried in the SoFP at fair value. Properties which are specialised and in operational use have been valued in Existing Use on the basis of Depreciated Replacement Cost. Full valuations are made by Land and Property Services (LPS) at a minimum every five years. In the intervening years the valuations are updated using appropriate indices provided by LPS.

Properties which were in operational use by Libraries NI but are now surplus, are stated at Existing Use Value if there are restrictions on the asset which would prevent access to the market at the reporting date.

Where there is an expectation to dispose of a property within a year, its value is reclassified and shown separately as part of current assets.

1.5.2 Other Assets

Other assets including vehicles, computers and plant/equipment are carried at fair value, and valued on a Modified Historic Cost basis. Values are updated annually using appropriate Office for National Statistics (ONS) indices and reviewed annually for impairment.

1.5.3 Assets in the Course of Construction

Assets in the course of construction are carried at cost, less any impairment. Cost includes all costs to acquire and construct the item of property, plant or equipment. On completion, property assets are reclassified at cost, and revalued. Other assets are reclassified at cost.

1.5.4 Depreciation

Depreciation is provided for all items of property, plant and equipment having a finite useful life, by allocating the cost (or revalued amount) less estimated residual value of the assets as fairly as possible to the periods expected to benefit from their use. Useful lives are estimated on a realistic basis, reviewed annually and adjusted where appropriate.

Other than as noted in the following paragraph, assets are depreciated on a straight line basis over their expected useful lives. A full month's depreciation is charged in the period of acquisition or commissioning and no depreciation is charged in the month of disposal. Completed building projects are not depreciated until brought into use.

Depreciation is not provided for on freehold land, heritage assets or on assets which are held for sale.

Useful economic lives are generally set as follows, for each class and sub-class of asset. The estimated useful lives of buildings are revised as part of the five year revaluation exercise by LPS. The useful lives of computer hardware or software provided under a contract will be set in line with the terms of the contract.

<u>Asset Class</u>	<u>Asset Sub-Class</u>	<u>Asset Life</u>
Land	Land	Not Depreciated
Buildings	Permanent Buildings	50 Years
Computers	Hardware and software	5 Years
Plant and Equipment	Music Equipment	10 Years
	Library Equipment, Other	10 Years
	Furniture and Fittings	10 Years
	Reprographics	7 Years
Vehicles	Mobile Libraries	7 Years
	Vans	5 Years

1.6 Intangible Assets

Intangible assets are non-financial non-current assets that do not have physical substance but are identifiable and are controlled by Libraries NI through custody or legal rights. Intangible assets costing in excess of £3,000 per individual item are capitalised and stated in the SoFP at fair value. Intangible assets are valued on a Modified Historical Cost basis, which is deemed to be a proxy for fair value. Valuations are updated annually using an appropriate index.

1.6.1 Amortisation

Amortisation is provided for all intangible non-current assets with a finite useful life, by allocating the cost (or revalued amount) less estimated residual value of the assets as fairly as possible to the periods expected to benefit from their use. Useful lives are estimated on a realistic basis, reviewed annually and adjusted where appropriate.

1.7 Heritage Assets

1.7.1 Stock Assets

Stock Assets are defined as, "stock items or groups of items to be retained for use by future generations because of their cultural and/or historical associations and with a value individually or as a group of over £1,000". They include the valuable book collections in Belfast Central Library, Derry Central Library, Armagh Irish and Local Studies, Ballymoney Library, Coleraine Library, Downpatrick Library, Enniskillen Library, Omagh Library and Ballymena Administrative Centre.

The Stock Assets are valued at net realisable value, and are valued every five years by professionally qualified valuers on the basis of a rolling programme of valuation. The legacy items valued at under £1,000 are periodically revalued using an index which is derived on the basis of a valuation of a sample of items. Heritage assets are reviewed each year by the Heritage Team and impaired where appropriate. Stock Assets are not depreciated as they are considered to have an infinite useful life.

1.7.2 Other Non-Operational Assets

These are defined as items or groups of items to be retained because of their cultural heritage associations, and with a value of over £1,000, other than Stock Assets. These include artworks located in library premises.

The other Non-Operational Assets are valued at net realisable value, and are valued every five years by professionally qualified valuers. They are not indexed in the interim, and are not depreciated as they are considered to have an infinite useful life, but are reviewed each year by the Heritage Team and impaired where appropriate.

1.8 Assets held for sale

Non-current assets are classified as held for sale if their carrying amount will be recovered principally through a sale transaction rather than through continuing use. This condition is regarded as met when the sale is highly probable, the asset is available for immediate sale in its present condition and management is committed to the sale, which is expected to qualify for recognition as a completed sale within one year from the date of classification. Non-current assets held for sale are measured at the lower of their previous carrying amount and fair value less costs to sell. Fair value is open market value including alternative uses.

1.9 Provisions

Libraries NI provides for legal or constructive obligations which are of uncertain timing or amount at the SoFP date, on the basis of management's best estimate of the cost to settle the obligation. These estimates are made on the basis of advice from Libraries NI's legal and insurance advisors. When some or all of the costs to settle a provision are expected to be recovered from a third party, the receivable is recognised as an asset if it is virtually certain that reimbursement will be received and the amount of the receivable can be measured reliably.

1.10 Employee Benefits

The cost of providing employee benefits is recorded in the SoCNE in the period in which the benefit is earned by the employee, rather than when it is paid or payable. This is applicable to both short and long term benefits.

1.11 Pension Scheme

Past and present employees are covered by the provisions of the Northern Ireland Local Government Officer's Superannuation Committee (NILGOSC) Scheme, which is a defined benefits scheme. The assets of the funded scheme are held in separate trustee-administered funds. Libraries NI's contribution to the fund is determined by the fund actuary based on a triennial valuation. Some former public library service staff were given termination benefits by the Education and Library Boards which were not funded, and these continue to be paid annually by Libraries NI.

Pension costs are assessed in accordance with the advice of independent qualified actuaries using the projected unit method and are accounted for on the basis of charging the cost of providing pensions over the period during which Libraries NI benefits from the employee's services. Variations from regular cost are spread over the expected average remaining working lives of members of the scheme after making allowances for future withdrawals.

The difference between the fair value of the assets held in Libraries NI's defined benefit pension scheme and the scheme's liabilities measured on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method is recognised in Libraries NI's SoFP as a pension scheme asset or liability as appropriate.

In accordance with IAS 19 Employee Benefits, the in-year movement in the defined benefit pension scheme asset or liability arising from factors other than cash contribution by Libraries NI are charged to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure.

Further detail in relation to the pension scheme is disclosed in the Remuneration and Staff Report and in Note 19 to these accounts.

1.12 Reserves

The SoCNE Reserve represents the accumulated financial position of Libraries NI. The Pension Reserve represents the cumulative balance on the Libraries NI portion of the NILGOSC pension fund. The Revaluation Reserve reflects the unrealised element of the cumulative balance of indexation and revaluation adjustments to PPE and intangible assets. The Heritage Assets Reserve represents the valuation of the Heritage Assets. Any increase or decrease in the valuation of Heritage Assets will be taken to the Heritage Assets Reserve.

Increases arising on revaluation of assets are taken to the revaluation reserve except when they reverse a revaluation decrease for the same asset previously recognised in the SoCNE, in which case it is credited to the SoCNE to the extent of the decrease previously charged there. A revaluation decrease is charged to the revaluation reserve to the extent that there is a balance on the reserve for the asset and thereafter to the SoCNE.

1.13 Leases

Libraries NI adopted IFRS 16 Leases with effect from 1 April 2022.

IFRS 16 represents a significant change in lessee accounting by removing the distinction between operating leases and finance leases and introducing a single lessee accounting model. IFRS 16 requires recognition of assets and liabilities for all leases in the Statement of Financial Position (SoFP), with exemption given to low value leases and short-term leases. The adoption of the standard results in the recognition of a right-of-use asset, representing a right to use the underlying leased asset and a lease liability, representing an obligation to make lease payments.

1.14 Private Finance Initiative (PFI) Transactions and other Service Concessions

The PFI transaction in Libraries NI is assessed against IFRIC 12, Service Concession Arrangements, as the private sector operator is contracted to provide services related to the infrastructure to the public on behalf of Libraries NI.

Libraries NI recognises the infrastructure as a non-current asset and values it in the same way as other non-current assets of that type. The liability to pay for the infrastructure is also recorded on the SoFP. The asset is depreciated over its useful economic life and the associated liability is reduced as payments are made. An imputed finance charge on the liability is recorded in subsequent years using an asset specific rate. The remainder of the PFI payments is recorded as an operating cost. Libraries NI recognised the asset when it came into use. Libraries NI has made a contribution to the operator in advance of the asset coming into use, and this contribution is shown within prepayments and amortised to the SoCNE in equal amounts over the contract term.

Libraries NI has entered into a Service Concession arrangement which is not a PFI transaction in relation to an ICT managed service. The assets are owned by Libraries NI and the operator provides the service to the public and library staff on behalf of Libraries NI. The assets are recognised as non-current assets when they are brought into use, and are depreciated over their useful lives.

1.15 Financial Instruments

Libraries NI does not hold any complex financial instruments. The only financial instruments included in the accounts are receivables and payables. Trade receivables are recognised initially at fair value less provision for impairment. A provision for impairment is made when there is evidence that Libraries NI will be unable to collect an amount due in accordance with agreed terms.

1.16 Contingent Liabilities disclosed under IAS 37

Libraries NI discloses in its accounts sufficient information in relation to events occurring before the year-end date which will probably give rise to a liability which it is not yet possible to estimate reliably, to allow readers of the accounts to understand the nature and possible timing of the liability.

1.17 Early Departure Costs

Libraries NI meets the additional costs of pension benefits for employees who retire early by paying the required amounts in a lump sum at retirement. Libraries NI accrues for this in full at the time the early retirement becomes binding.

For some staff who retired early from the former Education and Library Boards, the additional costs of their pension benefits are paid annually. These costs are charged to SoCNE and the liability is reflected in the pension deficit, in line with other pension obligations, under IAS 19.

1.18 Accounting Standards, interpretation and amendments to published standards adopted in the year ended 31 March 2023

IFRS 16 was implemented with effect from 1 April 2022, which has resulted in a significant change in accounting policy which largely removed the distinction between operating leases and finance leases and introduced a single lessee accounting model. Under this standard, the lessee is required to capitalise assets and liabilities for all leases, other than those which are exempt by virtue of being short term or of low value. There are no other standards, interpretations or amendments to published standards that became effective during 2022-23 and which are relevant to the operations of Libraries NI.

1.19 Accounting Standards, interpretations and amendments to published standards not yet effective

Management has reviewed new accounting standards, interpretations and amendments to existing standards that have been issued but are not yet effective as at 31 March 2023, and which Libraries NI has not adopted early for these accounts. IFRS 17 Insurance Contracts will replace IFRS 4 Insurance Contracts and is effective for accounting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2023. In line with the requirements of the FReM, IFRS 17 will be implemented, as interpreted and adapted for the public sector, with effect from 1 April 2025. Management's assessment is that this will have minimal impact on Libraries NI's Financial Statements.

1.20 Library Lending Stock

Library lending stocks are those materials including books, audio and visual materials, and downloadable materials which are purchased for lending to and reference by borrowers. These are expensed when purchased.

2. Analysis of Operating Costs by Segment

Libraries NI operates within Northern Ireland and is managed at a corporate level as one segment. Decisions are made by the Senior Management Team and Board.

3. Operating Expenditure

	Note	2022/23 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Staff Costs:			
Wages and salaries		14,294	12,768
Social Security Costs		1,033	905
Pension Costs		5,389	5,465
Other Staff Costs		157	161
Premises, fixed plant and grounds		5,143	4,718
PFI Service charges		393	338
Library lending stock		2,334	3,503
Supplies and Services		5,269	4,944
Other employee expenses		174	166
Transport		272	200
Rentals under operating leases: Buildings		(6)	203
Non-cash items:			
Depreciation		4,718	4,833
Amortisation		997	413
(Profit)/Loss on disposal of property, plant and equipment		(61)	(17)
Impairment / (Reversal of impairment) of property, plant and equipment	9	(267)	(210)
Provisions provided for in year	14	131	4
Auditors' remuneration – notional		34	33
		<u>40,004</u>	<u>38,427</u>

Libraries NI purchased no non-audit services from its external auditor (the Northern Ireland Audit Office).

Further analysis of staff costs is available in the Remuneration and Staff Report.

4. Other Operating Income

	2022/23	2021/22
	£'000	£'000
Fees and charges	206	144
Sale of goods and services	439	254
Grant Income	25	26
Other income	2	3
	<u>672</u>	<u>427</u>

5. Finance Expense

	2022/23	2021/22
	£'000	£'000
Leases	85	77
PFI	55	60
Interest on net pension liability	630	752
	<u>770</u>	<u>889</u>

6. Property, Plant and Equipment 2022/23

	Land	Buildings	Vehicles	Computers	Plant & Equipment	Assets in Course of Construction	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Cost or valuation							
At 1 April 2022	13,223	92,190	2,804	3,987	3,015	2,401	117,620
Right of Use Assets	86	1,672	-	-	-	-	1,758
Additions	115	1,067	22	79	2	2,600	3,885
Disposals	-	-	(165)	(388)	(167)	-	(720)
Net (Impairment) / Reversal	-	316	9	-	-	-	325
Revaluations	-	7,547	180	278	168	-	8,173
Reclassifications	-	736	-	(2)	-	(1,599)	(865)
At 31 March 2023	13,424	103,528	2,850	3,954	3,018	3,402	130,176
Depreciation							
At 1 April 2022	-	3,975	1,754	1,717	2,632	-	10,078
Right of use Assets	2	187	-	-	-	-	189
Charged in year	-	4,086	215	588	(360)	-	4,529
Disposals	-	-	(165)	(388)	(165)	-	(718)
Net Impairment / (Reversal)	-	49	9	-	-	-	58
Revaluations	-	599	111	131	123	-	964
Reclassifications	-	1	-	(1)	-	-	-
At 31 March 2023	2	8,897	1,924	2,047	2,230	-	15,100
Carrying amount at 31 March 2023	13,422	94,631	926	1,907	788	3,402	115,076
Carrying amount at 31 March 2022	13,223	88,215	1,050	2,270	383	2,401	107,542

6. Property, Plant and Equipment (continued)

Asset Financing:

	Land	Buildings	Vehicles	Computers	Plant & Equipment	Assets in Course of Construction	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Owned	12,338	89,080	926	1,907	788	3,402	108,441
Leased	734	1,636	-	-	-	-	2,370
On - SoFP PFI contracts	350	3,915	-	-	-	-	4,265
Carrying amount at 31 March 2023	13,422	94,631	926	1,907	788	3,402	115,076

Land and Buildings were revalued by Land and Property Services (LPS) as at 31 March 2021, and values were updated to 31 March 2023 using indices provided by LPS.

17 properties have intrinsic links to adjoining Health Trust facilities either through the sharing of common mechanical systems, access routes or building elements. The carrying amount includes £7,488,000 (2021/22: £6,883,000) in respect of such properties.

One property is identified as surplus (2021/22: 1 property). The property is located on a shared site with a Health Trust and future disposal will be through joint disposal with the Health Trust. This property was valued as at the 31 March 2023 by LPS, at fair value. The carrying amount is £30,000 (2021/22: £30,000).

IFRS 16 became effective from 1 April 2022 and as a result: 10 properties which were held as operating leases have been capitalised as Right-of-Use assets. These have been measured at the Net Present Value of unavoidable future lease payments, discounted using HM Treasury rates.

One property (land) which has been recognised prior to 1 April 2022 as a finance lease, has been reclassified as a Right-of-Use asset under IFRS16.

Four properties which were held on peppercorn leases have been recognised as Right of Use assets, and valued by LPS at Existing Use Value.

6. Property, Plant and Equipment (continued) 2021/22

	Land	Buildings	Vehicles	Computers	Plant & Equipment	Assets in course of construction	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Cost or Valuation at 1 April 2021	13,223	87,093	2,754	11,901	3,006	1,339	119,316
Additions	-	515	121	261	30	2,001	2,928
Disposals	-	-	(206)	(9,178)	(80)	-	(9,464)
Net (Impairment) / Reversal	-	221	30	-	-	-	251
Revaluations	-	4,228	105	197	59	-	4,589
Reclassifications	-	133	-	806	-	(939)	-
At 31 March 2022	13,223	92,190	2,804	3,987	3,015	2,401	117,620
Depreciation at 1 April 2021	-	13	1,583	10,177	2,560	-	14,333
Charged in year	-	3,787	277	657	112	-	4,833
Disposals	-	-	(185)	(9,178)	(79)	-	(9,442)
Net Impairment / (Reversal)	-	16	25	-	-	-	41
Revaluations	-	159	54	61	39	-	313
Reclassifications	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
At 31 March 2022	-	3,975	1,754	1,717	2,632	-	10,078
Carrying amount at 31 March 2022	13,223	88,215	1,050	2,270	383	2,401	107,542
Carrying amount at 31 March 2021	13,223	87,080	1,171	1,724	446	1,339	104,983

6. Property, Plant and Equipment (continued)

Asset Financing:

	Land	Buildings	Vehicles	Computers	Plant & Equipment	Assets in course of construction	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Owned	12,334	84,252	1,050	2,270	383	2,401	102,690
Leased	522	-	-	-	-	-	522
On-SoFP PFI contracts	367	3,963	-	-	-	-	4,330
Carrying amount at 31 March 2022	13,223	88,215	1,050	2,270	383	2,401	107,542

7. Intangible Assets

	Information Technology £'000	Software Licences £'000	Total £'000
Cost or valuation at 1 April 2022	-	2,169	2,169
Additions	868	-	868
Disposals	-	-	-
Net (Impairment)/Reversal	-	-	-
Revaluations	-	193	193
Reclassifications	660	205	865
As at 31 March 2023	1,528	2,567	4,095
Amortisation at 1 April 2022	-	795	795
Charged in year	25	972	997
Disposals	-	-	-
Net Impairment/(Reversal)	-	-	-
Revaluations	-	106	106
Reclassifications	-	-	-
At 31 March 2023	25	1,873	1,898
Carrying amount at 31 March 2023	1,503	694	2,197
Carrying amount at 31 March 2022	-	1,374	1,374
Asset Financing:			
Owned	1,503	694	2,197
Carrying amount at 31 March 2023	1,503	694	2,197
Cost or valuation at 1 April 2021	-	2,939	2,939
Additions	-	-	-
Disposals	-	(897)	(897)
Net (Impairment)/Reversal	-	-	-
Revaluations	-	127	127
As at 31 March 2022	-	2,169	2,169
Amortisation at 1 April 2021	-	1,235	1,235
Charged in year	-	413	413
Disposals	-	(897)	(897)
Net Impairment/(Reversal)	-	-	-
Revaluations	-	44	44
At 31 March 2022	-	795	795
Carrying amount at 31 March 2022	-	1,374	1,374
Carrying amount at 31 March 2021	-	1,704	1,704
Asset Financing:			
Owned	-	1,374	1,374
Carrying amount at 31 March 2022	-	1,374	1,374

8. Financial Instruments

Financial Reporting Standard IFRS 7 requires disclosure of the role that financial instruments have had during the period in creating or changing the risks a body faces in undertaking its activities. As the cash requirements of Libraries NI are met through Grant-in-Aid, financial instruments play a more limited role in creating risk than would apply to a non-public sector body. The majority of financial instruments relate to contracts to buy non-financial items in line with Libraries NI expected purchase and usage requirements and Libraries NI is therefore exposed to little credit, liquidity or market risk.

9. Revaluation, Impairment and/or Indexation

9.1 Property, Plant and Equipment

	2022/23 £'000	2021/22 £'000
(Credited) to the SoCNE	(267)	(210)
(Credited) to Revaluation Reserve	<u>(7,209)</u>	<u>(4,276)</u>
	<u>(7,476)</u>	<u>(4,486)</u>

9.2 Intangible Assets

	2022/23 £'000	2021/22 £'000
(Credited) to Revaluation Reserve	<u>(87)</u>	<u>(83)</u>
	<u>(87)</u>	<u>(83)</u>

9.3 Heritage Assets

	2022/23 £'000	2021/22 £'000
(Credited)/Charged to the Heritage Assets Reserve	<u>(2,370)</u>	<u>(137)</u>
	<u>(2,370)</u>	<u>(137)</u>

Revaluation - Charges/Credits to the Revaluation Reserve:

Increases arising on revaluations are taken to the Revaluation Reserve except for reversals of impairments for the same asset previously recognised in expenditure, which are credited to expenditure to the extent of the decrease previously charged there. Revaluation decreases are recognised as an impairment charge to the Revaluation Reserve to the extent that there is a balance on the reserve for the asset and, thereafter, to expenditure.

Impairment - Charges/Credits to the SoCNE:

Impairment losses are due to changes in the market value. Where necessary, assets have been written down to recoverable amounts, and the loss charged to the Revaluation Reserve to the extent that there is a balance on the reserve for the asset and thereafter, to expenditure. Where there is a reversal of the impairment loss, it is credited firstly to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure to the extent of the impairment previously charged there and thereafter, to the Revaluation Reserve.

10. Heritage Assets

	Stock Assets	Other Non-Operational Assets	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Cost or valuation			
Opening balance at 1 April 2022	10,254	45	10,299
Additions	-	-	-
Losses	-	-	-
Revaluations	2,352	18	2,370
Closing balance at 31 March 2023	12,606	63	12,669

	Stock Assets	Other Non-Operational Assets	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Cost or valuation			
Opening balance at 1 April 2021	10,117	45	10,162
Additions	-	-	-
Losses	-	-	-
Revaluations	137	-	137
Closing balance at 31 March 2022	10,254	45	10,299

Libraries NI has an accounting policy in respect of its valuable books and collections, (termed Stock Heritage assets) and art (termed Other Non-Operational Heritage assets), and applies a capitalisation threshold of £1,000, as set out in Note 1.7. Balances include some assets valued at under £1,000 which were inherited from the former Education and Library Boards.

Libraries NI undertakes annual valuations on a rolling program, so that all assets over the threshold are revalued every 5 years. Assets under £1,000 are valued on a sampling basis. Valuations are conducted on the basis of Net Realisable Value and are carried out by experienced valuers in this field.

During the year to 31 March 2023 the collections in Belfast Central Fine Book Room and the Bigger Collections were valued by Kennys Bookshop and Art Galleries and the Art Assets by Ross's Auctioneers & Valuers, Belfast.

Heritage Stock Assets are covered by the Libraries NI Heritage Policy which sets out the approach to the collection, preservation and exploitation of Heritage material. The stock is available to view by the public either on request or on open access, at a number of library locations.

11. Trade Receivables and Other Current Assets

	2022/23	2021/22
	£'000	£'000
Amounts falling due within one year:		
VAT	826	649
Trade receivables	452	300
Other receivables	10	-
Prepayments and accrued income	58	213
Current part of PFI prepayment	90	90
	<u>1,436</u>	<u>1,252</u>
Amounts falling after more than one year:		
PFI Prepayment	719	779
Total	<u>2,155</u>	<u>2,031</u>

12. Cash and Cash Equivalents

	2022/23	2021/22
	£'000	£'000
Balance at 1 April	146	76
Net change in cash and cash equivalent balances	1,196	70
Balance at 31 March	<u>1,342</u>	<u>146</u>
Balances held in commercial banks and cash in hand	<u>1,342</u>	<u>146</u>

This balance includes £19,463 which relates to charitable funds administered by Libraries NI, and a £5,000 bequest for Woodstock Library. An equivalent liability is included within Deferred Income.

12.1 Reconciliation of liabilities arising from financing activities

	Current Year					2023
	2022	Cash Flows	Non-cash Changes	Fair Value changes	IFRS16 Adoption	
			Acquisition			
Lease liabilities - Omagh	1,125	(37)	-	-	-	1,162
Lease liabilities - other leases	-	158	253	-	769	864
PFI liabilities	1,787	191	-	-	-	1,596
Total liabilities from financing activities	2,912	312	253	-	769	3,622

13. Trade Payables and Other Current Liabilities

	2022/23 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Other taxation and social security	223	214
Trade payables	1,301	892
Other payables	42	26
Accruals and deferred income	2,981	2,948
Current part of lease liabilities	204	(38)
Current part of imputed lease element of on-SoFP PFI Contracts	204	191
	<u>4,955</u>	<u>4,233</u>
Amounts falling due after more than one year:		
Lease liabilities	1,822	1,163
Imputed lease element of on-SoFP PFI Contracts	1,583	1,787
	<u>3,405</u>	<u>2,950</u>
Total	<u><u>8,360</u></u>	<u><u>7,183</u></u>

14. Provisions for Liabilities and Charges

Employer and Public Liability Claims £'000

At 1 April 2022	162
Provided in the year	177
Provisions not required written back	(47)
Provisions utilised in the year	(16)
At 31 March 2023	276

Analysis of expected timing of cash flows

Not later than one year	131
Later than one year and not later than five years	145
Later than five years	-
At 31 March 2023	276

At 1 April 2021	158
Provided in the year	34
Provisions not required written back	(30)
Provisions utilised in the year	-
At 31 March 2022	162

Analysis of expected timing of cash flows

Not later than one year	67
Later than one year and not later than five years	95
Later than five years	-
At 31 March 2022	162

Employer and Public Liability Claims

These are claims against Libraries NI submitted by members of staff and/or the public in relation to accidents or incidents which have happened on or before the SoFP date. Claims which have progressed sufficiently to allow a settlement figure to be reliably estimated are included in the provision. Estimates are calculated by Libraries NI's insurance advisors based on their experience and professional judgement.

The possible timing of payments in settlement of such cases is uncertain, cases are plaintiff-driven and progress is dependent on the individual circumstances of each case. As a case progresses and more information becomes available, the estimated settlement figure may subsequently be revised up or down.

15. Capital Commitments

	31 March 2023 £'000	31 March 2022 £'000
Contracted capital commitments at 31 March 2023 not otherwise included in these financial statements		
Buildings	-	556
Computers	12,719	734
	<u>12,719</u>	<u>1,290</u>

16. Commitments Under Leases

On transition to IFRS 16 from 1 April 2022, Libraries NI changed its accounting policy, and leases which are material and for a period greater than one year have been accounted for as Right of Use assets and lease liabilities, and the difference recognised as an adjustment to opening general reserves. Right of Use assets have been valued by applying the Treasury discount rate (0.95% pa) to outflows over the lease terms.

16.1 Quantitative disclosures around Right-of-Use assets

	Land Peppercorn Leases £'000	Land Other Leases £'000	Buildings Peppercorn Leases £'000	Buildings Other Leases £'000
Right-of-Use assets under IFRS 16				
As at 1 April 2022	75	661	662	758
Additions	-	-	-	288
Indexation	-	-	55	74
Depreciation expense	-	(2)	(34)	(153)
Depreciation indexation	-	-	(3)	(11)
As at 31 March 2023	<u>75</u>	<u>659</u>	<u>680</u>	<u>956</u>

16.2 Lease Liabilities for Right-of-Use Assets

Libraries NI has one lease in place, in respect of land which is held on a 999 year lease, and 10 leases of duration between 3 and 25 years which have been recognised as Right-of-Use assets leases since the implementation of IFRS 16 on 1 April 2022. Total future minimum lease payments under the leases are given in the table below.

Obligations under leases for each of the following periods comprise:

	2022-23 £'000	2021-22 £'000 restated £'000
Land		
Not later than one year	42	40
Later than one year and not later than five years	166	160
Later than five years	38,040	38,080
	<u>38,248</u>	<u>38,280</u>
Less interest element	(37,077)	(37,155)
PV of Obligations	<u>1,171</u>	<u>1,125</u>
Buildings		
Not later than one year	172	-
Later than one year and not later than five years	580	-
Later than five years	150	-
	<u>902</u>	<u>-</u>
Less interest element	(47)	-
PV of Obligations	<u>855</u>	<u>-</u>
Total Present Value of Obligations	<u>2,026</u>	<u>1,125</u>
Current	126	(38)
Non-Current	1,900	1,163
	<u>2,026</u>	<u>1,125</u>

16.3 Quantative Disclosures around elements in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure

	2022/23 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Lease payments not included in lease liabilities	-	203
Expense related to short-term leases	<u>26</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>26</u>	<u>203</u>

16.4 Cash Outflow for Leases

	2022/23	2021/22
	£'000	£'000
Cash Outflow	199	40
Total Cash outflow for leases	199	40

16.5 Other Right-of-Use Assets

Under a series of legacy arrangements Libraries NI occupies four properties for which there are no formal arrangements and for which no rent is charged. These properties were valued in March 2021 by LPS at Existing Use Value. After indexation and depreciation, the Net Book Value at 31 March 22 was £737,000. On transition to IFRS16, these have been treated as peppercorn leases, and included as an adjustment to opening reserves.

17. Commitments Under PFI Contracts and other service concession arrangements contracts

Libraries NI had one PFI contract in operation during the period under review, which was on-SoFP under IFRIC 12.

This contract relates to the Lisburn City library. The contract is for the provision of a serviced building, delivered under a 25 year contract, starting in December 2005. The Unitary Payment is increased annually in line with the RPI. The building will become the property of Libraries NI at the end of the contract period when Libraries NI will acquire a 999 year leasehold on the premises for a payment of £1. Under IFRIC 12, the property is treated as if it was owned by Libraries NI.

The substance of the contract is that Libraries NI has a finance lease and that payments comprise two elements - finance lease charges and service charges. Details of the imputed finance lease charges are in the table below.

On 29 March 2013, Libraries NI entered into a service concession contract for the supply of a managed ICT service for an initial period of five years commencing 1 May 2013, with option to extend for two years to 30 April 2020. On 26 February 2018, Libraries NI exercised this option to extend. On 7 February 2020 a contract modification notice was published in the OJEU, extending the contract to 30 September 2022.

On 11 November 2021, Libraries NI entered into a contract to become users of the Public Sector Shared Network Contract (PSSN). The PSSN is a contract between DoF NI and BT for the provision of network services to the public sector in Northern Ireland. The contract will provide Libraries NI with network and related services until 30 September 2028.

During the year under review Libraries NI entered into a service concession contract for the supply of a managed ICT service for an initial period of seven years commencing 1 October 2022, with option to extend for three years to 30 September 2032.

17.1 Present value of obligations under on-SoFP PFI contracts for the following periods comprise:

	2022/23	2021/22
	£'000	Restated £'000
Rentals due within one year	284	276
Rentals due later than one year and not later than five years	1,109	1,085
Rentals due later than five years	859	1,167
	<u>2,252</u>	<u>2,528</u>
Less interest element	(178)	(182)
Present value of obligations	<u>2,074</u>	<u>2,346</u>
Services due within one year	292	281
Services due later than one year and not later than five years	1,297	1,269
Services due later than five years	865	1,179
	<u>2,454</u>	<u>2,729</u>
Total present value of obligations	<u>4,528</u>	<u>5,075</u>

These figures represent the value of future minimum lease payments, discounted at HM Treasury's discount rate.

2021/22 has been restated for consistency with IFRS16 disclosures.

17.2 Charge to the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure and Future Commitments

The total amount charged in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure in respect of the service element of on-SoFP PFI and other service concession arrangements transactions was £4,773,000 (2021/22: £4,268,000) and the payments to which Libraries NI is committed is as follows:

	2022/23	2021/22
	£'000	£'000
Not later than one year	4,069	2,896
Later than one year and not later than five years	18,415	3,756
Later than five years	10,534	2,821
	<u>33,018</u>	<u>9,473</u>

18. Other Financial Commitments

Libraries NI has entered into no other non-cancellable financial commitments which are not leases or PFI arrangements, or other service concession arrangements as disclosed above.

19. Pension and Similar Obligations

Introduction

The disclosures in Note 19 below relate to the funded and unfunded liabilities within the Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Pension Fund (The Fund) which is part of the Local Government Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) (The LGPS) and certain related unfunded liabilities which are separately disclosed.

The LGPS is a funded defined benefit plan with benefits earned up to 31 March 2015 being linked to final salary. Benefits after 31 March 2015 are based on Career Average Revalued Earnings. Details of the benefits earned over the period covered by this disclosure are set out in The Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014 and The Local Government Pension Scheme (Amendment and Transitional Provisions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014.

The unfunded pension arrangements relate to termination benefits made on a discretionary basis upon early retirement in respect of members of the Local Government Pension Scheme (Northern Ireland) under the Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007.

Funding /Governance Arrangements of the LGPS

The funded nature of the LGPS requires participating employers and its employees to pay contributions into the fund, calculated at a level intended to balance the pension liabilities with investment assets. Information on the framework for calculating contributions to be paid is set out in LGPS Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014 and the Fund's Funding Strategy Statement. An actuarial valuation of the Fund was carried out as at 31 March 2022 and as part of the valuation a new Rates and Adjustment Certificate was produced for the three-year period from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2026.

The Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee (The Committee) is responsible for the governance of The Fund.

Assets

The assets allocated to the employers in The Fund are notional and are assumed to be invested in line with the investments of The Fund for the purposes of calculating the return to be applied to those notional assets over the accounting period. The Fund is large and holds a significant proportion of its assets in liquid investments. As a consequence, there will be no significant restriction on realising assets if a large payment is required to be paid from The Fund in relation to an Employer's liabilities. The assets are invested in a diversified spread of investments and the approximate split of assets for The Fund as a whole (based on data supplied by The Committee) is shown in the disclosures, split by quoted and unquoted investments.

The Committee may invest a small proportion of The Fund's investments in the assets of some of the employers participating in The Fund if it forms part of their balanced investment strategy.

Risk associated with the Fund in relation to accounting

Asset Volatility

The liabilities used for accounting purposes are calculated using a discount rate set with reference to corporate bond yields. If assets underperform this yield it will create a deficit in the accounts. The Fund holds a significant proportion of growth assets which while expected to outperform corporate bonds in the long term creates volatility and risk in the short term in relation to the accounting figures.

Changes in Bond Yield

A decrease in corporate bond yields will increase the value placed on the liabilities for accounting purposes although this will be marginally offset by the increase in the assets as a result.

Inflation Risk

The majority of the pension liabilities are linked to either pay or price inflation. Higher inflation expectations will lead to a higher liability value. The assets are either unaffected or loosely correlated with inflation meaning that an increase in inflation will increase the deficit.

Life Expectancy

The majority of The Fund's obligations are to provide benefits for the life of the member following retirement, so increases in life expectancy will result in an increase in the liabilities.

Exiting Employers

Employers who leave The Fund (or their guarantor) may have to make an exit payment to meet any shortfall in assets against their pension liabilities. If the employer (or guarantor) is not able to meet this exit payment the liability may in certain circumstances fall on other employers in The Fund. The assets at exit in respect of "orphan liabilities" may, in retrospect, not be sufficient to meet the liabilities. This risk may fall on other employers. "Orphan liabilities" are currently a small proportion of the overall liabilities in The Fund.

A triennial valuation of the fund was conducted as at 31 March 2022. The exercise was carried out by a qualified independent actuary, using the projected unit credit method, for the purposes of meeting the requirements of IAS 19.

The assets have been notionally allocated to each employer based on their liabilities and the funding level of the group as a whole.

The principal assumptions used by the actuary in updating the latest valuation of the Fund for IAS19 purposes were:

19.1 Assumptions

	2022/23	2021/22
Rate of increase in salaries	4.2%	4.6%
Rate of increase in pensions	2.7%	3.1%
Discount rate	4.8%	2.8%
Inflation assumption RPI	-	-
Inflation assumption CPI	2.7%	3.1%
Pension Accounts Revaluation Rate	2.7%	3.1%

The market values of assets in the scheme were:

	2022/23 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Equities	54,660	65,641
Government Bonds	28,149	37,793
Multi Asset Credit	18,174	15,301
Corporate Bonds	4,099	20,044
Property	15,304	3,366
Cash	8,882	6,120
Other	7,379	4,745
Total	136,647	153,010
Present value of funded liabilities	(132,267)	(174,826)
Present value of unfunded liabilities	(1,714)	(1,941)
Net pension (liability)/asset	2,666	(23,757)

The latest formal valuation of the fund for the purpose of setting employer's actual contributions was at 31 March 2022. The exercise was carried out by a qualified independent actuary, using the projected unit method. The valuation resulted in a surplus in the Fund for past service. Based on past service results and future service projections, the employer contribution rate has been set at 19% for the three years 2023/24, 2024/25 and 2025/26.

19.2 Amount charged to Comprehensive Net Expenditure

	2022/23 £'000	2021/22 £'000
Current Service cost*	5,610	5,577
Past Service cost**	-	-
Total operating cost	5,610	5,577
Financing Cost		
Interest on net defined benefit liability	630	752
Loss/(Gain) recognised in SoCNE	6,240	6,329

* The Current Service cost includes an allowance for an accruing McCloud underpin liability for the full accounting period, and an allowance for administration expenses of £0.063m for 2022/23 (£0.057m for 2021/22). It also allows for full indexation on all Guaranteed Minimum Pension (GMP) for members whose State Pension Age is on or after 1 April 2016.

** Past service costs relate to early retirement strain on fund payments.

19.3 Remeasurements in Other Comprehensive Expenditure (OCE)

	2022/23	2021/22
	£'000	£'000
Actuarial (gain)/loss on plan assets	19,599	(4,709)
Actuarial (gain)/loss due to changes in financial assumptions	(62,896)	(10,672)
Actuarial (gain) due to changes in demographic assumptions	837	(1,794)
Actuarial (gain) due to liability experience	12,364	(23)
	<u>12,364</u>	<u>(23)</u>
Net (gain)/loss recognised in OCE	<u>(30,096)</u>	<u>(17,198)</u>
Total amount recognised in SOCNE and OCE	<u>(23,856)</u>	<u>(10,869)</u>

19.4 Reconciliation of Defined Benefit Obligation

	2022/23	2021/22
	£'000	£'000
Opening Defined Benefit Obligation	176,767	182,622
Current Service Cost	5,610	5,577
Interest on pension scheme liabilities	4,901	3,807
Contributions by members	773	714
Actuarial (gain)/loss due to changes in financial assumptions	(62,896)	(10,672)
Actuarial (gain) due to changes in demographic assumptions	837	(1,794)
Actuarial (gain)/loss due to liability experience	12,364	(23)
Past Service Costs (incl. curtailments)	-	-
Unfunded benefit paid	(126)	(123)
Benefit paid	(4,249)	(3,341)
Closing Defined Benefit Obligation	<u>133,981</u>	<u>176,767</u>

19.5 Reconciliation of fair value of employer assets

	2022/23	2021/22
	£'000	£'000
Opening fair value of employer assets	153,010	145,637
Interest income on assets	4,271	3,055
Re-measurement gains/(losses) on assets	(19,599)	4,709
Contributions by members	773	714
Contributions by the employer	2,567	2,359
Unfunded benefits paid	(126)	(123)
Benefits Paid	(4,249)	(3,341)
Closing fair value of employer assets	<u>136,647</u>	<u>153,010</u>
Net Surplus/ (Deficit) at year end	<u>2,666</u>	<u>(23,757)</u>

19.6 Sensitivity Analysis

IAS 19 valuation results depend critically on the principal assumptions used in the calculations.

The sensitivity of the principal assumptions used to measure the liabilities is discussed below.

The discount rate used to value the pension liabilities is prescribed under IAS 19 and the results are particularly sensitive to the discount rate. A lower discount rate increases the present value of future cashflows, increasing the liabilities. The results are also sensitive to unexpected changes in the rate of future mortality improvements. If longevity improves at a faster rate than allowed for in the assumptions then, again, a higher value would be placed on the employer's liabilities. In addition, if pensionable pay increases more than allowed for in the assumptions, the liabilities will increase. Similarly, if inflation (and therefore pension increases) is higher than assumed, the liabilities will increase.

The sensitivities regarding the principal assumptions used as at 31 March 2023 were:

	Change in assumption	Impact on Employer Liabilities	Impact on Projected Service Cost
Discount rate	Decrease by 0.1% pa Increase by 0.1%	Increase by 1.4% Decrease by 1.4%	Increase by 3% Decrease by 2.9%
Pension Increase	Decrease by 0.1% pa Increase by 0.1%	Decrease by 1.2% Increase by 1.2%	Decrease by 2.9% Increase by 3%
Rate of salaries growth	Decrease by 0.1% pa Increase by 0.1% pa	Decrease by 0.2% Increase by 0.2%	Decrease by 0.0% Increase by 0.0%
Post retirement mortality	Decrease in life expectancy of 1 year Increase life expectancy of 1 year	Increase by 2.6% Decrease by 2.6%	Increase by 3.3% Decrease by 3.3%

In each case, only the assumption noted is altered; all other assumptions remain the same.

The impact on the present value of total obligations and projected service costs of these assumptions are as follows:

Discount Rate Assumption

Adjustment to discount rate	Base figure	+0.1%	-0.1%
Present Value of Total Obligation (£M)	132.267	130.415	134.119
% Change in Present Value of Total Obligation		-1.40%	1.40%
Projected Service Cost (£M)	3.138	3.047	3.232
Approx % change in Projected Service Cost		-2.90%	3.00%

Rate of Increase to Pensions and Rate of Revaluation of Pension Accounts

Adjustment to pensions increase rate	Base figure	+0.1%	-0.1%
Present Value of Total Obligation (£M)	132.267	133.854	130.680
% Change in Present Value of Total Obligation		1.2%	-1.2%
Projected Service Cost (£M)	3.138	3.232	3.047
Approx % change in Projected Service Cost		3%	-2.9%

Rate of Salaries Growth Assumption

Adjustment to salaries growth rate	Base figure	+0.1%	-0.1%
Present Value of Total Obligation (£M)	132.267	132.532	132.002
% Change in Present Value of Total Obligation		0.2%	-0.2%
Projected Service Cost (£M)	3.138	3.138	3.138
Approx % change in Projected Service Cost		-	-

Post Retirement Mortality Assumption*

Adjustment to mortality age rate assumption	Base figure	-1 year	+1 year
Present Value of Total Obligation (£M)	132.267	135.706	128.828
% Change in Present Value of Total Obligation		2.6%	-2.6%
Projected Service Cost (£M)	3.138	3.242	3.034
Approx % change in Projected Service Cost		3.3%	-3.3%

* a rating of +1 year means that members are assumed to follow the mortality pattern of the base table for an individual that is 1 year older than them.

Comment on Mortality Assumptions

The mortality assumptions reflect the length of time the benefits would be expected to be paid for. Mortality assumptions for unfunded benefits are based on the recent actual mortality experience of members within the Fund, and allow for expected future mortality improvements. Mortality assumptions for funded benefits are based on Standard SAPS S2P tables, and allow for expected future mortality improvements.

Based on these assumptions, the assumed life expectancies after retirement at age 65 are set out as follows:

	Males	Females
Future lifetime from age 65 (aged 65 at accounting date)	22.2	25
Future lifetime from age 65 (aged 45 at accounting date)	23.2	26

20. Contingent Liabilities

Libraries NI had no known contingent liabilities as at 31 March 2023.

21. Related Party Transactions

Libraries NI is a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) which is sponsored by the Department for Communities (DfC).

DfC is regarded as a related party, and during 2022/23 Libraries NI had material transactions with the department. DfC is also the sponsoring body for The Armagh Observatory and Planetarium, The Arts Council NI, National Museums NI, The NI Central Investment Fund for Charities, Sport NI, The Ulster Scots Agency, The NI Commission for Children and Young People, The Commissioner for Older People NI, The Local Government Staff Commission for NI, The NI Local Government Officers Superannuation Committee, The Charity Commission NI, The Northern Ireland Housing Executive, The NI Museums Council,

Vaughan's Charitable Trust, Foras na Gaeilge, Ulster Supported Employment Limited, and the office of the Discretionary Support Commissioner. During the year Libraries NI provided services to The Armagh Observatory and Planetarium and the NI Museums Council for which it charged a fee.

Libraries NI has had a number of material transactions with other government bodies during 2022/23. Most of these transactions have been with the Education Authority, Land and Property Services and the Health and Social Care Trusts.

During the year no board member, key manager, or other related party has undertaken any material transactions with Libraries NI.

A register of Board members' interests is available and may be inspected on application to the Chief Executive's Office.

22. Events after the Reporting Period

There were no events after the reporting period impacting on these Financial Statements.

Date of authorisation for issue

The Accounting Officer authorised these financial statements for issue on 20 October 2023.