**CULTURE NL BOARD MEETING**

**MINUTE OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**HELD IN**

**MEETING ROOM, MOTHERWELL CONCERT HALL AND THEATRE, MOTHERWELL ON**

**MONDAY 27 APRIL 2015 AT 1.00PM**

**Present:** Heather McVey (Chair)

Alison Denvir

Michael McPake

Alan Stevenson

Harry Curran

Jim Law

Allan Graham

Tom Curley

Gillian Hunt

Adam Smith

David Craig

**In Attendance:** Jillian Ferrie, Chief Executive, Culture NL

Lizanne McMurrich, Head of Education Skills & Lifelong Learning, NLC

Paul Hughes, Head of Financial Services, NLC

Irene McKelvey, Head of E-Government & Service Development, NLC

Alison Mathieson, Finance Manager, Culture NL

Frazer Simpson, Senior Human Resources Officer, Culture NL

Fiona Ekinli, Principal Solicitor, NLC (on behalf of the company secretary)

Evelyn Ross, Trainee Solicitor, NLC

**Apologies:** John Lambert

Karen Fleming

1. **IT Presentation – NLC Efficient Government and Service Development**

The Chair allowed Agenda item 2 to be dealt with as the first item of business. Irene McKelvey (IM) provided the Board with a presentation on NLC Efficient Government and Service Development and then took questions from Board members.

Harry Curran (HC) asked what IT support is provided for within the service level agreement for out of hours IT problems. IM advised that it depends on the criticality of the service as to whether out of hours support is considered necessary - only NLC Social Work Services have out of hours IT support. This is due to the expense involved in providing a 24/7 service and the costs have to be weighed against the risks of not having such support. It is possible to make the IT systems resilient enough that they are unlikely to fail and available to work offline.

Allan Graham (AG) asked about the current availability of Wi-Fi services within Culture NL centres. Jillian Ferrie (JF) advised Wi-Fi was required in the Heritage Centre for the upcoming Pearl Izumi Tour Series and Lego events scheduled to be held there. IM advised she would check this.

The Board discussed with IM the recent IT issues experienced by Culture NL such as the PAC project, Forge Community Centre and the Box Office system. IM advised that improvements could be made with Project Management within NLC and also that supplier managers were being appointed, both of which should address some of the issues discussed.

Alison Denvir (AD) stated that Culture NL had been held back from income generation because of these IT issues. She asked IM how much of the SLA was dedicated to development of IT services. IM advised that the SLA covers day-to-day operations of current services and the upgrading of existing services to the current standard/versions. New projects or the replacement of old systems with new systems is outwith the scope of the SLA as this requires additional resources. Once new projects are fully implemented and only require ongoing maintenance, they then fall within the scope of the SLA. It was further noted as a matter for the Board to consider whether the SLA with NLC would be the best way of securing IT services.

Alan Stevenson (ASt) asked if the SLA covered the upgrading of the public access PCs in Culture NL centres and when the current hardware would reach end of life. IM advised that the purchasing of new hardware was not included in the current SLA but that the end of life period would not be soon, given the recent refurbishment to Windows 7.

AG asked about the level of security required in relation to the public access PCs and computers within the Photomedia Studio at Summerlee, as he was aware of customer frustration resulting from e.g. customers being unable to use their own data sticks on the PCs. The Chair added that customers are being driven away particularly from the Photomedia Studio due to excessive security. IM advised she would have to look into this.

JF asked when the network re-design was due to be completed and whether public Wi-Fi would be rolled out prior to this. IM advised the network project was a large piece of work which would not be in place until at least the end of the year, but public Wi-Fi would be rolled out over the summer.

1. **Apologies**

Apologies were noted.

1. **Minutes of previous meeting**

Minutes were presented to the Board.

Harry Curran (HC) proposed and Tom Curley (TC) seconded.

1. **Matters arising from the Minutes**

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

1. **Chief Executive’s report (incorporating risk)**

Jillian Ferrie (JF) presented to the Board a report providing an operational update for the period 15 February to 10 April 2015.

JF advised the new Records Manager is due to commence their role on 11 May 2015.

David Craig (DC) has been appointed as the new independent Director.

JF advised she had signed the Memorandum of Understanding approved by NLC and the Trade Unions in respect of Culture NL outstanding equal pay claims, following meetings with NLC.

In relation to efficiency savings, it was noted that NLC savings target for 2016/17 and 2017/18 is over £80 million. Culture NL is expected to make savings of at least £2 million by 31 March 2018, with savings proposals to be finalised by end of May 2015. Weekly management meetings are being undertaken to meet this deadline.

JF advised the Janet Hamilton Community Centre will now be run by North Lanarkshire Leisure following a decision of NLC Learning and Leisure Services Committee on 24 February 2015. JF confirmed the centre will be integrated with Coatbridge Outdoor Sports Centre and run as a community sports hub. JF sought clarity regarding process and procedure should significant change to Culture NL operations be proposed. JLaw asked whether this removal of a Culture NL asset was provided for within the SLA. Lizanne McMurrich (LM) advised the change procedure within the SLA required Culture NL to be formally notified of the change. It was agreed that clarity was required as to the requirements of the change procedure.

Michael McPake (MM) advised the Board that the lack of car parking facilities at Summerlee Museum required immediate attention due to the impact on local residents. JF advised that management are aware of the car parking issues, particularly when there are special events on, however, they cannot put staff out into the car parking areas to manage the situation, as staff have previously been subjected to verbal abuse. She advised management were liaising with police ahead of the next scheduled event. DC suggested consideration be given to obtaining traffic management orders, which were used to great effect during the Commonwealth Games, as they give police a legal power to prevent people from parking in Heritage Way.

JF to further to liaise with Police and Roads colleagues in relation to the parking issue.

The Board approved the report.

1. **(a) Flexible Retirement Policy**

Frazer Simpson (FS) presented to the Board a report on the Flexible Retirement Policy.

FS advised that under the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations every employer must publish their position on flexible retirement options available to employees who are scheme members. Regulation 18 allows employers to pay all or some pension benefits if an employee reduces their hours or grade prior to age 60. FS suggested this could be a useful tool at a time when Culture NL is looking to make business efficiency savings. FS also advised that local Trade Union representatives seem keen to have such a policy in place, and he is awaiting feedback from regional representatives.

The Board approved the Report.

**(b) Voluntary Early Release Arrangement (VERA) Policy**

FS presented to the Board a report on the Voluntary Early Release Arrangement (VERA) Policy.

FS advised that this policy would provide Culture NL with a tool to secure savings within the employee costs budget.

Gillian Hunt (GH) asked whether this policy would be rolled out at the same time as the Flexible Retirement Policy. FS advised that it would be. He also advised deadlines for submitting applications would also be set.

The Board approved the Report.

1. **Cumbernauld Community Enterprise Centre Update Report**

AG declared an interest and left the meeting.

JF presented to the Board a report providing an update on the Cumbernauld Community Enterprise Centre development following Board approval for an options appraisal to be conducted to establish the mechanism for operating a combined business centre and community facility.

Adam Smith (ASm) asked why construction had started on project when it is not yet known whether the project is financially viable. HC asked whether NLC Regeneration Services had identified a specific demand. The Chair advised that a business case had been put together. She advised there were many charitable community organisations that could benefit from the facility. It was noted that a meeting between Culture NL and NLC Regeneration Services would be required to discuss the various issues. JF will continue to liaise with Regeneration Services colleagues. Paul Hughes (PH) also advised the Board that this project is worth over £8 million with funding coming from the Scottish Government which is time critical. There is no indication that the project is not viable but further detail will require to be put to the Board when appropriate. ASm asked whether Culture NL could afford to subsidise the centre whilst the losses within catering are ongoing. ASt also asked whether non-domestic rates charges would have an impact. PH advised there is no 100% relief available for empty properties so this would have to be factored into the business case.

The Board approved the report.

AG re-entered the meeting.

1. **Revenue Monitoring Report – P12 1 April 2014 to 27 February 2015**

Alison Mathieson (AM) presented to the Board a report on the current budget monitoring position for Culture NL for the period 1 April 2014 to 27 February 2015.

AM drew the Board’s attention to the £533,000 underspend for the charity, the £168,000 overspend of the trading arm, which results in a £365,000 total underspend. She noted the 38.04 FTE vacancies within Culture NL.

1. **Catering Review Update Report**

JF presented to the Board a report which provides an update on the progress made to date of the review of the Culture NL catering operation.

The Board noted the report.

1. **Press and Promotions Monthly Update – March to April 2015**

JF presented to the Board a report providing an update on press and promotional activity carried out by Culture NL in the period March to April 2015.

The Board noted the report.

1. **Board of Directors Training Session (Company Secretary)**

Fiona Ekinli (FE) gave a presentation to the Board on Directors’ duties and responsibilities.

1. **AOCB**

The next meeting will take place on 22 June 2015.