**CULTURE NL BOARD MEETING**

**MINUTE OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**HELD IN**

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

**MONDAY 23 FEBRUARY 2015 AT 1.00PM**

**Present:** Heather McVey (Chair)

John Lambert

Michael McPake

Alan Stevenson

Harry Curran

Jim Law

Karen Fleming

Tom Curley

Gillian Hunt

Adam Smith

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

Lizanne McMurrich, Head of Community Information and Learning, NLC

Paul Hughes, Head of Financial Services, NLC

Craig Smart, Venues Operations Manager, Culture NL

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

Evelyn Ross, Trainee Solicitor, NLC

**Apologies:** Alison Denvir

Allan Graham

1. **Apologies**

Apologies were noted.

1. **Minutes of previous meeting**

Minutes were presented to the Board.

Tom Curley (TC) proposed and Jim Law (JLaw) seconded.

1. **Matters arising from the Minutes**

JLaw asked that consideration be given to ensuring continuity when referencing individuals in the minutes due to several board members having the same initials.

1. **Replacement to venues theatre and events box office ticketing system**

Craig Smart (CS) presented to the Board a report on the requirement to replace the current Venues Theatre Ticketing System. CS advised the contract for the current system is due to expire in August 2016. The system is only providing two thirds of the facilities it is capable of and has impacted on Culture NL business. The venues team wish to focus on identifying a replacement system rather than make any further attempts to resolve the ongoing problems with the existing system. Products from two suppliers have been viewed which has allowed the potential advantages of securing a new system to be identified. CS advised the Venues team is looking for approval from the Board to convene a project team with a view to procuring a replacement system prior to the existing contract ending in August 2016.

Alan Stevenson (ASt) asked if the new system would allow mobile phones to be used instead of paper tickets. CS advised there is an issue with the use of bar codes as this is currently trademarked, however, it should be possible for mobile phones to be used in this way.

TC asked how much was paid for the current system. CS advised the cost of the existing system was £9000 per annum plus £4000-£5000 for the Web Kiosk. The two suppliers who have been contacted have provided quotes of between £13,000 and £14,000 but more detailed quotes will be sought and provided in due course.

Michael McPake (MM) asked if existing customers would be carried forward to the new system. CS advised the existing database would be transferred to the new system.

JLaw suggested it would be useful to obtain testimonials from the current users of the new systems being considered to check fitness for purpose. He also suggested that it would be better to have the new system running alongside the old system, even if there was a cost implication.

JLam asked what resources would be required to facilitate implementation of the new system. CS advised IT had been informed and were aware of what was involved. In particular the IT manager has experience of working with cloud based systems.

Lizanne McMurrich (LM) highlighted to the Board security concerns about the personal data and sensitive personal data which would be stored on the cloud software. As Culture NL hold this data on behalf of NLC, NLC would require a level of comfort that the personal data will be held securely on the cloud software.

The Chair stated she would expect attempts to be made for CNL to be released from the existing contract early without penalty and to pursue compensation for the deficiencies in the system experienced to date.

The Chair advised a detailed paper would be put before the Board in due course.

The Board approved the report.

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

Jillian Ferrie (JF) presented to the Board a report providing an operational update for the period 5 January to 14 February 2015.

JF advised that meetings with staff and trade unions have now commenced in relation to the catering review. The new staffing structure is under development and should be finalised by 1st April 2015. At that stage, staff will be matched with the new structure.

JF advised the Board that the catering income figures are increasing, due to successful party nights held over the Christmas period and the cafes in Summerlee and in parks.

The Board approved the appointment of Employee Director, Gillian Hunt.

The Board accepted the resignation of June Murray as Company Secretary and approved the appointment of Fiona Ekinli as Company Secretary.

JF advised that a review of the existing service level agreements between CNL and NLC has now taken place.

JF indicated that the intention was to increase prices by an average of 3% in 2015/16. Adam Smith (ASm) asked whether that increase would be applied to all prices, for example hall lets and catering. JF advised it would be an average across all prices and further detail on this could be provided to Board members if requested.

The Board approved the 3% average price increase.

JF advised managers within CNL had expressed an interest in receiving Board reports and asked the Board to approve implementation of a system whereby information of relevance from Board reports could be made readily available to managers. JF suggested a summary of what is discussed would be appropriate. The Chair suggested the practice of the Boards of other organisations could be considered to identify best practice.

1. **Q3 performance report**

JF presented to the Board a report providing information on the performance of CNL during the third quarter of 2014/15, covering the period 1 October to 31 December 2014. JF advised targets are being worked through and those shown red on the table attached to the report are those which have not been finalised or have not started yet.

JLam noted the increase in income and surplus and asked what variable costs are associated with putting events on.

ASm suggested, in light of the current inaccessibility of Cumbernauld Library, that steps be taken to advertise that the library is still open. JF advised the library manager is already dealing with this.

MM asked whether any consideration had been given to hosting party nights at Airdrie Town Hall. JF advised this was being considered for Christmas 2015.

1. **Revenue monitoring P10 report**

In the absence of Hugh McMaster, Paul Hughes (PH) presented to the Board a report with details of the current budget monitoring position for CNL for the period 1 April 2014 to 2 January 2015.

JLam noted the overspend by the trading company was being subsidised by the charity. PH advised that the management fee is in fact being apportioned between the charity and the trading company.

ASt noted that the sales and purchases figures for Summerlee Cafe and Drumpellier Park Cafe are roughly equivalent but employee costs at Drumpellier are much lower, which was affecting profits. He asked why there was this difference in staffing costs. JF advised Summerlee is staffed with casual staff only and this issue formed part of the catering review.

The Board noted the report.

1. **Learning & Leisure Services Special Committee Reports**

LM gave a verbal report to the board on NLC special committee reports relating to playing pitches within North Lanarkshire.

LM advised that prior to the formation of CNL, two pieces of work had been carried out by NLC to devise a sports pitch strategy. In 2008 the strategy was deployed effectively across NLC and involved a number of bodies. The strategy was refreshed in 2012 and a number of action points were identified. One such action point was that a more robust approach to maintenance of pitches was required due to an increasing number of third generation pitches. A maintenance programme was required for school use and community access. Work was carried out based on complaints received about the quality of second and third generation pitches. It was identified that regular maintenance was required.

LM reiterated that CNL are responsible for the letting and operation of school sport pitches. Responsibility for maintenance remains with NLC. Accordingly, NLC sought to procure a maintenance contract. North Lanarkshire Leisure expressed an interest in the contract.

The Special Committee Report identified four options for synthetic pitch maintenance. The first option was to ask Regeneration and Environmental Services (R&ES) within NLC. The second option was to retain the existing contract with R&ES and ask them to submit a competitive bid. The third option was to ask CNL to procure a suitable contract. The fourth option was to go straight to NLL and offer them the contract on the basis of transparency and best value.

Option 4 was recommended to committee on a three year contract term. NLC are now seeking approval to look at the current operating model and at an all-encompassing model for operating and maintenance of pitches.

The Chair noted she hoped that CNL would have the chance to respond or participate in any strategy reviews or harmonisation of maintenance and letting of pitches – CNL should not be prohibited from participating due to the original strategies pre-dating the formation of CNL.

ASt commented that he could see a benefit in one agency carrying out all maintenance of sports pitches in the interests of transparency and best value.

JLam asked whether there would be any budget implications for CNL. JF advised there would be an impact on the facilities team as the income from school pitches is £170,000 per annum and the removal of income from schools of£700k per annum.

1. **IT Update Report**

JF presented to the Board a report which provides an update on the status of current and planned ICT activities affecting staff and customers.

JLam asked for clarification of the position of public access to IT facilities at Abronhill Library.

ASm asked whether any progress had been made in regards pursuing compensation for Forge Community Centre. JF advised she would look into this further.

The Board noted the report.

1. **North Lanarkshire’s War – activity report**

JF presented to the Board a report providing information on the success of the North Lanarkshire’s War – First World War commemorative project. She advised this was a four year project for which external funding has been secured. The programme has now been finalised and the coordinator of the programme started in post on 23 February 2015.

The Board noted the report.

1. **Press and Promotions update report**

JF presented to the Board a report on the press and promotional activity carried out by CNL during the period January-February 2015.

The Board noted the report.

1. **AOCB**

ASm asked whether reports, emails etc could be passed onto Board members as soon as they are available, rather than waiting to issue papers prior to the meeting.

The Board discussed the recent review of NLC ALEOs which recommended Board appraisals and further training. The Chair suggested this be considered further once the full Board has been appointed and the Audit Scotland report would be a point of reference for identifying best practice.

The issue of Board meeting arrangements was also raised, in particular whether the venue and time could be altered to offer increased flexibility to Board members.

The next meeting will take place on 27 April 2015.