



Title of Meeting:	Inspire Board –Minutes
Location:	Workshop Library & *Teams Meeting
Date:	Tues 27th February 2024
Time:	4.00 to 6pm
Attendees:	<p>John Cottee – County Council Nominated Director (Chair)</p> <p>*Leon Dale – Member Elected Director</p> <p>*Mark Dorrington – Member Elected Director</p> <p>*Vicki Dunstall – Co Opted Director</p> <p>Peter Gaw – Chief Executive Officer, Inspire</p> <p>*Jackie Hewlett-Davies – Member Elected Director</p> <p>Margot Madin – Co Opted Director</p> <p>Diana Meale – Member Elected Director</p>
Invited:	<p>*Mick Allen – Group Manager Place Commissioning, NCC</p> <p>Margaret Anderson – Chief Finance Officer, Inspire</p> <p>Kirsty Blyth – Assistant Chief Executive Officer, Inspire</p> <p>Sharon Elliott – Comms & Marketing Manager</p> <p>*Aidan La Mola – Cultural Services Commissioner, NCC</p> <p>Carol Newman – Director of Culture, Inspire</p> <p>Katharine Say – Executive Officer & Board Support, Inspire</p>

Agenda No.	Agenda Subject	Action
1.	<p><u>Service Spotlight on Communications & Marketing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharon Elliott (SE) presented an overview of the Inspire Communications & Marketing service (see appendix 1). 	
2.	<p><u>Welcome and Apologies</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apologies received from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paul Henshaw – County Council Nominated Director Ann Penn – Staff Elected Director Mark Walker – Observer - Interim Service Director, Place & Communities, NCC 	
3.	<p><u>Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members agreed that the minutes from 28th Nov 2023 were a true and accurate record and were happy to approve. Amend JC's sign off date. Matters arising – none. 	<u>KS</u>
4.	<p><u>Declaration of Conflicts and Interests</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DM declared that she is no longer a trustee of New Perspectives and her declaration of conflict and interest can be removed from any further meetings. 	
5.	<p><u>CEO Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PG presented his strategic overview for December 2023 to February 2024. Highlights included: <u>Performance Dashboard April 2023 to January 2024</u> – library visits for 2023 quarter 1 -3 are up by 12% on the previous year, new memberships by 16% and overall loans are also up. All as a result of the hard work by colleagues from many areas of the organisation. JC asked if there was likely to be an increase of City customers to Inspire libraries. PG replied that city users have been visiting Notts libraries such as West Bridgford for several years since Central Library temporarily closed between 2020 -23. <u>Inspire College</u> –293 students currently enrolled and recruitment for next academic year also looking very healthy. 	

- Comms & Marketing Service – PG commended SE and her team for their ongoing work informing people about Inspire. Their excellent work and use of funding from a range of projects such as National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) and Captivate enables them to be agile and deliver much more.
- Funding Bids – ELS InspiREAD awarded £30k from Arts Council National Lottery Project Grant and Arc Partnership have agreed to renew sponsorship of £16k over the next 2 years.
- Board Recruitment – PG asked members to engage with the upcoming recruitment process to co-opt 2 new board directors. (note prospectus issued 8th March 2024)
- New Music Hub – the outcome of Inspire’s submission to become the Hub Lead Organisation (HLO) for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Music Hub will be known in April and running from August 2024. The new music hub will be complex in terms of governance and will require new members. Board members discussed 2 options in terms of impact, support required and possible new membership:

1. Continuing with a Culture & Heritage Committee - would need amended terms of reference and new members and could include the work of the defunct Development & Funding Committee
2. Discontinuing the committee and incorporating reporting, discussion and scrutiny into the main board decision making.

PG asked members to consider the impact on additional agenda items and responsibilities and suggested trialing Culture & Heritage within the main board and reviewing after 6 to 9 months. MM asked how Arts Council England (ACE) would view Inspire not having a specific committee. PG felt that ACE would prefer discussions at the main board but that the ACE Relationship Manager would have no objection to either option as long everything gets full scrutiny.

JHD raised the issue of board member involvement in strategic development rather than signing off on and assuring on decisions and asked for more detail of role of board members in the new music hub. PG noted the point regarding member development. MD felt that it could be good for the profile and visibility of Culture and Heritage to look at a separate committee as music currently dominates the meetings. VD thought it would be beneficial to bring Development & Fundraising into the Culture & Heritage Committee. PG to provide a more detailed paper for the next board meeting on option 1, terms and conditions for a new committee and ACE requirements for the new hub board. PG asked members to agree to a review of any decision and to note that there is a limit to board support capacity board and members time.

- Service Reviews – will be commissioned for Inspire Learning, the Education Library Service and Inspire Music Teaching Service. PG noted that the sector, Inspire and the NCC Leader Ben Bradley have written to the Secretary of State stating that the withdrawal of additional grant contribution to cover the Music Teachers Pensions Scheme is unfair and would undermine the provision of affordable music lessons and prevent Inspire from delivering the music education plan as the HLO. Updates will be provided on all 3 areas.
- DM queried what ‘non creative library offers’ were. PG replied this was a potential bid for ACE National Lottery funding for other library offers that weren’t part of NPO cultural projects. MM raised the number of library closures due to heating issues. PG noted that boiler replacements are NCC’s responsibility and the challenge is to know when to repair or replace (Newark Library is currently closed whilst heating/cooling systems are fixed). MD asked if the change to the new supplier of the library management system would impact the archive management system. PG assured that there had been a robust procurement process. MD also noted the over double target figure of delivery of events and asked if there was an impact on staffing resources or delivery of other services. PG advised that this was a result of working better with staff and with the support of volunteers and some events are from external projects and library staff developing their own events at a local level.

The board noted the progress of the organisation and the range of issues.


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6.	<p><u>Finance Update & 2024/25 Budget Approval</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MA noted that period 9 accounts were not included as the finance team were focusing on the 2024/25 budget. MA presented the period 8 management accounts showing actuals from April to November 2023 and a favourable outturn largely due to income coming from Learning, Towns Funds projects, bank interest and Barclays pop up rental income. The reforecast shows a deficit of £230k compared to the original budget deficit of £471k after the movement of funds, a £241k better position than budgeted. The positive outturn is largely due to increased bank interest, savings on staffing, archives royalties income, Barclays pop up banks, saving on premises costs and the WeGo courier service. The 2023/24 reserves forecast shows a draw on unrestricted reserves of £230k, a draw down on unrestricted designated funds of £13.5k and draw down on restricted funds of £448k leaving an estimated £1.3m in unrestricted reserves and £2m in restricted reserves by the end of the year. MA explained that this was based on a worst case forecast and potentially could improve by the next board meeting. MA advised that she has been working closely with Inspire Learning so they dip in less into their reserves. MA presented the proposed budget for 2024/25 budget, showing a £258k deficit after movement of restricted funds and includes an estimated 5% pay award (advised by NCC) and inflationary pressures on utilities. It also includes additional income from NCC to cover the pressures for NCC contracted services (income generating services such as Learning, ELS, Music and NPO have to cover themselves). The impact of of the 2024/25 budget is an estimated £997k in unrestricted reserves and £1.5m in restricted reserves by the end of the year. MA noted that this is a significantly better budget position than in previous years and asked for the boards approval. MA also presented the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) with 2023/24 figures and 2024/25 proposed budget figures upto March 2027 and noted the significant decrease in forecasted restricted and unrestricted reserves. PG advised that the Learning Service review and another MTFP will take place once Inspire has confirmation of the contract price from Notts CC for next year. PG thanked MA, the Finance team and budget holders for their effort and hard work in producing the smoothest budget process to date. <p>The board noted the contents of the report and approved the 2024/25 budget.</p>	
7.	<p><u>Volunteering Review</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> KB presented a progress report on volunteering over the last 12 months. Numbers continue to grow with over 475 active volunteers in 2023 and plans for 2024 include a refresh of the home delivery service, to grow the number of Places of Welcome, development of communications with volunteers, cross Inspire volunteering meetings and Duke of Edinburgh placements. KB noted that there had been 2 changes of manager in the last year but a newly seconded staff member is in post and will continue to build on the positive work achieved so far. MD commented on an excellent report and progress and asked for members to be added to the volunteering newsletter. <p>The board noted the report and workplan for 2024.</p>	<u>KS</u>
8.	<p><u>Investment Principles Plan 2023-24 Progress Report & Draft Plan 2024-25</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CN explained that as part of the funding agreement with ACE as an NPO, Inspire has to supply a report for each year. Members were asked to review the final plan and progress made for 2023/24 and the draft plan for 2024/25. CN will be finalising the plan in the next few weeks and welcomed any comments or discussion before submission on 3rd April. MM enquired about the delayed library strategy. PG advised this was the NCC library strategy is being done now. MM asked if members would see the Sustainability report and KB confirmed that this will be reported to the board every year. JHD reiterated her point regarding to use and engage members more fully and have a separate culture and heritage committee. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MD asked if ACE have any concerns over actions being rolled over or impact. CN not expecting to encounter any issues as Inspire has invested fully in the investment principles and consistently been in the low risk category and finances are scrutinised. <p>The board noted the report and approved the draft plan for 2024/25.</p>	
9.	<p><u>Health & Safety Annual Report & Policy</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> KB presented the annual report to the board for review and to approve the minor amendments to the Health & Safety policy. Inspire is currently progressing a new and improved health & safety management system working with NCC's H&S department. Delivery is taking longer due to internal capacity but expected to be implemented in 2024. In the mean time, the existing system continues to operate effectively. KB noted that anti-social behaviour (ASB) remains the principal work related incident and this is replicated in other library services across the country. Inspire has a zero-tolerance approach to ASB and procedures are in place to support staff e.g use of security guards. Members asked why looking at best practice for management of stress and wellbeing had been deferred and whether this included handling ASB. KB explained that capacity had been difficult but that a lot of work had been done previously and this is the second part around actions to develop support tools for staff and training. KB used the incident at Worksop Library last year to show the deployment of the support system and debriefing process. KB added that staff know the organisation will support them, there is online training and hotspots are dealt with locally. <p>The board noted the report and approved the policy statement.</p>	
10.	<p><u>Risk Review</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> KB noted that a key responsibility of governance is the management of risk within the organisation and The Charity Governance code sets out that the board should regularly review the process and set of internal controls to manage risk. KB asked members to consider and discuss their level of oversight, involvement and level of risk set out in the risk management framework. PG noted that the Inspire Leadership Team follow a systematic monthly review of risk which is reported to the board and felt that members were familiar with all the areas of risk. Members agreed that the appetite and tolerance were well balanced and were happy with the process. <p>The board discussed the approach to risk management and were happy to continue with the current risk management framework.</p>	
11.	<p><u>Risk Log</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> KB asked members to note: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decrease in risk for lack of ICT capacity and resilience to support Inspire services. New risk for financial impact of change in Teacher Pensions contributions rate and reduction in funding. PG to add a separate risk of losing teachers if the scheme is withdrawn. Increase in risk if financial contract price from NCC is reduced. New risk for cyber attack and data protection following rise in incidents across all organisations and advice from ICT manager and Barclays to review and link to staff awareness and training. 	<u>KB</u>
12.	<p><u>Committee Reports & Minutes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staffing & Standards – 08/11/2023 Finance & Audit – 27/11/2023 & 05/02/2024 – KS to amend typos. Music, Culture & Heritage – 12/12/2023 	<u>KS</u>

13.	AOB <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None. 	
14.	Forthcoming meeting and events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main board – Tues 14th May 2024, 4 to 6pm, Inspire HQ & Teams • Main board – Tues 17th Sept 2024, 4 to 6pm, Beeston Library & Teams • Inspire 2024 AGM – Weds 9th Oct 2024, TBC & online • Main board – Tues 19th Nov 2024, 4 to 6pm, Nottinghamshire Archives & Teams 	
15.	Meeting Review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity for chair/vice chair to discuss all aspects of the board meeting – timeliness, communication, quality of papers and opportunity for discussion and debate. • MM noted that the service spotlights are enjoyed and appreciated. 	

Noting of approved minutes	
Name:	John Cottee
Signature:	
Title:	Chair of Inspire Board
Date:	11/03/2024