


Title of Meeting:	Inspire Board –Minutes
Location:	Inspire HQ & *Teams Meeting
Date:	Weds 7th May 2025
Time:	4 to 6pm
Attendees:	Mark Dorrington – Member Elected Director *Vicki Dunstall – Co Opted Director Peter Gaw – Chief Executive Officer, Inspire *Jackie Hewlett-Davies – Member Elected Director Margot Madin – Co Opted Director Diana Meale – Member Elected Director Ann Penn – Staff Elected Director *John Cottee – County Council Nominated Director (Chair)
Invited:	Margaret Anderson – Chief Finance Officer, Inspire Kirsty Ellis – Assistant Chief Executive Officer, Inspire *Aidan La Mola – Commissioner, NCC Katharine Say – Executive Officer, Inspire

Agenda No.	Agenda Subject	Action
1.	<u>Virtual Library Tour</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> KE demonstrated Inspire’s new virtual library tour helping customers plan their visit, reducing anxiety and checking facilities and accessibility. West Bridgford Library Inspire - Culture, Learning, Libraries is live, soon to be followed by Mansfield Central Library and then Beeston and Worksop libraries. 	
2.	<u>Welcome and Apologies</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apologies received from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leon Dale – Member Elected Director Claudine White – NCC Group Manager, Place Commissioning, NCC 	
3.	<u>Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members then agreed that the minutes from 11th February 2025 were a true and accurate record and were happy to approve. Matters arising - Item 6, MA confirmed that Inspire has 185 casual employees. 	
4.	<u>Declaration of Conflicts and Interests</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None. 	
5.	<u>CEO Update</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PG presented his report for February to May 2025 and highlighted some of the many events, activities, results and developments. <u>ICT Separation</u> - due to be completed by the end of May giving Inspire network independence from Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) and full management of infrastructure and support. Heritage new burden funds can be spent once completed as involves purchasing new IT equipment. <u>Learning Management Information System</u> – selection completed and phased approach going live mid-June. <u>Library Management System</u> – went live in November 2024, reasonably smoothly but number of functionality challenges being worked through. <u>Completion of Hucknall Library renovations</u> - small investment with a big impact. <u>Archives Unleashed</u> - use of augmented reality at Notts Archives through Nottingham City UKSP funding to access archives resources. 	

	<p><u>Sustainable Inspire</u> - Food waste recycling now available at larger sites and ongoing work with NCC for a cost effective scheme to install EV charging at Inspire HQ and other sites.</p> <p><u>Service Design reviews</u> - all progressing, working hard at protecting employment, redeploying staff and minimal redundancies.</p> <p><u>Inspire Youth Arts (IYA) Light Night at Nottingham Castle</u> - 2 nights and 21,010 attendees.</p> <p><u>Customer Service Excellence & Matrix Standard for Information Advice & Guidance-</u> Inspire has been recredited.</p> <p><u>Areas of Concern</u> - Education Library Service (ELS) buy back has declined. Turnaround plan in place including a new service manager. Mobile libraries unplanned withdrawal of service still too high and as agreed as part of the library strategy will be reviewed with the council at the end of 2025.</p> <p><u>Funding Awards</u> – Ashfield UKSP £53k to support improvements to Hucknall Library and support heritage projects. Adult Skills Fund – failed to register with Crown Commercial Service in time. Overly complicated, many staged process, only one other service provider in the area managed to register.</p> <p><u>Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)</u> – the inspire leadership (ILT) and senior management teams will be looking at broad scenarios and impact. ALM noted that it is still early days and there are many unknowns. Inspire will be communicating with staff as soon as possible on any plans.</p> <p><u>Senior Staff Succession</u> – all leadership team job descriptions will be independently reviewed by NCC as this has not happened for over 5 years and will include the chief executive officer role. Any decisions will be brought to the board for approval. The Director of Learning has brought forward his retirement date to August and recruitment for his post will start shortly in partnership with NCC as this post is seconded to Inspire.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JHD queried what initiatives may be supported by the new Reform led county council. PG responded that this was still unknown. • DM asked what a shadow spinal column point was. PG explained that Inspire uses the local government grading scheme but there is an option that Inspire may decide to open up bands not currently used by NCC. • Inspire Board Elections 2025 – 3 x community board directors will be happening April to July and July to September for staff director. PG pursuing 2 possible candidates for co-opted director vacancies. • MD asked if the Dashboard Archives service engagement figure included online ancestry stats. PG confirmed this was correct. • MM asked if work had begun on the next Inspire Forward Plan. PG advised that the service contract with NCC has been extended to 2028, ILT are working on the plan and this will come back to the board for their involvement in the autumn. <p>The board noted the progress of the organisation and range of issues.</p>	
6.	<p><u>Finance Update</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MA reported that period 11 management accounts for April 2024 to February 2025 predict a surplus of £176k. This significantly better position is largely due to in-year discretionary spending and a recruitment freeze. Costs for the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system will now be in 2025/26 and slightly better service income and steady bank have contributed as well as an underspend on the book fund due to the implementation of the new LMS which meant books couldn't be purchased. A designated fund has been created so books can be bought in 2025/26. • There is a significant draw on Learning funds for use in the year of £324k. The ongoing service review is addressing the reduction of this figure and bringing the service into balance. • Impact on Reserves – expecting an estimated £1.8m in unrestricted reserves, £276k in designated funds and £2.2m in restricted reserves at the end of the year. • The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) shows an improvement for the Music service due to increase in income and delay in spending but still shows a deficit if no action taken. Awaiting outcome from government spending review for clarity on the future of Music funding in or to plan and continue with the service review if required. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unrestricted Funds – figures assume that NCC will continue to fund the contract price plus inflation, pay awards and NI contribution. AP commented that it was a very clear and well laid out report. PG highlighted that the £176k surplus is a great credit to colleagues who brought in extra income and managed resources exceptionally well. Members agreed it was a fantastic effort. MM noted that one of the contributions is the recruitment freeze and MA confirmed that the organisation has budgeted for less vacancy lag for 2025/26. MM enquired about the pension liability. MA advised it should be by mid-May. A briefing note from actuary stated that they expect the overall position to improve on last year due to inflation rates and mortality rates so MA not expecting to have to recognise anything on the balance sheet. <p>The board noted the contents of the report.</p>	
7.	<p><u>Annual Governance Review</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> KE reported on progress on last year's action plan and set out actions for 2025/26. Inspire uses the Charity Governance Code to assess and benchmark its governance. Most members attended the board away day in November and there is now an interim solution to managing data and the end solution being the implementation of the CRM system. The new system will ensure that Inspire's relationship is managed much better and communicates effectively with members. Following the board elections there will be a full induction for new trustees. Board performance in 2025/26 will be reviewed using the Governance App. To review the introduction of individual board member appraisals. Diversity training will be provided now that Inspire has a new Workforce Development Manager. <p>The board approved the plan and that progress will be reviewed in May 2026.</p>	
8.	<p><u>Risk Log</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members reviewed the risk log and noted the only change is on item 4 Finance - inflationary pressures where the risk rating has improved following work done on service reviews and renewal of contract sum. <p>The board noted the risk register.</p>	
9.	<p><u>Committee Reports and Minutes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning & Skills Committee – 24/02/2025 Staffing & Standards Committee – 12/03/2025 Music, Culture & Heritage Committee – 25/03/2025 Finance & Audit Committee – 30/04/2025 <p>The board noted the reports.</p>	
10.	<p><u>AOB</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> KE advised two new policies will be shortly circulated by email for comment/approval after presentation at the Trade Union meeting rather than waiting until the next board meeting in September. The Neonatal Leave policy sets out the new legal entitlement and Sexual Harassment policy is a legal duty that came out in October to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace. Board Away Day – either 8th Nov at Arnold or 15th Nov at West Bridgford. JHD noted that the new artistic director of the National Theatre, Indhu Rubasingham grew up in Mansfield. 	
11.	<p><u>Forthcoming meeting and events</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inspire Awards Celebration, rescheduled to Thurs 18th Sept 2025, 6 to 9pm at Mansfield Central Library 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tues 16th Sept 2025, 4 to 6pm at Notts Archives & Teams • Inspire AGM, Weds 8th Oct 2025, 7 to 8.30pm, venue TBC • Tues 25th Nov 2025, 4 to 6pm at Beeston Library & Teams • Inspire Christmas Concert, Mon 8th Dec 2025, 6.15 to 9pm at Royal Concert Hall 	
12.	<p><u>Meeting Review – opportunity for chair/vice to discuss all aspects of the board meeting</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members discussed roles for Chair and Vice Chair and unanimously voted for: <p>Margot Madin to be new Chair – nominated by Vicki Dunstall and seconded by John Cottee John Cottee to be new Vice Chair – nominated by Diana Meale and seconded by Mark Dorrington.</p>	

Noting of approved minutes	
Name:	John Cottee
Signature:	
Title:	Chair of Inspire Board
Date:	21/05/2025