



Libraries Act (Northern Ireland) 2008

2008 CHAPTER 8

An Act to provide for the establishment and functions of the Northern Ireland Library Authority; to enable the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure to make grants in connection with the provision of library services; and for connected purposes. [17th June 2008]

BE IT ENACTED by being passed by the Northern Ireland Assembly and assented to by Her Majesty as follows:

The Northern Ireland Library Authority

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1.—(1) There shall be a body corporate to be known as the Northern Ireland Library Authority.

(2) Schedule 1 applies in relation to the Authority.

(3) The Authority shall be the library authority for Northern Ireland.

(4) Accordingly, an Education and Library Board established by the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 (NI 3) shall cease to be the library authority for its area.

(5) The Department may make one or more schemes for the transfer of designated property, rights and liabilities of education and library boards to the Authority.

(6) On the transfer date, the designated property, rights and liabilities are transferred to and vest in the Authority in accordance with the scheme.

- (7) Schedule 2 contains further provisions relating to a scheme.
- (8) In this section and that Schedule—
- “designated”, in relation to a scheme, means specified in or determined in accordance with the scheme;
- “scheme” means a scheme under this section;
- “the transfer date”, in relation to a scheme, means the date specified by the scheme as the date on which it is to have effect.

Commencement Information

- II S. 1 wholly in operation at 1.4.2009; s. 1(5)-(8) in operation at 18.7.2008, see s. 12(1)(a); s. 1(1)(2) in operation at 1.10.2008 by S.R. 2008/396, art. 2(a); s. 1(3)(4) in operation at 1.4.2009 by S.R. 2009/123, art. 2(a)

Duty of Authority to provide library service

2.—(1) It shall be the duty of the Authority to provide a comprehensive and efficient public library service for persons living, working or studying in Northern Ireland.

- (2) In carrying out its duty under subsection (1), the Authority shall—
- (a) secure 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 appropriate means);
- (b) have regard to the desirability of—
- (i) encouraging both adults and children to make full use of the library service;
- (ii) 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;
- (iii) promoting literacy and lifelong learning;
- (iv) maintaining a collection of library materials relevant to the cultural heritage of Northern Ireland;
- (v) making library premises available for cultural and community activities; and
- (vi) meeting any special requirements of adults and children by any appropriate means.

(3) The Authority may make such arrangements with other bodies whether inside or outside Northern Ireland which it considers necessary in order to enable it to carry out its duty under subsection (1) more effectively.

(4) The Authority may provide such library services to persons visiting Northern Ireland as it considers appropriate.

Ancillary powers of Authority

3.—(1) The Authority may do anything that appears to it to be conducive or incidental to the discharge of its functions.

(2) In particular the Authority may—

- (a) enter into agreements;
- (b) subject to section 5, acquire or dispose of property;
- (c) borrow money;
- (d) subject to the approval of the Department, form bodies corporate or acquire or dispose of interests in bodies corporate;
- (e) accept gifts;
- (f) invest money;
- (g) carry out, or commission or assist in the carrying out of, research;
- (h) co-operate with, or provide advice to, other bodies established by or under a statutory provision.

Power of Authority to undertake commercial activities

4.—(1) Subject to the following provisions of this section, the Authority shall have power, with the approval of the Department, to undertake commercial activities which, apart from this section, it would not have power to undertake.

(2) An approval granted under this section—

- (a) shall specify the particular commercial activities which the Authority has power to undertake under this section in pursuance of the approval;
- (b) shall be subject to such conditions as may be specified by the Department in the approval.

(3) Subject to any conditions applying under this section, the Authority shall have power—

- (a) to do anything which appears to the Authority to be conducive or incidental to the exercise of any power conferred under this section; and
- (b) to make such charge as the Authority considers appropriate for anything that it does in the exercise of any such power and to calculate any such charge on any basis that it considers to be the appropriate commercial basis.

(4) Nothing in this section authorises the Authority—

- (a) to undertake any commercial activities which are detrimental to the performance of any duty imposed on it by any other provision of this Act; or
- (b) to disregard any statutory provision or rule of law or to override any person's contractual or property rights.

(5) Where it appears to the Department that the Authority—

- (a) has failed to comply with any conditions subject to which an approval under this section has been granted; or
- (b) has in undertaking any commercial activity in pursuance of such an approval contravened subsection (4),

the Department may, by notice served on the Authority—

- (i) revoke the approval; or
- (ii) modify the approval, whether by modifying the particular commercial activities or any conditions specified therein.

(6) The revocation or modification of an approval under this section does not affect the power of the Authority to meet any contractual commitments outstanding at the date on which the notice under subsection (5) is served on the Authority.

(7) Any approval or notice under this section shall be in writing.

(8) In this section “commercial activity” includes—

- (a) the carrying out of work for any other body or person;
- (b) the supplying of goods and services to any other body or person; and
- (c) the developing and exploiting of ideas and the exploiting of intellectual property.

Powers of Authority in relation to land

5.—(1) The Authority may, with the approval of the Department, acquire, hold and dispose of land for the purpose of carrying out its functions.

(2) The power of the Authority to acquire land includes power to acquire it compulsorily in accordance with subsections (3) and (4); and the power of acquiring land compulsorily under this subsection includes power to acquire, by the creation of a new right, an easement or other right over land.

(3) Where the Authority proposes to acquire any land compulsorily, it may apply to the Department for an order (a “vesting order”) vesting that land in the Authority and, subject to subsections (4) and (5), the Department shall have power to make such an order.

(4) Schedule 6 to the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972 (c. 9) shall apply for the purposes of the acquisition of land by means of a vesting order made under subsection (3) as it applies to the acquisition of land by means of a vesting order made under that Act, subject to the following modifications—

- (a) for any reference to the council there shall be substituted a reference to the Authority;
- (b) for any reference to the Department concerned there shall be substituted a reference to the Department;
- (c) for any reference to that Act there shall be substituted a reference to this Act;
- (d) in paragraph 6(2) for the words from “the fund” onwards there shall be substituted “ funds of the Authority (in this Schedule referred to as “the compensation fund”), and shall be discharged by payments made by the Authority ”; and
- (e) in paragraph 12(2) for “the clerk of the council” there shall be substituted “ such person as may be designated for the purposes of this Schedule by the Authority ”.

(5) Nothing in this section authorises the acquisition, without the consent of the Department of the Environment, of any land on or in which there is to the knowledge of the Department any historic monument or archaeological object within the meaning of the Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 (NI 9).

(6) The powers to make a vesting order under this section may be exercised over land—

- (a) which is the property of any body established by or under any statutory provision which has power under any statutory provision to acquire land compulsorily; or
- (b) which is declared by or under any statutory provision to be inalienable;

but a vesting order shall not be made in relation to any such land, where representations objecting to the proposal for making the order have been duly made by the owner of the land and have not been withdrawn, unless the proposal has been approved by a resolution of the Assembly.

Charges for certain library services

6.—(1) The Authority may not make any charges for any library services provided by it unless—

- (a) the services in question are specified in a scheme of charges approved by the Department and published by the Authority; and
- (b) the charges are made in accordance with that scheme.