
From: GEOFFREY SMITH <geoffrey.smith@btinternet.com>
Sent: 07 June 2014 13:43
To: Mrs. M. E. Newton; Mr. A. E. Pearson; Mr. R. Sharp; Mrs. R. Camamile; Mr. S. J. Hampson; Mr. M. H. Charlesworth; Mr. J. Kaufman; Mr. D. Jennings; Mr. P. G. Lewis; Mr. R. Sharp
Cc: Mr. A. M. Kershaw
Subject: Adult and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Dear County Councillor

I hope you will forgive my writing to you about a matter that is on the agenda of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday.

I have some experience of libraries, local and nationally, and I understand the financial challenges that make it necessary to review the way in which the service is provided in Leicestershire and the proposals set out in the Cabinet Paper and the consultation documents.

I am concerned that the proposed community libraries have the constructive and sustained staff support that will enable the volunteers to provide services that meet the needs of the community and are a credit to the County Council.

As a Trustee of the Quorn Old School - a community, arts and heritage project - I have been involved in discussions with your officers on the Heads of Terms for the proposed contract with the County Council by which a community library will be provided. The level of County Council library staff support proposed is of concern to the Trustees and if the Council intends to replicate it for other community libraries I fear that it will put at risk the success of the community libraries proposals.

I hope that the Committee will suggest that the officers consider recruiting volunteers to work alongside the paid staff at the sixteen larger libraries. This could make more paid staff (say four to over the thirty-six community libraries) available to provide the constructive and continuing support for community library volunteers that will be needed. It might also make it possible to increase the proposed opening hours of the larger libraries.

Yours sincerely

Geoffrey Smith