Copy of County Cllr Weston’s Speech to ECC 12.3.2019

Chairman, Members of the Council

I endeavour to represent all of my residents regardless of their political persuasion. As the county councillor for the Rochford West Ward I would like to speak on behalf of my residents in respect of two libraries, Hockley and Hullbridge.

As the cabinet member is aware the residents of both my wards are disappointed with respect to the tier ranking that has been applied to these libraries; Hockley being ranked a 3 Tier and Hullbridge 4 Tier.

All I ask of the cabinet member is that when you review the data for Hockley and Hullbridge Libraries you take note of the facts that have been presented in response to the consultation by my residents and equally by me.

We need to reassure residents that all factors have been taken into account fairly. We need to provide essential services. Libraries are not just a place to borrow a book – they are much more than that.

Closures would be detrimental to the community that I represent. I will look to methods to keep our libraries open and improve the facilities that they offer, rather than look for reasons to curtail them.

The closure of one or both the Hockley or Hullbridge libraries would have a huge impact on the most vulnerable members of our society; the young and the elderly, the lonely and those that can’t access facilities such as the internet in any other fashion.

Hence as the county member for Rochford West Ward I will be working very closely with the Parish and / or other organisations to explore the opportunity to use Hockley and Hullbridge libraries as community hubs and to also maximise the use of their buildings to support the community that I represent.