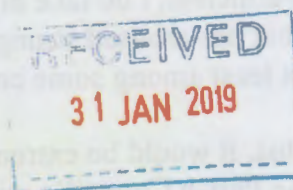




HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Councillor Roy Martin
Chairman
Hockley Parish Council
The Old Fire Station
58 Southend Road
Hockley
Essex, SS5 4QH



28 January 2019

PLEASE QUOTE ON CORRESPONDENCE

Our Ref: AJ/Martin/280119

Dear Councillor Martin

Essex Future Library Services Consultation

I am writing to you as I had the opportunity at home yesterday to read through the Essex Future Library Services Consultation Document. I have also seen a copy of the letter dated 24th January 2019 from your excellent clerk, Mrs Kelly Holland, to County Councillor Susan Barker, the Cabinet Member for Customer & Corporate Services at Essex County Council, which relates directly to this subject.

As you know, Essex County Council have placed Hockley Library in Tier 3. These libraries are defined as:

“Locations where no library service is needed in order to have a comprehensive and efficient network, but where ECC could support the provision of library services run by a community or partnership organisation with ECC support.”

As outlined in your Clerk's letter, my first instinct would be to support you as the Parish Council and the people of Hockley in order to try and persuade Essex County Council to reverse their decision to place Hockley Library in Tier 3. I will be writing to this effect when I respond to the Consultation as your Member of Parliament, prior to the deadline of 20th February 2019.

However, in the event that we are collectively unable to persuade Essex County Council to pursue this course of action, I thought it was prudent to ask you whether you are aware of any local voluntary or community groups, perhaps working under the auspices of Hockley Parish Council, who might be prepared to take over the running of the library as volunteers, so that this vital service is not lost to the people of Hockley. Thinking off the top of my head as it were, I wonder whether it might be possible to form some kind of “Friends of Hockley Library Group”, comprising people from the village who could continue to run the library for everyone's benefit.



As you may have seen, I have been rather involved in the whole Brexit issue at the national level but, nevertheless, I do take my constituency duties extremely seriously and I know that this issue is one that has aroused strong feelings amongst my constituents in and around the Hockley area (and not least among some constituents in Hawkwell as well).

Given this, it would be extremely helpful if you could provide me with a prompt reply, so that I know the Parish Council's mind ^{before} responding to the Consultation before the 20th February.

Finally, it is often difficult for me to attend regular Parish Council meetings, because they tend to take place midweek when I am required to be at Westminster. Nevertheless, once I have received your letter, if you want to subsequently contact my PA, Adele Jacquin, either by phone on 020 7219 8287 or email at mark.francois.mp@parliament.uk, hopefully we can agree a date for an informal meeting (perhaps at one of my constituency surgeries?) where we could pool our thoughts and decide what best can be done to save this vital resource for the people of Hockley.

I await your reply with great interest.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

Rt Hon Mark Francois
Member of Parliament for Rayleigh and Wickford