



HOCKLEY PARISH COUNCIL

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County Councillor Susan Barker
Cabinet Member for Customer & Corporate Services
Essex County Council
cllr.susan.barker@essex.gov.uk

24th January 2019

Dear Councillor Barker

Re Essex County Council Libraries Consultation 2019

Hockley Parish Council has instructed me to write to you expressing the Parish Council's concerns at the County Council's proposals for the library services, in particular the future of the Hockley Library.

Hockley has a population approaching 10,000 and its neighbouring parish of Hawkwell has a similar level but do not have their own library. The library in our other neighbouring parish of Hullbridge is scheduled for closure. All three parishes are expanding due to new developments.

Libraries are of benefit to all the local communities and with the increasing loss of other public services across the county it is essential that our remaining facilities are maintained to keep communities alive.

Hockley Library is centrally situated and a corner stone of local community life providing much more than reading material. It is used by a variety of local groups of all ages and for access to the internet which is not reliable in every area of the parish. They also work closely with the Parish Council for community events and are a venue for Councillor surgeries for Hockley and Hawkwell parishes. Our library is a member of the J9 Scheme providing a place of safety for vulnerable people. Have these additional community benefits been factored into the survey of usage?

Should the library be downgraded to Tier 3 the service will not be sustainable if it is run on a voluntary basis. Whilst it is appreciated library services must move forward with changing demands, the proposals outlined in the consultation could result in Hockley losing this valuable asset.

The Parish Council would like to have a firm assurance that Essex County Council will reconsider the decision to downgrade Hockley and that should ECC be looking at future development plans for the library site, provision will be made for an alternative community hub in Hockley which would incorporate library facilities and enable the community to have a point of contact for other services such, Police, health, social services, a meeting area for local groups and public toilets if they are moved to within a new building.

Hockley Parish Council and our residents would like to invite you to a meeting in Hockley to discuss these issues. I would be grateful if you could advise when you would be available for a meeting.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Your sincerely,

K Holland

Mrs Kelly Holland
Locum Clerk to Hockley Parish Council

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