

Dear Mr ,

CILIPS Council are deeply concerned by the decision of Moray Council to close so many libraries after dismissing the advice of its own officials, public protest and the Equalities Impact Assessment which highlighted that the closure would disadvantage communities affected.

CILIP in Scotland is the professional body for library and information professionals. We hold that a good public library service is essential to the well being of communities, providing a positive experience for local people and demonstrating the value a local authority places on its community. Our views are supported by evidence based research carried out by the Scottish Government which concluded that participation in culture is significantly linked to good health and life satisfaction. For example, those who visited a library were almost 20% more likely to report good health than those who had not visited a library in the previous 12 months (i).

Libraries also play a key role in supporting the current digital strategies in Scotland (ii) and across the UK (iii) by providing free access for people unable to get online at home. This is particularly important in Scotland where broadband take up is still lower than the UK as a whole and in rural areas where mobile connectivity is often reduced (iv). Evidence from Carnegie UK shows that online access delivers substantial social and economic benefits to citizens and communities. These benefits include: improved educational attainment; better job prospects; better access to public services; cheaper goods and products; access to advice, information and knowledge improved communication with family and friends; and enhanced democratic and civic participation (v).

In addition, it is CILIPS's view that libraries are vital to improving literacy in Scotland. Over a quarter of adults living in Scotland has issues with literacy (vi) and libraries tackle this by providing adult learning and promoting access to reading at a community level. Local authorities have a statutory duty under the s.163(2) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 and supplementary library and local government legislation to secure the provision of adequate library facilities for all persons resident in their area.

In conclusion, It is CILIPS's view that the closures will diminish the service in such a way that it may well fail to meet the requirement of an adequate strategic network delivering core provision. The cuts will be significant and damaging, impacting on the ability of the service to continue delivering innovative work with partners to attain key policy goals such as employability, digital participation, lifelong learning and health promotion.

Yours Sincerely,

On behalf of CILIPS Council

- i. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/publications/2013/08/9956>
- ii. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0040/00404183.pdf>
- iii. <http://www.publications.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/digital/strategy/>
- iv. <http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/market-data-research/market-data/communications-market-reports/cmr13/scotland/>.
- v. <http://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/CMSPages/GetFile.aspx?guid=7324c775-a74a-47d6-b9ad-4a4c173087a3>.
- vi. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Education/Life-Long-Learning/17551>