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Councillors Jenny Laing and Douglas Lumsden
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Dear Council Leaders,

The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals in Scotland (CILIPS) is the affiliate body of CILIP, the leading professional body for librarians in the UK. We write in response to your current proposals to close all of your libraries apart from the Aberdeen Central Library.

We realise you are facing extreme levels of financial challenges and fully appreciate that you need to make difficult decisions. However, to close the number of libraries that you are suggesting would severely affect the local community's ability to access an adequate public library service as required by the Local Government Act.

Recent research shows that libraries are well used by people of all agesⁱ and the recent National Strategy for Public Librariesⁱⁱ highlighted the incredible return of investment libraries offer. We believe the savings these closures would achieve are short-term ones in comparison to the detrimental long-term impact it would have on communities.

Library closures have the potential to severely damage the ability to meet community needs and may also disadvantage older and more vulnerable people and it is essential that the impact on equalities has been fully assessed. Libraries tackle social isolationⁱⁱⁱ and support mental health and wellbeing^{iv} as evidenced by the Scottish Government. Libraries also play a key role in supporting the current digital strategies in Scotland^v and across the UK by providing free access for people unable to get online at home.

A public library service makes an important contribution to national outcomes such as reducing inequality and improving literacy as well as providing a positive experience for local people and demonstrating the value a local authority places on its community. Libraries across Scotland are more popular than other activities such as football and the cinema and have a huge impact on the communities they serve.

Studies have shown that around a quarter of Scotland's adults have issues with literacy^{vi} and libraries tackle this by providing adult learning and promoting access to reading at a community level. Evidence^{vii} also shows that online access delivers substantial social and economic benefits to citizens and communities including 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. Libraries are also vital to improving literacy in Scotland.

I would hope that you can take the above information into consideration when making your decisions and we would welcome further discussion on the matter.

Yours Sincerely



Sean McNamara

Head of CILIP in Scotland

ⁱ https://d1ssu070pg2v9i.cloudfront.net/pex/carnegie_uk_trust/2017/04/Scotland-Shining-a-Light-2.pdf

ⁱⁱ <https://scottishlibraries.org/media/1133/ambition-opportunity-scotlands-national-public-library-strategy.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/connected-scotland-tackling-social-isolation-loneliness-building-stronger-communities/>

^{iv} <https://www.gov.scot/publications/making-easier-health-literacy-action-plan-scotland-2017-2025/pages/6/>

^v <https://www.gov.scot/publications/realising-scotlands-full-potential-digital-world-digital-strategy-scotland/>

^{vi} <https://www2.gov.scot/Resource/Doc/339854/0112382.pdf>

^{vii} https://d1ssu070pg2v9i.cloudfront.net/pex/carnegie_uk_trust/2016/02/pub1455011469.pdf