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Council Leader Graham Leadbitter
Moray Council
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Dear Councillor Leadbitter,

The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals in Scotland (CILIPS) is the affiliate body of CILIP, the leading professional body for librarians and information workers in the UK. We write in response to your ongoing review of library services.

We recognise that this is the beginning of a process within which you will be “engaging in what is called Early Market Engagement.... Scottish Local Authorities, leisure trusts and commercial companies will be contacted to explain that the Council is reviewing its services and is interested in different ways for them to be delivered.”

Our concern is that the above process may lead to library services being delivered in ways that may affect the local community’s ability to access an adequate public library service as required by the Local Government Act, particularly if the model that was ultimately pursued was one where library services were to be delivered by fewer paid and trained staff and without adequate Council funding.

As we pointed out in our letter from earlier this year (Feb 2019) the 2017/18 CIPFA statistics show that Moray Libraries had 532,650 visitors, far higher than the combined visitors to Community Centres and Leisure Centres. Libraries have a huge impact on the communities they serve by reducing inequality, improving literacy^j, tackling social isolationⁱⁱ and supporting mental health and wellbeingⁱⁱⁱ as evidenced by the Scottish Government.

Libraries support the current digital strategies in Scotland^{iv} and deliver 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^v. However, all of this is only possible when libraries are properly resourced, managed and staffed and I would hope that any decision taken ensures this remains the case.

We understand that “an independent organisation, iESE, is supporting and advising the council on assessing different options.” We realise this is ongoing, but we would strongly urge you to ensure

that the consultants take all steps possible to ensure the local community and partner organisations, many of whom rely on library services, are fully consulted. We would also ask that once the review has been undertaken that you also engage with national organisations, such as ourselves, to ensure all views are heard alongside trade unions.

I would hope that you can take the above information into consideration when taking this challenging work onwards and we look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours Sincerely



Sean McNamara

Head of CILIP in Scotland

ⁱ <https://www2.gov.scot/Resource/Doc/339854/0112382.pdf>

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

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

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

^v https://d1ssu070pg2v9i.cloudfront.net/pex/carnegie_uk_trust/2016/02/pub1455011469.pdf