

1st March 2022
North Ayrshire Council, Cunninghame House
Irvine, KA12 8EE

Dear Councillor,

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. Many of our members work in services including those in your school libraries. I am writing to raise concerns over your current budget proposal to carry out a 'Review of the Learning Community Librarians across Educational Establishments' with a potential saving of over £40k. I understand that this review may include reducing staff hours or decreasing the provision of librarians within schools to meet the saving.

We realise local authority budgets are extremely challenging in Scotland and that difficult decisions are required. However, making changes to school library provision such as reducing staffing will severely affect the service and directly impact the quality of education you offer pupils. This runs counter to current national initiatives aiming to support and enhance literacy and will inevitably lead to a poorer overall educational experience.

Evidence shows that school librarians directly support improved literacy and attainment, and this is particularly relevant in North Ayrshire, a Scottish Attainment Challenge authority. School libraries are a safe and supportive learning environment where all pupils have equitable access to curriculum related learning resources, both physical and digital, practical support, and information for educational purposes. With an increasing number of children living in poverty and a cost-of-living crisis deepening, this has never been more important. North Ayrshire school libraries are held in high regard and are often seen as a best practice case in Scotland, and this should be built upon. We believe that school libraries should be the central resource of the school, open every day and staffed by a professionally trained librarian.

The [National Strategy for Public Libraries](#), currently being implemented in Scotland makes clear that 'school librarians are a fundamental part of Scotland's education sector and have the potential to be transformative in the development of every child and young person'. This document states on numerous occasions the important role school librarians have in educational settings and it is important that local authorities recognise this. Recent savings you have also taken via public libraries in Bourtreehill and Springside will also have a cumulative effect on access for young people.

We ask that you do not take these savings when you agree the budget this month as the saving you will make will not outweigh the impact it will have on young people in North Ayrshire, we would be happy to discuss this matter further should you wish.

Yours Sincerely



Sean McNamara, Head of CILIP Scotland