

20th June 2022

North Lanarkshire Council
7 Scott St, Motherwell
ML1 1PN

Dear Councillor,

Firstly, congratulations on your recent election success and we look forward to working with you. I am writing to you from the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals in Scotland ([CILIPS](#)), 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 and provide feedback over proposed changes that are being made to your school library service. We understand from a Freedom of Information request dated 12th April that in 2020 the deletion of 23 school library posts was agreed by the Council and a working group is now considering how to implement these changes via alternative operating models. Whilst we welcome that stakeholders, including librarians and Headteachers, are involved in this we urge you take steps to ensure these savings are either reversed or mitigated in a way that leaves in place a similar service with skilled and experienced school librarians in place.

We accept local authority budgets are extremely challenging and that difficult decisions are required. However, removing school librarian posts will severely damage the service you offer and directly affect the quality of education you offer pupils as well as efforts nationally to improve literacy rates and attainment. We understand there is some consideration being given to a better coordinated and integrated service within Active and Creative Services but we believe any permanent reduction in school library posts will have a detrimental effect.

A [body of evidence](#) highlights the contribution of school librarians to improved attainment and achievement and their role as a safe and supportive learning environment where all pupils have equal and equitable access to curriculum related learning resources, both physical and digital, practical support, and information for educational purposes. We believe that school libraries should be the central resource of the school, open every day and staffed by a professionally trained librarian and the [National Strategy for Public Libraries](#), currently being implemented in Scotland, states on numerous occasions the important role school librarians have in educational settings.

Specifically, in North Lanarkshire, your school librarians have been extremely impactful including a North Lanarkshire librarian until recently chairing the national [School Libraries Group Scotland](#), and another being [deservedly shortlisted](#) for Scotland's Library and Information Professional of the Year 2022. Your librarians have been instrumental in creating acclaimed projects such as Read to Succeed and School Librarians Guide to Oz (interactive reading project) and none of this would be possible without dedicated and skilled school librarians in place.

We ask that when considering whatever options there are that you take the above into account and consider the long-term impact on pupils. We would be happy to discuss this matter further should you wish.

Yours Sincerely



Sean McNamara, Head of CILIP Scotland