

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AND LIBRARIES COMMITTEE

Tuesday 11 June 2019

ITEM 11 – PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

Note

At the meeting a total of 30 minutes is available for public questions and comments. The questioner may ask one supplementary question at the meeting which will be answered without discussion. The supplementary question must be relevant to the original question put to the Chairman.

Public Comment - up to 3 minutes per comment

	Agenda Item No 8	Public Comment Request
1.	Item 8 – Evaluation of new Library Service Model	<p>Keith Martin</p> <p>My comment concerns agenda item 8; Evaluation of new Library Service Model. What was promised on 7 March 2019 was an independent review tonight of the Council's Library Strategy.</p> <p>This evening is a key moment in the history of human civilisation and of democracy. We who are assembled here are privileged to witness a pivotal moment in history. Never before has Barnet Council entertained the possibility that it has not the absolute right to overrule Acts of Parliament. It is an important step forward, on a par with man's first steps on the moon.</p> <p>However, the cautious recommendations before the committee this evening show us that this is only a first</p>

		<p>step.</p> <p>The second step is to establish the legitimacy or otherwise of what is described as a decision by the Secretary of State for Culture not to order a formal enquiry into whether or not Barnet is meeting its statutory duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient public library service as required by the 1964 Act.</p> <p>This second step involves assessing the extent to which the Secretary of State was influenced by misrepresentations and false information contained in emails to the DCMS by officers of Barnet Council, as evidenced by emails disclosed under FOI from the DCMS to Save Barnet Libraries on 28 May 2019. These show clearly that the minister's conclusions were based largely on inaccurate data supplied by Barnet Council, as well as assurances that an independent report would be presented to this committee this evening, which has not happened. It is my contention that the decision of the Secretary of State is thereby flawed and should be forthwith withdrawn. What is incontestable in the legislation is the principle of the public interest in protecting public libraries from falling below the standards of providing a comprehensive and efficient public library service as required by the 1964 Act. I have appealed to the two ministers against the decision of Michael Ellis on 9 April 2019.</p> <p>I agree that optimism is a necessary ingredient of the Council's Library Strategy. However, I suggest that the recommendations themselves require, in the words of</p>
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		<p>the Summary, paragraph 4 line 3: “further adaptations and improvements.”</p>
<p>2.</p>	<p>Evaluation of new Library Service Model</p>	<p>Rhonda Miller</p> <p>I am writing to demand a full and transparent investigation of the impact of your cuts to our library service.</p> <p>Floor space has been reduced substantially. My local library, Church End Library, deemed ‘core-plus’, was regularly filled to capacity in its old space. (see the picture below).</p>  <p>Now this space has been even further reduced. Not all children in the borough have quiet study spaces at home and need library facilities in order to study.</p> <p>As staffed hours have been reduced, this means that access to the library has been reduced for children under 16 who are unable to enter during unstaffed times. I recently spoke to a 14 year old, who would often come to the library after school and is now not allowed to enter his pin-code restricted library without an adult!</p> <p>Attendance has fallen substantially in libraries since the</p>

		<p>cuts and the changes have made it so that vulnerable groups – particularly children and disabled people – are excluded.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Golders Green and North Finchley, with pin-code restricted access for under-15s, and have lost their children’s rooms, have shed 66 per cent and 51pc of their visitors respectively.• There was an almost 50 per cent drop in participation in the annual children’s summer reading challenge – from 4,216 children taking part in Barnet in 2016 to 2,113 last year – illustrates the impact of restricting access for young people.
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3.	Evaluation of new Library Service Model	<p>Holly Kal-Weiss</p> <p>As a resident of High Barnet, active in the community and in touch with hundreds of other residents through my community work, I write to you concerning the difficulties we face with the planned changes to the library service.</p> <p>Comments from friends and neighbours include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Lack of opportunities for children to use the library unattended by a parent- unstaffed libraries have led to a reduction in children using the library for reading schemes and to do school work. Many parents must work long hours to make ends meet and libraries play a crucial community role in providing a safe space for children after school. Families in cramped living quarters rely on the library to give children quiet space for learning. Reduced services in libraries disadvantages those in our community that need these services the most. Schools, struggling themselves with cuts to their budgets, can not rely on libraries to be available to their pupils.2. Difficulties with technology for older/disabled residents- not everyone is comfortable with technology or able to use it and need the support of staff. The library staff are vital to ensure equal access for all and unstaffed libraries are discriminatory.3. Decimation of our communities in general- after so many years of austerity and cuts, there are very few community spaces left for residents. Without library spaces and staff, our community assets will be further
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		<p>depleted.</p> <p>4. Importance of professionalism- librarians are trained professionals who provide an educational resource to all residents and visitors. They plan, organise, research and deliver a well resourced and well rounded library that will support a huge variety of needs. I have had examples from neighbours of library staff assisting with job searches, government forms, as well as academic research and assistance to local businesses. Volunteers are not necessarily able to provide these services. Again, the further reduction of staffed libraries and the hours these libraries remain open and functioning will have unintended negative consequences for the future.</p> <p>In this push to cut costs we will create many more costly problems for the future.</p>
4.	<p>Evaluation of new Library Service Model</p>	<p>Elizabeth Walter</p> <p>Some reflections on what has happened to Barnet libraries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Closed twice for months. Apparently for refurbishment. There was no refurbishment, just areas shut off. The whole entrance is dark now and one room gone and the toilets rarely available for use. - People can't get in without a pin if it's unstaffed. A notice on the door forbids people from following others in - to their own library! - Loss of trained librarians. No one to help you find a

		<p>book or help with a query. I've not been able to replace my daughters lost card because no one is there to do it. You can't take out any DVD or book that has a problem and refers you to the desk.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of volunteers in place of paid staff. - no additional resources as promised, no larger spaces. - community hub opportunities gone. No places for people to just sit and read if they can't access the library. <p>I really feel people are disadvantaged by not having easy access to libraries and trained librarians.</p> <p>I hope Barnet can start investing in Libraries again.</p>
5.	<p>Evaluation of new Library Service Model</p>	<p>Alex Dower</p> <p>As a parent local to East Finchley library I have been shocked and appalled by the degradation of library provision for the local community since the library changed. The great British tradition of libraries open to all has been completely and recklessly destroyed.</p> <p>There needs to be a full and transparent investigation of issues including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reductions in study space, separate children's rooms, computers & book stock 2. Locked toilets 3. Replacing staff with security guards 4. Obstacles to access and use for ALL people affected by unstaffed and volunteer-run libraries. <p>Please inform me of the next steps and any progress in this issue.</p>

6.	<p>Evaluation of new Library Service Model</p>	<p>Thalia Waddell</p> <p>As a member of the local community and a mother of young children I object to the following:</p> <p>1. Reductions in study space, separate children's rooms, computers & book stock 2. Locked toilets 3. Replacing staff with security guards 4. Obstacles to access and use for ALL people affected by unstaffed and volunteer-run libraries.</p> <p>I frequently find the library unaccessible if I don't have my card as it is shut; there are rarely staff to address requests for books; the toilets are always locked; I don't feel safe in the library on unstaffed days.</p>
7.	<p>Evaluation of new Library Service Model</p>	<p>Vanessa Hernandez</p> <p>I am writing to enquire about the evaluation of the cuts that Barnet have taken on the library in East Finchley.</p> <p>As a previous regular user of the library and other libraries in North London I must say it's such a huge shame and a great loss to the community what Barnet have done to drive down the use of their library in East Finchley. I know that their must be some long term plan to remove this library and turn it into some money making service for Barnet as you've done everything in your power to stop the public using this service. There have been countless times when I myself, who holds a library card, has experienced issues entering the building as the machine has been out of service. Also I have been there a few times when people have been turned away because they do not hold a card. Luckily the guard is a</p>

		<p>friendly fellow and as he knows me has let me in when he is around. There has also been so little events and so little effort put in to help bring the community into this library while there is more effort put into other libraries in Barnet. Sadly my kids and I use Kentish Town library more regularly as there is a much nicer atmosphere there and far more activities. East Finchley library used to be a great place to drop into and you have turned this place into a ghost town. What a very sad way for a Council to act!</p>
8.	Evaluation of new Library Service Model	Barbara Jacobson
9.	Evaluation of new Library Service Model	Tatianna Rodrigues
10.	Evaluation of new Library Service Model	<p>Elizabeth Burling</p> <p>I firmly believe that Barnet Council's new Library Service Model is not fit for purpose and is doing local residents a great disservice.</p> <p>The result of the council's actions in reducing library provision so drastically is that many people who were previously using the libraries now seem to be unable to do so. Surely reading is a basic skill that we hope all people will acquire? Visiting a library is an excellent way to help literacy and should be encouraged in every way possible. Barnet Council has a duty under the Library and Museums Act (1964) to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service and encourage its use by children. I would contend that they are doing exactly the opposite! I work in a local school and whereas previously we would introduce 90 or so Year 4 children to our local library at East Barnet, the cuts in hours mean that we no longer do</p>

		<p>this. Figures from Barnet Council show that people visiting East Barnet Library last year were only 59% of those attending the year before. Also, children under 15 have actually been excluded from using many of our local libraries.</p> <p>Those who need to use public computers are also being excluded from access to them. Some of these people will be students but others will be those trying to claim benefits, which I understand now must be accessed online.</p> <p>I trust the Council will see that its experiment to save money in its provision of library services is a false economy in many ways and will restore all libraries in the Borough to their previous state.</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p>Evaluation of new Library Service Model</p>	<p>Ana Campos</p> <p>I'm a Barnet resident highly concern for the future of our East Finchley library. My family and I used not only as a free, friendly workspace, but as a place where you can spend invaluable time with your children between beautiful books. We also enjoy regularly the nursery rhymes on Monday mornings.</p> <p>Key aspects for us as users of this library are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A decent toilet, with baby changing facilities. This means you can spend all the time you want at the Library, without being worried of you or your children needing to use the loo. 2. Separated rooms for children, so they don't interrupt

		<p>other adults, where parents are comfortable</p> <p>3. A friendly library staff</p> <p>4. A good amount of books for different ages.</p> <p>I hope our library won't be affected by any budget of staff reductions, so we can keep on enjoying it as a nurturing, safe community space. Thank you for reading this.</p>
<p>12.</p>	<p>Evaluation of new Library Service Model</p>	<p>Katalin Aradi</p> <p>I would like to give you some information on how we use our local library.</p> <p>I am a mother of three children living in East Finchley. My children attended Martin Primary School and we used to use the library a lot, borrowing books, spending time in the children's library and attending events organised.</p> <p>This has changed with the library closing and re-opening with very short staffed hours.</p> <p>The current system of opening was very bad news for my older children, who could not use the library independently until they were 16.</p> <p>My son (and a lot of his friends from East Finchley) prefers to go to Crouch End library, where there are spacious and quiet reading rooms, long opening hours and staff available. My daughter, who is 16, often studies in East Finchley library, but some of the time she does not find a place. The two small rooms are really tiny; so all the other tables and chairs are being used in the main hall of the library, too. Obviously it is a lot less quiet there. Sometimes (especially during the short days of</p>

		<p>winter) she does not feel safe or comfortable during unstaffed hours. The toilets are locked during unstaffed hours, so she needs to walk home if she wants to use the toilet.</p> <p>A lot of her friends are also travelling across to Crouch End.</p> <p>I feel that there is a real need for reading room spaces and quiet study places in East Finchley, that the library is not very well equipped to provide.</p> <p>I like to borrow reference books and books on art or crafts. The selection of books available on these topics has gradually shrank. There are some new and interesting books, but in much smaller numbers than what we used to have.</p>
13.	Evaluation of new Library Service Model	<p>Louise Nodwell</p> <p>Comment on the service at East Finchley Library. The loss of a librarian is so detrimental. They are an essential for knowledge and reference, especially when my 11 year old son needs to research a school topic. Its appalling to have reduced the opening times. Reduced service restricts my usage greatly and my neighbours are commenting on this too.</p>
14.	Evaluation of new Library Service Model	<p>Einat Sohar</p> <p>I have two children and we used to enjoy going to East Finchley library, especially in rainy days.</p> <p>Now it is an unpleasant experience. We can't stay for long because there is no toilet. We can't buy any of the lovely sticker books because there is no one to sell. No</p>

		<p>one helps us when we have questions.</p> <p>Even in a self service Tesco there is toilet and people to help.</p> <p>The only thing Barnet Council achieved is less children enjoying reading in the library and more children going to the shopping mall.</p> <p>I would like Council to conduct a full and transparent investigation of ALL the issues including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reductions in study space, separate children's rooms, computers & book stock 2. Locked toilets 3. Replacing staff with security guards 4. Obstacles to access and use for ALL people affected by unstaffed and volunteer-run libraries.
<p>15.</p>	<p>Evaluation of new Library Service Model</p>	<p>Harriet Connides</p> <p>I would like to inform you about my experience as a disabled person who feels utterly discriminated against and excluded from my local library, (East Finchley).</p> <p>I have very limited mobility due to multiple sclerosis and arthritis.</p> <p>My personal experience of using the library is as follows.</p> <p>I used to use the library most days, and meet my daughter there after she finished school: I do not dare go there now.</p> <p>Also, without the staff to check on it, the disabled parking bay outside the library is almost always taken up</p>

		<p>with cars not displaying a blue badge - if I cannot park there, I cannot use the library anyway, as I cannot walk from further than that bay.</p> <p>The reductions in study space, children's library and general stock is a disgrace.</p> <p>There needs to be a full and transparent investigation into all of these issues. I honestly feel that Barnet Council is discriminating against me and all of those who have similar problems, whether through disease or old age.</p> <p>There few places that I can take my daughter, and a safe and friendly place for us to visit together has been taken away from us.</p>
16.	<p>Evaluation of new Library Service Model</p>	<p>Verity Smith</p> <p>As a resident of East Finchley I am writing to register my unease about the effect on the community cuts to library services have had and lookset to continue to do.</p> <p>I would particularly like the following to be addressed at your upcoming meeting as part of Agenda item 8 - Evaluation of new Library Service Model.</p> <p>A full and transparent investigation of all the issues is urgently needed including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reductions in study space, separate children's rooms, computers & book stock 2. Locked toilets 3. Replacing staff with security guards

		<p>4. Obstacles to access and use for ALL people affected by unstaffed and volunteer-run libraries.</p> <p>My young children read voraciously but I find it increasingly difficult to access the library due to problems with my card/code and the absence of anyone to help.</p> <p>I'd be grateful for your acknowledgement of these concerns and hope the community is fully informed about Barnet's next steps in addressing them.</p>
<p>17.</p>	<p>Evaluation of new Library Service Model</p>	<p>Alice Eady Ketchell</p> <p>As a Barnet resident, I have the following comments on Agenda Item 8 of the agenda for the next Barnet Council meeting on Tuesday 11 June.</p> <p>Please provide a full and transparent investigation of all the issues regarding the new library service model including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reductions in study space, separate children's rooms, computers & book stock. In particular, a justification for the closure of the upstairs floor at East Finchley library which, to date, remains an empty and unused space, presumably generating no income at all. 2. Locked toilets outside of the official staffing hours (which does not seem to include the hours when a security guard is present). 3. Replacing staff with paid security guards, including whether there have been any significant financial savings resulting from this. If there have been significant financial

		<p>savings, please confirm how these savings have been re-purposed by Barnet Council on other community issues, for example funding to make Barnet roads safer and help to reduce or eliminate the large number of recent fatal road traffic accidents in the East Finchley area.</p> <p>4. Obstacles to access and use for ALL people affected by unstaffed and volunteer-run libraries.</p> <p>With respect to point 2 above, I have witnessed an unfortunate incident on a Saturday afternoon at East Finchley library when a teenager with special needs was (i) unable to get into the locked toilet due to no staff being present; (ii) unable to work out why the toilet was locked (even with the assistance of her adult carer) and (iii) was very close to having an accident in a public part of the library if a kind member of the community had not stepped in with an alternative suggestion. If an accident had unfortunately occurred, not only could it have been damaging to the teenager's confidence in visiting public spaces, including the supposed safe haven of a library, but there also would have been no way of contacting anybody to help clear it up.</p> <p>This is just one example of many disadvantages to the new library system. I would expect this and all other issues to be thoroughly investigated by Barnet Council to justify the changes made against the very clear wishes and interests of Barnet residents. I look forward to reading the resulting report.</p>
18.	Evaluation of new Library Service Model	<p>Samantha Haycock</p> <p>I am writing to add my concerns about Library provision</p>

		<p>in Barnet and the evaluation of a new Library Service model which is being pushed through without transparent community engagement and consultation.</p> <p>I've been a user of Barnet libraries since 1998 and, in East Finchley, for 8 years. As a parent and member of the school community I've seen huge impacts on local children from the reduction in opening hours, trained staff and facilities. Older children are not able to access the library independently for homework and research, outside very limited hours. Services for schools and pre-schoolers have been cut. At the same time there is ever more pressure on children to read at an early age and daily to hit literacy targets and increasing amounts of homework. We need open, accessible, libraries to be able to do this.</p> <p>There are many children in the area who have no books or internet access at home, children who speak English as an additional language and children whose parents cannot afford afterschool clubs and enrichment activities - libraries are crucial for supporting these children.</p> <p>Many other people in our community need the library - for computer access, job applications, services, support - it is crucial that any review takes into account these needs. Access and facilities for disabled and elderly people are threadbare. Libraries exist to make the difference for those without - to type a CV, apply for a job, a bus pass, learn new skills and connect with groups. They enrich our community in the long term.</p> <p>With security guards instead of librarians and electronic</p>
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		<p>access, the library has lost accessibility and usability - it has become very difficult to access with convenience, and this creates a snowball effect - fewer users leads to fewer users. The security guards' attitude comes across as preferring to keep us out rather than allow access. If you are able to get in, the toilets are often closed and there are no professional librarians to support users. It does seem a deliberate attempt to reduce footfall.</p> <p>Finally my children and I regularly visit other parts of the UK and use libraries there. It is remarkable how poor our service and provision is versus other boroughs - boroughs that are a lot more challenged than Barnet.</p> <p>I trust that these views are taken into account in your evaluation.</p>
19.	<p>Evaluation of new Library Service Model</p>	<p>Lisa Payne</p> <p>I am a long term resident and parent from East Finchley and I am writing to you on the issue of East Finchley's poor provision of library services and how recent changes have effected ours and others use of our library spaces.</p> <p>I understand there is to be an investigation / evaluation into the current provision and how these recent changes now serve the borough. I wish to notify you of mine and my families demands to allow a full and transparent investigation of all the issues effecting the libraries users. These are the items which effect us and are changes to the services we once enjoyed in the borough. Items such as:-</p> <p>Reductions in study space, separate children's rooms,</p>

		<p>computers & book stock Locked toilets (madness) Replacing staff with security guards Obstacles to access and use for all people affected by unstaffed and volunteer-run libraries.</p> <p>These listed items need to be included in any forthcoming evaluation to ensure a thorough and fair appraisal of what has caused serious decline to our library services and resultant decline in use and attendance of our once decent libraries.</p>
20.	<p>Evaluation of new Library Service Model</p>	<p>Andrew Milne</p> <p>Could you please ensure that your evaluation of the new library model service takes into account the following -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the general degradation of service accessibility caused by the absence or staff or staffing by volunteers • the reductions across the libraries including the general stock of books, study space, separate children's rooms and computers • the inaccessibility to toilets • the removal of experienced library staff and replacement with security guards who cannot provide the level of service previously provided <p>In my opinion and experience these changes not only make for poorer library services but make them less appealing, to the point where many have general reluctance or inability to use the services.</p>
21.	<p>Evaluation of new Library Service Model</p>	<p>Tiffany Blaze</p>

		<p>I would like to add comment to your current review into the detrimental effects of funding & service cuts to Barnet libraries. Although I think a proper independent investigation is needed with the chance for residents to have their say and for researchers to analyse the impact on communities (especially those less advantaged) is needed.</p> <p>I do believe we shouldn't have:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. reductions in study space, separate children's rooms, computers & book stock 2. locked toilets 3. The replacement of staff with securitDeai 4. obstacles to access and use for ALL people affected by unstaffed and volunteer-run libraries. <p>Libraries are there as a way for all people to access books, the internet and education. We need to keep this as a pillar of our society. We need to make sure that we can enable the next generation and those of all priviledges to access the same level of facilities.</p>
22.	<p>Evaluation of new Library Service Model</p>	<p>Melody Flumendorf</p> <p>I am writing in order to let you know that the current library system is not working for our family and the wider community. Our neighbours children who are older than mine have stopped going to the library as they can now only go at certain times - times they don't have time in their case. I myself have resorted to ordering books from</p>

		<p>the library but it's a gamble if and when they will arrive- just now I ordered about five books but none of them arrived, only one showed up in the system as having been ordered. The whole situation is dispiriting for the staff as well. The library has lost its place as a community hub and I am sure you know about the falling numbers of children participating in the reading challenge. The new System is not working and should be changed.</p>
<p>23.</p>	<p>Evaluation of new Library Service Model</p>	<p>Fiona Doyle</p> <p>I write to contribute my experiences of East Finchley library since the new service model came into force. Unfortunately, the changes to East Finchley library have been a huge failure from my own perspective and I know that of the local community also. As a local parent and childminder, I used the library frequently when it was fully staffed. The children's area was wonderful and the library staff happy to help the children and guide them in their reading choices. Now, with the reduced staffing hours, we are unable to enjoy the library in the way we once did and it is often inaccessible during the hours we used to use it.</p> <p>There are numerous health and safety concerns when using the library during unstaffed users; if someone were to be taken ill, or hurt in any way, for example. The locked toilets pose a huge problem when visiting with children also.</p> <p>East Finchley library used to be a busy, friendly and welcoming hub for us all; sadly, the massive reduction in staffing and introduction of PIN codes has meant that it has become inaccessible to many members of the community. I do feel that most affected have been the</p>

		<p>elderly and children, who benefitted from the library in so many ways previously.</p> <p>Please include my comments in any evaluation being undertaken of the new service model for Barnet libraries.</p>
<p>24.</p>	<p>Evaluation of new Library Service Model</p>	<p>Jennifer Borst</p> <p>I would be most grateful if you could include my comments for the upcoming assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I have found there to be more frequent computer issues since the reduction of staff inconvenient. It is noticeable and consistent. - The closure of toilets has meant on two occasions that I have had to go home earlier than planned. This is not an issue for me as I live fairly close to the library and am in my forties but I am sure would deter older individuals for bladder problems. This is ageism in action. - I object to my taxes being spent to pay for security guards who of course are unable to help rather than trained librarians. - A lack of staff or any presence makes the library a less safe environment. I have had one unpleasant experience with an unfortunate woman who appeared to be suffering from severe mental illness. The incident left me shaken and I would have greatly have valued the intervention of a member of staff. - On the grounds of global competition and

		<p>discrimination, access to our local libraries for our young people should not be limited. Our global competitors like China and Singapore invest heavily in education and we are restricting access to books and resourced study spaces in our libraries to those poorer youngsters who may lack their own room or any quiet space to study. This is short sighted. Students who underachieve are more likely to end up without fixed employment and perhaps ultimately involved in the justice system at great expense at some point down the line.</p>
<p>25.</p>	<p>Evaluation of new Library Service Model</p>	<p>Mez Raja</p> <p>This concerns agenda item 8 of the forthcoming meeting of the community leadership and libraries committee.</p> <p>I cannot attend the meeting, but I trust you will forward this to whom it may concern.</p> <p>I am a resident of East Finchley. I visit East Finchley Library around once a week.</p> <p>I do understand the concern to allocate resources carefully in this day and age, and I appreciate the need to make cuts in council services. (The case of Northampton council seems pertinent.)</p> <p>In my opinion some of the cuts that were decided to be made in relation to libraries have been proven to be false economies, and were also dangerous.</p> <p>If there was an objective to keep the libraries as safely accessible to all as possible with reduced staffing then I</p>

		<p>think this has somewhat backfired and ought to be fully investigated under the proposed review.</p> <p>Not having any staff/security whatsoever present at a public amenity, even one that is entry controlled, just seems to be an unacceptable safeguarding risk for the Council to take. In my mind the security guards were an essential part of the compromise. I understand that people are deterred from using the service altogether without any safeguarding presence (and of course, children can no longer attend at all during the hours when the doors are pin-controlled).</p> <p>I have also witnessed people acting aggressively in the library - people who seem to only be there to use free WiFi - seemingly to make calls to conduct criminal activity. This seems a strange risk for the council to be taking - if it is possibly creating a crime scene by not adequately securing the premises and facilities. WiFi provision makes absolute sense and should continue - but without security staffing to observe it I am not sure the Council is effectively mitigating the risks that it has created itself.</p> <p>In my practical experience the toilets are sometimes locked without any explanation or advance notice. This seems to be extremely backwards, given the Council's lip service to community inclusion.</p> <p>It is not clear to me how the principles underlying the Equality Act have been addressed in the service provision - although i am sure that the Secretary of State has taken legal advice when it was asserted that statutory</p>
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		<p>requirements are being met - perhaps at a technical level that is true.</p> <p>I would encourage you to take the fullest heed of the evidence that your forthcoming inquiry collects - and not to focus purely on the bare minimum legal obligations. Our communities are surely worth more than that, and the libraries play an important role within them. They also can usefully support the schools in the advancement of reading and literacy. They can be much more than the sum of their parts, even if the benefits are difficult to quantify with statistics.</p> <p>I would also encourage you to pro-actively involve user groups such as Save Barnet Libraries (copied) in the review. I would be very disappointed if the contracted independent agency did not see fit to meet with them - and i would anticipate asking for the reasons for not having such a meeting, if that turns out to be the case.</p> <p>I wish you and the committee all the best for the meeting.</p>
26.	<p>Evaluation of new Library Service Model</p>	<p>Tanveer Ahmed</p> <p>I am writing at how the local cuts to East Barnet Library - my local library - are affecting my family, especially my children. Since the closure of the children's library upstairs there are now obviously less books for children to look at downstairs and it is noisier downstairs. What was once an exclusive children's space is now gone. My children feel more intimidated looking at books in a space shared with adults - adults often wander into their</p>

section - and are now less enthusiastic about visiting the library. This is at the same time as their national curriculum is emphasising literacy. All I hear in the playground are wealthier family resorting to amazon for books now, while the less privileged are unlikely to have that option.

The Summer Reading Challenge used to be a highlight for my children. Last year there were no posters advertising this at East Barnet Library until I mentioned it to the staff. Although my children participated, none of the staff were able to feedback on the books they had read - unlike in previous years where the library staff were people who had known my children and were knowledgeable about the book collections. So, it is no surprise that it will be difficult to persuade my children to read their six books over the summer for this year's challenge.

But, the thing I'm most disappointed with is the introduction of fines for children's books. Before, my children would always take their maximum of ten books out, without any worry about when they were being returned. Occasionally, the books were late, but more often than not we were visiting so regularly it was unlikely. Now that my children are less enthusiastic about visiting, it means we need to keep such a careful eye on the return date. With two children, each with 9 or 10 books on loan, a one week late fine could cost us up to £1! DO that few times and very quickly a fine can build up. Children get sick, it's not always easy to return books, or log on to the website when you are caring for sick children, its the last thing on your mind! Even, I'm getting paranoid about how many books we take out, policing

		<p>myself. Whereas before, the children took more risks, trying different books out - and obviously the collection was bigger - and finding out different styles of literature. That risk taking and playfulness is diminishing because of these cuts and it's so sad to see. I grew up in this area and remember reading an entire shelf of books in the old children's library in the 1980's. That option isn't as freely accessible to my children now, sadly.</p> <p>I love East Barnet Library and hope the children's space can be returned to the more vibrant and safe space it used to be, just a few years ago. Please help by returning the children's library to its former space.</p>
27.	<p>Evaluation of new Library Service Model</p>	<p>Leonie Gore</p> <p>I am a mum with two young children, aged 8 and 4 years old. We are very disappointed at the way the library is currently operated.</p> <p>When my mum comes to visit, she cannot take her grandchildren to the library, as an overseas visitor, she cannot gain entry when it is unmanned.</p> <p>If I forget my library card at home, I cannot gain entry to the library, to read stories to my children after school or during school holidays.</p> <p>When we have been able to gain access using my library card, during unmanned hours, and one or both of my children need to go to the toilet, they can't as the toilets are locked, this is a disaster!</p> <p>I am very concerned about the safety of the library users when no staff are around. A few months back, I was sitting in the library, I was reading a magazine passing the time until I needed to fetch my children from school. I</p>

		<p>started to hear some raised voices which turned into shouting. Two women were having an argument and it was getting rather heated, I started to feel very scared. Even though this was officially “unmanned” opening hours, thankfully an off duty library staff member was there to calm the situation down and separate the women. I don’t know what would have happened if the staff member was not there. Thank goodness there were no children around, I felt unsafe and I am sure children would have been very scared.</p> <p>I want to demand a full and transparent investigation of ALL the issues of the new library model including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reductions in study space, separate children’s rooms, computers and book stock 2. Locked toilets 3. Replacing of staff with security guards 4. Obstacles to access and use for ALL people affected by unstaffed and volunteer-run libraries
28.	<p>Evaluation of new Library Service Model</p>	<p>Cressida Nash</p> <p>Please do a full and transparent investigation into Barnet libraries:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reductions in study space, separate children's rooms, computers & book stock 2. Locked toilets 3. Replacing staff with security guards 4. Obstacles to access and use for ALL people affected by unstaffed and volunteer-run libraries. <p>I have seen school children denied access to the library who need the quiet space to study and/or to read - this is unacceptable, children need a safe / accessible space to</p>

		<p>learn.</p> <p>I have been unable to borrow books and pay fines when there has been a problem with the machines.</p> <p>Toilets have been locked or unusable.</p> <p>You are making it very difficult for people to use the library service.</p> <p>Change the way you run them. They were better when they were properly staffed and open longer.</p>
<p>29.</p>	<p>Evaluation of new Library Service Model</p>	<p>Tessa Manning</p> <p>I am very concerned about the Evaluation of the new library model.</p> <p>For all reasons that have been stated multiple times, but in particular re the lack of staff and only security personnel being present. Earlier in the year my 89 year old mother fainted in East Finchley library, due to excessive heating, and there was NO ONE to help her. If a member of the public hadn't been in the library I believe she would have been left on the floor.</p> <p>What kind of community wants this, where a library is not open to all, and has members of staff running it.</p> <p>Evaluate this new model thoroughly and get to the facts.</p>
<p>30.</p>	<p>Evaluation of new Library Service Model</p>	<p>Erini Rodis</p> <p>As a parent and childminder of children aged between 3 and 11, I use the library in many different ways. As an</p>

		<p>Ofsted registered professional I have found my duties somewhat</p> <p>compromised in practical terms, due to your library changes. My first duty is that of safeguarding the children I'm paid to look after; in addition to this I am responsible for their</p> <p>comfort, hygiene, & educational and social enrichment, during each session they are with me. Libraries are not just a store of books - they are (or should be) a community space, where children from</p> <p>different schools, and home-schooled, can meet and browse, discovering mutual interests whilst wowing at amazing facts in reference books, or showing each other their favourite authors.</p> <p>Sadly none of the children that I look after can actually borrow a book themselves. They have library cards in their bags, but their parents are too busy working to</p> <p>update their membership and get a pin issued. All I can do is give the parents leaflets of information and hope that they can get some time which coincides with</p> <p>whenever the library is open and staffed.</p> <p>It appears that while I can take children into the library with me, I'm not then allowed to let another parent into the library building, even though they've come to collect children from me.</p>
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		<p>One recent incident involved a child with mild SEN who was learning manners and self control in the inter-generational library setting, only to suddenly witness his mother being shouted at by</p> <p>a security guard for entering the library building without her own updated card and pin (even though she is actually a registered member) . I didn't want to leave other children alone in the children's</p> <p>section, nor did I want to cut our entire visit short for the rest of the children, which left me in a compromised position. I don't blame a security guard for doing his job, but I do blame your</p> <p>ill-considered changes which have created one fiasco after another.</p> <p>By running our public library service like a private club, you are locking out all the independent travellers, ie children walking home alone from the age of 10, who used to be able to safely drop in on the way</p> <p>home to borrow a book or do some homework.</p> <p>Locked toilets and the PIN-coded access system have proven particularly problematic</p>
31.	Evaluation of new Library Service Model	Mary Beer

I ask that a full and proper impact study be done into the impediments Barnet has put into library use particularly for my children and me. Since you reduced the staffed hours and locked the toilets, my son, aged 6, (who has Autism Spectrum Disorder) is afraid to go to the library because if he needs the loo he is worried he will have an accident. We used to go to the library every week and it was a joy. Now we can't go anymore because it is too difficult with two children, one of whom is disabled, and working full-time to make it to the library. I then tried to go on my own to at least pick out books for them but it took me over 45 minutes to find the most basic children's book about fire engines — this shouldn't be so hard but as I don't know Dewey Decimal I couldn't find it and so had to leave — it was a wasted trip. This means that my children can't read as much. When I go to other libraries there is an active effort to promote reading but it seems Barnet has gone out of its way to discourage it. Every 'promotion' of the service is so disingenuous.

I also tried to sign them up for the Summer Reading Challenge but learned I can't do that when the library isn't staffed so that too is nearly impossible and I've just given up!

I see older people who want to get into the library to read the papers and they realise they need a code and card but without it being open they too just give up.

It is so obvious to anyone that all these impediments to usage add up to reducing reading, digital literacy, community cohesion — what a false economy.

It is imperative there is a proper study both into what the real impact on the lives, literacy, digital access and digital literacy, loneliness and ill-health is because of these cuts.

		It is also imperative that a proper study be done to determine if the cuts delivered the promised savings at all and if so to what extent or if the cuts cost more than they saved
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Qn No	Agenda Item No 8	Raised By	Question Raised	Answer
1.	Evaluation of new Library Service Model	Keith Martin	<p>SUMMARY Paragraph 3, line 4</p> <p>“His conclusions confirm that Barnet is meeting its statutory duty...”</p> <p>To what extent were these conclusions influenced by the misrepresentations and false information contained in emails disclosed under FOI by the DCMS to Save Barnet Libraries on 28 May 2019?</p> <p>Does the committee agree that a decision influenced by misrepresentation is flawed and should be forthwith withdrawn?</p>	Any allegation of misrepresentation of information is refuted.

2.	Evaluation of new Library Service Model	Rhonda Miller	<p>Do we really want to be cutting access to library facilities to children? Is this a conscious strategy?</p> <p>We need a full and transparent investigation of all the issues including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reductions in study space and separate children's rooms, computers & book stock • locked toilets • replacing staff with security guards • obstacles to access and use for ALL people affected by unstaffed and volunteer-run libraries. <p>Please let me know how you plan to conduct a thorough investigation into this situation.</p>	<p>These points will be considered as part of the scope of the local evaluation which will be conducted by an independent organisation identified through a procurement process.</p>
3.	Evaluation of new Library Service Model	Holly Kal-Weiss	<p>The unintended consequences of the library cuts will be to further reduce the opportunities to create and empower community. The plans speak of 'volunteers' to help run libraries however volunteers must be nurtured and encouraged to take part in a wide variety of activities. Where will volunteers meet? How will they be trained?</p>	<p>The deployment of volunteers is within the scope of the local evaluation being proposed. Barnet Libraries has run a successful volunteering programme since November 2011, supported by a specific team within the library service. There are currently 52 volunteers working in Core and Core + libraries (not including volunteers in Partnership Libraries.) Volunteers receive a variety of training specific to the role that they are undertaking and the library or libraries in which they are working.</p>
4.	Evaluation of new Library Service Model	Barbara Jacobson	<p>The methodology does not mention any visits to the libraries. Will there be visits and, if so, will they include a selection of staffed, unstaffed and volunteer libraries?</p>	<p>Yes.</p>

5.	Evaluation of new Library Service Model	Elizabeth Burling	Library services were drastically slashed in an attempt to save the Council money yet they are having to pay for security guards, as unstaffed libraries are not necessarily safe places for residents to be in. Why could this money not be spent on librarians instead?	The deployment of security guards in self-service opening hours is within scope of the evaluation.
6.	Evaluation of new Library Service Model	Harriet Connides	I am bladder incontinent on a bad day, and have urge incontinency on better days. I cannot go any where unless I am certain that there are accessible toilet facilities. Previously, the staff very kindly let me use the men's room as I could not manage the stairs to the ladies. Now, the new toilet, although fully accessible, is generally locked. What a crazy situation the council has concocted - a brand new disabled -friendly toilet, which people are not permitted to use except at a few odd times each week. Can it not, at the very least, be always accessible to people who possess a Radar key?	<p>The local evaluation will consider this as part of the review of the EIA.</p> <p>We open the toilets whenever there are staff or security guards within the building to oversee their use and condition. This includes staff on site for meetings, training or who are delivering events or undertaking back-office work as well as those running the libraries in the staffed opening hours.</p>
7.	Evaluation of new Library Service Model	Ruth Kersley	<p>You state that the evaluation is being considered in the light of the Minister for Culture's decision not to order an inquiry into the Barnet Library Service.</p> <p>Please can you explain why the exchanges of communication between the Council and DCMS regarding this complaint are being withheld under the Freedom Of Information Act, in particular letters sent via email on 7/11/17, 7/3/18,16/3/18,17/12/18?</p>	Communications were only withheld whilst the DCMS investigation was on-going. Information has now been released and any exemptions or redactions are explained in the refusal notice issued with the FOI response.

8.	Evaluation of new Library Service Model	Jennifer Borst	I appreciate that budgets are under great pressure but I have personally seen people unable to enter the library (had I not helped them) that their taxes pay for. This has happened on 3 occasions and I am in the library for perhaps 30 minutes physically per week on average. Is this legal? I understand that our libraries are meant to be accessible for all.	<p>Access arrangements are within scope of this evaluation.</p> <p>Application and opening hours forms are available on the exterior of every library and explain how customers obtain an SSO enabled library card or how to update an existing library card. Staffed opening hours are staggered across the week to facilitate access and all libraries have 1 staffed late night until 8pm and are staffed at various times across the weekend.</p> <p>The DCMS has confirmed that the council is meeting its legal obligations in respect of the Public Libraries and Museums Act (1964).</p>
9.	Evaluation of new Library Service Model	Erini Rodis	<p>Schools provided evidence of their concerns of the impact on their pupils to DCMS.</p> <p>How does the evaluation propose to engage with schools in Barnet as part of its brief to collect evidence of impact on children and young people?</p>	Schools will be part of the stakeholder engagement undertaken by the organisation contracted to conduct the evaluation.
10.	Evaluation of new Library Service Model	Mary Beer	The space where I used to work and study has been taken away but is now empty and locked - why? Why spend all that money to destroy something people need? There is no evidence that all this destruction has saved any money at all.	Access to study space is available within all Barnet Libraries and is within scope of this evaluation.

11.	Evaluation of new Library Service Model	Keith Martin	<p>SUMMARY Paragraph 4, line 3</p> <p>“ further adaptations and improvements...” To what extent do suggestions by independent reviewers in the future for further adaptations and improvements comply with the undertaking by the Council at the CLL meeting on 7 March 2019 to present to this meeting tonight an independent review of the Council’s Library Strategy?</p>	The council committed to carry out the local evaluation following the outcome of the DCMS’s consideration of the complaint as the outcome could materially impact on the scope of the evaluation. The paper under consideration sets out the scope of that evaluation exercise.
12.	Evaluation of new Library Service Model	Barbara Jacobson	The methodology also states ‘...targeted stakeholder engagement. The focus of this engagement will be the key demographic groups highlighted within the EIA as most likely to be impacted by the changes made to the library service.’ What are those groups?	Children & young people, Elderly people, People with disabilities as specified in section 5.6.2 and the report summary.
13.	Evaluation of new Library Service Model	Harriet Connides	Secondly, because of my poor mobility, I am prone to fall; on several occasions, the library staff have helped me to my feet, as I cannot get up on my own. I have, in the past, fallen, hit my head and knocked myself out. If I was to have a fall in an otherwise empty library building, what guarantee do I have that I would be found?	CCTV is monitored constantly during self service hours and the emergency services would be called immediately if needed. Safety and security arrangements are within scope of this evaluation.
14.	Evaluation of new Library Service Model	Ruth Kersley	<p>Please can you explain why legal advice is being provided by DCMS to Barnet on 12/12/18 during the conduct of the investigation of the service by DCMS (as explained in a response to my FOI request following an internal review)?</p> <p>Did Barnet Council rely on this legal advice?</p>	DCMS have not provided legal advice to the council.

15.	Evaluation of new Library Service Model	Erini Rodis	<p>How is the UNICEF process being involved in the library service evaluation? If Barnet want to be accredited as a 'family/child friendly city'</p> <p>how will they ensure that children's voices (and their carers') are heard and considered properly? How have they been involved so far in planning the scope of the evaluation?</p>	<p>Children, young people and their parents and carers will be included in the proposed stakeholder engagement sessions. The evaluation process will also engage with the Voice of the Child Team and organisations/ professionals working with children and young people.</p>
16.	Evaluation of new Library Service Model	Mary Beer	<p>Did the cuts save any money and if so how much and how is it measured?</p>	<p>The library service budget has reduced by £1.61m p.a. Commercial spaces are currently let within East Finchley, Edgware, Golders Green, and Hendon libraries. Current rentals total £188,000 p.a with a further circa £60,000 under lease negotiation.</p>
17.	Evaluation of new Library Service Model	Keith Martin	<p>SUMMARY - PRINCIPLES Paragraph 4, line 7</p> <p>“That an independent agency is contracted to undertake the review.”</p> <p>5.2.1 “This is based upon two indicative quotations...in the region of £25,000 to £30,000...”</p> <p>Who are the two quotations from?</p>	<p>This was obtained through market testing and is commercially sensitive at this time.</p>

18.	Evaluation of new Library Service Model	Barbara Jacobson	While "the key demographic groups highlighted within the EIA as most likely to be impacted by the changes' might be the focus, will the research also engage with other stakeholders who use the libraries?	Yes as specified in section 5.8.2 of the report.
19.	Evaluation of new Library Service Model	Harriet Connides	Thirdly, I would be afraid to take my daughter in with me when there are no staff there. Her wellbeing is my responsibility. Suppose we were alone in the library, and someone tried to rob or attack us? I cannot run - how am I suppose to protect my child? I dare not take the risk.	CCTV is monitored constantly during self service hours and the emergency services would be called immediately if needed. Safety and security arrangements are within scope of this evaluation
20.	Evaluation of new Library Service Model	Keith Martin	Has the experience of libraries in other countries been studied?	The scope includes: Comparison to other London Borough Library Services and examples of good practice.
21.	Evaluation of new Library Service Model	Barbara Jacobson	Will the review have access, and give consideration, to the evidence of stakeholders gathered by the Save Barnet Libraries group?	Yes.

22.		Erini Rodis	When are you going to: accept that these changes are disconnecting an entire generation from habitual library use, and reverse the changes	Children engage with the library service in many ways: through its 14 static service points; the Mobile Library Service; the specialist Early Years Service; the School Libraries and Resources Service, the Local Studies service and the online Digital Library. Barnet Libraries continues to deliver a wide range of events and activities and many of the current Year of Learning activities are aimed at children (for example: micro:bits workshops, the zoo in the library and creative writing courses). To date since January 2019 the Library Service has delivered a total of 1,071 events and activities attracting a total of 7,684 children and young people. A specialist Librarian Team also conduct a variety of outreach activities such as the annual Carnegie Shadowing event which takes place this week and involves groups of young people from nine of Barnet's secondary schools.
22.	Evaluation of new Library Service Model	Mary Beer	What is the impact on children using the library to read (not just borrowing books?)	There is space in all libraries for children to read
23.	Evaluation of new Library Service Model	Keith Martin	Has CILIP been invited to conduct the independent review?	The council will identify the appropriate provider through a procurement procedure.

24.	Evaluation of new Library Service Model	Mary Beer	What is the impact of no toilets on discouraging or reducing frequency of use?	This will be covered in the review of the EIA.
25.	Evaluation of new Library Service Model	Mr Keith Martin	Is the timescale of a decision at the November 2019 CLL meeting too optimistic? It would seem to me that a comprehensive survey of future strategy, including whether or not to comply with the 1964 Act and, if so, what are the recommendations and timescale for implementation of the Act, must envisage a time frame extending well beyond November 2019.	The Secretary of State (DCMS) has determined that the council is complying with its legal obligations to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service. The timescales set out in the report are considered appropriate for an evaluation of this kind.
26.	Evaluation of new Library Service Model	Mary Beer	What is the impact on the next generation of children who may never met a librarian in person?	<p>Children can access the library services in a number of different ways including face to face and digitally.</p> <p>The impact of the changes on children and young people is within scope of this evaluation</p>