

<b><u>MEETING</u></b> <b>COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AND LIBRARIES COMMITTEE</b>
<b><u>DATE AND TIME</u></b> <b>THURSDAY 5TH MARCH, 2020</b> <b>AT 7.00 PM</b>
<b><u>VENUE</u></b> <b>HENDON TOWN HALL, THE BURROUGHS, LONDON NW4 4BG</b>

Dear Councillors,

Please find enclosed additional papers relating to the following items for the above mentioned meeting which were not available at the time of collation of the agenda.

Item No	Title of Report	Pages
1.	PUBLIC COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS	3 - 6

Tracy Scollin Tel 020 8359 2315 [tracy.scollin@barnet.gov.uk](mailto:tracy.scollin@barnet.gov.uk)

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**COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AND LIBRARIES COMMITTEE**  
**Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

**ITEM 5 – PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS**

**At the meeting a total of 30 minutes is available for public questions. One supplementary question per original question can be asked at the meeting. Supplementary questions will be asked in order of receipt.**

	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Public Question</b>	<b>Response</b>
1.	<b>7. Future Direction of the Community Participation Strategy</b>	<p><b>Barbara Jacobson</b></p> <p>The Council claims ‘Consultation and engagement are fundamental to the Community Participation Strategy’, but it limits participation to specific projects, and has often stated that it can ignore the results of consultations. Community engagement and participation should include the right of residents to comment on, question and receive answers to all issues being considered by Council committees, as in the past. How can limiting the number of questions to two per agenda item be more democratic than allowing as many questions from as many residents who want to make them?</p>	<p>Decisions to amend Barnet’s public participation rules (as detailed in Article 3, Residents and Public Participation <a href="#">here</a>) were taken by Council on 30<sup>th</sup> July 2019 and 28<sup>th</sup> January 2020 (see <a href="#">here</a>).</p> <p>The rationale for those decisions are stated in the reports and it was a decision of the Council as a whole to make the changes to the rules.</p> <p>The Community Leadership and Libraries Committee does not have the power to amend the constitution and, given that decisions on residents’ questions at committees have been made by Council very recently, it is not appropriate to review those changes at this time as part of this decision.</p> <p>The Community Participation Strategy refers in section 1.17 to Residents’ Forums and ways that these can be improved to facilitate engagement with residents. Any</p>

AGENDA ITEM 5

			<p>resident can currently submit issues or petitions to the Residents' Forums and the questioner is encouraged to use this pre-existing mechanism to participate. Details can be found in Article 3 and meeting dates for Hendon, Finchley &amp; Golders Green and Chipping Barnet Residents' Forums can all be found <a href="#">here</a>. Meetings are held four times per year.</p>
2.	<p><b>8. Independent Evaluation of the Library Service</b></p>	<p><b>Emily Burnham</b></p> <p>This review acknowledges what Barnet residents have always said: that 70% reduction in staffed hours devastated the service, excluding many people including children and disabled users.</p> <p>The review shares our criticisms of visitor and other data, recommending an independent review plus regular reporting to this Committee. Financial transparency must be included.</p> <p>As the Committee is specifically advised to invest in libraries, the predicted failure to make intended savings is no excuse for refusing to implement recommendations.</p> <p>When will the council restore staffed hours and space and develop a service that actually meets residents' needs?</p>	<p>The report of Activist's evaluation did not conclude at any point that the service has been 'devastated'. However, it did find that there was a major impact on children and a proportion of people with disabilities and the report identifies recommendations to mitigate that impact. (Comment provided by Activist)</p> <p>The independent review recommended by Activist relates specifically to the operation of people counters.</p> <p>The annual revenue budget for the Library service has been reduced by £1.61 since April 2017 in line with the proposals approved by Council in April 2016.</p> <p>Recommendations made by the evaluators will be considered by the committee.</p>

3.	<b>8. Independent Evaluation of the Library Service</b>	<p><b>Cherry Sewell</b></p> <p>At paragraph 4.23 the Evaluation Report states: <b>The reduction at South Friern is the most glaringly unsuccessful due to the high visibility of a large empty floor area that cannot be readily let for commercial purposes due to the cost of zoning off the emergency exit from the library.</b></p> <p>And recommends at paragraph 4.9: To increase the footprint of South Friern Library...</p> <p>When did it become apparent that South Friern would be too expensive to convert and when will this incontrovertible recommendation be put into effect so that local residents, including pupils sitting exams this summer, can have access to the space they need?</p>	<p>The precise configuration of the commercial areas at each library and the extent of separation varies from site to site as appropriate to each building. The decision to create more integrated commercial space at South Friern was taken during the development of the capital programme in 2016.</p> <p>The retained library space includes a large meeting room which is used for study throughout the year and for a variety of events and activities.</p> <p>The implementation of recommendations made by the evaluators is subject to the decision of the committee.</p>
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	<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Public Comment</b>
1.	<b>8. Independent Evaluation of the Library Service</b>	<p>Keith Martin</p> <p>Imagine that John Bird, founder of Private Eye, is addressing you. His Guardian letter revealed that Bradford Council proposes to reallocate health budgets towards libraries.</p> <p>The culture Minister Oliver DOWDEN may visit unstaffed Barnet libraries to assess how a single security guard provides a comprehensive library service.</p>

		<p>Activist's report ignores the national library crisis. It highlights that staffed opening hours have been reduced too far.</p> <p>The public consultation produced recommendations to rewrite the draft review, and to consider best practice from UK libraries.</p> <p>Barnet's Local Plan to 2036 envisages massive population and infrastructure increases, but an illogical REDUCTION in libraries.</p>
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