

To: Joy Darby, Chief Executive Officer
Essex Association of Local Councils
42B High Street
Great Dunmow
Essex CM6 1AH

Our ref: FLSCH/A
Date: 23.11.18

Dear Joy Darby

**Public consultation on Essex Future Library Services Strategy (2019-2024)
29 November 2018 – 20 February 2019**

I am writing to you as a representative of library users to invite you to help us make decisions on the future of Essex Library Services.

At Essex County Council, we recognise library services play a unique and valued role in our society. But in the last five years use has slumped: loans have almost halved and fewer than one in five Essex residents use libraries. The current service needs to change to fit the way we live now and in the future.

Earlier this year we asked for people's views on library services. We have listened to what Essex people have told us and come up with a set of proposals which are set out in a draft strategy. Our five-year plan in that draft strategy is for a service that:

- Keeps books and reading at the heart of our library service offer
- Embraces digital technology and e-library services
- Has a smaller number of libraries which better meet community needs
- Works in partnership with communities to run library services.

It is vital we operate a service that is viable to run and is relevant to people's lives. The proposals therefore include some significant changes to the current service. We want to get your views on these proposals.

You can find more information about our proposals and complete the survey at www.essex.gov.uk/libraries-consultation. You can complete the survey as an individual or on behalf of an organisation.

If you need help to complete the survey, would like it in large print, or would like a printed copy of the EasyRead versions, please ask at your local library or call 0345 603 7639.

During the consultation, we will also be holding information drop-ins at every library providing a further opportunity to ask questions, complete the consultation and find out more.

If you are from a community group or organisation we would also welcome your help to publicise the consultation to your members or service users. If you would like copies of publicity material please email libraries@essex.gov.uk.

The deadline for completing the consultation survey is 20 February 2019.

All the responses from the consultation will be analysed and findings published on the consultation website. These will be available on request for those without internet access. Any changes proposed will be considered when the strategy is finalised in summer 2019.

I am very much looking forward to finding out what you think about our proposals.

Yours sincerely,



Cllr Susan Barker
Cabinet Member for Customer and Corporate Services

Enquiries:
Telephone: 0345 603 7639