

Saving Local Libraries – Emergency Motion – Council 23 July 2020

Moved by Cllr Nick Couldrey, seconded by Cllr Michelle Marsh

This Council notes Hampshire County Council's proposals to be considered on Tuesday 28 July by one Cabinet Member to withdraw funding from 12 of the County's libraries, and to reduce the opening hours of existing funded libraries in Eastleigh Borough by 32% from January 2021, with Fair Oak library to close and Lowford losing its funding as a community managed library.

Council further notes the investment that Eastleigh Borough has put into the library network over many years, including funding to build Hedge End and Lowford libraries, and support for self-service kiosks and the expansion of hours in others including West End. It also notes that the independent library at Hamble was launched between the Borough and Parish Councils after an earlier pledge, not met, of County funding support.

Council expresses its grave concern at the County Council's proposals that, departing from its consultation that offered the choice of library closures or illustrative hours' reduction of up to 25%, are now proposing to both close libraries and reduce the hours of most, with Chandler's Ford seeing a 19% hours' reduction, Eastleigh a 23% reduction, Hedge End a 39% reduction and West End a 30% reduction.

The Council resolves to:

- (1) continue to object to the closures and substantial reduction of hours;
- (2) call on the County Council to subject any recommendations to change to a full and open County Council debate; and
- (3) urge Eastleigh's MPs to support the better funding of local government to avoid these and further service reductions from the County Council.