



County Councillor  
Mr David Ivison  
Chairman  
Surrey Heath Local Committee

*Mr Maurice Neighbour  
County Hall  
Penrhyn Road  
Kingston upon Thames  
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23 May 2007

Dear Mr Ivison

**Libraries Staffing Review 2007 (Phase 1)**

At its meeting of 23 May 2007, the Safer and Stronger Communities Select Committee received a report and presentation on the first phase of the Libraries Staffing Review 2007. The Select Committee discussed the proposals put forward and wanted to let you know of its support to the approach of seeking improvements to opening hours and services through efficiency gains from new Self-Service technology.

The Committee discussed two approaches to simplifying the current structure of five library bands into three library groups. The two options put forward were to either divide the libraries according to size and level of use or to divide the libraries on a strategic geographic basis. The Committee put its support behind the second option, accepting the officer's arguments with regard to affordability, consistency of opening hours and long-term stability. The Committee considered the terminology to describe the three groups and, while it was happy with the designation of Group A libraries as 'Town' Centre libraries, it put forward the alternative possibility of 'Village' instead of 'District' Centre libraries and 'Community' or 'Neighbourhood' instead of 'Local' Centre libraries.

With regard to opening hours, the Select Committee supported standardised hours in Library Groups A and B with late night opening to 7pm. The Committee was excited at the prospect that this would result in at least 128 additional opening hours per week. On the whole, the Committee preferred developing further daytime opening to remaining open until 8pm. It particularly supported Group C libraries closing at 7pm rather than 8pm with the resources redirected to enable them to open over lunchtime. The Select Committee looked to the service to investigate further the relative benefits of:

- i. further exploration of releasing capacity to open Group B libraries on Mondays; and
- ii. additional late nights to 7pm in Group A and Group B libraries.



Finally, the Committee supported further work and costing of the proposed Sunday opening pilot at Walton New Library. However, the Committee was also keen that the service be asked to investigate the prospect of Sunday opening in Group B and C libraries as opposed to Group A libraries as it felt that people may be keener to use local facilities on a Sunday and prefer only to go into town if they need to shop.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Maurice Neighbour". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath.

Maurice Neighbour  
Chairman, Safer and Stronger Communities Select Committee