

JULIAN SMITH MP

Skipton & Ripon



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mr Richard Flinton
Chief Executive
North Yorkshire County Council
County Hall
Northallerton
North Yorkshire DL7 8AH

Our ref: SR2835

05 January 2015

Dear Mr Flinton

I want to set out my views on Ripon Library as part of the ongoing consultation on library services across North Yorkshire.

Since the consultation began, I have received a number of representations from constituents concerned about the future of library services in the City with the current consultation proposing that it no longer be designated a 'core' library, receiving less direct support from North Yorkshire County Council.

Having visited the library, and looked in detail at the figures put forward as part of the consultation, I want to express my deep concern that in allocating just one 'core' library to each District, an important City like Ripon – and its residents who use the library – will suffer.

It would appear that the three-tier model being proposed, with Ripon being suggested as a 'hybrid' library, takes no account of the varying levels of usage or significance of libraries. For example, although Ripon is not the largest centre of population in the Harrogate District, it is a key North Yorkshire city and it currently has a very well used library open for 40 hours a week with over 110,000 visits per year and 13,500 members.

As such, the aim of NYCC to reduce its commitment to covering the premises costs and the salary of only one member of staff is wholly disproportionate and unacceptable. You are aware that I fully support the importance of community involvement in library services, and supported these efforts in the last North Yorkshire County Council consultation in 2010/11. However, as has been shown in other parts of my constituency, communities and volunteers need strong professional support in order to run high quality library services

The County Council showed itself willing to listen and engage with communities during the last consultation, and I urge you to do the same on this occasion. I would be grateful if we could discuss this matter further when we meet in Ripon on 30 January.

With best wishes

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Julian Smith'.

JULIAN SMITH MP