

JULIA LOPEZ MP
Hornchurch & Upminster



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Councillor Ray Morgon
London Borough of Havering
Town Hall
Main Road
Romford RM1 3BD

5 August 2024

Dear Cllr. Morgon,

Thank you for your libraries response - I appreciate the direct answers to the questions I posed.

You will know that this remains an issue of serious concern to residents. In recent weeks there has been significant support for Harold Wood library to remain open. Shortly before the election, a group of students from Harold Wood Primary School visited Parliament and outlined to me their objections, and parents, pupils and staff from the school have attended protests outside the facility. Trade Union Council members have also protested outside the Town Hall and there has been regular coverage in local media.

I maintain that the plan to close up to four libraries without undertaking any consideration of the potential future usage of the sites is a mistake, and I find it surprising that the Cabinet has had no strategic discussion about what comes next as it may determine whether four closures are necessary.

I believe that this approach fundamentally limits the utility of the consultation that the Council has just completed as residents cannot provide a balanced comment on the proposals without any appreciation of what might happen to the library sites beyond closure. You have advised that the Council is undertaking a broader piece of work to consider the public estate in Havering, including potential mixed use facilities. Given that the savings to be realised by the closures are modest, similar to a single high-needs social care case, I would argue that the Council should suspend consideration of disposing of the library sites until this work has been completed.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julia Lopez MP".

Member of Parliament for Hornchurch & Upminster

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