

LETTER FROM THE CAMBUSLANG-RUTHERGLEN COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP TO SOUTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL LEADER JOE FAGAN, 4 FEBRUARY 2023

Dear Mr Fagan,

SLLC consultation on the closure and rationalisation of community services

We are writing to express the serious concern of the Cambuslang-Rutherglen Community Planning Partnership about the unacceptable consultation process (Resident Consultation Phase 3) launched on 1 February by South Lanarkshire Leisure & Culture (SLLC). This relates to SLLC's "withdrawal from some facilities" involving the closure of two libraries (Cambuslang and Halfway) and four community centres (in Cambuslang, Eastfield and Halfway), possibly as early as 1 April 2024, and the rationalisation of services in many more community facilities. Similar large-scale closures and service cuts are proposed for Clydesdale, East Kilbride and Hamilton communities.

We have three specific concerns.

1. **Our communities are not adequately informed.** There is no accessible information that has been placed in the public domain as to the context for these proposals, or their rationale, or how the options have been determined by SLLC.
2. **The SLLC Phase 3 consultation launched on 1 February is not acceptable.** It runs only for two weeks from, 1 to 15 February, yet is dealing with issues with enormous community consequences. As yet, there is no information on the results of the previous Phase 2 consultation run by SLLC - which will presumably inform the future of services – and will only become available on 5 February. Under the Phase 1 consultation, [SLLC found that libraries are the third most valued service in South Lanarkshire](#) yet SLLC are now proposing the closure and rationalisation of libraries and services; this makes no sense.
3. **The community impact of library and community centre closure means that our communities need to be properly involved.** The scale and scope of the proposed closures and rationalisations will be highly damaging. As you will know library services go well beyond book-lending and involve hosting a wide range of community services and group activities, especially for more vulnerable people. Community centres are also vital for community cohesion and to enable the work of voluntary and community groups. This makes it all the more important that there is sufficient time and proper processes for communities to be fully informed and involved in decision-making.

We are very aware of the [pressure for savings in SLLC](#). However, the current approach is the antithesis of the commitment to community engagement and empowerment we were promised when the local CPP process was established and to which SLC say they are committed.

Given this situation, we urge you to request that SLLC **suspends the current Phase 3 consultation**,

- first to allow the provision of sufficient information to community groups and to the wider community;
- second to ensure adequate time for a proper consultation (including public meetings); and
- third to allow discussion on how any decisions for service changes might be managed and ameliorated.

We will not accept the current SLLC approach to deciding the future resources of our communities.

We look forward to hearing from you at the earliest opportunity.

Kind regards,

Cheryl Burnett
Chair, Cambuslang-Rutherglen Community Planning Partnership