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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Coventry Libraries – An Express service to nowhere?

Coventry City UNISON condemns the Proposals for Libraries in the public consultation which was undertaken by the library service from 19th November to 23rd December 2018.

The proposals were to;

- Remove all hard copies of newspapers and magazines
- Open Central as an express model from 9-11 and on Sundays
- Remove overdue charges for late return of books for children ages 8-16

What an express model would look like for service users was not detailed.

What was not consulted on, either by staff or the public, was to introduce single staffing in four libraries - Aldermoor, Caludon Castle School, Canley and Coundon.

UNISON have a major concern over the safety and wellbeing of the staff and users of the libraries if they were single staffed.

This in a time when a Coventry Violence Summit was called on Monday 28th January as victims of serious violence has increased by 17.4 per cent from 2017 to 2018. There has also been an increase of 16.7 per cent in knife crime.



These current levels of violence have been branded “unacceptable” by Martin Reeves

What does the council see as the purpose for a library? It’s hard to see in the proposals.

The proposed annual cost saving alone of £319,000 for libraries is less than the ‘clean up’ costs for the Godiva Festival at £460,000. The Godiva festival is a wonderful thing for Coventry, and so are libraries which are open and available all year round.

Libraries should be at the Heart of our community, not marginalised and under resourced.

People use them for all sorts of reasons and especially in times of austerity they are more valuable than ever.

The Libraries Taskforce set up by Central Government said;

“Libraries are open to everyone. Their staff understand their community’s needs and are trusted to provide reliable guidance and support on a wide range of issues when people need help. They provide a vital role in helping public services reach out into communities.

They bring people together in vibrant community hubs which host local events and provide a shared sense of place for their users - something that is ever more important in an increasingly digital age”.

This is yet another nail in the coffin to a vital asset when we have been awarded the City of Culture 2021. Our Libraries can and should help to further develop the immense cultural and diverse asset which our members and the people of this great city deserve.

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ENDS