



THE EAST COULSDON RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

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To Mayor Perry
London Borough of Croydon
Bernard Weatherall House
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librariesconsultation@croydon.gov.uk.
Dear Mayor Perry

Draft

14th April 2024

Libraries Consultation and Proposed Closure of Bradmore Green Library

East Coulsdon RA represents residents of East Coulsdon and Cane Hill. Our members use both Coulsdon and Bradmore Green Libraries. We are of the view that both libraries provide an important service to our residents that could not be replaced if they were closed and should remain open.

Coulsdon Library : Is the 5th busiest library in the borough with 27,315 annual visits. We welcome that the council has chosen Coulsdon to be one of six Library hubs which are proposed to be open five days a week, including Saturdays. These hubs will deliver an extensive offer of books, Wi-Fi, PCs, study spaces and events. We agree that Coulsdon is well used being situated in the town centre of Coulsdon which is easily reached both by car and public transport. We welcome proposal for remodelling and updating the library

Hive Garden Project : Turning a redundant unkempt area at the rear of Coulsdon Library into a public garden has shown what can be done by the council when it engages with the local population. This has led to a great open space that can be used by residents, businesses and visitors to Coulsdon enhancing the facilities of Coulsdon Town Centre. We welcome the Council providing direct access to the Hive garden from the library. We are also of the view that Coulsdon Library has the ability to offer even more community services, such as the existing Barclays Bank help desk.

At annual cost of £176,739 and at middle range of the hourly running cost at £144 per hour, this library is excellent value for the services it offers.

Bradmore Green Library : Is the 8th busiest library of 14 libraries in the borough with some 17,280 annual visits and has the second lowest hourly cost at £117. Despite its small size it serves the local community well and the needs of three local junior and primary schools and there would not be room to accommodate these schools in the alternative building in Coulsdon Town Centre. Coulsdon Library is already used by four other local schools. Pupils from Old Coulsdon would have to use public transport which would take an hour there and back and this time will be lost to the national curriculum

The local population of the Old Coulsdon area is one of the oldest in the London Borough of Croydon and has a number of elderly and sheltered housing facilities located there. Bradmore

Green library provides access on the level to them. In the Borough's Core Strategy, it identified parts of Old Coulsdon as having some deprivation levels on par with the poorest parts of the Borough. The library also provides reading clubs to local people and many activities for children which could not be provided elsewhere without excess travelling making access to library facilities difficult for many.

The cost of running Bradmore Green at £95,790 is the lowest cost of all the libraries in Croydon and we believe this is value for money. The building is of a unique design which has warranted locally listing on Croydon's Historic building list. This does not lend the building to many other uses. The suggested use of the Tollers Community Centre as an alternative is not a viable alternative and not conducive to the needs of a library.

These libraries have all proved to be well-used, accessible buildings that meet local needs. We would also like to point out how good and helpful the local managers and staff are at both Bradmore Green and Coulsdon libraries and have been over the years.

In today's fast changing world, we need libraries to provide services to Croydon residents. It is clear that library facilities need to be upgraded for the 21st century. However, this upgrading should take place rather than closing existing facilities.

We would ask you to rethink this position as a matter of urgency and keep Bradmore Green Library open. And invest in improved facilities at Coulsdon Library.

Yours Sincerely

Charles King

Charles King MBE, MA
Chair: East Coulsdon Residents' Association

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