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Contact: Jon Rouse
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Derrick Anderson CBE
London Borough of Lambeth
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Our ref: CE/km/0254
Date: 22 December 2011

Dear Derrick

UPPER NORWOOD JOINT LIBRARY

Thank you for your letter of 20 December.

Following my letter of 12 December, and taking into account your response, I now write to set out how I propose that we should further progress this matter.

For us, time is of the essence. The two authorities only have joint funding until 1 April 2012 and, as you will appreciate, from Croydon's perspective the Agreement has come to an end for the reasons set out in our previous correspondence. (I appreciate that your authority holds a different view, and we agree with you that both authorities should avoid the cost of expensive litigation over this issue if at all possible).

We note that you suggest we discuss all the options put forward so far, although we understand from your previous letter that you do not accept any of the options we have proposed. There is therefore a real prospect that the library will close. Given this position, Croydon will need to commence consultation with its residents and evaluate the potential impact of closure on them.

Whilst consultation is being undertaken, your alternative proposal that the community could potentially take on the running of the library can also be explored, provided it is done within a reasonable period of time and results in a clear, deliverable proposal. We therefore need a plan and timetable of the steps that need to be accomplished to give the community an opportunity to come up with proposals. That timetable should bear in mind the 1st April, as a possible hand-over date.

So as to meet that possible hand-over date of 1 April 2012, it would be most helpful if you would write to us by 11 January 2012 with a plan and timetable of the steps

that you propose our authorities should take to:

- a) provide an opportunity for community groups to express an interest
- b) provide them with enough information and selection criteria to enable them to put forward firm proposals
- c) keep staff informed and take whatever steps are necessary in relation to staff to enable a transfer of the library in some form or other to take place.

In the meantime, we would be happy to arrange a meeting of the Directors in January to discuss your alternative proposal, as well as the other options so far put forward and any queries you have arising from this letter. We can offer two dates at present:

Thursday 12 January from 12.00 to 2.00pm and
Monday 16 January from 3.30 to 5.30pm

Can you please ask your Director and any colleagues accompanying him to indicate if they can attend on either of these dates by emailing:

terri.buckley@croydon.gov.uk.

In the meantime, we intend to instruct valuers to undertake the following valuations, to assist us in the decision making process:

- Freehold of the whole site, subject only to current planning restrictions
- Freehold of the whole site, but subject to an overage clause if it is subsequently sold or used for purposes other than library and related community purposes.
- Separate valuations of the carpark and the Library building, the latter subject to an overage clause.
- Lease of library building only for 3 years, with option to buy at market value with overage clause, to the lessee at the end of the term

The books and other contents of the Library will have to be valued separately and, in the event of closure, either sold or possibly transferred to other library branches within our respective authorities.

Fixtures and fittings funded by SRB grants will also need to be valued, and L.B.Bromley consulted (as the accountable body for the grant) as to what funds they would require to be repaid, should the UNJL for any reason not continue to be used as a Library.

It is proposed that these valuations should be carried out discreetly, so as not to undermine the ongoing work of staff at the Library, and it would be appreciated if Lambeth would carry out its initial planning work with similar discretion. I would be grateful if you could confirm by 6th January 2012, that your authority agrees to share equally the cost of this valuation. We estimate the cost will be in the region of £6,500, so your share would be £3,250. If you agree to share the valuation costs in this way, we will give you an opportunity to approve the choice of the valuers before they are instructed.

I await your detailed proposals, and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jon Rouse". The letters are cursive and connected, with a prominent capital 'J' and 'R'.

Jon Rouse
Chief Executive