

Councillor Steve Reed
Lambeth Town Hall
Brixton Hill
London
SW2 1RW

Please ask for/reply: Mike Fisher



Your Ref

Our Ref:

Date: 24 June 2010

Dear *Steve*

I am writing to you with a proposal regarding the Upper Norwood Joint Library, and would be grateful for your views on how we could take this forward together.

Given the current economic climate and the spending pressures all councils are facing, we have looked at options for reducing the costs of the library – potentially taking a different approach to how the service is delivered and how we can gain savings from it during 2011/12.

An option for achieving this is that library services in Upper Norwood could be more economically operated by either Croydon or Lambeth, and integrated into a single borough-wide library service. This would avoid duplication and bring costs for the library in line with other branch libraries.

We would like to work closely with you on this proposal, which would require our officers to work jointly to establish potential savings in comparison with a comparable branch library in Lambeth or Croydon. This would give the best possible outcome in terms of maintaining the library service and reducing costs.

However, I also fully appreciate this may not fit in with your future plans, and in the event of our two authorities being unable to agree on how we would both like to move forward, the Council may formally request the termination of the 1994 Upper Norwood Joint Library agreement.

I am aware that Upper Norwood library is highly valued locally and operates under a unique funding position – and as such this is a matter we need to handle with utmost care, to reassure residents that we value the service and very much wish it to be maintained. Likewise, as I am sure you are aware, recent Government announcements on grant spending and revenue support means we are now under an even greater obligation to maximise efficiency at every level.

I would therefore also propose that we handle our communications on this jointly, to reassure taxpayers that we are focused on a solution that retains the service.



I would welcome a response by 12 July 2010 if possible, in order for us to progress our budget preparation work as soon as possible. However should you want to discuss any aspect of this in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Mike Fisher
Leader of the Council