

Public Question Time
Cabinet
26th April 2017

Ms Sarah Church has asked the Leader of the Council

- 1) Following the letter from the Secretary of State for Culture to the Leader of Swindon Borough Council dated 11 April 2017, stating her intention to consider the representations she had received from library users concerning the compliance of the proposed future Swindon Library Service with the 1964 Act, and to determine whether to hold a local inquiry, can the Leader of the Council explain his reasons for continuing with the proposed changes to opening hours from 6th April, rather than waiting for the outcome of the deliberations of the DCMS? If the outcome of any inquiry is still unknown on 31st August 2017, will he still press on with library closures and/ or divestment to parish councils even though this plan may be found not to be compliant with the 1964 Act, i.e., not to be comprehensive and efficient?

The Leader has responded

- 1) Thank you for your question. We understand that the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) needs to look into the issues raised in the representations they have received and we are co-operating fully with the department. The Cabinet Member for Communities and senior officers have been working closely with the Minister to show how Swindon's proposals are consistent with the Act and I will invite Councillor Martin to reply.

Councillor Mary Martin, Cabinet Member for Communities responded:

- 1) Thank you for your question. I am not going to speculate about a course of action in August. This is because I am confident that the solution for the community libraries as set out in the Cabinet Report to be considered tonight as well as the work we are undertaking with the Department for Culture Media and Sport before then will confirm that Swindon's library strategy provides a service that is comprehensive and efficient. The issues raised with DCMS were fully considered through the consultation that supported the development of the Council's Libraries Strategy and we will continue to implement the strategy in accordance with the timescales approved by Cabinet.