

My name is Kiki Ambrose and I love Bath Central Library. I read lots of books. My favourite authors are JK Rowling, Jaqueline Wilson and Robin Stevens.

I love novels which let me imagine what it's like to be in someone else's head. When I read Heidi I felt what it was like to have to use a wheelchair. It made me think how lucky I am to be able to run around and do cartwheels whenever I like. But people in wheelchairs can do amazing things too, just look at the Paralympics - they're superhumans!

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time is about a boy with a mental disability. He's called Christopher and he finds it hard to be in places full of signs and noise and cramped spaces make him claustrophobic.

There is a girl in my infants with learning and walking problems. Our school made changes so she could get around and feel welcome and cared for. She even has her own special room with a shower in it. Some of the problems with Lewis House can be fixed too, but you can't make three floors of an old office into a big one floor library specially designed to make everyone happy.

I think libraries should be welcoming places. Heidi's friend should be able to get around without having to struggle with lifts just to get from one bit of the library to the next. And their families definitely shouldn't have to worry about how they would escape if there was ever a fire in there.

Christopher wouldn't be able to use a library which feels small, confusing and has lots of busy desks with council stuff going on. He has big panics in places like that and gets so upset he never wants to go back.

My friend in infants would find it difficult to get around too. In the Podium, she can run to the big safe children's space right

from the escalator. Inside the Podium library there are no stairs inside to fall down and it's a lovely calm place.

I'd like my granny - she's called Granny Sparkle - to be able to come to the library with me too, but she walks with a stick and would probably make excuses if it moves to Lewis House.

I love librarians too. Did you know they study for years to qualify? Roald Dahl's Matilda goes to the library when her dad is at work and her mum is at the bingo. Matilda has lovely happy times sitting in the cosy corner. Her librarian, Mrs Phelps, knows exactly which author is right for Matilda, even though it's Charles Dickens and he's a writer for grown-ups!

Librarians are fun too. They put on lots of events and clubs. My friends and I feel really sad our event room closed when Lynne the librarian was told librarians aren't needed any more. When she was there kids could do all kinds of stuff like computer clubs and I saw an amazing storyteller once for the haunted house summer reading challenge. She got us all to rattle our chains and gnash our teeth!

They still give out summer reading challenge cards but there's no Lynne and this year there was just a man handing out free balloons. Balloons are nice, but they soon pop and that doesn't make the same memory as a good event.

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I'm Caroline Ambrose. I work with a team of 20 kids including those whose life chances are directly linked to library services.

I'm here to raise some questions about the options for Bath Central Library.

Given the concern about the council's handling of this matter, my aim is to help cabinet steer away from a judicial review that will prove costly both financially and reputationally for B&NES.

Firstly, cabinet are you in a position to vote today? A mountain of info was published only last week which raises fundamental questions about viability of both options.

Cabinet have you had time to read and consider all documents? Has Cllr Veal briefed you on the serious issues and omissions? Option 1 is not viable on Bevans' report alone with unacceptable accessibility for those with mobility, learning, sight, hearing and mental health issues.

Alongside this, Option 1 has vastly increased costs of £6.4m which seem to fail the key criteria of "Delivery Within Capital Provision". Also vastly reduced savings and no info about external income.

A huge question mark also hangs over Option 2. The cabinet documents seem to have nothing on what integration would look like. Not even indicative layouts or operational models. According to the data, library footfall is 495k per year, the One Stop Shop 130k. How will a compressed library cope with over 25% more visits? How will a (presumably) smaller OSS cope with the huge uplift of being in a busier site on hugely reduced staffing? These are big operational questions.

There is also no detail about the impact on accessibility of what Bevans identify as a "plethora" of facilities added into the mix. Ergo, in all those documents, cabinet does not have enough facts, unless perhaps Councillor Veal can explain how it will all work?

Councillor Veal, you have also as yet not found time to receive the many other options collated since January by Save Bath Libraries. A valid petition was presented on February 14<sup>th</sup> but we've still not had the council debate at which we wish to present these options as you will not meet.

How is cabinet is being asked to vote in your full knowledge you have yet to represent options residents expect to be considered equally alongside those favoured by officers and/or yourself.

Lastly, as B&NES "2020 Vision" is to be "known as a beautifully inventive C21st place, where everyone is invited to think big" surely cabinet you would want to look at a ready-made list of beautifully inventive big ideas?

In view of all of this, I urge cabinet to postpone the vote. Option 1 is based on financial nonsense for a site some residents won't be able to access while Option 2 has a high chance of operational chaos. I trust you will agree this matter needs further time and thought?

Thank you.