

BATHNES COUNCIL MEETING 14TH SEPT 2017 PUBLIC STATEMENT

Hello, my name is Betsi Ifans. I'm a pupil at Ralph Allen, library user and am reading this statement on behalf of SAVE BATH LIBRARIES.

In 2016, via its Libraries Taskforce, the Department for Culture Media and Sport published LIBRARIES DELIVER and set out best practices for local government.

You'll recall Costa Award winning author Moira Young presented LIBRARIES DELIVER here on February 14th when we submitted our petition.

Seven months on, we are concerned to note the MODERN LIBRARIES PROGRAMME is still falling well short of DCMS standards.

For context, less than 1% of local government spending goes on libraries. Our (partly answered) freedom of information requests suggest Bathnes spends considerably **less**.

As proven outcomes far exceed expenditure, the DCMS direction is to **treat libraries as an asset not a cost**.

Further, **councils should NOT cut library services in response to ad hoc savings targets**.

Downgrading a busy city library for ad hoc savings does NOT meet the DCMS' standards.

One of the key modern libraries challenges to officers is to diversify and maximise funding opportunities. One of the many ways other councils are already doing this is through the Libraries Innovation Fund. All local authorities were invited to submit and in March £4million was shared between 30 councils.

Here are five examples of winning council projects:

In Manchester, £250,000 was awarded to develop specialist workshops in innovations such as 3D printing.

In Devon, £245,000 to roll out services to rural communities to improve employment prospects.

Hampshire won £238,000 to support a tablet computer lending service for the disadvantaged and socially isolated.

Sefton won £99,000 to create a 'human library' project where people can 'gift' their talents to socially isolated adults or those in need.

Greenwich won £125,000 to create an indoor soft play area built around the theme of children's literature.

Wouldn't all of these have been fantastic for Bath & NE Somerset?

So what **did** we receive?

ZERO.

Ian Savigar says **winning funding was not part of the Modern Libraries Programme**.

Councillors, residents need you to challenge officers to get up to speed and on the page.

Thank you.