

STATEMENT TO BATH & NE SOMERSET CABINET / 23 NOVEMBER 2017

I'm Caroline Ambrose, resident, founder of Bath's Novel Awards and founding member of residents' group Save Bath Libraries.

I'm here to make a statement to cabinet about its decision of 11th October 2017 to phase out council operation of Paulton, Radstock, Moorland Road, Weston and Saltford libraries as well as the mobile library.

This decision, taken in the absence of adequate consultation and without any equalities analysis, is of particular concern to residents given council's earlier unlawful attempt to relocate and downsize Bath Central Library.

On 22nd November 2017 Save Bath Libraries sent a 10 page pre-action letter to council's Principal Solicitor Shaine Lewis, Council leader Tim Warren and Councillor for Transformation Karen Warrington setting out in detail why cabinet's decision-making is unlawful and requesting that all cabinet members be made aware of the content.

Today, cabinet has three options:

1. Withdraw the decision
2. Withdraw the decision and carry out a lawful consultation prior to retaking a decision
3. Suspend implementation of the decision while residents seek judicial review

Council has been reminded of its duty to provide adequate oversight of public decision making and best value duty not to commit funds while a decision may be quashed.

It's hard to believe cabinet would continue to act unlawfully.

Should it do so, residents will hold council to account.

END OF STATEMENT