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Dear Carol

Herne Hill Carnegie Library

Thank you very much for letting us know about the Shadow Carnegie Community Trust's proposal to adapt the Herne Hill Carnegie Library into an Enterprise, Cultural and Community Hub. I'm sorry for the time it's taken for me to get back to you but as you know we've been looking into the proposal. We have considered the proposal carefully and have enjoyed learning more about the proposed Hub.

I thought I'd take the opportunity to share a bit of the Trust's background on the Trust's relationship with libraries. From our inception in 1913 the Trust (and our founder Andrew Carnegie before that date) supported public libraries in the belief that they were the single most effective contribution which could be made to improving the wellbeing of communities. We remain very strong supporters of libraries and library services.

As you are aware, the Trust's support was made in the form of a gift of money to a local authority to enable them to build a library. The sole condition attached to these gifts was that the local authority should increase the level of local taxation (the rates) to pay for the staffing and stocking of the library. The Trust consciously sought no legal or financial interest in these gifted buildings. These gifts were without further stipulations, given in the spirit of a demanding partnership with local government - and they have played their part in the partnership extraordinarily well for many decades. The Trust therefore has no legal standing to intervene in the closure of, or a reduction in service within, a Carnegie Library, and we do not intervene in specific cases.

Nevertheless, we strongly believe that libraries are an essential part of community life, contributing to individual and community wellbeing and lifelong learning, as well as providing access to computers and online services for all. The Enterprise, Cultural and Community Hub that you propose, with its free access to books, computers and learning events for all children, and its charged for business area are in line with this view and the

Trust's thinking on the future of libraries. We are aware that the needs of local communities for library services change over time, as populations change, both in relation to where public libraries should be situated and in relation to the kind of libraries people require. There are also pressures on local budgets and tax where decisions are made through the democratic process. Your proposal to retain a core service that is free and open to all alongside a proposition to facilitate income generation reflects the need for libraries to think innovatively about the services they offer and how they offer them in order to be sustainable in the longer term.

We wish you all the best with your proposal.

Yours sincerely

Jenny Peachey, Policy Officer