

Cllr Geoff Gollop, Deputy Mayor of Bristol said: "I am pleased that the mayor has listened to the concerns of me and my Cabinet colleagues. Libraries are a sensitive issue and one we absolutely must get right. With this extra time we're improving the odds for these much-loved local resources and I will continue to press for a solution which best serves all our communities."

### **Libraries not at risk during next financial year**

No libraries in Bristol will be at risk of closure before April 2016, even if a current consultation on the future of the service results in recommendations for closure, and every effort will be made to find new ways of working with local communities and potential partners to adapt the library service to current needs.

This guarantee was made by the Mayor today (Monday 16 March) following consultation with Assistant Mayor for Neighbourhoods Cllr Daniella Radice, Deputy Mayor Geoff Gollop and council officers.

A four month consultation on the future of libraries is underway in the city, looking at the need for a more modern service in the context of government imposed cuts to public budgets. Libraries have been categorised into two groups to be clear about how the Council will target investment to deliver a new-look service. There is a further group of seven libraries that have been identified as not currently fitting into these two groups. The Council is having conversations about the future of these libraries with the community and other partners during the consultation to explore possible viable opportunities for continuing to provide a service in affected areas.

Now the mayor says he will allow extra time to look at the results of the consultation, make firmer plans and bring any creative or unusual ideas to fruition. He will also continue to consider how library provision can link with other council services to deliver them more effectively at a local level. He does not rule out making savings elsewhere in the council's overall budget in future if the consultation reveals compelling reasons to retain more libraries in the long-term or highlights new ways to join up services.

Mayor George Ferguson said: "We are in a consultation process and don't have any firm plans to date, but already we've seen a tremendous strength of feeling and a desire for community involvement when it comes to local libraries, and I have been listening carefully. On one hand this is very encouraging as it means people are more likely to be part of the solution, but on the other hand it drives home that we absolutely need enough time to reduce any unnecessary risk to libraries and make a success of people's good ideas from all sources.

"I am very grateful to my Assistant Mayor Daniella Radice, Deputy Mayor Geoff Gollop and all our Cabinet colleagues for their impassioned advocacy for our libraries. Their constructive challenge to the timescales has led me and my officers to believe that making this commitment is the right thing to do. However we continue to be faced with overall cuts and there remain hard choices to be made which will require a review of some budget decisions"

Cllr Daniella Radice, Assistant Mayor for Neighbourhoods added: "It's a huge challenge to deliver the savings required by national austerity measures, and we have a duty to local people to make sure that we go about things in an inclusive way which has every chance of success.

“I’ve pushed for this commitment to avoiding any in-year savings, taking some of the urgency out of the decision making process and helping us make absolutely sure there’s time to see what ideas people come up with and how we as a council can help make them happen.

“The Mayor and his cross party Cabinet are absolutely united in our desire to see libraries open, modernised and serving their communities in the best possible way. We need more time to give the city the best chance of this happening. I’d urge everyone to take part in our current consultation and give us their ideas – these will be key to ensuring the long-term viability of Bristol libraries.”

Bristol’s Libraries for the Future consultation is open now and closes on 30 June 2015. People can take part by visiting [www.bristolfuturelibraries.co.uk](http://www.bristolfuturelibraries.co.uk). The website includes an information booklet, online survey and full details of face-to-face meetings and drop-in sessions in local libraries. Paper copies of the information booklet and surveys are available at all libraries.

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