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Dear Faye and David

North Prospect Library

Thank you for coming to Plumer House to meet Phil and me to discuss PCC's plans for the North Prospect Library.

You outlined the new vision for library provision in Plymouth, and provided a copy of your document – 'plan for libraries 2017-2020'. Thank you for this.

We advised that we have two interests in the North Prospect library specifically. Firstly, it provides a valuable community resource in North Prospect, and is one key element of the wider community vision which led to development of the Beacon in the first place. North Prospect has been one of the most deprived neighbourhoods in Plymouth, but the regeneration is helping to improve this, and access to the resources offered at the Beacon, including by the library, is a key element in this improvement. Secondly, we lease the premises to you and therefore clearly have an interest in your proposals in respect of the lease.

Whilst we set out our view regarding the Beacon, and the contribution that it makes to North Prospect and the wider area, including the library service as a key part of this, you advised that your vision for future library provision includes a requirement for library sites to be able to offer public meeting space and a minimum of 12 public access computers. In terms of timescale, you advised that the consultation is currently in progress, with a closing date of 19 April. You will then be producing a report for a full council meeting on 3 July.

In respect of the consultation, we are aware that you had had a meeting before ours with Charlotte Edwards and Alice Potter, and are also due to meet John Clark later this week. Following these meetings, we will be coordinating and submitting a response to the consultation.

In terms of the Beacon as a community resource, we also note that you made comments that you believe it is not fully used in this respect. We do monitor use of the Beacon closely and this is not our experience. In fact, we experience high and growing demand for the facilities available, and the Beacon is being used as a vibrant and valued community resource. In particular:

- We honour arrangements with existing community groups to access space at the time they require it and at the same cost previously paid. There are a wide range of groups, providing a whole spectrum of different services, included in this arrangement.
- A very wide range of new groups also now use the community hall and meeting rooms, and usage has steadily increased since the building opened. To name just a few of these, we have regular bookings with organisations such as Cornwall College for training course, other training providers, Child Health Clinics, Slimming World, Street Games, the Ladies' running club, the PCC Youth Service, Tai Chi, Timebank, etc.
- In addition to regular meetings, we also have a lot of ad hoc use from members of the community for bookings such as children's parties, Christmas grotto, table top sales, Easter events, community fun days, etc.
- We have over 1,000 bookings for the community hall and meeting rooms per year.
- We have a commercial tenant providing a service to North Prospect residents through the Costcutter shop.

All these activities contribute to the community vision for the Beacon, and clearly assist with bringing footfall to resources such as the library.

Finally, in terms of costs for the library, we would also note that we continue to demonstrate our support for the value that the library brings to the community objectives of the Beacon by leasing the premises to you on a rent free / service charge only basis, meaning that under the current lease we are seeking only to cover our costs and not derive income from you for these premises.

We do appreciate you coming in to talk to us, and look forward to further discussions as your plans progress.

Yours sincerely

Liz Phillips
Head of Income Management and Housing Operations