

PETITION TO NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL (cover sheet)

<p>PETITION SUBJECT</p>	<p><i>(Insert the subject of the petition)</i></p> <p>The withdrawal of Great Ayton library as a public , professionally-run, council-tax funded service</p>
<p>PETITION ORGANISER</p>	<p>Name: [REDACTED] Address: [REDACTED] Postcode: [REDACTED] Email: [REDACTED] Daytime telephone number: [REDACTED]</p>
<p>ACTION REQUESTED</p>	<p><i>Brief statement of the action petitioners wish the County Council to take:</i></p> <p>That the County Council reconsider their decision to withdraw Great Ayton library as a funded,, professional public service.</p>
<p>BACKGROUND INFORMATION</p>	<p><i>(Detail concisely any relevant background information to the petition. For example, what has happened to prompt the petition? Has there been any previous contact with the County Council on this matter and what was the outcome?)</i></p> <p>Revised proposals on the library service were considered by NYCC Executive on 14 June 2011 and included the recommendation that Great Ayton library should close if it did not come up with a sustainable business plan for a service run entirely by volunteers. The matter is going back to the Executive on 12 October 2011.</p>
<p>TOTAL NUMBER OF SIGNATORIES</p>	<p>1014# 978</p>
<p>DATE PETITION SUBMITTED TO NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL</p>	<p>22 August 2011</p>
<p>DATE PETITION RECEIVED (OFFICE USE ONLY)</p>	<p>22/08/2011</p>
<p>NOTE: I should like to give notice of wishing to be present and speak to the Committee to which the petition is given for consideration.</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>19/8/2011</p>	

Keep It Public	Great Ayton Library Campaign Group 
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We, the undersigned, do not accept that keeping Great Ayton library open as a public service is not an option open to NYCC.

Great Ayton submitted the biggest petition opposing the first proposals, and accounted for 35% of those attending the public consultation meetings. Yet unlike others, our position is worse under the revised plans than it was originally. We should not be penalised because of our proximity to Stokesley.

We do not want a volunteer-run service and urge NYCC to think again!

Name	Address	Signature,
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SAMPLE SIGNATURE SHEET

20

Please return this form - no matter how few names - back to Alison at 139 Newton Road by Sunday 7 August. Thank you.

Alison *Alison*

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

COUNTY COMMITTEE FOR HAMBLETON

EXTRACT of Minutes of the meeting held at County Hall, Northallerton on 5 September 2011, commencing at 2.00 pm.

PRESENT:-

County Councillor David Blades in the Chair.

County Councillors:-, Arthur Barker, Gareth Dadd, Tony Hall, Neville Huxtable, Heather Moorhouse, Caroline Patmore, Caroline Seymour, Peter Sowray, Tim Swales and John Weighell.

County Council Officers:- Tom Jenkinson and Ray Busby (Policy, Performance and Partnerships), Nigel Smith, (Highways), and Gary Fielding and Julie Blaisdale (Chief Executives) and Jane Wilkinson (Legal and Democratic Services).

Co-opted Members:-

Parish Councillors:- Ken Blackwood, Gary Readman and Brian Taylor.

District Councillor:- Derek Adamson

Present by Invitation:

North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue: Group Manager Carl Boasman.

In attendance:-

Executive Members County Councillors Carl Les and Chris Metcalfe.

20 members of the press and public.

Apologies For Absence:

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of District Councillors John Prest and Andy Wake and Parish Councillor Martin Jones.

COPIES OF ALL DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED ARE IN THE MINUTE BOOK

151. PETITION – GREAT AYTON LIBRARY

CONSIDERED –

The report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services) inviting the Area Committee to determine its response to a petition received from residents of Great Ayton objecting to the "withdrawal of Great Ayton library as a public, professionally run, Council Tax funded service". .

The organiser of the petition, Alison Jarvis addressed the meeting. She said the petition was in response to concerns about the realism of the decision taken by the Executive in June for Great Ayton to be run as a community led library. She cited the following as the main areas of concern:-

- Public consultation – lack of proper engagement with the local community. No direct feedback was given following public meetings. The decision to communicate exclusively with the Friends of Great Ayton Library Group is inequitable as the views expressed by the Group are not representative of the local community. Approximately 12% of the consultation responses were from Great Ayton residents and this was not reflected in the report considered by the Executive in June. The report did not highlight the strength of public feeling in Great Ayton, nor did it analyse the responses on an area basis. The Executive report contained data for three other areas that were comparable to Great Ayton but this was not reflected in the report recommendations.
- The criteria used to determine a library's category is arbitrary and was applied inconsistently. Great Ayton is an area of significant population. There is no rationale for the decision to use five miles as the determining distance from a category 1 library. Whilst consideration was given to the affect on the economy of market towns the same consideration was not given to Great Ayton. No detailed information was produced in respect of the deprivation criteria applied and the raw data upon which decisions were made. The data on the library fact sheets produced is basic and there is no audit trail for the decisions made in the report.
- Young People – are heavy users of the library in Great Ayton. The consultation did not specifically consult with young people and there was no direct engagement with the under fives. The consultation did not include youth councils or the County Council's Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee. Consequently the Equality Impact Assessment is flawed. In Great Ayton two attempts to provide a youth club run by volunteers have failed this demonstrates that is unrealistic for the library to be a community led resource.

The Chairman asked Julie Blaisdale, Assistant Director Library & Community Services to respond to the points made.

Julie Blaisdale stated that the public consultation did not target any specific groups. The consultation document was made available to everyone. The consultation was widely publicised as demonstrated by the large audiences public meetings had attracted. She said the County Council's web-site was often accessed by young people and that library staff had done some work with the school improvement network. In Great Ayton there had been high response to the consultation from young people. Of the 357 responses received, 107 had been from young people.

Following the decision of the Executive in June, Officers were busy preparing a further report to be considered at the meeting of the Executive on 22 November. That report would document the response of individual localities including Great Ayton. She confirmed that to date engagement with the Friends of Great Ayton Library Group had been positive. She confirmed that she was happy to provide the additional data requested and that she would give consideration to the suggestion of involving Youth Councils and Children's Services.

Gary Fielding, Assistant Chief Executive Policy Performance and Partnerships added that discussions with Friends of Great Ayton Library group were on-going. The negotiations whilst positive were proving challenging as the Group were pressing for various concessions. He confirmed that officers were trying to respond to all requests for information but that resources were stretched because negotiations with community groups were being held simultaneously. Gary Fielding said that as things stood he was confident of a community led solution for Great Ayton being found.

The Executive Member County Councillor Chris Metcalfe said that after attending public meetings in Great Ayton he was in no doubt about the strength of public feeling. He appreciated the community value of a library but said that in the future libraries had to have a wider role. Assets had to be fully utilised. He said that he had insisted on being copied into to all correspondence between the County Council and the Friends Group and was therefore fully aware of developments.

County Councillor Tim Swales (Young People's Champion), said it was incorrect to say that young people had not been consulted. Senior library staff had attended schools and school improvement network meetings. The implications of the consultation were understood by schools and their governing bodies. Savings had to be made as other service areas faced increasing demand.

County Councillor Caroline Seymour said that whilst she was happy for people to come to Stokesley library it should be noted that the local bus service was poor. IT equipment at Stokesley library was already used to its full capacity and she hoped additional computers could be provided. She said that the task facing volunteers was daunting and that the County Council should provide volunteer groups with regular support from a paid member of staff.

County Councillor Neville Huxtable said that whilst he sympathised with Great Ayton cuts to council budgets and funding meant that the status quo could not be maintained.

County Councillor Heather Moorhouse expressed support for the petition. She recognised there was an opportunity for the library to be used for other things as it currently only opened for 20 hours per week.

Parish Councillor Gary Readman said that Great Ayton library was well used and centrally located. He said local businesses would suffer if people starting using the library at Stokesley. If the Friends of Great Ayton Library Group was ultimately successful and the library remained open it had been proposed that the funds would be raised via use of a parish council pre-cept. This was inequitable as it meant that Great Ayton residents would in effect be paying twice for the same service.

County Councillor John Weighell said as Chairman of the Executive he would be happy to consider the issues raised by the petitioners at the meeting of the Executive on 22 November.

Members of the Area Committee were supportive of the approach suggested by the Leader.

RESOLVED –

That the petition objecting to the “withdrawal of Great Ayton library as a public, professionally run, Council Tax funded service” is referred to the meeting of the Executive on 22 November 2011.

UNCONFIRMED MINUTES