



Lowestoft Town Council
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BY EMAIL TO:

Councillor Bobby Bennett, Cabinet Member for Equality and Communities
c.c. Councillor Michael Ladd, Chairman, Suffolk County Council Scrutiny Committee
c.c. Councillor Matthew Hicks, Chairman Suffolk County Council
c.c. Town Clerk, Bury St Edmunds Town Council
c.c. Chris Bally, Chief Executive, East Suffolk Council

31 January 2024

Dear Councillor Bennett,

I am writing on behalf of Lowestoft Town Council, and many residents of Lowestoft who have made direct and heartfelt petitions to the Town Council, concerning Suffolk County Council's decision to close the Lowestoft Branch of Suffolk Archives, which you describe on your own website as the 'heritage home for archives'.

The Town Council most vehemently objects to the decision of the County Council, which was made without consultation to the Town Council or given prior notice, which will remove a valued and well used service from Lowestoft.

Lowestoft is a town rich in history with many historical societies and historians and much of the recent regeneration of the town has been driven through the acknowledgement and value of its heritage. For example, the recent National Lottery Heritage Fund grant awarded for the renovation of the Lowestoft Town Hall was only successful in part due to the recognition of the value of heritage and community engagement in heritage activities. Investment in two Heritage Action Zones has seen the Town Council, East Suffolk Council and Historic England working in partnership with residents and businesses for the improvement of the town.

If you look closer at the town, or consult with any of the locality county councillors, you may appreciate that the town has high levels of social deprivation compared to other areas of the county. To make a decision which removes a local facility from local people, with the only access to local archives now being through costly travel to Ipswich, is unjust.

Therefore, to conclude, Lowestoft Town Council requests Suffolk County Council revisit its decision and the Local Archive Office remain open. If this cannot be achieved after all options have been fully explored and exhausted, then all study material should remain in Lowestoft and be publicly available at no cost to local residents.

We look forward to receiving your considered response.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Foote

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Acting Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer.