

Leith Central Community Council highlight the Library Consultation

✘ *By Jenny MacKenzie*

Concerns were raised at the [Leith Central Community Council](#) meeting on Monday 16 January 2012 about the proposed changes to library services that are [currently under consultation](#). It was the loss of Sunday opening times that caused alarm, with some members noting that this is an important day for many families in the area.

[Pilmeny Development Project](#) director, Anne Munro, emphasised that access to library services is vital in a multi-ethnic community:- “Sunday closing would be a loss to many Leith families who see McDonald Road library as an important part of their social and leisure activity,” she said.

Former Leith councillor Phil Attridge said that the most recent improvements in services are often the first to be cut when money is tight. “Sunday opening of libraries has only been available for a few years in Edinburgh,” he said. “When cuts are made, it’s the most recent changes that are the first to go.”

CEC notes that all libraries will open on Saturday, usually for much longer than they were before. However it is planned to close all 28 in the city on Sundays. Additionally, smaller ‘Group C’ libraries will close on Thursdays.

All have been banded into three groups, with group A being ✘ open 51 hours, group B 42 hours and group C 32 hours each week. Both Leith and McDonald Road libraries fall into Group A, so they will be open for nine hours more than say Sighthill, Stockbridge or Currie and 19 hours more than

Granton, Ratho or South Queensferry. However, considering the density and diversity of the population in Leith, community council members felt that Sunday opening times make a crucial contribution to the fabric of community life in the area.

City of Edinburgh Council officer, Loraine Duckworth, urged members to make their concerns known via the link to the consultation document. "This is still a consultation period," she said. "You still have an opportunity to make your views known and affect the final recommendations."

You can find out more about the plans here:

[Next Generation Library and Information Services Strategy 2012-2015](#)

And make your own views known here: [this questionnaire](#)

The consultation period concludes at the end of this month (January 2012).

Jenny MacKenzie is a local journalist and Leith Central Community Councillor