

To Mr. Mike Hill, Cabinet Member for Community Services

By: Amanda Honey, Managing Director – Communities

Subject: **CANTERBURY LIBRARY** - temporary relocation of service

Classification: Unrestricted

File Ref:

Summary:

To seek approval to temporarily relocate library services to 35 Pound Lane, Canterbury to enable the redevelopment of the Beaney Institute.

Background:

1. The redevelopment of The Beaney Institute in Canterbury is included in the capital programme and has been put forward as the best solution to provide a modernised library and gallery facility for the city to deliver the County Council's Library and Archive Strategy. The Beaney Institute is owned by Canterbury City Council and houses Kent County Council's library service.

In partnership with Canterbury City Council we have secured £6.5m Heritage Lottery Funding towards the project. On the announcement of securing the HLF funding, Canterbury City Council Cabinet members approved the closure of the Beaney Institute from 28th February 2008 to allow the redevelopment works to commence. In particular there is a planning condition requiring an archaeological survey before any building work can commence.

In the normal course of events we would seek approval for temporary relocation of a library as part of the approval to spend the capital budget. However, in this instance we need to relocate in advance of letting a building contract to enable the archaeological assessment to be carried out.

A temporary relocation is essential to comply with the requirements of the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act to provide library services in the city.

Policy Context

2. Kent County Council provides library and archive services under the following statutory requirement and discretionary powers.

Public Libraries and Museums ACT, 1964 – requires KCC to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient' library service

In April 2004 Cabinet endorsed the "**Library and Archive Strategy: 2004 to 2014**". This document set out the vision for Libraries and Archives and the broad strategy to deliver the transformed service, which commits us to:

“Provide a network of welcoming and attractive libraries which are centre’s for local communities, open at convenient times.”

Providing a network of facilities that:

- are welcoming and vibrant community spaces;
- enable all our customers, current or potential, to access the full range of services, whether directly or remotely;
- are tailor made to meet the needs of the local community

Towards 2010: Target 26

Modernise the Library Service so that it acts as a focal point for KCC services and widens access to Kent’s rich culture

Process

3. To enable library services to be available throughout the rebuild period an alternative temporary location has been sought in the city.

An options appraisal of retail outlets and other Kent County Council properties has been carried out and indicative annual rentals ranged from £100,000 to £250,000 per annum. KCC’S current revenue costs for the Beaney premises are £58,000 annum.

Canterbury City Council have offered the library service the use of a two storey property at 35, Pound Lane, Canterbury which is situated in a residential area to the north west of the city centre. Three public car parks surround the location and the premises are within easy walking distance from the city centre.

Annual rental of the property has been offered at £20,925pa for a 3 year lease with a break clause after 2 years, other premises running costs are estimated at £35,000 based on other similar size buildings.

It would be our intention to use the ground floor for book lending, information services and public access to computers. The first floor would be used for staff accommodation. An equalities impact assessment has been carried out and access is no worse than at present at the Beaney Institute.

A limited local studies service will be provided at Canterbury Cathedral Archives.

Library opening hours would remain as 55 hours per week including Thursdays until 8.00pm and 9.00am -5.00pm on Saturdays.

The Home Library Delivery Service will be offered to local people if this is a more appropriate alternative library service for them. This will offer these customers an enhanced personal service - with books and other library items being delivered by a volunteer to the customers in their home.

Awareness of alternative ways to access library services will be promoted; focusing on services available at Herne Bay, Whitstable, Sturry and Swalecliffe libraries as well as our wide range of remotely accessible services available through the KCC website.

Resource Implications

4. Over the period of closure the rental will be offset by the saving on current user costs for the Beaney Institute and can be accommodated within the Libraries, Archives and Museums revenue budget.

A full condition survey of the building has been completed which has identified minor modifications to be achieved before occupation. Canterbury City Council have agreed to take responsibility for implementing and funding these changes.

The temporary facility will be stocked from existing resources.

There are no implications for the current District staffing establishment.

Recommendation

5. The Cabinet Member for Communities is asked to:

Approve a temporary relocation of library services in Canterbury from the Beaney Institute to 35 Pound Lane and subject to her being satisfied to the detailed terms and conditions to authorize the Managing Director for Communities to enter into the lease for the building with Canterbury City Council.

Lynn Catt
Area Manager for East Kent
Libraries, Archives + Museums
01227 715230.

Background documents

None