

By: Amanda Honey, Corporate Director, Customer & Communities
To: Mike Hill, Cabinet Member, Community Services
Subject: Temporary relocation of library services from Swanley Library during the refurbishment of the building to become a Gateway: Decision No: 13/00040

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: To seek approval to relocate Swanley library services to temporary premises during the refurbishment of the facilities to become a Gateway

Recommendation: The Cabinet Member is asked to relocate library services from Swanley Library to temporary premises during the refurbishment of the building to become a Gateway.

1. Background:

1.1 In partnership with public and third sector organisations plans are being drawn up to completely refurbish premises to deliver a Gateway in Swanley as agreed by Cabinet as part of the 2012-13 Customer Services divisional business plan.

1.2 During the proposed redevelopment of the site, in accordance with the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act, a temporary location must be provided to ensure the continued provision of library services in the areas. The anticipated build timeline for the site is anticipated to be 51 weeks.

1.3 Funding for the project will come from a number of sources including external partners. Work is underway to ensure agreements will be reached on the design, build costs, leases, capital and revenue investments prior to the Project Advisory Group meeting on 26 June 2013.

1.4 The work will ensure a number of KCC services will be located in one facility, together with district and town council services, ensuring customers benefit from a 'one front desk' experience. Expressions of interest have been received from a number of third sector organisations to use the site, in some cases taking on leases and covering revenue and capital costs.

2. Policy Context

2.1 Kent County Council provides library and archive services under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 which requires the provision of a 'comprehensive and efficient' library service.

2.2 In April 2004 the Cabinet endorsed the "Library and Archives Strategy: 2004 to 2014" which set out the vision for Libraries and Archives to:

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

2.3 This included 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; and
- are tailor made to meet the needs of the local community.

3. Process

3.1 To enable library services to be available throughout the build period alternative temporary locations are being looked at nearby.

3.2 An appraisal of various facilities is being undertaken and already some options have emerged:

3.2.1 Swanley

Swanley Town Council has offered the use of land attached to their Civic Centre directly behind the library.

3.3 In order to minimise the inconvenience to our customers, signage to temporary sites will be put up at the existing building and the library opening hours are expected to remain the same. Re-location will also include suitable registration facilities.

3.4 The Home Library Delivery Service will be offered to local people if this is a more appropriate alternative library service for them.

3.5 Awareness of alternative ways to access library services will also be promoted including services available at nearby libraries and the wide range of services accessible through the KCC website.

4. Resource Implications

4.1 During the closure period costs for the provision of temporary facilities will be kept to a minimum and any revenue costs should be offset by a reduction in user costs for the individual facilities.

4.2 Relocating library services for Swanley will provide the contractor with an unfettered site which will reduce the time of the build and therefore lower capital costs.

4.3 The temporary facilities will be stocked from existing library resources and there are no implications for the current staffing establishment.

5. Recommendation

5.1 Members of the Cabinet Committee are asked to consider and either endorse or make recommendations on the member decisions to relocate library services from the Swanley Library to temporary premises during the refurbishment of the building to become a Gateway.

Background Documents

- Libraries & Archives Strategy can be found at:

http://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure_and_culture/libraries/using_the_library/about_kent_libraries.aspx

Contact

Jonathan White
Projects & Operations Manager
01622 691485
jonathan.white@kent.gov.uk