

## **CABINET**

**5 JULY 2011**

### **WALDESLADE VILLAGE LIBRARY RENEWAL OF LEASE**

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Alan Jarrett, Finance and Deputy Leader

Report from: Deborah Upton, Assistant Director Housing and Corporate Services

Author: Nick Anthony, Head of Asset and Property Services

#### **Summary**

This report seeks delegated authority to take a new lease of Walderslade Village Library on the best terms reasonably available.

#### **1 Budget and Policy Framework**

- 1.1 As the value of the rent payable for a new lease will be more than £20,000 pa this is a matter for Cabinet.

#### **2 Background**

- 2.1 The Council are holding over in occupation of the library premises as a protected tenant under the terms of a 25-year lease that commenced in 1986.
- 2.2 From a service perspective Walderslade Village Library is a busy modern community library very much appreciated by local residents, last year it received 43,143 visitors, has 2,236 active borrowers, issued 56,019 books and audio visual items, handled 7,749 enquiries and 3,597 computer use sessions were booked.
- 2.3 The library is well stocked with over 14,000 items both books and audiovisual available to the public. It is staffed by four part time staff and is managed by a Senior Library Assistant who also has responsibility for two other buildings.
- 2.4 The library also works very closely with local schools, pre schools and other community groups to support the raising of literacy in the local community.

### **3 Options/Way Forward**

- 3.1 The Council could decide to renew or alternatively not to renew the lease agreement.
- 3.2 Renewal of the lease is recommended to ensure that the library continues to provide a valuable service to local residents for years to come.
- 3.3 The Library is considered to form a vital part of the Council's network of sixteen service points, it is integral to life in this part of Medway and provides the local community with a vital interface to the Council.
- 3.4 Negotiations have commenced with the Landlord's Agents with a view to obtaining a new lease of up 25 years incorporating tenant only break clauses at 5 -yearly intervals.

### **4 Advice and analysis**

- 4.1 The option set out above would safeguard the library with the benefit of giving flexibility in future years. There is also a right to renewal when the new agreement expires while future flexibility will be provided by break clauses allowing the lease to be ended by the Council (not the landlord) at 5 yearly intervals.

### **5 Consultation**

- 5.1 Consultation has taken place with the library service and the relevant Portfolio Holders and the proposed course of action is supported.

### **6 Financial, legal and risk implications**

- 6.1 The library service is satisfied that renewing the lease is achievable within the current budget.
- 6.2 Negotiations have taken place to establish the level of rental that will apply on renewal of the lease and officers are confident that an agreement can be reached at more favourable terms than those applicable under the terms of the expired lease.
- 6.3 There are no foreseen risks arising from the proposal to enter into a new lease agreement.

### **7 Recommendations**

- 7.1 That Cabinet delegates authority to the Assistant Director of Housing and Corporate Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance to enter into a new lease agreement of not more than 25 years with tenant only break clauses and otherwise on the best terms reasonably obtainable.

## **8. Suggested reasons for decision**

- 8.1 To preserve the quality of the library network as the facility is a vital part of the service available to the public.

### **Lead officer contact**

Nick Anthony, Head of Asset and Property Services 01634 332294

[nick.anthony@medway.gov.uk](mailto:nick.anthony@medway.gov.uk)

### **Background Papers**

Lease of Walderslade Village Library dated 22 October 1986 – copy held by  
Lead officer contact