

# DIGGING DEEP TO TRANSFORM CHURCH STREET LIBRARY

## PROJECT UPDATE

### 18 JANUARY 2008

#### Message from the Director of Libraries

In October 2007 the Big Lottery awarded Westminster Libraries £1,066,097 to open up the basement levels at Church Street Library for additional library, learning and community use. This investment will allow the introduction of exciting and much needed services for the local Church Street Community.

The current library has 4,000 members, receives 200,000 visits a year and issues over 98,000 items. The library also offers many events and activities for everyone in the community. With your help we can make the most of this opportunity, helping to put the local community at the heart of this new library.

Following the grant award the next stage is to develop 3 project plans - a business plan, community engagement plan and capital delivery plan. These plans need to be produced within a very tight timescale set by the Big Lottery.

To keep our partners up to date with project developments and useful information we will be sending out regular e-bulletins. Please tell us if you know anyone else who would like to receive this information. If you have any further questions please contact Laura Hannan on 020 7641 3270 or [lhannan@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:lhannan@westminster.gov.uk)



*David Ruse Director of Libraries Westminster City Council*

#### Bid Update

The Church Street area is a diverse and complex neighbourhood, ranked among the top 20% most deprived wards in the country. 80% of homes are social housing, 35% of adult residents have no qualifications and over 30 languages are spoken in this small geographical area.

Church Street is however a community with many strengths and has been a focus of considerable regeneration in recent years including the Church Street Neighbourhood Management Programme which is one of 35 national Pathfinder Programmes. In the midst of these positive changes, the busy local library is not keeping pace. The current public space - occupying only the upper ground floor of a three floor building - is no longer adequate in size to deliver the learning and reading services required by the community.

This project will enable a cramped one floor library with frequent conflicts of use to become a three level building. A detailed feasibility study has been carried out to open up the lower library floors currently occupied by Library offices and a Home Library Service and extend into the adjacent garage to create a new learning centre. This project will create defined adult, childrens, and young people's areas on separate floors, an indoor 'breathing space' and a separate space for community use. The introduction of a lift, air conditioning and energy efficient glazing will facilitate this extension.

To ensure that the local community are actively engaged with the transformation of the Library this project will create a Youth Forum to offer young people the opportunity to input into the development and delivery of services. A Steering Group of community and voluntary group representatives will also be established to take responsibility for the management of the dedicated community area in the library.

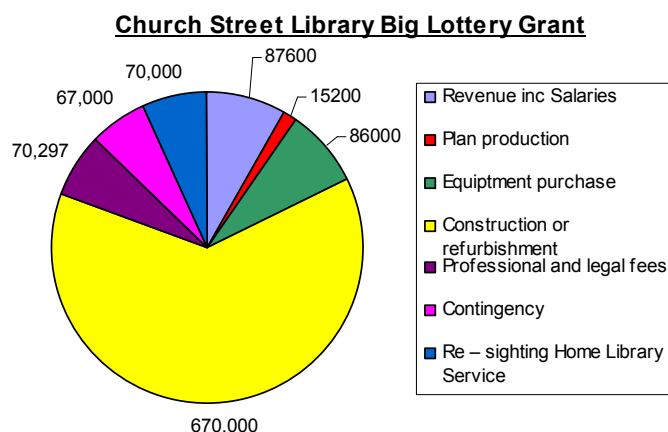
## Project Steering Group

A project steering group has been established to oversee the management and delivery of the Library transformation. The group consists of:

- David Ruse – Director of Libraries
- Laura Hannan – Project Manager
- Julie Mallett – Neighbourhood Management Officer
- Iona Cairns – Head of Library Operations
- Mary Enright – Group Manager (Learning)
- Marco Torquati – Neighbourhood Manager
- Nicola Hutchison – Church Street Library Site Manager
- Don Mackenzie – Church Street Resident

## Funding Breakdown

The pie chart below shows a breakdown of what the project funding will be spent on the total funding awarded by the Big Lottery was £1,066,097



## Church Street Library Current Services

Church Street Library is a vibrant community library close to Church Street's busy market. The library has an active children's section which hosts: a programme of visits from nursery, infant and primary school classes; a weekly session of rhymes, songs and activities for under 5s; a bustling homework club run by volunteers; and a Chatterbooks reading group for children aged 8-11. Every summer, hundreds of children flock to the library to join in with the Summer Reading Challenge and participate in a range of special activities and events.

The library also benefits from an 8 computer Learning Centre where customers can enrol on one of a range of free IT and language courses, take a Life in the UK practice test or drop in to a workshop to get careers and CV help. Home Library Service customers can attend a new 'Silver Surfers' club to practice their computer skills and use the internet. The Westminster Libraries Bengali Outreach worker is based at Church Street and she runs a successful Bengali Women's Reading and Writing Group as well as other activities such as family learning events.

Other activities at Church Street include: an Adult Reading Group which meets once a month to discuss the latest book over coffee; and starting this week, a 'Knit and Natter' group aiming to encourage people of different ages and backgrounds to enjoy the community environment of the library together. The library website contains further details including location, opening hours and forthcoming events <http://www.westminster.gov.uk/libraries>

## Key Project Dates

**14<sup>th</sup> April 2008**

Submission of plans to Big Lottery

**June 2008**

Recruitment of Project Manager

**October 2008**

Work starts on Site

## Have your say

If you would like further information or details of how to get involved with this project please contact Laura Hannan at [lhannan@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:lhannan@westminster.gov.uk) or on 020 7641 3270