



UNDER STRICT EMBARGO UNTIL 9.30am WEDNESDAY 22nd MARCH 2006

**LOVE LIBRARIES:
A Campaign to Transform Three Public Libraries in Twelve Weeks**

London 22 March 2006: David Lammy, Minister for Culture, will today announce the launch of **Love Libraries**, a campaign to explore a new vision of a 21st century reading service. The campaign kicks off with the dramatic transformation of three libraries in twelve weeks into models of a future library service with reading at its heart.

Love Libraries has been created by The Future Libraries Partnership, a unique alliance of the public and private sectors including the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, the Society of Chief Librarians, the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, nine British publishers and The Reading Agency.

Combining existing best practice in libraries and new ideas for an inspiring new vision of a reading centred library service, **Love Libraries** aims to showcase an exciting, replicable template for other libraries. It also aims to galvanise consumers into demanding a better standard of service from their local library.

The project will involve visibly transforming the image of the library buildings, drawing on the expertise of retailers, designers and space planners to re-model interiors. Library opening hours and book stocks will be reviewed to ensure there is a good range of the newest bestselling titles as well as an extensive backlist, and publishing marketing mentors will be attached to each library. New technology will be used to make the borrowing experience more personal and convenient including the ordering and renewal of books online, and there will be much imaginative promotion of reading including a high profile live events

programme. The result will be vibrant, inspiring community venues for consumers to visit on and off line that are attractive to all ages and social groups.

“Public libraries are transforming themselves to meet people’s needs in a new reading world” commented Miranda McKearney, OBE and Director of The Reading Agency. “They’re carving out an exciting new role that embraces but goes beyond traditional book lending. Reading groups, self service borrowing, author events, reader to reader recommendations, ebooks, listening posts...it’s all happening.”

“However, libraries haven’t always been good at telling the world they’re changing and public perceptions are out of step with the major changes that are occurring in the library service. Although children’s borrowing is on the up, we are in danger of permanently alienating the mainstream UK adult audience.”

She continues, “**Love Libraries** will enable us to showcase the best of current practice whilst exploring ideas for a 21st century reading service that meets the needs of a new contemporary audience.”

David Lammy, Minister for Culture said: “I have been impressed and encouraged by the creative and generous spirit that has brought this project together in the shared belief in the value of libraries. I look forward to seeing the results of these visionary transformations. ”

Three local councils have joined with The Future Libraries Partnership to make these transformations possible. The three libraries to be transformed are Cornwall County Council's **Newquay** Library, Kent County Council's **Coldharbour** Library in Gravesend; and The London Borough of **Richmond's** Central Lending Library in Richmond town centre. Local managers will have 12 weeks to undertake a hothouse transformation which will harness the combined skills, energy and resources of the local authorities, library peers, the booktrade, celebrities and the local community.

The makeover libraries will be revealed in week of 3rd July with a programme of live events involving authors and celebrities that appeal to large and diverse audiences throughout July.

A website, www.lovelibraries.co.uk, has been created for the campaign that will trace the progress of the transformations.

At the end of the campaign there will be an online **Love Libraries** toolkit for consumers, launched in July 2006. This will show what readers can expect of a good library. There will also be a toolkit with practical shared library advice for simple and effective models of change.

Love Libraries is attracting a growing band of vocal champions and celebrities including Phillip Pullman, Ahdaf Souief, Terence Blacker, Caryl Phillips, Tracy Chevalier, Jenny Éclair, Roy Hattersley, Michael Morpurgo and Tony Parsons who have lent their name to the campaign. Each has offered their support - becoming a Love Libraries Champion, offering to make personal library appearances or simply saying why they love libraries.

Terence Blacker, author, commented: "Don't let's fall for the lie that libraries play a less important part today than they used to. A thriving library system is an essential part of a civilised society."

www.lovelibraries.co.uk

For more information or to interview Miranda McKearney regarding Love Libraries, please contact:

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Notes to Editors:

Love Libraries was kick started by Reading Partners; a consortium of The Reading Agency and nine British publishers. This consortium has spent the last two years working with libraries with the aim of growing the market for reading.

Reading Partners joined up with government and the main library bodies to form 'The Future Libraries Partnership' which is committed to supporting and improving English library services.

The Future Libraries Partnership is made up of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, the Society of Chief Librarians, the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, nine British publishers and The Reading Agency.

The UK has 4,204 permanent public library sites.

DCMS

DCMS aims to improve the quality of life for all through cultural and sporting activities, to support the pursuit of excellence and to champion the tourism, creative and leisure industries. Within Government DCMS holds overall policy responsibility for public libraries in England.

DCMS works closely with the Museums Libraries and Archives Council (MLA). Framework for the Future is the first ever national public libraries strategy, implemented by MLA through a DCMS funded Action Plan. MLA are also collaborating with and advising DCMS on the further development of the Public Library Service Standards, and the Public Library Impact Measures.

These joint efforts aim to encourage the improvement and modernisation of English public library services which are managed by the 149 library authorities in England. The Advisory Council on Libraries, supported by MLA provides its own independent advice to DCMS Ministers.

MLA

MLA is the national development agency for museums, libraries and archives, advising the government on policy and priorities for the sector. MLA's roles are to provide strategic leadership, to act as a powerful advocate, to develop capacity and to promote innovation and change. For further press information about MLA please contact Emma Poole on 020 7273 1459 emma.poole@mla.gov.uk or visit the MLA website at <http://www.mla.gov.uk/>.

The Reading Agency

The Reading Agency is an independent charity with a mission to help libraries create a 21st century reading service. It runs major national library programmes such as the Summer Reading Challenge, and has led the creation of new national partnerships for libraries with BBC Learning, BBC Radio, the nine Reading Partners publishers and Orange. For further information visit www.readingagency.org.uk.

SCL

The Society of Chief Librarians is a professional association made up of the Chief Librarians of each library authority in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. SCL aims to take a leading role in the development of public libraries by influencing statutory, financial and other decisions. For further information visit <http://www.goscl.com>.

Newquay Library

For more information, go to: <http://db.cornwall.gov.uk>

Northfleet Library

For more information go to: www.kent.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture/libraries

Richmond Library

For more information go to: http://www.richmond.gov.uk/home/leisure_and_culture/libraries