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## Report of the Chief Libraries, Arts and Heritage Officer

### Scrutiny Board (Culture and Leisure)

Date: 16 July 2007

### Subject: Lift in Leeds Central Library

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Electoral wards affected:

Specific implications for:

Ethnic minorities

Women

Disabled people

Narrowing the gap

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## 1.0 Purpose of this report

1.1 To update the Board on the installation of the lift in Central Library.

## 2.0 Background information

2.1 The lift in Leeds Central Library was way beyond its sell by date, regularly breaking down. Parts were becoming increasingly scarce. It was decided to replace the lift and coincide the work with the refurbishment of the Tiled Hall and the Art Gallery. Reopening connections between the Library and Art Gallery would also enable the lift to be used to give access to the Art Gallery first floor for those with mobility difficulties.

## 3.0 Replacement Lift

Before the lift could be replaced the shaft needed to be repaired and extended. The aim was to carry out the work over the Summer of 2006 when usage of Leeds Central Library reduces partly due to holidays and partly due to student numbers being limited.

Work on the lift shaft hit a few problems with the drains but these were fairly easily sorted out. Schindler Lifts had won the tender for the lift and have a good reputation for service and good looking lifts. The aim was for Schindler to commence installation in August 2006 and complete in October 2006. Unfortunately, although work commenced as planned, the lift was not returned to service until 8<sup>th</sup> May, 2007.

Schindler Lifts have given the explanation that the lift installed was a new product and demand had over taken their manufacturing abilities. There have been high levels of delay, not just on this project but to others around Europe.

### 3.1 Access to the Library during replacement

During the replacement of the lift we offered a range of services to users with mobility difficulties. On site we would take books and items they wanted down to them. This was far from satisfactory but this did ease the pressure for some users.

Users were notified of all accessible libraries and that items could be borrowed from and returned anywhere. The 24 hour renewal phone line was advertised as was electronic access. For people with enquiries, they could access Enquiry Express via phone, e-mail or fax. People with a specific need to visit a particular floor in Central Library were taken up in the stock lift, which helped some users.

### 3.2 Insurance Checks

The lift was operational from 8<sup>th</sup> May and ran smoothly until 5<sup>th</sup> June when the Insurers visited to do checks. They switched it off and it failed to switch back on. Schindler Lifts responded very quickly but could not find any faults so they had to replace various circuit boards and parts. The lift became operational again on 7<sup>th</sup> June.

## 4.0 **Recommendations**

### 4.1 Scrutiny Board to note the report.