

Subject:	Reading Strategy		
Date of Meeting:	8 June 2009		
Report of:	Director of Children's Services		
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Key Decision:	No		
Wards Affected:	All	All	

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 The Reading Strategy is a consultation document designed to engage more people in the development of an action plan to improve reading across the city. It sets out some priorities already identified that we can work on together with partners across the city. This strategy has been jointly developed by staff from the CYPT and Libraries Services.
- 1.2 The Corporate Plan 2008-2011 includes the commitment to '*Improve young people's reading levels by implementing a **city reading strategy***' within the '*Giving our children the best start in life*' objective of the '*Reducing inequality by increasing opportunity*' priority. This Reading Strategy has taken this one step further, aiming to improve reading for people of all ages in the city.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 To agree the Reading Strategy and its approach to improving reading across the city.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 2008 was the **National Year of Reading**, designed to promote reading across the country. Reading is essential for daily life; it is a fundamental life skill that opens doors, empowering people, enabling them to make the most of their lives. Brighton & Hove took a very active part in the National Year of Reading, with primary and secondary schools, libraries, private sector and other organisations delivering a range of activities and events to promote reading and attract new library members. Some examples of these include:
 - Over 20,000 new members joined the library
 - Over 50 events were held, from author talks to poetry readings
 - Writers Conference for young people held at Jubilee Library, in partnership with three secondary schools and a private sector partner
 - 'Get Caught Reading' photography competition

- Eight new book groups established
- Four new writers groups established
- Telling Tales Story events held for primary school children
- Story Telling project in primary schools
- Off by Heart poetry competition in a junior school
- Reading volunteers run by Education Business Partnership won a Literacy Trust Reading Connects national award
- Book Ahead and Boys into Books services were launched
- Mini story competition held
- Chatterbooks and Brainwave children's projects were launched
- Increased take up of the Summer Reading Challenge
- Moving On literature conference for Year 10 secondary school students
- City Reads – 40 events held, 500 copies of book given away, and 20,000 readers guides picked up

3.2 **Current Situation:**

There is much to celebrate about reading in Brighton & Hove, but there is more to do for everyone to benefit from the rewards of reading. At the Early Years Foundation Stage, more than the national average number of children do well in Communication, Language and Literacy. Reading levels at Key Stage 1 and 2 are above the national average, with Key Stage 3 a little below. Girls are ahead of boys at all stages. An estimated 12,000 adults lack basic literacy skills, and there are 7,000 people in the city for whom English is a second language. Over 1.2 million library books are issued every year, and there are 195,000 library members in the city. However, only 55,000 of them (22% of the city's population) have borrowed from the library in the last year. A range of other data is presented in the Strategy to illustrate the current position.

3.3 **Current Provision:**

There are many different programmes and opportunities to encourage reading in the city. For instance:

- At the early years level there is the Bookstart programme, Story Times, and the introduction of Letters and Sounds. Bilingual parents and their children have been encouraged to make use of library services and especially their dual language materials
- All primary schools have received training and materials to ensure they have a systematic, structured approach to teaching early reading
- The Language and Literacy Support Service (LLSS) literacy team has worked with schools to raise standards and remove barriers for pupils experiencing significant difficulties with reading
- Development work relating to reading is taking place in secondary schools to reinvigorate teaching, improve students' experience and enjoyment, and raise attainment. In all secondary schools a range of activities and new approaches are being used, including reading celebration days, author visits and reading 'buddy' schemes
- Family Literacy, Language and Numeracy programmes aim to improve the language, literacy and numeracy skills of parents and carers
- In libraries, Homework Clubs, the Summer Reading Challenge, Chatterbooks, Boys into Books and the Book Ahead schemes are all supporting and encouraging reading for learning and leisure

- Reading is at the core of public library services, supporting reading for pleasure, and for learning, information and knowledge development. Libraries run or support over 50 reading groups across the city, and support adult learners with low literacy levels, helping develop the skills and confidence they need to further their learning

3.4 **Reading Strategy Vision:**

The Reading Strategy sets a clear vision to make Brighton & Hove a city where:

- every child and young person can read
- every adult can read
- everyone enjoys reading and becomes a regular reader
- everyone benefits from the advantages that the ability to read brings
- everyone is supported so that any difficulties in learning to read are overcome

3.5 **Reading Strategy Priorities:**

The strategy is broken down into different age groups and identifies how we are doing now, describes the current provision, and then sets out key priorities for the future:

Early years (0-5 years)

1. Train and support all practitioners and teachers working across the Early Years Foundation Stage
2. Raise the percentage of children living in areas of deprivation achieving 6+ in Communication, Language and Literacy in the Early Years Foundation Profile
3. Promote and support parents and carers reading with their children

Children & Young People (5-19 years)

1. Raise the profile of reading in all primary schools
2. Raise attainment in reading and increase the number of pupils attaining age-appropriate levels across Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2
3. Empower families to support their children's learning through encouraging reading for pleasure
4. Improve range, content, engagement and progression in reading through Assessing Pupils' Progress (APP) in secondary schools
5. Improve intervention at an earlier stage via one-to-one tuition in Key Stage 3
6. Improve the reading curriculum through support for continued, yearly implementation of the renewed curriculum in Years 7, 8 and 9
7. Improve achievement and attainment in reading in Key Stages 3 and 4
8. Provide support and leadership with the implementation of functional skills, including building and applying reading skills
9. Further develop provision for children and young people with disabilities and Special Educational Needs
10. Promote a love of reading and support reader development through public libraries

Adults (20+ years)

1. Increase the literacy rate amongst adults
2. Encourage and support families reading and learning together
3. Recognise and promote the broader benefits of reading

3.6 A range of commitments is given under each priority, which will lead to the development of a detailed action plan to achieve improvement. The next steps will be to promote the message that **Reading Matters** and work in partnership across the city to implement the actions needed to improve reading and literacy in Brighton & Hove.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The Reading Strategy has been developed by a working group of practitioners involved in reading and learning, including representatives from Children and Young People's Trust (CYPT), Libraries Services, Adult and Family Learning, and Brighton & Hove Education Business Partnership.
- 4.2 The Strategy has been discussed at CYPT and Culture and Enterprise management team meetings. It has been sent out to all primary, secondary and special schools for their views.
- 4.3 The launch of the Reading Strategy planned for 7th May, will mark the start of a more substantial consultation process to engage a wider audience across the city. We are seeking views of schools, businesses, arts, sports and cultural organisations, parents groups, private sector, and community and voluntary organisations. The feedback from the consultation will inform the development of an action plan building on the Reading Strategy.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 There are potentially significant financial implications arising from this report. At this stage it is not possible to fully quantify them. They will need to be properly costed and reported to the Board as per recommendation 2.2.

Finance Officer Consulted: Jeff Coates, Principal Accountant *Date: 22/04/09*

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 As described in the body of this report the Reading Strategy reflects one of the objectives contained in the Corporate plan, and proper consultation is being undertaken in accordance with general principles of fairness. There are no specific legal or human rights implications arising from this report.

Lawyer Consulted: Natasha Watson *Date: 23/05/09*

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 The Strategy has identified a number of areas where action is needed to address inequalities in access to reading opportunities or achievement of full potential. For instance - the disparity in performance between girls and boys; the additional support needed for people with disabilities, learning difficulties and special

educational needs; the particular needs of bilingual families or people for whom English is a second language, the essential skills needs of some adult learners.

Sustainability Implications:

5.4 There are no sustainability implications.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

5.5 There are no crime and disorder implications.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

5.6 There is a risk that the progress achieved in improving reading for some children and young people could be impeded if the range of reading programmes are not maintained and developed. There is an opportunity to work more effectively across different organisations to more effectively target people who need more support and encouragement with reading, and to achieve improved levels and greater enjoyment of reading and the benefits this skill can bring.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

5.7 The implementation of the Reading Strategy will fulfil one of the commitments of the Corporate plan to '*Improve young people's reading levels by implementing a **city reading strategy***' within the '*Giving our children the best start in life*' objective of the '*Reducing inequality by increasing opportunity*' priority.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

6.1 N/A

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 To improve reading levels across the city through a variety of programmes, working across a range of different partners. The improvement of reading levels underpins skills development and access to economic and social opportunities. Reading also broadens people's horizons, encouraging understanding of different cultures and ways of life, and so supports community cohesion

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Reading Strategy

Documents In Members' Rooms

1. Reading Strategy

Background Documents

1. Independent Review of the Teaching of Early Reading – final report (DCSF, 2006)

