

Council: 9 September 2008

Administration Policy Item: Cllr. Matthew Offord

Voluntary Reading

Council is proud of its Library Service, which offers free access to books as well as information, education and ICT facilities for our residents.

The Borough's libraries also help boost literacy, which is the key to a successful education, dramatically increasing the life-chances of our children.

Though Barnet enjoys high levels of literacy, there remains a problem with childhood illiteracy nationally, and there are some individuals within the Borough for whom reading is a problem.

Barnet's Libraries could offer a solution by facilitating a Borough-wide Voluntary Reading Scheme to children who have difficulty with words. This not only could help boost Barnet's already high literacy rate, but also set a good example of best practice to other areas, especially those locations where many children suffer from poorer reading skills.

Accordingly, Cabinet is requested to investigate how a Voluntary Reading Scheme could be developed in the Borough's Libraries, and examine the cost implications and other practical matters (such as CRB checks), of such a proposal.