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A pioneering new approach has been launched in Peterborough to ensure that every child in the city enjoys reading and can read well.

A Vision for Reading is the first of its kind in Peterborough and has been developed by Peterborough City Council, Vivacity and the National Literacy Trust. It builds on the great work already being done across the city by these partners, including the National Literacy Trust Hub in Peterborough, known locally as the Peterborough Literacy Campaign.

The vision establishes reading as a priority for every service, business and community group, outlining how the city can work together to give Peterborough's children improved opportunities through reading.

Although there were significant improvements in Peterborough pupils' reading achievement between 2016 and 2017, the results are lower than the national average. Last year, 63 per cent of pupils in the city reached the expected level in reading at the end of primary school, compared to 72 per cent nationally.

A Vision for Reading in Peterborough prioritises getting more children enjoying reading and reading more often, which will support improvements in reading achievement. It will place a particular focus on:

- > Encouraging schools and partners to prioritise reading by signing the Peterborough Reading Pledge
- > Recruiting and training Reading Buddies to support pupils at Peterborough schools
- > Raising awareness of and implementing the School Readiness Project to ensure more children are ready to learn when they start school
- > Celebrating the Peterborough Year of Reading in 2019/20

The aim of the vision is that by August 2021, the rate of literacy improvement in Peterborough will be double the national rate, with attainment raised to 75 per cent (or in line with national averages) for key literacy measures from early years to GCSE.

The vision also strives to train 100 Reading Buddies, encourage 90 per cent of schools and 40 partner organisations to sign the Peterborough Reading Pledge and increase library membership and usage by an additional 2,500 children each year.

Councillor Lynne Ayres, Peterborough City Council's Cabinet Member for Education, said: "This is a fantastic initiative which will have a positive effect for children across the city. We are committed to working with our partners to improve literacy results and this project builds on a solid foundation of work that has already been achieved. It is vitally important that children can read to a good standard in order to take advantage of opportunities throughout their time in education."

Kevin Tighe, Chief Executive of Vivacity said: "Vivacity is passionate about literacy and we are proud to be part of this exciting new vision. Alongside our partners at Peterborough City Council, the National Literacy Trust, and other organisations, we believe we can make a real difference. Vivacity's priority will be to focus on inspiring children and their families to read for enjoyment, helping children to do even better at school and in life."

Jonathan Douglas, Director of the National Literacy Trust said: "Partnerships are vital to the success of our National Literacy Trust Hubs and since we launched our Hub here in 2014, we've seen how successfully businesses and local organisations in Peterborough work together to make a difference. The Vision for Reading in Peterborough exemplifies this partnership approach, calling on the whole community to play a vital role in ensuring local children enjoy reading and have the literacy skills they need to succeed."

The Vision for Reading in Peterborough was launched at a lunch hosted by the Mayor of Peterborough, Councillor John Fox, on Monday 29 January.