

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTORATE OF CORPORATE RESOURCES

TO:	STRATEGIC PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE		
DATE:	9 <sup>th</sup> July 2013	AGENDA ITEM:	8
TITLE:	DRAFT READING CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY 2013-2020 'READING MEANS BUSINESS ON CLIMATE CHANGE'		
SERVICE:	CORPORATE POLICY/ SUSTAINABILITY	WARDS:	ALL
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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Reading Climate Change Partnership was convened in 2009 as part of the delivery of the 2008 Reading Climate Change Strategy, Stepping Forward for Climate Change.
- 1.2 The strategy action plan ran from 2008-2013 and focused on Reading Borough Council services. The Council aimed to lead by example and work in partnership to reduce borough emissions.
- 1.3 The Council reported emissions reductions in all years except for 2009. The emissions from the borough as a whole up to 2010 reduced by 18% reduction.
- 1.4 Other achievements included thousands of houses insulated (with a particular focus on those in fuel poverty), hundreds of people trained in green skills, with many subsequently employed, solar panels on a large number of schools and other public buildings and lower carbon development.
- 1.5 The Reading Climate Change Partnership has been overseeing the development of a new climate change strategy for Reading (Reading Means Business on Climate Change), to be launched in Sept 2013.
- 1.6 Following public consultation in November and December 2012, the draft of the strategy has been revised and is currently in the process of final edit. The current draft is attached as Appendix A.

- 1.7 Strategy 'theme leads' are currently consulting with partners on the content of action plans to deliver the strategic priorities identified for each theme, to be published alongside the strategy in September. A list of the strategic priorities is attached as Appendix B.

## 2.0 RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 The committee comment on the draft Reading Climate Change Strategy 2013-20, 'Reading Means Business on Climate Change' (Appendix A).
- 2.2 The committee delegate authority to the Head of Policy, Performance and Community to make minor changes to the draft prior to the final strategy being submitted to Policy Committee on 23<sup>rd</sup> Sept for agreement.

## 3.0 Background

- 3.1 In 2008 Reading Borough Council published its Climate Change Strategy and action plan to 2013, "Stepping forward for Climate Change". The majority of the programmes set out in the action plan have been successfully delivered. The action plan focused primarily on Council functions.
- 3.2 The Climate Change Act 2008 establishes national carbon budgets of 50% reduction in carbon emissions by 2027, below 1990 levels. The government is bound to make provisions to meet this through a range of regulations.
- 3.3 Stepping Forward for Climate Change did not set emission targets for the borough as a whole, but rather set a policy framework to enable cross sector emission reductions to be made to increase the chances of the Borough meeting a 34% reduction by 2020. This was in line with national and European policy. There are no local data sets for carbon dioxide emissions in 1990.
- 3.4 The graph shown on page 7 of Reading Means Business on Climate Change, 'Reading CO<sub>2</sub> emissions' shows the reductions that have been made in the different sectors. The emissions in Reading have reduced significantly during the period 2005 to 2010 with a total reduction in annual emissions of 18% over this period. Reading's population has risen during this same period and the per capita reduction in emissions was 22%.

- 3.5 The carbon emission reduction targets set out for the Councils own operations in "Stepping Forward for Climate Change" were: 20% reduction in emissions by the end of the strategy period (by 2013), 50% by 2020 and zero carbon by 2050.
- 3.6 The carbon dioxide emissions from the councils own operations were first measured fully in 2007. These were measured as 30,470 tonnes and whilst the most recent measurement of 22,710 tonnes, compares very favourably with this with reductions achieved every year except 2009, the measurement methods have changed and so the figures cannot easily be compared. The carbon dioxide emissions data for the fifth year of the strategy (2012/13) are currently being processed and will be available in August 2013.
- 3.7 A summary of the achievements made through Stepping Forward for Climate Change is provided in the new draft strategy, Reading Means Business on Climate Change.
- 3.8 Some of the accomplishments during the first strategy were:
- Thousands of homes were insulated.
  - Hundreds of people trained in 'green skills'.
  - Solar panels were installed on many of the boroughs schools and corporate buildings such as the bus depot and Rivermead leisure centre.
  - Development sites have been earmarked for energy schemes.
  - There was an increase in sustainable transport choices.
  - The Council made good progress with its own emissions.

#### 4.0 Development of Reading Means Business on Climate Change

- 4.1 The new climate change strategy for Reading covering the period 2013-2020 has been developed through extensive stakeholder consultation, including a conference with over hundred stakeholders in January 2012, a second well attended stakeholder consultation workshop in July 2012, and consultation via the Reading Green Business Network (RGBN) website.
- 4.2 A draft of the strategy was published for public consultation in November and December 2012, and focused on the proposed strategic priorities for each theme. Changes to the strategy have now been made in the light of the consultation responses.
- 4.3 A number of themes have been identified, and 'theme leads' from a range of partner agencies (including RBC) volunteered to co-ordinate and develop each theme chapter, in consultation with stakeholders. The 'theme leads' include: Reading Borough Council councillors, sustainability, planning, transport and communications teams;

Kyocera Document Solutions, NHS Berkshire, Greater Reading Environmental Network, Institute for Sustainability and Reading Friends of the Earth.

4.4 The themes are:

- Energy
- Low Carbon Development
- Natural Environment
- Water Supply and Flooding
- Transport
- Purchasing, Supply and Consumption
- Education, Communication and Influencing Behaviour
- Community

4.5 For each of the eight themes, a number of strategic priorities have been identified (see Appendix B). These form the framework for detailed action plans for each theme of the strategy.

4.6 The action plans, setting out how the strategic priorities will be achieved, are currently being developed by the 'theme leads' in consultation with delivery partners.

4.7 A key target audience for the strategy is Reading's business community. However, rather than creating a separate 'business' theme, the business viewpoint is reflected via a 'business box' within each of the theme chapters.

4.7 The strategy is still in the final edit stage and there may be further minor amendments to the draft version attached at Appendix A. The Committee is invited to comment on the draft.

5.0 Vision and target

5.1 The draft strategy sets out a vision for Reading for 2020, with low carbon being the normal way to live and work in 2050. It proposes a target for the **borough as a whole** to reduce emissions by **34% by 2020** (against a 2005 baseline), with members of **Reading Climate Action** (see 5.2 below) committing to reduce their emissions by **7% a year**.

5.2 The strategy proposes a wider network of organisations, businesses, communities and individuals called Reading Climate Change Network, who will seek to establish ways to meet the targets and aspirations of the strategy. To help promote the community of action, we are also developing an awards scheme to reward those who achieve the target.

## 6.0 Action plans

- 6.1 The strategic priorities form the framework for the action plans for each theme of the strategy, which set out how key partners will contribute towards the strategy's overall target, along with targets, measures and milestones.
- 6.2 These are currently still in development by theme leads and will be published with the strategy in Sept 2013. The action plans will constitute a three year rolling programme, reviewed annually.
- 6.3 Although the intention is for a range of organisations, including the Reading Climate Change Partnership, to commit to actions, a significant element of the action plans is likely to be delivered by the Council. Much of the Council's delivery within the strategy will be embodied in existing Council policies such as the Local Transport Plan and Biodiversity Action Plan. A number of developing strategies will also be relevant such as the Asset Management Strategy and the associated Energy and Carbon Management Policy.
- 6.4 Both the Council's element of the action plans, and the final strategy itself will be signed off by the Policy Committee in Sept 2013, to allow publication in September.

## 7.0 Publication and launch

- 7.1 The strategy will be published via a dedicated interactive website which will inspire both organisations and individuals to join Reading Climate Action.
- 7.2 In addition to the full strategy, there will also be a summary version of the strategy aimed at the general public.
- 7.3 Both the strategy and the website will be launched at a breakfast event planned for Sept 2013. Businesses will be a key target audience, along with other key stakeholders.

## 8.0 Timetable

- 8.1 The outline timeline for the remaining development of the strategy is as follows:

Final editing and compilation	June 2013
Development of final action plans with partners	Summer
Development of website and summary	Summer
Final to Reading Climate Change Partnership	Sept
Final to Policy Committee	23 <sup>rd</sup> Sept
Publish/launch	24 <sup>th</sup> Sept

## 9.0 CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- *To Develop Reading as a Green City with a sustainable environment and economy at the heart of the Thames Valley*

9.1 The Council has made a commitment to lead in tackling climate change in Reading. The success of the delivery the Climate Change Strategy is paramount in meeting this strategic aim.

- *To establish Reading as a learning City and a stimulating and rewarding place to live and visit.*

9.2 Reading needs to develop a low carbon economy. Jobs and learning opportunities created in the delivery of the strategy are a key part of this. Climate change is a key part of 'sustainable schools' and development of the curriculum to include of climate change is vital in securing the future of Reading.

- *To promote equality, social inclusion and a safe and healthy environment for all*

9.3 The health and welfare of the population of Reading depends in part on understanding and adapting to the impacts of climate change.

## 10.0 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

10.1 Extensive stakeholder engagement, including two very well attended workshops, has influenced the development of Reading Means Business on Climate Change from the outset.

10.2 A draft of the strategy was published for public consultation at the on 1<sup>st</sup> Nov, running for six weeks until December 14<sup>th</sup>. Responses have now been considered and the strategy revised.

## 11.0 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

11.1 The implementation of Reading Means Business on Climate Change and associated carbon reductions will benefit Reading's population as whole in helping to mitigate the effects of climate change, as well as benefiting some sections of the population more specifically e.g. the education and skill level of those living and working in Reading will need to be raised in order to meet the demands of an expanding 'green economy'; this will enable people generally to play a fuller part in a more cohesive society.

11.2 Grant assistance will be provided through the Green Deal, to enable those in fuel poverty who find it difficult to heat their homes to be

able to afford work such as loft and cavity wall insulation so that their homes produce fewer emissions as well as being warmer.

## **12.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 The Climate Change Act 2008 implements a range of regulations which local authorities are required to meet, in relation to its own operations.

12.2 The Climate Change Strategy is a key policy under the Local Strategic Partnership, its delivery forming part of the delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy.

## **13.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

13.1 The strategic priorities that are primarily delivered by the council have been identified as deliverable within the existing budget framework of the Council.

13.2 Under the revised constitutional arrangements the responsibility for climate change policy is now held by the Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee. Since the action plans will be reviewed annually, it is proposed that this committee approve any changes to the action plan to ensure that delivery is consistent with the Council's policy and budget frameworks. Should amendments to the action plans require additional resourcing, beyond the existing budget framework then the revisions will need to be approved by full Council.

13.3 The financial implications of the delivery of the Council's actions in relation to energy management form a key element of the financial savings programme of the Council. The strategy includes investment plans for the period 2013-16. These are included within the Council's budget.

## **14.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

14.1 Appendix A - Stepping Forward for Climate Change 2008-13 -Strategy.

14.2 Appendix B - List of Strategic Priorities.