

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTORATE OF CORPORATE SUPPORT SERVICES

TO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE		
DATE:	20 th NOVEMBER 2013	AGENDA ITEM:	8
TITLE:	CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY 2013-2020 'READING MEANS BUSINESS ON CLIMATE CHANGE' ACTION PLAN		
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 emission reductions each year except for 2009 and 2012. Emission reductions from 2007 to 2013 were 17.2%. Savings were estimated to be £587k per annum on the Council's energy costs from 2008 to 2013, taking account of growing energy costs.
- 1.4 The emissions from the borough as a whole up to 2011 reduced by 24%, making Reading the 15th best performing local authority area in England and Wales, out of nearly 400.
- 1.5 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.
- 1.6 The Committee adopted the new climate change strategy for Reading, Reading Means Business on Climate Change developed by the Reading Climate Change Partnership on 23rd September 2013.

- 1.7 Strategy 'theme leads' have been consulting with partners to develop action plans to deliver the strategic priorities identified for each theme of the strategy. The Action Plan is included in Appendix A.

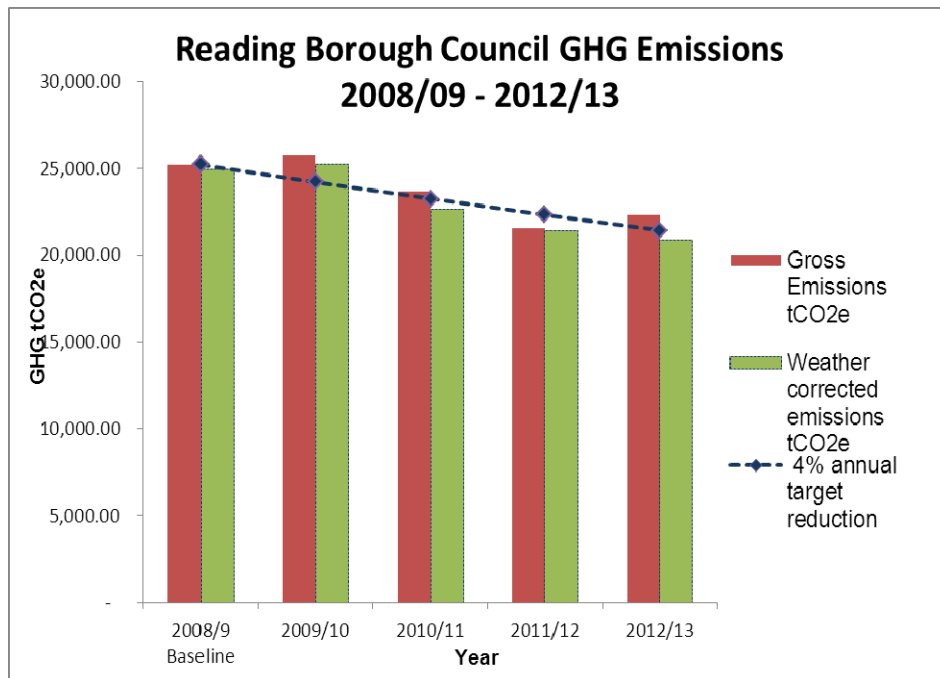
2.0 RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Committee approve the Reading Climate Change Strategy 'Reading Means Business on Climate Change' Action Plan (Appendix A) insofar as the business relates to the activities of the Council.

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 emissions of greenhouse gases from Reading have reduced significantly during the period 2005 to 2011 with a total reduction in annual emissions of 24% over this period. Reading's population has risen during this same period and the per capita reduction in emissions was 29%. This makes Reading the 15th best performer in England and Wales out of 388 authorities.
- 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 measured in 2006/7 and since this date have reduced each year except for 2009 and 2012. Figure 1 shows the reductions against the Councils target since 2008/9. The graph shows that there has been a reduction in real terms of emissions of 11.6% since 2008/9 (estimated

to be 17.2% since 2007/8). The emissions were shown to be slightly higher than the target. The weather corrected figures are also shown and the impact of the weather on emissions can be seen in 2012/13, in particular.



3.7 Since 2008/9, the annual emissions of greenhouse gases from the operations of the Council have reduced by 2922 tonnes. It is estimated that since 2007/8 greenhouse gases have reduced by 4336 tonnes per annum.

3.8 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.

3.9 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 The New Strategy - "Reading Means Business on Climate Change"

4.1 The new climate change strategy, "Reading Means Business on Climate Change" covering the period 2013-2020 was adopted by the

Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee on 23rd September 2013. The strategy was launched at a high profile event at the Henley Business School on the 24th September 2013 alongside a dedicated interactive website which is designed to inspire both organisations and individuals to join the Reading Climate Action Network. www.readingclimateaction.org.uk

- 4.2 A number of themes from a range of partner agencies (including Reading Borough Council) co-ordinated and developed 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.

- 4.3 The themes are:

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

- 4.4 For each of the eight themes, a number of strategic priorities have been identified.

- 4.5 The detailed Theme Action Plans set out how the strategic priorities will be delivered. These continue to be developed by the 'theme leads' in consultation with delivery partners.

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 Action Network, who will seek to establish ways to meet the targets and aspirations of the strategy.

6.0 Theme Action plans

- 6.1 The strategic priorities set out in the strategy form the framework for the actions for each theme of the strategy. They set out the key objectives of the strategy. They will be reviewed after three years in 2016/17.
- 6.2 The Action Plan sets out how partners will contribute towards the strategic priorities set out in the strategy. It includes specific targets, measures and milestones for each action. The Action Plan has been drawn up by theme leads in consultation with delivery partners. The action plan is a working document and will be reviewed annually.
- 6.3 The action plan will be published on the Reading Climate Action website. www.readingclimateaction.gov.uk Progress against the action plans will be monitored bi-annually by the Reading Climate Change Partnership.
- 6.4 Although the Action plan details the delivery by a range of organisations, a significant element of the action plans will be delivered by the Council. The Council's delivery within the strategy is embodied in existing Council policies such as, for example the Local Transport Plan and Biodiversity Action Plans.

8.0 Timetable

- 8.1 The timeline for the strategy monitoring and review is as follows:

Publish/launch Strategy	24 th Sept 2013
Action Plans to Strategic Environment Planning and Transport Committee	20 th Nov 2013
First monitoring	Apr 2014
First Annual meeting	Nov 2014
First review of action plan	Nov 2014
Review of Strategy	2016/17

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 on 1st Nov, running for six weeks until December 14th and was extended to February 2013. Responses have now been considered and the final strategy published.

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 a 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 insulation so that their homes produce fewer emissions as well as being warmer.

12.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

12.1 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.

12.2 Nationally, legal obligations in respect of climate change are incorporated into legislation through a range of regulations set out under the Climate Change Act 2008. The Reading Climate Change Strategy does not set out any specific binding actions in relation to these regulations but offers a multi-organisation framework which constitutes the proposals for the Borough to assist in meeting the national carbon budgets.

12.3 The low carbon development chapter sets out the intended course of action for planning policy development and upcoming obligations relating to the Zero Carbon Standards, which are yet to be set in statute and which relate to the Building Control Regulations and National Planning Policy Framework. The strategy and action plan sets out a principle in this regard to incorporate a Zero Carbon approach in respect of new development. In the event that this legislation is not passed by parliament, a programme of research into local carbon funds that are currently in place in other boroughs is included to enable further consideration.

12.4 The Energy Efficiency Directive 2012 came into force in December 2012 and member states have to implement it by June 2014. The Directive requires member states to renovate 3% of buildings "owned and occupied" by Central Government. It also says Member States shall encourage local and regional government to adopt plans, energy management systems and energy performance contracts. It is currently unclear how the government intends to implement this into national law, but a number of key provisions are already in place to 'encourage' regional and local government to adopt a range of measures.

12.5 Whilst a number of initiatives and investment proposals have been incorporated in the Climate Change Strategy Action plan, the obligations relating to the Energy Performance in Buildings Regulations, Carbon Reduction Commitment, Energy Efficiency Regulations and Energy Act will be specifically addressed in an Energy and Carbon Management Policy, which is currently under development. This will set out the specific actions that the Council is intending to make in relation to its use of energy and fuel in its own estate operations.

12.6 The Home Energy Conservation Act and Energy Act sets out the obligations on the Councils to make provisions and plans to improve the energy efficiency of the housing stock within its area of control. This includes stating the intended course of action in relation to the Green Deal (The Government's policy on retrofitting of buildings for energy efficiency). The Council has notified the Department of Energy about its intention to publish its HECA report this year.

13.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

13.1 The action plan sets out the actions that the Council and/or other partners will make to meet the strategy. Actions for which the council are the named lead delivery body will only be included where they 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 are yet to be finalised and they will be reviewed annually, it is proposed that the Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee approve the action plan and any changes 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 Councils actions in relation to energy management form a key element of the financial savings programme of the Council. Annual energy bills amount to around £4m. This annual revenue expenditure is predicted to rise beyond inflation and therefore it is important to maintain investment and operational control on energy and fuel to enable significant reductions in energy consumption. The strategy includes investment plans for the period 2013-16. These are included within the Council's budget and are predicted to generate cost savings and revenues of £878k per annum by the end of 2016

13.5 The estimated savings associated with reductions in energy consumption since 2008 to 2012 are estimated to be £587k per annum. This figure shows the reduction against costs taking into account the increases in energy costs. i.e. what the council would be paying for energy today if it hadn't reduced the consumption.

14 BACKGROUND PAPERS

14.1 Appendix A - Reading Means Business on Climate Change 2013 -2020 (Action Plan).

14.2 Appendix B - Reading Means Business on Climate Change 2013 -2020 (strategy)