

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTORATE OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD
SERVICES

TO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE		
DATE:	19 TH JULY 2014	AGENDA ITEM:	13
TITLE:	READING'S CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY 2013-2020 - PERFORMANCE REPORT OCT 13 - MARCH 14		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	Cllr Page	PORTFOLIO:	Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport
SERVICE:	CORPORATE POLICY/ SUSTAINABILITY	WARDS:	ALL
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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Reading's Climate Change Strategy 2013-2020 (Reading Means Business on Climate Change) was launched in Sept 2013, following extensive stakeholder consultation.
- 1.2 The strategy sets out a vision for Reading for 2020, as well as a set of strategic priorities organised according to eight themes.
- 1.3 Detailed action plans set out how the strategic priorities will be delivered by partners, and include specific targets, measures and milestones for each action. The action plans constitute a three year rolling programme but will be reviewed annually.
- 1.4 This report presents the progress against the targets in the action plans for the first six months of the strategy, from Oct 2013 to March 2014.
- 1.5 Across all partners 8% actions are 'red', 40% are 'amber' and 49% 'green'. For the delivery of actions for which Reading Borough Council was the lead this improved a little with 6% red, 34% amber and 55% green. The full performance report against all of the actions is set out at Appendix A.

- 1.6 Overall it was concluded that there had been some significant progress, but there were many areas where timescales had slipped, local deliver partners were not able to commit or where national policy changes had impacted delivery.
- 1.7 The Council's delivery was slightly better than the partnership with areas of strength being energy and transport. National policy uncertainty, in particular around Green Deal has impacted delivery in a number of chapters. There were also a number of areas where the council and/or partners were no longer able to resource actions.
- 1.8 There were a number of areas where significant review of actions was required; in particular, the Purchase, Supply and Consumption and Education and Influencing Behaviour chapters.
- 1.9 In addition to the delivery of the strategy action plan, a wider participatory framework has been established called Reading Climate Action Network (RCAN) which encourages organisations and individuals to meet challenges such as aiming to reduce their carbon footprint by 7% per annum. www.readingclimateaction.org.uk

2.0 RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Committee note the outcome of the first six monthly monitoring report of the Reading Climate Change Strategy, 'Reading Means Business on Climate Change', for the period Oct 13 - March 14.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The new Climate Change Strategy for Reading 2013-2020 (Reading Means Business on Climate Change), was developed through extensive stakeholder consultation and launched in Sept 2013.
- 3.2 The 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).
- 3.3 The strategy also presents a set of strategic priorities which form the framework for the actions for each of eight themes. These key objectives will be reviewed after three years in 2016/17.
- 3.4 The eight themes of the strategy are:
- Energy Supply
 - Low Carbon Development

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

- 3.5 'Theme leads' from a range of partner agencies (including the Council) volunteered to co-ordinate and develop each theme chapter, in consultation with stakeholders.
- 3.6 Detailed action plans, setting out how the strategic priorities will be delivered by partners, were published in November 2013. These include specific targets, measures and milestones for each action. The action plans constitute a three year rolling programme and will be reviewed annually (see section 5.0 for more information). Progress against the targets will be monitored six monthly, with the first monitoring period running from Oct 2013 to March 2014.
- 3.7 Although the action plans detail the delivery by a range of organisations, a significant number of actions are being delivered by the Council. The Council's delivery within the strategy will be embodied in existing Council policies such as the Local Transport Plan and Biodiversity Action Plan.

4.0 PROGRESS AGAINST ACTION PLANS OCT 2013 - MARCH 2014

- 4.1 A RAG (red/amber/green) status¹ has been allocated to the majority of actions in each theme action plan. However there has been little reporting on a number of the actions as there has only been 6 months of delivery. Progress on these actions will be further developed over the second half of the year (April - Sept 2014), as part of the general continued development of the action plans by the 'theme leads' in consultation with delivery partners.
- 4.2 The table below summarises the proportion of 'red', 'amber' and 'green' actions.

	<i>green</i>	<i>amber</i>	<i>red</i>	<i>No RAG</i>
Energy Supply	12	6	1	0
Low carbon development	11	12	2	0
Natural environment	9	6	1	1
Water supply and flooding	5	8	0	2
Transport	19	4	0	1
Purchasing, supply and consumption	6	13	2	1
Education, Communication and Influencing Behaviour	3	8	6	0
Community	10	4	0	0
Total	75	61	12	5
%age	49%	40%	8%	3%

¹ Red = significant issues with either delivery or resourcing

Amber = work progressing or due to progress but delayed/ not to original timescale; issues but not significant

Green = complete or no issues and on time

4.3 The table below summarises the proportion of 'red', 'amber' and 'green' for actions for which Reading Borough Council is the lead deliverer.

	<i>green</i>	<i>amber</i>	<i>red</i>	<i>No RAG</i>
Energy Supply	10	4	0	0
Low carbon development	11	8	2	0
Natural environment	6	3	0	0
Water supply and flooding	3	4	0	0
Transport	16	4	0	1
Purchasing, supply and consumption	3	8	1	0
Education, Communication and Influencing Behaviour	1	3	3	0
Community	3	2	0	0
Total	53	36	6	1
%age	55%	36%	6%	1%

Successes (significant 'greens')

4.4 The following projects are particular successes to date:

Solar panels

4.5 Following the successful installation of solar panels on 40 corporate and community buildings in 2012, the Council has developed a project to put solar panels on the roofs of its retained social housing and the new headquarters building. The projects are expected to install around 1.5MW of generating capacity, quadrupling the Council's renewable energy generation. Installation is on track to take place in 2014/15.

HECA report

4.6 The Council published its HECA (Home Energy Conservation Act) report in December 2013. The report sets out the approach that will be taken to improve the energy performance of social and private housing stock in the borough.

- 4.9 Policy Committee resolved that Council staff should seek private sector partners to use 'Energy Company Obligation' (ECO) funding to address 'hard to treat' properties. This is one of several actions to save energy and address fuel poverty identified in the theme action plans.

Website launched - www.readingclimateaction.org.uk

- 4.10 A new website, acting as the 'shop window' for the strategy, was launched at the same time as the strategy in Sept 2014. This allows access to all of the strategy documents, as well as news on actions within the action plans. The website also promotes Reading Climate Action Network (RCAN) and allows members to sign up to challenges.

Repair Café established

- 4.11 The repair café is runs once a month and is a place where people can come to repair their possessions and share tools. This was launched in October 2013 and is now established, running successfully every month from donations and supported by Transition Town Reading and RLAB (www.rlab.org.uk) in various locations around Reading.

Reading Outdoor Classrooms

- 4.12 Reading outdoor classrooms is a ten year program run from a grant from Natural England, as part of their 'higher level stewardship agreement' which RBC has undertaken. Commenced in 2011, a dedicated officer takes classrooms out to Reading's wildlife areas. There are 25 trips a year, and each classroom goes three times a year. 530 children have been out since June 2013.

Ready Bike

- 4.13 The Bike Hire Scheme was launched on 10th June, with a led ride from Reading Station North to the Town Hall. The launch was well attended by the press and the Council's partners, including the University of Reading, Green Park and the Business Improvement District. Bike hire is now available for use at 27 docking stations with 200 bicycles. There are two further docking stations in phase 1 (Reading Station South and Earley Station) and these will go live later in the summer.

Re:start Local

- 4.16 The Re:start Local project has been running since June 2013. Funded by European Regional Development Fund the project aims to help

small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) secure local business opportunities developing from the increasing number of renewable energy and low carbon building retrofit investments in South East England. Over the past year the council and its partners have held 'meet the buyer' and networking events, as well as a successful 'energy innovation day' at the University of Reading. We now have a network of 67 registered SMEs, mostly in the 'green economy', and are just entering the stage of establishing how much growth there has been in this sector during the period of the project.

Issues with Delivery

4.17 8% of actions (12 in total) have been designated 'red'. A number of these are more significant in that they are actions which are either not resourced ('Red (R)' in the full action plan), or have no lead deliverer agreed ('Red (De)' in the full action plan). These are listed in the table below.

4.18 The Reading Climate Change Partnership Board considered the significant 'reds' at their meeting on 2nd July, along with the next steps that need to take place in order to start to move these actions back to 'green' or at least 'amber' status or to review their place in the action plan. The remaining 'reds' will be considered and progressed by theme leads during the next reporting period.

4.19 Significant 'reds'

<i>Reference</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Lead deliverer</i>	<i>Progress/ key issues</i>	<i>Next steps</i>
	ENERGY SUPPLY			
Strategic Priority 4:	Increase amount of energy generated locally using renewable technologies			
T1SP4.10 Red (R)	Implement a bulk buy scheme for renewable energy	Transition Town Reading	Not progressed; TTR happy to co-lead, but need support with technical information. No resource to take forward at the moment.	Further discussions with TTR; investigate which other organisations could provide technical expertise; Re:start Local project could identify potential local suppliers
	LOW CARBON DEVELOPMENT			
Strategic Priority 4:	Enable uptake of Green Deal and associated grants in Reading			
T2SP4.2 Red (R)	Prepare scheme to publicise the Green Deal to appropriate households	Reading Borough Council	Green Deal bid for funding not successful; anecdotally scheme is not attractive at	Need to re-plan to access funding; planning now underway with

<i>Reference</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Lead deliverer</i>	<i>Progress/ key issues</i>	<i>Next steps</i>
			present. Significant changes to national scheme require new approach.	intended project partners.
	PURCHASING, SUPPLY & CONSUMPTION			
Strategic Priority 1:	Enable people to make sustainable purchasing choices			
T6SP1.1 Red (R)	Identify/support best practice champions in key areas	Reading Borough Council	Not progressed; resource required	Needs better definition as part of the annual review process
Strategic Priority 6:	Reduce waste by supporting the re-use and repair of products and materials			
T6SP6.4 Red (De)	Promote and disseminate knowledge widely re practical approaches	Kyocera	Kyocera does not have the expertise to lead; needs to be re-assigned, though happy to support	RBC to lead; awaiting development of Reading Waste Strategy
	EDUCATION, COMMUNICATION AND BEHAVIOUR CHANGE			
Strategic Priority 1:	Further integrate sustainable behaviour promotion and practice throughout schools, colleges, universities, and workplaces			
T7SP1.3 Red (R)	Encourage school children to become involved in local projects to encourage action to raise awareness of and tackle climate change and encourage continued participation in ECO schools scheme.	Reading Borough Council	Limited progress; there is now no longer a dedicated officer for ECO schools work.	Some support still offered to schools on energy and carbon management; RCCP to look at on-line monitoring of ECO Schools
Strategic Priority 3:	Engage organisations in the private sector, including residential and commercial landlords, in effective action to mitigate climate change			
T7SP3.1 Red (R)	Develop approaches to promote and engage landlords (and their tenants) across Reading to take up energy efficiency measures taking advantage of Green Deal/ Energy Company Obligation as appropriate	Reading Borough Council	Targeted campaign required but due to changes in govt offer regarding Green deal/ ECO, there is now a lack of resource.	RBC are currently planning an approach with delivery partners; links to housing condition work and to landlord requirements in Energy bill (2016 and 2018); University of Reading (UoR) may be able to support
Strategic Priority 4:	Develop the market for climate change related local business and the skills to ensure that local jobs are created in line with the growing low carbon economy			
T7SP4.1	Identify available	Reading	Reading UKCIC are	Need to develop

<i>Reference</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Lead deliverer</i>	<i>Progress/ key issues</i>	<i>Next steps</i>
Red (De)	funding to support programmes to enhance range of training in 'green skills' available locally	UK CIC	currently unable to support this element of the strategy; links to action 4.2 below	more detailed proposal and identify skills gaps (see also below)
T7SP4.2 Red (De)	Work with the building industry, professional bodies and educational establishments to identify and further develop training or guidance on low-carbon construction and renovation skills	Reading UK CIC	As above	Need to investigate with partners a new lead deliverer; actions 4.1 and 4.2 likely to be merged and redefined as part of the annual review process

4.20 In summary, key issues include:

- Lack of resource to take forward T1SP4.10 (a bulk buy scheme for renewable energy) within the Energy Supply theme.
- Failure of the Green Deal bid has affected activities in Low Carbon Development (T2SP4.2) and Education, Communication and Influencing Behaviour (T7SP3.1).
- New lead deliverers need to be identified for actions in Education, Communication and Influencing Behaviour (T7SP4.1 and 4.2) and Purchasing, Supply & Consumption (T6SP6.4 and T6SP1.3).
- Some actions in Purchasing, Supply & Consumption and Education, Communication and Influencing Behaviour need redefining or clearer definition as part of the annual review of the action plans (T6SP1.1, T7SP4.1, T7SP4.2).
- The recent absence of a dedicated officer to work on ECO schools scheme has affected action in and Education, Communication and Influencing Behaviour (T7SP1.3) theme.

5.0 REVIEW OF ACTION PLANS

- 5.1 As discussions have continued with potential deliverers during the first six months of the strategy period, it has become apparent that some of the actions, and in particular their targets, will need to be reviewed and revised.
- 5.2 In order to incorporate these and other changes, the theme actions plans will be reviewed annually by the RCCP Board, starting this October.

- 5.3 The action plans are currently published on both RGBN (Reading Green Business Network) at www.rgbn.org.uk/haveyoursay and RCAN (Reading Climate Action Network) at www.readingclimateaction.org.uk/reading-climate-action/ and are therefore open to general comment. All comments will be considered by the Board as part of the review process. A revised action plan will then be published at the end of the first year of delivery.

6.0 READING CLIMATE ACTION NETWORK (RCAN)

- 6.1 As part of the strategy, Reading Climate Action Network (RCAN), a wider network of organisations, businesses, communities and individuals, was also launched in September 2013.
- 6.2 Members of RCAN seek to establish ways to meet the targets and aspirations of the strategy, committing to one of a number of possible challenges, including reducing their emissions by 7% a year.
- 6.3 Two meetings a year are planned to obtain wider interest and support in local action to deliver the strategy's action plans. The first meeting was held in May 2014, and gave updates on successful actions over the last six months.

7.0 CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- *To Develop Reading as a Green City with a sustainable environment and economy at the heart of the Thames Valley*
- 7.1 The Council has made a commitment to lead in tackling climate change in Reading. The success of the delivery of 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.*
- 7.2 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.
- *To promote equality, social inclusion and a safe and healthy environment for all*
- 7.3 The health and welfare of the population of Reading depends in part on understanding and adapting to the impacts of climate change. Sustainable development and transport also lead to positive health outcomes.

8.0 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 8.1 Extensive stakeholder engagement, including two very well attended workshops, influenced the development of 'Reading Means Business on Climate Change' from the outset.
- 8.2 A draft of the strategy was published for public consultation on 1st November 2012, running for six weeks until December 14th and was extended to February 2013.
- 8.3 The action plans are open for public comment via RGBN and RCAN websites (www.RGBN.org.uk and www.readingclimateaction.org.uk). Responses will be considered as part of the annual review of the action plans in October 2014.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 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.
- 9.2 Support will be given to those who are struggling to afford their fuel bills. 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.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 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.
- 10.2 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.
- 10.3 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 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.

- 10.4 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. The publication of the UK National Energy Efficiency Action Plan in April 2014 outlines the range of public sector policies that apply to Local Authorities, although there are no specific binding targets.
- 10.5 Whilst a number of initiatives and investment proposals will be 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 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.
- 10.6 The Home Energy Conservation Act and Energy Act set out the obligations on the Council 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 published its HECA report in December 2013.

11.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The action plan will set 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 have only been included where they have been identified as deliverable within the existing budget framework of the Council. In many cases actions depend on national policies that have yet to be passed into legislation.
- 11.2 Under the revised constitutional arrangements the responsibility for climate change policy is now held by the Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee. The action plans will be reviewed annually, and the committee will approve 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.

11.3 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. Annual energy bills amount to around £4m including schools. 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.

11.4 The delivery of the Council's actions in relation to energy management forms 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.

12 BACKGROUND PAPERS

12.1 The full actions are attached as Appendix A.