

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

POLICY COMMITTEE

22 APRIL 2024

COUNCILLOR QUESTION NO. 1

Councillor White to ask the Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport:

Will the Council sign up to the Fossil Fuel Treaty?

In light of RBC's Climate Emergency declaration in February 2019 and the current Reading Climate Emergency Strategy, Global Justice Now, Friends of the Earth and many other national groups are lobbying councils for their endorsement of the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty.

This Treaty, also known as the Fossil Fuel Treaty, was initiated by small island states facing disastrous sea level rise. It has been endorsed by UK councils including those of Birmingham, Brighton and Hove, Cambridge, Hastings, and Lambeth. Global Justice say that the support of local councils around the world is effective in persuading national governments to join the Treaty.

The Treaty's three Pillars are:

- Non-Proliferation, to prevent *new* coal, oil, and gas development;
- An Equitable Phase Out, of existing fossil fuel extraction;
- A Just Transition, so that no community, country, or worker is left behind.

Is Reading Borough Council prepared to endorse this Treaty?

REPLY by Councillor Ennis (Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport):

I thank Cllr White for his question.

The aims of the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty are wholly consistent with the Council's February 2019 Climate Emergency Declaration and the Reading Climate Emergency Strategy, which the Council endorsed in November 2020.

Reading Borough Council has a long tradition and strong track record of action on climate change, being a founding member of the Reading Climate Change Partnership in 2008 and playing a full role in the development and implementation of successive Reading Climate Change Strategies since that time. Our efforts with partners have contributed to Reading's carbon emissions being cut by 51% since 2005, the 8th largest reduction out of 374 UK local authority areas. Our corporate emissions have also been cut by 74% since 2008/09, and we were pleased last year to meet our target to reduce our own consumption of fossil fuels by 50% two years ahead of schedule. We know there is much more to do but these achievements provide a solid foundation on which to build.

Reading is also proud of its diversity and many of the communities who live in Reading have strong links with the regions and nations of the world which are even more exposed to the impacts of a changing climate than we are in the UK. For this and the other reasons given above, Reading Borough Council is happy to express its solidarity with those who have pioneered the Treaty, and will be happy to endorse the Treaty, adding its voice to the call for an end to new coal, oil and gas extraction, an equitable phase out of fossil fuel production, and a just transition to a sustainable future.