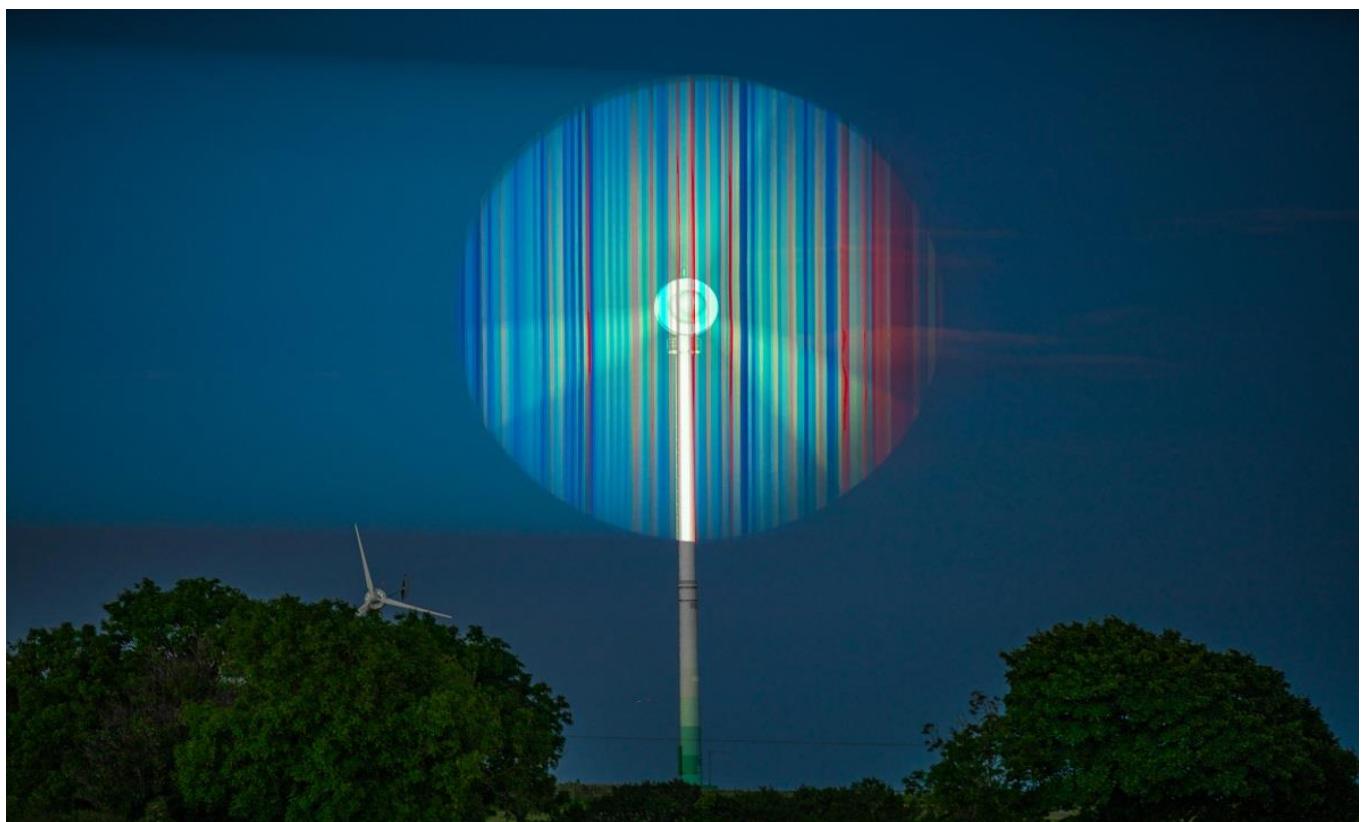


The Reading Climate Emergency Strategy 2020-25

Annual Report 2024/25

November 2025



Reading Climate Emergency Strategy 2020-25

5th Annual Progress Report (2024/25)

Produced by Reading Climate Change Partnership (November 2025)

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FOREWORD

As we reflect on another year of climate action in Reading, it is impossible to ignore the shifting sands of national and global climate ambition. Political ambition is wavering, and families are facing real pressures – from rising living costs to housing and healthcare challenges. In this context, climate change can feel like just one more issue competing for attention. But the truth is, local climate initiatives can help solve these challenges too – by lowering energy bills, improving air quality, creating green jobs, and building healthier, more connected communities. *Local* action helps bring the benefits of climate action to *local* people.

Reading continues to demonstrate that bold, community-driven climate action is not only possible – it is essential. Our town’s commitment to becoming net-zero and climate-resilient by 2030 is more than a target; it is a shared vision that unites residents, businesses and institutions. In the last reporting period of 2023/24, we saw tangible progress:

- Reading Borough Council has [reduced its own emissions](#) by 71% since 2008, and [across the borough](#) emissions fell by 57% between 2005 and 2023
- Heat Network feasibility studies and low-carbon economy initiatives are laying the groundwork for [long-term transformation](#)
- During 2004, over 400 residents and businesses engaged in helping to shape the Reading Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plans for the crucial years of 2025 - 2030; RCCP and Dialogue Matters won a CIEEM Best Practice Award for the stakeholder engagement work that shaped this strategy.
- Big companies with a presence in Reading, are proving that climate action isn’t just good for the planet, it’s good for business: PepsiCo is investing in renewable energy with 89% of electricity used in company-owned operations powered by renewables in 2024^[1]; Oracle’s UK data centres, including those in Reading, already run on 100% renewable energy, and its new Industry Lab in the town is helping test green technologies across sectors; Microsoft is contracting over 34 GW of renewable energy globally and using AI to help reduce emissions and water use.

Reading Climate Change Partnership (RCCP) is helping to create a framework for collective climate action, bringing together diverse actors – from local government and academia to grassroots organisations and businesses. Together, we are delivering projects that reduce emissions, restore nature and improve lives. But we must go further. The next phase of our strategy (2025–2030) will require even greater collaboration. Whether you are a policymaker, funder, parent, student, community leader, ‘creative’ or CEO, your role in this transition matters. We invite you to find your place in Reading’s Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plans for 2025 – 2030. Help us evolve it over the next five years and become an active part of the local team that is working in myriad ways to deliver a climate-resilient, net-zero Reading.

Reading is proving that local action matters. Let’s continue to lead and inspire action, together.

Heather Marshall and Dylan Parkes, Co-chairs, Reading Climate Change Partnership

^[1]^[1] [PepsiCo Reports 2024 Progress Against PepsiCo Positive \(pep+\) Sustainability and Nutrition Goals](#)

INTRODUCTION

The Reading Climate Emergency Strategy 2020-25 was published in November 2020 and included a commitment to review progress annually. This report represents the fifth annual report on the Strategy covering the year 2024/25. The report combines:

- An assessment of progress against the headline targets in the strategy (section 2)
- Case studies illustrating and celebrating progress (section 3)
- A detailed account of progress with the action plans on which the strategy is based (Annex 1)

The report is the final performance report for the Climate Emergency Strategy 2020 to 2025 although it should be noted that emissions data remains outstanding for two years 2024 and 2025 as there is a reporting lag in the government data and therefore the data for a 2024 will not be available until the summer of 2026 and will form part of the first report of the progress against the 2025 to 2030 strategy.

While the report has been produced by the Reading Climate Change Partnership and reflects progress with action to which a wide range of partner organisations have contributed, in the interests of transparency, and to put the report on the public record, a copy will be submitted to the November 2025 meeting of Reading Borough Council's Strategic Environment Planning and Transport Committee.

1. READING BOROUGH EMISSIONS

2.1 Measuring Reading's emissions

The Reading Climate Emergency Strategy reinforced the goal of a 'net-zero Reading by 2030' which was first set out in the Climate Emergency Declaration passed by the Council in February 2019 on behalf of the wider community.

Carbon dioxide emissions statistics for UK local authority areas are compiled by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) and published annually as 'The UK local authority and regional carbon dioxide emissions national statistics'¹. This dataset represents the most reliable and consistent breakdown of CO₂ emissions across the country, using nationally available data sets going back to 2005, the baseline.

The DESNZ statistics include a data subset for 'Carbon dioxide emissions within the scope of influence of local authorities'. This excludes sources of emissions which cannot realistically be influenced by local action such as those arising from motorway traffic, large industrial installations (excluding power stations) within the EU Emissions Trading System, diesel railways and land use change. We use this dataset to track progress towards net zero by 2030 target for Reading as, while it does not substantially change the headline figure for emissions reduction in the area compared to the main DESNZ dataset, it does reflect the sources of emissions from Reading over which local partner organisations and residents have most control and influence.

¹https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1086967/uk-local-regional-greenhouse-gas-emissions-2005-2020-release.pdf <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-greenhouse-gas-emissions-national-statistics-2005-to-2021>

While these statistics represent the most comprehensive and robust assessment of emissions by local authority area and are used by many other local authority areas to measure their progress toward net zero, it is important to recognise their limitations. Chief among these is the fact that they measure 'territorial' or 'production' emissions (goods, products and services made or provided in Reading), but do not take account of emissions arising from consumption (things used or eaten in Reading but produced outside Reading's boundaries). This latter calculation would add a significant proportion to Reading's 'real-world' carbon footprint due to our reliance on imported food and other products. This is not to say that our Strategy ignores the issue of emissions arising from consumption – on the contrary, measures to tackle such emissions feature prominently in the Action Plans on which the Strategy is based – but it does mean that the impact of these actions will not necessarily be reflected in the headline measure of the Borough's carbon footprint used to measure progress towards net zero.

2.2 Progress towards net zero by 2030

HEADLINE NUMBERS:

- **There has been a 57.3% cut in Reading's area emissions since 2005.**
- **Reading has seen the 12th largest reduction in emissions in 2023 out of 374 UK local authority areas since 2005.**

The headline measure of Reading's progress towards net zero is the reduction in emissions since 2005 based on the national data for 'emissions within the scope of influence of local authorities'.

The 2023 statistics (the latest year for which data is available) were published in June 2024 and show that CO₂ emissions fell from 1009.9kt in 2005 to 427kt in 2023 - a reduction of 57% which compares favourably to the UK average of 43%, the South East regional average of 43% and the five other local authorities in Berkshire which range from 14% to 46%.

The reduction in Reading Borough emissions is also the **12th highest reduction out of 374 UK local authority areas**, suggesting that Reading is leading the way nationally in efforts to reduce emissions by this measure.

Figure 1 on the next page summarises the reduction in Reading Borough's emissions over that period by sector.

It is important to note that there is a significant time lag in this dataset so the data reported in June 2025 in fact relates to the calendar year 2023. As figure 1 shows, Reading's emissions reduced again in 2023 bringing them in line with the levels experienced during the pandemic. Overall, the downward trajectory of emissions has slowed. Caution should be taken with year-on-year comparisons, especially those affected by the pandemic, and the long-term trend is more instructive. The emissions post pandemic returned to a level very close to pre pandemic and have fallen for two years since, returning to trend set prior to the pandemic.

Not all of Reading's CO₂ emission reductions achieved by 2023 are attributable to local action. A significant portion arises from national policies to decarbonise the electricity network. The way in which Reading's economy has developed, with a focus on high-tech sectors with relatively greater reliance on electricity, coupled with its small geographical size, means that it is relatively less reliant on gas and other fossil fuels. The benefits of lower carbon grid electricity were of course experienced by every local authority area, to a greater or lesser degree, so the fact that Reading has seen the 12th largest reduction out of all UK local authority areas still provides meaningful evidence that Reading is heading in the right direction and doing so faster than most.

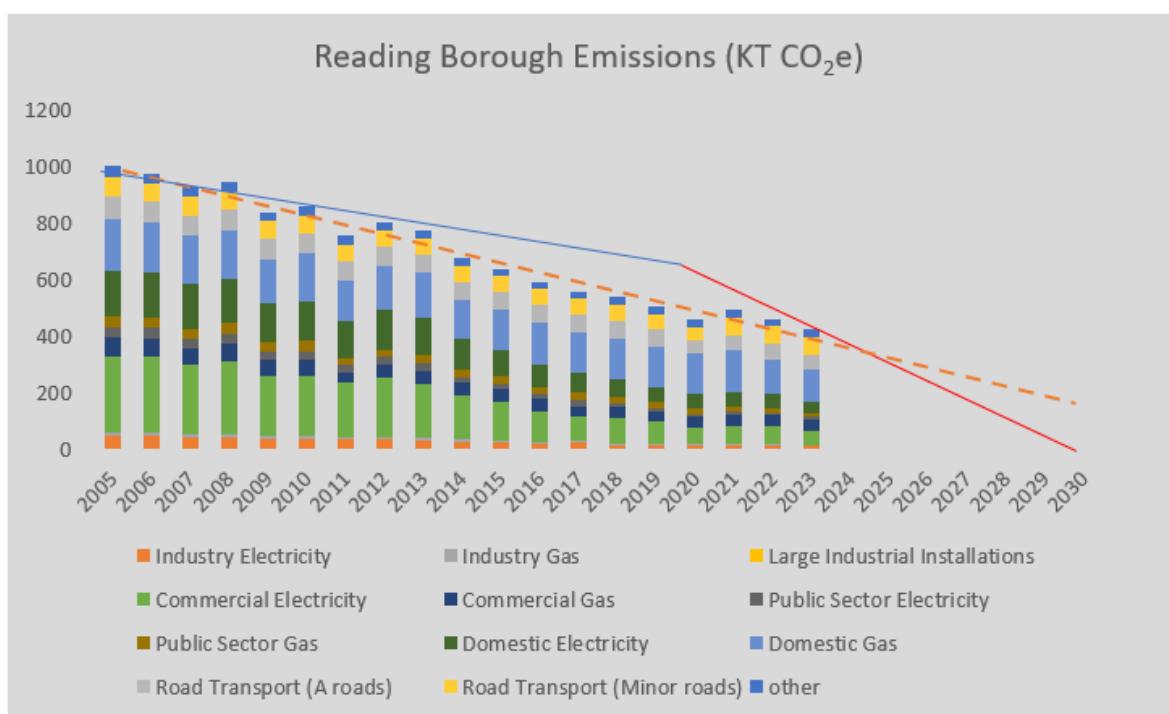
It remains equally clear, however, that there is much more to do. We saw a year-on-year reduction in emissions of 9% between 2022 and 2023 which typical of the annual reductions seen the last twenty years. It is clear that the pandemic year was not a typical year and this ‘blip’ was not sustained but in fact emissions but ‘bounced back’ to pre-pandemic levels showing no meaningful reduction between 2019 and 2021. Whilst the downward trend appears to have now returned the trajectory is not on course to meet a net zero position by 2030.

The Reading Climate Emergency Strategy makes clear that progress towards the aspiration of a ‘net zero Reading by 2030’ required significant national policy intervention, and it was always likely that the pace of emissions reduction would need to accelerate as the decade progressed. Major transformational changes such as the widespread electrification of heat and transport take time to embed and will not be likely to follow a linear trajectory.

The data continues to show that the challenge will indeed increase as the decade advances, but it also shows that we are making relatively good progress which gives us some encouragement that we are moving towards the pursuit of ‘net zero’.

As we conclude the 2020 to 2025 strategy and move into the 2025 to 2030 period, a transition away from fossil fuels alongside a rapid decarbonisation of the UK national electricity grid will be needed to be able to shift this trajectory downwards for Reading. The key message of the Committee on Climate Change is that transport and heat needed to be rapidly electrified to enable this to occur.

Figure 1: reduction in carbon dioxide emissions within the scope of influence of local authorities from Reading Borough 2005-22 by sector (with projected reductions needed to reach ‘net zero by 2030’)



Blue line shows pre 2020 target and red line shows Climate Emergency target and orange dotted line shows the trajectory based on data so far

2.3 Emissions reduction in Reading compared to other Berkshire local authority areas

HEADLINE COMPARISONS:

- **Reading has the highest long-term rate of emissions reduction out of the six Berkshire local authority areas.**
- **Reading has the lowest per capita emissions out of the six Berkshire local authority areas.**

Comparison with neighbouring local authority areas provides another way of looking at emissions reduction in Reading. Table 1 shows the reduction in emissions in each Berkshire local authority area between 2005 and 2023, based on the national dataset for ‘emissions within the scope of influence of local authorities’, as well as figures for the South East and UK as a whole.

Table 1 also shows the figures for per capita emissions for these jurisdictions.

The data for the Reading local authority area is positive by both measures. Reading is the only local authority area in Berkshire to have seen a >57% reduction in emissions between 2005 and 2023 and is also the only local authority area in Berkshire with per capita emissions of below 2.5 tonnes CO₂ per annum. Reading also compares favourably with the South East and UK averages – a 57.3% cut in emissions since 2005 compared to 47% for the south east and the UK; and per capita emissions of 2.4 tonnes p.a. compared to 3.2 tonnes p.a. for the South East and 3.5 tonnes p.a. for the UK.

Table 1: Emissions reduction in Berkshire local authority areas (with South East and UK averages)

Area	% reduction 2005-23	Per capita emissions 2023 (tonnes pa)
Reading	57%	2.4
Wokingham	47%	2.6
Windsor & Maidenhead	50%	2.7
Bracknell Forest	53%	2.8
Slough	16%	3.5
West Berkshire	45%	4.3
SE average	47%	3.2
UK average	47%	3.5

2.4 Progress on improving resilience to climate impacts

HEADLINES:

- **A ‘City Pack’ for Reading was published in August 2022 to support adaptation planning – a collaboration between the Met Office, University of Reading and Reading Borough Council.**
- **In November 2024 Reading Borough Council published a Framework for Adaptation for its services.**

The vision for the Reading Climate Emergency Strategy has two key elements – first, reducing emissions to net zero by 2030, and second, making Reading more resilient to the impacts of a changing climate. Whilst we have metrics for the former as summarised above, there is no simple means of measuring the

latter. However, the Action Plans within the Strategy include several actions designed to adapt to climate impacts.

Overall, while there are well-established mechanisms for adaptation planning in some areas like flood risk management and heatwave planning, adaptation planning in Reading (like many other areas) remains at a relatively early stage. Furthermore, while we have an understanding of the potential impacts, more work is needed to raise awareness of these and the steps which public services, businesses, organisations and individuals need to take to improve their resilience to the impacts of a changing climate.

The heatwave of summer 2022, which saw UK and Reading temperature records broken, provided an important test of preparedness for the sort of extreme conditions we can expect more of in future. Communications on staying safe in the heat were stepped up and, many organisations made temporary changes to working practises from which we can learn to help us adapt in future. Nonetheless, it is estimated that there were 3,271 excess deaths in the UK (6.2% above the five-year average) during the five 'heat periods' between June and August 2022 (defined for Reading area as three consecutive days when maximum temperatures reach 28 °C). 2,803 of these were among the over-65s, illustrating how extreme weather events tend to impact the most vulnerable.

Flooding continues to impact Reading significantly with the winter of 2023/2024 leading to dramatic floodwaters and significant impact to properties and transport links.

In August 2022 the University of Reading and the Met Office published a 'City Pack' for Reading outlining key climate impacts we can expect. The City Pack sets out the factors affecting Reading's weather and climate, summarises observed changes and impacts, explains the projections used to forecast future changes based on different emissions scenarios and sets out the basis of good climate risk management. The City pack provides organisations in Reading with a valuable resource to inform their efforts in planning to adapt to future climate change.

In November 2024 Reading Borough Council published a Framework for Adaptation for its services.

2.5 Future challenges and opportunities

Energy prices peaked towards the end of 2022 and subsequently dropped but remain relatively high compared to 2021. Global pressures make it unlikely that this volatility will cease.

Cost of living pressures continue. Whilst inflation has now reduced to pre-pandemic levels, the substantial increased energy costs have pushed more households into fuel poverty. According to the latest fuel poverty statistics (2023) fuel poverty in Reading increased by 0.4% to 10.9% since the previous year. Analysis of the 88 LSOAs (Lower Super Output Areas) in Reading shows a range from 4-27%. This is the highest of the six unitary Local Authority area in Berkshire and whilst it is lower than the average UK rate of 11.4%, it is much closer to it than the previous year (10.5 and 13.4% respectively).

Fuel poverty is where households are at high risk of not being able to afford their energy bills. This occurs where incomes are low, energy prices are high and homes are poorly insulated. Government support for retrofit programmes, whilst rightly targeted on low-income households with poor Energy Performance Certificates has not benefited a significant number of homes in Reading due to funding caps and onerous eligibility criteria. Low carbon electrical heating technologies, such as heat pumps, whilst significantly more efficient do not significantly impact on fuel poverty as they use electricity which remains expensive in comparison to gas. This is due to energy pricing policies and continued reliance on fossil fuels.

The Government has pledged to increased grant funding for retrofit and details of this programme are expected in the Autumn Statement which is when it is understood that the government plan to publish their Warm Homes Plan. Reading Borough Council is part of the Portsmouth consortium for delivery of this scheme and has also claimed some funds under the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund.

Manifesto commitments and recent announcements will involve re-instating legislation to bring all private and social landlord properties to an EPC C level by 2030, giving much needed clarity in this area albeit not applying to the owner-occupied sector which remains the majority of housing in Reading.

The government's reinstatement of the 2030 date for ending new petrol and diesel vehicle sales is set to exclude hybrid vehicles until 2035. Local Electric Vehicle (EV) infrastructure funding has been provided to install EV chargers to Reading streets and car parks.

High profile policies on lifting of on shore wind turbine bans and support for large solar projects offer some degree of support for renewable energy and it is understood that a pipeline of projects will gain support from the Government's Clean Power 2030 plan which contains a target for the UK to secure a further 8GWp of community solar capacity (around 16 million panels).

2. CASE STUDIES

Stories from Reading's journey to net zero

The following photographs illustrate the stories you will read in this section. Thank you to everyone who submitted case studies this year – both RCCP partners and other groups taking climate action locally. We hope these stories will inspire you and create a few creative collisions too.

One of Reading's most popular annual events, WaterFest 2025:



Examples of solar-powered irrigation systems:



Planting community orchards at Emmer Green Playing Fields and Bugs Bottom



Local schools participated in a mock UN Conference of the Parties (COP)



Clean Air Living Matters: Exploring Reading (CALM:ER)



SOLAR-POWERED WATER IRRIGATION IN READING

We're all part of the solution when it comes to becoming a more climate-resilient town.

The challenge

Summer 2025 was one of the driest on record in the UK, with rainfall across England at just 62% of the seasonal average and some areas experiencing the driest March to July period since 1921. In Reading, groundwater levels dropped significantly, and water resources were under pressure, prompting temporary use bans and drought alerts from Thames Water. With gardens suffering and mains water restricted, residents were encouraged to find alternative ways to conserve and reuse water.

The response

Naomi, a Reading resident and keen gardener, installed a solar-powered irrigation system connected to a 200-litre water butt that collected rainwater from her roof. The system used a small solar panel to power a pump that distributed water through a drip irrigation network across her raised beds. This set-up allowed her to maintain her vegetable garden – tomatoes, courgettes, and herbs - without relying on mains water during the drought.

Impact

- Naomi saved over 200 litres of mains water over the summer, equivalent to two bathtubs.
- Her garden remained productive despite the dry conditions.
- The system operated entirely off-grid, using renewable energy and free rainwater.
- She inspired two neighbours to install similar systems.

Why it matters

With Reading facing increasing water stress and climate extremes, small-scale solutions like Naomi's offer practical, low-cost ways to slow and store water locally. They reduce pressure on public supplies, support biodiversity, and build resilience in urban gardens.

CALL TO ACTION

Think about how you can slow and store water where you live. Whether it's installing a water butt, using mulch to retain soil moisture, or setting up a solar-powered irrigation system, every drop counts. Let's make our gardens part of the solution, from mains to rains.

Submitted by RCCP Theme Lead (Water)

READING LEADS THE WAY IN WATER-EFFICIENT PLANNING

Reading has been celebrated as a best practice example!

The challenge

Reading is one of the most water-stressed areas in the UK. One consequence of this is the need to reduce water consumption even while developing new housing.

The response

RBC and Thames Water are working collaboratively to align local planning policies with national water efficiency goals, including:

- Incorporating water efficiency standards into the Local Plan update, encouraging developers to exceed minimum regulatory requirements
- Supporting the Thames Water Developer Incentive Scheme, which offers financial discounts to developers who commit to water neutrality – using low-flow fixtures, rainwater harvesting, and greywater recycling
- Promoting SuDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems) and water reuse technologies in new developments, to manage surface water and reduce pressure on the sewer network.

The Future Homes Hub’s “Water Ready” report (April 2024) celebrated RBC as a **best practice example** of a proactive approach to water efficiency in planning, noting RBC’s leadership in encouraging developer uptake of water-saving technologies, using local policy to drive innovation and exceed national targets, and creating a replicable model for other LAs.

Outcomes

- Increased developer engagement with water efficiency standards
- Uptake of Thames Water’s incentive scheme, with developers saving up to £1,800 per property by achieving water neutrality
- Enhanced resilience of new homes to drought and water scarcity
- Positive environmental impact through reduced abstraction and improved river health.

CALL TO ACTION

Local authorities and developers can follow Reading’s lead. Explore the Future Homes Hub’s roadmap ([Future Homes Hub Delivery Plan and Roadmap](#)) and Thames Water’s incentive scheme ([Charging arrangements for new connection services 2025/26](#)) to start your journey toward water-smart development.

Submitted by: RCCP Theme Lead (Water)

GREEN EVENTS CODE OF PRACTICE

Six Reading events will participate in the next phase of GECoP, which will be rolled out to 30 additional local authorities.

The challenge

Until recently, UK-based event organisers lacked consistent nationwide guidance on how to understand, assess, improve and validate the sustainability impacts of their events.

The response

Reading was one of 10 local authorities to take part in a landmark **national pilot project** to find ways of making events and festivals more sustainable, which came to an end earlier this year. The year-long **Green Events Code of Practice (GECoP)** pilot has helped shape national guidance on sustainability for event organisers across the country. In Reading, East Reading Festival, Reading Festival, Readipop Festival, Reading Water Fest, Reading Pride, and Reading's Economic and Destination Agency (REDA) took part in the pilot.

RBC is now taking part in **phase two** of the programme which will see GECoP rolled out to 30 additional local authorities. The initiative ties in with the Council's ambition (as a member of RCCP) for Reading to be a net-zero-carbon borough.

The GECOP pilot focused on seven key areas where positive environmental change could be achieved at events: governance, energy, travel and transport, food and drink, waste, water and influence.

Event organisers were asked to trial the Donut Advisory Tool for Events which offered a quick and effective way to assess an event's sustainability practices against the GECoP. It creates an event score and highlights good practice and potential improvement areas.

Early results

At the Council's biggest annual event, Water Fest, bins were provided for mixed recyclables and food waste, diesel generators were replaced by giant battery power, drinking water filling stations were offered and local suppliers were used where possible.

CALL TO ACTION

Local event organisers can also benefit from the GECoP. Find out more and download the Green Events Code at: <https://visionsustainableevents.org/green-events-code/>.

Submitted by: RBC Comms Lead (Climate)

LOCAL CLIMATE ACTION CAMPAIGN

Reading Borough Council partnered with the Met Office to run the Local Climate Action campaign throughout November 2024.

The challenge

Many Reading residents are not aware of everyday actions they could take to help reduce their own impact on the environment or to prepare for the effects of climate change. Many are also unaware of climate actions being taken by Reading Borough Council (RBC) and other local businesses and groups to reduce carbon emissions. RBC aimed to raise awareness, inform local residents and inspire additional climate action.

The response

The RBC communications team worked with the Met Office on a month-long social media campaign to highlight ways residents and businesses can prepare for flooding and other extreme weather conditions, which are occurring more regularly because of climate change. The Met Office also shared RBC's posts across its social media platforms, linking this to their own work and services, websites, newsletters, blogs etc.

The campaign also highlighted local groups and projects that are contributing to a healthier environment, including videos on the bike bus scheme at The Heights Primary School, Reading Library of Things, Reading Buses and the climate credentials of the University of Reading. A video on the benefits of buying second-hand featured designer Wayne Hemmingway.

The campaign drew on data and examples from the RBC's carbon emissions annual report and RCCP's Climate Emergency Strategy annual report. Examples included the decarbonisation of Council buildings including the Civic Centre and Hexagon theatre, the national Green Events Code of Practice pilot and Clean Air Living Matters air quality schools education programme.

Results

The campaign was one of the Council's best performing and was considerably boosted by the support of the Met Office, helping it to reach audiences beyond Reading.

CALL TO ACTION

For ideas on climate actions individuals and organisations can take, visit:

<https://readingcan.org.uk/#> For advice on how to be ready for the weather, visit:

<https://weather.metoffice.gov.uk/warnings-and-advice/weatherready>. Schools can contact the University of Reading's Climate Ambassadors: <https://climateambassadors.org.uk/>

Submitted by: RBC Comms Lead (Climate)

TWO NEW COMMUNITY ORCHARDS & AN AVENUE OF FLOWERING CHERRIES

Volunteers are helping to conserve Reading's natural environment and improve Reading's public open spaces

The challenge

Reading's open spaces have multiple uses for recreation, organised sports and relaxation as well as for carbon storage and biodiversity. Volunteers and the Council work together to increase carbon storage and make corridors for biodiversity, whilst providing access for the other needs. Tree planting is one such action.

The response

Reading Tree Wardens and Econet identified public areas in Caversham for planting new community orchards that would count towards the Reading Borough Council (RBC) tree planting numbers as well as providing a harvest for people and wildlife. The trees will provide fruit from August to October for residents and wildlife.

Council officers checked the sites for potential problems with service lines and then gave permission.

Freely Fruity, a charity that provides and plants fruit trees for community plantings, sourced the saplings and tree supports, and led the planting in February 2025, alongside the wardens and Econet volunteers.

Despite the hot weather and drought, volunteers kept the trees watered and all have survived the summer months.

The two sites are at Emmer Green Playing Fields and Bugs Bottom. The team replaced dead fruit trees at Mapledurham Playing Fields community orchard on the same day.

In a separate initiative, Reading Borough Council has planted an avenue of 18 white flowering cherry trees either side of the diagonal path across Westfield Park. This avenue is part of the 650 standards and saplings planted across Reading in the winter of 2024/5 by RBC, Ethical Reading, the Tree Wardens and Econet.

CALL TO ACTION

If you would like to volunteer with the Tree Wardens to plant trees and/or water newly planted trees contact rtwn2011@gmail.com, or volunteer with Econet and help protect and improve your local environment then visit www.econetreading.org.uk to see upcoming tasks and events.

Submitted by: RCCP Theme Lead (Nature and Open Spaces)

MODEL CLIMATE CONFERENCE 2024

Local schools participated in a mock UN Conference of the Parties (COP)

The challenge

Climate change is already here, but future generations will bear the brunt of it. Young people deserve opportunities to develop the skills and understanding needed to participate in different forms of climate action, including climate change negotiations at local and global levels.

The response

Local social consultancies [Just Ideas](#) and [InterClimate Network](#) have developed a youth climate conference format, which they also deliver, modelled on the annual COP, the 'Conference of the Parties' who signed the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The format includes an accessible briefing on each country's position on a selection of issues, and clear guidance for additional research.

Coinciding with COP29 in Azerbaijan, the **11th annual Reading Model Climate Conference** brought together 64 students from eight local secondary schools.

In the opening address the Mayor of Reading called climate change the defining issue of our time and welcomed attendees to the Council Chamber, a hub for local decision-making.

Students then participated in a global debate, representing countries from Indonesia to Uganda, presenting well-researched national perspectives on climate challenges and solutions. Each school also showcased its own climate initiatives and engaged in discussions on maximising local impact. Finally, local decision-makers and business leaders fielded questions from students, strengthening the link between youth voices and community leadership.

Feedback and results

The [2024 InterClimate Network Impact Report](#) captures feedback from all students and teachers who participated in these events in 2024:

- **90%** left with a better understanding of how they can take climate action
- **95%** deepened their understanding of global climate negotiations
- **94%** now feel more confident to share their concerns and ideas about climate change
- **100%** of teachers would recommend the conference.

CALL TO ACTION

If your school or local authority would like to host a **Model Climate Conference**, [contact Just Ideas](#) to bring this powerful educational experience to life.

Submitted by: Just Ideas and InterClimate Network

CONNECT READING RESOURCE XCHANGE PROGRAMME

100 surplus iPads redistributed to local schools and charities

The challenge

Businesses dispose of hundreds of thousands of tonnes of usable equipment each year – from office furniture to IT devices. Only 22% of the 62 million tonnes of annual global e-waste is properly recycled. Charities, schools and community organisations could put these unwanted corporate resources to good use, while preserving their hard-working budgets for other things.

The response

Connect Reading's Resource Xchange programme is well established locally, with over £2.2m of surplus resources redistributed since 2019. In 2024, PepsiCo was planning to recycle 100 surplus iPads. Connect Reading ran a mini bid process to redistribute these to 19 local charities and schools where they would be most needed by service users. This demonstrates how Connect Reading delivers practical climate action while supporting digital inclusion.

Rather than being sent to landfill, the devices were repurposed, enabling access to education for young people, improved access to online services for digitally excluded residents, and improved fundraising processes for local charities. Each reused iPad avoided approximately 8 kg of e-waste and saved an estimated 160 kg of CO₂ emissions, based on lifecycle data.

This project reflects some of Connect Reading's core strengths:

- Operational efficiency: Items were matched and delivered within two weeks of donation
- Cross-sector collaboration: PepsiCo's ESG goals aligned with local need, facilitated by Connect Reading's brokerage
- Social value: Beneficiaries included charities supporting young people, refugee families, children with SEND, and disadvantaged adults

The programme offers a scalable model for circular-economy delivery, with clear environmental metrics and grassroots community impact. It also supports Reading Borough Council's climate and inclusion strategies by reducing waste and improving access to technology. Connect Reading is well-positioned to expand this work through existing infrastructure, strong local networks, and proven delivery.

CALL TO ACTION

To help Connect Reading extend the Resource Xchange to more local charities please donate here: <https://connectreading.org.uk/contact/>

Submitted by: Connect Reading

RCCP'S CLIMATE ACTION FUND BID

The climate crisis is maturing, and so are we!

Reading Climate Change Partnership (RCCP) was set up as 12-member group in 2009, primarily to **inform, convene** and **produce** five-year climate change strategies and action plans. The plans provide a **framework for collective climate action**, with each action delivered by an RCCP partner (e.g. University of Reading, the Council, GREN, etc.) or another local organisation that has identified a climate action priority, shaped a relevant action with others and nominated itself to help deliver it. RCCP's 'Year of Climate Engagement 2024' (the participation process that informed the *Reading Climate Emergency Strategy 2025 – 2030*) won a CIEEM Best Practice Award for Stakeholder Engagement. This is the fourth strategy RCCP has developed since 2007.

The challenge

The challenge we want to address with our National Lottery bid concerns 'who delivers what' during the 5-year period between strategies. RCCP is a partnership, which means there is no 'central resource' or delivery capacity beyond that of a paid part-time co-ordinator. Actions are delivered by partner organisations, not by RCCP itself. Additional 'central' work is achieved through volunteer hours, for example volunteer hours have: produced a Reading Climate Pledge for Individuals and one for SMEs and charities; founded and delivered an annual Reading Climate Festival; created the ReadingCAN website; and written funding bids.

A clear need is emerging for a **central resource** to build on the assets described above and to:

- inspire and enable action through design and delivery of multi-partner campaigns
- support and convene the strategy's existing delivery partners
- evolve the action plans and bring new delivery partners into the framework
- communicate effectively with stakeholders, including the 'general public'
- provide an evidence base for campaigns, e.g. by developing local pathways to net zero

The response

We want to transition RCCP into a resourced organisation with roles, responsibilities and flagship projects related to the *Reading Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plans 2025 – 2030*. To enable this, we are working on a £1.5M bid to the National Lottery's Climate Action Fund, which will be submitted by mid December 2025.

CALL TO ACTION

If you can help us refine the bid or access other sources of funding, or if you would like to be written into the bid as a delivery partner, please get in touch:gudrun.freese@readingcan.org.uk

Submitted by: RCCP Board

GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY LEADERS' SCHOLARSHIP

More than 200 students welcomed by University of Reading into programme that seeks to transform knowledge into action

The challenge

The University of Reading saw a need to provide more support and opportunities for high-achieving students who wish to develop into the sustainability leaders of the future.

The response

The Global Sustainability Leaders Scholarship enrolled its first 230 scholars in September 2025. As one of the UK's largest-ever sustainability-focused undergraduate scholarship programmes, the scheme will create a community of future global sustainability leaders.

Up to 400 scholarships will be awarded each year across all subject areas, each lasting a maximum of four years. Each successful student will receive £6,000 a year to cover living costs, benefit from cross-disciplinary learning experiences alongside their core studies, and access sustainability leadership development opportunities.

The scholarships will be available to students who achieve AAA at A-level (or equivalent), with adjusted criteria for students from disadvantaged backgrounds and for students who demonstrate a passion and commitment to addressing climate and environmental challenges.

Students who are not recipients of the scholarship can receive free climate and sustainability education through a new online course launched by the University, 'Advocating for a Better Planet', launched in October 2025. The course is designed to help students explore issues they care about and identify one step they can take to make a difference. Students will research and plan an action to address and advocate for a sustainable or climate-based challenge.

Why it matters

Vice-Chancellor Professor Robert Van de Noort said: "We must bring together knowledge, experience and understanding from across our broad range of disciplines. We need historians who understand how societies have adapted to change. Artists who can inspire others to see the world differently. Economists and social scientists who can develop workable policies that help communities to adapt. Psychologists who can help us understand and influence how people may adopt more sustainable behaviours. Computer scientists who can harness new technologies for good. And so much more besides. The scholarship you've earned is just the beginning. Over the coming years, you'll develop competencies through a series of experiences designed to transform knowledge into action."

CALL TO ACTION

Find out more at : [Global Sustainability Leaders Scholarship - University of Reading](https://www.reading.ac.uk/study/scholarships/global-sustainability-leaders-scholarship-university-of-reading)

Submitted by: University of Reading

AIR QUALITY EDUCATION PROGRAMME REACHES 9,000 SCHOOL PUPILS

Two-year project reached pupils from 28 different schools across Reading

The challenge

Air pollution – indoor and outdoor – has a negative effect on health and well-being. Increasing awareness of its causes and impacts can help to reduce air pollution or avoid exposure to it.

The response

The **Clean Air Living Matters: Exploring Reading (CALM:ER)** programme set out to increase knowledge and awareness of the causes of poor air quality and explore solutions. Engagement activities targeted primary and secondary school pupils, teachers and parents.

Between January 2024 and July 2025, the CALM:ER team delivered: workshops and assemblies in 20 primary and eight secondary schools; all-day sessions at the University of Reading; 50 parent engagement sessions at school gates; and community events around the borough. In total, it is estimated that between 26,000 to 33,000 people engaged in the CALM programme.

Reading Council led the government-funded programme with support from the University of Reading, engineering consultants Stantec and social enterprise Design Nature.

Assemblies included discussions about sources of air pollution, such as transport and wood burning, its impact on health and ways of reducing it and avoiding exposure to it.

Air quality monitors were provided to participating schools and pupils were able to carry out indoor and outdoor air quality measurements over a period of time. The results were analysed and discussed during workshop sessions. Pupils were also able to take real-time measurements and look at the pollutants detected, their levels and potential sources.

Why it matters

Cllr John Ennis, Reading's Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport, said: "Improving air quality in Reading is a high priority for the Council and the CALM programme has been a brilliant way of engaging young people, their families and the wider community on this important subject. Although air quality is improving in Reading, pollution still poses a health risk, particularly for children, the elderly and people with lung and heart conditions, which is why this Council continues to invest heavily in public transport, whether that is buses and bus lanes, rail travel or improved pedestrian and cycle facilities. The CALM project has delivered fun and engaging sessions to more than 9,000 Reading children who now have much more knowledge and awareness of air quality, the common causes of air pollution and ways of reducing it."

CALL TO ACTION

Find out more at: [Clean Air Living Matters](#)

Submitted by: University of Reading

UNIVERSITY OF READING'S AMBITIOUS NET ZERO PLAN

The challenge

The University of Reading (UoR) has already reduced carbon emissions from its buildings by 64% since 2009 while saving £57.9 million on energy bills. UoR's carbon reductions so far are equivalent to taking all cars off Reading's roads for over a year. UoR's energy efficiency initiatives include switching from gas heating to electric systems and installing solar panels that now provide 5% of electricity needs. Business travel emissions dropped 50% after UoR set an overall cap on travel emissions, including banning flights within the UK and to destinations reachable by train within eight hours from London. UoR has now set itself the challenge of **being even more ambitious in their reduction plans and targets across a broader scope of emissions**, keeping in line with the latest best practice.

The response

A bold new **Net Zero Carbon Plan** that covers everything from student travel to food purchases will now help UoR cut the emissions of its supply chain by 70% by 2040. The new targets extend beyond campus buildings to include emissions from student halls run by private companies, goods bought by the University, and even student travel home at the end of term. These broader emissions are targeted to fall 40% by 2035 and 70% by 2040. The updated plan is one of the most ambitious and comprehensive plans in the higher education sector, reflecting that the University is a leader in sustainability among higher education institutions. In 2021 UoR set out a pathway for achieving carbon neutrality on campus by 2030, and they are on track to achieve this. Additional actions are planned to achieve the emissions cuts required by 2040:

- Student halls operated by private company UPP must achieve zero carbon emissions by 2040. UoR will work with suppliers to cut emissions from goods and services by 80% within 16 years.
- Staff and student commuting emissions must drop by 50% by 2035.
- UoR remains committed to sourcing 100% of its electricity through certified renewable energy sources, and plans to significantly expand its renewable energy and battery storage capability to generate much more of its own electricity.
- Heating systems across the estate will switch from gas to electric heat pumps by 2030.

Dan Fernbank, Energy and Sustainability Director at the University of Reading, said: "We've already proven that ambitious climate action delivers real results - cutting emissions by 64% since 2009, while saving millions of pounds. We are expanding our carbon targets because we have a responsibility to demonstrate that comprehensive climate action is both possible and beneficial. Our ambitious climate goals will be the benchmark for other institutions to follow. By tackling emissions across our operations, we are addressing the entire environmental impact of the University of Reading - not just the easy areas. As we celebrate our centenary in 2026, we are shaping a better world for the next hundred years and beyond."

CALL TO ACTION

Read more here: [University of Reading Net Zero Carbon Plan 2025-2040](https://www.reading.ac.uk/about-us/centenary/centenary-plan/our-plan/our-plan-net-zero-carbon-plan-2025-2040/)

Submitted by: University of Reading

HIGHLIGHTS FROM READING BOROUGH COUNCIL'S CARBON REDUCTION PLAN

Zero Carbon Bus Travel: Reading's award-winning bus company is owned by the Council. In 2024 the number of bus passengers was 19.5m, an increase of 11% over the previous year. The bus depot has also undergone a major transformation with a fleet of 32 new electric buses due to begin service in autumn 2025. Plans are progressing for a major new solar array on the roof of the depot to accompany the array on the office roof. This is being delivered by Reading Community Energy Society and Reading Borough Council.

Zero Carbon Depot: The Council completed the acquisition of its 13th and last electric waste vehicle in March 2024, effectively decarbonising 25% of its diesel emissions. Expansion of solar through the installation of solar canopies at the depot site alongside heat pumps for the buildings and the electrification of the remainder of the vehicle fleets would see the depot come very close to net zero in its operations.

Levelling Up – Decarbonising the Library, Civic Offices and Theatre: Over the past year, the Civic Offices had new heat pumps installed and these are now operational, completely removing all gas supplies. As the new Library is brought into the offices, the old Library will be sold for housing offering further reductions. Boreholes are now drilled at the Hexagon Theatre and works are underway to build an extension to the theatre. This work will include new ground source heat pumps which will extract heat from the aquifer. This will enable gas to be removed from this building also. Once these two new extended buildings have had all fossil fuels removed, carbon emissions will be reduced significantly and the emissions should continue to reduce year on year as the UK Clean Power Plan decarbonises the national electricity network.

'A' Rated for Climate: In September 2025 the Council submitted its fourth annual return to the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) whose international reporting platform is regarded as the 'gold standard' in climate reporting for local authorities. In 2025 CDP confirmed that Reading had retained its place on their 'A' list of cities taking bold climate action, one of only 122 cities across the world and 20 in the UK to achieve this level.

Submitted by: Reading Borough Council

4. PROGRESS WITH ACTION PLAN DELIVERY

4.1 Overview

In terms of the action plans around which the Strategy is based, we have reviewed each Action Plan in preparation for this Annual Report and ‘RAG’-rated the status of each action based on the following definitions:

- RED – not yet started
- AMBER – started but not in line with target dates/outcomes
- GREEN – complete/underway and on target

Annex 1 contains a detailed description of progress with the action plans on which the strategy is based. The majority of actions remain ‘green’ or ‘amber’ (89%), but a significant number have not been progressed due largely to constraints on the Partnership’s resources.

5. SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

It is clear from this Annual Report that much has been achieved over the past year and through the five years of this strategy. The reduction in Reading’s emissions between 2005 and 2023 (the latest year for which data is available) of 57% is, once again, the 12th highest of 374 local authority. The data is from the UK Government dataset which records ‘carbon dioxide emissions within the scope of influence of the local authority’.

Whilst this represents relatively good progress, it remains clear that there is much more to do – emissions reductions appear to be back to their pre-pandemic trend of steadily reducing in the borough but not on a trajectory to meet net zero by 2030. Especially as we are 2/3rd of the way to 2030.

The past year has seen the new UK Clean Power Plan launched which aims to bring reduce the carbon intensity of UK electricity by achieving a 95% clean energy mix by 2030. This will also ensure that emissions are less than one quarter of their current level. We must now shift our heat and transport to electrified sources to benefit from this transition. Electric Heat pumps and vehicles are approximately three times as efficient as their fossil powered counterparts and meaning that combined the strategy would result in almost complete decarbonisation. As boilers and cars have similar life expectancy a redoubled effort to replace with old fossil powered units with new electrically powered technologies at their natural end of life point would ensure that within 15 years a significant decarbonisation can occur.

At a local level the Council and University have been installing heat pumps and increasing the numbers of electric vehicles in their fleets, steadily reducing their fossil fuels. The public sector emissions in the 2023 year reduced by a considerable 24% on the year before and overall have reduced by 75% since the baseline year.

Our bus company is reporting record ridership, the third highest in the UK outside London. A new Local Transport Plan has been aligned with the climate challenge and sets in train a number of key projects

designed to help residents to travel actively. A new train station was opened in Reading at Green Park and a funding was secured to purchase 32 electric buses in Reading.

Climate-related weather events around the globe and at home illustrate the equally pressing need to adapt to future climate impacts. It therefore remains incumbent on all partners to develop their adaptation strategies alongside plans to reduce their emissions in the coming months and years. As part of the developed world the UK has more resources to adapt than many, but also bears more than its share of responsibility for historic emissions – further underlining the importance and urgency of the need for us to take action in this vital area.

Our natural environment offers a precious reprieve for humans and wildlife in the heat of the summer and can help to protect us from flooding in the winter. Our biodiversity is at risk from the changing climate and we must help sustain it.

Reading's thriving army of volunteers participated in a plethora of events to preserve and enhance our nature with two new orchards being planted last year and many other events. The University is developing the old walled garden as an educational resource, forest gardens are being planned and planted, a sensory and teaching area for students to name but a few.

Work took place to raise water awareness including community walks and tours and celebration of our wetlands, online events at the climate festival and consultation leading to a new flood resilience plan in 2025.

Over the past year and throughout the life of this strategy Reading Climate Change Partnership and its partners have worked on countless projects and programmes. Members of the public have worked with paid employees in the public, voluntary sector and private sectors to deliver and mobilised a great number of initiatives which show the highly active engagement of our local community in acting on climate in Reading.



ENERGY ACTION PLAN

2020 - 2025

Our aim (in 2020) is that by 2025 Reading is taking urgent action to decarbonise its energy networks, increase energy efficiency and create renewable energy capacity. It has concrete plans to achieve sufficient demand reduction to enable its annual energy needs to be 100% covered by its renewable generation, taking account of the increased load from transport and heat becoming electrically powered.

Energy & Low Carbon Development Theme Action Plan – RAG rating for 2024/2025

Please note: Some of the actions included in the action plans below, and the scale and pace at which they can be progressed, will be subject to the prevailing national policy context and/or the provision of additional powers and resources by central government, as made clear in Reading's climate emergency declaration.

Sub category: Low Carbon Development

Action name	Description	Targets & measures/ milestones	Target completion date	Delivery partners	RAG Status	Commentary (100 word max)
E1: an Energy Master Plan for Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an Energy Master Plan for Reading 	i) Develop stakeholder group ii) Establish evidence base and technology pathway iii) Develop cross sector implementation plan	i) Q4 2020 ii) Q2 2021 iii) Q2 2021	Scottish and Southern Energy (District Network Operator) SGN (Southern Gas Networks) Ovo Energy Octopus Energy Local renewable energy suppliers. Spirit Solar Reading Energy Strategy forum	AMBER	An evidence base has been developed (statistical returns provided to DNO and NESO) and use of LENZA tool. Collaboration with UoR on approaches to dashboard and a transition hub working with UoR and community (cross sector)
E2: Energy Efficiency in New development	Introduce high standards of energy efficiency for new development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large commercial to BREEAM 'excellent' standard 	iv) % achieving standard v) Schemes supported though offset	Ongoing Choose an item.	Reading BC	GREEN	Zero Carbon and BREEAM standards are being applied but as the former are applied at the end of development process few have been realised at current time. LA housing

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> with best methods employed • Larger housing developments built to zero carbon standards • Ensure standards post construction with best methods employed • Build new council housing to the highest standards Net zero carbon and exceeding 50% reduction on building regulations • Consider the embodied energy in building materials in publicly commissioned projects 					being built to high (close to carbon neutral standard) Embodied energy being include in LA Plan review.
E3: Energy Reduction through Retrofit Programme	<p>Establish a housing retrofit programme in Reading which is compelling for property owners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply for funding • Compile high quality information on stock and energy efficiency levels of local housing • Identify partners • Zero carbon offset • Investigate green/community bonds and other finance innovation • Commercial retrofit scheme 	<p>Apply MHCLG Local Authority Delivery funding Sept to Dec 20</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stock condition survey Oct 20 • Supply chain development work TBC • Collect Section 106 • funds for zero carbon development • Work with LEP and Reading UK to establish 	2020/21	Reading BC and developers and/or retrofit companies	AMBER	Most of the actions met within the strategy period. Grant schemes have been implemented in Reading and Zero Carbon Offset but a bonds scheme and commercial retrofit scheme not delivered.

		companies to pilot – scheme TBC				
E4: Retrofit Design	<p>Establish standards for climate-conscious retrofit (not exhaustive):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop standards for different property types <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Heritage sympathetic schemes - Consider damp and ventilation. - Design for climate risks - Heat recovery ventilation - Underfloor heating - Consider embodied energy in construction - Introduce water saving especially hot water. • Develop public communication and resources for retrofit. <p><u>Links:</u> Water, Business</p>	Identify pilot projects which target specific solutions for different building types locally..	2020 to 2022	Reading BC, English Heritage SECBE, University of Reading	AMBER	This action has not progressed for heritage buildings although the PAS 2030 standards do in theory meet many of these requirements. This is the standard for grant funded retrofit work.
E5: Behaviours that save energy in homes and businesses and schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop approaches to reduce energy consumption in homes, businesses and schools 	<p>Publish resources</p> <p>Targeted campaign</p>	<p>2020/21</p> <p>2021/2022</p>	<p>National/local agencies and organisations</p> <p>materials and resources</p>	AMBER	Some schemes were investigated including eco refurb which is being implemented. Offers local tools. A business decarb scheme delivered using EU funding. Climate festival and pledge

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create information resources • Develop targeted behaviour-change campaign <p><u>Links:</u> Community, Business, schools</p>			Reading BC, RCCP Brighter Futures	AMBER	
E6: Best in class buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop high standard projects in different sectors, to reduce emissions <p><u>Link:</u> Business</p>	Publish reports on buildings	Q2 2021	Housing providers	AMBER	The Councils LA new build properties can be shown to be Passivhaus principles.
E7: Reducing fuel poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to provide Winter Watch service • Support new schemes targeting retrofitting for those most in need • Build referral mechanisms for those suffering from poor health and/or fuel poverty. • <u>Links:</u> Community, Health 	Reading Housing Strategy Design new approaches Establish cross-referral programme	2020/21 2020/22 Ongoing	Reading BC, other agencies (Health Citizen advice etc)	GREEN	Reading Warm Homes team expanded. Retrofit grants made available within eligibility criteria.
E8: Leadership and Influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider legal options for establishing standards that go higher than regulations • Buy sustainable LCGES (Low Carbon Goods and Environmental Services) from local suppliers to build supply chains where rules allow. Use social value KPIs • Develop in-house skills for retrofit of Council housing 	Consider trials nationally Project to work with public and private sector to build local supply chain	Q3 2020 2021 – 2023	Reading BC Reading UK TVB – (Berkshire) LEP	RED	Implementation of sustainable procurement in key organisations has continued to develop but no specific resources to support work with supply chains. In house skills within council for retrofit established.
E9: Reading Borough Council	Reading Borough Council to set out plan to achieve emissions	Published plan to 2025 and meet its milestones	Q4 2020	Reading BC	AMBER	Plan published and all major assets decarbonised except the Town Hall

Carbon Plan 2020 to 2025	reductions and renewable energy generation targets.					which is being designed. Decarbonisation of Civic Offices, Hexagon Theatre and Bennet Road depot in progress. Some projects not delivered and 85% target unlikely to be met by 2025 (one more reporting year 25/26).
E10: Publish new housing strategy to incorporate energy retrofit	New strategy to include C-rating and where possible B rating for all Council and rental accommodation in borough by 2030 Link: Business	i) New housing strategy ii) Implementation	2020/21 2021 onwards	Reading BC	AMBER	Some work has taken place to improve Council houses . EPC ratings increased to 52% of Reading dwellings in 2024 compared to 48% in 2023. Social housing was 69% above EPC C in 2024 (up 3% from 2023) compared to 39% in owner occupied and 46% in Private rented.

Sub category: Renewable Energy – Heat

Action name	Description	Targets & measures/ milestones	Target completion date	Delivery partners	Status	Commentary (100 word max)
E11: Renewable Heat – Ground Source	Work with developers to maximise district energy solutions in line with Local Plan policies on decentralised energy: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Establish District HeatingInvestigate the potential of rivers, ground and aquifers in Reading for renewable heatImplement heat pump schemesDevelop skills of local installers Link: Business	Complete studies Implement scheme	Q2 2020 Q2 2022 (dependant on developers)	Reading BC /BEIS University	AMBER	Good progress but behind original timelines as projects not yet complete. Feasibility phase complete and now working through Detailed Project Design phase. Boreholes drilled at Hexagon Theatre showing adequate flow in aquifer. Heat pump schemes in development.

E12: Renewable Heat Air Source	Consider different types of heat pumps and develop skills of local installers <u>Link:</u> Business	Report on Air Source Heat Pumps Identify installers Conduct trials	Q3 2020 Q3 2020 Q2 2021	Reading BC	AMBER	Various local installs (338 housing plus 3 large RBC buildings) but no trials were conducted. Resource not available for skills development. Net Zero Hub funding went to other areas of SE for skills.
E13: Renewable Heat Anaerobic Digestion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anaerobic digestion for food waste streams Consider biogas generation for buses and inject to grid <u>Links:</u> Resources, Transport	Report informing waste strategy	Q2 2021	University of Reading	GREEN	Municipal food waste collection implemented. AD used to supply grid and gas powered buses linked.
E14: Hydrogen	Investigate renewably sourced hydrogen fuel cell technology in particular for use in Heavy Commercial Vehicles (HCVs) <u>Links:</u> Business, Transport Investigate hydrogen injection to gas network	Identify schemes/trials Discussions with SGN	DATE TBC	Reading BC Reading UK Reading Transport SGN	Not continued	Hydrogen network not scheduled to reach Reading until 2040s. Focus in Reading is on electrified transport system.

Sub category: Renewable Energy – Electricity

Action name	Description	Targets & measures/ milestones	Target completion date	Delivery partners	Status	Commentary (100 word max)
E15: Solar PV (commercial)	Establish large commercial roof-based schemes that service base loads in large commercial buildings <u>Link:</u> Business	Establish scheme Achieve high proportion of suitable roofs	2020/22 2025	UoR, Reading UK & Reading BC, TVBLEP/Reading UK, SE Energy hub	AMBER	Scheme not progressed although larger arrays being developed by RBC, Reading Transport Ltd and University of Reading
E16: Solar PV (domestic)	Establish phase 1 of domestic scheme using bulk purchase to reduce price	Develop scheme Scheme up and running	2020 2022	RCCP, Tenants groups, local companies	GREEN	Scheme implemented – solar together. 249 installs in phase 1 and 652 registered interest in phase 2 with 150 having paid.
E17: Solar PV (Public buildings including schools)	Install solar panels onto public buildings including housing, community buildings, schools, schools	Council target 50% of electricity from	2025	RBC NHS Police Fire authorities	GREEN	Solar installed on 30 schools. Second phase in 2023 included 14 schools funded through PSDS.

	hospitals, leisure centres, police and fire authorities	renewables (mainly solar)				
E18: Renewable Energy – hydro	To bring forward Hydro-electric power schemes powered by Reading's rivers To publicise sustainable energy through educational programme. <u>Link: Water</u>	Planning approval secured already, investment and commence scheme Launch educational programme, tours etc	2020/21 2022	Reading Hydro	GREEN	Installed and tours do operate – consideration of a 'Sustainability Centre'
E19: Investment in Renewable Energy at Regional level	Consider investment in land and sites in and outside of Reading that have potential to supply renewable electricity to Reading Investigate suitable land with (potential) planning and connections for renewable energy generation	Initial report by	Q2 2021	Reading BC	RED	Not progressed. Wokingham solar farm is potential for PPA for Reading based organisations

Sub category: Electric Powered Transport - see also Transport Theme Action Plan

Action name	Description	Targets & measures/ milestones	Target completion date	Delivery partners	Status	Commentary (100 word max)
E20: Energy strategy for Bus Depot and surrounding area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish potential for solar – depot, car park canopies, Civitas School Investigate Riding Sunbeams option for direct connection to railway network 	Report	2020/21	RBC, Reading Community Energy Society	AMBER	Schemes are being developed for Reading car parks but these have been delayed due to pandemic impacts and review of assets. Riding sunbeams not viable for Reading.

Sub category: Electricity Storage, Management and Metering – Smart Cities Solutions

Action name	Description	Targets & measures/ milestones	Target completion date	Delivery partners	Status	Commentary (100 word max)
E21: Battery Storage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grid side battery storage by Local Energy company (District Network Operator) Behind meter storage on domestic and commercial sites Specialist large scale storage facilities third party 	Establish energy strategy group Develop energy strategy draft	2020 Q2 2021	SSE Public Sector Private sector	RED	Not aware of any schemes
E22: Smart Meters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roll out of smart meters in households Identify 'Internet of Things' solutions linked to smart meters Explore linkages to 'time of use' tariffs (different rates for different times of day) linked to IoT devices and 'vehicle to grid' (vehicles powering buildings). Establish trials with vehicles/buildings and local network <p><u>Links:</u> Business, Transport</p>	Energy company schedules/targets	2020 to 2024	Energy Companies RCCP University of Reading	AMBER	Reportedly 54% of SSEN meters are smart across their networks.
E23: Internet of Things projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of in-building solutions for projects that use the cloud and smart response approaches 	Smart Cities projects	2020 to 2022	Reading BC, University of Reading	Choose an item.	Update needed from UoR

	including machine learning to optimise energy flows					
E24: Heat storage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate the potential of natural and engineering based heat storage systems in urban context for stabilising heat supply and balancing summer storage and winter loads 	Set up Energy Working group	TBC	TBC	GREEN	University of Reading and RBC have installed open loop ground source heat pump boreholes. A total of 6 have been installed.
E25: Carbon intensity research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with University and or third parties to develop accurate real time assessment of carbon intensity of electricity and optimise energy flows to minimise carbon emissions 	Set up Energy Working Group	2022	Reading BC, University of Reading	GREEN	Some work carried out by UoR based on RBC site.



NATURE ACTION PLAN

2020 - 2025

Our aim is that by 2025 the people of Reading will live in a greener town with changes to the management of open spaces and the green links between them that store more carbon as well as giving shade for hot summers, corridors for wildlife and some flood control. New developments will include biodiversity net gain and water management, and there will be exemplar sites showing how to change planting and soil management around buildings to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Nature Theme Action Plan – RAG rating for 2024/2025

Please note: Some of the actions included in the action plans below, and the scale and pace at which they can be progressed, will be subject to the prevailing national policy context and/or the provision of additional powers and resources by central government, as made clear in Reading's climate emergency declaration. They are also dependent upon recruiting enough volunteers to the Nature task Force to supplement the existing nature theme group.

Sub-category: Carbon Sequestration

Action name	Description	Target & measure/milestone	Target completion date	Delivery partners	Status	Commentary (100 word max)
N1: Increasing tree cover across the town	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plant more street trees Test new planting options in town centre and on the road network Promote trees in private gardens/ business/ schools Encourage tree and hedge planting in air pollution hotspots esp. schools Enable more street tree planters Promote use of degradable tree planting maps and tubes <u>Link:</u> Education, Transport	Targets per updated Biodiversity Action Plan & RBC Tree Strategy (NB resources for and timing of implementation may be influenced by England Tree Strategy, publication of which is awaited) Publish guidance on RCAN website 2 school hedges/year Review policies for traffic restrictions Policy for council planting; publish guidance for householders;	RBC to adopt Tree Strategy 2020 Planting programme to 2025 2020 2021 2021	Reading BC, Ethical Reading; Tree Wardens (RTWN); Nature Task Force (NTF) Econet Food4Families Thames Water	AMBER	Trees/saplings planted winter 2024/5 were 407 standards and 255 saplings by RBC Streetscene . Tree wardens Econet and Freely Fruity. 135 Saplings were replacements. Only one school hedge, two new community land hedges and thickening of large hedgerow done during plan period. No other requests from schools
N2: Managing land to store more carbon and increase biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review methods to protect existing stored carbon and relative benefits of different land uses 	Conduct literature review	2021	Reading BC University NTF BBOWT	AMBER	Commenced work

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify optimum practical and effective management systems for retaining carbon in Reading Feedback into review of management of Council land 	Feedback into review of Council land management and planting programme				
N3 explore use of biochar and charcoal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research on cost benefit of charcoal and biochar Expect results to show that expensive to purchase but beneficial for tree growth and resilience to climate change and should be part of planting plans Seek opportunities to make charcoal from local forestry waste to sell locally and reduce imports and to dig into the soils to sequester carbon 	Research undertaken RBC ground maintenance policies and planting policies revised accordingly Advice leaflets for householders on RCAN website	2023	UoR RBC Local charcoal makers BBOWT Coppice Federation	AMBER	Commenced discussions
N4: Review Council parks and woodlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey land, including allotments, and make recommendations that increase carbon storage, flood control, and Biological Action Plan delivery, compatible with increased public use for health <p><u>Link:</u> Water, Health</p>	<p>Survey minimum 4 sites per year</p> <p>Recommend management changes</p>	From 2020	Reading BC NTF Econet, Reading and District Natural History Society (RDNHS), RTWN	AMBER	All sites given initial survey. Detailed surveys and recommendations for management changes completed for 9 sites, 3 more by end of 2025.
N5: Test different management of parks, verges and roundabouts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review mowing regimes in parks Consider measures like extending tree cover, scrub regeneration and conservation grassland Consider options for managing roadside verges/roundabouts Test, review and implement preferred options Accompany changes with public education campaign 	<p>Annual meeting to review options for evidence-based changes</p> <p>Consider options for changing mowing/planting on 6 area/yr of verge/roundabouts and 2 areas in parks</p> <p>Review impact and extend across town</p>	<p>From 2021</p> <p>From 2021</p> <p>From 2020</p>	Reading BC NTF Community groups	GREEN	Continuation of different mowing regimes across the town and extension of areas

N6: Planning for replacement for ash dieback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decide which areas to be left for regeneration with resistant ash Decide on replacement species on Council land where necessary Grow on local material to plant out (potential schools project) <p><u>Link:</u> Education</p>	<p>Review Council woodlands and revise management plans</p> <p>2 year collection of seeds with schools</p>	2022 2 per year	<p>Reading BC Parks; "friends of" groups; NTF, Community groups</p>	AMBER	<p>New tree officers employed and dangerous ash under a removal plan. No specific plan for replacements species</p>
N7: Kennet Meadows	<p>Review options to increase carbon storage and biodiversity through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintaining water levels through the year increasing granularity of livestock management to form a mosaic of swards Before and after surveys required for carbon capture and biodiversity <p><u>Links:</u> Water</p>	<p>Discussions underway</p> <p>Completion targets and dates to be agreed</p>	TBA	<p>Land Owners EA, Reading BC NTF Thames Water</p>	RED	<p>No agreements between landowners/tenants to change management although attempted</p>
N8: Increase hedgerows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey existing hedgerows and suggest new hedgelines/infill Schools encouraged to have hedge boundaries to mitigate air pollution Hedgerows promoted along cycle routes/ walking routes for air pollution mitigation and shade <p><u>Links:</u> Health</p>	<p>Review hedgerows as part of wildlife corridor survey at 10km/year</p> <p>Target schools and park boundaries for priority planting</p>	<p>Annual report 2 per year from 2021</p>	<p>NTF to survey Landowners to plant and maintain</p>	AMBER	<p>Some surveying achieved, not achieving targets</p>
N9: Food waste/green waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support no dig cultivation, home composting/ worm bins Disseminate information on food fermentation and support larger scale waste trials Seek University research to quantify effects 	<p>Information on RCAN website and links to other sources</p> <p>Support 2 trials: data required before end of RE3 contract</p>	<p>2020 2024</p>	<p>NTF Food4Families Community groups UoR MERL</p>	GREEN	<p>PhD at UoR being written up. provedf fermentation delivers better food for soil microorganisms and reduces carbon emissions cf composting</p>

Sub-category: Supporting wildlife habitats and biodiversity

Action name	Description	Targets & measures/ milestones	Target completion date	Delivery partners	Status	Commentary (100 word max)
N10: Compensatory habitat restoration/offsets for urban development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baseline review of the likely requirements for habitat compensation and biodiversity net gain due to development of sites in the Local Plan Financial mechanism developed 	System to be set up Implementation	2020 continuous	Reading BC planning	RED	Legislation delayed in implementation, and now potentially under review again. taken forward into next plan
N11: Identifying wildlife corridors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working from the green links shown in the Local Plan, and revision of the Biodiversity Action Plan, identify primary and secondary routes Agree any changes/additions changes with RBC planning department and Council 	Identify routes and mark on plan for transfer to RBC Geographical Information System	2020	Reading BC planning BAP review/NTF Reading BC parks and Highways	GREEN	On GIS. Active Leisure and Transport group in RBC working to increase use of walking routes
N12: Assessing the quality of wildlife corridors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review existing data Walk through and rapid assessment of accessible land List priorities for enhancement on public land and community land <u>Link:</u> Community, Health	Start within year 1, 10km a year reports on the corridor survey	Annual from 2020-2025	NTF/Reading BC community groups Network rail BBOWT	AMBER	Not achieved 10 km/year
N13: Managing the impact of development areas on wildlife corridors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure design and planting on development sites contributes to wildlife corridors Ensure connectivity through developments with appropriate supplemental planning guidance Align with objectives of revised Biodiversity Action Plan and/or 	Supplementary Planning Document published	2021 Implementation ongoing	Reading BC Berkshire Local Nature Partnership BBOWT	AMBER	Worked with Berkshire Nature Recovery Strategy to deliver new goals. Delay in delivery of the plan

	green infrastructure strategy/plan					
N14: Species protection/recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biodiversity Action Plan develops objectives for increasing/recovery of identified key species Ensure these are fed into management methods and changes in wildlife corridors 	<p>Develop land management objectives</p> <p>Implement from:</p>	2020 2021	Reading BC/NTF University of Reading	AMBER	Worked with Berkshire Nature Recovery Strategy to deliver new goals. Delay in delivery of the plan
N15: Biodiversity enhancement pilots	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet/work with residents associations/ community groups Offer regular workshops/newsletter input/other methods to support changes in these areas <p><u>Link:</u> Community</p>	<p>Identify 2 areas to participate including an area of deprivation</p> <p>Review impact relative to other areas</p>	2020 2023	NTF Adopt-a street Community groups	GREEN	Two sites developed with lottery funding during action plan period, plus community orchards in south reading and caversham
N16: Data recording/monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request that all new data go onto TVERC, irecord or data systems that link with TVERC (Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre) Recruit volunteers for recording Encourage householders to take part in garden surveys/ TV projects <p><u>Link:</u> Community</p>	<p>Contact all local groups</p> <p>Recruit volunteers</p> <p>Publicise surveys undertaken by others</p>	2021 2020 Each year	NTF Community groups UoR	GREEN	

Sub category: Planting for biodiversity and resilience

Action name	Description	Targets & measures/milestones	Target completion date	Delivery partners	Status	Commentary (100 word max)

N17: Provide Information on adaptation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide information on climate resilience and wildlife friendly gardening Improving soil structure and promote water reuse Promote exemplar sites – eg council, church, school <u>Links:</u> Water, Health, Education	Information published on RCAN website 2 exemplar projects by:	Q4 2020 2025	NTF RISC community groups, Reading BC	AMBER	Factsheets produced on RCAN website Changes to council sites and school sites. Limited promotion
N18: Greening front gardens and reducing hardstanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide information and links to potential designs for increasing green cover and reducing hardstanding Hold seminar for developers Seek TV support for project, eg Gardener's World <u>Links:</u> Water, Energy and LCD	Information by end 2021 Seminar Contact TV options	2021 2022 2023	RCAN/ NTF/RHS	AMBER	Regular information provided at Beanoole Day each year. No seminar for developers. Gardeners world approached and Gardeners Question time. GQT show held in Reading during plan period
N19: Interaction with garden centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage garden centres to introduce a wildlife friendly and climate change adaptation section Peat-free labelling of composts <u>Link:</u> Business	Programme introduced	2020	NTF BBOWT	AMBER	Garden entres around Reading (none in Reading area) approached, but no success in creating links. Peat free compost for garden use is now required by Law.

Sub category: Green Spaces for Cooling/well-being

Action name	Description	Targets & measures/ milestones	Target completion date	Delivery partners	Status	Commentary (100 word max)
N20: Green Infrastructure	Using green infrastructure to reduce carbon emissions from	In local plan. May need Supplementary planning document	SPD 2022	Reading BC	AMBER	Very limited changes. Bus shelters introduced with green roofs, and proof that

	<p>buildings and promote urban cooling, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote Green walls and roofs on new build • Promote green roofs on existing single storey structures • Plant for shading of cycle/pedestrian routes • Research on impacts of green infrastructure required <p><u>Links:</u> Energy & LCD, Water, Transport, Health</p>	<p>Advice published on RCAN website</p> <p>Research projects to evaluate effects</p>	<p>2022</p> <p>2021</p>	<p>NTF</p> <p>NTF/UoR</p>		<p>survived this years' drought. Planting for additional shade in parks and roadsides undertaken</p>
N21 Develop green space to enable increased health benefits	<p>Tree/hedge planting to provide shade, reduce particulate pollution and oxides of nitrogen</p> <p><u>Links:</u> Health</p>	Part of reviews referred to in N4 above	Ongoing from 2020	Landowners	AMBER	Done as part of reviewing management plans, mainly increased tree cover

Sub category: Communication and Engagement

Action name	Description	Targets & measures/ milestones	Target completion date	Delivery partners	Status	Commentary (100 word max)
N22: Raising awareness in the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify two areas in the town, including an area of deprivation, to concentrate existing resources to test ideas and communication methods for dissemination • Extend proven ideas to other areas <p><u>Links:</u> All themes, Business, Community</p>	2 target areas identified and developed	Identify test areas by 2021; Extend to four areas by 2025	Nature Task Force	AMBER	Effective communication in Caversham area and new small sites developed. Substantial inputs from RBC, Econet, Nature nurture and others in South Whitley area to increase involvement in open spaces
N23: Advice service for adaptation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide advice to schools/ community groups/ for wildlife friendly gardening/ water 	Offer half day advice service to up to 20	Advice service from 2021	NTF BBOWT	GREEN	Advice give to various groups, but have not had 20

	efficient gardening/recycling in the garden <u>Links:</u> Water, Education, Community, Adaptation	organisations a year, plus online leaflets				requests per year. Online leaflets provided
N24: Support schools in their climate change initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide list of support actions available through ReadingCAN or external sources to enhance existing systems (e.g. ecoschools), and distribute <u>Links:</u> Education, Communication and Engagement	Create option list for schools Offer 8 support activities a year	2020 From 2021	RCAN Nature Task Force	AMBER	Offered service through brighter future but limited take up. Worked with 3 schools during plan period.
N25: Supporting Businesses and NGOs in their climate change initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make opportunities for groups to do practical work via Team Challenge <u>Link:</u> Business, Communication and Engagement	6 actions a year	Set up by 2021	Reading BC/NTF Econet/TCV	AMBER	Available, but no real success.
N26 Identify opportunities for green prescribing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce a list of groups willing to provide options for social prescribing and make available to local GPs <u>Links:</u> Health	List available to RBC Public Health	2021	NTF	RED	Taken out of this plan as being done through RVA



RESOURCES ACTION PLAN

2020 - 2025

Our aim for 2025 is that Reading is on track to become a zero-waste town by 2030, is actively innovating to find new ways of using resources more efficiently and thereby minimising our contribution to climate change. To facilitate this transition, by 2025 it is easy for everybody to access information and services to help them find ways to reduce waste and repurpose things they no longer need.

Resources Theme Action Plan

NB Some of the actions included in the action plans below, and the scale and pace at which they can be progressed, will be subject to the prevailing national policy context and/or the provision of additional powers and resources by central government, as made clear in Reading's climate emergency declaration.

This RAG rating was completed in 2024. We are currently recruiting for a new Resources Theme Lead to take the 2025 – 2030 action plan forward.

Action (Written in 2020)	Description	Targets, measures, milestones	Target complete date	Delivery partners	RAG 2024	Commentary (100 word)
R1: Food: Reducing domestic food waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish baseline and set meaningful targets for reducing domestic food waste Adopt the Love Food, Hate Waste toolkit from WRAP and drive behaviour change through communications <u>Links:</u> Business	Baseline research completed by March 2021 Communications programme in place, targets set and tracked annually from July 2021	Q1 2021 Q3 2021 onwards	Reading BC (lead); University of Reading (research)	AMBER	No baseline collection phase. Some progress made through promotion of WRAP Food Waste Action Week and linking up with the emerging Reading Food Partnership. Re3 also promoting food waste reduction (and recycling) through their socials.
R2: Food: Reducing commercial food waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish baseline and set meaningful targets for reducing commercial food waste Create a programme combining reduction measures, well-managed charity donations and best outcome waste processing Collaborative programme by and for business <u>Links:</u> Community, Business, Education	Baseline research completed by September 2021; Communications programme in place, targets set and tracked annually from January 2022 Commercial food waste collection from TBC	Q3 2021 Q1 2022 TBC	RCAN (lead); Reading UK CIC; University of Reading (research); Connect Reading; Waste/recycling contractors Reading BC/commercial parties	AMBER	As R1. Perhaps scope to get local businesses to go public about their commitments and progress. (Some may choose to do so by aligning with WRAP's 'Guardians of Grub' programme.)

Action (Written in 2020)	Description	Targets, measures, milestones	Target complete date	Delivery partners	RAG 2024	Commentary (100 word)
R3: Food: Reducing food waste in schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish baseline and set meaningful targets for reducing food waste in schools Create a programme combining reduction measures, well-managed charity donations and best outcome waste processing Commercial food waste collection to be introduced by Reading BC for schools <u>Links:</u> Community, Business, Education	Baseline research completed by September 2021; Communications programme in place, targets set and tracked annually from January 2022 Commercial food waste collection for schools from TBC	Q3 2021 Q1 2022 TBC	RCAN (lead); University of Reading (research); Reading BC/commercial waste partners	AMBER	As R1. Perhaps scope to get local schools & their catering partners to go public about their commitments and progress. (Some may choose to do so by aligning with WRAP's 'Guardians of Grub' programme.)
R4: Other: Clothing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish baseline and set meaningful targets for reducing the amount of clothing wasted Introduce programmes to divert unwanted clothing from general waste through various means including donation, swapping, sharing, leasing/rental, etc. Investigate the potential for emulating the WearNext project pioneered in New York <u>Links:</u> Business, Community	Establish baseline and identify areas for improvement Publish programme of targeted interventions	Q1 2021 Q4 2021	Reading Circular Economy Club (lead); Reading UK CIC; Connect Reading; Re3 (baseline data)	AMBER	No baseline collection phase. Have been, or are, various initiatives focused on reducing textile waste including New Directions College's 'Upcycled Fashion' projects and retailers introducing return and repair services. But lack of capacity limits scope to make connections.

Action (Written in 2020)	Description	Targets, measures, milestones	Target complete date	Delivery partners	RAG 2024	Commentary (100 word)
R5: Other: Resource efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish easy to access and understand best practice guidance covering all common household purchases (in and out of home) • Focus on extended life, zero waste, energy efficiency • Signpost established labels and standards, advisory bodies, etc. • Establish communications programme to reinforce behaviour change <p><u>Links:</u> Communications and Engagement</p>	Guidance published and communications programme launched	Q2 2021	ReadingCAN (lead); Re3; Reading UK CIC	AMBER	<p>A number of initiatives exist or have emerged (including the information and support provided through the network of local Repair Cafés) that promote knowledge and skills to support resource efficiency. A number of retailers have also introduced repair services. But not joined up enough or delivering fast enough change. There is an opportunity to connect and promote what exists. Also for anchor institutions to lead by example.</p>

2: Reuse – keeping products in use for longer; delaying the point at which they need to be recycled

Action (Written in 2020)	Description	Targets, measures, milestones	Target completion date	Delivery partners	RAG 2024	Commentary (100 word)	Carry forward to 2025-30?
R6: Re-use and repair: Establish a definitive information source on re-use and repair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compile and maintain a comprehensive directory of re-use and repair resources in Reading, and encourage new ones, especially through social enterprise Include information resources like ifixit and services like <i>Reading Repair Café</i> and <i>Reading Bicycle Kitchen</i> Establish communications programme to reinforce behaviour change <p><u>Links:</u> Community</p>	Directory published, update process and communications programme in place by April 2021	Q2 2021	ReadingCAN (lead); Organisations offering re-use and repair services; Reading UK CIC; Transition Towns; Re3	AMBER	Although progress not made on developing a directory of reuse and repair resources, a number of initiatives exist or have emerged that promote supporting knowledge and skills. Some retailers have introduced repair services. Opportunity to promote what exists as well as identify gaps. Anchor institutions can lead by example.	Amend – As R4
R7: Sharing, renting and swapping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compile and maintain a comprehensive directory of sharing, renting and swapping resources, and encourage new ones Include peer to peer systems like <i>Freegle</i>, rental and “as a service” systems, charity outlets and platform services like <i>Too Good to Go</i> <p><u>Links:</u> Community</p>	Directory published, update process and communications programme in place by:	Q2 2021	ReadingCAN (lead); Organisations offering sharing, rental and swapping services; Transition Towns	AMBER	Although progress not made on developing a directory of sharing, renting & swapping resources, a number of initiatives exist or have emerged that promote supporting knowledge and skills (including Reading Library of Things). There is an opportunity to connect and promote what exists as well as identify gaps. Also for anchor institutions to lead by example.	Amend – As R4

3: Recycle – seeing what we end up throwing away as still having value, and doing our best to retain and recover that value at its highest level

Action (Written in 2020)	Description	Targets, measures, milestones	Target completion date	Delivery partners	RAG 2024	Commentary (100 word)	Carry forward to 2025-30?
R8: Food: Kerbside food waste recycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximise take-up of kerbside food waste recycling when introduced Appropriate annual targets to be set in conjunction with Reading BC/Re3 Communications programme required to drive behaviour change <p><u>Links:</u> Community, Education</p>	Increase Reading's recycling rate by 7% through food waste collection	Q4 2021	Reading BC/Re3	GREEN	Achieved early by re3 and performance maintained.	Amend – As R1
R9: Other: Glass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a baseline and set meaningful targets for increasing glass collection Improve access to glass recycling facilities for residents Focus on areas with high density housing/low car ownership Work with hospitality industry to introduce colour segregated glass collection <p><u>Links:</u> Community, Business</p>	<p>Establish baseline and identify areas for improvement</p> <p>Publish plan to introduce improved provision for residents and businesses, including targets for collection by September 2021</p>	<p>Q1 2021</p> <p>Q3 2021</p>	<p>Reading BC (domestic lead); Reading UK CIC (business lead); University of Reading (research); Waste/recycling contractors</p>	AMBER	No baseline collection stage. But aware that re3 and Reading BIDS are addressing glass recycling infrastructure	Amend – As R1, may make sense to group some actions together. Also worth noting that the engagement of some partners is very much tied to their contractual requirements and associated KPIs.

3: Recycle – seeing what we end up throwing away as still having value, and doing our best to retain and recover that value at its highest level

Action (Written in 2020)	Description	Targets, measures, milestones	Target completion date	Delivery partners	RAG 2024	Commentary (100 word)	Carry forward to 2025-30?
R10: Other: Kerbside recycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximise kerbside collection and minimise contamination • Increase awareness of what can do in kerbside recycling • Implement communications programme to encourage and improve confidence in recycling • Set annual targets to improve collection/contamination rates <p><u>Links:</u> Community</p>	Increase in Reading's overall recycling rate by 4% by October 2021 arising from efforts to reduce contamination	Q4 2021	Reading BC/Re3	GREEN	RBC/re3 are continuing to experiment with ways to increase recycling rates and reduce contamination.	Amend – As R9

4: Reimagine and redesign – rethinking products and systems to avoid waste altogether; making Reading an engine of the circular economy

Action (Written in 2020)	Description	Targets, measures, milestones	Target completion date	Delivery partners	RAG 2024	Commentary (100 word)	Carry forward to 2025-30?
R11: Plastics: Plastic-Free Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued implementation of single-use plastic-free pledge by RBC and sharing the learning Encouraging adoption of the Surfers Against Sewage Plastic-Free Community methodology and tools by communities, businesses and schools Replicate Plastic Free Caversham concept to achieve the critical mass of groups, schools and businesses required to secure Plastic Free accreditation for Reading <p><u>Links:</u> Business, Community, Education</p>	<p>Reading BC to share own lessons in becoming plastic free</p> <p>Caversham to secure accreditation as a Plastic Free Community, with first schools and businesses accredited</p> <p>Plastic-Free Community accreditation gained by at least one other Reading community</p> <p>Set annual targets for the number/percentage of schools and businesses to be Plastic Free</p>	<p>Q3 2021</p> <p>Q3 2021</p> <p>Q4 2021</p> <p>Q3 2022</p>	<p>Reading BC (Council and schools lead); Reading UK CIC (business lead); Reading Business CAN</p>	AMBER	<p>Amber, but edging towards green. Plastic Free Caversham achieved SAS accreditation. But the steering group disbanded soon afterwards. Installation of public drinking fountain has been delayed but Thames Water is still committed to funding. Unfortunately no other neighbourhood has expressed interest in following PFC's lead.</p>	<p>Amend – Rethink the means of achieving the goal of Reading becoming a plastic free town. Engagement with national initiatives (Plastic Free Communities, Refill, etc.), local commitments (RBC's plastic free resolution) and active support for plastic free initiatives.</p>

4: Reimagine and redesign – rethinking products and systems to avoid waste altogether; making Reading an engine of the circular economy

Action (Written in 2020)	Description	Targets, measures, milestones	Target completion date	Delivery partners	RAG 2024	Commentary (100 word)	Carry forward to 2025-30?
R12: Food: Climate-friendly diet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish reliable and authoritative information on how to eat more sustainably • Focus on dietary choices, sustainable sourcing, child nutrition • Guidance for caterers as well as individuals <u>Links:</u> Community, Business, Health, Nature, Education	Best practice identified and guidance prepared by: Communications programme developed and campaign launched by:	Q1 2021 Q3 2021	University of Reading; Subject-matter specialists (e.g. breastfeeding, food growing networks)	AMBER	Amber, but edging towards green. Emergence of Reading Food Partnership with the vision of 'affordable, healthy and sustainable food for all' in Reading offers an exciting opportunity. Reading Food Partnership is one of a network of such partnerships around the country which provides scope to learn from others aswell.	Amend – Reading Food Partnership could be invited to take on the role of lead body for successor action. Alternatively could work with Reading Food Partnership to identify elements of their strategy that align with the RCCP Strategy and how they could mutually support one another

4: Reimagine and redesign – rethinking products and systems to avoid waste altogether; making Reading an engine of the circular economy

Action (Written in 2020)	Description	Targets, measures, milestones	Target completion date	Delivery partners	RAG 2024	Commentary (100 word)	Carry forward to 2025-30?
R13: Other: Zero waste and circular festivals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Reading's festival organisers to develop resource-stewardship systems to reduce waste at festival venues (and campsites, where appropriate) Explore different approaches to engage and encourage organisers, vendors and festival goers in addressing waste Establish baseline and set meaningful targets for reducing waste and maximising recovery of resources Engage with Reading Festival to understand the challenge of campsite waste and explore opportunities to reduce unrecyclable tent waste Connect with and draw on the experiences of Green Deal Circular Festivals and other sustainable events bodies (A Greener Festival, Julie's Bicycle, Vision 2025) 	<p>Work with ReadingUK CIC local festival organisers group to understand the challenges and share best practice by:</p> <p>Collect baseline data by:</p> <p>Co-produce programme of knowledge sharing and local collaboration by:</p> <p>All of Reading's festivals to have a statement or page describing their approach to sustainability on their web site by:</p> <p>Zero tents to be left behind on site at Reading Festival by:</p>	<p>Q3 2020</p> <p>Q1 2021</p> <p>Q2 2021</p> <p>Q3 2021</p> <p>Q3 2025</p>	<p>Reading Circular Economy Club (lead); Reading UK CIC; University of Reading (research); Waste/recycling contractors; Festival organisers</p>	GREEN	<p>Momentum in Reading's festival sector has continued to build over the last year. A major boost this year was the invitation for Reading Borough Council to work with Vision 2025, Julie's Bicycle and a group of other local authorities around the country to pilot the Green Events Code of Practice, GECoP. This has given Reading and its festival access to tools and expertise. Reading Festival is participating in the GECoP pilot. But tents remain a challenge.</p>	<p>Amend - Could invite Reading Independent Festival Forum, RIFF, to take on the role of lead body for the successor action. Alternatively could work with RIFF to identify elements of their strategy that align with the RCCP Strategy and how they could mutually support one another.</p>

Links: Business

4: Reimagine and redesign – rethinking products and systems to avoid waste altogether; making Reading an engine of the circular economy

Action (Written in 2020)	Description	Targets, measures, milestones	Target completion date	Delivery partners	RAG 2024	Commentary (100 word)	Carry forward to 2025-30?
R14: Circular economy: Establish Reading Circular Economy Club to grow the Circular Economy in Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish Reading Circular Economy Club – part of international network of Circular Economy Clubs Peer to peer information exchange and networking for businesses/organisations Develop resource exchange to create closed resource loops, reducing use of virgin resources and finding new uses for waste products <p><u>Links:</u> Business</p>	<p>Reading Circular Economy Club set up – DONE</p> <p>Regular scheduled meetings and events established and publicised</p> <p>Resources exchange set up and operational</p>	<p>Complete</p> <p>Q4 2020</p> <p>Q2 2021</p>	<p>Reading Circular Economy Club (lead); Reading CAN/Reading Business CAN; Re3</p>	AMBER	<p>Amber, but edging towards green. Circular Economy Club was established and was active (online) throughout the pandemic but has since gone dormant. That said, there is circular activity in the town. The challenge is, perhaps, to develop a narrative that helps make it visible. A number of local projects are working on a shared narrative that might form a basis for collaboration.</p>	<p>Amend – May be better to identify desired outcomes. Could then identify some actions to generate momentum as well as invite others to align their own efforts and strategies (whether or not named in the action plan). Opportunity to work with/support the emerging networks of local projects. Say something encouraging about circularity in construction?</p>



TRANSPORT ACTION PLAN

2020 - 2025

Our aim is for a low carbon future for transport in which emissions are cut by reducing the need to travel by more polluting modes of transport, shifting more journeys to sustainable modes of transport and supporting the transition from petrol/diesel to electric vehicles. In the process, we will improve health and wellbeing, while making transport infrastructure more resilient to climate impacts.

THEME OVERVIEW: Transport

Theme Lead: Chris Maddocks

1. PROGRESS WITH ACTION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Please enter here a brief overview of progress with delivery of the action plan, highlighting in particular (i) any significant examples of success and (ii) any key challenges to implementation which have been encountered.

Significant progress has been achieved with delivery of the Transport Theme over the past few years, including the Council adopting its new Local Transport Plan, the Reading Transport Strategy 2040, in October 2024. The vision of this Strategy is fully aligned with the Climate Emergency Strategy; with the policies, schemes and initiatives for travel heavily focused on promoting sustainable, active and public transport over the next 15+ years.

Reading has the third highest number of bus passenger journeys per head of population in England (outside of London) and achieved an 11% increase in bus passenger journeys to 19.5m from 22/23 to 23/24 (the latest period for which data is available). The Council has secured external grant funding of over £30m over the past few years to invest in improving bus services, which has enabled the Reading All-Bus ticket discount scheme which saved passengers more than £5million in fares, and helped to fund 32 new electric buses which Reading Buses have recently purchased, with the first buses due to be launched later this year.

Substantial progress has been made to improve travel options for other sustainable modes, including the opening of Reading Green Park Station, the upgrade of Reading West Station and the delivery of the active travel scheme, including segregated cycle facilities, on Shinfield Road leading to the University campus.

In addition, the Council has adopted its new Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy and has secured external grant funding for the rollout of around 1,500 electric vehicle charging points across the borough, predominately in residential streets that do not have off-street parking to help with the uptake of electric vehicles for residents.

2. EXTERNAL POLICY CHANGES RELEVANT TO THE THEME

Please enter here a brief overview of any changes in the external environment which are relevant to the Action Plan which have come about since the Action Plan was written – e.g. changes in national or local policy, new legislation or funding streams – and explain how they may impact on implementation of the Action Plan, or require new action to be initiated.

Grant funding from Central Government for sustainable transport improvements is anticipated to continue, however this is likely to be at a lower level for Reading in future years as Government moves away from competitive bidding processes to allocating funding on a formulaic basis.

2. OTHER EXTERNAL CHANGES RELEVANT TO THE THEME

The high levels of inflation experienced in recent years has impacted on the delivery of a number of transport schemes; and has resulted in increased costs for local bus companies leading to the need to increase fares and in some cases reduce service levels.

3. KEY ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED IN RUN-UP TO REVIEW OF 2025 -2030 STRATEGY

Policy changes from Central Government regarding Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation are likely impact delivery partners for the Transport Theme (and others) in the medium term.

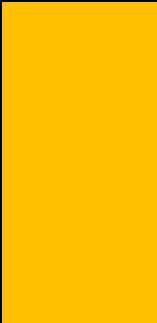
Transport Theme Action Plan – RAG rating 2024/2025

NB Some of the actions included in the action plans below, and the scale and pace at which they can be progressed, will be subject to the prevailing national policy context and/or the provision of additional powers and resources by central government, as made clear in Reading's climate emergency declaration.

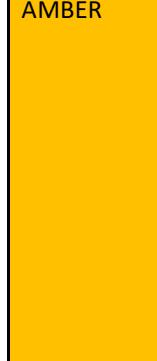
Sub-category: Reducing need and demand for travel, promoting walking and cycling

Action name	Description	Target & measure/ milestone (NB numerical targets subject to confirmation in final Local Transport Plan still in development at time of publication)	Target completion date	Delivery partners	Status	Commentary (100 word max)
T1: Reduce the need to travel through well planned development	Ensure that services, leisure facilities and employment opportunities are located close to where people live and/or in locations easy to access by sustainable transport services via planning policy and decisions <u>Links:</u> Business, Community, Health, Energy and LCD	Reduction in transport-related emissions across Reading Implementation of Reading Local Plan policies	2025 (this is an on-going action)	Reading BC Developers	AMBER	Proposals are contained in the Council's new Local Plan Update.
T2: Develop demand management measures to reduce traffic and encourage shift from high carbon transport	Consider introduction of individual or combined policies via the forthcoming Local Transport Plan such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workplace Parking Levy• Clean Air Zone• Alternative demand management measures	Initiate consultation Develop business case for preferred option(s) Implement preferred measure(s)	TBC	Reading BC Local Businesses Neighbouring Authorities Department for Transport Reading BID	AMBER	Demand management measures are contained in the Council's new Transport Strategy. Consultation taking place on Emission Based Charging.

	<u>Links:</u> Business, Community, Health					
T3: Enhance provision for Pedestrians & cyclists to encourage low carbon travel choices	<p>Provide space for walking and cycling improvements, including segregation and road reallocation (where feasible), surface improvements, crossing priority, safety improvements and increased cycle parking hubs/facilities as set out in Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan</p> <p><u>Links:</u> Health</p>	<p>Increase proportion of adults who walk at least 3 times per week from 30.8% (2019) to 40% by 2025 (en route to a 60% target by 2036)</p> <p>Increase proportion of adults who cycle at least 3 times per week from 5.1% (2019) to 9% by 2025 (en route to a 15% target by 2036)</p>	2025 as part of the Local Transport Plan targets through to 2040	<p>Reading BC Local User Groups Thames Valley Police</p>	GREEN	A range of pedestrian and cycle enhancements have been implemented including new crossing facilities, secure cycle parking and segregated cycle lanes on Shinfield Road.
T4: Enhance Town Centre and Local Centre Public Space to improve air quality and reduce carbon use	<p>Improve the pedestrian experience in Central Reading and local centres by providing better access to key destinations for walking, cycling and bus passengers</p> <p>Green up the local environment to encourage use and enjoyment of local facilities</p> <p><u>Links:</u> Business, Community, Health</p>	<p>Increase active travel mode share of trips to/from Reading town centre from 32% (2017-2019 avg) to 34% by 2025 (en route to a 38% target by 2036)</p> <p>Increase public transport trips to/from Reading town centre from 44.5% mode share (2017-2019 avg) to 45.5% mode share per day by 2025 (en route to a 48% target by 2036)</p> <p>Decrease car trips mode share to/from Reading town centre from 23.5% (2017-2019 avg) to 20.3% mode share by 2025 per day (en route to a 14% target by 2036)</p>	2025 as part of the Local Transport Plan targets through to 2040	<p>Reading BC Transport Operators Reading BID Local User Groups Developers Businesses Residents</p>	AMBER	The Council has recently consulted on a Reading Town Centre Urban Relam Strategy
T5: Promote Sustainable Travel to School	Establish dedicated and safe walking and cycling routes for each school. Reduce the	Increased shift from private car use to active travel	2025 as part of the Local Transport Plan	Reading BC School Communities	AMBER	New School Street schemes have been established in Reading.

and other education sites to encourage low carbon travel choices	danger and pollution from 'the school run' Roll-out Play Streets/School Streets programme - supporting local communities and schools who want to organise street closures	Improved health and fitness of schoolchildren Improved air quality Trial school street closures at selected schools before a wider roll-out across the borough	targets through to 2040	Bikeability Provider TV Police Local User Groups Residents Uni of Reading		
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Sub-category: Encouraging a switch to public transport

Action name	Description	Targets & measures/ milestones (NB numerical targets subject to confirmation in final Local Transport Plan still in development at time of publication)	Target completion date	Delivery partners	Status	Commentary (100 word max)
T6: Improve major and radial routes to promote switch to sustainable modes of travel	Improve the transport options on main corridors and radial routes including A4, A33, A327, A329, A4074, A4155 and the Inner Distribution Road. Make space to encourage changes in travel choice to low/zero carbon modes. <u>Links:</u> Business, Community, Education	As per T3 and T4	2025 as part of the Local Transport Plan targets through to 2040	Reading BC Neighbouring LAs TVB LEP Transport Operators Local User Groups Residents Businesses		Proposals are contained in the Council's new Transport Strategy
T7: Improve Quality Bus Corridors	Improve branded local routes with faster, more reliable and more frequent services, changing people's travel habits away from dependency on cars	Increase bus journeys per year by 9% from 22.5M (2019) to 24.6M (en route to a target increase of 25% by 2036)	2025 as part of the Local Transport Plan targets through to 2040	Reading BC Transport Operators Businesses Residents Schools		Significant investment in enhanced bus services, ticket discounts and bus priority measures through the Council's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) programme.

	especially for commuter and school journeys <u>Links:</u> Business, Community, Education			Health Services Department for Transport/UK Gov	GREEN	
T8: Establish Fast-Track Public Transport Corridors	Improve speed and reliability of key public transport routes through establishment of key Fast-Track Public Transport (FTPT) corridors on strategic routes (including south, west, east and north).	As per T7	2025	Reading BC Wokingham BC West Berkshire BC Oxfordshire CC Transport Operators	AMBER	Proposals are contained in the Council's new Transport Strategy
T9: Extend Park and Ride provision to encourage car users to change onto low carbon alternatives to access Reading	Provision of new and expanded Park & Rides to intercept traffic on main corridors into Reading. <u>Links:</u> Business	Increased use of P&R trips to/from Reading by 25% compared to 2019 levels New P&R at Thames Valley Park opened Winnersh Triangle P&R expanded New P&R sites identified	2025 2020 2021 2025	Reading BC Transport Operators Royal Berks Hospital Businesses Wokingham BC Thames Valley Park W Berks BC Oxfordshire CC TVB LEP Businesses	AMBER	Proposals are contained in the Council's new Transport Strategy. Enhanced park & ride services recently reinstated from Winnersh Triangle.
T10: Deliver Railway Station upgrades to encourage car users to use low carbon alternatives to and from Reading	Improved access to railway stations at Reading, Reading West and Tilehurst by walking, cycling and public transport. Improved customer experience	Increase public transport trips to/from Reading town centre from 44.5% mode share (2017-2019 avg) to 45.5% mode share per day	2025 as part of the Local Transport Plan targets through to 2040	Reading BC Network Rail Great Western Railway TVB LEP	GREEN	Significant enhancements including Green Park Station, Reading West Station Upgrade and accessibility enhancements at Tilehurst Station.

	(including fully accessible platforms), interchange and public space enhancements, including new and improved cycle parking hubs and facilities	by 2025 (en route to a 48% target by 2036)				
T11: Open Reading Green Park Railway Station	Provide new station for access to Green Park and South Reading and interchange with integrated bus services <u>Links:</u> Business	New station completed and served by GWR services. Interchange open with provision of integrated bus services.	2021	Reading BC Network Rail Great Western Railway Transport Operators TVB LEP DfT Businesses	GREEN	Complete
T12: Implement traffic management schemes to support low carbon travel choices	Provide effective management of the existing network to meet changing mobility demands of Reading Provide safe roads and pavements including crossings and reduce crossing conflicts and interruptions to the flow of walking and cycling	As per T4	2025 as part of the Local Transport Plan targets through to 2036	Reading BC Transport Operators Emergency Services	AMBER	On-going delivery of the Council's waiting review programme

Sub-category: Reducing emissions from the vehicle fleet and using new technology

Action name	Description	Target & measure/ milestone (NB numerical targets subject to confirmation in final Local Transport Plan still in	Target completion date	Delivery partners	Status	Commentary (100 word max)

		development at time of publication)				
T13: Develop a zero emission vehicle strategy for the Borough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study suitable locations • Identify potential network constraints • Assess potential demand 	Strategy development to follow Local Transport Plan	2020/21	Reading BC	GREEN	Complete
T14: Decarbonise the Council Vehicle Fleet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase electric charging points at Council buildings • Consider phased replacement of Council vehicles with electric powered units wherever possible • Charging points to be installed at depot that can allow vehicles to power buildings • Carbon Plan will set targets for reduction in diesel/petrol 	RBC Carbon Plan Feasibility report, Business case, Budget approval * (subject to above)	Q4 2020 2022-2024	Reading BC	AMBER	Delivery on-going.
T15: Increase Public Electric Vehicle Charging Points	Install electric charging points in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council car parks • Leisure centres • Lamp columns (trials) • Business premises • Taxi ranks <u>Links:</u> Business, Transport	First car park project All suitable car parks First leisure centre All leisure centres	2020/21 2023 2020/21 2022	Reading BC, Reading UK, Taxi Assoc, Leisure provider	GREEN	Funding secured for new chargepoints and procurement for a supplier underway.
T16: Increase zero emissions vehicles uptake	Work with vehicle sales outlets in Reading to increase zero emission vehicle uptake <u>Links:</u> Business	Zero emission vehicle uptake compared to national benchmarks	Ongoing	Reading UK RCAN	AMBER	On-going
T17: Establish and promote eBikes	Identify charging locations for electrically assisted pedal cycles and investigate	Develop strategy for location	TBC	Reading BC Site owners	AMBER	Opportunities are being explored

	potential for e-bike hire scheme.					
T18: Planning policy for EV charging in new properties <u>Links:</u> Business	Monitor number of additional charging units installed in new properties	Monitor additional units in line with planning policy	Ongoing	Reading BC Developers	GREEN	Including in new Local Plan
T19: Reduce emissions from the Taxi Fleet	Require all taxis and private hire vehicles to be electric or hybrid by 2030	Improved Air quality, reduced carbon emissions	Beyond 2025	Reading BC Taxi and Private Hire Associations	AMBER	On-going Council emission policies
T19A Reduce emissions and improve efficiency of freight movements	Work with the freight operators and businesses to encourage use of cleaner vehicle technology, consolidate deliveries, encourage 'out of hours' deliveries during quieter times and trial e-cargo bikes and freight consolidation parks where feasible.	Improved Air quality, reduced carbon emissions and reduced congestion	Beyond 2025	Reading BC Road Haulage Association Logistics UK Freight operators and local businesses	AMBER	On-going Council network management policies
T20: Improve Electric Vehicle Charging infrastructure	Develop and implement policy for appropriate provision of electric vehicle charging points across the borough	Provision of EV charging installed as per the policy to accommodate anticipated increases in demand	2022	Reading BC Transport Operators Third Party Landowners	GREEN	See similar item above
T21: Deploy Intelligent Transport Systems to encourage change to low carbon transport	Use technology and real-time data to improve safety, efficiency environmental performance and journey experience of users of the transport system, particularly at signal-controlled junctions	As per T4	2025 as part of the Local Transport Plan targets through to 2036	Reading BC Transport Operators	AMBER	On-going
T22: Embrace Smart Solutions to reduce use of carbon in transport	Smarter Working – maximise benefits of flexible working patterns including working from home (to cut transport	Decrease car trips mode share to/from Reading town centre from 23.5% (2017-2019 avg) to 20.3%	2025 as part of the Local Transport Plan	Reading BC Employers Transport Operators	AMBER	On-going

	<p>demand) and more flexible working hours to encourage commuter travel outside of the peak periods.</p> <p>Smart City Initiatives - Use different types of electronic Internet of Things (IoT) sensors to collect data and then use insights gained to manage assets, resources and services efficiently.</p> <p>Implement Micromobility and Mobility-as-a-Service (MaaS) schemes as they evolve to facilitate shift from personally-owned modes of transportation towards mobility provided as a service, combining <u>public</u> and <u>private transportation</u> services through a unified gateway that manages the trip, which users can pay for with a single account</p> <p><u>Links:</u> Business</p>	<p>mode share by 2025 per day (en route to a 14% target by 2036</p> <p>Reduced need for car ownership across the borough</p>	<p>targets through to 2036</p>	<p>Emergency Services Highways England Motoring Organisations</p> <p>Reading BC DfT Car Clubs</p>		
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Sub-category: Adaptation, Communication & Engagement

Action name	Description	Targets & measures/ milestones (NB numerical targets subject to confirmation in final Local Transport Plan still in development at time of publication)	Target completion date	Delivery partners	Status	Commentary (100 word max)

<p>T23a (General): Develop education, initiatives, promotion and advice to encourage low carbon travel choices</p>	<p>Undertake marketing activities promoting sustainable transport, including national events such as Bike Week, Clean Air Day, In Town Without My Car Day, and organising local events and activities</p> <p>Enable access to any adults who want to undertake Bikeability training.</p> <p>Provide courses through schools as well as to individuals and to groups.</p> <p>Provide up-to-date travel information to enable people to make informed travel choices including open data apps, real time passenger information and roadside Messaging Signs</p> <p>Develop programme of training, education and initiatives to promote sustainable transport usage</p> <p><u>Links:</u> Education, Health</p>	<p>As per T4</p>	<p>2025 as part of the Local Transport Plan targets through to 2036</p>	<p>Reading BC Stakeholders</p> <p>Reading BC School Communities Bikeability Provider Thames Valley Police Local User Groups Residents</p>	<p>GREEN</p>	<p>Annual programme of initiatives promoting the use of sustainable transport</p>
<p>T23b (Schools): Develop education, initiatives, promotion and advice to</p>	<p>Roll-out Mode-shift STARS accreditation scheme to all schools in Reading to recognise efforts encouraging sustainable travel</p>	<p>Achieve 50% of all schools accredited to at least Bronze by 2025.</p> <p>Improvements to air quality and road safety as well as</p>	<p>2025</p>	<p>Reading BC</p>	<p>AMBER</p>	<p>Modeshift STARS materials available for all schools in Reading to use.</p>

encourage low carbon travel choices in school	<p>Implement School Streets, working with the schools to provide temporary restriction on motorised traffic at school drop-off and pick-up times resulting in a safer, healthier and a more pleasant environment.</p> <p>Enable access to anybody who want to undertake Bikeability training. Provide courses through schools as well as to individuals and to groups.</p> <p><u>Links:</u> Education, Health</p>	encouraging healthier lifestyles.		School Communities	AMBER	
T24: Research and plan for Carbon Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation	<p>Participate in research programmes investigating the carbon footprint related to transport and the air quality impact of transport</p> <p>Design climate adaptation into the planning and operation of transport network to improve resilience to climate change impacts</p> <p><u>Links:</u> Adaptation</p>	<p>Research completed and recommendations made</p> <p>Climate Change Adaptation key consideration in planning of all schemes</p>	<p>2022</p> <p>2025 and beyond</p>	<p>Reading BC Transport operators</p> <p>University of Reading</p> <p>DfT</p> <p>Other Stakeholders</p>	AMBER	On-going



WATER ACTION PLAN

2020 - 2025

Our aim for 2025 is that Reading will be the most 'water-aware' and 'water-efficient' town in the UK, going beyond national targets. We will achieve this by developing and implementing a dedicated communications and education strategy and delivering a range of water saving improvements in Reading's homes and businesses.

Climate change will also increase the risk of flooding: significantly from the River Thames and from urban storm water. We will help residents and businesses understand these risks and get ready for them.

THEME OVERVIEW: Water

Theme Lead: Heather Marshall

1. PROGRESS WITH ACTION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Our aim remains to make Reading the most water-aware and water-efficient town in the UK. In 2024–2025, we made strong progress through local engagement, infrastructure improvements, and policy advocacy. Communication and education remain central, alongside collaboration with the Environment Agency, Thames Water, and local communities to deliver water-saving solutions for homes and businesses.

Climate change impacts were again felt locally. In January 2025, heavy rainfall and storm events, including the tail end of Storm Éowyn, caused disruption. While the River Thames didn't reach 2024's record levels, surface water flooding and high groundwater led to localised impacts in low-lying areas.

In response, Reading Borough Council, supported by Stantec, advanced its flood resilience work through the Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), published in May 2025. This identified priority sites and recommended bunds, ditch clearance, and infrastructure upgrades.

To raise water awareness, we delivered several initiatives:

- Events at Reading Climate Festival 2025, including a community walk, Reading Hydro tour, flood resilience consultation, and wetland nature walks.
- Online workshops and webinars on water-saving and flood preparedness.
- Collaboration with Thames Water and RBC on pilot schemes and retrofit opportunities.
- Signposting resources to help households and businesses improve water efficiency and resilience.

We continue to advocate for green infrastructure to manage surface water. Engagement with key partners has progressed around the future implementation of Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act, expected to mandate SuDS in new developments. The Flooding Review also highlighted the need to keep watercourses clear, with the Climate Change Partnership supporting community engagement and messaging around sewer misuse and litter.

Kennet Meadows remains a priority for biodiversity and flood protection. Although progress has been slowed by land ownership and technical studies, proposals such as rewetting and nature-based solutions like beaver reintroduction are being explored to improve habitat and water flow.

Reading continues to lead on green roof adoption, holding 7th place in the UK Green Roof League Table (excluding Greater London). Retrofitting of bio-solar and low-maintenance systems has expanded, and interest in biodiverse green roofs is growing. A standout initiative includes green living roofs on 15 bus shelters, using sedum plants to absorb pollution, capture rainfall, and support pollinators.

2. EXTERNAL POLICY CHANGES RELEVANT TO THE THEME

National and local policy changes are positively influencing our water stewardship efforts:

- National targets aim for a 20% reduction in household water use and 9% in non-household use by 2037–38.
- Ofwat's £100M Water Efficiency Fund supports behaviour change and innovation in water-saving technologies.
- Storm overflow regulations have tightened, with Thames Water required to reduce average spills and meet stricter nutrient reduction targets to protect river ecosystems.

3. OTHER EXTERNAL CHANGES RELEVANT TO THE THEME

Horizon scanning for key issues we need to think about as we plan the next strategy, omissions which will need to be addressed, or significant new actions which may be required.

As we plan the next strategy, we must address emerging challenges and gaps in water and flood management. Key issues include:

1. Flood Risk and Climate Resilience
More frequent flooding from rivers and surface water demands stronger planning, guided by updated flood risk assessments and mapping tools.
2. Water Resource Pressure
Reading faces high water stress, with growing demand and climate impacts requiring action on leakage, recycling, and efficiency.
3. Green Infrastructure Solutions
Nature-based approaches like SuDS, green roofs, and wetlands are vital to manage stormwater and support biodiversity alongside engineered defences.
4. Community Engagement
Effective water efficiency relies on inclusive education, retrofit support, and culturally sensitive messaging to reach all communities.

Water Theme Action Plan

NB: Some of the actions included in the action plans below, and the scale and pace at which they can be progressed, will be subject to the prevailing national policy context and/or the provision of additional powers and resources by central government, as made clear in Reading's climate emergency declaration.

This theme's RAG rating was last updated in 2024.

Action name Written in 2020	Description	Targets, measures, milestones	Target complete date	Delivery partners	Status in 2024	Commentary (100 word max)
W1: Educate the public about Reading's water situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share and explain our 2050 target and how this compares to current consumption, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domestic water consumption by activity Info on non-domestic water consumption Where our water comes from Develop Comms Strategy for engaging public, including schools <p><u>Links:</u> Education, Community, Business, Communication and Engagement.</p>	<p>Available material published on RCAN website</p> <p>New material prepared and published</p>	<p>2020</p> <p>2021</p>	Thames Water	GREEN	<p>Local authority communications to Reading residents in relation to floods in early 2024 were timely and informative.</p> <p>Further discussions were held and a flood response investigation undertaken to identify any gaps and opportunities for improvement. This flood review led to recommendations which can be seen in Section 5 of the Stantec Flood Report: Appendix 2 - Reading flood investigation Jan 2024 flood event.pdf</p>
W2: Educate households about their water consumption and the need to save water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share information on the risks of drought and importance of water conservation. Provide tips and information on how to save water in the home and garden Develop and implement Comms Strategy for engaging households 	<p>Information resource compiled and published</p> <p>Comms programme underway</p>	<p>2021</p> <p>2025</p>	Thames Water	GREEN	<p>Educational materials shared and helpful tools available to the public including: Water saving calculator Water saving Help Thames Water</p>

Action name Written in 2020	Description	Targets, measures, milestones	Target complete date	Delivery partners	Status in 2024	Commentary (100 word max)
	<u>Links:</u> Energy & LCD, Nature, Communication and Engagement					
W3: Educate businesses about water use, efficiency benefits, and dry weather preparedness / response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share the Thames Water Drought Plan Signpost relevant information and case studies from reputable sources Create industry-specific advice and case studies Run a drought exercise with Local Resilience Forum (LRF), partners and businesses Communicate the Environment Agency 'incident management' approach to drought <u>Links:</u> Business, Energy and LCD, Communication and Engagement	Information resource compiled and published Industry-specific guidance available Drought exercise and incident management response	2020 2021 2022	Thames Water (lead) Environment Agency RCAN/RBCAN	GREEN	Water efficiency for businesses Wholesale Thames Water New targets for business water efficiency set by Defra will require greater effort on behalf of the commercial sector to reduce their water usage and improve their efficiency. MOSL (the market operator) have published helpful guidance (Microsoft Word - RWG WE Road map revision - Nov 2023 - FINAL formatted (mosl.co.uk)) which includes the action to increase awareness of the water scarcity issue and of Defra's target for demand reduction in the business sector
W4: Educate the public about water quality and sewer abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publish sewer abuse and water quality stats, messages and content to RCAN website <u>Links:</u> Business, Community, Communication and Engagement	Content published	2021	Thames Water	GREEN	While awareness campaigns continue to be rolled out, sewer misuse remains a concern for the local authority and water company. Households and businesses continue to put things down the drain that lead to blockages and pollutions such as wet wipes and fats. Additionally, with the number of household improvement works, misconnection can occur and result in either surface water being discharged into the foul network and taking up critical capacity or foul water being connected to a surface water only network and being discharged without treatment directly to our local watercourses.

Action name Written in 2020	Description	Targets, measures, milestones	Target complete date	Delivery partners	Status in 2024	Commentary (100 word max)
W5: Water efficiency measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote installation of water saving and efficiency devices during refurbishment Promote Thames Water's 'Smarter Business Visit' scheme to all schools in Reading Increase awareness of leaky loos and benefits of fixing plumbing losses Engage with building management companies to promote retrofitting/leak fix Expand the provision of water info packs from new homes to all households Promote Thames Water's 'Smarter Home' visit scheme to homes with smart meters Support the roll-out of smart meters Conduct periodic research on understanding and engagement with water saving. <p><u>Links:</u> Community, Business, Communication and Engagement</p>	Refurbishment programme Schools visits, building management company engagement and leaky loos programme Water info packs, smart meters and research project	2020 2021 2025	RCAN Reading Borough Council Thames Water University of Reading (research)	GREEN	This remains on-track, supported by local planning policy.
W6: "Water Neutrality" as a planning requirement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate whether the RBC Sustainable Planning Document can be modified to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the requirement for all new major 	Share the contents of the Sustainable Planning Document on RCAN website	2020 2022	Reading BC Thames Water	GREEN	Work continues to progress on enabling water neutrality, with RBC taking the lead through the planning function and sustainability policies included in the local plan.

Action name Written in 2020	Description	Targets, measures, milestones	Target complete date	Delivery partners	Status in 2024	Commentary (100 word max)
	<p>developments to contribute to funding water saving measures equivalent to the development's water consumption.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> adopting the 'fittings approach' within Building Regulations rather than a pcc calculation approach <p><u>Links:</u> Energy and LCD</p>	<p>Feedback on required amendments</p> <p>Amendments implemented</p>	2025			
W7: Leadership and Influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lobby MPs and Defra to introduce a mandatory water label to help consumers make water-efficient choices Lobby MPs and Defra to strengthen building regulations and planning process, to drive water efficiency within all new developments and procurement schemes. 	<p>Water labelling</p> <p>Building regs and planning</p>	<p>2021</p> <p>2025</p>	<p>RCAN</p>	GREEN	Working in partnership with Thames Water, MOSL (the market operator) and other stakeholders to support policy and regulation that promote water efficiency and water security.
W8: Research to drive future improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research the costs, benefits and suitability, of rainfall harvesting and grey water recycling schemes. Use UKCP18 climate modelling and local river flow models, to develop projections for future drought / water resource availability. 	Develop research proposals	2020-25	<p>RCAN</p> <p>University of Reading (research)</p>	AMBER	Limited modelling or future scenarios undertaken locally, however extensive information available more widely, including work commissioned by the Greater London Authority (GLA) which can be used to inform and improve the situation in Reading.

Action name Written in 2020	Description	Targets, measures, milestones	Target complete date	Delivery partners	Status in 2024	Commentary (100 word max)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With RBC and LEP update our estimates of Reading population growth to 2050 Develop a new evidence-based 2050 water target Review the first Adaptation Plan and identify and deliver initial win-win opportunities Identify thresholds, risks, solutions and case studies for the second Adaptation Plan Work with Thames Water to understand the changes to household and business water use due to COVID-19 impacts <p><u>Links:</u> Adaptation</p>					

Action name Written in 2020	Description	Targets, measures, milestones	Target complete date	Delivery partners	Status in 2024	Commentary (100 word max)
W9: Raise awareness of fluvial (river) flood risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise awareness of flood risk from the River Thames and the proposed Reading and Caversham Scheme by carrying out various engagement activities Update the flood maps on the Gov.UK website to show the areas at risk of flooding based on the latest flood modelling <p><u>Links:</u> Education, Business, Transport, Community, Adaptation</p>	Engagement activities Flood maps updated	Q2-3 2020 2022	Environment Agency Partners: Reading BC, local councillors, local businesses and community groups	GREEN	<p>Reading experienced significant flooding in early 2024. A report was commissioned, detailing the actions taken by the Council and other responsible bodies during flooding in Reading January 2024, and recommended actions to tackle future flood threats (Section19-Flood-Report-RBC-final.pdf (reading.gov.uk) and Appendix 2 - Reading flood investigation Jan 2024 flood event.pdf).</p>

<p>W10: Raise awareness of the Flood Warning and flood alert service</p> <p><u>Links:</u> Education, Business, Community, Adaptation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of at-risk homes and businesses signed-up to receive Flood Alerts • Signpost advice on the Flood Warning Service and what to do before, during and after a flood • Develop “what if” scenarios to help people and businesses understand the importance of self-preparation, and education about flood risk 	<p>90% sign-up to FW service</p> <p>100% sign-up to FW service</p> <p>“What if” scenarios developed and posted on ReadingCAN</p>	<p>Q4 2021</p> <p>Q4 2025</p> <p>Q4 2025</p>	<p>Environment Agency</p> <p>Partners: Reading BC and community groups</p>	<p>AMBER</p>	<p>Flood alert service operational. Residents in areas of risk receiving alerts and access to information available.</p> <p>Additional actions recommended to address risk of flooding including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The open section of Christchurch Ditch between George Street and the public footpath adjacent to residential properties at Heron Island was cleared of accumulated debris within the channel and on the RBC-owned bank. A tree creating a partial blockage in the channel was also removed. - A further tree has been felled which was growing adjacent to and through the wingwall of the culvert located at the eastern end of Hills Meadow. - The local surface water drainage network in Queens Road has been checked and cleared by RBC Highways Team. - A preliminary meeting was held with the Heron Island Residents Association (HIRA) to discuss potential culvert clearance works. - The ditch immediately south of Circuit Lane has been cleared of debris - Bank and footpath repairs have been undertaken to the Holy Brook to the east of Briscoe's Bridge - Installation of a trash screen to the culvert at the eastern end of Hills Meadow, to capture debris before it enters the closed section of the culvert and improve the ease of future clearance work - Establishment of a checking/maintenance schedule for the ditch and trash screen - Installation of a level gauge board at the eastern end of Christchurch Ditch to provide a
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Action name Written in 2020	Description	Targets, measures, milestones	Target complete date	Delivery partners	Status in 2024	Commentary (100 word max)
W11: Reducing fluvial flood risk from River Thames	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work in partnership with Risk Management Authorities and local stakeholders to identify ways to reduce fluvial flood risk Gain support from all Reading communities on action to reduce flood risk from the River Thames Seek funding through partnership funding and local grants. <p><u>Links:</u> Education, Business, Community, Adaptation</p>	<p>Reading community makes decision about favoured River Thames flood reduction option</p> <p>Funds raised to deliver favoured option</p>	<p>Q2-3 2021</p> <p>2025</p>	<p>Environment Agency</p> <p>Partners: Reading BC, local councillors, Thames Water, Local Resilience Forum, community groups and local businesses</p>	RED	<p>visual indicator of water levels and potential flood risk to residents</p> <p>Work required to meet the 100% target for those registered for the flood warning service.</p> <p>'What if' scenarios not yet published on RCAN website, however excellent flood preparation and response resources available on Reading Council website, updated 16 July 2024.</p> <p>Flood related community engagement and action plans with investment not yet delivered. Opportunity to establish a flood resilience bond or community investment plan potentially, to support keeping the gutters clear, green space available, and providing flood awareness and education.</p>
W12: Implement sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain the importance of SuDS and their practical application Find out what post scheme monitoring is happening and recommend how this can be improved <p><u>Links:</u> Nature, Adaptation, Transport</p>	<p>Share planning information</p> <p>Monitoring, reporting and research</p>	<p>2020</p> <p>2025</p>	Reading BC	AMBER	<p>We remain committed to prioritising sustainable urban drainage initiatives. Taking inspiration from London neighbours (Plans unveiled for UK's largest sustainable urban drainage network (susdrain.org)) we will continue to work with the Local Council and Thames Water to identify and realise opportunities for sustainable drainage. This will also be reflected in the updated local Plan.</p>

Action name Written in 2020	Description	Targets, measures, milestones	Target complete date	Delivery partners	Status in 2024	Commentary (100 word max)
W13: Investigate the use of green infrastructure to reduce slow down storm water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate measures to slow the flow of storm water, eg by planting and creating scrapes and swales. Follow up on research by Reading University and the Landwise project Transfer learning to RBC Sustainable Design and Construction (supplementary planning document). <u>Links:</u> Nature, Transport, Adaptation, Business	Scope project brief and costs Deliver results	2020 2023	Water theme group Partners: Environment Agency and University of Reading	RED	Additional work required to understand opportunities for green infrastructure to support stormwater management in Reading.
W14: Improve the resilience of the Kennet Meadows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a plan for the Kennet Meadows to make it a resilient wetland Make sure the plans preserve the need for the meadows to act as flood plain Consider the drought risk and make sure the needs of the meadows are considered in EA / TW drought plans. There will be a limit to their protection...is it possible to develop a recovery plan early to try and mitigate? <u>Links:</u> Nature, Adaptation, Energy	Workshop to bring partners together and agree scope Develop and share plan	2021 2023	EA Partners: CEH (Wallingford), UoR Water theme group member	AMBER	Initial conversations have not resulted in action. Need to reassess opportunity and reengage relevant stakeholders.
W15: Improve our flood risk adaptation plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve our understanding of climate change adaptation thresholds 	Post information on revised future flood modelling, as it is released	Ongoing	Partners: EA, Reading BC and local	AMBER	Work progressing on improving and updating flood risk guidance and adaptation planning.

Action name Written in 2020	Description	Targets, measures, milestones	Target complete date	Delivery partners	Status in 2024	Commentary (100 word max)
W16: Investigate opportunities for Green roofs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate the latest UK climate projections to find out what extreme rainfall events we need to prepare for. Check the developing EA guidance for fluvial flooding and develop our own understanding of the changing flood risk for the River Thames and River Kennet. Develop our flood adaptation plans through to 2050 and beyond <u>Links:</u> Education, Adaptation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop recommendations for green roofs, green walls and landscaping for new build Explore opportunities for retrofitting homes and offices Develop advice for home owners on the benefits of breaking up hard surfaces in driveways and gardens <u>Links:</u> Transport, Nature, Community, Business	Deliver report on change in storm rainfall, and Thames + Kennet flood peaks	Q4 2024	interest groups	AMBER	Report commissioned by RBC following January 2024 flooding will support continued progress against this action.
W17: Develop links to the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate the limits of our emergency plans and explore what the community of Reading can do to become more resilient. 	Organise meeting with LRF Public workshop/ event on resilience and adaptation	2021 2022	UoR Partners: Reading BC and EA EA Partners: Reading BC, TW, UoR, LRF	AMBER	Green roofs on new builds and as part of a retrofit programme have the potential to delivery more benefit for local residents through enhanced biodiversity and slowing and storing water. There are also health and well being benefits associated with green infrastructure. Work in flight to work with partnership organisations to share guidance and best practice via the RCAN website. Information to help establish a level of ambition and overcome barriers included here: LONDON-LIVING-ROOFS-WALLS-REPORT-2019.pdf (cdn.net) Emergency plans have been tested in 2024 when the early months brought significant amounts of rain that led to extensive flooding. Adaptation planning is needed as we prepare communities to manage the experience of our changing climate.

Action name	Description	Targets, measures, milestones	Target complete date	Delivery partners	Status in 2024	Commentary (100 word max)
Written in 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share the developing adaptation planning and vision for Reading with the LRF to inform long term strategic decisions. Share advice on being prepared for an incident including "Thames Valley: Are you ready?" booklet and advice from the Environment Agency Use resources from Business in the Community Business Resilience Group to help businesses improve resilience <p><u>Links:</u> Community, Business, Adaptation</p>					<p>There is a need to strengthen the link between RCAN and the TV LRF, which provides helpful tools and guides to support communities, individuals, and businesses prepare for an event.</p> <p>2025 will focus on sharing the work the TV LRF deliver and including a link to their resources. This may be most relevant for communities at risk of flooding.</p>

COMMUNICATIONS

Cross-cutting service

OVERVIEW: Communications

PROGRESS WITH ACTION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The RCCP Communications Theme has not had a dedicated volunteer Theme Lead since 2022. Prior to this, communications actions were delivered by two very active volunteer Comms Theme Leads with support from a part-time RCCP co-ordinator.

During this period, successes included:

- creation of a public-facing brand, ReadingCAN
- creation of a comprehensive ReadingCAN website with an info hub that services organisations (including businesses and schools) and individuals who want to reduce their carbon footprint
- a Reading Climate Pledge for individuals
- a Reading Climate Pledge for organisations
- annual Reading Climate Festivals
- communications infrastructure including: Zoom; Eventbrite; Facebook; X; Instagram; website hosting; a blog; a LinkedIn group for local businesses
- school visits, talks and stands at community events
- promotion of community organisations and initiatives focused on climate and nature
- other.

This comms infrastructure provided a strong foundation for RCAN's communications work, however the pace was not sustainable without similarly dedicated volunteers. We have not been successful (yet) in fundraising for a paid comms and engagement role.

2024/2025

In the absence of volunteer comms leads, the part-time RCCP Co-ordinator (working 1.5 days a week in 2024/2025) took on a selection of Comms & Engagement responsibilities during 2024/25 on top of co-ordination responsibilities, specifically:

1. Curation of the **Reading Climate Festival 2025** programme; promotion of the Festival through RCAN channels; plus design and delivery of a selection of Festival events
2. Targeted comms and engagement related to **RCCP's Year of Climate Engagement**, the process that informed the Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plans for 2025-2030

Successes in this reporting period included:

- **Reading Climate Festival 2025:** 30 online and in-person events provided opportunities for local climate and nature groups and individuals to showcase their campaigns, services, successes and key messages; the Festival also provided a key 'moment' to engage the Reading public in co-creating the new climate strategy.
- **Year of Climate Engagement 2024/25**

- Creation and convening of a 'core deliberative group' which met during three day-long workshops in 2024/25 to shape successive drafts of the Reading Climate Emergency Strategy & Action Plans 2025 - 2030
- Three public surveys, which responded to and shaped the above process
- Convening of a Youth Engagement Day
- Convening a Reading Climate Leaders' Summit
- Communications toolkits to enable local organisations to promote the above opportunities

RCCP and Dialogue Matters (our partner for the three core deliberative group workshops), won a **CIEEM Best Practice Award for Stakeholder Engagement**, for our Year of Climate Engagement activities.

CHALLENGES:

- Lack of resource was a key challenge during this time. The more targeted comms and engagement work in 2024/25 came at the expense of **basic services** that were envisioned for the comms role: e.g. gathering news from partners, telling inspiring stories and promoting events; raising awareness of the 2020-2025 Climate Emergency Action Plans; and management of day-to-day queries.
- It was also challenging to manage expectations from the public. Setting up a public-facing brand in 2021/2022 (ReadingCAN) has led people to assume that ReadingCAN/RCCP is a delivery body with central resource (staff and funds) to shape and deliver comms campaigns, rather than a partnership where actions are proposed and delivered through member organisations, e.g. University of Reading; Reading Borough Council; GREN, etc.

A paid, full-time Comms and Engagement Lead could add a lot of value to RCCP's work in Reading, working closely with both volunteers and with comms leads at anchor institutions, ideally within a 'Reading Climate Communications Alliance'. It's not likely that this strategic need and orchestrator role could be serviced by volunteers who come and go.

2. EXTERNAL TRENDS & INSIGHTS RELEVANT TO THE THEME

- There is a major backlash globally and locally against greenwashing (whether intentional or because of lack of data and insights), and a number of creative agencies are collaborating to introduce a new role and new standards for creative work – e.g. Futerra, Climate Outreach and Creatives for Climate.
- There is also a backlash against overly simplified or non-targeted appeals to 'individual action' without the added context of the relative impacts of, for example corporate behaviour and responsibilities, local and national government behaviour, systemic barriers, relative incomes and top-of-mind concerns. Climate campaigns require thoughtful, targeted and accurate messaging that does not place unrealistic burden on individuals. Communications campaigns that promote solar PV, heat pumps, meat-free diets, insulation, EV, grow-your-own, 'sharing, repairing and re-use',

and various behaviour and mindset changes are not context-free and should therefore also aim to (1) enable or inspire these changes locally, including through partnerships with local businesses and the Council, (2) inspire change through storytelling and case studies using trusted spokespeople from target communities (3) provide accurate and up-to-date information, and trusted endorsements where possible. These campaigns require time and thought to develop, and a large outreach partnership to achieve impact.

- RCAN comms tends to reach a set of 'usual suspects'. We are struggling to build our reach without additional comms resource to develop targeted outreach and engagement campaigns or an editorial programme, e.g. to inspire others through sharing stories about local climate action.
- Even as sustainability rises to the top of more people's list of concerns, the cost of living can sometime frustrate efforts to grow, for example uptake of solar, EV, heat pumps and insulation, even if savings can be demonstrated over the long term. Many household climate actions do offer savings even in the short-term, e.g. various circular economy actions related to repair, sharing platforms, 2nd hand, recycling, etc., as well as reducing meat in diets. The cost-of-living crisis actually builds the case for these sorts of 'cost-saving' climate actions, so a little bit of additional comms resource could help to harvest this low-hanging fruit.

4. KEY ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE CONTEXT OF THE REVIEW OF THE STRATEGY FOR 2025-30

All of the current themes included in the current climate action plans are calling for additional comms and engagement resource.

Comms and engagement resource is needed to develop a coherent comms and engagement strategy to service Reading's 2025 – 2030 climate action priorities, and to raise awareness of the strategy and engage people in it.

A funding bid has been submitted to the National Lottery Climate Action Fund.

No changes have been made to this RAG rating since the last annual report in 2024.

CROSS-CUTTING THEME: Communications & Engagement

Action name*	Description (written in 2020)	Target, measure, milestone	Target complete date	Delivery	Status	Commentary (100 words), and resource challenges (100 words)	Carry forward to 2025-30?
General							
Information hub	<p>Establish & maintain one-stop hub on website where all themes are supported with relevant, practical info for all stakeholders.</p> <p>Mixture of bespoke content (Reading-centric) and signposts to reliable sources of info e.g. WRAP, Wildlife Trust, Energy Saving Trust, Carbon Trust etc.</p> <p>Supported by comms programme (conventional and social) to drive traffic. Include info on progress: achievements, measurement etc.</p>	Content published on website	Set up by Nov 2020, continuously update thereafter.	Comms and Engagement Volunteer + Theme leads	GREEN	<p>An online info hub was created in 2022 by volunteers. It shows evidence-based individual and organisational climate action options related to diets, travel, energy use, nature, waste and recycling. Given resource constraints, traffic to this hub has been indirect, e.g. visitors who arrive via Reading Climate Festival or Year of Climate Engagement outreach, which were RCCP's key outreach projects for 2024.</p> <p>Resource: RCCP has not had a comms volunteer or staff resource to prioritise updates to the info hub, or to design and deliver targeted outreach campaigns related to the hub. Currently revisiting whether this should be a priority of RCCP and if so how to resource it and how to position RCCP – e.g. would RCCP manage a group of volunteers? Convene comms innovation challenges linked to the strategy? Simply promote the strategy itself and encourage organisations to design relevant campaigns in response to it? Raise funds for a full-time comms lead? Invest resource in growing our own comms channels?</p>	Amend – (1) update content and (2) align outreach campaigns with climate action priorities for 2025-2030
Dashboard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a dashboard with KPIs that track progress against the targets in the strategy. Publish on the RCAN website but also 	Dashboard designed and created	Set up by Dec 2020 and continuously updated thereafter	RCCP Co-ordinator + Energy Theme Lead + UoR	AMBER	RCCP created a dashboard brief and convened a scoping meeting with RBC and UoR. All agreed on the desirability of this dashboard. Wokingham Council is also keen to partner. RCCP proposed a dashboard-focused Masters project to UoR. The aim of the dashboard is to help different audience	Yes

	strategic media around the town, eg large digital sign at the station, buses, The Oracle, Reading Borough Council venues.				Yellow	<p>segments understand the potential avoided emissions under their collective influence (agency), e.g. householders, businesses, schools, consumers, commuters, public authorities, etc. and measure changes and progress by various segmentations.</p> <p>This would support and guide a storytelling and campaign strategy, rather than replace it, and form an evidence base for the town's journey to net zero.</p> <p>Resource: Currently no-one 'owns' this project as an organisational deliverable. The project requires expert oversight, especially as we want to integrate Scope 3 emissions into the dashboard and develop messages around Scope 3 emissions for Reading's net zero challenge.</p>	
Brand Book and Stakeholder Map	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop brand guidelines, style guide and messaging matrix Confirm role of RCCP versus RCAN and relationship with other organisations within Reading 	Brand Book and stakeholder map created	By end Sept	Comms and Engagement Volunteer / RCCP Co-ordinator	GREEN	<p>We have a de facto brand (see social media outreach; Reading Climate Festival 2024 comms; and website look, feel and copy).</p> <p>Going forward we will need to update messaging re the role and responsibilities of RCCP & RCAN (especially with regard to comms & engagement), to manage expectations and also to encourage and direct offers of support.</p> <p>A strong stakeholder list emerged via our research for Reading Climate Leaders' Summit and Designing a Net Zero Reading Deliberative Group participants and comms targets – we know have a list of 300+ named contacts.</p>	Yes – update for 2025 - 2030
Campaign Calendar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and publish a calendar of campaigns to encourage action on different issues, eg Beat 	Quarterly Rolling Comms Plan devised and published	By Nov 2020	Comms and Engagement Volunteer / RCCP Co-ordinator	GREEN	RCCP campaigns for 2021 – 2024 have been delivered. 2024 outreach focused primarily on Reading Climate Festival (and component partner events) and the Year of Climate Engagement (and component activities). RCCP also partnered with	Amend

	<p>the Street, Fair Trade Fortnight</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align with RBC campaigns and initiatives led by other organisations in the town, as well as national “days” eg Earth Day • Support with social media and conventional media such as bus advertising, outdoor, The Oracle, council magazine 				GREEN	<p>RBC on a Month of Climate Awareness in 2023 and 2024. A new campaign calendar is needed for 2025, and this should derive from comms priorities for this period. Given existing resource this likely to have a similar scope.</p> <p>Theme leads are currently identifying comms & engagement campaign needs within their theme areas for the 2025 – 2030 Climate Emergency Strategy – e.g. around energy use and retrofit; water use; food waste; habitat protection; climate literacy; etc. Local organisations across Reading will take ownership of these campaigns by adding their names as delivery partners / partnerships against these comms actions in the Climate Emergency Strategy for 2025 - 2030. RCCP can inform people of these campaigns, but it does not have the resource to design and deliver them.</p> <p>Resource: Additional resource would allow RCCP to mobilise and support targeted campaigns linked to the new climate strategy, and offer guidance around greenwashing, best practice, behaviour change, etc. They could also offer ‘innovation services’, e.g. by hosting ‘communications innovation challenges’ to mobilise responses to particular comms and engagement needs related to the strategy.</p>	
Climate Literacy Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer carbon and climate training, tailored to support the RCAN Action Plan, to all who live, work or study in Reading • Begin by training all RBC staff • Potential to build on the University's MOOC 	<p>Development of training</p> <p>Targets for delivery</p>	<p>December 2021</p>	?	GREEN	<p>RBC budget has covered a first wave of Climate Literacy Training for RBC staff. This is ongoing and each participant designs a climate action to take into their work KPIs.</p> <p>Could it become one of the (resourced) climate action priorities for the new strategy, for Reading to become a climate-literate town? (Does a net-zero Reading require a climate-literate Reading?)</p>	Amend – not a comms action

	<p>and/or Climate Reality training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accreditation available from the UNEP endorsed Carbon Literacy Project 					<p>Resource: Budget for this would need to come from RBC and other stakeholders, e.g. UoR, corporates, or from fundraising.</p>	
Third party events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take part in/support local public events eg Town Meal, Beanpole, day, Waterfest, Meadows Day, school fêtes etc. 	Events calendar published and theme support agreed.	10 events per year	RCAN admin	AMBER	<p>RCAN hosted and sponsored Big Lunch and supported 30 other events during Reading Climate Festival. RCCP board members (volunteers) spoke at several third-party events, including CADRA.</p> <p>Resource: Requires portable display materials as well as volunteer help + key messaging and calls to action.</p>	Amend
Funding hub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish and maintain a list of sources of outside funding that can be drawn on to support RCAN initiatives. • Offer grants to support small local initiatives that align with RCAN goals 	List published	Set up by end of 2020, continuously updated thereafter.	RCAN admin	AMBER	<p>RCCP has won funding from GWR and Tomato Energy in the past two years and is also a recipient of funding from RBC, which was ringfenced for a review and update of RCCP's Climate Emergency Strategy. RCCP is looking into National Lottery Community Fund, Co-op Community Fund and RBC's Social Value Fund. RCCP channeled some of these funds into 'mock UN' schools events and many additional events via Reading Climate Festival.</p> <p>Resource: We intend to shape a volunteer role around fundraising.</p>	Amend – not a comms action
Volunteer Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Reading Voluntary Action to establish process to recruit volunteers to support delivery of RCAN activities 	Relationship built and process established	December 2020	RCAN, RVA	AMBER	<p>This will likely be a priority moving forward. We have posted a few volunteer roles on RVA, and have had some approaches via the website, but have not found suitable candidates – i.e. relevant comms skills and ability to work independently.</p> <p>Resource: The RCCP Co-ordinator role would need to be expanded to make time for recruitment and management.</p>	Amend – not a comms actions
Research Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a research programme to support the actions in the strategy 	Programme developed and approach defined	April 2021	RCAN, University of Reading	AMBER	<p>It will likely emerge as a climate action priority for the new strategy to align UoR research with the town's climate action priorities. We will need a</p>	No - not an RCCP comms action

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the University of Reading to develop a structured approach to matching research needs with students seeking research projects. 					champion at the UoR to oversee this. UoR is currently leading on this.	
Climate Action Pledge for Individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a pledge that residents can sign to commit to taking action on climate change across a relevant range of impacts Possible “eco-journey” starting with simple things and becoming more advanced 	Pledge defined and published	November 2020	RCAN	GREEN	<p>Pledge was created for individuals in 2022 and published on RCAN homepage. It is a feature of most RCCP outreach campaigns.</p> <p>A dedicated pledge outreach campaign is now needed.</p> <p>We may need to update the pledge to align with the 2025 – 2030 strategy.</p> <p>Resource: To optimise reach, the pledge campaign would need the buy-in and participation (and possibly joint branding) of a comms alliance (i.e. comms leads at all delivery partner organisations). The campaign would need orchestration.</p>	Amend as ongoing campaign
Business focus							
Reading Climate Pledge for Organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define a set of commitments for organisations to sign up to in order to gain “Climate Friendly” status 	Pledge defined and published	November 2020	RCAN lead	AMBER	<p>This pledge was developed and published on the RCAN website in 2023. Stage 2 was kicked off in 2024, when RCCP launched a pledge campaign concept during Reading Climate Festival 2024, in partnership with Connect Reading, REDA and Ethical Reading. This will be developed further during late 2024 and 2025. Local organisations will be invited to sign up to the pledge to support Reading’s journey to net zero and they will receive guidance and practical support to work towards making their own organisations net zero. Our goal is to create a visual dashboard showing a growing number of local businesses committed to supporting Reading’s journey to net zero.</p>	Yes

						Resource: RCCP orchestration + co-ordination with Connect Reading, REDA and Ethical Reading.	
Climate-Aware Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embed climate change into the workstreams of the LEP, IOD, Chamber of Commerce and other local business networks Work with leaders of those organisations to convince them of the strategic importance of climate change for their own organisations and their membership 	All nominated organisations have climate change as part of their mission	Summer 2021	RBC lead	GREEN	<p>During 2024 a targeted list of 90 senior local leaders across all major sectors has been:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> invited to the Reading Climate Leaders' Summit hosted by RCCP, to invite them into the ambition to become a net zero town by 2030 invited to participate in the core deliberative group 'Designing a net Zero Reading' - the stakeholder participation process for co-creating Reading's Climate Emergency Strategy for 2025 – 2030 invited to comment on emergent climate action priorities via two surveys invited to become delivery partners for specific climate action priorities in the Reading Climate Emergency Strategy for 2025 - 2030 	Yes
Lobbying for better business practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify barriers preventing use of sanctions to address "carbon crimes", eg: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaving lights on all night in office buildings Having doors of restaurants/retail units open Incorporate the GHG Protocol (Scope 1, 2 & 3) ? Lobby central government for the policy changes 	Issues identified and lobbying programme launched	Spring 2021	RCAN lead	RED	<p>Integrate into current strategy review and identify suitable delivery partner.</p> <p>Resource needed</p>	Yes – but not a comms priority
Reading Business Climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish business network for sharing of expertise and 	Network already launched.	November 2020	RCAN lead Ethical Reading Sustainability Champions	AMBER	Established but lacks momentum. This will be linked to the revived Pledge campaigns for organisations (see above).	Yes – merge with similar goals

Action Network	<p>knowledge on sustainable business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold regular events • Publish business-centric advice and guidance and signpost tools and models from reputable sources on the RCAN website • Encourage all Reading Businesses to nominate an employee who is their representative and can help to engage the company 	<p>Events programme published</p> <p>Information hub launched</p>	November 2020		RED		
Sustainable Business Accreditation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate the suitability of BCorp and BITC frameworks and other accreditations • Ideally have a free-to-use dashboard system • Introduce an accreditation scheme for businesses that recognises achievement at different levels, eg bronze, silver, gold, to create a race to the top 	<p>Research completed and proposal published</p>	Summer 2021	RCAN lead	RED	<p>No progress – this could be integrated into the Pledge Campaign for Organisations.</p> <p>May require funding</p>	Amend – not a comms priority
Divestment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divestment from fossil fuels is an important signal of intent as well as a way to divert capital investment from carbon-based to cleantech/Greentech innovation. 	Campaign launched	November 2021	RCAN lead	RED	<p>No progress – this can be merged into pledge campaign targeting local organisations</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Run a campaign encouraging all institutional investors in Reading to divest 						
Business volunteering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create opportunities for staff to support delivery of actions from the strategy via Team Challenge 	6 business actions a year	First actions Q1 2021	RCAN lead Connect Reading/RBC /NTF/Econet/TCV,	RED	No progress – this can be merged into the pledge campaign got organisations (see above)	
Community focus							
Working with other organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish links with other groups working on the sustainability agenda across Reading and showcase their work through the RCAN website Enable sharing of events, expertise, knowledge and resources by other groups 	Partner hub set up with ability for representatives to contribute content	Partner hub set up by end 2020	Comms and Engagement team	GREEN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RCAN hosted and sponsored a 'by invitation only' 'Shaping a Future for Community Energy in Reading' event during Reading Climate Festival 2024. As a result the group proposed to set up a local energy transition hub and a number of workstreams have been set up. Circular economy initiatives have been promoted on the RCAN website and socials. A newsletter has been set up and local groups have been invited to submit their news and events. <p>Comms resource is needed to liaise with local groups so that we can promote their news.</p>	Amend
Community focused work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify 2 geographical areas in Reading (up to 10 streets) – and support the residents in these streets to lead more climate-friendly lives. Develop competition (eg 'green streets initiative') 	2 areas per year 6 groups per year	First area identified by Q2 2021 First group identified by Q1 2021	RCAN admin	RED	<p>No progress. This could be submitted as a proposed climate action priority for the new strategy and delivery partners identified via that process.</p> <p>There is no resource for this at RCCP</p>	Amend

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and work with community groups (i.e. religious, ethnic, age related) – and support the members to lead more Climate friendly lives, through community talks and projects 						
Education focus							
Schools-based interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with the Education team and Better Futures for Children, to establish a programme of climate change interventions for schools. To cover physical changes (i.e install solar panels, heat pumps etc) and support with lessons/curriculum / local community engagement (use Eco Schools framework?) Draw on established tools and programmes where possible 	Programme launched	September 2021	RCAN admin Brighter Futures for Children, RBC Sustainability team, Helen Roberts team	GREEN	Schools section on website has been set up. The UoR launched their Climate Ambassadors for Schools scheme during Reading Climate Festival. A proposed energy transition hub (see above) will support schools to reduce emissions via solar, heat pumps and energy efficiency. https://www.eco-schools.org.uk/ https://www.greenschoolsproject.org.uk/ https://www.wwf.org.uk/get-involved/schools/green-ambassadors https://www.youngclimatewarriors.org/	Amend
Reading Schools Climate Action Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish teacher network for sharing of expertise and knowledge on sustainable schools (for primary and secondary) Hold regular events 	Network launched. Events programme published	September 2021	Brighter Futures for Children RCAN, Alfred Sutton primary?	RED	Discontinued due to lack of resources	Amend – this is a BFfC action

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish school-centric advice and guidance and signpost tools and models from reputable sources • Link to home schooling networks 	Information hub launched					
Model Climate Conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand the model climate conference to include all schools in Reading • Bring the outputs back to the RCAN website • Legacy - Supporting the schools to make the changes they committed to on the day, through the RSCAN 	50% increase in schools participating in the Model Climate Conference	November 2021	Just ideas	GREEN	<p>RCCP supported Reading Schools Climate Conferences in 2022 and 2023 and will support one in 2024. We made personal contact with non-participating schools to encourage attendance. We also supported a Youth Mobilisation Day during Reading Climate Festival as part of the wider climate strategy review, to elicit youth visions of a net zero Reading, and promoted a Big Letter to schools.</p> <p>Subject to funding – we have received a donation from GWR and have applied to Tomato Energy</p>	Yes
Young Persons Climate Assembly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the potential to set up a Young Persons activist Network – for young people to meet up with like-minded individuals to develop ideas and support regular meetings, Instagram account? • Are there any programmes that we could already fit in with? Eg: Youth Council, schools strikes for climate, https://www.foeeurope.org/yfoee 	Research appetite and develop proposal if appropriate	June 2021	RCAN admin	GREEN	<p>A UoR student and Reading Youth Council were invited to host and design a Youth Mobilisation Day during Reading Climate Festival, which received financial and other support from RCCP and RBC. Both were also invited into the core deliberative group for Designing a Net Zero Reading.</p> <p>Must be youth led and with proper safeguarding</p>	