



**Reading Climate Change Partnership
Board Meeting Agenda
Fri 18th October 2019
Councillor Room 1 at Civic Offices.
10.30-12.30 pm**

Attendees

Willem Londeman (WL), Bottomline Technologies

Ben Burfoot (BB), Reading Borough Council – Sustainability Manager

Chris Beales (CB) (Chair), Environment Agency

Poppy Harris (PH), Oracle Corporation UK

Tricia Marcouse (TM), GREN partnership (Waste Saddoes Ltd)

Councillor Tony Page (TP), Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport

Tracey Rawling Church (TRC), Connect Reading (Independent Sustainability Consultant)

Katie Brett (KB), RCCP Support Officer (Reading Borough Council – sustainability team)

Apologies

Tim Dixon (TD), University of Reading

Paul Harrison (PH), Berkshire NHS

Minutes

Update from Chair + forward look

See link to Chair's introduction slides here:



<https://alto.chrisbeales.net/index.php/s/ltECUnoHXjtXWE>

CB gave a snap shot of some of the recent climate events across the world – ranging from confirmation of: a Swiss glacier vanishing; the destruction caused by Hurricane Dorian in Japan; and the recent heat waves Europe. There has also been much recent social and political activity – including the international Climate Strike on 20th Sept. The event was fantastic in Reading – and very well attended outside Reading Civic Centre, followed by a march through the town centre. CB made a speech highlighting the work of ReadingCAN and found the large amount of people engaged very moving. The ReadingCAN message of ‘Zero carbon 2030’ is correct and very strong.

Since the June launch event the theme groups have been working very hard. The development of the new strategy is going hand in hand with the growth of ReadingCAN. ‘Reading Business CAN’ group was launched at an event at Town Hall this month.

The Environment Agency has also recently declared ‘Zero Carbon 2030’. There has been many requests for the RCCP Chair to talk at events. Momentum is building - which is great.

A website group has now been set up across the themes. CB showed the hit rate graph for the website, with approx. 400 hits per week.

CB clarified the timeline for the development of the 2020-25 strategy: All the draft action plans will be submitted by Dec 17th, the narrative written alongside this. There will be a public consultation in Feb to March 2020, with a launch in spring.

Action: BB/TP to clarify which RBC Strategic Environment Planning and Transport Committee (SEPT) meeting will be used to sign off the strategy (16th March or Nov 2020). It needs to align with the new Transport Plan too.

Update on the Adaptation Plan and event on 22nd October

There is a public event planned at Reading Town Hall on 22nd October to share an overview of the recently commissioned first Reading Adaptation Plan. CB will present along with Lisa Horrocks from Mott MacDonald and Jason Lowe from the Met Office (who is based at Reading University).

As a reminder: This is an introductory report with a Reading focus. The idea is that it helps to start local thinking around adaptation needs and issues (ref Chris’ commission document:

<https://readingcan.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/RCCP-Adaptation-commission-2019.pdf>).

Check RCCP happy with the strategy progress

- o Reflect on outcome from 15th October - Mid-term review*
- o Is it strong enough to meet the challenge of a Climate Emergency?*
- o Is the Vision good?*
- o What are the resource gaps? How can we help?*
- o Are we still on target for Christmas (theme Action Plans + Vision)?*

Update was provided by each theme:

Energy theme – they are half way through the key issues and another workshop is planned with the theme group to complete the plan. They have a very strong vision statement.

Resources – they also feel they are half way through. Actions have been written but they need to be made SMART and follow the ICELI principles. They have a strong vision.

Nature – the action plan is on target, going very well. However the vision is nebulous and hazy.

Water – they are struggling to ‘get things together’. They have a strong vision but need assistance with the action plan.

Health – this action plan is currently looking very thin. It was highlighted however that this is a new theme of work and so has no basis to build on like the other themes. It needs ‘investigation’ actions in order that it becomes a robust plan in the years to come. They need to build networks with the Royal Berkshire Hospital and into the wider health community. NHS health plans can provide much of the delivery. This theme has a strong alignment with Adaptation. Need to develop the mental health support strand and link to heat plan. Need some assistance.

Action: PH to link with the Royal Berkshire Hospital to engage with and populate the action plan. PH to meet with health theme co-ordinator Gill Ringland and the person tasked with pulling Action plans together - to add key adaptation health needs, and then put into NHS plans.

Transport - the public consultation for the Transport plan is happening alongside this action plan development. The draft currently has a lot of actions. The overall vision needs to be more clear. TP highlighted there would be more clarity

on the plan towards the end of the year – once the 2500 responses had been considered. The current action plan needs to be distilled.

Action: KB to ensure all theme co-ordinators are aiming for a *Snappy vision statement and then a wider paragraph to expand the statement.*

BB highlighted that there is a reasonable size gap after modelling for 2050. Have to get more traction. A lot out of our control.

Make sure no gaps in next 5 years.

Resource gaps: Water – CB helping out.

Decision: All agreed that a resource is needed to help write/digest the action plans and visions - to be a critical friend. To ensure all the action plans follow the ICLEI principles, as well as the cross cutting issues of education, adaptation, community and business. Also to ensure all cross theme work areas - such as 'air quality' and 'food' are addressed in the strategy. This help is needed asap in order for the work to be completed by Christmas. Lots of consideration is needed. It is critical that the plan does not slip. Writing the strategy narrative is also needed to be done before Christmas. This could be done by the same consultant or other.

It was noted that the Council budget is confirmed in February and we need to plan for this.

Action: KB and BB to write an 'invitation to tender' for this work and recruit a consultant asap.

RCCP budget update

- *Including update on the strategy budget (£10k earmarked)*

BB updated that £64k budget was carried over in April 2019. In addition there is solar incomes of £24k – however the panels are not performing optimally and £20k is more realistic. Of this £84k – £40k is committed. We expect to carry over £44k. We are able to commit more resource to work - post Christmas.

Help is needed to pull together a strategy narrative - with a consistent tone of voice, and to make it an attractive document.

On advertising – to discuss in Jan.

Action: CB to add to January board agenda

Decision: Agreed Strategy budget to increase to £15k to pay for two additional pieces of work – firstly to pay for the additional work on the action plans and visions, and then the authorship of the narrative afterwards. We could commit further resource in January (or before) to help ‘write the strategy’ if necessary.

CB highlighted that the revenue reserves would be run down by 2021/22 according to our current trajectory.

Sources of funding

TRC highlighted her concerns that the climate threat in Reading was being addressed by volunteers. There are staff at RBC allocated to help, but we also need citizens and businesses to step up. We need a change in scale and pace. Could we seek external funding for individual elements of the Action Plans? Perhaps a specialist fundraiser is needed to access funding opportunities? The balance between Capacity to engage vs. the funding accessed was highlighted – as there are a number of funding opportunities which are often for small amounts.

BB shared that he had bid for a few funds recently and there is also a need to ensure bids are positioned correctly, and bids focussed towards the right fund. BB confirmed the PCAN bid was unsuccessful.

CB highlighted that the voluntary RCCP Chair role had taken up much of his time. Currently we are reliant on volunteer partners doing the work as always. Perhaps more paid work is needed?

There is a need to research funding criteria to attain the appropriate funds that RCCP can realistically bid for. Perhaps a university student could do some scoping work in regards the potential to get projects funded.

Action: TD to investigate the possibility of a student doing a scoping study of RCCP funding opportunities

What options are there for increasing our core budget? Could we get income from future new initiatives?

A discussion around public crowd funding was led by TM. Could we access private funds to fund a renewable energy scheme? Could we use community funds i.e. Reading Community Energy Society (RCES), in a bigger scale in the future? New developments in Reading could use this formula - market it widely, get buy in – with a 20 year pay back.

Action: CB and BB to investigate further how to raise more funds, on a more permanent basis – to provide RCCP with more sustainable funding. To arrange a joint meeting with RCES on this challenge. To link with RCES to investigate how to spend the benefit fund, and discuss how to scale it up as a significant way to bring funds in

Action: All to keep an eye out for potential funds – to share at April 2020 board meeting.

Should RCCP set up a charity arm in order to access more funds, due to the tax breaks given to companies who donate.

Strategy narrative and publication

- o *Primary location will be online.*
- o *What do we want from the narrative:*
 - *A few pages from each theme?*
 - *Professional copy-editing?*
 - *Introduction, foreword, etc*
- o *Do we want paper copies ?*
 - *What do we want in them?*
 - *Graphical design, images, photos (see below) – for final version*
 - *How much do we want to spend?*
 - *PDFs online*

We hope it to be a powerful dynamic strategy, housed online with hyperlinks to actions. It was felt that a hard copy of the strategy was needed to be displayed in all libraries, council offices etc.

It was agreed that the narrative should have a succinct text, with overall vision (one paragraph) and synopsis. Need an introduction and forward, and a summary document. Approx. two pages A4 of text per theme. Each cross theme (education, community, business and adaptation) will have a chapter but no action plan.

- o What do we want to call it? And is ReadingCAN or RCCP the primary brand?

Decision: It was agreed that the branding should be 'ReadingCAN'. The Local Strategic Partnership no longer exists – so perhaps the 'Reading Climate Change Partnership' is also defunct. To be discussed more at a later date.

There was a discussion about the order of the themes within the strategy. Some thought that 'Energy' and 'Transport' are the primary deliveries of Zero Carbon 2030, and so should be first. Then 'Resources' incl food and waste. The

other themes to follow in support. Others felt adaptation is key and should be prominent.

There was a discussion in regards ReadingCAN appealing to the 320k Reading population, and the need for advice on individual action being researched and made available on the website. It was suggested that each theme have this as a deliverable within their action plan. A link to 'What can I do?' on the front page of the website. Nothing agreed.

Action: KB to highlight to all theme co-ordinators the need to ensure individual actions are a deliverable in their action plan.

It was felt it wasn't necessary at the moment to gather more public interest in order to grow ReadingCAN more. There was a discussion on the form of public communication – such as advertising on Reading buses, bus shelters etc to engage the general population.

BB: to investigate the potential of advertising ReadingCAN (consultation and ongoing messages):

- on bus shelters/buses
- on big screen by Reading station (speak to Marcus).

TP highlighted the need for the public consultation on the strategy to be more cohesive – as he has concerns that large companies- such as Thames water and SEE are disengaged and they need to join the table. They also have a key role in the climate challenge. CB clarified that ReadingCAN has strong links with Reading UK, the Reading bids and Reading 2050.

Action: TP to ask his fellow Councillors to spread the message on ReadingCAN, and cascade the information in the new year.

Advertising Strategy and Climate Action Network

- o Before end of the authoring phase (Christmas)?*
- o For the Public consultation?*
- o Explaining the Vision and the artistic community, schools + others*

CB mentioned that Linda Duff - Ethical Reading Sustainability Consultant was happy to help with visioning for the strategy. It was felt that this work could lead to confusion with the resource being brought in to help develop and write the narrative. She would not therefore be currently needed and is encouraged to link with the consultant once appointed.



Chris also suggested that we should start engaging the artistic community in order to help communicate strategy – to preparation for launch.

Action: CB to link with Zsuzsi from Reading Fringe Festival in regards a presence next year.

We noted that we already have branded pop ups to use at public events.

ICN school conference

The annual Reading Schools' Climate Change Conference is taking place in the council chambers on Fri 6th Dec. It was agreed by all that ICN would lead the planning for the event and we would support with administration on the day, and provide theme co-ordinators to aid the carousel activity.

There was a discussion on wanting a 'Reading Schools CAN'. Others felt that 'Education' is not just about schools. No agreement was made.

Action: BB to make sure 'travel planning', 'climate emergency', 'schools conference' and 'Eco schools' is included in RBC leader's letter to all schools.

AOB

The new Head of Climate Strategy at RBC starts on 11th Nov.

TM asked that the university is approached in regards research gap needs to support the action plans.

TD: to investigate the possibility of students filling some of the research needs in the action plans

Date for the next meeting - Tues 28 Jan 2020, 10am-12pm