

Reading Climate Change Partnership

Board Meeting Minutes – part 2, Tues 14th July 2020

TEAMs meeting online, 9:30-11.00 pm

Attendees:

Tim Dixon (co-Chair, will Chair today, TD), Tracey Rawling Church (co-chair, TRC), Willem Londeman (WL), Poppy Harris (PH), Chris Beales (CB), Cllr Tony Page (TB), Tricia Marcouse (TM), Paul Harrison (PHa), Katie Brett (Support Officer, KB), Peter Moore (guest, PM), Paul Ducker (observer, PD), Natalie Ganpatsingh (observer, NG)

Apologies: Ben Burfoot

| Item | Action |
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| <p>Apologies received from Ben Burfoot. TM arrived late.</p> <p>TD welcomed Paul Ducker and Natalie Ganpatsingh as the new theme leads for the Resources and Health themes respectively. They introduced themselves to the board, highlighting the experience they bring and welcoming this new opportunity to engage and support the climate change agenda in Reading.</p> | |
| <p>Minutes of last meeting – approved</p> | |
| <p>Consultation</p> <p>- Responses to each question (PM) and a Board discussion on each section in turn</p> <p>TD thanked PM for all his efforts in reviewing the consultation comments (210 comments received in total) and appraising them for his summary paper. PM explained that he looked at a blind version of the comments and wrote his paper by appraising each comment alongside a scale. The paper summarises the thrust of responses received and makes recommendations on how these comments might be reflected in the next iteration of the Strategy, whilst giving theme groups scope to interpret detailed comments as they consider revising their Action Plans.</p> <p><u>Vision and targets section:</u></p> <p>Upon reviewing PM paper All agreed to keep the headline message of the strategy: 'a vision for 2025 of a Reading which was working rapidly towards a net zero carbon, resilient Reading by 2030, reinforcing the target of reaching net zero by 2030'.</p> <p>PM confirmed that Extinction Rebellion (XRR) have submitted a thorough response. They have suggested that Reading adopt an alternative to the national BEIS dataset as the basis for measuring Reading's emissions. This was discussed and while the board recognises that it's a valuable point with this data set focuses on emissions from production not consumption, the accepted international reporting mechanisms used by the UK Government would break down if there were inconsistent approaches applied to emissions reporting.</p> | |

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| <p>TRC welcomed the XRR engagement but all board agreed that redirecting scarce resources to create parallel emissions reporting at a Council level is not considered a priority, and would detract from the action needed to decarbonise the borough.</p> <p>It was agreed that we will continue to use the BEIS national dataset to assess the emissions from the borough as a whole, but will encourage the use of more inclusive measurements for organisations, such as scope 3 and those including embodied carbon, when reporting their own emissions.</p> <p>It was agreed that there would be greater clarity given to the vision and targets expressed.</p> | |
| <p>PM to ensure TRC/TD attend the Extinction Rebellion follow up meeting this month.</p> | PM/BB |
| <p>PM highlighted that XRR had called for a more detailed expenditure forecast to be set against the actions in the plan. PM suggested we ensure partners have costed delivery plans for the strategy. TRC pointed out that this was a draft document for consultation and therefore at this point it wasn't sensible to cost each action. She felt this was unrealistic given the level of detail that would be required across many projects and organisations. It was highlighted that this would be a mammoth challenge to meaningfully cost such a wide variety of actions owned by a wide variety of organisations.</p> | |
| <p>It was agreed that costings is important but the level of detail is not possible at this time. We need to provide some honesty about where the resources are coming from - and where the gaps are, and how we hope to fill those gaps going forward.</p> | All theme leads |
| <p><u>Benefits of tackling climate change section:</u> PM stated that many respondees highlighted many positive changes from climate change. It was agreed to site these ideas more in the document and emphasise the positives and many benefits. We are to use this in the wider communications too.</p> | PM TRC |
| <p><u>Priority areas for action section:</u> It was agreed to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve clarity/care in use of language – i.e. ‘sustainable transport’ – replace with ‘walking, cycling and buses’ which is more inline with the publics understanding. - Increase the importance of public education and engagement in the document. - Recognise the public passion for green space management and natural solutions. Although this will not have a big impact on carbon management, it has clear resonance with a lot of people as a way of engaging people in this process. It needs to be a higher priority. It was felt that the current Covid pandemic had helped highlight this. NG highlighted there is new evidence from a report by Exeter and Derby University (by Miles Richardson of the Nature connectedness grp) that immersion in the natural environment in itself leads to pro environmental thinking and behaviour. NG to share this research report highlighting the linkage between nature and climate engagement | PM NG |

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| <p>TP felt PM report was very helpful indeed. He highlighted the current work in RBC in developing a food waste recycling programme – ready to launch next Feb 2021, with a pilot planned for sept/oct. There are new staff recruited to support this work and its important they take on the feedback from this consultation and ensure public communications has a climate change message.</p> <p>PM to link with RE3 staff to ensure they use climate change messaging in their food waste communications work</p> | PM |
| <p>TM joined meeting</p> <p>CB felt that it was worth highlighting more the expected work on green spaces as deliverables in the action plan. This would help engagement and ‘people can see that action is happening’. He felt it was also important to have a section in the narrative about how all people can ‘Make better choices’.</p> | PM |
| <p>TRC confirmed that when the strategy is launched there will be a communications and engagement plan alongside it – incl. education in broader sense and communications on progress and planning. It was not expected to be part of the public consultation.</p> | |
| <p><u>Action plan section:</u></p> | |
| <p>Energy: PM confirmed that the energy action plan comments were useful, housing retrofit being a very substantive programme, with a large gap in resources that is hoped to be filled with central government funding. We need to explain the reason, and provide evidence for, the prioritisation of ‘electrification of heat supply’ as main technology priority.</p> | BB |
| <p>PM: All targets to be more specific and relate to the goals. TD - All the comments have been very useful to us – thank you</p> | All Theme leads |
| <p>Transport: PM felt all the transport comments were v useful, and Chris Maddocks in RBC Transport is happy with the thrust of recommendations, subject to TPP consultation conclusions. Lots of enthusiasm on cycling agenda.</p> <p>TP: highlighted that transport is the fastest moving area of work at the moment, with central government offering extra funding for active travel promotion (cycle and walking initiatives) - with very tight deadlines. When funding is confirmed it is expected that there will be more ambitious targets set, probably in time for strategy launch in November.</p> <p>CB felt that transport is a very visible theme and that it would be a helpful selling point for the strategy if some of the planned initiatives were highlighted more prominently in the document.</p> | PM |
| <p>Resources: TRC felt that the comments on the Resources action plan were very useful and supports the request to move further up the waste hierarchy and focus on using green spaces and gardens for growing. PD agreed they were very helpful.</p> | |
| <p>Water: CB was very pleased with the water action plan feedback and will incorporate the comments.</p> | |
| <p>CB and PM to discuss the Kennet Meadows project with Thames Water</p> | |

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| <p>Nature: PM stated that feedback suggested the plan could be more ambitious. TM did not agree with PM recommendations as she felt there was much non comprehension. Increasing carbon sequestration by not mowing verges is already being done by RBC and she felt an increase in areas would not be sensible before the results were analysed. PM stated that RBC are now saying they want to do more, but TM felt the plan is already at capacity. TD felt that if we are able to achieve the targets we could be more ambitious.</p> | CB/PM |
| <p>PM and TM to revisit the nature theme action plan comments in more detail.</p> | PM/TM |
| <p>NG would like to bring out the link between nature and health more.</p> | NG/TM |
| <p>Health: There has been a focus/trend that ‘climate change is bad for your health’. It was agreed we need to talk more about aligning health and climate goals (i.e. exercise and diet). This should be brought out more strongly. We need to talk more about how climate action can help protect and strengthen vulnerable people.</p> | |
| <p>CB – Covid 19 needs to be considered – and how the virus can be made worse by climate change (i.e. a heat wave exacerbating the virus). NG felt divisions in society are exacerbated – and looking at broader social determinants of health is important going forward.</p> | |
| <p>All to make sure cross referencing is happening across the document, and all theme leads to ‘Covid proof’ their narratives and texts, but be careful not to overdo it and make the document dated.</p> | All theme leads |
| <p>NG hoped to use the word ‘engagement’ more than ‘education’ which implies a didactic process. Health is a driver for people and perhaps we should be starting our communications from a different lens – not this is about climate change but start with ‘This is about (ie health) ...not this is about climate change’</p> | TRC |
| <p><u>What could we do to take more action on climate change section:</u> We will have a more detailed comms and engagement plan in Nov.</p> | |
| <p>It was agreed that there would not be a Reading citizens assembly on climate change due to lack of resources. Perhaps it would be possible at some point at the sub regional level – for example Wokingham, Bracknell and Reading- as is currently in the re3 partnership. TP highlighted that RBC already has a citizens panel, which could be used more.</p> | |
| <p>Its important to emphasise that there has already been a lot of public consultation and its an open process that anyone can join in going forward. Lets keep talking and listening continuously. Its not the end of the conversation.</p> | |
| <p>All agreed we need a ‘What are the 3-10 things you can do’ as a individual in our communications plan.</p> | TRC |
| <p>Next steps (timeline, launch) - TD</p> | |

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| <p>All were happy with the deadline of 24th Aug for the updated theme narratives and action plans, and also with a Strategy launch on wc 9 Nov.</p> <p>PM's Consultation report is an internal document written for RBC. It will not be published now as its work in progress. It will be made public via the papers at the next SEPT committee, alongside the amended strategy.</p> <p>An update post on the readingcan website to this effect would be fine- welcoming the good public responses which are being taken seriously, and we are currently working on a detailed analysis.</p> | <p>CB</p> |
| <p>Communication and engagement update:</p> <p>TRC shared that a Communications and Engagement Team has now been set up of Katie Brett, Poppy Harris, Rachel Hazell (Rachel is a marketing professional who approached us to volunteer), TRC. They have developed branding guidelines, created a stakeholder map, developed a communications and engagement plan to support the strategy – which include a twin track launch plan (live and online events) which will be ready by 24th August.</p> <p>TRC shared the proposal to upgrade the RCAN website - in time for the launch. The website is the hub around which everything we do will revolve and so is mission critical. It will build on the excellent work already done by Chris, maintain the dynamics of the site that order content by theme and topic, and have visual enhancements to ensure we attract, engage and inspire our audience. It will have clear navigation, excellent user experience, powerful calls to action and incorporate landing pages so different groups (eg. business) can be sent directly to the page that contains relevant content. It will have a template based content management system – so it will be easier for non experts to contribute content in a consistent style.</p> <p>The websites mission is 'To inform everybody who lives, works or studies in Reading about climate change and to inspire and empower them to take action'</p> <p>Four potential supplier have been identified – and given the same written briefs and reference sites. We are currently waiting for their proposals.</p> <p>TRC reassured all that RCAN would still have full control over changing the content of the website going forward, and not reliant on a third party.</p> <p>All agreed that the communications team are given the mandate to upgrade the website. Upon review of the budget item below – a spend of £10k was approved for this purpose.</p> <p>TRC to circulate the website design brief and references to all.</p> | <p>TRC</p> |
| <p>Current 'Reading Means Business on Climate Change' Strategy? - update</p> <p>TD highlighted BB board paper and theme Leads agreed they were happy to help resolve the '?' column of the report</p> | |

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| BB to share the full report with theme leads for their feedback | BB |
| <p>Budget</p> <p>TRC shared the budget figures: we have a £48k surplus, with £19k committed this year and £29k in hand. All agreed to draw the surplus down and spend the agreed funds on the website proposal.</p> <p>Funding</p> <p>TRC praised Rachel Hazell’s hard work in reviewing the funding opportunities for the partnership and shared her summary document of current open funds. It was clarified that Rachel is not available to write proposals however.</p> <p>All theme leads to get back to KB with any questions.</p> <p>BB to clarify if income from solar panels on schools will be affected by lockdown – as has happened in other locations. As we receive our funds through the feeding tariff it was felt unlikely to impact.</p> | <p>TRC/KB</p> <p>BB</p> |
| <p>Governance Update</p> <p>TD highlighted his 1 pager on the governance review process. This is ongoing, to be completed by end April 2021 at latest.</p> <p>Update post on website</p> | <p>TD?CB?</p> |
| <p>AOB</p> <p>All Theme leads to talk direct to PM re. consultation detail</p> <p><u>What can you do for us? Section:</u> KB to follow up with individual respondees and on agreement link them to relevant leads</p> <p><i>Date for the next meeting: 10am Tues 22nd Sept 2020</i></p> | <p>All theme leads</p> <p>KB</p> |