

Stepping forward for Climate Change

Reading's Climate Change Strategy 2008-2013



Reading
BOROUGH COUNCIL



Climate change is a reality

Our weather is changing and it's not just polar ice caps and coral reefs which are threatened.

Here in Reading we can expect to see changes like flooding and heat-waves. These could bring transport difficulties and health problems.

Climate change is an urgent and serious challenge but by acting together we can make a real difference.

Reading Borough Council will lead by example on climate change: Reading's Climate Change Strategy 2008-2013 sets out the ways in which all of us can get involved to reduce our carbon footprint* and rise to the challenge of climate change.

* The amount of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases our activities produce.

Leading by example

The Council plans to be zero carbon by 2050 and will lead by example to achieve a low carbon Reading which is resilient to the effects of future climate change.

- The Council has been working hard to reduce emissions from its own buildings and activities. We have achieved a reduction in CO₂ emissions since starting carbon management in 2005 and we will reduce our own emissions by 20% by 2013.
- In the community, the Heatseekers project offers free or discounted insulation to private householders right across Reading.
- The Council also sets high standards for the energy efficiency of new developments within the Borough.
- A new flood action plan has been drawn up to respond to possible future flooding which may be made worse by climate change.
- We continue to raise awareness of climate change and encourage residents to voice their opinions through our environmental events.
- Our carbon reduction pathway aims to reduce emissions across Reading by around 50,000 tonnes by 2013.

Working in Partnership

The Council aims to help reduce Reading's carbon footprint to 80% below 1990 levels by 2050.

Climate Change affects everyone. The local business community, public and voluntary sectors, our universities and places of learning all have a vital role to play in the transition to a low carbon world. As individuals we can make our contribution by reducing our personal carbon footprint, using alternative methods of transport, reducing household fuel use and recycling.

The Council is forming a climate change partnership. The Reading Climate Change Partnership will bring together businesses, community and public sector organisations to reduce the carbon footprint of Reading and to protect communities and businesses from the impacts of climate change.

Energy & Water use



The principal source of climate changing emissions is energy use from the burning of fossil fuels.

- In 2006, 85% of Reading's greenhouse gas emissions were associated with the use of energy in homes and businesses.
- The use of water has an indirect energy use linked to extraction, treatment, supply and sewerage. Reading has a large population for the available water resource.
- The development of low carbon local energy supply, from renewable (green) sources will help reduce emissions and improve energy security.

Climate Change Action: *The Council will improve the energy efficiency of its own buildings. We will also promote borough-wide energy efficiency and low carbon energy generation to help businesses and homes reduce energy use.*

Everyone can help by turning off equipment at home and at work when it's not needed.

Access, Transport and Mobility



- 12% of Reading's carbon footprint comes from transport – around 1 tonne per person – this is below the South East regional average but can be reduced further.
- Climate change may affect transport due to damaged road surfaces, railway lines prone to buckling in the heat and localised flooding, causing road and rail closures.
- The hotter, drier summers will also intensify air quality issues as pollutants react to strong sunlight and are not dispersed in still, warm weather.

Climate Change Action: *The Council will implement a travel plan for Reading Borough Council. We will continue to implement the Local Transport Plan (2006-2011) which sets out the Council's vision to ensure transport right across Reading is easy, safe, comfortable and sustainable. The Council has developed an Air Quality Action Plan to reduce adverse impacts on local air quality and climate change.*

Everyone can join in by combining car trips and choosing to walk, cycle or use public transport where possible.

Built and Natural Environments



It is important to ensure that buildings are of good quality in order to minimise the amount of energy they use and to make them resilient to the effects of climate change.

- The government requires that by 2016 any new houses built are zero carbon.
- More resilient buildings are better able to cope with hotter summers and wetter winters.
- The natural environment plays a key role in making our urban spaces liveable.
- When new buildings are planned, if tree planting is included it can help reduce the 'heat island effect'.

Climate Change Action: *The Council will ensure that new buildings are sustainably designed. The Council will make changes across Reading through the Local Development Framework which has ambitious targets for sustainable construction and design, and new standards for achieving high quality design in new developments.*

Homeowners and landlords can help by ensuring that their buildings are as efficient as possible, for example by installing good levels of insulation.

Buying Goods and Services



The products and services we buy have a carbon footprint. Many of them also cause emissions when we use them.

- Reading Borough Council spends approximately £85 million on buying goods and services each year.
- Local Authorities procure services from stationery to major infrastructure projects such as schools and major road schemes.
- Transport and energy procurement decisions are also important in terms of our carbon footprint.

Climate Change Action: *The Council will build on the current commitment to apply environmental selection criteria including carbon footprints to influence how it buys things. The Council will also work with other councils and businesses to maximise its purchasing power and use this to advance the low carbon economy locally .*

Everyone can make a difference by choosing to buy A rated appliances and buying fewer things which last rather than many cheap things which have to be replaced.

Waste Minimisation and Management



The carbon footprint of consumable products and the generation of waste are critical when looking at Climate Change.

- Reusing and repairing products can prevent the need to manufacture a replacement product
- Recycling means that raw materials and carbon used in manufacture can be used again to make new products and reduce their impact
- Waste that cannot be recycled or reused can be utilised to produce gas, electricity and heat.
- Sending waste to landfill (a last resort) results in the production of the greenhouse gas methane, which is 20 times as potent as CO₂.

Climate Change Action: *The Council will build on a history of paper and card re-use and recycling in the Council's operations by developing a more comprehensive recycling and waste awareness programme in the workplace. Reading Borough Council is also part of 're3' – a partnership of three authorities (Bracknell Forest, Wokingham and Reading) working with the Waste Recycling Group (WRG). This partnership will work to reduce the amount of rubbish we all send to landfill and to recover value from what we throw away.*

Everyone can join in by choosing products with low packaging. Reading residents have already increased their recycling at the doorstep.

Climate Change pledge

The Council has drawn up a climate change strategy but climate change needs to be tackled by all of us together so there is now also a Climate Change Pledge. Reading residents can sign the pledge online at www.reading.gov.uk/climatepledge

Reading's Climate Change Pledge:

I accept that:

- Climate Change is a reality and primarily man made.
- Climate Change has wide ranging impacts on our environment, health, economy and well-being.
- Climate Change is everyone's issue and I can get involved to reduce emissions.

Within the following year I will get involved and do at least 5 of the following:

- Calculate my carbon footprint (and/or read my meters) and work on reducing it.
- Tell my family, friends and colleagues about the Reading Climate Change Pledge and encourage them to get involved.
- Install more insulation in my home.
- Turn my heating thermostat down by 1°C.
- Buy A or A+ rated appliances when replacing my fridge, washing machine etc.
- Switch off appliances at the wall and turn off lights when not in use
- Reduce travel impacts– I will walk or cycle if I can and use public transport or car share if not.
- Fly only once a year or less.
- Grow my own produce and make my own compost (and teach my family/ friends these skills).
- Think before I buy ('Do I really need this item?') and buy locally when I can.