

Minutes of Reading Climate Change Partnership board meeting

Friday 8th July 2016

Room G03 Henley Business School, Whiteknights, University of Reading

Present: Ben Burfoot, Dan Fernbank, Graciela Melitsko, Tracey Rawling-Chruch, Naomi Ashcroft, Chris Beales, John Booth, Jill Marston

Apologies: Paul Gittings, Tony Page, Chris Rhodes, Jonny Riggall

Previous Actions

LED streetlighting – Ben has not managed to arrange a further meeting with Councillor Page. Cllr Page has indicated at public meetings that the Council plans to stick with what it has. This is a concern because colour of light can have a detrimental impact on circadian rhythms. Ben indicated that the Council does consider frequency of light among other factors. As a result, £9m investment may not be optimum – certainly many hold the view that it's not best practice. Project is very significant in terms of carbon emissions reduction and perhaps other factors are outside our remit. Concerns have been well documented and raised, so not sure how much further we can take it.

Sub-group meeting with planners took place about the local plan issues and options paper and a good discussion took place, RCCP made an informal response setting out our position.

ACTION: Graciela to update through Ben on any relevant developments regarding the local plan

Ben indicated that the Council has written to the government about the impact on their ability to execute local policy after withdrawal of zero carbon homes programme.

Governance Framework

Dates from 2009. Mission doesn't match, needs to be updated. Some terminology needs to be updated and there is reference to programmes that no longer exist. LSP is open to RCCP being an active contributor. Dan would like to see reference to the LSP priorities made more explicit. John proposed reference to the action plan and Chris Beales wants to see reference to structure, for example RCAN. Frequency of meetings is now quarterly. The need for admin support should be mentioned.

ACTION: All to feed comments back to Ben. Ben to collect comments and revise to reflect current status

Relationship with partnership, action network and theme leads is somewhat confused. Dan is not sure how to find out who is involved in what and how RCCP intersects with RCAN. Extensive discussion confirmed there was much uncertainty.

ACTION: Tracey to prepare a one-page brand guide.

Chris Beales has offered to help with writing web content. Discussion about ways of sharing information eg during plan review consultations.

Admin assistant – dedicated part-time employee of RBC, funded by and reporting in to RCCP. 20 hours per week base with option for more hours on an ad hoc basis. More than an admin person.

ACTION: Ben to draft a job description.

Progress report

Generally status has deteriorated. Two themes are lacking an active lead. Changes to government policy and reduction of resources at RBC have had an impact. Report due to go to the council in the autumn. Chance to add a mid-term report that explains this. Too many actions, changed landscape and not all actions have an owner - we need a root and branch review of the entire strategy but this will need to be funded, whether Ben does it or a third party.

ACTION: Ben to approach his manager for clarification of how much resource the council can contribute to this process, then make a proposal for how to get it done.

Needs a pragmatic approach, streamlining what we already have rather than starting from scratch and recognising the external factors that limit what can be done.

Chris Beales highlighted the lack of an adaptation plan. Graciela has prepared an adaptation policy for Reading that we can draw on.

ACTION: Graciela to circulate it.

Mid-term review

Discussed need for both the Strategy and the Actions to be reviewed. BB suggested the Strategy would benefit from being more concise and he will speak to his manager re approach and priority. Likely to be a 'charged for' service to RCCP – whether BB resource or externally. JB suggested Strategy review first, followed by review of Action Plans

ACTION: BB to bring proposal back to next RCCP Board meeting

ACTION: JM to prepare summary report for LSP, extracting key points from report to RBC, on progress of Partnership – for Sept 2016 LSP meeting

Funding applications

Climate Talks – further funding proposal £400 agreed, Wind Turbine Talks – further £2,000 funding agreed, subject to feedback being provided on attendance of previous (and proposed) events and the timescales for the funding to be spent. Noted no formal budget review this meeting

ACTION: BB to present budget report to next RCCP meeting

Smart M4 – plans for J3 to J12 to become smart motorway using hard shoulder. Anticipated 19% increase in CO2 emissions by 2037. Also impact of longer journey times and impacts of increased heatwaves on health inc low level ozone

ACTION: JB to write to BB/DF outlining concerns, to enquire of RBC on their position and the opportunity to raise these concerns with the LEP

Climate UK – CB explained set up by former regional climate groups (e.g. Climate South East) as a resource-hosting platform. Potentially some good resources here, esp. re adaptation. Interested to consider RCCP making contribution to their circa £10k/annum hosting costs.

ACTION: CB to provide further info to Board on website, resources and potential value to RCCP, for further consideration

Reading Community Energy Society (RCES)

BB explained proposed use of LSP £80k funds; to support delivery/administrative costs for project, which will then boost the community benefit fund of RCES. BB explained the use of these

community funds are yet to be clearly defined, but good opportunity to influence with DF and 2 RBC Councillors on Board. DF explained on Board because of RCCP membership, but that his (and all) Directors must have a first priority to the business of RCES. DF clarified that this does not impact the existing funds available to RCCP, but means that the additional community funds that would have resulted from LSP-supported installs will now be managed by RCES.

Renewable Energy Strategy

BB advised progress to date has been limited and may need to look at alternative resource options

ACTION: BB to provide further update for next RCCP meeting

AOB

Reading Town Meal 1 October – agreed to consider sharing a stall, subject to RCCP admin support being in place

JB - Oxford Strategic Environmental Economic Investment Fund. Should RBC consider something similar? BB explained current ESIF funding has low carbon chapter.

ACTION: JB to write to BB further

GREN representation on Board – JB plans to step down as GREN secretary. Hopes to step down from RCCP Board once suitable alternative found, but will continue to support in the meantime. Will also be looking to step down as Low Carbon Theme Lead once alternative rep identified

ACTION: BB to consider review Low Carbon Theme Lead role

Climate Voices – event cancelled due to lack of schools take up, but hope to re-apply for model climate conference funding later in year