

Development and Implementation of Reading Borough Council's AQAP

1.8 Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

In developing/updating this AQAP, we have worked with other local authorities, agencies, businesses and the local community to improve local air quality. Schedule 11 of the Environment Act 1995 requires local authorities to consult the bodies listed in Table 0.1. In addition, we have undertaken the following stakeholder engagement:

- Public Consultation
- Website
- Social Media
- Etc.

The response to our consultation stakeholder engagement is given in Appendix A: Response to Consultation.

Table 0.1 – Consultation Undertaken

Consultee	Consultation Undertaken
The Secretary of State	<Yes/No>
The Environment Agency	<Yes/No>
The highways authority	<Yes/No>
All neighbouring local authorities	<Yes/No>
Other public authorities as appropriate, such as Public Health officials	<Yes/No>
Bodies representing local business interests and other organisations as appropriate	<Yes/No>

1.9 Steering Group

Reading Council established an internal Air Quality Steering Group (AQSG) in 2020 to develop and evaluate the draft AQAP measures. When the work was recommenced on the AQAP in 2023 some of the officers had changed, this is signified by the year in brackets after each name in the below list.

The AQSG was composed of Reading Council members and officers:

- Former Deputy Leader of the Council: Cllr Tony Page (2020).
- Former Chair of Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee: Cllr Paul Gittings (2020).
- Former Deputy Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services: Giorgio Framalico (2020).
- Regulatory Services – Principal Air Quality Project Officer: Ross Jarvis (2020, 2023).
- Assistant Director, Planning, Transport & Public Protection: James Crosbie (2023).
- Regulatory Services – Public Protection Manager: Matt Golledge (2023).
- Regulatory Services - Community Protection Manager: Catherine Lewis (2020, 2023).
- Public Health and Wellbeing Team - Public Health Consultant Martin White (2023).
- Transport - Transport Programme Manager: Chris Maddocks (2020, 2023).
- Transport - Project Manager: James Clements (2020, 2023).
- Transport – Senior Transport Planner: James Turner (2020, 2023).
- Head of Climate Strategy: Peter Moore (2020, 2023).
- Sustainability Manager: Ben Burfoot (2020, 2023).
- Public Health: David Munday (2020).
- Planning – Planning Policy Manager: Mark Worringham (2023).

- Planning – Senior Planning Policy Officer: Sarah Burr (2023).

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AQAP Measures

Table 0.1, Table 0.2 and Table 0.3 shows the Reading Borough Council AQAP measures. It contains:

- a list of the actions that form part of the plan
- the responsible individual and departments/organisations who will deliver this action
- estimated cost of implementing each action (overall cost and cost to the local authority)
- expected benefit in terms of pollutant emission and/or concentration reduction
- the timescale for implementation
- how progress will be monitored

NB: Please see future ASRs for regular annual updates on implementation of these measures.

1.10 Travel Measures

Reading Borough Council are committed to implementing as many measures as possible to encourage and facilitate a shift from private petrol/ diesel vehicle use to more active and sustainable travel modes.

Reading's Transport Strategy 2040 discusses an abundance of ambitious schemes and initiatives to achieve this goal, which will inherently allow for significant improvements in air quality across the borough.

A few examples of proposed measures are listed below:

- Cross-Thames Travel: there is potential for a new road crossing over the Thames, to support in the alleviation of congestion on the IDR. Reduced congestion on the IDR will better enable multi-modal enhancements on the IDR, which will aim to support active travel and prioritise bus transportation.
- Reading's bus fleet is one of the cleanest emitters in the country, with approximately 100% of the fleet comprising hybrid, gas or Euro 6 diesel vehicles. With this in mind, Reading Borough Council are placing heavy

emphasis on improving the attractiveness and accessibility of bus travel across Reading. To this end, they are proposing the following measures:

- Enable more direct routes between neighbourhoods with poor bus use statistics, key mobility hubs and employment areas;
 - Introduction of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) facilities across four key routes and expansion of Park and Ride sites, connecting the outskirts of the borough to Central Reading via highly efficient transport modes.
 - Introduce a Mobility as a Service (MaaS) scheme, which would enable travellers to reach destinations confidently and conveniently, without the need for private vehicles, utilising a user-friendly transport services mobile app; and
 - Offer discounted fares for young people to discourage private vehicle school trips, which account for approximately 25% of 'rush-hour' car trips.
- In 2020, taxi licensing fees were reduced by 25% for drivers of ultra-low emission vehicles, and 50% for drivers of electric vehicles. By 2028, Reading is targeting for all taxis to be electric or ultra-low emission vehicles.
 - Cycle infrastructure improvements are being delivered through Active Travel Schemes on the Shinfield Road and on the Bath Road/Castle Hill. Further schemes are planned for future Active Travel Funding rounds.

1.11 Other measures

It cannot be argued that targeting measures to improve the transport sector's environmental impacts, such as those listed above, will have the most significant contributions to local air quality improvements, especially with regards to NO₂. However, there are a considerable number of alternative measures which can also allow for such benefits, especially with regards to reducing other pollutants, such as PM_{2.5}.

A few examples of proposed measures are listed below:

- In the coming years, Reading proposes to introduce planning guidance for new developments, supporting developers to minimise the air quality impacts of developments through strategic emissions mitigation plans.
- Reading Borough Council have recently consulted on the prospect of expanding Reading's existing Smoke Control Area (04/09/2023 – 16/10/2023) to encompass the entire borough. Properties and business within Smoke Control Areas are encouraged to avoid the burning of solid fuels (i.e. wood and coal) through chimneys. Legal prohibitions are based on specific fuel types associated with significant smoke generation, limiting fuel sales and purchases to 'Ready to Burn' / 'Smokeless' fuels, unless alternatives are burned within Defra exempt appliances. Reading Borough Council are also obtaining funding to enable the introduction of better enforcement measures to ensure better compliance with fuel burning regulations.
- There is also significant value in providing the public with sufficient information to enable them to make informed decisions on matters of health and air quality. To this end, Reading Borough Council are committed to providing several air quality resources to the public, such as:
 - AirAlert – air quality alerts are delivered to the public via text or email on days where pollution levels are recorded as being particularly high and potentially harmful to health;
 - The council will work with GPs and Health Practitioners to better educate health patients on the risks of air quality, especially where the patient is identified as having, or being at risk of having, respiratory or cardiovascular illnesses;
 - Air quality awareness campaigns will continue to be rolled out into schools, to encourage an interest and understanding of the potential issues and solutions from an early age; and
 - Resources will be made available to Reading's residents, enabling them to better understand the potential air quality impacts of wood burning/ bonfires/ indoor air quality.

Table 0.1 – Air Quality Action Plan Measures: Cleaner Transport

Measure No.	Measure	Category	Classification	Estimated Year Measure to be Introduced	Estimated / Actual Completion Year	Organisations Involved	Funding Source	Defra AQ Grant Funding	Funding Status	Estimated Cost of Measure	Measure Status	Target Reduction in Pollutant / Emission from Measure	Key Performance Indicator	Progress to Date	Comments / Potential Barriers to Implementation
RDAQ1_Transport	Vehicle access/ speed management (road/ bridge access)	Traffic management	Reduction of speed limits, 20mph zones	2023	TBC	RBC	RBC/DFT	No	Funded/partially funded/ not funded	<£1m	Implementation /Planning	Minor Localised benefits to PM; Smoother driving leading to a reduction of PM from tyre and brake wear	No. of roads made 20mph		
RDAQ2_Transport	Parking standards – diesel/ EV differential parking rates	Traffic Management	Emission based parking or permit charges	2024	2024	RBC	RBC	No	Not funded	< £10k	Planning	Minor Regional benefits to NO ₂ and PM; encourages uptake of cleaner vehicles			
RDAQ3_Transport	Reading Buses investment programme and support	Vehicle Fleet Efficiency	Public Transport Improvement	2023	2027	RBC/Reading Buses	Defra/ JAQU/DFT	Yes		1m-10m	Planning	Moderate Regional benefits to NO ₂ and PM; reduces bus emissions	Buses decarbonised	ZEBRA funding bid being prepared	
RDAQ4_Transport	Neighbourhood and Highway Management	Traffic Management	UTC, Congestion management, traffic reduction	2024	2028	RBC	RBC/DFT	No	Not funded	< £10k	Planning	Minor Localised benefits to NO ₂ and PM			
RDAQ5_Transport	Implementation of EV Infrastructure Strategy	Promoting Low Emission Transport	Procuring alternative Refuelling infrastructure to promote Low Emission	2024	2025	RBC		No	Not funded	£10k - £50k	Implementation	Moderate Regional benefits to NO ₂ and PM; facilitating and encouraging	Policy adoption		

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			Vehicles, EV recharging, Gas fuel recharging									EV vehicle uptake rates			
RDAQ6_ Transport	Improve taxi fleet emissions	Promoting low emission transport	Taxi licensing conditions	2024	2028	RBC	RBC	No	Not funded	£10k - £20k	Planning	Minor Regional benefits to NO ₂ and PM; reduces taxi emissions		Emissions policy in place for hackney fleet	
RDAQ7_ Transport	School Streets	Promoting Travel Alternatives	Other	2023	2027	RBC/Schools	RBC/DFT/Schools	No	Part funded	< £10k	Implementation	Minor Regional benefits to NO ₂ and PM; encouraging travel alternatives	New schemes investigated	4 schools streets implemented covering 7 schools.	
RDAQ8_ Transport	Continue to promote active and low emission travel options	Promoting Travel Alternatives	All	2023	2028	RBC	RBC/DFT	No	Part funded	£50-£100k per annum	Implementation	Minor Regional benefits to NO ₂ and PM; encouraging travel alternatives		Numbers of people walking and cycling	
RDAQ9_ Transport	Multi-modal enhancements (Traffic corridor, IDR, Oxford Rd)	Traffic Management	Strategic highway improvements, Re-prioritising road space away from cars, inc Access management, Selective vehicle priority, bus priority, high vehicle	2024	2028	RBC	RBC/DFT	No	Part funded	£10-£15m (BSIP)	Implementation	Major Regional benefits to NO ₂ and PM			To improve wider connectivity with the outskirts of Reading, while reducing traffic congestion.

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			occupancy lane												
RDAQ10_Transport	Cross-Thames Travel Scheme	Traffic Management	Strategic highway improvements, Re-prioritising road space away from cars, inc Access management, Selective vehicle priority, bus priority, high vehicle occupancy lane									Major benefits to NO ₂ and PM on the IDR and existing bridges			Potential for new Thames crossing to the east of Reading, to alleviate congestion on the IDR and enable RDAQ17.
RDAQ11_Transport	Connecting Neighbourhoods	Traffic Management	Strategic highway improvements, Re-prioritising road space away from cars, inc Access management, Selective vehicle priority, bus priority, high vehicle occupancy lane									Moderate regional benefits to NO ₂ and PM			Plan is to enable more direct routes between neighbourhoods, key mobility hubs and employment areas, hopefully via sustainable transport improvements, to reduce through travel on the IDR.
RDAQ12_Transport	Concessionary and Discounted	Promoting Low	School Travel Plans	2023	2025	RBC/DFT	DFT	No	Funded		Implementation	Minor regional benefits to NO ₂ and PM			Discounted bus fares for young people, to discourage parents

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	Travel for Students	Emission Transport													driving kids to schools
RDAQ13_Transport	Travel demand management charges	Traffic Management	Other									Minor regional benefits to NO ₂ and PM			Vehicles travelling through Reading ('rat-runs') without the need to be in Reading to be charged.
RDAQ14_Transport	Bus Rapid Transit Schemes	Traffic Management	Strategic highway improvements, Re-prioritising road space away from cars, inc Access management, Selective vehicle priority, bus priority, high vehicle occupancy lane	2024	2028	RBC	RBC/DFT	No	Part funded	£10-£15m (BSIP)	Implementation	Major regional benefits to NO ₂ and PM			Bus Rapid Transit Schemes from the South, Southeast, Southwest, East and West, to connect Central Reading to the wider town.
RDAQ15_Transport	Park and Ride Expansions	Alternatives to Private Vehicle Use	Bus based Park & Ride	2024	2025	RBC	RBC/DFT	No	Part Funded	£500k	Implementation	Moderate regional benefits to NO ₂ and PM			
RDAQ16_Transport	New pedestrian and cycling routes	Transport planning and Infrastructure	Cycle network/ Other	2024	2028	RBC	RBC/DFT	No	Part funded	£1-£5m (Active Travel England Tranche Funding))	Implementation	Minor regional benefits to NO ₂ and PM; better enabling alternatives to private vehicle use			In line with Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

Measure No.	Measure	Category	Classification	Estimated Year Measure to be Introduced	Estimated / Actual Completion Year	Organisations Involved	Funding Source	Defra AQ Grant Funding	Funding Status	Estimated Cost of Measure	Measure Status	Target Reduction in Pollutant / Emission from Measure	Key Performance Indicator	Progress to Date	Comments / Potential Barriers to Implementation
RDAQ17_Transport	Freight and Delivery. Investigate Introduction of last mile, low emission delivery	Freight and Delivery Management	Delivery and Service Plans									Minor regional benefits to NO ₂ and PM			Such as encouraging 'last-mile' deliveries to be made by zero-emission vehicles

Table 0.2 – Air Quality Action Plan Measures: Policy and Guidance Development

Measure No.	Measure	Category	Classification	Estimated Year Measure to be Introduced	Estimated / Actual Completion Year	Organisations Involved	Funding Source	Defra AQ Grant Funding	Funding Status	Estimated Cost of Measure	Measure Status	Target Reduction in Pollutant / Emission from Measure	Key Performance Indicator	Progress to Date	Comments / Potential Barriers to Implementation
RDAQ20_Policy	Air quality planning guidance for construction sites and operational developments	Policy Guidance and Development Control	Air Quality Planning and Policy Guidance	2024	2025	RBC	RBC	No	Not funded	< £10k	Planning	Moderate Regional benefits to NO ₂ and PM; limits air quality impacts of new developments	Implementation of policy		
RDAQ21_Policy	Wood burning policy and expansion of Smoke Control Area	Policy Guidance and Development Control	Other	2023	2024	RBC	RBC	No	Not funded	< £10k	Implementation	Moderate Regional benefits to PM; reducing domestic combustion pollutant contributions	Expansion of SCA, Implementation of policy	Public consultation process undertaken	
RDAQ22_Policy	Use of Wood Burning	Policy Guidance and	Other	2024	ongoing	RBC	RBC	No	Not funded	<10k	Planning	Minor regional benefits to PM	Number of enforcement actions taken		

Measure No.	Measure	Category	Classification	Estimated Year Measure to be Introduced	Estimated / Actual Completion Year	Organisations Involved	Funding Source	Defra AQ Grant Funding	Funding Status	Estimated Cost of Measure	Measure Status	Target Reduction in Pollutant / Emission from Measure	Key Performance Indicator	Progress to Date	Comments / Potential Barriers to Implementation
	Enforcement Powers	Development Control													
RDAQ23_Policy	Retrofitting Buildings to support Net Zero Ambitions	Policy Guidance and Development Control	Other	2023	ongoing	RBC		No				Minor regional benefits to NO ₂	Number of buildings retrofitted		In line with ambitions of Reading Climate Action Network. This should reduce the need to rely on gas boilers and solid fuel burning
RDAQ24_Policy	Encourage commercial cooking establishments to incorporate fine particulate filtration systems in their vents	Policy Guidance and Development Control	Other	2025	ongoing	RBC	RBC	No	Not funded	<10k	Planning	Minor regional benefits to PM	Number of businesses reached, percentage of businesses with filtration systems		
RDAQ25_Policy	Develop a Non-Road Mobile Machinery Emissions Policy	Policy Guidance and Development Control	Air Quality Planning and Policy Guidance	2025	2026	RBC	RBC	No	Not funded	<10k	Planning	Minor regional benefits to PM	Implementation of policy		London have stringent NRMM policies in place to ensure heavy construction vehicles use as low-emission technologies as practically possible, which could be replicated in Reading

Table 0.3 – Air Quality Action Plan Measures: Public Health and Awareness

Measure No.	Measure	Category	Classification	Estimated Year Measure to be Introduced	Estimated / Actual Completion Year	Organisations Involved	Funding Source	Defra AQ Grant Funding	Funding Status	Estimated Cost of Measure	Measure Status	Target Reduction in Pollutant / Emission from Measure	Key Performance Indicator	Progress to Date	Comments / Potential Barriers to Implementation
RDAQ26_Public	airAlert service (pollution warning service)	Public information	Via other mechanisms	2024	2024	RBC	RBC/Defra	no	Not funded	£5k CAPEX, £5k OPEX	Planning	No direct influence on pollutant concentrations, but provides the public with the opportunity to better protect themselves from pollution spikes	Implementation, number of subscriptions.	Part of AQ grant bid	Ongoing cost of running service
RDAQ27_Public	School awareness events	Promoting Travel Alternatives	Other	2023	2027	RBC/Design Nature/University of Reading/Stantec	AQ Grant	yes	Funded	£100k-£300k	Planning	No direct influence on pollutant concentrations, but increases awareness	Number of school/pupils reached	AQ grant secured. Programme in development.	
RDAQ28_Public	Health promotion work with NHS	Public information	Other	2023	2027	RBC/NHS/PHE		no	Not funded	£100k-£200k	Planning	No direct influence on pollutant concentrations, but increases awareness			
RDAQ29_Public	Mobility as a Service (MaaS) scheme	Public Information	Via other mechanisms	2023	2027	RBC		no	Not funded		Planning	Minor regional benefits to NO ₂ and PM			Enable travellers to reach destinations confidently and conveniently, without the need for private vehicles, utilising a user-friendly transport

Measure No.	Measure	Category	Classification	Estimated Year Measure to be Introduced	Estimated / Actual Completion Year	Organisations Involved	Funding Source	Defra AQ Grant Funding	Funding Status	Estimated Cost of Measure	Measure Status	Target Reduction in Pollutant / Emission from Measure	Key Performance Indicator	Progress to Date	Comments / Potential Barriers to Implementation
															services mobile app
RDAQ30_Public	Increase PM _{2.5} Monitoring to help understanding of levels and sources in Reading	Public Information	Other	2024	2028	RBC/Defra/EA	RBC/EA	no	Not funded	100k-500k	Planning	No direct influence on pollutant concentrations, but enables greater understanding to better target measures in the future	Number of monitoring locations	AQ grant application submitted, EA planning to install monitoring station	Carry out monitoring of PM _{2.5} at more locations in Reading, to better understand current situation and trends.
RDAQ31_Public	Smoke Control Area Awareness Campaign	Public Information	Other	2023	2025	RBC/Defra	RBC	no	Not funded	<10K	Planning	No direct influence on pollutant concentrations, but improves awareness	Publicity measures taken, surveys.	Information on RBC website	Develop and deliver awareness campaign to educate residents of the adverse air quality impacts of solid fuel burning. Materials re-published every winter for maximum impact.
RDAQ32_Public	Bonfire/ garden waste fire awareness campaign	Public Information	Other	2024	2026	RBC	RBC	no	Not funded	<10K	Planning	No direct influence on pollutant concentrations, but improves awareness	Publicity measures taken, letters sent.		Develop and deliver awareness campaign to educate residents of the adverse air quality impacts of burning garden waste/ bonfires. Materials re-published every autumn for maximum impact.

Measure No.	Measure	Category	Classification	Estimated Year Measure to be Introduced	Estimated / Actual Completion Year	Organisations Involved	Funding Source	Defra AQ Grant Funding	Funding Status	Estimated Cost of Measure	Measure Status	Target Reduction in Pollutant / Emission from Measure	Key Performance Indicator	Progress to Date	Comments / Potential Barriers to Implementation
RDAQ33_Public	Engagement in National Clean Air Day	Public information	Other	2024	ongoing	RBC	RBC	no	Not funded	<10k	Planning	No direct influence on pollutant concentrations, but improves awareness	Events held locally, Publicity of campaign.		Encourage schools to be engaged in the topic of air quality. Awareness raising for residents.
RDAQ34_Public	Indoor Air Quality Awareness Campaign	Public Information	Other	2025	ongoing	RBC	RBC	no	Not funded	<10k	Planning	No direct influence on pollutant concentrations, but improves awareness	Publicity measures taken, surveys.		Knowledge of the importance of indoor air quality is starting to pick up traction, but public awareness remains limited. No targets or legislation in place.