

A VISION FOR READING 2050

DEVELOPED BY...









WHY A VISION?

More than 50% of the world's population (3.6 billion) live in cities, and by 2050 this is set to grow to nearly 70%. As our cities grow, we must build upon our strengths to create vibrant hubs of enterprise and innovation.

A Vision is a shared and desirable expectation of a plausible future, that helps us understand how a city might evolve and look in the future. It enables us to proactively deal with key challenges in incremental steps, to achieve what may at first seem like ambitious long-term objectives and substantial change.

In the mid 1990s Reading developed a 2020 Vision, which set out some core ambitions focused around enhancing the heart of the town and its wider infrastructure. Over the last 25 years this initiative has delivered many notable changes and opportunity for the town.

Through the Reading 2050 Vision, we want to excite and engage with people from across Reading; local communities, businesses, education providers and the public sector, to support Reading's economic growth and evolution as a smart and sustainable city.







THE CHALLENGE

Since the 2020 Vision, Reading's economy has gone from strength to strength, however our challenges have evolved.

Reading's success to date, has been significantly influenced by our physical and virtual connectivity nationally and internationally, alongside local leadership. This undoubted success however, also presents a range of socio-economic and environmental challenges, as we seek to compete in an increasingly globalised marketplace and within a networked system of national and international cities.

While Reading prospers, two of our Wards remain in the top 10% of the most deprived in England. In numerous small pockets of deprivation in Reading, fuel poverty, health and education are major challenges. A shortage of affordable housing, pressures on heritage, increased car-based traffic and the resultant congestion and air-quality issues this brings, plus ongoing environmental/climate change are also all key challenges we must tackle Reading-wide in coming years.

Each of these challenges are interconnected and raise issues around future governance structures and the quality of life for our population. However, the capabilities of people in Reading, the businesses, skills, innovation and creativity are also the enablers for us to develop smart and sustainable responses to help solve our challenges and narrow the gap.

Reading's new Draft Local Plan sets some clear ambitions for 'living within the environmental limits' and 'ensuring a strong, healthy and just society', but the Reading 2050 Vision has been developed by the businesses of Reading, to support our Local Authority in driving this ambition further, with opportunities for all, in the long term.





CELEBRATING READING

Across Reading today, we have much to celebrate. Here we set out just a few of these attributes raised by many of those we have talked to over the last 3 years.









OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENTREPRENEURS & YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

TOP 10 LOCATION FOR PATENTS GRANTED PETAINS 20% of UNIVERSITY OF READING GRADUATES (19,000 YOUNG PROFESSIONALS)



#2 MOST

ATTRACTIVE EUROPEAN SMALL CITY ECONOMY OF THE FUTURE FOR















AN ATTRACTIVE OPPORTUNITY FOR EMPLOYERS

50% of READING'S POPULATION EDUCATED TO NOVA OR ABOVE #5 BEST



#6
FASTEST
GROWING
EMPLOYMENT
MARKET

3.7M SQFT OF PROPOSED OFFICE SPACE WITHIN SOOM OF READING STATION





AN EXCELLENT QUALITY OF LIFE









AHOCKEYCLUBSPORTING NEARLY 70 TEAMS & OLYMPIC MEDALLISTS



A STRONG SPORTING NETWORK









LOCAL CLUBS SUPPORTING SPORTS DEVELOPMENT, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENTS COACHING WITH EXTENSIVE VOLUNTEER INPUT







RESTING PLACE OF KING HENRY I

IS THE CONFLUENCE OF THE RIVER THAMES, RIVER KENNET & HOLY BROOK, ALLOF WHICH ARE HENTIONED IN THE DOOMESDAY BOOK

A DIVERSE HISTORY



HOME OF READING ABBEY
ONE OF MEDIEVAL ENGLAND'S RICHEST



800 LISTED BUILDINGS



2 SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENTS



5 HISTORIC PARKS & GARDENS



17,000 STRONG UNIVERSITY OF READING EACH YEAR



HAS THE BEST A LEVEL RESULTS OF ANY LOCAL AUTHORITY AREA IN THE COUNTRY

STRONG EDUCATION
PROVISION



2 OFFE TOP 10 SCHOOLS IN THE UK BY GCSE RESULTS

THE JOURNEY SO FAR

The collaborative process to develop a Reading 2050 Vision began in 2013, drawing views from the town's business and wider community, to determine an ambitious, yet realistic long-term Vision for our city.

Focusing on the three pillars of sustainability – environmental, social and economic – we have driven discussion and debate that has resulted in some clear, collective ambitions and directions for the town, which aim to get us started on our journey to 2050.

This is not a response to historic trends or a rebranding exercise, but instead seeks to present politically and economically viable ambitions and opportunities which can deliver a smart and sustainable future for everyone.

The Vision began in June 2013, when young professionals from across the property industry: planners, engineers, developers, designers, etc., began to question the direction of travel for Reading over the next 30 years. Barton Willmore and the University of Reading brought a breadth of practical planning, design and academic thinking to the process, which the business community have embraced, through Reading UK – the economic development company for the town.

We believe this Vision, driven by the people who live, work and shape this city, can tackle our inherent socio-economic challenges, through the delivery of considered growth and opportunity.

The new Reading 2050 Vision will help us establish ourselves as an internationally recognised and economically successful city region. A city where low carbon living is the norm, and the built environment, technology and innovation have combined to create a dynamic, smart and sustainable city with a high quality of life and equal opportunities for all.

Since then we have engaged with a broad spectrum of people and businesses, to develop and test ideas, consulting over 21,000 members of the local community, some 350 local business representatives and hosting 15 events to discuss and shape the opportunities for Reading.





3 CORE
THEMES
THAT HELP FOCUS &
MANAGE OUR WORKSTREAMS

THE VISION SETS OUT:

12 KEY YOU CAN WAYS GET INVOLVED

12 NEXT 12 STEPS FOR PROGRESSING THIS VISION

EVOLVE IN THE

A GREEN TECH (

WHY?

A globally competitive economy in the future is essential to tackling some of the social and environmental challenges we are facing. Within Reading, we already have a strong, established technological business sector, who regularly work alongside our world-class University. We have businesses of all sizes, from entrepreneurs to multi-nationals and a world-class business school, who combine to deliver a strong community, capable of delivering tomorrow's state-of-the-art, green tech city. The comprehensive integration of technology is becoming more and more important to us all in our daily lives and therefore we believe we can build these strengths more successfully into Reading. We need to continually review and reduce our impact on the environment around us; improve our efficiency and seek greener ways to deliver a smart, yet sustainable living and working environment for all. Business has a key part to play in developing technological change and strengthening our economy, as well as being ethical partners in our town.

WHAT?

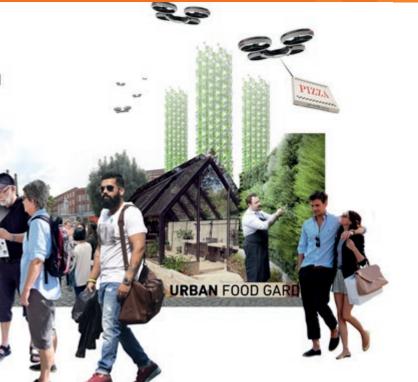
A city that builds upon the established technology focus of Reading, it will celebrate and encourage diversity through the provision of facilities and infrastructure to support small start-ups and high growth companies. A university presence within the city centre will exhibit and test cutting-edge ideas and approaches, no matter what discipline they are emerging from. We will see retro-fitting of existing buildings and the development of new iconic architecture, providing some of the greenest accommodation possible for local and incoming businesses, as well as communities. We will strengthen and develop our world-class public bus service, encouraging more users through new generation buses, a rapid transit system, autonomous vehicles and a comprehensive cycle network connect the city east to west/north to south, all combining to relieve the town centre of congestion. Utilising the' internet of things', we will change business practices, drive greater collaborative working, open up new markets, revolutionise our homes and the way we live, through the transfer of information and knowledge.





CITY?





HOW DO WE DELIVER THIS?

- Smarter, greener buildings, be they homes or workplaces, that utilise advanced technology and approaches to maximise the use of space and deliver increased density and quality of occupation for all.
- Housing provision which offers a variety of housing types, scales and tenures city-wide: from live/work units to house boats; family housing to assisted living; rental and market sale, in order to support a truly cross-generational diverse community, providing benefit at all levels of society.
- Deliver a fully integrated transport network citywide, which maximises our connectivity, while also prioritising green and smart methods of travel.
 Encourage modal shift, from cars to active travel (cycling and walking), mass rapid transport, and the utilisation of electric or other future low-carbon fuel options both within and beyond the city.
- Green technology and the 'internet of things' becomes the core of our education and training system, preparing and developing young people to meet the needs of businesses based within the town and continue to implement and drive innovation.
- Utilise the strengths the University of Reading
 has in research and development within the built
 environment, energy and climate research, to drive
 further live technology-led projects based across the
 town and wider region.
- Build on our current and attract new modern technology, creative and scientific businesses into the city by actively marketing our creativity and innovation, in order to establish ourselves as a leader in these sectors.
- Encourage universal take up of green, smart technologies by celebrating and showcasing innovation amongst business, as well as the delivery of technology into homes, be this to improve energy efficiency, education or connectivity to reduce seclusion and loneliness.
- Encourage and facilitate reduction of our carbon footprint across the city through the local food production, renewable energy programmes and visibility of consumption through the internet of things.
- Market our green tech strengths and network globally to promote support (of any scale) in our local investment projects.

A CITY OF CULTU

WHY?

Reading already has a rich heritage and strong cultural base which has the potential, if capitalised upon, to make us both a cultural and tourist destination in our own right, while also delivering a fair, yet dynamic and enticing lifestyle for our current and a growing number of future inhabitants. A strong cultural destination is important to businesses seeking suitable locations. Today, our diverse communities mark numerous religious festivals and occasions, while also containing members from all generations, each of whom can share and celebrate in Reading's heritage and contribute to our social scene on various levels. As we aspire to deliver a strengthening retail and tourism destination, we must ensure we encourage and support our successful differentiation.

WHAT?

A city that builds on the success of the iconic Reading Festival to deliver arts and culture to people of all ages and ethnicities, Reading will facilitate community interaction and opportunity. The music festival will spill out, infiltrating the city itself all year round, through the provision of vibrant public gathering spaces and street life, diverse venues and embraced cultural diversity. The city will integrate, enhance and celebrate our heritage, bringing it to life through modern interpretations as well as preservation. Comedy, independent retailers and pop up shops, street cafes and markets, community and creative hubs, workshops and live-work units will all support start-up businesses and facilitate the celebration of art, craftsmanship and culture. Sporting events, religious and international festivals could all be celebrated and woven throughout the urban fabric to bring our city to life, promote health and wellbeing, while also intensifying activity around key city centre nodal points and community hubs throughout our suburbs. All this activity will be celebrated and shared across a central hub, providing visibility and access to all.





JRE & DIVERSITY





HOW DO WE DELIVER THIS?

- A broad coordinated programme of arts, culture, music and history city-wide, which maximises all community and religious event opportunities and incorporates a new Reading on Thames Festival of arts and culture.
- Technology becomes a key facilitator of our cultural programme to showcase and share events and information.
- Deliver a new theatre with maximum appeal and accessibility.
- Deliver a programme of public art citywide, utilising our open space and core gathering areas, to deliver events, supported by collaborative, community-led arts space, studios and workshops.
- Refurbish existing heritage assets for preservation as well as for temporary and modern, innovative uses, e.g. the Prison, Abbey, etc.
- Broaden education/training to ensure that arts and humanities are represented and young people are involved, while also ensuring support for the city's wider mental health and wellbeing. At a higher education level, through the school of architecture, drive the opportunities for advancing architectural ideas and opportunities citywide.
- Support the greater diversification of our retail offer to deliver strong, local independent brands, interim retail solutions and differentiation through flexible retail opportunities, workshops and collaborative studio spaces.
- Develop a strong, coordinated and wellmarketed leisure offer.
- Capitalise on our music heritage and standing delivered by the Reading Festival, to broaden visibility of this festival and musical opportunity city-wide, and further support our growing night-time economy.

A CITY OF RIVER

WHY?

Not just the River Thames, but the River Kennet, the Kennet & Avon Canal and the Holy Brook all weave their way through and under much of our city, defining and offering opportunity via their river banks and crossings. Throughout our consultation however, people raised the lack of waterfront and opportunity to experience it, as a wasted opportunity. Cities around the world celebrate their water courses, and use them to improve the quality of life for residents, by improving accessibility and utilising water's cooling properties in urban environments. Low lying land and the risk of flooding is a challenge for Reading, but it can also be an opportunity. Considered management and design could better utilise these areas for recreation and leisure, and install advanced technology to enable greater occupation of these areas for wider uses. Throughout Reading we have a variety of parks and gardens, but by better connecting our green spaces we can provide access for all, a green lung for the city and support greener, smarter, safe modes of transport.

WHAT?

A city that recognises how water has shaped much of Reading will celebrate our waterways, opening them up to offer recreational spaces and sporting facilities. Waterside living will be possible and attractive to a broad range of the community, through house boats, and urban intensification, where suitable. A greater number of considered, usable green spaces will deliver leisure and social opportunities throughout the town.

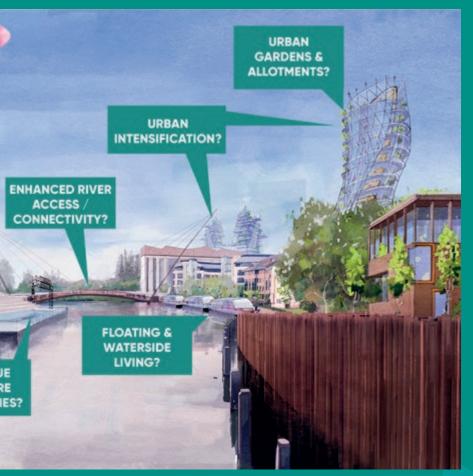
Buildings will become green in their own right, with indoor and outdoor growing spaces woven throughout the built fabric of the city, on roofs and walls, to soften hard surfaces and minimise run-off.

Increased occupation of our green spaces will be facilitated through improved navigability and signage, pop-up and permanent accommodation options, shared surfaces and the promotion and celebration of education, sporting and leisure opportunities of all types.





RS & PARKS?





HOW DO WE DELIVER THIS?

- Open-up the rivers and waterways to facilitate and encourage greater levels of movement, access and waterside city living.
- Develop greater connectivity through our green spaces and waterways via a considered strategy which includes greening the IDR to act as a lung for the city, and embedding the 'internet of things' technology within it.
- Develop urban and waterway strategies for food production.
- Engage with leading built environment industry specialists to encourage the considered provision of open space, bodies of water and vegetation in our urban spaces, inside and on buildings, in order to minimise heating and cooling requirements and pre-empt climate change impacts.
- Develop a considered city-wide water management strategy to maximise the opportunities and minimise the threats it presents.
- Utilise the renewable energy opportunities our rivers and waterways and open space already present.
- Boost the riverside economy by developing new water travel and marina business opportunities and supporting new local and international water activities.
- Open our rivers and green spaces as areas for education, leisure and sport.
- Enhance and encourage understanding of the ecology and biodiversity of our open space for informal leisure activity and educational purposes.
- Encourage and facilitate community ownership of open spaces, including a co-owned schedule of events and activities.

WHAT DOES SUC

The scenarios we have created for each city theme are not part of the statutory planning process and not specific to the areas shown, but instead are a selection of ideas to inspire and prompt thinking into what could be possible in Reading.







CESS LOOK LIKE?









WHAT DOES SUC

HERE ARE SOME POTENTIAL NEWS HEADLIN

'READING NAMED UK'S FRIENDLIEST CITY'

'HENRY I EXPERIENCE IN READING AWARDED TOURIST DESTINATION OF THE YEAR'

'READING CITED AS A MODEL OF SOCIAL EQUALITY'

'READING FLOATING HOMES COMMUNITY CELEBRATES 10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY'

'READING'S NEW IDR PARK TO BE FINISH OF TOUR OF BRITAIN 2050' 'READING NAMED #1 FOR UK CREATIVE INDUSTRY APPRENTICESHIPS'

CESS LOOK LIKE?

IES...

'FLEET OF DRIVERLESS CARS DELIVERED TO READING CITY CENTRE'

'READING NAMED 'CLEAN AIR' LEADER IN UK'

'READING NAMED UK CITY OF CULTURE'

'ALL READING SCHOOLS NOW IN THE UK TOP 5%'

'READING NAMED MOST EXCITING THAMES-SIDE LOCATION OUTSIDE LONDON'

'READING BECOMES FIRST UK 100% RENEWABLE, SELF-POWERED CITY'



66 WITH READING UK LEADING THIS PROCESS, AND THE **UNIVERSITY OF** READING, BARTON WILLMORE AND READING BOROUGH COUNCIL IN SUPPORT, THE LAUNCH OF THE VISION MARKS ONLY THE BEGINNING OF A PROCESS.,,

To realise this Vision, we need to maintain momentum, securing cross-organisational collaboration with both the private and public sector and propose the following initial steps:



Support the communication of the Vision to the community.



Further develop the steering committee and leadership.



Set out a route map of incremental steps for the most ambitious ideas.



Push the Vision out UK-wide and internationally.



Split the opportunities into clear workshop streams.



Drive participation in these workstreams across Reading's professional and local community.



Each workstream to develop an understanding of work already underway/pending proposals.



Invite further thoughts and contributions through ongoing activity.



Encourage and support local initiatives that impact upon the workstreams and assist in their delivery.



Drive wider understanding and debate via the Reading 2050 Public Lecture Series 2017-18, hosted by the School of Built Environment, University of Reading.



Undertake a review of funding streams available including Government Grants, TIFs, Carbon Bonds, Crowdfunding and Local Investment Funds.



Drive regular reporting and collaboration across workstreams.



Report back to wider business and local communities.

GETINVOLVED

66COLLABORATION IS ESSENTIAL TO DELIVERING THIS AMBITIOUS VISION. THE READING 2050 VISION PROVIDES **EXCITING OPPORTUNITIES FOR US ALL TO ENGAGE** WITH AND HELP TO SHAPE THE **DELIVERY** OF CHANGE FOR READING.,,





GET INVOLVED

Below we have set out how you might contribute. We urge you to carefully consider what your personal contribution could be in realising a great, smart and sustainable future for Reading by 2050.

SHARE AND CONTRIBUTE YOUR IDEAS:



Visit the website to watch the videos and find out more on the vision. www.Reading2050.co.uk



Tell us about your local community and local initiatives already in place.



Consider how the ideas in this Vision could be embedded in your home or work life.



Follow the Facebook page and share your thoughts www.facebook.com/ Reading2050.



Share ideas on how some of these ideas might help you and your neighbours.



Talk to your local councillor about the ideas raised and your thoughts on them.



Contribute on Twitter #Reading2050.



Support or contribute to local initiatives or activities in your community, sharing them on social media and wider arts platforms.



Contribute your personal knowledge, skills, contacts or understanding of best practice to assist in realising the Vision.



Tell us how your projects/ activity can proactively feed into the Vision.



Become a supporter of Reading 2050 Vision by registering for email updates, and attending future events.



Volunteer your expertise to the focused workshop streams.





A VISION FOR READING 2050



DEVELOPED BY...





SUPPORTED BY...











