

Proposal to abolish Sustainability Manager role at RBC

GREN response to consultation - submitted Friday 16th October 2015

RBC Budget proposals in summer 2015 described at

http://beta.reading.gov.uk/media/3576/Proposal-13---Planning-Development-and-Regulatory-Services---Management-and-Operational-Posts/pdf/Proposal_13_-_Planning_Development_and_Regulatory_Services_-_Management_and_Operational_Posts.pdf

included major changes to Sustainability Team.

GREN response – was agreed in draft at Members' Meeting on 7th October and modified after a subsequent input from a member.

GREN response to Question 1:

Proposal says: Loss of sustainability management role will directly impact on partnership working where RBC have provided local leadership and been a champion in relation to climate change.

We agree strongly

- The 'Sustainability Team' has already been cut back and is to lose another member of staff in April 2016 leaving no-one operating either within the community or at policy level. Loss of the Manager will mean that the expertise, contacts and history built up over many years will be lost to RBC. Ideally there should be at least two staff in the team to give some resilience against 'natural' loss of staff.
- RBC will be without specialist expert guidance in this key area – RBC strategy and policy will suffer, and opportunities to access county, regional and national expertise and finance, and to influence initiatives at these levels, will be missed.
- RBC will lose inputs to the planning process reflecting long-term sustainability goals – so decisions on Reading's future development are likely to be based on short-term considerations .
- RBC will be unable to give support to Reading Climate Change Partnership – a Local Strategic Partnership sub-group.
 - If the RCCP continues its members will find it extremely difficult – if not impossible – to monitor and report on progress with the adopted Climate Change Strategy without the involvement of dedicated contacts within RBC to liaise with delivery partners.

- RBC staff have organised successful public events for RCCP every six months. It is not at all clear if these events can continue without staff support
 - RCCP Board members may not be able to give the time to these activities.
 - RBC's Carbon Plan has seen Council carbon emissions cut by almost one third, saving the Council tax payer an estimated £1.1 million per annum in the process – and has equally ambitious plans for the future. Without a specialist Manager the remaining staff members focussed on internal energy saving and 'Warm Homes' will lack the policy framework, guidance and contacts
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