



Reading Chamber Council

Strategy Document for 2011

The aim of the Vision Document is to set down the key issues of concern to Reading Chamber Members and to outline the Chamber's plan to lead, debate and action change. We aim to ensure that Reading remains as the commercial capital of the Thames Valley. This will be achieved by creating a partnership with large and small business, local government, all sectors of the community and the education sector. These partnerships support the commercial growth of the town and the economic improvement of all sectors of the community.

Services to Chamber Members

Reading Chamber of Commerce is part of the Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce Group, a membership organisation, which must maintain and expand its services and benefits to members of all sizes.

To this end the Chamber will work towards providing the following:

- Training for companies and individuals to support skills development and business success
- Networking events to encourage business development and a dynamic forum for business interchange, tendering and supply chain opportunities. Local member updates through email and website communication.
- Business information services in the form of mailing lists and member directories
- Specific and targeted events and focus groups on Property & Planning and People & Skills Social events to foster business and community links
- Support to members thinking of taking their first step towards an overseas market, and ongoing services to those already exporting through our International Trade department.
- Working with Reading UK CIC with regard to: 1. Local Economy Group (LEG), 2. Economic Potency, 3. Skills Agenda, 4. Business Improvement District, 5. Support for City Status.

Key Local Business Issues and Representation

Economic Development and Sustainability – Miles Saunders

Transport – Matthew Golton

Recruitment - Rebecca Taylor

Property & Planning – Derek Ching

Hotel/Tourism – Jean Philippe Kern

Retail Sector – Steve Fawke/Adam Jacobs

Reading UK CIC LEG – Tom Fuller/Bill Gornall-King

1. Economic Development and Sustainability

The Chamber will continue to ensure the production of a 20-year strategy for the South-East with key issues to push the business agenda forward and to ensure that the Thames Valley continues to lead the country as one of the most progressive and prosperous regions to do business.

The Chamber will:

- Attract higher inward investment
- Encourage enterprise
- Focus on quality of employment land and buildings
- Lobby for local transport enhancements
- Support and promote the strengths of Reading – GreenPark, Madejski Stadium home of Reading Football Club and London Irish, Thames Valley Park.
- Encourage co-operation with other chambers where unitary authority borders overlap (West Berks/Wokingham). Facilitated by chamber Presidents meeting on a quarterly basis.
- Support Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership in his quest for investment in the region.
- Lobby Reading Borough Council – understand how cost savings are being achieved and their priorities around CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility). Invite representation to Reading Chamber Council meetings.

2. Transport

The Chamber supports an integrated transport strategy which affords viability to all forms of transport and will continue to lobby on behalf of the membership regarding:

- Re-development of Reading Station/Station Hill

- Better Public Transport Links to Heathrow
 - Direct Rail Link between Heathrow and Reading
 - Link from Heathrow to the Southwest Trains Network (Airtrack)
- M4 Capacity – reducing congestion
- Upgrade north-south M4 to M3 road connections

Focussing on the following transport issues, specific to Reading, the Chamber will:

- Lobby for M4 motorway widening and Reading station improvements to see that they proceed with minimal disruption to traffic flow
- Continue to liaise with Reading Borough Council to ensure that sufficient parking is available at reasonable cost both in the town centre and at out of town Park and Ride schemes
- Support Reading Borough Council in finding solutions to Reading's transport infrastructure problems including a third Thames crossing as well as park-and-ride and in the implementation of more advanced technology such as the vehicle information systems on bus routes and the Metro TV Information system.
- Lobby central government through the British Chambers of Commerce to ensure early electrification of the Great Western rail line and encourage schemes that provide a direct rail link from Heathrow to Reading.

3. Property & Planning

The Chamber supports the continued regeneration and enhancement of the town centre. We believe that planning regulations should support business to provide jobs, employment and wealth. Decisions should be made quickly, efficiently and with due consideration of their impact on business and the economic wellbeing of the area.

The Chamber will:

- Encourage and support the provision of new housings stock for the greater Reading area. Understand the implications of the Localism Bill and its impact on local authority housing targets – seek confirmation from RBC on its course of action.
- Support and encourage the commitment of Reading Borough Council to the continued growth and prosperity of Reading as a city.
- Encourage the improvements of the station and surrounding areas to provide a suitable gateway to Reading.
- Encourage the balance of development of business parks on the periphery of the town with the enhancement of a central business district.

- Engage with the Property sector through Reading Chamber's Property Group.

4. People and Education

People are our greatest asset. Business has a duty to support and train staff to the highest standard. Government support organisations have a key role to play in training and educating the workforce. The Chamber is keen to encourage self-reliance and an inclusive culture to harmonise with the social needs/aspirations of the area. Maintain close links with Reading University and the role of the Innovation & Growth fund team. Take representation from the team at CC meetings.

Reading Chamber of Commerce will actively engage all parties concerned with work based skills to promote an acceptable programme of improvements in the standard and availability of suitably qualified people in order to enhance growth sustainability and profitability of local businesses.

The Chamber will:

- Encourage research and identify specific local skill shortages
- Encourage employers to forecast skill requirements and through partnerships try to narrow the skills shortage gap
- Offer as many opportunities for people to network and promote their businesses by providing valued networking events
- Sustain and develop stronger links with various educational institutions in the Reading Area
- Support Reading UK CIC's Local Economy Group in relation to its skills agenda and other activities that benefit members of the Chamber and the business community as a whole.

5. Cross-Chamber cooperation and working

The Chamber recognises that many of the social and economic issues that affect its members reach across parliamentary and local government boundaries and markedly so in the case of Reading where the functional economic area of Reading extends into the adjoining local authority districts.

Accordingly the Chamber would give consideration to supporting a rationalisation of local authority boundaries to promote the economic well-being of the FEA but in the meantime recognises that there should be communication and cooperation with the Chamber Councils for West Berkshire, Wokingham and Bracknell on issues that affect some or all these local chambers, including working parties and other forms of communication, information sharing and joint working..

Summary

The Chamber is keen to maintain the successful development of Reading for the benefit of our members, employers and residents. It will work with appropriate organisations to deliver its vision. This

document does not attempt to identify all the issues affecting the area, but merely sets out the priorities for the Chamber and our members at this time.

Reading Chamber Council 2011

Tom Fuller (President)	Barclays Corporate
Bill Gornall-King	Boyes Turner
Miles Saunders	Pricewaterhouse Coopers
Steve Fawke	Centre Manager, Broad Street Mall
Rebecca Taylor	Jobs @ Pertemps
TBC	Yell
Derek Ching	Boyes Turner
Nigel Penn Simkins	Article10 Design
Matthew Golton	First Group
Robin Barnes	Royal Bank of Scotland
Jean Philippe Kern	Novotel
Adam Jacobs	Jacobs
Julian Evans	Littleton Evans
James Heap	Teamworks Karting

Chamber Council Meeting Dates 2011

10 Jan, 07 Feb, 07 Mar, 04 Apr, 09 May, 06 Jun, 04 July, 05 Sept, 04 Oct, 07 Nov

All take place at 6pm at the offices of PricewaterhouseCoopers, Greyfriars Road unless otherwise notified.