Act Now, Change Forever: How Climate action will help people in Reading Central

27,124
Number of poorly insulated homes

65
Neighbourhoods with unhealthy air

6,054
Homes at risk of flooding from rivers or seas

People across Reading Central care deeply about their local area and the people in it. We want to live in a country where both people and nature can thrive — with clean air, warm homes, green spaces, and strong, resilient communities. Climate change and nature loss are already negatively impacting our health, driving up costs, and threatening nature and landscapes that we cherish and depend upon. And it's not just here in the UK - all around the world people are being impacted, with some disproportionately harder hit.

Across the UK, people are already stepping up. But we can't do it alone. That's why we need practical and inspiring leadership — including delivering vital funding to help those most affected, restoring nature to protect our future, and investing in solutions that cut bills and back good UK jobs. 79% of people in Reading Central said environment and climate change policies are important to them.

Cut Bills, Back UK Jobs, and Secure a Greener, Fairer Future

The government is legally obliged to write a new Climate Plan by October 29th. Fairness must be at the heart of the plan, through delivering lower energy bills, greater energy security, better public transport, new job opportunities, and healthier homes.

- **Warmer homes** - 55% of homes in Reading Central are poorly insulated (rated EPC band D or lower). Upgrading these could save residents £250 or more per year on energy bills, as well as reduce carbon emissions. According to the latest government data there were 5,251 households in fuel poverty in Reading Central.
- **Cleaner air** - In Reading Central, levels of the harmful pollutant nitrogen dioxide (NO2) are above World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines in 51 neighbourhoods and levels of the equally harmful pollutant PM2.5 are above WHO guidelines in 65 neighbourhoods. 8,768 constituents in Reading Central suffer from a respiratory disease like asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). A rapid transition to electric cars, better public transport and better cycling infrastructure will reduce air pollution and health impacts.
- **Better buses** - Bus services have declined by around 50% outside of London in England & Wales since 2010. In Reading Central bus services have declined by 66% according to research by the University of Leeds. 31% of households in Reading Central don't have access to a car.

- **Greater energy security** – projects across Reading Central already produce 2,490 MWh of energy from onshore wind and solar farms. The more renewable energy we produce, the more resilient we are to global spikes in the price of oil and gas and the less dependent on energy imports.
- **More jobs** - the green economy already supports 2,576 jobs locally, and has grown faster than other sectors. A recent report by CBI Economics said the UK's net zero economy generates £83.1 billion in Gross Value Added (GVA) and it has grown 10% in the past year compared to 0.9% for the whole economy.

Restore Nature to Build a Safer, Healthier Future

Restoring nature improves health, builds our resilience to climate impacts, and supports community wellbeing. A recent Whitehall analysis for the Planning and Infrastructure Bill provided no data or research to support the government argument that environmental legislation holds up building. **The government must protect existing nature sites and restore nature.**

- **More trees and nature** – restored woodlands, peatland and saltmarshes can help capture and store carbon pollution as well as provide habitats to threatened wildlife. Trees also provide shelter from the heat and contribute to wellbeing. In Reading Central tree cover is 15%. Researchers have suggested a minimum of 20% tree cover in urban areas.
- **Reduce sewage spills** – in England only 14% of rivers are in good ecological condition.
- **Improve access to green space** – Reading Central has poor amounts of green space compared with other constituencies, with 17.0m^2 of green space per person

Deliver Vital Funding to Communities Hit Hardest by Climate Change

To tackle the climate crisis fairly and effectively, the UK must provide finance to those on the frontlines — in our communities and around the world.

In Reading Central, 6,054 homes are currently at risk from flooding from rivers and seas, with many more properties at risk of flash flooding from overwhelmed drainage systems during periods of intense rainfall. Many of these households will need financial support to make their homes resilient to flooding.

50% of the UK public support climate aid for poorer nations while only 34% oppose this. This means scaling up climate finance, particularly making the biggest polluters pay since they have made vast profits from environmental destruction at the expense of ordinary people. More than 3 billion people globally are highly vulnerable to climate change, and it could push up to 132 million more people into extreme poverty by 2030. Addressing unsustainable debt that is holding back countries already hit hardest by climate breakdown is also essential.

Join us in standing up for real solutions that work for people and planet.

Let's Act Now and Change Forever.

This briefing was prepared by Friends of the Earth / MySociety on behalf of The Climate Coalition. For detailed data sources or further inquiries, contact data@foe.co.uk.

Friends of the Earth