

**Climate Change Centre Reading (CCCRdg)**  
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**Reading Borough Council**

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**Subject:** CCCRdg update in response to the draft *Reading Prison Framework (Closing Date 11<sup>th</sup> April, 2014)*

To the Planning LDF Team,

- **Climate change**
- **Community**
- **Art**
- **Conference**
- **Hostel**
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The outline of the development framework of the site Reading Prison contains many good points with a respective theme running throughout the draft. However we would like to expand on some of the issues mentioned. Here is our response on behalf of the *Climate Change Centre Reading* (CCCRdg). As Reading's leader in the green movement against climate change, we would like to invite your consideration of a special project with the "Reading (Berkshire) County Gaol" to help drive Reading's bid for sustainability and for the 2019 European Green Capital Award. **Climate Change Centre Reading** a green resource community hub with aim to bring together Businesses, the Community, Academia, and the local Government and those who want to learn about Climate Change and how to put a cap on emissions. To pledge with the Paris Agreement in order to create collaborative momentum to reduce CO<sup>2</sup> and develop sustainability in the Thames Valley Berkshire 2016 and beyond.

Overall we fully agree with the "Outline Development Framework- the site of Reading Prison", however we feel the prison could be used whilst unoccupied, until detailed planning applications are put forward. We believe the HM Reading prison site is a perfect opportunity to build upon London's success with the opening of the 'Crystal- sustainable cities initiative', and create Reading's own sustainable education and **BOB** (BOBShire's Capitals) **Creative Conference Centre** for the public. We put forward the idea of using the site during the period of 2014-2020 as a functional space to let local community

groups use the prison as a sustainability hub to promote Reading to become a greener place to live and work in towards beyond zero emissions and zero waste. The “Learning Centre” will promote various green project solutions and can also be a testing conference facility for monitoring and analysing local community art projects for the council. A Live Public Prison could be an astonishing example of public space, where our global network of leading *Placemakers* could add value to Reading’s planning and urban green development. We want to improve pedestrian and bike access to the prison via Forbury Gardens, from Reading train station. Also a possible new “prison tunnel” which would run under / over the A329 towards the Forbury Retail Park.

Display one prison wing as **Reading Art Exhibition** would be a first step towards permanent art museum in reading. Making use of the prison’s exterior walls as a vertical garden promotes the prison as a green space. The building would also be an excellent example of a sustainable community engagement, with shaped PV-solar panels temporarily fitted on the roof areas or vertically on the walls to maintain all energy needs (With our expertise in this area, we would offer a free feasibility study). This would turn the site into an outstanding usage of a historical building without altering the structure. We want to strive for community usage of the site in order to preserve its heritage qualities but also as a sustainable landmark for the future, with the Reading (Berkshire) County Gaol, the Abbey of Reading and the Forbury Gardens linked together via the Kennet and Avon canal, with open access to the public and new tourism.

We believe that the modern part of the prison should also be an advisory exhibition of the Reading Museum and the *Reading's Abbey Quarter*.

One part of Reading Prison could be explored of turned into **Berkshire County Gaol Hostel**, similar to transformation made in Langholmen Hostel in Stockholm

<http://langholmen.com/en/vandrarhem> or HI-Ottawa Jail Hostel

<http://www.hihostels.ca/Ontario/1166/Hi-Ottawa-Jail.hostel>

We understand after the period is up, the prison will return to the hands of the Reading Borough Council who have already evaluated future usage of the historic site and building i.e. a permanent Berkshire hotel should enhance the settings of the **Reading Abbey Quarter** and Forbury Gardens (Reading Mueseum). We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your consideration and invite you to future meetings with us or events to discuss from a business perspective the themes set out in the draft Reading Prison Framework.

With Regards,

Team

**Climate Change Centre Reading (CCCRdg)**

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