

# WIRRAL COUNCIL

## SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

30 JANUARY 2012

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>WIRRAL CLIMATE CHANGE GROUP ANNUAL REPORT</b>
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED:</b>	<b>ALL</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF LAW, HR &amp; ASSET MANAGEMENT</b>
<b>RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:</b>	<b>COUNCILLOR KENNY</b>
<b>KEY DECISION?</b>	<b>NO</b>

### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- (a) Update Members on the work of the Wirral Climate Change Group during 2011; and
- (b) Seek endorsement for the development of a replacement Wirral Climate Change Strategy.

1.2 The Council's early commitment to action on climate change, which resulted in the adoption of a climate change strategy in 2007, has heralded more concerted, co-ordinated action on carbon reduction and energy efficiency – now reflected as a corporate priority to reduce the Council's carbon footprint. It has also led to some initial work on local adaptation to expected changes in the climate.

1.3 The Council cannot respond adequately to the climate agenda alone. The Wirral Climate Change Group has thus been developed into a local partnership with representation from various organisations from different sectors. The group meets regularly and has reported progress through Wirral's Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and the Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee. The group maintains a rolling Wirral-wide carbon reduction programme which details the actions of partner organisations.

1.4 The climate change strategy from 2007 is now due an update. Many of the actions associated with it have now been implemented, the agenda has moved forward and the context has changed. Therefore the Wirral Climate Change Group proposes to initiate a consultation process leading to the development of a new replacement strategy.

1.5 The production of a local climate change strategy is not a statutory obligation. However, since the adoption of the Wirral's first strategy, a variety of legal changes and policy instruments have been introduced by government to drive climate-related actions which do demand action. The strategy is envisaged to act in part as a co-ordinating framework for such action.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION/S**

2.1 It is recommended that members:

- Note the activity of the Wirral Climate Change Group from 2011 and the actions of partner organisations contained in the Wirral-wide Carbon Reduction Programme; and,
- Endorse the partnership's proposed work to develop a replacement climate change strategy for Wirral.

## **3.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S**

3.1 Wirral's existing climate change strategy is in need of updating. Since the original strategy was adopted, the issues have evolved and the context has changed. Furthermore, many of the early actions advocated have been implemented. The Wirral Climate Change Group is the logical partnership to lead the development of a new replacement strategy.

## **4.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES**

4.1 Much of the UK's climate pollution comes from emissions associated with local activities such as the way we heat and power buildings and travel around. Actions at the local level can thus have a critical influence in meeting national and global emission reduction targets designed to mitigate damaging climate change. Service providers also need to take the impacts of likely changes in the climate into account to ensure decisions are 'future proof' and that any opportunities are realised and threats minimised. The importance of local action for climate change – both mitigation and adaptation - has led local authorities and their partners to develop local climate change strategies as frameworks for a co-ordinated local response.

4.2 In 2001, Wirral Council became an early signatory to the 'Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change' (Council, 13 February 2006, Minute 91). The Nottingham Declaration Group comprised officers from each Council department and was formed to produce a climate change strategy and implement the key actions agreed by the Council. The original Wirral Climate Change Strategy adopted in 2007 (Cabinet 20 June 2007, Minute 99) was developed 'in house' and has been instrumental in promoting the carbon reduction agenda. The strategy's main target – a 20% reduction in Council CO2 emissions by 2010 - was achieved early. Subsequently the Council has: embraced reducing its carbon footprint as a corporate objective; adopted a more ambitious 60% target; and, introduced a Carbon Budget to drive progress and help to realise financial savings from energy efficiency initiatives.

- 4.3 The Wirral Climate Change Group evolved from the Nottingham Declaration Group and, over time, has become a wider partnership. It currently includes representatives from the: NHS; fire and police services; travel and waste authorities; and, voluntary, community and faith sectors. The group meets on a quarterly basis and reports progress via the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It includes elected member representation based on a 1:1:1 ratio for the three main political groups.
- 4.4 Part of the rationale for the Wirral Climate Change Group is that action from all sections of the community will be required and that no partner is equipped to deal with climate change fully alone. Through partnership there is also potential for better co-ordination and sharing of skills and resources - conferring potential mutual advantages to participants, particularly at a time when resources are constrained. The initial work of the Wirral Climate Change Group has predominantly focused on mitigation to prevent climate change – i.e. reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Under the former National Indicator (NI) 188, some initial work was also undertaken on preparing to adapt to likely changes in the climate in the future.
- 4.5 The Local Area Agreement (LAA) was, until recently, the main focus for LSP action and has shaped the Wirral Climate Change Group's agenda. The LAA included a commitment to reduce per capita carbon emissions – formerly reported under National Indicator (NI) 186. Accordingly, the group developed the Wirral-wide Carbon Reduction Programme (also referred to as the Wirral-wide NI186 Carbon Reduction Action Plan) – a rolling programme of partner actions to reduce carbon emissions in the Borough. One notable example of partner co-operation has been the development and promotion of the CRed Wirral carbon reduction campaign.
- 4.6 The removal of the NI framework and associated LAAs under the Government's 'localism' agenda has led to a review of the workings of Wirral's LSP and associated partnerships, including the Wirral Climate Change Group. There is now perhaps greater freedom to develop a local response to climate change. National targets and the associated legal frameworks continue to indicate a clear 'direction of travel' for local action.
- 4.7 The original 'Nottingham Declaration' to which the Council was an early signatory, has itself recently been subject to a review and consultation – designed to take account of the changes in context since it was first formulated. The results of the review are expected to be reported in March 2012 and it is anticipated they will provide some useful input to the strategy review.
- 4.8 Turning to the actions of the Wirral Climate Change Group during 2011, in accordance with its terms of reference, the group has met four times during 2011: 1 February, 5 April, 9 August, and 7 December. The rolling Wirral-wide carbon reduction programme developed by the group has been updated twice during the year in April and December. The latest version can be found at Appendix 1 to this report. The group has continued to receive regular progress reports documenting partner efforts to promote the CRed Wirral campaign.

During 2011, the number of participants in CRed Wirral grew by 712 and the number of carbon reduction pledges by 2690.

4.9 In addition to standing items of business, in 2011 the group has received reports and presentations on:

- The climate change activities of the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service,
- Health Impact Assessment Screening
- The Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy Review
- The Merseyside Police Carbon Reduction Programme
- The work of Faiths4Change
- Local food projects
- Work to develop a Sustainable Energy Action Plan for the Liverpool City Region; and
- Preparations for the Green Deal

4.10 As part of the process of reviewing its modus operandi, the Wirral Climate Change Group has noted the absence of an up-to-date climate change strategy to drive local partnership actions. Therefore, at its meeting on 7 December 2011 the group proposed to develop a replacement strategy that:

- Reflects the changes in context since the original strategy was formulated – legal framework, scientific understanding etc.;
- Sets a new carbon reduction target for Wirral that is in line with national targets and timescales;
- Provides the context for the development of the group's future work programme and review; and,
- Helps to engage the wider community and encourages wider action beyond the Wirral Climate Change Group.

To this end, the group intends to:

- Develop a discussion paper and online questionnaire to gather views on a way forward;
- Organise a workshop/s to involve partners and interested stakeholders in the strategy development process;
- Produce a revised framework for formal consultation; and,
- Encourage partner organisations to adopt and promote the replacement strategy.

## **5.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

5.1 There are a number of risks associated with a failure to respond to the climate change agenda. Without an up-to-date local framework for climate change there is the danger that Wirral will be ill-prepared to manage the risks associated with likely changes in the local climate, for example, more extreme and frequent weather events that could have an adverse impact on the Borough. There is also the risk that Wirral will be ill-prepared to take advantage of the economic, environmental and social opportunities associated with the transition to a low carbon economy.

## **6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

6.1 As the context for local partnership work has now changed, the Wirral Climate Change Group has given consideration to its continuance, form and function.

The group considered and rejected the option to disband acknowledging that there are potentially significant mutual advantages in sharing resources and expertise through partnership.

## **7.0 CONSULTATION**

7.1 This report is based on the recorded actions of the Wirral Climate Change Group and so reflects the input of a number of partner organisations. The proposal - to develop a new replacement strategy - anticipates a consultation process with partners and the community.

## **8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS**

8.1 The development of a new replacement strategy presents an opportunity to engage voluntary, community and faith groups in shaping and delivering action locally. The voluntary, community and faith sectors undoubtedly have an important role in the local response to climate change. This was perhaps not fully captured in the original strategy, although is increasingly reflected in the membership of the Wirral Climate Change Group.

## **9.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS**

9.1 There are no direct financial implications.

9.2 There are no IT implications that cannot be accommodated within existing infrastructure.

9.3 There are no additional staffing implications from this report.

9.4 There are no direct implications on the Council's assets. However, as with the initial strategy, the development and implementation of initiatives and projects concerning the efficient and effective use of energy will likely have a positive benefit on the future management of the Council's assets.

## **10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

## **11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 Local responses to climate change may have different implications for different sectors of the community. The creation of a replacement strategy creates the opportunity to consider the equalities implications and use them to shape the new strategy.

11.2 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

(a) Is an EIA required? Yes, as part of the strategy development

(b) If 'yes', has one been completed? No, the report seeks endorsement for the development of a new strategy

## 12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

12.1 The Wirral Climate Change Group provides a key forum for the co-ordination of local efforts to reduce carbon emissions. Its work is anticipated to assist the Council to meet its corporate objective of reducing its carbon footprint. It is also anticipated to assist the promotion of carbon reduction through partner organisations and in the wider community.

## 13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

13.1 There are no direct planning or community safety implications. Both planning and police are represented in the Wirral Climate Change Group.

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## APPENDICES

*Appendix 1 - Wirral-wide Carbon Reduction Programme December 2011*

## REFERENCE MATERIAL

Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change – Available as Appendix A to Item 3 of Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee 12<sup>th</sup> October 2006 'Nottingham Declaration Council Motion – Update Report'

Wirral Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan – Available as appendices to Item 17 of the Cabinet Meeting of 20th June 2007 'Environment – Nottingham Declaration Update Report No.2'

Minutes from the meetings of the Wirral Climate Change Group from 2011 – available from the report author

## SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Item 46, Reducing Wirral's Carbon Footprint	8th March, 2010
Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Item 82, Carbon Reduction - Progress Update Report 2	14th September, 2010