

'NOTTINGHAM DECLARATION' GROUP - UPDATE REPORT no 2

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 At the Cabinet meeting on 19th October 2006, Members noted the update report on the work of the Nottingham Declaration Group and also endorsed the development of a Climate Change Strategy for Wirral by Councillors and Officers.
- 1.2 This second report provides Members with an update of the work of the Nottingham Declaration Group since October 2007, together with a draft of the proposed Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan for Members to approve.

2. Background

- 2.1 Climate change is now at the top of the political agenda and Local Authorities have a crucial role to play in responding to the challenge posed. Tackling climate change requires that we reduce our emissions of Greenhouse Gases (Mitigation) and adapt to the changes in climate that will occur (Adaptation).

By developing a coherent approach to mitigation and adaptation, Councils can also benefit in terms of saving energy and money, improving overall environmental performance, enhancing the living conditions of local residents and protecting local people from the threats posed by our changing climate.

- 2.2 The scale of the challenge presented by climate change means that all sectors of the community will have to be involved if we are to meet the targets set. The UK Climate Change Programme recognises the crucial role that local government can play in reducing emissions and adapting to climate change.

By acting together Local Authorities can have a major impact on national Greenhouse Gas emissions. Action to cut energy use can also lead to significant cost savings for Councils, while action to adapt to climate change can help protect their citizens against the risk of extreme weather events, such as flooding.

- 2.3 In October 2000, Nottingham City Council launched 'The Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change'. The authorities attending the launch agreed to sign up to the Declaration as a first step in tackling climate change. Wirral had its own Member/Officer delegation at the launch and was one of the first to sign up in 2001. Wirral was the first Merseyside authority to sign, Sefton have recently signed up. Over 230 local authorities have signed up to date.

- 2.4 In a Council Motion on the 13th February 2006, Wirral's Members unanimously re-affirmed their support for the Nottingham Declaration, and requested Cabinet to seek reports on the way in which Wirral is working to meet this global challenge, particularly through reviewing activity on energy sourcing and use; travel and transport; waste production and disposal; and the purchasing of goods and services.
- 2.5 Following the Nottingham Declaration motion, officers were selected to join a working group from key areas across the Council, viz; Transport, Procurement, Waste & Recycling, LA21, Housing Strategy/Fuel Poverty, Planning, Energy sourcing and use. The inaugural meeting of the Nottingham Declaration Group took place on 27th April 2006 and the group has now met on 7 occasions, with meetings approximately every six weeks. The group comprises the following officers :

Brian Anderson , Technical Services	Group Chair
E Young/J Barnes , Technical Services	Green Transport/Highways
Tony Dodd , Technical Services	Energy Conservation/Energy Utilities
Tara Dumas , Technical Services	Waste and Recycling issues
Ray Jkinson , Technical Services	Procurement (Local labour, construction)
Tony Birkett , Finance	Corporate Procurement (Fair Trade)
Paul Grey , Technical Services	Building and Development Control
Ed Kingsley , Regeneration	Housing Strategy/ Energy Efficiency/Fuel Poverty
Sue Weldon , Corporate Services	LA21 / Sustainable Communities
Hazel Edwards , Corporate Services	Forward Planning/Sustainable Development

- 2.6 At the Cabinet meeting on 19th October 2006, Members noted the progress update report on the work of the Nottingham Declaration Group and also endorsed the development of a Climate Change Strategy for Wirral by Councillors and Officers. This is the second progress update report on the work of the Nottingham Declaration Group.

3. Work of the Nottingham Declaration Group since October 2006

- 3.1 Members of the Group have been responsible for, or involved in developing and implementing a number of key 'green' initiatives since the last progress report, a number of which arose from Council Motions. Recent achievements include :

Energy

- Energy and Water Policy approved by Cabinet in March 2007 now being implemented across Council
- A Phase 2 Energy Efficiency Investment Programme has been developed, this was approved by Cabinet in Jan 2007, phase 1 Programme ongoing
- Two new Energy Conservation officers appointed to expand and roll out work of Council's Energy Team
- Work ongoing with Carbon Trust consultants to develop and implement pilot micro-generation projects on key Council sites, report due shortly
- Cosy Homes helped 747 homes install insulation, including measures from the Warm Front grant, in 06/07. Since Cosy Homes began in 2004, 2998 homes within the Housing Market Renewal area have received insulation and heating measures

- The 10th (2006) HECA Progress Report showed a 2.64% improvement in home energy efficiency for the year (best yet) and a 16.38% improvement overall since 1996

Awareness

- Letters and posters have been sent to all schools to remind staff and pupils of simple energy conservation measures and the importance of reducing CO₂ emissions, as requested in the Council Motion of 30th October 2006
- Articles and Energy Saving posters have been circulated to Council staff via the One Council magazine and departmental newsletters
- Letters drafted to go out to local and NW building contractors who regularly undertake work for the Council, to begin a dialogue on sustainable construction issues which will lead to development of a Sustainable Construction Policy to be incorporated into all future tender and contract documentation
- 9290 households were given energy efficiency advice in Wirral in 06/07 through the Council's partner, Merseyside Energy Efficiency Advice Centre
- In 06/07, there was a 23% increase in npower Health Through Warmth referrals compared to 05/06, to 256 for the year (best yet)

Adaptation

- Liaison has commenced with United Utilities and the Environment Agency with regard to Variable Rainfall and increased surface water run-off
- Wirral Council is now a registered Fairtrade organisation and has produced a Guide to Fairtrade Organisations in borough
- Wirral is the lead Authority for the production of the Shoreline Management Plan for the coastline between Great Orme's Head and Southport Pier
- Drafting Developer's Guide and Sustainability Checklist
- Roll-out of fortnightly domestic collection of re-cyclates and garden waste

Transport

- 9 Pool Bikes available for use by Council employees from Jan 07
- Increase in mileage rates for cycle usage from 10p per mile to the casual car user allowance rate of 38.7p per mile plus retention of the £100 per annum lump sum
- Increase in the maximum loan amount available for the purchase of cycles from £250 to £800 and for the loan to be interest free (from 30 August 2006)
- Change in policy to allow the purchase of public transport seasons tickets to be interest free
- Promotion of walking and cycling at Corporate Health and Wellbeing Fair, training of "Walk Leaders" to undertake lunch time walks for staff
- Production and distribution of Wirral Cycle Map
- Cycle courier service set up with Social Services Transport and LA21 Co-ordinator launched 14th March 2006
- Travel Plan induction packs sent to all new employees including a free weekly bus ticket, a personalised public transport journey plan and public transport service and ticket information

4. A Draft Climate Change Strategy for Wirral

- 4.1 The Council has seen cost increases of 100% for electricity, 72% for gas, 45% for heating oil and 21% for water over the last two years, adding significant pressures on it's budget. The combined cost of utility bills for Wirral in 2005/06 was approximately £7M; this could rise significantly, to £8M in 2006/07. It is vital therefore, that we reduce our dependency on fossil fuels by reducing our energy needs and by using alternative, renewable energy sources.
- 4.2 The development of a Climate Change Strategy will enable us to focus our efforts for maximum efficiency returns by developing realistic and challenging reductions in energy consumption and CO₂ emissions. We will develop a range of key initiatives to fully engage with Council staff and members, Wirral residents, community groups and schools on environmental and sustainability issues.
- 4.3 The Nottingham Declaration Seminar & Workshop took place on the 17th of Oct 2006 in Birkenhead Park Pavilion. Representatives from the Local Energy Support Programme team (LESP), Consultants 'Practical Help', Council Members and key officers delivered presentations and workshops. The event was very successful with over 30 Council officers and Members attending during the morning and afternoon sessions. By the end of the event, attendees understood :
- What climate change meant for them
 - The role of sustainable energy
 - What they could do about it and why
- 4.4 Working in small groups Members and officers began shaping the outline of a Climate Change Strategy for Wirral MBC based around key themes with suggestions for a clear Vision, key objectives and realistic, but challenging targets. Members and officers also shaped the outline for a Climate Change Strategy based around key themes, with suggestions for a clear Vision and key objectives.
- 4.5 Feedback notes and copies of the presentations from the event were posted on the Council's Virtual Committee site on the 1st of February 2007 for all staff and Members to access.
- 4.6 Since the October 2006 Workshop, Members of the Working Group have developed this outline for a strategy further, creating realistic but challenging actions to implement with measurable targets for each action.
- 4.7 Developing the draft Climate Change Strategy around the themes of Awareness, Energy, Adaptation and Transport, has enabled the Group to focus our efforts for maximum efficiency returns by developing realistic and challenging reductions in energy consumption and CO₂ emissions. We have also developed a range of key initiatives to fully engage with Council staff and members, Wirral residents, community groups and schools on environmental and sustainability issues.
- 4.8 The draft Climate Change Strategy, comprising a clear Vision and Key Objectives under the four themes, is attached to this report at Appendix **A**. The detailed Action Plan of initiatives is also attached at Appendix **B**. The key actions are

consistent with, and support a number of important National, Northwest, and Merseyside strategies, including :

Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2
Merseytravel Environmental Sustainability 2006-2011
North West Climate Change Action Plan
Defra National Strategy : Making Space for Water
Draft Regional Spatial Strategy
National Planning Policy Guidance/ Statements
Unitary Development Plan and Core Strategy Local Development Documents
Wirral Procurement Strategy
Fair Trade Foundation
Merseyside Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy
Environlink Northwest
The Energy Performance in Buildings Directive
North West Sustainable Energy Strategy
UK Microgeneration Strategy

- 4.9 The linkages are indicated where the Climate Strategy key actions support the outcomes of these high level strategies.
- 4.10 Effective liaison with external agencies on sustainability issues will be vital to ensure Wirral's Climate Change Strategy is successful. The proposed strategy will provide a focus for consultation with external groups on environmental matters by bringing together interested groups and organisations from the public, private and voluntary sectors. Early discussions have already commenced with the Wirral Environment Partnership (WEP) which is keen to identify ways in which it can make a positive contribution to the roll-out and communication of Wirral's Climate Change Strategy to the public, local organisations and businesses.

5. Financial, Value for Money and Staffing Implications

- 5.1 Wirral's performance in conserving natural resources (energy, water etc), reducing CO₂ emissions, developing green transport, sustainable procurement and improving its waste recycling, will in many cases require capital investment to develop and implement. The 'invest to save' initiatives implemented to date, will provide financial savings, value for money and service improvements over the medium to long term, whilst protecting and sustaining Wirral's environment for future generations. The financial implications of any future 'green initiative' investments will be evaluated and reported to Members in separate reports.

6. Equal Opportunity Implications

- 6.1 There are no equal opportunity implications arising directly from this report. However, the proposed Climate Change Strategy for Wirral will engender engagement with residents, community groups, schools and businesses from across the borough in raising awareness of climate change, and seek the potential involvement of them to work together to mitigate CO₂ emissions, conserve resources and adapt lifestyles.

7. Human Rights Implications

7.1 There are no Human Rights implications arising directly from this report.

8. Community Safety Implications

8.1 Whilst there are no community safety implications arising directly from this report, however Wirral's 'green' initiatives and achievements to date, together with the implementation of the proposed Climate Change Strategy will further improve the quality, environmental sustainability and safety of Wirral's urban and rural areas for its residents, communities, businesses and visitors.

9. Local Agenda 21 Implications

9.1 The ongoing 'green' initiatives together with the further actions proposed under the Climate Change Strategy, will have major implications for Wirral's LA21 Agenda and will significantly improve the borough's 'green credentials'.

10. Ward Member Implications

10.1 This report has no specific Ward Member implications. However, engagement with all Members in the implementation of the Climate Change Strategy for Wirral is vital to ensure its effectiveness and success.

11. Background Papers

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

North West Climate Change Action Plan & NW Sustainable Energy Strategy
Minute 91 – Notice of Motion - The Nottingham Declaration
The Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change & Action Pack
Wirral Council's Corporate Plan 2002/03 – 2007/08

12. Recommendation

12.1 That this Nottingham Declaration progress update report be noted, and

12.2 Members endorse the draft Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan for referral to cabinet.

David Green

Director of Technical Services

This report was prepared by **Brian Anderson**, Head of Design and Development Control, in the Technical Services Department, who can be contacted on 606 2308.