



**COUNCILLOR
BERNIE MOONEY
CABINET MEMBER FOR
ENVIRONMENT**

CABINET

7 November 2016

**CLIMATE CHANGE ANNUAL REPORT
AND ACTION PLAN 2016**

Councillor Bernie Mooney, Cabinet Member - Environment, said:

“Action on climate change matters. There needs to be action at all levels from global to local, and from all quarters -at home, at work, and in our communities.

An historic international agreement was reached in Paris last year. It seems fitting to affirm our support for this agreement as we take stock of local progress and set out further actions. These actions will help to both limit climate related pollution from Wirral and better adapt Wirral to current and future climate impacts. We can all play a part in rising to the challenge of climate change and we all need to do so.”

REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides the latest annual update on climate change activity in Wirral as requested by Cabinet. The report gives an overview of the new UN Paris Agreement on Climate Change and introduces the Paris Pledge for Action - an initiative through which organisations can confirm their support for the new UN framework. It documents the activities of the Wirral Climate Group, introduces the group’s second annual progress report on the Wirral climate change strategy 2014-19, and the latest version of the ‘rolling’ action plan to advance the strategy’s implementation.

The climate strategy supports the delivery of 17 of the 20 pledges in the Wirral Plan.

Climate change affects all wards within the Borough. The report is considered a key decision in view of the implications of climate change.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The second annual progress report on the climate strategy and the latest version of the rolling action plan be noted, endorsed and used to fulfil the council's commitments to public reporting.

Wirral Council signs the Paris Pledge for Action in support of the UN Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 The Council is a signatory to Local Government Association's "Climate Local" initiative which requires regular public reporting on actions and on progress implementing them.
- 1.2 The Paris Pledge for Action presents an opportunity to show support for the international Paris Agreement on climate change and by doing so to draw attention and encourage wider action in support of the climate change strategy for Wirral.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 None. Cabinet have previously requested an annual report on climate change.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Climate change requires action at global, national and local level. In practice we need to cut 'green-house' pollution that drives global temperature rises. We also need to adapt to the changes to the climate already set in train. At a local level that primarily means cutting fossil fuel use for heat, power and travel directly and reducing indirect impacts through consideration of the wider influence that our decisions have (e.g. through the amount of waste we produce, or type of food we eat). It also means considering what the main risks from the changing climate are and putting in place plans and actions to limit their impact.
- 3.2 Wirral Council has a long-held public commitment to climate action most recently expressed as a signatory to the Local Government Association's (LGA) 'Climate Local' initiative (Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 29 January 2013, Minute 63). As a signatory to Climate Local the council is committed to set out its actions to reduce climate pollution and to adapt to unavoidable change and to regularly report progress publicly. The council's first submission under Climate Local detailed actions to complete a new climate change strategy for Wirral. This strategy was developed via the Wirral Climate Change Group and endorsed by cabinet in October 2014. When cabinet endorsed the new climate change strategy it also requested an annual report on climate change – this report is the second progress report submitted.

Paris Agreement

- 3.3 At the United Nations Conference of the Parties held in Paris in December 2015, participants reached a new global agreement to combat climate change. The agreement is designed to take forward and strengthen international work started with the Kyoto Protocol agreed in 1997. It is due to come into force from 2020 subject to ratification by enough member states. Unlike the Kyoto Protocol which focused on emissions from industrialised nations, the Paris Agreement requires all countries to formulate and submit a "nationally determined contribution" and then to work to progress and develop this further. To ensure transparency and help drive improvement, the agreement also requires countries to report regularly on their plans. To this end, a global stocktake is planned every five years. The agreement sets a long term goal to limit global temperature rise this century to "well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels" while pursuing efforts to limit the increase to 1.5 degrees. It sets out various mechanisms to support action

by developing countries and countries most vulnerable to climate change to strengthen their ability to mitigate and deal with the impacts of climate change.

- 3.4 The Paris Agreement acknowledges the efforts and value that other stakeholders, including local government, have in addressing and responding to climate change. To show support for the Paris Agreement, non-party stakeholders have been invited to sign the Paris Pledge for Action (Appendix 1). Doing so demonstrates publicly that stakeholders are ready to play their part to support the objectives of the Paris Agreement to meet or exceed the ambition set out by the Paris Agreement. The Pledge is intended to “provide a political signal that demonstrates the breadth of support and scale of momentum for a transition to a low-emission and climate resilient economy.”

The Wirral Climate Change Group’s work to advance the climate change strategy

- 3.5 Since last year’s annual report, the Wirral Climate Change Group has met three times - in December, 2015, and June and September, 2016. The group has received presentations on:

- Work on meat free menus by St George’s primary school. Children at the school worked with teachers and kitchen staff on the topic of going meat free including the associated benefits for climate-related pollution. The school subsequently introduced a meat free menu one day a week. The success of the initiative has led to it being emulated by other schools across Wirral.
- The Wirral 2020 Plan and Pledges. An initial review indicates the climate strategy will contribute to meeting 17 of the 20 pledges in the Wirral Plan. Reports on specific activities linked to the plan will be brought to the group at future meetings.
- The development of an award winning energy efficient home in West Kirby by the owner and architect. The building was inspired by the German ‘Passivhaus’ standard though adapted slightly for a maritime climate. It combines high standards of insulation, airtightness and controlled ventilation to create a comfortable living environment that is very energy efficient in use. The property has received national media coverage as an example of what is possible. A website outlining some of the lessons learnt is now planned to promote wider awareness.

A planned presentation on the council’s severe weather plan did not take place as anticipated. Further discussion of this topic remains a priority for the group in view of the likelihood that extreme weather events will be more frequent.

- 3.6 Since the last progress report the Wirral Climate Change Group has helped to:
- Develop a public event to celebrate the first year of progress with the climate strategy. The event took place in December 2015 at the Williamson Art Gallery. It was timed to coincide with the UN climate conference in Paris. The event was used to publicise the first annual progress report and featured a variety of activities.
 - Update the Joint Strategic Need Assessment (JSNA) climate and health

paper. This forms part of the JSNA evidence base and it is subject to regular review. It has been updated to include more recent information, for example to take account of local flooding experienced in 2015.

- Produce the second annual progress report on the climate change strategy (Appendix 2). This is designed as a brief overview and highlights some of the recent steps taken that help progress climate objectives. It also flags up some changes in context that have limited progress. There has been some progress under all of the strategy aims, although changes in context may make it more difficult to meet some objectives going forward. For example reductions in incentives for solar generation may limit its uptake. The second year report includes some actions pursued by others beyond the climate change group to underline the importance of widespread action and that no single organisation can tackle climate change alone, e.g. a new sun tracking solar array launched by a local company.
- Develop the climate strategy rolling action plan. In the last twelve months the group has started to trial the use of an on-line platform so that the action plan can be updated by partners direct at any time. A 'snap shot' of the action plan as at August 2016 is reproduced in Appendix 3. This is annotated to show where progress has been reported or new actions added to the plan since last year's version. It captures the broad range of actions being pursued by members of the climate change group in support of the climate strategy.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The action plan does not commit the Council to any additional expenditure. Savings may be associated with actions to save energy.

5.0 LEGAL

- 5.1 There are no legal issues foreseen associated with recommendation to endorse the progress report and action plan, or sign the Paris Pledge for Action.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 The action plan does not commit the Council to any additional resources.
- 6.2 Asset rationalisation provides an opportunity to reduce the council's carbon footprint.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 A failure to develop and pursue an appropriate response to climate change will likely increase the risk of negative impacts from climate change locally and further afield.
- 7.2 A failure to fulfil obligations under Climate Local could pose reputational risk for the Council.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION

- 8.1 The latest annual progress report and action plan have been developed via the Wirral Climate Change Group which includes representation from partner organisations. The climate change strategy 2014-2019 to which these reports relate was developed through a wider public consultation process.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 An equality impact assessment has been completed.

9.2 Climate change will have impacts for all but is expected to have more severe consequences for vulnerable groups including people with existing health conditions, children and older people, and people on low incomes. In this light efforts to tackle climate change as advanced in the action plan have potentially positive impacts for these groups.

REPORT AUTHOR: Bryan Lipscombe

Sustainability Liaison Officer

telephone: (0151) 6062141

email:bryanlipscombe@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

1: Paris Pledge for Action

2: Cool Steps: Wirral Climate Change Strategy 2014-2019 2nd Annual Progress report July 2016

3: Climate Change Strategy Action Plan, August 2016 version

REFERENCE MATERIAL

Cool: Wirral Climate Change Strategy- 2014-2019

[<http://www.wirral.gov.uk/downloads/7555>]

Wirral JSNA Climate and Health

[<http://info.wirral.nhs.uk/ourjsna/climate&health.html>]

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Policy and Performance - Regeneration and Environment Committee	September 2014
Cabinet	October 2014
Policy and Performance - Regeneration and Environment Committee	September 2015
Cabinet	October 2015