

# COOL

# STEPS

**WIRRAL CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY 2014-2019**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Progress report - July 2016**



## Background

This report is the second in a series of planned annual reports to detail progress with *Cool*, Wirral's climate change strategy 2014-2019.

*Cool* seeks to encourage and co-ordinate climate change-related action and investment by people and organisations with an interest in Wirral. Its goals are to cut local climate pollution and to adapt Wirral to unavoidable change.

This progress report outlines some recent advances towards meeting the strategy's aims. It also highlights some areas where changes in context present a challenge.

Many of the actions highlighted in this report have been advanced by organisations directly involved in the Wirral Climate Change Group – the partnership tasked with co-ordinating local climate-related action. This year the report also features some actions from those beyond the group. Readers are asked to reflect about their own potential roles to help take the strategy forward. Widespread action from all quarters is vital to the success of the strategy.

Since *Cool* was adopted by the Wirral Climate Change Group in 2014, Wirral Council has developed a 2020 vision plan supported by several partners. Many of the aims and objectives in the climate strategy have potential to contribute to the pledges in this plan. An appendix to this report shows some of the possible connections.

## Aim 1: Reducing demand for energy and making Wirral more energy efficient

### Recent steps...

- 7553 LED lanterns and controls were fitted to Wirral street lights as part of Wirral Council's street lighting strategy.
- The £5.6M capital investment programme in Combined Heat and Power, energy efficient lighting and insulation at Wirral University Teaching Hospital NHS Trust hospitals was completed.
- Local businesses from the environmental sector were showcased at the International Festival of Business during the energy and environment week in June 2016.



- Energy Projects Plus' Save Energy Advice Line provided telephone advice to 380 Wirral clients in the 12 months to August 2015, covering a broad range of issues including fuel debt, energy tariff switching, grants for measures, and renewable energy options.
- Magenta Living installed solid wall insulation in 191 of their properties in 2015/16 (157 in Bromborough and 34 in Moreton).

A reduction in access to funding to support household energy efficiency has made progress more difficult than anticipated. The Government's Energy Company Obligation (ECO) was envisaged as a key means to support energy efficiency improvements in houses in the east of Wirral but changes to ECO have limited prospects here. The Government's 'Green Deal' mechanism was envisaged as a route for householders in the west of Wirral to improve their properties. This loans-based mechanism drew criticism about its attractiveness from the outset and ultimately failed to meet expectations. This led the government to stop funding the Green Deal Finance Company which lent money to Green Deal providers. Cuts to budgets for registered housing providers following the imposition of rent controls have also impinged on the finance available for energy efficiency improvements in social housing.

## Aim 2: Meeting more of our energy needs from renewable sources

### Recent steps...

- 2801 kWp of solar photo voltaic (PV) panels were installed (registered for Feed in Tariff (FiT)) in 2015/16, bringing the total installed to 8,277 kWp. (DECC, Sub-regional Feed-in Tariffs statistics, April 2016). Wirral Council has now installed 571 kWp of solar PV across 24 council buildings, up from 391 kWp across 18 buildings last year.



50 kWp solar installation at West Kirby Concourse

- The fledging community renewable energy group Wirral Community Renewables made a successful bid to the Urban Community Energy Fund to support a feasibility study looking at potential sites for solar developments. At the time of writing the group was looking into formal registration as community benefit society to enable it to take up the grant offer. The group had previously had its proposal for solar PV on a Pensby Library short-listed in the

M&S Energy Community Fund. Unfortunately after a public vote across the region the group finished second by a narrow margin and so missed out on the funding.

- Moreton-based Mole Group launched the Smart Flower Pop sun tracking solar array in the UK market in May 2016.



Smart Flower Pop, on display at Mole Group

Changes to the Government's Feed in Tariff (FiTs) scheme have reduced incentives for renewable energy installations. It is likely there was an increase in installations in the run up to December 2015 as people sought to take advantage of the higher incentive rates available prior to the changes being introduced. The lower incentive rates now available will have implications for the feasibility of future proposals.

The change in FiTs has had implications for the strategy objective to develop a local renewable energy co-operative. FiTs income has been an important element in the business model adopted by other renewable energy co-operatives. In this context, the offer of funding from the Urban Community Energy Fund (UCEF) provides Wirral Community Renewables with an opportunity to explore different business models. UCEF has since been closed for further applications. Existing offers will be honoured but are time limited.

The prospect of pursuing a small scale wind turbine trial has been limited by a change in planning criteria following a ministerial statement issued in June 2015. This statement indicates that local planning authorities should only grant planning permission for on-shore wind developments if the site is in an area identified as suitable for wind energy development in a local or neighbourhood plan (there is no specific allocation at present locally) and following consultation, it can be demonstrated that the planning impacts identified by affected local communities have been fully addressed and therefore the proposal has their backing.

### **Aim 3: Making use of more sustainable means for transport**

#### **Recent steps...**

- 2008 people living in east Wirral received support from Travel Solutions in 2015/16.

- Secure sheltered cycle stores have been introduced at all Merseyrail stations on the Wirral line in Wirral, bar one.
- Living Streets has worked with over 60 primary schools, 13 secondary schools and six workplaces to promote walking, with five community street audits completed.
- Over a million public transport tickets have been sold on Merseyside's Walrus cards since its launch in 2014. 'Solo' and 'Saveaway' tickets are now available to purchase as electronic tickets on Walrus with more tickets planned.
- A new public electric vehicle charging point has been introduced at Elgin Way Car Park

## Aim 4: Reducing indirect climate pollution

### Recent steps...

- A Wirral Waste Strategy has been developed setting out Wirral's aim of recycling 50% of household waste by 2020.
- Wirral Council is part way through introducing the Warp-it system to enable surplus items to be shared within the council, between local schools and with community and voluntary sector organisations. The WARP-IT portal was previously introduced by the Cheshire and Wirral NHS Partnership where it has resulted in savings of over £178,000.
- St. George's Primary School introduced a meatless Monday menu following a pupil-directed process involving teachers, canteen staff and parents. The meatless menu approach has subsequently been spread across local schools via the eco-schools network.
- Work to establish a network and develop a 'Better Food Wirral' brand is progressing with a second round of Better Food innovation grants on offer.

## Aim 5: Adapting to unavoidable changes in Wirral's climate

### Recent steps

- A guide to climate resilience for small and medium sized businesses in the Liverpool City Region has been produced by CLASP.
- An update to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Climate and Health paper was completed and a further update is in progress.

The UK Climate Change Committee has recently produced an assessment of the risks and opportunities associated with climate change (UKCCC, 2016). This identifies the impacts of flooding and coastal change and those of high temperatures as immediate risks where there is a need for more action.

There was widespread flooding across Wirral at the end of August and beginning of September 2015 following heavy rainfall. This significant flooding event triggered a formal investigation.

A local business resilience workshop aimed at helping small and medium enterprises prepare for climate risks was planned to take place in June 2016. Unfortunately the event was postponed due to limited bookings. The Environment Agency's 'climate ready' programme to encourage businesses and councils to prepare for climate-related risk was closed in March 2016.

## Aim 6: Building capacity for action

### Recent steps

- An award winning energy efficient house in West Kirby achieved widespread media and press coverage.



- A home in Eastham that was refurbished to meet the 'Super Home' standard opened its doors to interested parties during Super Homes week.
- Transition Town West Kirby and partners held a successful Wirral Earth Fest Event in September 2015
- A first year public celebration of progress with *Cool* was held in December 2015 to coincide with the United National Climate Change Conference in Paris
- Transition Town West Kirby Energy Group is running a programme of public events on energy themes. This has included a presentation on *Cool*
- There have been regular updates for @CoolWirral twitter feed. There were 584 tweets during 2015/16 financial year with 116,748 tweet impressions recorded.
- Five journal blogs were added to Cool Wirral group pages on [www.projectdirt.com](http://www.projectdirt.com) during 2015 attracting a 'top blogger' award.
- A school 'Cool Climate Challenge' event was held in March 2016 with nine schools taking part.

Wirral Council's website has been redesigned and content edited to fit this design. As a result some of the information previously created about climate change and what people can do about is no longer available via this platform.

## Next steps

The Wirral Climate Change Group co-ordinates efforts across various organisations through a rolling plan of action in support of the strategy. A 'snap shot' of this plan is reported to Wirral Council each year, which is available publicly. Success will ultimately depend on wider support and action. To get involved and find out how you can help put Cool into practice, at home in your community and in your workplace:

- Read the strategy available at: [www.wirral.gov.uk/climatestrategy](http://www.wirral.gov.uk/climatestrategy)
- Join the free mailing list to keep in touch via [www.wirral.gov.uk/coolwirral](http://www.wirral.gov.uk/coolwirral)
  - Follow @CoolWirral on twitter.
- Connect with others via our Cool Wirral group at [www.projectdirt.com](http://www.projectdirt.com).

## Appendix: Topics in the climate strategy that may contribute to Wirral 2020 pledges

Wirral plan 2020 pledges	Climate strategy aims					
	<i>Make Wirral more energy efficient</i>	<i>Generate and source more of our local energy needs from renewable sources</i>	<i>Use more sustainable modes of transport, more fuel efficient vehicles and less polluting means of getting around</i>	<i>Reduce the indirect negative impacts that decisions have for climate pollution</i>	<i>Identify risks and vulnerabilities from expected changes and bring forward plans and actions to limit negative impacts and improve resilience</i>	<i>Build capacity for action by strengthening local networks and partnerships and by developing wider awareness and education initiatives.</i>
<i>Older people live well</i>	Fuel poverty/energy efficiency measures		Public transport improvements		Community resilience	Lifelong learning
<i>Children are ready for school</i>						
<i>Young people are ready for work and adulthood</i>						Eco schools
<i>Vulnerable children reach their full potential</i>						
<i>Reduce child and family poverty</i>	Fuel poverty/energy efficiency measures	Renewables in collective switch				
<i>People with disabilities live independently</i>			Public transport improvements		Community resilience	
<i>Zero tolerance to domestic violence</i>						
<i>Greater job opportunities</i>	Directory/ expo	Directory/ expo	Directory/ expo	Directory/ expo, green procurement fair, local inter-trading		
<i>Workforce skills match business needs</i>	Building skills	Renewable skills				Vocational training to support transition to low carbon economy
<i>Increase inward investment</i>	Wirral waters	Renewable energy co-op, sites for solar investment, renewable energy tech, centre of excellence for wind				
<i>Thriving small businesses</i>	Directory/expo	Directory/expo	Directory/expo	Local food, reduce waste	Business resilience, directory/expo	
<i>Vibrant tourism economy</i>			Co-ordination of timetables and ticketing, cycle network, cycle hire	Local food	Green infrastructure	

<b>Wirral plan 2020 pledges</b>	<b>Climate strategy aims</b>					
	<i>Make Wirral more energy efficient</i>	<i>Generate and source more of our local energy needs from renewable sources</i>	<i>Use more sustainable modes of transport, more fuel efficient vehicles and less polluting means of getting around</i>	<i>Reduce the indirect negative impacts that decisions have for climate pollution</i>	<i>Identify risks and vulnerabilities from expected changes and bring forward plans and actions to limit negative impacts and improve resilience</i>	<i>Build capacity for action by strengthening local networks and partnerships and by developing wider awareness and education initiatives.</i>
<i>Transport and technology infrastructure fit for the future</i>			All infrastructure measures	Online working		
<i>Assets and buildings are fit for purpose for Wirral's businesses</i>	Property improvement, smart grid	Exploit wind, solar, biomass	Electric vehicle charging, alternative fuels		Asset adaptation, water conservation	Exemplar eco buildings
<i>Leisure and cultural opportunities for all</i>		Biomass heat and power in parks	Active transport - walking, cycling	Community cultivation		
<i>Wirral residents live healthier lives</i>			Active transport - walking, cycling, safety initiatives	Local food, reduce consumption of meat	Climate & health links	
<i>Community services are joined up and accessible</i>			Co-ordination of timetables and ticketing			Community hubs
<i>Good quality housing that meets the needs of residents</i>	Property improvement	Micro renewables			Adaptation	Exemplar eco buildings
<i>Wirral's neighbourhoods are safe</i>	Upgrade lighting		Secure cycle parking, cycle security, safety initiatives		Adaptation, community capacity	
<i>Attractive local environment for Wirral residents</i>					Green infrastructure	

### Key

 Topic in climate strategy that could contribute to a 2020 pledge

