

Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Thursday, 29 November 2018

REPORT TITLE	CLIMATE CHANGE ANNUAL REPORT AND ACTION PLAN
REPORT OF	STRATEGIC COMMISSIONER – ENVIRONMENT, COMMUNITY SERVICES & RESILIENCE

REPORT SUMMARY

1.1 The report presents the annual update on climate change action in Wirral. It includes a brief overview of:

- The latest international and national developments pertinent to action on climate change;
- The activities of the Cool Wirral Partnership (formerly Wirral Climate Change Group);
- The latest 'Cool Steps' report, produced by the Cool Wirral Partnership, detailing recent progress with the climate change strategy up to the end of July 2018;
- The priority action plan developed by the Cool Wirral Partnership to help progress implementation of the strategy in its final year; and
- Plans to develop a new framework to replace the present strategy.

Climate change is a cross-cutting issue. The present climate strategy has the potential to help contribute to 17 pledges from the 2020 Plan. This matter affects all wards in the Borough. The decision is not a key decision.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- (1) The work of the Cool Wirral Partnership and the progress outlined in the submitted report to implement the Climate Change Strategy be noted; and
- (2) It be recommended to the Cabinet Member that the 'Cool Steps' annual progress report (Appendix 1 to the submitted report) and the Priority Action Plan (Appendix 2 to the submitted report) be formally endorsed and used to meet the Council's Climate Local commitment.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 Cabinet has requested annual reports on climate change.
- 1.2 Wirral Council is a signatory to Climate Local and is therefore committed to identify actions on climate change and the public reporting of progress with respect to these.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

None.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Human induced climate change is a growing problem. To reduce its severity and associated impacts there is a need for deep and rapid cuts in 'greenhouse' pollution. To limit unavoidable impacts, there is also a need to adapt so we are more resilient to changes that are already happening that cannot be stopped.

INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

- 3.2 In the wake of a string of extreme weather events around the world, climate change has had a high profile over the last year. This was amplified by new scientific guidance published in October 2018 by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The guidance was produced as part of the UN's Paris Agreement on climate change. The Paris Agreement seeks to keep global temperature rises 'well below' 2°C above pre-industrial levels with an ambition to limit the rise to 1.5°C. Under the agreement Governments are tasked to identify their 'nationally determined contributions' to help stabilise temperatures. The IPCC's report focuses on the impacts of 1.5°C of warming compared to 2°C. It also considers pathways to cut pollution in line with this lower threshold. The take home message is stark. Human activities are estimated to have caused approximately 1.0°C of global warming already. Presently we are off course with both targets and remain on a path towards great danger. Pathways to limit global warming to 1.5°C require rapid and far-reaching transitions in energy, land and infrastructure. The changes needed are on an unprecedented scale. Deep emission reductions are needed in all sectors. Significant increases in investment are required to achieve them. In order to limit warming to 1.5C, net global CO₂ emissions need to fall by about 45% (from 2010 levels) by 2030 and reach "net zero" by around 2050. Keeping temperatures to the lower 1.5°C threshold will reduce the severity of impacts.

NATIONAL CONTEXT

- 3.3 The implications of the new IPCC guidance are now being considered by governments around the world. In the UK, the Government has asked the independent Committee on Climate Change (CCC) to provide advice on the

implications of limiting temperature rise to 1.5°C for action in the UK. The government is committed to take action through the Climate Change Act 2008. The Act requires the government to set a target to reduce greenhouse pollution by 2050 and set out a path to achieve this. Legally-binding 'carbon budgets' - which indicate the amount of greenhouse gases that can be emitted over a five-year period - must also be set. These budgets act as 'stepping stones' to the target. The Act established the CCC to ensure that emissions targets are evidence-based and independently assessed. The present legally binding target is for an 80% reduction in emissions by 2050 compared to 1990 levels. Carbon budgets are already in place up to 2032. In the light of the IPCC report, it seems likely that a more ambitious 2050 goal will now be required. This would mean tighter future carbon budgets with a need for further steps to be identified to reduce emissions. The Clean Growth Strategy (outlined in last year's annual report) has already been challenged by the CCC for lacking detail on measures to meet the present 80% target.

- 3.4 Under the Climate Change Act 2008, the government is also required to assess the risks and opportunities from climate change and to prepare for them. A UK Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA) must be produced every five years and a National Adaptation Programme (NAP) in response. Independent advice comes from the CCC's Adaptation Sub-committee. The government published its second NAP in July 2018 in response to the latest risk assessment. The programme covers actions to address flooding and coastal change risks to communities, businesses and infrastructure; risks to health, well-being and productivity from high temperatures; risks of shortages in the public water supply for agriculture, energy generation and industry; risks to natural capital- including terrestrial, coastal, marine and freshwater ecosystems, soils and biodiversity; and risks to domestic and international food production and trade.

LOCAL CONTEXT

- 3.5 Wirral Council is committed to act on climate change. It is a signatory to the Local Government Association's 'Climate Local' initiative (Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 29 January 2013, Minute 63) and has also pledged its support for the UN's Paris Agreement on climate change (Cabinet, 7 November 2016, Minute 58). To meet its commitments, the council must set out its actions on climate change and regularly review and report progress on them. To this end, the council has supported the development of a climate change strategy for Wirral. The five year strategy, Cool (2014-2019), sets a vision and framework for local climate action. It has two overarching goals, to:

- Reduce climate pollution; and
- Adapt to unavoidable change.

Its aims, in support, are to:

- Reduce demand for energy and make Wirral more energy efficient.
- Meet more of our energy needs from renewable sources.
- Make use of more sustainable means for transport.

- Reduce indirect climate pollution.
- Identify risks and develop resilience; and
- Build capacity for action.

3.6 Cabinet has requested annual reports on climate change (Cabinet, 9 October, 2014 minute 67; Cabinet, 7 November, 2016, minute 58). This is the fourth annual report since the strategy was adopted. Annual reports have typically been given in the autumn each year, although last year's report was delayed and was considered by Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January 2018.

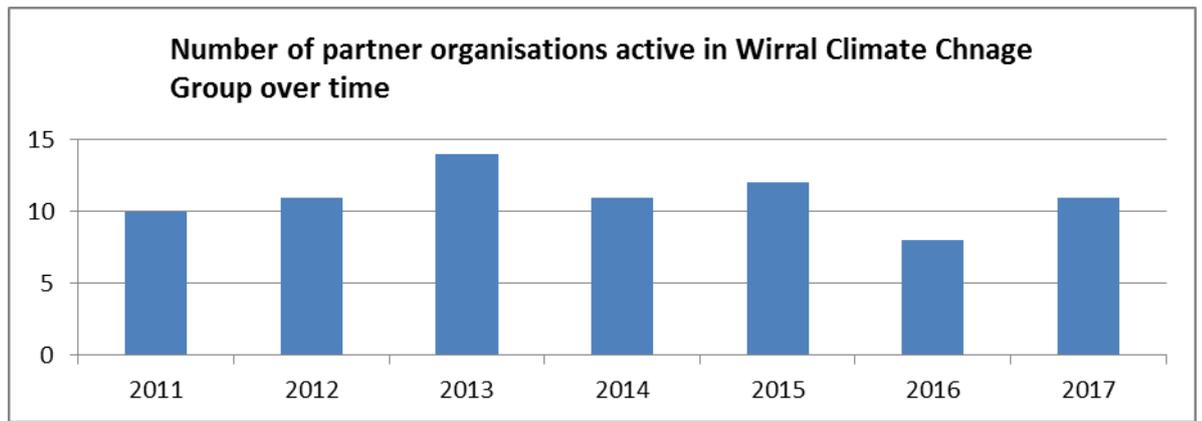
4.0 THE WORK OF THE COOL WIRRAL PARTNERSHIP

4.1 Local work on climate change is based on a partnership approach. The climate strategy envisages an independent 'Cool Wirral Partnership'. This partnership formally came into being after the Wirral Climate Change Group adopted a new name and terms of reference. The partnership includes councillor representation, key public sector bodies, voluntary and business interests. Those who have played a recent part in include:

- Magenta Living
- Energy Projects Plus
- Faiths4Change
- Wirral Environment Network
- Peel Holdings
- LCR Local Enterprise Partnership
- Merseyside Police
- Merseyside Recycling and Waste Disposal Authority (MRWA)
- Community Action Wirral
- Planet Heswall
- Wirral Chamber of Commerce
- Wirral University Teaching Hospital NHS Trust
- Wirral Met College

4.2 Since last year's annual report, the Cool Wirral Partnership met in March, June and September. Over this time the group has received presentations on:

4.2.1 Stakeholder involvement in the partnership – The number of organisations actively involved in the partnership has varied over time. 21 other organisations have been involved. Three of these no longer exist and six have stopped participating actively following staff restructures.



4.2.2 Climate change communications - We rarely talk about climate change. One explanation is that we focus on local and short term matters, not global issues that span generations. Another is that climate change suffers from a socially constructed silence: it's a taboo topic. Several principles for climate communications have been advanced– including the power of stories in helping shift the conversation from a technical one to a human one that resonates more. We need to talk more about climate change and what it means to us in order to engage more people in the topic in a meaningful way.

4.2.3 Progress at Wirral Waters - The vision statement for Wirral Waters highlights the opportunity for it to be the most sustainable regeneration project in UK. Several developments are now in the pipeline presenting an opportunity to begin to realise this vision and so help achieve climate strategy objectives.

4.2.4 RecycleRight - A campaign to boost recycling and reduce 'contamination' of recyclable materials collected. This MRWA led campaign seeks to address householder uncertainty about what can and can't be recycled at present in Merseyside. The www.recycleright.org.uk website is designed to be a 'first port of call' for any recycling question across the Liverpool City Region. In preparation for the campaign, collection rounds with higher contamination levels have been identified. Demographic data for these areas has been examined so that campaign messages can be tailored for maximum impact. Material collected for recycling from rounds in selected areas (including parts of Seacombe and Birkenhead in Wirral) will be analysed periodically to test the impact of campaign messages.

4.2.5 Wirral Met College's Extreme Low Energy Hybrid Combined Heat and Power Project – This pioneering installation at Wirral Met's 12 Quays Campus is designed to combine efficient gas turbines for generating heat and electricity with electric storage and heat batteries. The plant room will act as a working 'classroom' so students can learn about the technologies being used.

4.3 Since the last progress report the Wirral Climate Change Group has:

4.3.1 Produced the fourth annual 'Cool Steps' report - This summary report (Appendix 1) for public consumption details recent steps to help advance climate objectives. It also includes indicators of progress and highlights

changing circumstances that may have an influence. This year's report continues to present a mixed picture highlighting where progress is being made and where things have not advanced as hoped. Several advances have been made on energy efficiency with 1492 LED street lights installed around Wirral and the start of work on an ultra-low energy combined heat and power system at Wirral Met College. However, the number of new energy efficiency improvements being installed in homes continues to be below that anticipated. Looking at renewable energy, Ørsted opened a new operations base to service its offshore wind farms. Installations of solar photo voltaic panels were up on the previous year, but remained a small fraction of the number being installed prior to reductions in the feed in tariff incentive scheme. On the topic of sustainable travel an e-vehicle event was held in Birkenhead to harness growing interest in electric vehicles and showcase local businesses. Improvements in cycling infrastructure continued along the A41 corridor and in and around the Wirral Waters docks redevelopment area. Considering the reduction of indirect impacts, the climate strategy seeks to minimise waste and encourage re-use of materials. However, residual household waste continued to rise in spite to local efforts to the contrary. There continues to be limited local progress in relation to adapting to climate change, although a bid was developed for funding to support a sustainable drainage scheme at Coronation Park. With respect to raising awareness and building capacity for action, several events took place including Wirral Earth Fest, a faith and climate change workshop and a school climate challenge. Wirral Chamber launched a new Wirral Energy & Environment Forum for local businesses. A survey found nine in ten Wirral residents believe in climate change, higher than the national average.

- 4.3.4 Developed a priority action plan** - The group held a workshop at its March meeting in order to help prioritise actions. It has since developed a priority action plan to cover the final year of the strategy. *The focus on a smaller number of actions was part in response to the scrutiny committee's comments on last year's report.* The focus for the final year is now on 13 actions, to:
- i. Develop and implement a 'Cool' communications programme 2018/19. *This programme will take on board comments from the committee about promoting simple messages about what people can do. It should also pick up on some of the campaigns highlighted at committee such as 'Veganuary'.*
 - ii. Develop and implement a 'Cool' event programme 2018/19. *An event has already been planned to coincide with the UN's conference on climate change in Poland. It is due to take place on Thursday 6th December from 4PM to 6PM hosted by Wirral Environment Network, at the Sandon Building, Falkland Road, Wallasey.*
 - iii. Develop a climate and faith network and faith climate hubs.
 - iv. Develop and promote a 'Green Map' of Heswall to communicate local examples of sustainable living as an illustration for other areas to emulate.
 - v. Establish a 'Sustainability Central' programme – an area-based intervention centred on Wirral Waters, Seacombe and Birkenhead to showcase climate-related action.
 - vi. Conduct audits around rail stations without current provision for cycle parking to identify opportunities to improve secure parking facilities.

- vii. Identify solar generation opportunities and promote the development of viable sites in advance of the withdrawal of Feed-in-tariff incentives in April 2019.
- viii. Improve local e-vehicle charging facilities and develop an on-street residential charging pilot.
- ix. Develop a 'circular economy' initiative and encourage investment in infrastructure to support local resource 'loops'.
- x. Promote self-assessment of climate change risks for local organisations, including those participating in the Cool Wirral Partnership.
- xi. Promote the use of tools to address the impacts of climate change in health and social care.
- xii. Develop the local 'strategic ask' for the Metro Mayor and Combined Authority (CA) in recognition of the areas where the Mayor and CA now have powers and resources that could help meet objectives in the local climate change strategy (e.g. flexible public transport ticketing and integration)
- xiii. Promote appropriate tools (including sustainability appraisal) to inform decision making.

4.3.5 Initiated work to develop a new strategy – The present strategy covers the period 2014-19. The strategy makes clear the intention to develop a replacement during its final year 'to ensure a seamless transition to a new framework'. To this end, a group has been convened from the Cool Wirral Partnership to plan the process. The broad goals and aims of the strategy are unlikely to change. However the more detailed objectives will need updating. There is also a need to tighten the link between the actions advocated and emission reduction targets. The first public opportunity to share views about climate action will be at the event planned for 6th December. Discussions are taking place to ensure the engagement process links with wider activities under the 'Wirral Together' banner. Some work has already been undertaken to chart changing greenhouse emissions. Further work will be needed to consider future emission reduction pathways.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The report does not commit the Council to any additional expenditure. Work in support of the strategy promotes the efficient use of energy and water that help ensure the Council does not waste money.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no legal issues foreseen associated with the recommendation.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

- 7.1 The report does not commit the Council to any additional staffing or ICT infrastructure. The strategy supports the efficient use of assets to reduce the use of energy and water and promote more sustainable patterns of transportation.

8.0 RELEVANT RISKS

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

9.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 9.1 The latest annual progress report and priority action plan have been developed via the Cool Wirral Partnership which includes representation from numerous partner organisations spanning the public, private and voluntary sectors. The climate change strategy 2014-2019, which this report concerns was developed through a wider public consultation process.

10.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The impacts of climate change will affect everyone but are expected to be more severe for vulnerable groups. An impact review has not been undertaken for this progress report. However the climate change strategy to which this report relates was subject to an equality impact assessment available here:

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments/equality-impact-assessments-2014-15/chief>

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Cool Steps: Wirral Climate Change Strategy 2014-2019 4th Annual Progress Report July 2018

Appendix 2: Climate Change Strategy - Priority Action Plan

REFERENCE MATERIAL

IPCC (2018) Global Warming of 1.5°C, an IPCC special report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty. (<http://www.ipcc.ch/report/sr15/>)

United Nations (2015) The Paris Agreement
http://unfccc.int/paris_agreement/items/9485.php

HM Government (2017) *The Clean Growth Strategy - Leading the way to a low carbon future* (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/clean-growth-strategy>)

Committee on Climate Change (2018) *An independent assessment of the UK's Clean Growth Strategy: From ambition to action*
(<https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/independent-assessment-uks-clean-growth-strategy-ambition-action/>)

DEFRA (2018) *Climate change: second national adaptation programme (2018 to 2023)*
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/climate-change-second-national-adaptation-programme-2018-to-2023>)

Wirral Climate Change Group (2014) *Cool: Wirral Climate Change Strategy- 2014-2019*
(<http://www.wirral.gov.uk/climatestrategy>)

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	31/01/2018
CABINET	07/11/2016
CABINET	08/10/2015
REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY & PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE	15/09/2015