

CABINET PORTFOLIO SUMMARY REPORT

REPORT OF	Councillor Anita Leech
CABINET PORTFOLIO FOR	Environment
CO-ORDINATING CHIEF OFFICER	David Armstrong – Corporate Director for Delivery Services

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is an update from the Cabinet Portfolio Holder to Members of the Council on matters relevant to her portfolio.

1 ATTRACTIVE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT

This is my first report to Council as a Cabinet Member, and I am delighted to be able to start with an important new policy to improve and protect our environment. Single-use plastics pose a real threat to our environment, both locally and globally and I'm so pleased to introduce this policy in Wirral.

Our policy is innovative, deliverable and will achieve a real impact. The highlights include:

- All council procurement processes, services and events, even third party events on council property, will be required to be single-use plastic free wherever possible in a bid to reduce their environmental impact.
- A voluntary SUP free code for Wirral businesses will be developed in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce and Surfers Against Sewage (SAS).
- The council will support the Refill scheme to encourage residents to fill up drinking bottles and reduce single-use plastic bottles.
- The council will also work with local community groups to support local schemes and projects working to tackle SUPs.

I look forward to putting this policy into practice and working with our local communities to protect Wirral's environment for the generations to come. Read more in [Wirral View](#) and the [Wirral Globe](#).

I am proud we are also leading by example and doing all we can to reduce our carbon emissions. We have implemented our new engine idling policy, with council staff being asked to lead by example. By the time of the Council meeting, we will have also held a climate change event – Cool Yule – in which partners, residents and businesses come together to help protect our environment.

I also want to use my report to Council to put our opposition to fracking on the record. A recent Government consultation has been held on policy changes

which would have removed the need for specific permission to be sought before companies could drill for gas. We have responded on behalf of Wirral residents and will seek to block these changes.

In my view the Government consultation makes no case or provides no evidence why the existing local system of regulating oil and gas exploration cannot be continued. There is no evidence of the national need for major shale gas production or justification for fast-tracking these decisions against the wishes of residents and elected representatives.

Read more about this important issue in the [Wirral Globe](#).

The company contracted by Wirral Council to enforce certain environmental crimes – Kingdom – have been in the news recently. While it is important we continue to monitor the performance and behaviour of all contracts and commissioned organisations, it is also important to retain our zero tolerance approach to environmental crime in the borough.

The fines we have issued for these crimes is used to improve our environment and clean up the 'grot spots' which residents tell us are impacting on their quality of life. Eleven areas of private land regularly used by fly-tippers have been cleaned already this year after council intervention.

The funding for this work came from fines for environmental offences such as littering, fly-tipping and not cleaning up after dogs. So far this year, almost £7,000 has been spent on the clean-up, with almost £2,000 earmarked for further clean-ups.

Read more in the [Wirral Globe](#).

Finally, I would like to offer my congratulations to 27 Wirral's entries in this year's North West In Bloom competition, who have all been recognised at the awards ceremony at the Southport Convention Centre.

More than 30 amazing transformations from Wirral were entered into the 'In Bloom' competition this year – the most ever.

A special mention to Wirral Council's Neighbourhood Recycling Officer, Phil Hanlon who created an amazing sculpture of Thomas the Tank engine at Seacombe Children's centre out of recycled bins and plastics and was singled out for praise at the awards. Well done, Phil!

Read more in [Wirral View](#).