

CABINET PORTFOLIO SUMMARY REPORT

REPORT OF	Councillor Elizabeth Grey
CABINET PORTFOLIO FOR	Environment and Climate Change

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is an update from the **Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Environment and Climate Change** to Members of the Council on matters relevant to the portfolio.

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE EMERGENCY

Climate emergency action plan

Since declaring an Environment and Climate Emergency in July 2019, Wirral Council has committed to develop a Climate Emergency Action Plan. The action plan is made up of a variety of new strategies, policy changes and goals to be completed or commenced over the next few months. Some key elements and policies for reducing our impact on climate change and promoting biodiversity include:

- A new policy for encouraging the growth of wildflowers and planting for much endangered pollinators on public and private land including along hedges and verges.
- A new Tree Strategy which will see far more robust protection of our existing trees and a massive programme of afforestation across the borough.
- New proposals for developing electric vehicle charging provision across the borough.
- A shift in all future transport planning to encourage greater levels of active, sustainable travel.
- Plans to establish a network of Environment and Climate Emergency Champions in the Council's workforce and climate training for all council officers and elected members. Cabinet and SLT have had the first stage of this already. The Cabinet Member, Liz Grey, is training on Climate Change with the UN.
- A review and update of the Council's procurement policy, reflecting the climate emergency, for example a shift away from meat in catering and a ban on all SUP.

Decision making

Since announcing the climate emergency all key Council decisions now require officers to consider their impact on the environment and climate change, across all services.

Cool 2

Residents were invited to have their say on Cool Wirral Partnership's new strategy, named 'Cool 2' to ensure Wirral plays its part in the global effort to tackle climate change. (Closes 7 Oct 2019)

Developed via the Cool Wirral Partnership, the strategy was created in reaction to the latest scientific evidence as part of wider efforts to tackle climate change, globally, nationally and locally, and calls on all with an interest to develop an action plan in support.

Clean Air campaign

Wirral's Clean Air campaign is calling on residents and businesses to pledge their support and #Bethekey in tackling air pollution, by making small changes to make the air healthier for everyone.

Launched on Clean Air Day (20 June), the campaign is working alongside schools, taxi drivers and community groups to spread the word about how we can all make a difference to air quality in Wirral. Eight schools requested resources provided by the Council to run their own campaigns.

Pupils from St George's Primary school's Mini Police Team and eco team dedicated some time to patrol the playground and street around their school in support of Wirral's Clean Air campaign. Accompanied by teachers, pupils from the school in Wallasey spoke to parents waiting in cars and those on the playground about what they can do to help tackle air pollution in Wirral handing out advice on things residents can do to help.

LED light program

The LED programme will help to cut carbon emissions by 1,346.34 tCO₂ per year and dramatically reducing energy use by 4,414,240 kWh per year.

BEACHES

Portfolio for beaches has moved to Cabinet member for Environment and Climate Change.

Hilbre Island

A Hilbre Island Incident Report was presented to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny in September. The Committee asks the Cabinet Member to allow a full options appraisal to be undertaken for a range of actions to be considered based on previous reports and new inspections being conducted.

Glyphosates

The Council recently voted to phase out the spraying of glyphosate in the borough, immediately after we have identified a suitable effective alternative. We are currently investigating and trialling alternatives as we move towards ending the use of spraying. Spraying has already stopped on beaches.

RECYCLE RIGHT

To support National Recycle Week 2019, residents were encouraged to 'recycle right' as part of a Merseyside campaign in partnership with Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority. To support the campaign a website has been developed to help encourage more recycling and reduce confusion for households. Members can find out more about what should and shouldn't be recycled and why through the [Recycle Right website](#). In addition to the campaign, materials are being developed to remind residents what can be recycled in their grey bin. These will be distributed shortly.

LWYL FUND

Love Where You Live funding is available for groups in Wirral to improve their local high streets, parks and open spaces and community assets. The fund will be available to community groups, voluntary organisations, charities or social enterprises. Funding up to £1000 is available for projects that will improve the local environment for the benefit of the wider community. Those successful will have up to the end of March 2020 to spend the grant.

SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

Summer of Cycling

To celebrate two large-scale cycling events riding through Wirral, Wirral Council and partners promoted all cycling offers as a Summer of Cycling, encouraging everyone from enthusiasts and beginners alike to take to two wheels.

The treelined paths at Brimstige Hall & Courtyard were opened to the public for the first time at the end of September as part of the Leverhulme Summer Cycle. Hundreds of cyclists, ranging from

young children to grandparents, got on their bikes to explore the 4 miles of tracks. Others chose to walk the paths which extend from Brimstage to neighbouring Thornton Hough. The event was organised by Pedalare, which promotes cycling, and Rethink Now CIC, which works with communities to help them consider what changes they can make to improve air quality and their quality of life. Rethink Now CIC are an active member of our Transport Steering group.

ROAD SAFETY

Diagonal pedestrian crossing

A state-of-the-art pedestrian crossing has been installed to improve road safety at the junction at Moreton Road/Old Greasby Road/Ford Road/Arrowe Park Road. Traffic lights at this site are over 30 years-old. This is a significant refurbishment to promote the safety of residents, pedestrians and road users alike.

Young driver 'Engage' scheme

A new website was launched this month for 'Engage driving'. This is a council-backed scheme operating across Cheshire & Merseyside which equips young drivers with the skills and knowledge to be smarter drivers. The project works with local 'engage' approved driving instructors and provides learner drivers with additional special learning modules, as part of their normal driving lessons, to fill the gaps in the current driving test about issues such as fatigue, peer pressure, basic maintenance, drink and drug driving, speed and distraction. The project was featured last month on [ITV's Granada Reports](#).

Mind Your Business

The Road Safety team continue to work with local businesses who require staff to drive as part of their work duties. The team are delivering free road safety training and advice as part of the 'Driving for Work' seminar, which saw speakers from the health and safety industry, road safety specialists and police and collisions investigation experts.