



COMMITTEE: HEALTH & WELLBEING BOARD

Date: 15 June 2022

REPORT TITLE:	ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND HEALTH
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

REPORT SUMMARY

Climate change is the single biggest health threat facing humanity and harms to health are already evident. To limit the impacts of climate change in Wirral, and to contribute to global efforts, the longstanding Climate Change Partnership for Wirral 'Cool Wirral' has set climate change target for Wirral to be 'net carbon neutral' by 2041, to be delivered through the Cool2 Climate Strategy for Wirral. As a key partner of Cool Wirral, Wirral Council has set its own ambitious climate target of being net carbon neutral by 2030. This is the Council's locally determined contribution to Cool2 and Wirral's net carbon neutral target of 2041.

In July 2019 the Council declared a declared an Environment and Climate Emergency and made the commitment to being net carbon neutral by 2030, by approving the Council's Environment and Climate Emergency Policy in March 2021.

The impact of climate change on the health of the population is an important issue for the Board. This report outlines the work to date, and seeks support, to address climate change through the collective contribution of the organisations and sectors represented on the Health & Wellbeing Board.

This matter affects all wards within the Borough; it is not a key decision.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Health and Wellbeing Board is recommended to:

- Commit to taking action to address the causes of the environment and climate emergency.
- Request that representatives of the Health and Wellbeing Board support and participate in the delivery of the Cool2 Wirral Climate Strategy and develop appropriate joint working arrangements and action plans to address the environment and climate emergency.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 The consequences of climate change represent a significant threat to the health of the population. This paper provides a summary of Wirral's commitments on climate change and activities underway to achieve them.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 No other options are presented.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The evidence base for climate change is substantial. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has concluded that to avert catastrophic health impacts and prevent millions of climate change-related deaths, the world must limit temperature rise to 1.5°C. Past emissions have already made a certain level of global temperature rise and other changes to the climate inevitable. Global heating of even 1.5°C is not considered safe, however; every additional tenth of a degree of warming will take a serious toll on people's lives and health. The IPCC modelling found that, with a rise of 1.5°C, there would be risks to health, livelihoods, food security, water supply, human security and economic growth. A rise to 2°C would be even more catastrophic.
- 3.2 As well as the threat to the planet climate change presents a major threat to health and is already leading to death and illness from increasingly frequent extreme weather events, such as heatwaves, storms and floods, the disruption of food systems, increases in zoonoses and food, water and vector borne diseases, and mental health issues. Furthermore, climate change is undermining many of the social determinants for good health, such as livelihoods, equality and access to health care and social support structures. These climate-sensitive health risks are disproportionately felt by the most vulnerable, disadvantaged and those with underlying health conditions.
- 3.3 The World Health Organisation suggests that in the short to medium term, the health impacts of climate change will be determined mainly by the vulnerability of populations, their resilience to the current rate of climate change and the extent and pace of adaptation. In the longer term, the effects will increasingly depend on the extent to which transformational action is taken now to reduce emissions and avoid the breaching of dangerous temperature thresholds and potential irreversible tipping points.

4.0 AN ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE EMERGENCY

4.1 Wirral's first climate change strategy, *Cool 2014-19*, set out actions to achieve positive climate change outcomes. The strategy, led and co-ordinated through the Cool Wirral Partnership, laid the foundations to tackle the climate crisis in Wirral. Between 2005 and 2017 CO₂ emissions in Wirral have fallen by an average of 3.9% per year (Wirral Intelligence Service, 2020), however the ongoing threat is substantial. In recognition Wirral Council declared an Environment and Climate Emergency in July 2019 and the Cool Strategy was updated and relaunched as 'Cool2' in February 2020, setting the following ambitious goals for Wirral the place going forward:

- To stay within a local emissions' 'budget' of 7.7 million tonnes of CO₂ between 2020-2100 and to reach 'net zero' pollution as early as possible before 2041.
- To ensure a climate resilient Wirral adapts to cope with existing change and further unavoidable disruption this century. (*Cool 2: A strategy for Wirral in the face of the global climate emergency*)

4.3 Wirral Council is now delivering a ten-year Climate Emergency Action Plan 2020-2030 to make the Council and its provision net carbon neutral by 2030. The Environment and Climate Emergency Policy and Action Plan will be used as tools to transform the way the Council operates, engages with residents, and works with partners. The Action Plan will therefore focus on the Council's functions, from service provision, decision making and procurement, to energy consumption, transport, and ways of working. The policy and action plan will contribute to the *Cool 2* strategy and targets for Wirral as a place, however, their focus will be on transforming the Council's operation to demonstrate commitment and leadership for the climate emergency response.

4.4 As well as the collective effort of Wirral Partners supporting the Cool2 Strategy, the NHS became the world's first health service to commit to reaching carbon net zero, in response to the profound and growing threat to health posed by climate change. With around 4% of the country's carbon emissions, and over 7% of the economy, the NHS has an essential role to play in meeting the net zero targets. The *Delivering a Net Zero Health Service* (2020) report sets out a clear ambition and two evidence based targets:

- The NHS Carbon Footprint: for the directly controlled emissions, net zero by 2040.
- The NHS Carbon Footprint Plus: for emissions the NHS influences, net zero by 2045.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. However, alleviating the impact of climate change on health organisations will need

investment in mitigation measures. Not taking or delaying action is not cost neutral as the costs of responding to adverse climate change impacts, such as extreme weather events, are significantly greater.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

7.1 Resources will be required by all partner organisations to adapt to, mitigate and tackle the climate emergency as well as the ensuing impacts of it such as increasing demands for health care, emergency planning and preparedness etc.

8.0 RELEVANT RISKS

8.1 The climate crisis presents considerable and varied risks to the place and residents. The work outlined within this report describes the efforts to mitigate these risks.

9.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

9.1 No public engagement or consultation has been undertaken in relation to this report. However, the schemes of work referenced within the report engage with all relevant stakeholders.

10.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity.

10.2 The Equality Impact Review relevant to the work programmes referenced within this paper is attached via link below: [Equality Impact Assessments | www.wirral.gov.uk](http://www.wirral.gov.uk)

11.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The content and recommendations contained within this report are expected to:

- Reduce emissions of CO2
- Reduce emissions of Greenhouse Gasses
- Demonstrate that Wirral Council plans to deliver on its commitments
- Contribute to the Climate Emergency Action Plan
- Contribute towards attainment of Wirral Cool2 Strategic Plans
- Ensure a more adaptive and resilient service that can respond to a changing climate

12.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

12.1 Addressing health inequalities is a key objective of the Health and Wellbeing Board and the impact of climate change is also affecting some communities more than others. The Wirral Plan intends to address these differences and community wealth building is part of efforts to do so. Opportunities to do this through the action outlined in this report are integral to the work programmes described.

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APPENDICES - none

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 2018: Summary for Policymakers. [Summary for Policymakers of IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C approved by governments — IPCC](#)

World Health Organisation (2022) [Fast Facts on Climate Change and Health \(who.int\)](#)

Cool Wirral Partnership (2013) Cool: Wirral Climate Change Strategy 2014 - 2019 [Wirral Climate Change Strategy 2014-2019.pdf](#)

Wirral Intelligence Service (2020) Climate Change. [Climate Change \(wirralintelligenceservice.org\)](#)

Cool Wirral Partnership (2019) Cool 2: A strategy for Wirral in the face of the global climate emergency [Cool 2 climate change strategy for Wirral | www.wirral.gov.uk](#)

NHS England (2020) Delivering a Net Zero National Health Service [delivering-a-net-zero-national-health-service.pdf \(england.nhs.uk\)](#)

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Full Council Environment and Climate Emergency Declaration	July 2019
Cabinet Launch of Wirral’s Tree, Woodland, and Hedgerow Strategy	June 2020
Environment, Climate Emergency, and Transport Committee Environment & Climate Emergency Policy	March 2021

