

APPENDIX 1
Wirral Council
Environment & Climate Emergency Action Plan
Progress 2021/22

1. Introduction

Climate change refers to the long-term change in the planet's average weather patterns (such as temperature and rainfall) and changes in the frequency and severity of these patterns. As a result of warming temperatures and changes in rainfall, we are seeing impacts around the world such as rising sea levels, shrinking glaciers, and melting ice caps and extreme weather events.

In recognition of the increasing threat posed by climate change, Wirral Council declared an Environment and Climate Emergency through an all-party resolution in July 2019.

In March 2021 the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee approved the Council's Environment and Climate Emergency Policy, which committed the Council to being carbon emissions neutral within the decade.

The commitment to action aims to:

- Cut climate damaging pollution locally in line with global targets, whilst developing resilience to more extreme weather patterns and rising sea levels that impact Wirral.
- Protect and enhance biodiversity.

As a local authority, we can have a positive influence through how we organise our operations and services; the regulations and policies we set; the goods and services we buy; the investments we make; and the example we set to others. Tackling the ecological and climate crisis presents major opportunities locally to improve quality of life, health, well-being, and the economy.

2. The Environment & Climate Emergency Action Plan (ECEAP)

The policy committed the Council to the establishment of the Environment & Climate Emergency Action Plan (ECEAP) and the ambitious but achievable target of the Council and its entity being 'net carbon neutral' by 2030 – a 10-year journey. The ECEAP is the Council's locally determined contribution to the Cool2 climate strategy, which sets a target for Wirral as a whole, to be carbon neutral by 2041

The ECEAP was developed in 2020 and is designed to drive fundamental change to the way the Council operates, makes decisions, and provides services. The plan contains a significant number of actions to transform the Council.

The actions contained within the ECEAP have been developed in collaboration with the service areas they pertain to. This cross-departmental ownership not only ensures that actions are ambitious and achievable, but that they will be fully integrated into service delivery to address the requirements of the environment & climate emergency declaration resolution.

3. Accountability

During 2021/22 an internal audit of the Council's environment & climate emergency response was undertaken. The audit report includes 17 recommendations, which can be summarised as follows:

Priority Level	Number of recommendations
High	4
Medium	10
Low	3

The high priority recommendations relate to:

- Monitoring and reporting of the climate emergency action plan targets.
- Review of the resources allocated to servicing the carbon emissions database to ensure the accuracy of the data reported.
- Development of a strategy to target high carbon emission areas within the Council.
- Assess existing contracts to identify contracts that may have a significant environmental impact on the Council including the completion of an environmental impact assessment on those existing contracts identified as high risk.

A management action plan has been developed and actions are underway, outstanding actions will be implemented in 2022/23.

4. Progress with the Environment & Climate Emergency Action Plan

An overview of progress on the workstreams can be seen in Table 4.1.

Further details on the key milestones and actions delivered for each workstream are outline in section 5 below.

Table 4.1 Progress on ECEAP actions

Workstream	RAG rating			
	Complete	Green	Yellow	Red
Governance and leadership	15	7	2	
Resource and finance	2	5		
Measurement and reporting	5	7	2	
Staff investment	4	9	4	1

Transport	11	35	6	4
Assets and energy	1	6	5	4
Culture and events		3		7
Communication	9	5	3	2
Waste Management		8	9	
Procurement management	1	2	10	17
Carbon capture	10	17	12	
Resilience and adaptation	10	4	1	
Ways of operating	9		2	
Wiser decisions	2	6	1	
Community engagement	4	6	5	
Highways	7	9		
Health and wellbeing	No data			
Regeneration	8	7	2	1
Future generations	4	13		1
Total	102	149	64	37

5. Summary of milestones achieved in 2021/22

For ease, the ECEAP has been broken down into key areas, referred to as 'Workstreams.' Each workstream (WS) contains a range of actions designed to embed change, provide guidance, increase sustainability and reduce carbon emissions. Below is a summary of key progress for each workstream over the financial year 2021/22.

5.1 WS1. Governance and Leadership

The Council has successfully showed commitment and accountability to the Environment & Climate Emergency agenda by showing significant leadership and progress over the past year. Both the Chief Executive and the Council leader- along with senior officers - have completed the Carbon Literacy Course, and actively encourage staff and management to do the same.

In terms of becoming a 'Climate Literate Organisation,' the Council's employee induction and onboarding programmes are being overhauled to set out the Council's Environment & Climate Emergency declaration response. The established Environment & Climate Emergency Action Group has set out corporate responsibilities for the Environment & Climate Emergency, as well as individual service areas.

The Environment & Climate Emergency Action Group has been meeting bimonthly, chaired by Nicki Butterworth, Director of Neighbourhood Services, with over 20 senior officers from across the Council attending and participating. The Action Group meetings facilitate the ability for progress to be made on the Environment & Climate

Emergency Action Plan and wider work is being undertaken to redefine the plan and prioritise high impact actions.

The Council also has been coordinating with key council partners including the Cool Wirral partnership. Key partners of the council are also addressing the Environment & Climate Emergency through meetings with council officers.

5.2 WS2. Resources and Financial Allocation

Total spend for the Climate Emergency Budget for the financial year 21/22 was £202,883. Some of the main projects allocated funding were the green fleet review; supporting infrastructure for electric vehicle pilot project; carbon literacy training for staff; tree planting; i-Trees study; engagement with faith networks and the Cool youth programme. The key climate emergency actions are funded through a combination of support from the CE budget, individual service areas and external funding.

There is an established Climate Emergency team, headed by the Climate Emergency Manager, whose role is to drive the ECEAP. The Climate Emergency team also has support from an established wider team of officers and partners.

5.3 WS3. Measurement and Reporting

Wirral Council has committed to being net carbon neutral by 2030 and it is being achieved through the delivery of the Environment & Climate Emergency Action Plan. Progress is measured by the annual carbon budget and a zero-carbon pathway prediction for 2030 has been established.

There have been regular reports of the progress of the Climate Emergency Action Plan to the Climate Emergency Action Group. The Environment & Climate Emergency Action plan is 'RAG' rated and updated frequently by the Climate Emergency Team with the help of Officers from across the council.

5.4 WS4. Staff Investment

Carbon literacy has been delivered to over 200 employees and Members as part of the Council's commitment to becoming a Carbon Literate Organisation. The Council was awarded 'Bronze Status' and with future course dates scheduled for 2022, the Council is on the way to applying for 'Silver Status.'

Environment & Climate Emergency is now included in staff inductions to the council and is a section on the new virtual staff learning platform- Flo.

5.5 WS5. Transport

To encourage more sustainable travel in schools a post has been appointed to work with schools to encourage sustainable travel and the Modeshift STARS package was purchased to help accredit the schools in travel planning.

Funding was secured for the purchase of eCargo bikes through the Energy Saving Trust. The bid was a collaborative approach with Council officers working closely with Rethink Now! CIC, Wirral Environment Network, Wirral Met College, Cycling UK, and Peel L&P with support from the Chamber of Commerce and Reciprocity. The

eCargo bikes will be utilised internally, initially through a pilot, and by partner organisations to replace existing delivery vehicles and the loans will commence in summer 2022.

A pilot scheme for on-street residential charging commenced in October 2021 via a bid for funding from OZEV, with 53 on street charge points installed across the borough for residents to use, in residential areas with limited off-street parking. This measure supports the transition to Electric vehicles (EVs) as outlined in the government Electric vehicle infrastructure strategy. Following on from this, there will be a review of the pilot project and development of an EV strategy for Wirral borough.

5.6 WS6. Assets and Energy

The Council has re-established annual Carbon Budget Performance reporting and the 2021/2022 Carbon Budget Performance report will be tabled in June 2022. A list of corporate carbon climate emitters to prioritise buildings that will deliver the biggest impacts has also been completed.

This year the Council has also set short term targets for more renewable and low carbon energy. Council officers contributed to the Environment & Climate Emergency Policy and Asset Management Strategy drafts.

During 2021/22 the Council purchased electricity from renewable sources, therefore net carbon emissions from electricity were zero, however this is not seen as a sustainable option. Therefore, going forward the Council will look for an alternative to green electricity purchase to ensure we can fulfil our net zero commitments.

5.7 WS7. Culture and Events

Progress was limited regarding in person events due to in 2021 covid restrictions, however we are beginning to see the return of events, for example events for the Green Business Festival were held across the Liverpool City Region at the start of 2022, including two days of events held in regeneration areas in Birkenhead communicating innovating thinking, sharing best practice, and providing opportunities for networking.

5.8 WS8. Communication

The communications team are continuing to communicate how the Council are meeting their actions through the dedicated climate emergency tab on Wirral View, the climate pages on the council's website and the bimonthly climate and environment e-newsletter.

Between April 2021 and December 2021, the Climate tab on Wirral View has had 3,396 unique page views. 2,862 of these people have then gone on to view (or have clicked directly through to) the further climate related news.

Between October 2021 and March 2022, 44 organic climate related posts were shared on social media, with a total reach (how many people saw the post) of 398,961, a total impression (the total number of times a piece of content appears

somewhere for someone) of 596,599 and a total engagement (how many people engaged with or reacted to the post) of 29,044.

The bi-monthly newsletter has 9,319 subscribers. From the latest two e-newsletters, there is an average open rate of 46% and a click rate of 14% with the most popular story being the EV charging information. Benchmarking this against an all-industry average, our open rate is more than double that of the average (based on all-industry average open rate of 21.3%) and five-times better on click rate (based on all-industry average click rate of 2.6%).

Communications has also helped the Climate Emergency team facilitate the delivery of a Carbon Literacy Alumni Newsletter for Council employees who have attended the course.

5.9 WS9. Waste Management

Implementation of the 'Single Use Plastic' Policy across the council has been achieved with procurement processes being amended to ensure that single use plastics are removed as far as possible from Council activities. The exception to the rule being around the need for disposable single use items in the wake of COVID-19 for safety purposes and following NHS and Government guidance.

5.10 WS10. Procurement

An Environment & Climate Emergency statement has been included into Procurement's Supplier Code of Conduct. The Climate Emergency Team provided consultation support to ensure the Environment & Climate Emergency Action Plan goals and objectives are reflected in the statement.

5.11 WS11. Carbon Capture

In 2021, a Landscape Manager (Tree Strategy) was appointed to help deliver the councils Tree, Woodland, and Hedgerow Strategy. Implementation of the Council's target to plant 210,000 trees by 2030, remains on target with 21,527 trees being planted in 2021/22, so over 46,000 trees planted since the launch of the Strategy. Overall, there were 26 community planting events held in the 21/22 season, therefore 98% of the planting was achieved by communities meaning that residents feel more ownership over the trees.

This season the planting comprises of 1km of new hedgerow, 509 street/parkland trees and 7.2ha of new woodland.

To help support the strategy the webpage was updated, with information about the tree planting initiatives, such as pledge a tree, and grow a tree for Wirral, Adopt a Tree, Tree for life.

5.12 WS12. Resilience & Adaptation

In 2021 the flood and coastal risk team successfully bid for funding to deliver a natural flood management project at Coronation Park, Greasby, which meets the requirements of Wirral's Resilient Parks Project on how parks are placed to meet the changes associated with climate change and identifies adaptation measures. The

project is currently out to tender and will be delivered in 2022, helping to reduce surface water flood risk to surrounding properties.

5.13 WS13. Ways of Operating

Whilst working through the Covid-19 pandemic was challenging, significant numbers of our workforce have embraced a different way of working. This was out of necessity rather than choice, but it has accelerated the journey we had started already, to work more flexibly in a way and at a pace we could not have imagined.

It has provided the opportunity to change the way we work forever. The Council will use the learning from the pandemic and feedback from employees to provide a springboard for new ways of working in the future. This includes the ability of many more employees to work remotely or from home and other locations, utilising technology more effectively.

Hybrid working is a type of flexible working where an employee splits their time between the workplace and remote working. A hybrid working policy is in development to set out the Council approach to hybrid working and the responsibilities that managers and employees must ensure it is operated effectively.

5.14 WS14. Informed Decisions

The requirement to consider the Environment & Climate implications of decisions and reports is not firmly embedded in the standard committee template and the Council are well on the way to delivering carbon literacy training to all Council report writers. The Council was awarded bronze award carbon literate status at the start of 2022. Further carbon literacy training is planned for May and June 2022, with the ambition of becoming a silver award carbon literate council in 2022/23.

The second annual carbon budget is being reported this year and will show that the Council remain on target to meet their annual carbon budget for 2030 at present.

5.15 WS15. Community Engagement

Cool Wirral continues to meet on a quarterly basis. The Wirral Zero Carbon Building and Infrastructure Task Force is a task group to advise the Cool Wirral Partnership on the decarbonisation of the built environment in line with local net zero ambitions set out in the Cool 2 strategy.

A new Adaptation Task Force was suggested in 2021, terms of reference have been drafted and appropriate stakeholders are being sought. The Adaptation Task Force will convene for its first meeting in 2022.

Wirral Environmental Network (WEN) have been hosting 'Cool communities' sessions funded by the Council's as part of their commitment to Cool Wirral. Other Cool community partners such as Building Bridges and Planet Heswall created their own climate action plans.

The Council have also been supporting a local group 'Earth Moves,' to establish a Permaculture growing project at the former market gardens site in Leasowe and have undertaken a joint bid for funding to look at sustainable food networks.

The Climate Emergency team also worked with Zero Carbon Liverpool on a bid to the Liverpool City Region Community Environment Fund (CEF).

5.16 WS16. Highways

Phase 2 of the LED streetlight replacement scheme has been completed. In total 25,037 lanterns have been replaced as well as 10,019 streetlight columns. This will result in energy savings of more than three million kWh and 1,300 fewer tonnes of carbon each year.

All new LED lanterns are programmed to dim by 40% from midnight to 5am and removal of redundant illuminated sign lights is 40 % complete. Steel street lighting columns, traffic sign plates and traffic bollards are all being recycled at end of life.

A 'Greening the Fleet' review has been undertaken by APSE and recommendations made on how to transition the fleet to Low or zero carbon emissions by 2030. The next stage is to develop a strategy based on these recommendations.

5.17 WS18. Regeneration

At the time of writing the Wirral Local Plan Submission Draft has been published for representations. It sets a clear strategic direction for the future of the borough in terms of addressing key issues such as climate change and protecting and enhancing green space. Key objectives of the plan are to address climate change by aiming to achieve zero carbon ready buildings on all new developments, protecting the borough's biodiversity, open increased opportunities to walk and cycle as well as using public transport.

The Birkenhead Heat Network Project is progressing. A total of £3.6m Green Recovery Funding has been awarded from OFGEM for the upgrade of local power networks to enable heat network energy centres and regeneration. External technical project management has been appointed and detailed Project Development (DPD) and Outline Business Case (OBC) consultants appointed and project underway.

5.18 WS19. Future Generations

There has been lots of activity post Covid with schools keen to participate in the Eco Schools programme. There has been a return to delivering in person support to schools in delivering 'environmental themes' through the national curriculum. In 2021 funding was gained to deliver a 'Natural curriculum' initiative, training teachers to deliver the natural curriculum outside in partnership with Liverpool John Moores University. Delivery will commence in 2022.

The 'COOL' strand is now delivered in schools as part of the Eco School programme and we are back to full in person delivery of teacher training on environmental topics such as energy, transport, and future planning.

A project was undertaken to raise awareness and increase knowledge and understanding around increased tree planting for schools. A 'Tiny Forest' was planted at Citrine Park, Leasowe in 2021 and this will be revisited with a citizen science project in 2022 to monitor and document progress.

6. Greenhouse Gas Reporting

A carbon budget has been prepared by the Energy conservation engineer with data supplied from various sources within the council, this is being taken as a separate report to the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee. A summary of the Council's actual emissions verses the carbon budget is outlined in Table 6.1.

In 2021/22 the Council continued the downwards trajectory and are currently ahead of the target set by the carbon budget for 2021/22.

Table 6.1 Annual Carbon Budget targets verses performance

Financial Year	Annual Carbon Budget (Tonnes CO ₂ e)	Actual Emissions (Net tonnes CO ₂ e)
2019/20	13,656 (Baseline)	13,656
2020/21	10,349 (Mobilisation year)	9,424
2021/22	7,843	6,275
2022/23	5,944	
2023/24	4,505	
2024/25	3,414	
2025/26	2,587	
2026/27	1,961	
2027/28	1,486 (Re-baselining due)	

7. Priority Actions for 2022/23

The ECEAP has been reviewed by the Climate Emergency team, with regards to the large-scale actions that are vital for the Council to deliver our ambition of being net carbon zero by 2030. Urgent action needs to be taken in certain areas now to ensure we have the correct policies, investment, and delivery mechanisms in place to secure carbon reductions across all our service areas.

Key priority actions have been identified for 2022/23 to ensure the council continue the trajectory to keep pace with the carbon budget and meet our net zero target by 2030. They are:

- Implement the Management action plan and recommendations put forward by internal audit.
- Establish a Green Fleet Strategy for the Council.
- Develop an Electric Vehicle Strategy for the borough.
- Define the Council's scope 3 emissions from good and services.
- Become a Silver award status 'Carbon Literate Organisation.'

- Establish a decarbonisation plan for building emissions and create a ‘project pipeline’ to enable funding bids.
- Increasing communication and engagement from residents and communities.
- Increase awareness and action from internal staff.
- Increase accountability through a public-facing ECEAP introduction and progress report.

References

Equalities Impact Assessment – Climate Emergency Action Plan

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/sites/default/files/all/communities%20and%20neighbourhoods/Equality%20Impact%20Assessments/EIA%20since%202017/Delivery/Climate%20Emergency%20Action%20Plan%20-%20Wirral%20Council%20EIA.pdf>

Wirral New Local Plan <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/planning-and-building/local-plans-and-planning-policy/wirral-new-local-plan/new-local-plan>

Wirral Plan <https://www.wirralintelligenceservice.org/media/3552/wirral-plan-2026.pdf>

Cool Wirral Partnership [Cool 2 Strategy](#)

UN Sustainable development goals <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

UN Paris Agreement

http://unfccc.int/files/essential_background/convention/application/pdf/english_paris_agreement.pdf

IPCC Sixth Assessment Report <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg3/>

Committee on Climate Change Progress Reports 2019

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/committee-on-climate-changes-2019-progress-reports-government-responses>