

APPENDIX 1
Wirral Borough Council
Environment & Climate Emergency Action Plan
Progress 2022/23

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Global action on climate change

- 1.1.1 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. Unnatural climate change across the world is widely evidenced and is already affecting many weather and climate extremes in every region across the globe. This has led to widespread adverse impacts and related losses and damages to nature and people.
- 1.1.2 Summer 2022 in the UK was the joint warmest summer on record according to mean temperature. This means that four of the five warmest summers on record for England have occurred since 2003 as the effects of human-induced climate change impact on England's summer temperatures. In England, 2022 was the 6th driest summer on record and the Met office have provisionally named 2022 as the UK's warmest year on record.
- 1.1.3 Globally, the United Nation's Paris Agreement seeks to keep average global temperature rise to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursue efforts to limit the increase to 1.5°C. To have a chance of staying within 1.5°C rise means cutting global emissions rapidly to reach 'net zero' towards the middle of this Century. 'Net zero' is the point when the amount of pollution we release to the atmosphere is less than or equal to that which is removed naturally, or by artificial means.
- 1.1.4 In 2021, the UK government changed its legally binding target to reduce emissions by 78% by 2035 compared to 1990 levels. This is consistent with the findings of the independent Climate Change Committee (CCC) and the Paris Agreement temperature goal.
- 1.1.5 The IPCC released its 6th synthesis report in March 2023, which reiterated that global greenhouse gas emissions have continued to increase. There is a rapidly closing window of opportunity to secure a liveable and sustainable future for all. All global modelled pathways that limit warming to 1.5°C involve rapid, deep, and in most cases, immediate greenhouse gas emissions reductions in all sectors this decade. Near-term actions involve high up-front investments and potentially disruptive changes that can be lessened by a range of enabling policies.
- 1.1.6 2022 saw the 27th Conference of the Parties (COP 27) After an extended negotiating period, COP27 closed on 20th November 2022. One of the key

achievements was a new agreement to fund loss and damage for vulnerable countries which are already suffering severe effects from climate change. The mechanism of the fund will be a focus of COP 28. COP 27 showed the continued commitment of nations to the Paris agreement.

1.2 Environment and Climate Emergency Declaration

- 1.2.1 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.
- 1.2.2 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.
- 1.2.3 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.
- 1.2.4 The Council 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. ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN (ECEAP)

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 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.
- 2.3 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. ECEAP PROGRESS 2022/23

3.1 For ease, the ECEAP has been broken down into Workstreams. Each workstream contains a range of actions designed to embed change, provide guidance, increase sustainability and reduce carbon emissions.

3.2 Headline actions that were achieved in 2022/23 were:

- Funding secured from the Low Carbon Skills fund and development of 11 Heat Decarbonisation Plans to build a 'project pipeline' to reduce emissions from council buildings;
- Secured £171,700 DEFRA funding for an education and awareness project on domestic burning;
- Completed delivery of a 'Natural Curriculum' programme to teachers of 10 schools within the Borough;
- Continued upskilling of Rangers to Forest school Level 4, and subsequent training of 24 primary school teachers to Forest school Level 3, enabling them to lead forest schools within their own school;
- Planting of over 21,000 trees through 20 community planting sessions
- 16 Park Rangers trained to utilise e-cargo bikes and trailers in Birkenhead Park, Leasowe Castle, Central Park Wallasey and Flaybrick Cemetery to undertake maintenance duties;
- Continuing from the Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure (EVCI) pilot in 2021/22, charging points were retained and a charging tariff implemented.
- Consultants (WSP) commissioned to develop an Electric Vehicle strategy for the borough;
- A further 88 staff received carbon literacy training.
- Consultation completed on the Pollinator strategy and adopted by the Council in November 2022;
- Progress on the Birkenhead Heat Network Project;
- Council led a Cool Wirral Partnership task & finish review into low carbon buildings.

3.3 A table of key progress for each workstream over the financial year 2022/23 can be found below.


Table 3.3 ECEAP progress in 2022/23

<u>1. Governance and leadership</u>	Environment and Climate Emergency Action group meetings continues to take place bimonthly and is chaired by Nicola Butterworth, Director of Neighbourhoods.
	Wirral has taken the role of lead authority for the LCR Director Climate group. A series of workshops have taken place between LCR and Local Authority Directors to focus on a more joined up way of working on the Climate Emergency, developing the LCR 5-year climate action plan and input into the Hydrogen demand study. Involved in workshops to develop and support the LCRCA 5-year Climate Action Plan.
	Commitment to the Climate Emergency agenda was reaffirmed through the appointment of the Climate Emergency

	<p>and Environment Assistant Director, with explicit responsibility for the Climate Emergency.</p>
	<p>The Climate Emergency Team are continuing update the ECEAP as a live document and collecting data to produce the carbon budgets, reporting progress annually to the ECE&T committee in June.</p>
	<p>The ECEAP was developed in 2019 with delivery beginning in 2020, the document was intended to be a 'live' document and since this time, a large proportion of the actions have been completed, whilst some have become outdated or irrelevant due to changed within the organisation. Climate Emergency Team have been conducting a review of the ECEAP to update the actions and drive forward the next phase of climate action for the council.</p>
<p><u>2. Resources and financial allocation</u></p>	<p>During the financial year 2022/23, the Climate Emergency budget was set at £120,000 revenue, with an additional £100,000 capital funding. The funding helped to deliver numerous activities, which are reported within this document. The larger items that were funded included a contribution towards pool covers, further carbon literacy training for staff, the appointment of an interim green fleet manager, tree planting across the borough, rollout of the electric vehicle charging infrastructure pilot project and natural curriculum training for teachers delivered by Liverpool John Moores University.</p>
	<p>In addition to the budget, the Climate Emergency Team secured £171,900 from DEFRA's Air Quality Fund to deliver a project aimed at reducing domestic burning and education and behaviour change campaign on air quality. The funding includes an 18-month post to deliver the project. They also worked with in partnership with a local community group, Earthmoves, to secure a £29,000 grant from the LCR community environment fund to deliver a community garden project based on permaculture principles at the former market gardens on Telegraph Lane.</p>
<p><u>3. Measurement and reporting</u></p>	<p>In 2022 internal audit undertook an audit of the climate emergency action plan and made 17 recommendations to improve accountability and the actions contained within it. To date 10 of the actions have been implemented, 5 are partially implemented with dates to be achieved in 2023 and 2 not yet implemented. Some of these improvements related to the frequency and robustness of the data collected.</p>
	<p>The Climate Emergency Team have continued to promote the organisations work on the Climate Emergency at events with peers from Local Authorities. Both the Climate Emergency and Environment Assistant Director and Climate Emergency</p>

	<p>Manager gave presentations at APSE events detailing our experience to date.</p>
<p><u>4. Staff Investment</u></p>	<p>In pursuit of our ambition to become a carbon literate silver award organisation, 91 more staff received carbon literacy training in 2022/23. Two staff also attended the Local Government Association/Centre for Alternative Technology 'Train the trainer' Carbon literacy training to enable carbon literacy training to be undertaken in house when required.</p>
	<p>Additional information on environment and climate emergency was hosted on Flo in news articles and online training – i.e. Electric vehicle seminar, energy efficiency module.</p>
	<p>The Climate Emergency team has also continued to produce the internal carbon literacy newsletter and the distribution of this has been widened from carbon literacy alumni to all staff.</p>
	<p>Three days of staff volunteer days were arranged at Dibbinsdale Local Nature Reserve in February 2023. The volunteer days focussed on clearing the walled garden and getting it ready for use as a location for Forest School workshops.</p>
	<p>Salary sacrifice scheme cycle to work scheme for staff was run in summer 2022. 18 people took part in the scheme which enabled them to purchase bikes and cycling equipment, with a total spend of £20,779.</p>
<p><u>5. Transport</u></p>	<p>In 2022 16 park staff members received training to use e-cargo bikes and electric trailers to assist with maintenance tasks. The e-cargo bikes were deployed in January 2023 and have been utilised within Birkenhead Park, Leasowe castle, Central Park in Wallasey and Flaybrick cemetery. In the 3 months from January 2023, the bikes have covered a total of 257 miles (a diesel van would generate 60kg CO₂e over this distance) and it is hoped that the uptake will increase over the coming year.</p>
	<p>A temporary Green fleet manager was appointed to develop a Green fleet strategy to transition to lower emissions from the council fleet vehicles. During the financial year 22/23, emissions rose 8.5% on the previous year, highlighting the need to prioritise decarbonisation of the fleet through the preparation of a green fleet strategy.</p>
	<p>Following on from the requirement for staff to work from home due to Covid, a new hybrid working policy produced to support staff working remotely for part of their working week if their role</p>



	<p>allows. Although the staff commute is outside the scope of our reporting, reducing staff travel to and from the office will reduce emissions for the wider borough and contribute to the Cool 2 strategy. Further work will be done on this to calculate the benefits through a staff travel survey and strategy. As part of the move to the new Council building in the Birkenhead Commercial District it will be a key requirement that a move towards more sustainable modes of transport is incorporated. A staff travel survey is planned for 2023/24 with a view to developing an updated staff travel plan.</p>
	<p>A pilot of 53 on street electric vehicle charging points was completed in 2022. Following on from the pilot these have been adopted and a charging tariff was agreed and implemented in December 2022.</p> 
	<p>An updated parking strategy is in development and went out for the first phase of consultation in October 2022 and the engagement phase 1 is currently under review. The review will focus on all forms of parking including, cycle parking and electric vehicle (EV) charging and parking bays and one of the aims is to improve access to and the ability to use more sustainable modes of transport.</p>
	<p>The Mind Your Business project was delivered, working with local employers to promote eco driving in addition to raising awareness of safe driving practices.</p>
	<p>All schools in the borough were offered cycle training. Training is also available for all Wirral residents.</p>
	<p>An active travel officer works with schools to deliver the School Street initiative. This aims to reduce cars travelling in and around school locations to reduce emissions and air pollution. A total of 6 school street 18-month pilots were established, with 3 being made permanent in May 2023. In 2022, 7 schools were Modeshift Stars accredited and further schools were submitted in March 2023, awaiting outcome.</p>
	<p>A feasibility study into introduction of 20mph speed limit implementation on all non-major residential roads including development of methodology commenced during December 2021. Traffic surveys and phase 1 of design and implementation to commence 2022 subject to member approval.</p>
<p><u>6. Assets and Energy</u></p>	<p>In February 2023 the Council implemented a resolution to reduce the temperature in occupied council buildings by 2 degrees, which is projected to reduce emissions by 296 tonnes CO2e annually.</p> <p>The council purchase all their electricity for 2021/22 from</p>

	<p>renewable energy tariffs. Exploring the use of power purchase agreements to purchase renewable electricity.</p>
	<p>The Council secured £80k through a joint bid to the Low Carbon Skills Fund with LCR-CA and North-west net zero hub for heat decarbonisation plans for 10 of our highest emitting buildings. Due to be completed February 2023. The reports considered 2,236.6 tonnes CO₂e associated with fossil fuel use (50.4% of 2022 emissions). The reports will allow us to take forward projects to bid for Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund to implement the recommended decarbonisation plans.</p>
	<p>The Asset Strategy has been reviewed in conjunction with CE Team and now contains a priority to 'Reduce the impact of the Estate and Services on the Environment' https://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/documents/s50095452/Asset%20Strategy%202022%20-%202027.pdf This included 6 actions that would be undertaken by December 2023 to reduce the carbon emissions of council assets.</p>
	<p>Through collaboration with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) 10 Heat Decarbonisation Plans (HDPs) received (studies considered circa 50% of 2021/22 emissions from natural gas. The intention is to take some of the sites forward for Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme funding in September as appropriate. The Energy Team have also submitted the next tranche of 18 applications for HDP's in collaboration the LCRCA.</p>
	<p>The Carbon emissions for the council in financial year 2022/23 have been calculated and compared to the council carbon budget. The carbon budgets show a decrease in carbon emissions since 2021/22 in line with the net zero trajectory, although progress has slowed. The emissions shown for heating our buildings has decreased, this can be attributed both to the reduction in the number of buildings through community asset transfer and disposal of assets. Overall electricity usage has decreased and any emissions from this are offset via the purchase of renewable electricity. Carbon Budget Performance 2022/23 report will be reported in tandem with the Environment and Climate Emergency Action Plan Update at the Environment Climate Emergency & Transport Committee meeting 19 June 2023.</p>
	<p>Council leisure centres make up a significant proportion of the overall emissions from Council assets. In 2022/23 a programme of works was started to identify energy efficiency initiatives to be implemented in the short to medium term to compliment the heat decarbonisation plans and strengthen future funding bids. The research has identified efficiencies to make the most of the building management systems and equipment already</p>

	<p>installed at the sites. This includes a “Planned Preventative Maintenance” regime which will ensure equipment is operating as efficiently as possible, estimated at saving 76 tonnes of carbon equivalent per year, and £115,000 in energy expenditure over five years*. The interventions include the installation of new equipment, such as “Low Flow” shower technology, which utilise less water and energy whilst maintaining the same level of comfort for service users. This has been estimated as saving approximately 41 tonnes of carbon equivalent per year and £136,000 over five years. Pool covers are also to be installed at the sites in September of this year which, by reducing heat loss and evaporation, reduce energy demands for heating the pools and dehumidifying the pool halls.</p>
<u>7. Culture and Events</u>	<p>The way events are delivered within culture and events have changed since the action plan was written. This workstream has been reviewed and updated with the relevant officers, with a view to reducing the carbon footprint of events and holding events to support and raise awareness of the climate emergency agenda.</p>
	<p>Work is planned to deliver a ‘Cool and Creative’ Event during 2024, to celebrate Wirral as the borough of culture 2024 whilst highlighting the environment and climate emergency and the role that we all have to play in the response.</p>
<u>8. Communication</u>	<p>During 2022/23 content was produced across a range of topics with 70 news articles published on Wirral View. This content was shared across further council digital channels (including Wirral View newsletter, social media).</p>
	<p>Content is also shared with the media, where most appropriate, and for this period 32 media releases were shared, with 93.5% of these media releases were covered by multiple media outlets.</p>
	<p>The council’s achievements since declaring climate emergency are hosted on the following webpage https://www.wirral.gov.uk/about-council/climate-change-and-sustainability/climate-emergency/key-achievements-climate-emergency</p>
<u>9. Waste Management</u>	<p>Total figures for the recycling rate within Wirral are not available at the time of writing, however they are likely to be lower than last year (32.3% due to reduced volume of garden waste collected because of the dry summer weather. However, a positive to note is that the total collected tonnages of waste have decreased back to pre-covid levels, as many places of work have re-opened and the cost of living has had an impact on spending and disposal.</p>

* Please note estimates have a high degree of uncertainty at this time and will always be subject to the stability or volatility of energy markets.

	<p>Green bin subscriptions for 22/23 were 40,794 and a total of 11,608 tonnes of green waste were collected. So far, 15,600 residents have registered for a green bin subscription in 2023/24 which goes live from the 12th June.</p>
	<p>Environment Act will bring in new requirements for consistent recycling collections, including mandatory food recycling, which is not presently undertaken in Wirral. In addition, the Environment Act will also introduce a deposit return scheme, extended producer responsibility and a 'plastics tax' on suppliers.</p> <p>In June 2023 work is due to be completed on a baseline review of current kerbside waste collection systems across Merseyside and modelling of potential future collection systems. This modelling takes into consideration the new collection requirements set out in the Environment Act and likely regulations relating to recycling consistency. DEFRA are expected to publish the consistency consultation results (closing date June 2021) in 2023. This project will be the starting point for the Council's development of a new waste collection strategy, ready for a new collection contract in 2027.</p>
	<p>A LCR Zero Waste Strategy Framework has been developed by the LCR waste management partnership and endorsed by Councils, including Wirral Council at the ECET Committee meeting on the 14 March. The Framework will form the basis of the Zero Waste Strategy, which will set out the responsibility, capacity and action required to underpin the principles of the LCR Pathway to Net Zero Strategy. A jointly-funded Partnership Manager will be in post soon to coordinate the development and delivery of the strategy.</p>
	<p>Communications campaign "It's not you, it's me" ran social media posts for during the week commencing 10th October 2022. The aim of this campaign was to raise awareness of reuse and repair options of bulky items (for example, chest of drawers, wardrobes and sofas). This campaign will be expanded in 2023, to include adverts on the side of refuse collection vehicles. Additional campaigns this year will focus on getting recycling right and separation and recycling of batteries and small electricals.</p>
	<p>The Waste Team are investigating the potential to install underground communal bins for high density population areas. Three pilot sites are being proposed – two using above ground bulk bins and one using underground bins. Underground bins are being proposed for all future new developments, including Hind Street in Birkenhead.</p>
	<p>During 2022/22, in conjunction with Magenta Living, the Council supported Bee Wirral to run the Refresh project, saving furniture from landfill and distributing to social housing tenants. Wirral council provide a van and staff to deliver</p>

furniture on one day a week. Over the course of the year, Bee Wirral actioned 59 referrals and distributed 257 items of furniture and household appliances. This prevented 7.9 tonnes of household waste from going to landfill, equating to just over 16 tonnes of CO2e saved.

'Kit Link' project being developed by graduates to reuse sports kit and equipment in the borough, the initiative was launched in March with a collection point located in Cheshire Lines. The aim is to create a circular economy for sports kit, whereby residents can donate or collect items, to reduce barriers to being active and reduce waste going to landfill contribute positively to the council's Climate Emergency ambitions.

Colleagues were able to donate pre-loved sports equipment and clothing throughout the pilot, which will be used as starting stock for wider implementation of the scheme across the Council's Leisure Centres.



10. Procurement

All social value Themes, Outcomes and Measures (TOMs) with regard to environmental impact are included in all contracts procured by an invitation to tender.

Options have been explored on how to obtain scope 3 data (indirect emissions) from suppliers to incorporate into the carbon budgets when re-baselining takes place in 2027. The new Oracle system goes live (April 2023) which will enable better data collection and the capabilities will be explored to determine how it can support carbon reduction targets.

Draft procurement strategy and sustainable procurement policy have been developed and will go through governance in 2023.

11. Carbon capture

During the 2022/23 planting season 20 community planting sessions were held and over 21,000 trees were planted. This means that in total, the Council have planted over 66,000 trees within the borough, against the target of 210,000 trees by

2030.

In partnership with Forest research, an I-Tree survey has been carried out – over 200 in person surveys of trees carried out to quantify the structure, composition and social, cultural and environmental impact of trees in the borough. It estimated that there are just over 1 million trees in Wirral, providing 13.8% total tree canopy cover, with annual benefits equivalent to £780.3 million per year. The survey also allowed a more accurate calculation of carbon sequestration and storage, with the tree population estimated to store 338 tonnes of carbon, equivalent to 1.2 million tonnes of CO₂.

Following public consultation, Wirral Council's Pollinator Strategy was adopted in 2022 with the aim of protecting, increasing and enhancing pollinator habitats across Wirral and increasing knowledge and understanding of pollinators. The strategy was accepted by Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport (ECE&T) Committee in November 2022, and sets out the Councils approach to supporting pollinators. As part of the strategy Parks will be developing a training programme for parks staff to assist them in identify wildflowers and how to best maintain and protect our plants, trees and wildflowers to best effect.

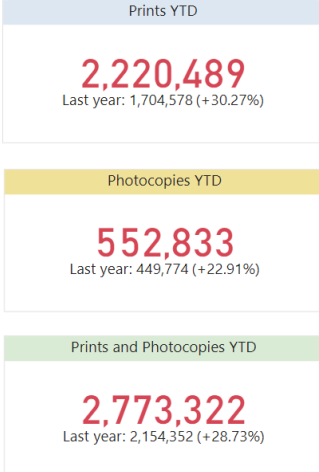

Throughout May 2022, the council again participated in Plantlife's national campaign 'No Mow May'. Grass in agreed areas remained uncut through the month of May to support insects such as bees, butterflies and other wildlife.

Working in partnership with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, Wirral piloted the regions first living roof bus shelter. The shelter was installed outside Eureka and aims to introduce pollinators into urban areas.





Work has continued to work to reduce the use of glyphosate in our parks. The recommendations for new weed control methods were presented to ECE&T committee in July 2022,

	with recommendations for the next steps in using alternatives such as steam control, electrocuting, machinery, and low glyphosate chemical control.
<u>12. Resilience and adaptation</u>	After 7 years of consultation a flood defence scheme has been implemented in West Kirby to protect 70 homes now and 540 homes in the 100 years from tidal flooding due to increased sea level. It consists of a 1.1km long flood wall which is 1.2m high. The scheme is being delivered by Wirral Council in partnership with DEFRA and the Environment Agency and is anticipated to complete in Summer 2023.
	Funding to deliver a natural flood management project at Coronation Park in Greasby was secured in July 2020. The project will be designed to meet the requirements of Wirral's resilient parks project through the introduction of adaption measures to reduce surface water flood risk to surrounding properties. This was due to be delivered in 2022/23, however the timescales have slipped due to resources being allocated to other projects.
	Cool Wirral had the first meeting of the Adaptation sub-group in November 2022, and a report is going to developed and written focusing on community adaptation in the first phase. The working group are utilising ADEPT guidance (preparing for a changing climate: Good practice guidance for Local Government) and CCRA3 (Climate Change Risk Assessment) guidance to identify current and future risks, then and the current adaptation activity at present, taking place at a national, regional and local level, the group will then undertake a gap analysis to identify where further intervention is needed and outline mitigation actions that can be taken at a local level.
<u>13. Ways of operating</u>	New agile working policy has been communicated to staff.
	The Birkenhead commercial district climate change/sustainability leads are writing a paper for the BCD board on proposed options for car parking and a need to develop a new Staff Travel Plan.

	<p>The volumes of paper used on the Multi Functional Devices is still significantly lower than Pre Covid.</p> <p>2019 saw approximately 9.1 Million Prints and Copies compared with approx. 2.0 Million in 2021. The figures have risen slightly in 2022 to approx. 2.6 million, largely due to the return of departments to Office/Hub environments.</p>	 <p>Prints YTD 2,220,489 Last year: 1,704,578 (+30.27%)</p> <p>Photocopies YTD 552,833 Last year: 449,774 (+22.91%)</p> <p>Prints and Photocopies YTD 2,773,322 Last year: 2,154,352 (+28.73%)</p>
<p><u>14. Informed decisions</u></p>	<p>The Environment and Climate Emergency implications are now included in a report template to committee. The committee coordination and oversight group convenes on a weekly basis and implications are scrutinised and strengthened.</p>	
	<p>The new Local Plan 2021-2037 closed for representations on the 25th July 2022. The Wirral Local Plan 2021 - 2037 Submission Draft was submitted to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities for independent examination on 26 October 2022. It contains requirements for low carbon sustainable development.</p>	
<p><u>15. Community engagement</u></p>		<p>Council are still a leading partner of Cool Wirral and hosted a Cool Yule event at the Floral Pavilion for partners to encourage networking and engagement. A Cool Communities subgroup has been established to drive community engagement. A climate community engagement strategy is in draft, consultation with the group is scheduled for January. The Council also produced the Cool Wirral Update for 2022, documenting progress for the borough towards the net zero 2041 target https://www.wirral.gov.uk/about-council/climate-change-and-sustainability/climate-emergency/cool-steps-wirral-climate</p> <p>A project proposal has been submitted to the LCR-CA to establish a 'one front door' for volunteering activity and grant funding for community projects. A community climate champion scheme will be set up to provide education and engagement activity within local communities.</p> <p>A funding bid has been submitted to the FCC to upgrade the buildings and facilities at Dibbinsdale Local Nature Reserve to</p>

	<p>provide a Eco-hub for Forest schools, community activity and green skills workshops. 2 rangers have been trained up to Level 4 to deliver forest schools to teachers.</p> <p>Wirral Council has funded Faiths4change to continue engaging with all faiths to produce their climate action plans in support of Cool Wirral.</p>
<u>16. Highways</u>	<p>Following on from the streetlight replacement programme, a new contract has been awarded for the supply of LED sign lights, also to reduce energy consumption. All new traffic sign plates are made from recycled materials and are recyclable.</p>
	<p>A Fleet review was completed in early 2022 and a green fleet strategy is in draft on how we reduce the carbon emissions of council fleet. This is outlined as a key priority with the Neighbourhoods Business Plan for 2022/23. A Temporary Green Fleet Manager was appointed in 2022 and the delivery of a Green Fleet Strategy is a priority within the Neighbourhoods business plan.</p>
	<p>The electric vehicle charging infrastructure pilot was completed in October, the charging infrastructure remains, and a tariff was placed on the network in early December to enable costs for electricity and maintenance to be recouped.</p>
	<p>Over the last year highways have continued to try and reduce the carbon footprint of highways maintenance. Several different technologies are being used to reduce the carbon emissions, these include micro-patching, and trials of warm mix asphalt.</p> <p>Highways are also using an innovative process called Retread, a cold in-situ recycling process which reconstructs the carriageway, as a lower carbon alternative to conventional plane-out and inlay.</p> <p>The carbon savings from these technologies will try to be captured as a key performance indicator within the reviewed action plan and reported in 2023/24.</p>
<u>18. Regeneration</u>	<p>An external project manager has been appointed to deliver the Birkenhead Heat Network project. The emerging Local Plan policy includes a requirement to connect to the heat network or a developer contribution if the network is not yet in place. Land for energy centres has been safeguarded. £3.6m Green recovery funding has been awarded by OFGEM for uprating of local electricity network. A Heat Network Task and Finish group has been established.</p>
	<p>Town Deal funding for sustainability central has been awarded.</p>
	<p>The emerging local plan policy includes requirements for Passivhaus, biodiversity and water efficiency standards. The Birkenhead Design Guide is being developed with external consultants to set the expectation for new development in the</p>

	Birkenhead 2040 Framework area.
<u>17. Health and wellbeing</u>	The JSNA has been updated to include reference to the climate emergency.
	The Heath Protection strategy has been updated to include climate risks and objectives.
	An Air Quality Strategy is in development with consultation workshops to be held with Stakeholders in June 2023.
	The Climate Emergency Team were successful securing £171,900 in funding from DEFRA to establish a campaign to raise awareness of air pollution and reduce pollution from particulate matter from domestic burning.
	A Place Sustainability Board has been established and is attended by representatives from the Council and NHS trusts. NHS partners are developing their green plans in support of the Cool Wirral Partnership.
<u>19. Future generations</u>	Natural curriculum training was undertaken with teachers from 10 schools aimed at integrating the national curriculum with outside learning.
	 <p>collaboration between Wirral's Eco Schools, Wirral Unplugged and Wirral Environment Network, saw the launch of 'Eco Art in the Park' during summer 2022. Large sculptures of Wirral's wildflowers were created by artist Alison Bailey Smith using reused materials. The flower sculptures visited schools and parks across the borough to raise awareness of the importance of pollinators.</p>
	Workshop led by a local behaviour change consultancy Diskette were undertaken with secondary schools. These focused on the use of behaviour change to secure improvements in waste reduction and littering

	<p>The Eco-school Programme Manager worked with schools to produce a film entitled 'Climate in Chaos' (https://vimeo.com/690195468) based on the book by Neil Layton. The film premiered at the Science in the Sunshine event held at Heswall Primary school.</p>	
	<p>The council continues to deliver a very successful Eco-school programme to around 60 schools, with 50 schools achieving their Eco-school green flags in 2021/22.</p>	
	<p>19 wildflower workshops were held with schools and community groups to craft paper wildflowers native to Wirral. The workshops will culminate in a 'Wildflower meadow' exhibition at Wirral Country Park Visitor Centre in June 2023 to raise awareness of the importance of pollinators and as a celebration of Wirral Way 50th Anniversary.</p>	

4. GREENHOUSE GAS REPORTING 2022/23

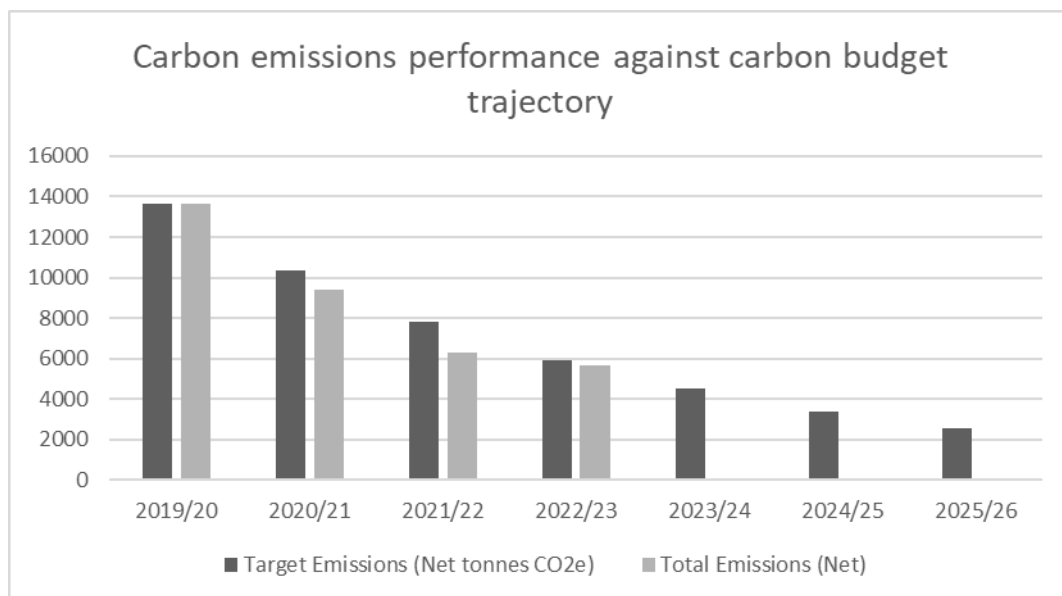
4.1 In 2019/20 Wirral Council set a baseline for their carbon emissions of 13,656 tonnes CO₂e (carbon dioxide equivalent emissions). A carbon budget was set for each year marking the trajectory to net zero by 2030, with a re-baselining in 2026/27. A summary of the Council's actual emissions verses the carbon budget is outlined in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Annual Carbon Budget targets verses performance

Scope	Emissions Type	2019/20 Baseline Emissions (tonnes CO ₂ e)	2021/22 Actual Emissions (tonnes CO ₂ e)	2022/23 Actual Emissions (tonnes CO ₂ e)	Change from previous year
Scope 1	Heating	5,994.67	5,222.63	4,496.60	-13.9%
	Authority's Fleet	599.99	469.77	509.68	+8.5%
Scope 2	Electricity	5,924.40	4,347.52	3,932.1	-9.6%
Scope 3	Staff Travel	482.03	146.73	226.24	+54.2%
	Transmission & Distribution Losses	502.97	384.81	359.7	-6.5%
	Water	151.94	50.53	68.34	+35.2
Total Emissions (Gross)		13,656.00	10,621.99	9,592.66	-9.7%
Carbon Offsets		0	0	0	0
Green Tariffs		0	(4,347.52)	(3932.1)	-9.6%
Total Emissions (Net)		13,656.00	6,274.47	5,660.56	-9.8%

- 4.2 In 2022/23 the Council continued the downwards trajectory and are currently slightly ahead of the target set by the carbon budget for 2022/23.
- 4.3 Figure 4.3 shows the net actual emissions against the carbon budget to date. The net calculated emissions show a reduction of 9.8% against the previous year (2021/22) and a 58.6% reduction compared with the 2019/20 baseline. Whilst this is very encouraging it must be appreciated that recent years have been highly unusual in respect of energy use patterns. A more permanent arrangement for green electricity supply will be needed, as will significant reductions in use of fossil fuels for heating if future targets are to be met.

Figure 4.3 Carbon budget performance



- 4.4 The Carbon Budget sets a limit of 4,505 tonnes CO₂e for 2023/24 – a reduction of 1,156 tonnes CO₂e in comparison to 2022/23 performance. This reduction will only be achieved if fossil fuel use for heating is reduced significantly.

5. PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2023/24

- 5.1 The ECEAP is under review 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 now to ensure we have the correct policies, investment, and delivery mechanisms in place to secure carbon reductions across all our service areas, particularly in decarbonising our buildings.
- 5.2 Alongside this report, the carbon budget progress shows that the Council met the target reduction for CO₂e (carbon dioxide equivalent) emissions for 2022/23, with actual net CO₂e emissions of 5,508 tonnes, against a target of 5944 tonnes. The forthcoming years will become more difficult to achieve our carbon reduction targets as we transition from the ‘quick wins’ to the more

difficult decarbonisation of our buildings and fleet. 79% of the Council's reported net emissions in 2022/23 derived from heating council buildings. Looking to 2023/24, the Council require a further 18% reduction in net emissions, this will require reducing our energy use and transitioning away from using fossil fuels for heating if we are to remain on target.

5.3 Key priority actions have been identified for action in 2023/24 to ensure the Council continues the trajectory to keep pace with the carbon budget to meet the net zero target by 2030 and support the Cool2 strategy objectives. They are:

- Continued green purchase and exploration of alternative purchasing strategies.
- Integrate of heat decarbonisation plans with Asset delivery plans;
- Progress Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) application to support Asset delivery plans with potential involvement of the Liverpool City Region;
- Develop and expand project pipeline of heat decarbonisation plans;
- Progress plans to improve energy efficiency of Leisure facilities;
- Complete development of Green Fleet strategy;
- Develop and adopt a sustainable procurement strategy;
- Complete and adopt an Electric Vehicle Strategy for the borough and explore options to expand the EV charging network within the borough;
- Increase staff and member engagement and continue working towards becoming a silver award carbon literate organisation;
- Raise the profile of the climate emergency with residents through the launch of the Climate action hub, community climate champions and community grants;
- Develop and implement an Air Quality strategy and action plan for the borough;

The actions within the ECEAP will also be reviewed and updated to ensure that the plan remains a live document and reflects the actions taken by the council in pursuit of its net zero target. In the interest of monitoring the progress made, further key performance indicators will be established to enable enhanced progress reporting.

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>