



ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Monday, 23 October 2023

REPORT TITLE:	CARBON LITERACY TRAINING UPDATE
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

REPORT SUMMARY

This report supports the Wirral Plan 2021-2026 sustainable environment priority by ensuring council officers are knowledgeable and aware of the impacts Climate Emergency has on a local and global scale. It then challenges officers to commit to change on a personal and professional level using knowledge and skills developed through their training.

This matter affects all wards within the borough. The matter is not a Key Decision.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee is recommended to note the Carbon Literacy training update.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 The report outlines the progress to date on Wirral Council's carbon literacy training and target of becoming a carbon literate organisation.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The Council could not provide carbon literacy training, however this option was not considered as it is outlined as a requirement in the Environment and Climate Emergency policy.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 On the 15th July 2019, Wirral Council declared an Environment and Climate Emergency at a meeting of full Council, and committed to action to address the ecological and climate crisis.
- 3.2 Since July 2020 the Council have been working with an external provider to deliver carbon literacy training to staff. Carbon literacy is 'an awareness of the carbon dioxide costs and impacts of everyday activities, and the ability to reduce emissions, on an individual, community and organisational basis.'
- 3.3 The training provides strong personal and professional development for council officers, as every individual who attends the course are required to submit a mandatory pledge. The pledge must be submitted for review within two weeks of attending and covers how they will take action to reduce carbon emissions, in their work and personal life. Once the pledge has been accepted by the Carbon Literacy Trust, the attendee will then receive their certificate stating they are now carbon literate. As well as supporting the development of staff, Carbon Literacy also provides an essential networking opportunity for current and new members of staff, particularly given the current increase in homeworking. The in-house training format is interactive and provides an opportunity to build team cohesion amongst our staff. For some, carbon literacy training may be their first time working with members of a different department within the council.
- 3.4 Recently carbon literacy training was mandated to senior & asset managers, report authors, procurement commissioners and regeneration & planning officers. This came after a report taken to Senior Leadership Team in July 2023, stated these roles held significant effect on Wirral Council's carbon emissions.
- 3.5 In 2022, Wirral Council was the first council in the Liverpool City Region to be awarded, Bronze Carbon Literate Organisation (CLO) status by the Carbon Literacy Trust, which required an organisations leader to be carbon literate. To truly embed carbon literacy into the culture of the council, the council have ambition to move beyond Bronze CLO towards Silver accreditation and train all appropriate staff to be carbon literate. To begin our progression, we are targeting all mandated staff to undertake the course and set a clear example of intent to achieve our target of being

net carbon zero by 2030. To achieve silver status the council will be required to train 533 staff. Currently 312 staff have attended the carbon literacy training, however only 170 have both attended and received their carbon literate status as approved by the Carbon Literacy Trust.

- 3.6 In addition to training council staff in becoming carbon literate it is a strong recommendation that elected members also undertake carbon literacy training to have the knowledge to adequately scrutinise the environmental and carbon impacts of council decision making. Some elected members have already undergone carbon literacy training and these are shown in Appendix 1.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 It is important to embed carbon literacy across all council services to ensure that we are making informed, environmental and carbon conscious decisions and recommendation to members, and procuring and providing sustainable services. This will help to fulfil the council commitment of becoming a net zero carbon organisation by 2030 and many cases, sustainable decision making can also lead to reduced financial costs.
- 4.2 The cost of delivering the course through a third party is £1169 for 15 employees. To train a total of 450 staff, running 2 courses per month would take a total of 15 months to deliver at a cost of £35,070 if delivered by a third party.
- 4.3 To reduce the cost of training staff it is proposed that a hybrid model of delivery is adopted. Two members of staff have undertaken training to enable them to deliver the course, and toolkits have been sought from the Carbon Literacy Project. The toolkits incur costs of approximately £1000/year plus staff time for delivery of 1 course per month and administration of the carbon literacy certificates totalling 2-3 days per month, plus an additional £10 for each carbon literacy pledge. The costs to deliver the courses will be covered by the Climate Emergency revenue budget.
- 4.4 To ensure full courses the Climate Emergency team are working with the Organisational Development team to ensure that departments will be charged for non-attendance, when reasonable circumstances or a week's notice is not provided. This will reimburse the Climate Emergency budget and incentivise officers to attend once committing to signing up for the course.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 When declaring an Environment & Climate Emergency in 2019, the council developed a Climate Emergency Policy aligning the goals of the action plan to corporate policy. The policy sets out commitments to the council's climate agenda around sustainable resource, biodiversity and transport. The final commitment of the policy recognises the council's position as a significant force for positive change in the local area, in addition to its ability to change its own ways of operating, with becoming an accredited carbon literate organisation as the first identified action.
- 5.2 The policy was approved by committee in March 2021, ensuring commitments are legally binding set out in the action plan. As Carbon Literacy is embedded in the Environment and Climate Emergency Action Plan and Policy, there is a legal

responsibility to becoming a carbon literate organisation as well as moral commitment.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 Currently all training is undertaken by an external provider, delivered online through Microsoft Teams. The course is delivered by trainers accredited through the Carbon Literacy Project, and all pledge submissions are sent for evaluation and approval by the Carbon Literacy Trust.
- 6.2 The Climate Emergency team has signed up Wirral Council for Carbon Literacy Action Day (CLAD), which will require the council to deliver in person Carbon Literacy training on the 4th December. This will be done by members of the Climate Emergency and Organisational Development team, with both undertaking and passing Local Government Association (LGA) Carbon Literacy 'Train the Trainer'. This now allows both officers to deliver in person or online training for carbon literacy. Following on from this launch, during 2024 the Council will adopt a hybrid approach to training council officers, with delivery inhouse by the Climate Emergency & Organisational Development team for one session per month and external training being delivered by an external provider.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 The main risk to the council achieving its corporate objective of becoming a carbon literate organisation is the completion of pledges by council officers. As previously stated, we have had 312 undertake carbon literacy training with only 170 receiving their certificate and become carbon literate. This means 142 council officers and members have undergone the training and failed to submit their pledge to the standards set by the Carbon Literacy Project or have failed to submit anything at all. This has become a strain on time and financial resources, as well as delaying the council of reaching its silver accreditation goals.
- 7.2 To resolve the issue a member of the Climate Emergency team has been tasked with driving up the number of staff submitting with pledge by a number of means, including pledge workshops, newsletters and email reminders.
- 7.3 There is also reputational risk to the council as they become under more scrutiny to achieve their net zero targets. A high profile project, the Climate Scorecards, has this year included questions on if a portfolio holder had climate change explicitly in their remit and if all councillors had received carbon literacy or equivalent training.
- 7.4 Climate Response Failure to deliver organisation target (Net Zero 2030) and boroughwide 2041 leads to increased financial costs, pressure on resources, impact on public health, reputation damage, lack of resilience) and that risks associated with this area of work are identified, managed/monitored via the team/Group/Board.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 No external consultation has been carried out in relation to carbon literacy training within the council.

- 8.2 Recently we have encouraged engagement with our carbon literacy training to external partner organisations who are supporting us on our journey to net zero by 2030. Key partners such as the Wirral Chamber of Commerce and Biffa Waste Collection Service have had senior members attended the council carbon literacy training and have reported the beneficial insights to making key changes to aspects of their day-to-day operations and working relations with the council.
- 8.3 The climate emergency team will continue to encourage staff engagement through staff newsletters, informal training and staff volunteering and engagement opportunities.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 An equality impact assessment was undertaken during the development of the Environment and Climate Emergency Action Plan on 31st July 2020 and by received & approved by the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee on the 22nd October 2020. The assessment highlighted the importance for Climate Emergency to be addressed, due to the greater impact in poorer communities and minority backgrounds it would have compared to other groups in society.
- 9.2 Carbon Literacy training helps address the findings of this assessment by informing officers of the importance of tackling the everyday challenges climate change presents to those in disadvantages backgrounds and of minority ethnicities. By applying the training to their everyday operations, officers can directly and indirectly have a positive impact on those most affected by climate change.
- 9.3 Carbon Literacy training is highlighted as one of the actions required to mitigate the potential negative impacts of climate change by, *'Staff investments via carbon literacy training across the council will also raise awareness of climate and related justice issues and how to tackle them.'*

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The council is committed to becoming a carbon literate organisation through key documents such as the Environment & Climate Emergency Policy and Action Plan. This commitment will bring a cultural change and awareness to the impact the council's services have towards our decarbonisation and help each individual council officer who attends the course to commit to supporting decarbonisation on a professional and personal level.
- 10.2 Some of the strong pledge commitments on a professional level have been around identifying more environment & climate conscious suppliers when tendering for contracts, ensuring the scope 3 emissions are monitored and offset through a strongly critiqued tender process. Another example of training supporting reduction of carbon emissions is the personal commitments in pledges by officers which set an example for the wider Wirral and Liverpool City region communities to follow. For example, officers have committed to reducing travel in their cars when performing

everyday errands or using active travel for the school commute. These pledges help to reduce carbon emissions from daily activities.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Becoming a carbon literate organisation and embedding it into the overall culture and every day running of the council, will have a major impact on the local Wirral community. Carbon literacy training ensures the response to the climate emergency is a corporate wide responsibility. Training will help officers become more climate conscious in their decision making, influencing their service area and outputs. We know that some of the most deprived communities are the most impacted by climate change. Ensuring that officers are making better carbon conscious decisions can positively benefit our community and ensure a just and fair transition to net zero, for example choosing local suppliers can both reduce transport emissions and support local communities and businesses.

REPORT AUTHOR: **Name:** Sean Birkett
 Climate Emergency Officer
 email: seanbirkett@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Appendix1- Wirral Council Carbon Literacy Training- Elected Members List- Sept 2023

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This report is being considered by the Environment, Climate Emergency & Transport Committee in accordance with section (a) of its Terms of Reference, “in co-ordinating the response to cross-cutting sustainability issues such as reducing carbon emissions, air quality issues, climate change response.”

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Corporate Risk Register- Climate Response Failure

Environment and Climate Emergency Declaration

Environment and Climate Emergency Policy

Environment and Climate Emergency Policy Statement

Environment and Climate Emergency Action Plan

Carbon Literacy Senior Leadership Team Report

Equality Impact Assessment- The Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP)

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Council Extraordinary Meeting, Wallasey Town Hall, Wirral Council declares an Environment and Climate Emergency	05/07/2019
Climate Emergency Action Plan, Item 5, Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee	22/10/2020
Environment and Climate Emergency Policy, Item 39, Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee	16/03/2021
Environment and Climate Emergency Action Plan Progress report 22/23, Item 7, Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee	19/06/2023