



## WIRRAL CLIMATE CHANGE GROUP

Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 21st December at 10:30am at Birkenhead Park Visitor Centre, Park Drive, Birkenhead Park.

- Welcome** - Participants were welcomed. [REDACTED], Wirral Council's strategic manager for school estates, chaired the meeting deputising for Jeanette Royle. The meeting was held at Birkenhead Park to coincide with a Christmas celebration event linked with the eco schools programme. [REDACTED] gave an overview of recent eco schools activities including the 'lights out' and 'hedge fund' projects. [REDACTED] is now based in Wirral Environment Network office. 'Lights out' is an environmental arts project through which 15 Schools had worked with 5 artists to create artworks housed in old street light fittings. These highlighted species under pressure from climate change and habitat loss. The artworks had been exhibited at an event held at WEN. 'Hedge fund' is a school enterprise project developed with social enterprise HYPE. School children had up-cycled items that were on sale at the Christmas market in Birkenhead Park. The project would raise funds to promote hedge planting. Hedges were particularly useful for biodiversity. The project's focus on hedges enabled various links across the curriculum – including history and geography. The schools involved would be visiting the park in the afternoon to take part in various festive activities – including arts and crafts, singing and a lantern parade. Members of the group were invited to join the celebration that would follow the meeting.

**Present:** [REDACTED] Policy, Wirral Council; [REDACTED] Public Health, Wirral Council; [REDACTED] Waste, Wirral Council; [REDACTED] Sustainable Transport, Wirral Council; [REDACTED] Housing, Wirral Council; [REDACTED] Sustainability, Wirral Council; [REDACTED] Peel Holdings; [REDACTED] Energy Projects Plus; [REDACTED] Eco Schools, Wirral Council; [REDACTED] School Estates, Wirral Council

- Apologies for absence:** [REDACTED] Magenta Living; [REDACTED] Public Health; [REDACTED] Merseyside Police; [REDACTED] Wirral Environment Network; Jeanette Royle, Asset Management, Wirral Council

It was noted [REDACTED] is no longer with Community Action Wirral

- Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda** - The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted. The following matters arising were reported:  
*Item 3:* The JSNA update had been completed and was now online at: <http://info.wirral.nhs.uk/ourjsna/climate&health.html>  
*Items 4 and 5:* Both the rolling action plan and annual progress report had been completed and then reported to council cabinet. The Cool Steps annual progress reports are now available via the climate strategy web page: <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/climatestrategy>

#### 4 Wirral Community Renewables UCEF update

Before giving an update on Wirral Community Renewables [REDACTED] praised the 'Lights Out' project highlighted by [REDACTED]. EPPlus occupied the same building as WEN where the exhibition had been held.

[REDACTED] detailed the background to the development of Wirral Community Renewables. Various meetings had followed the initial public event on community renewable energy. These conversations had ultimately led to the Urban Community Energy Fund bid and grant offer. The Wirral Community Renewable group was now formally constituted as a Community Benefit Society but still needed to get a bank account to be able to take advantage of the grant offer. Setting up a bank account had proved more difficult than expected. [REDACTED] anticipated the group should get the funding through in the new year. It had been offered around £16K to pay for a consultant to look at potential sites for PV on buildings and underused or disused sites, e.g. potential housing sites that are currently vacant or railway sidings – including the possibility of moveable installations. Part of the agreement is to identify 2-3 viable sites that are investable. Positive discussions had already been held with Merseyside police. [REDACTED] indicated his interest in the upcoming agenda item on Wirral Waters in view of the potential to find viable sites in the Wirral Waters area.

#### 5 Wirral Waters - sustainability opportunities [REDACTED] Director of Development for Wirral Waters, Peel Holdings gave a presentation on Wirral Waters.

Peel is a private company owned by one person. Peel has multiple interests including ports, airports and energy development. Through these interests Peel has amassed much experience. Most of Peel's assets are in the north.

Peel has had a greater focus in the Merseyside area over the last 15 years. It had acquired Liverpool Airport and Mersey Docks and Harbours. Its subsequent investments in new docks facilities including some of the biggest cranes in the world should help Merseyside compete with Southampton and Felixstowe. Wirral Waters is being pitched as the western gateway to the 'northern powerhouse'.

Wirral Waters is a priority redevelopment project for Peel. After many years researching and developing proposals, planning permission was granted in 2012. Ideas for Wirral Waters are informed by research into redevelopment projects in other parts of the world. There are many examples of old dock redevelopments after port facilities have moved to deeper water locations. [REDACTED] gave the example of Hammarby in Stockholm which was an exemplar sustainable city extension.

Progress at Wirral Waters was not always obvious, for example, 70 acres of land had already been remediated ahead of development. Wirral Waters is a large and long-term redevelopment programme. [REDACTED] contrasted the situation in Salford Quays 30 years ago with the present regenerated area that included Media City.

[REDACTED] gave an overview of the area in which Wirral Waters was situated. The East Float area was at the heart of Wirral Waters with mixed development anticipated. A marine and energy park was anticipated to the north. Peel owned the core development sites but master planning extended to surrounding areas. It was important to improve the wider area and work with existing communities too. 1500 trees have already been planted in collaboration with Mersey Forest and linked with

6 **Workplace energy efficiency peer-sharing session** [REDACTED] highlighted that the climate strategy includes objectives to assemble good housekeeping promotional resources to support energy awareness and to encourage peer review of the energy efficiency efforts of organisations. To take these matters forward [REDACTED], suggested calling together interested parties for some 'sharing sessions' on an ad hoc basis focussed on topics of interest. The suggestion was not to create an additional group but rather to promote a series of 'topic' focussed sessions to which interested parties could be invited. The aim would be to share approaches adopted – what has worked, what hasn't and so on and so encourage learning between different organisations. [REDACTED] suggested an initial session on encouraging energy efficiency good housekeeping in the work place. [REDACTED] asked for feedback on the suggestion and for group members to identify other topics potential of interest **[All to note and feedback with topics of interest]**. There followed some discussion and questions, notably whether the proposal was solely related to energy efficiency or could extend to other topics such as sustainable transport. [REDACTED] indicated the proposal was advanced to help progress the objectives relating to energy, but if there was demand for sessions on other climate strategy topics such sessions could be organised.

7 **Developing the Wirral Climate Change Group**  
[REDACTED] highlighted that the climate change strategy includes an objective to 'create an independent Cool Wirral Partnership from the Wirral Climate Change Group'. The strategy envisages this partnership will be the lead body to champion implementation, win investment, co-ordinate action and monitor progress on the climate change strategy.

[REDACTED] highlighted how the present climate change group had evolved from the earlier Nottingham Declaration Group. Its membership had been extended to include various partner organisations and to include councillor representation. The Nottingham group was renamed the Wirral Climate Change Group around seven years ago. Its terms of reference date from this time when its activities were linked with the then local strategic partnership. As circumstances had changed the group had evolved further. It had initiated the development of the present climate change strategy for Wirral. It now acts as a forum for sharing information between partners and to co-ordinate activities in support of the strategy as well as monitor progress against the various strategy themes. Throughout the group's life it has been facilitated and supported by Wirral Council officers. To date it has been chaired by a senior council officer.

As the climate strategy envisages further evolution of the group into a more independent body [REDACTED] invited those present to contemplate three potential options

*Option 1:* To rename and update its terms of reference to reflect present circumstances and the group's role with respect to the climate change strategy.

*Option 2:* To rename and update terms of reference including the provision for an independent chair selected from the group. The opportunity to select a non-council officer chair could enable the group to develop a more independent voice.

*Option 3:* Rename and adopt a separate legal form – This option would involve developing the group's terms of reference and a constitution to give it a separate legal form. By doing so the group would become an independent entity with the associated

local communities, community events and the development of college floristry and forestry courses. There is a section 106 tariff arrangement in place to support green infrastructure and sustainable transport.

The Wirral Waters redevelopment is primarily about economic regeneration and associated jobs. The area is now an enterprise zone. Regeneration hinged on many factors amongst them: creating a positive identity; creating new markets and improving the natural environment. Peel has the aspiration to make Wirral Waters the most sustainable redevelopment project in the UK. The proposition drew on Wirral's history as a place of firsts.

In terms of built development, the focus would likely be around Tower Road in the next few years. The new award winning college building set the standard. 300 college students had helped build their own college gaining skills to be the workforce of the future. Several further developments were in the pipeline including a university health faculty, maritime knowledge hub and a 'pop-up' amenity centre. There were plans for modular housing – a joint venture with Urban Splash – and dementia care facility. [REDACTED] pointed to high standards in public realm works including decent facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.

Sustainable transport - including new public transport facilities - is a key to unlocking the development opportunity. There are proposals to create a Wirral 'street car' service that could ultimately link Woodside and Seacombe Ferry terminals – extending the existing short tram line from Woodside. Peel is working with Merseytravel and Wirral Council to try to advance this proposal. A second hand Blackpool tram has already been purchased. There is the potential to extend the network along the line of the old dock railway.

There followed some questions and discussion with various issues raised:

*Public investment* - initial phases of development relied on some public sector investment. However the success of Wirral Waters should yield new income through business rates and 'new homes bonus' money.

*Developing CHP and heat networks in a long term redevelopment project and opportunities to extend the network to heat residential properties in neighbouring areas.* The dock system included a network of chambers that could be used to locate heat network infrastructure making it potentially easier to implement.

*Links with climate strategy* - The climate strategy already includes a specific objective to promote investment in 'Wirral Waters' as an exemplar sustainable energy opportunity. Key opportunities included solar PV, district heating, biodiversity/green infrastructure, sustainable transport, exemplar eco buildings and local food cultivation  
*Solar opportunities* - Peel had already commissioned Arup to explore potential solar PV including moveable and floating solar arrays. There could be potential opportunities for Wirral Community Renewables.

*Links with the Wirral Waters development process* – There appeared to be opportunities for the group to link with the Wirral Waters 'nature connected' board.

[REDACTED] indicated [REDACTED] - and/or Peel's sustainability officer - would be willing to be involved in the work of the climate change group. It was agreed that [REDACTED] be added to the group's circulation list

freedoms and legal constraints that would entail. These would vary depending on the form chosen. For example the body might qualify to bid directly for funds, but would likely need to produce annual accounts and returns as well.

Due to the limited amount of time available, it was agreed to convene a task and finish group to consider the options available in more detail and report back on the pros and cons of each. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] agreed to assist [REDACTED] with this task

8 **Partner updates/information exchange**

None

9 **Any other business**

None