

Climate Local

A new Strategy for Climate Change in Warrington
June 2013

Foreword from Councillor Linda Dirir

Warrington Borough Council has been actively working on the climate change agenda for the last five years. During this time we have progressed well, making leaps and bounds in changing attitudes within the authority and in the activity that we undertake to tackle carbon emissions.

In 2007 we signed the Nottingham Declaration and launched our climate change strategy for Warrington. It is time to refresh our commitment and identify a new and more challenging path forwards. To do this as an authority we have signed up to Climate Local, an agenda that aims to reinvigorate local authorities on the climate change agenda.



We want to inspire, drive and support the community of Warrington in their actions to address climate change. Our climate local strategy outlines our intentions for our own estate, the emissions of our borough and how we will look to adapt to climate change. Above all we want to communicate and share with our community what we are doing, working in partnership to achieve real change.

The case for working on this agenda is stronger than ever. At Warrington Borough Council we are committed to continuing to drive forward this programme from our organisation; we hope that you will join us on this journey.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Linda S. Dirir". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cllr. Linda Dirir
Executive Member for Transport, Engineering and Operations



Climate Local Warrington:

Our commitment to taking action in a changing climate

We recognise that our council has an important role to help our residents and businesses to capture the opportunities and benefits of action on climate change. These include saving money on energy bills, generating income from renewable energy, attracting new jobs and investment in 'green' industries, supporting new sources of energy, managing local flood-risk and water scarcity and protecting our natural environment.

We will progressively address the risks and pursue the opportunities presented by a changing climate, in line with local priorities, through our role as:

- Community leader – helping local people and businesses to be smarter about their energy use and to prepare for climate impacts;
- Service provider – delivering services that are resource efficient, less carbon intensive, resilient and that protect those who are most vulnerable to climate impacts;
- Estate manager – ensuring that our own buildings and operations are resource efficient, use clean energy, and are well prepared for the impacts of a changing climate.

In signing this commitment, **we will:**

- **Set locally-owned and determined commitments** and actions to reduce carbon emissions and to manage climate impacts. These will be specific, measurable and challenging;
- **Publish our commitments, actions and progress**, enabling local communities to hold us to account;
- **Share the learning from our experiences and achievements** with other councils; and
- **Regularly refresh our commitments and actions** to ensure they are current and continue to reflect local priorities.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. O'Neil'.

Cllr Terry O'Neil Leader of Warrington Borough Council

17th June 2013

Warrington Borough Council

Context and Background

Warrington Borough Council's Climate Local Strategy refreshes our pledge to take action on climate change and to lead Warrington toward a sustainable, low carbon future.

In 2007 the Council signed the Nottingham Declaration, which demonstrated our commitment to this important issue. In the same year we published our Climate Change Strategy, which set out the case for action. The strategy also listed the activities that we intended to take to reduce our impacts on the global climate and to prepare for changes in our local weather. We have made great progress in achieving the targets we set out in the strategy; however the need for action has not ended. This document replaces our 2007 Climate Change Strategy, committing Warrington Borough Council to a continuing focus on climate change, for the benefit of those living and working in Warrington both now and in the future.

The case for continued action

We know that the earth's climatic systems are changing, due to a build-up of greenhouse gases (such as carbon dioxide) in the atmosphere from the burning of fossil fuels. Evidence from ice cores and other historic records show that the amount of carbon dioxide that is now in the atmosphere has not happened in the past 650,000 years. As the atmosphere and the oceans warm, they are causing changes to our weather patterns which can be unpredictable and can vary widely across the globe. We are already starting to see unusual weather in the UK, with prolonged dry periods and extended periods of persistent rainfall.

Climate scientists have recommended that temperature increases should be limited to no more than 2°C, to avoid causing irreversible damage to the planet and its ability to provide our essential resources including food. To limit warming to this level, global emissions need to peak by 2015 and decline after that.

The UK Government is leading the way in setting targets to reduce our carbon emissions. The Climate Change Act¹ commits the UK to an 80% emissions reduction by 2050 compared to 1990 levels, and various policies across all areas of government are being introduced to achieve this commitment.

There are also economic benefits for action. The Stern Report² in 2006 reported that the benefits of strong action on climate change outweigh the costs; taking action early was estimated at 1% of GDP, whereas taking action once the climate has already been affected was estimated at 10% of GDP.

High among our priorities for action are the implications of climate change for vulnerable people. Inevitably, it is the most vulnerable people in our communities that will tend to suffer most from rising energy and food costs, extreme weather such as flooding and drought and the potential health impacts from changes in climate.

Responding to climate change has become one of the world's foremost policy challenges

International Monetary Fund, April 2013

¹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/27/contents>

² http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/independent_reviews/stern_review_economics_climate_change/stern_review_report.cfm

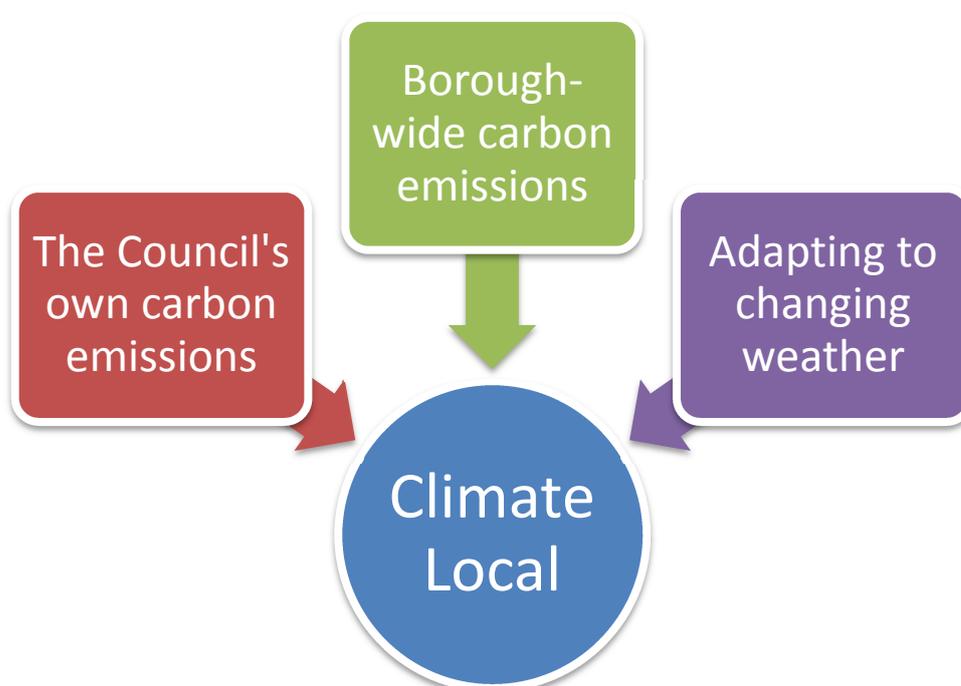
Our priorities for action

To try to reduce the potential effects of climate change we need to focus on ensuring we reduce our carbon emissions and protect our natural environment. These actions will help to mitigate the effects of climate change.

Some changes are now inevitable and we want to be in the best possible position in Warrington to be prepared to face these changes and adapt to climate change.

We have divided our priorities for action under Climate Local into three main areas:

- Reducing the Council's own carbon emissions
- Helping to reduce carbon emissions across the borough as a whole
- Adapting Warrington to cope with changing weather



In each of these areas there are a range of actions we can take; in all cases we want to work in partnership with our community to achieve success. Ultimately there are only benefits in taking action – saving money, protecting our neighbourhoods and helping our businesses to prosper.

Signing up to Climate Local declares our commitment to set appropriate targets and actions under each of these priority areas within six months, where we have not already done so. Many of our strategies and policies already include strong actions and commitments to reduce the impact of climate change, such as our Local Plan Core Strategy and our Local Transport Plan. We are committed to setting and publishing our targets, and also to disseminating our progress to help other organisations learn from our experiences and follow our lead.

Partners in Warrington are committed to making wellbeing, health equality, social justice and sustainable development key values for our decision-making.

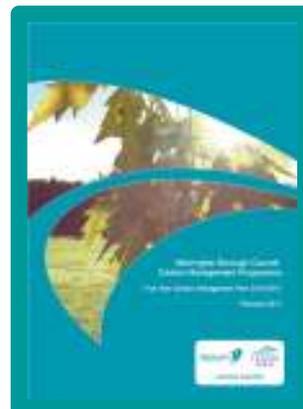
Warrington Strategy for Wellbeing 2012-2015, August 2012

Warrington Borough Council's own emissions

In 2010 Warrington joined the Carbon Trust's local authority carbon management programme. This programme enabled us to work with a group of other public sector organisations that have similar opportunities and challenges, to develop a plan to reduce our own carbon emissions. The carbon management plan that we developed through this programme was published in March 2011. It sets an ambitious carbon reduction target of 40% of 2009/10 emissions by April 2015.

Since the carbon management plan was published, the incentives to save energy and carbon have increased further. Energy prices have continued to rise, and the government introduced a new fiscal policy known as CRC (carbon reduction commitment) which requires us to report our carbon footprint each year and purchase allowances for each tonne of carbon we emit.

Annually we also have to compile a greenhouse gas report for DECC (the Department of Energy and Climate Change), outlining the progress that we have made to reduce our carbon footprint. We are committed to transparency in our reporting and we publish the report on our website by the end of July each year to ensure that it is publicly available. The latest report can be found at http://www.warrington.gov.uk/downloads/file/2424/greenhouse_gas_report_2011_2012 or a copy can be obtained by contacting the Council's Climate Change team.



To achieve our 40% savings target we are looking to:

- Find ways to reduce carbon in our buildings and vehicles
- Embed the consideration of carbon into all our processes and policies
- Invest to save carbon and save money
- Raise awareness amongst staff
- Form a partnership with schools to address their energy use

Partnerships within the council and with others are essential to achieve our goal. In particular, schools in Warrington account for about 40% of our carbon footprint and their co-operation is essential in reducing these emissions.

In 2012 we published a specific Low Carbon Schools Programme Plan, which sets out how we will work with schools to manage their energy use and help them reduce their emissions. As part of this programme we work with twelve schools each year on an intensive programme of energy saving investigations and behaviour change.

As part of our Climate Local Commitment we will:

- Continue to strive to reduce our own carbon footprint, reporting our progress publicly to encourage others to follow our lead
- Continue to work with partners including our schools, our suppliers and other authorities, to assist in progress, to learn lessons and share successful ideas
- Refresh our carbon management plan in 2015, when the current plan comes to an end

Borough-wide emissions

We are committed to helping to reduce carbon emissions across the borough, from all different areas. Our main sources of carbon emissions are:



The Council cannot control many of these sources, but we can encourage people and organisations to take action themselves, and we can help to facilitate sharing of skills, advice and success stories in Warrington. We can also help to track carbon emissions using data produced by the Government which shows our progress over time. Due to the complexity of the data that the government collects, it takes two years for the carbon emissions in any year to be published. However the data shows where major sources of carbon emissions lie, and it can help us to set priorities.

Warrington is already making great efforts to reduce carbon emissions across the board. Since 2005 the borough's carbon emissions have fallen by more than 16% which is an excellent achievement. However our carbon emissions are still higher than we would like, particularly in the area of industrial and commercial emissions. Warrington's businesses are vibrant and performing well, but they could perform still better by using resources more efficiently and saving money on energy.

More than any other area, we will need to work in partnership with others if we are to be successful in reducing emissions across Warrington. In particular, we will need the co-operation of businesses operating within the borough, who affect not only energy use, but also much of the road transport emissions from movement of people and goods.

To encourage other organisations and community groups to share our commitment to move towards a low carbon and low energy future, we will create a **Warrington Declaration**, and will invite signatories from across the borough to join us in making this pledge. We want to capture and record the activities that we are taking across all areas in our borough that reduce energy and carbon.

Later this year we will publish a framework for action on borough-wide carbon emissions that will set out details of how we will act to help reduce Warrington Borough's footprint.

As part of our Climate Local Commitment we will:

- Continue to take action that will reduce borough-wide emissions
- Create a Warrington Declaration to join with others in Warrington to commit to action on climate change
- Consult on and publish a framework for action that will set out the actions that we will take to help reduce emissions and energy use across the borough
- Publish Warrington's progress annually in an accessible manner

Adapting Warrington for changing weather

During 2012 we saw some examples of how changeable our weather could be in the future. We started the year with very dry weather with reservoirs in the area much lower than normal, then in the Autumn we experienced heavy persistent rain.

Our commitment to adapting to climate change is based on a need to make sure we help to protect our residents and businesses from the impacts of these events so that they are able to continue as normal.

There is clear scientific evidence that climate is changing. If global carbon emissions follow a high future scenario, likely projected changes by the 2050s relative to the recent past are³:

- Winter precipitation increases of around 13%
- 3°C warmer
- 18% drier in summer
- More extreme weather events e.g. high winds, flooding



In September 2012 we experienced a month's worth of rain in just three days.

For us as an authority these impacts will make it harder to deliver our services in some situations, such as collecting bins in times of flooding or checking on vulnerable residents in higher temperatures. For our businesses it may mean disruptions in their supply chain or a change in demand for services. For our residents it could mean being less comfortable at home and difficulties in travelling to work.

We have started to look at our services and how resilient they are to weather incidents. We want to make sure we are able to react to these events and make sure that our most vulnerable people are also able to react and recover without massive disruption to their lives. It is also key for us to prepare now and make changes to reduce the effects that the events will have. It has been shown that for every £1 spent on being prepared now £4 is saved in the future.

We will develop a climate change adaptation framework that will set out our path for reducing the risks of weather events and improving resilience for ourselves and for those in our borough.

As part of our Climate Local Commitment we will:

- Support Warrington residents and businesses to become more resilient to extreme weather events and their effects
- Consult on and publish an Adaptation Framework that will set out the actions that we will take to help reduce risks and improve resilience across the Borough
- Track progress and publish regular updates to help others to manage their own risks

³ <http://ukclimateprojections.defra.gov.uk/>

WARRINGTON Borough Council



Warrington Borough Council

New Town House, Buttermarket Street
Warrington
WA1 2NH

Tel: 01925 443322
www.warrington.gov.uk