



**WARRINGTON**  
CLIMATE EMERGENCY COMMISSION

# Warrington Climate Emergency Commission

Teams meeting – Monday 8<sup>th</sup> January, 14:00 – 16:00

## Organisations present:

- University of Chester
- Warrington Community Energy
- Business Declares
- Natural England
- Culture Warrington
- Warrington Chamber of Commerce
- Warrington Borough Council
- Cheshire Wildlife Trust
- NHS Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board

## Items discussed on the agenda:

- 1. Notes of previous meeting and action points not covered elsewhere on the agenda**
  - Notes were approved from November's meeting.
  - We are awaiting the LEP commissioned housing retrofit study, which is due imminently, before developing proposals for a potential local retrofit advisory board.
- 2. Local Nature Recovery Strategy presentation – *Presentation from LNRS lead for Cheshire***
  - The local nature recovery strategy (LNRS) was presented to the group.
  - The LNRS is a key mechanism for mapping and planning local delivery of the Nature Recovery Network and biodiversity net gain (BNG). The strategy will be locally led, evidence-based, and co-produced.
  - Existing strategies already in place across authority areas of the region will be considered and incorporated into LNRS development.
  - The LNRS will be a strategic document that will be linked with the development of BNG and other agri-environmental schemes, help to feed into different local plans and other strategic documents created within the county and will be developed to help focus the efforts of local authorities, organisations and individuals by prioritising areas for nature recovery, nature based solutions to climate change and improving the wellbeing of people and their access to nature.
  - Engagement with the public will launch on the 22<sup>nd</sup> January. Questionnaires and workshops will take place across the borough. They will inform priorities and measures taken when developing the LNRS, including identify where BNG investment should be targeted across Cheshire.
  - From January 2024, all major development will need to deliver a measurable uplift in biodiversity of at least 10% compared to the baseline beforehand.
  - Commissioners were encouraged to get involved in the engagement activities on the Cheshire West and Chester website.

### **3. New standard contract terms and conditions for Warrington Borough Council**

The Service Manager Procurement, Warrington Borough Council gave an update.

- The council are in the process of developing a new procurement strategy with a focus on building sustainability into the selection criteria.
- Currently the procurement process looks to the most economically advantageous tender. From October 2024, the contract terms and conditions will change to look at wider considerations such as the sustainability credentials of bidders as part of the assessment criteria.
- The sustainability clause must be applicable to all goods, services and works contracts.
- Implementing these updated contract terms and conditions will mean that tenders will have to provide a sustainability plan and comply with various KPI's which will be used to monitor them during the contract.
- Commissioners expressed concern for the lack of consideration for nature and biodiversity within the draft. The commission's strategy was referenced as this includes a section on the recovery of nature.
- Concern was also expressed for the inclusion of emissions offsetting, as this does not directly reduce the impact of contractors and may be counterproductive.
- It was suggested that contacts are to be exchanged between WBC procurement team and NHS central and Chester Zoo's procurement teams as lots of work has taken place in this area within these organisations.
- It was agreed an update on the procurement strategy would be provided to allow further input.

### **4. Communications update**

- The Warrington CEC newsletter gained 19 new subscribers from publicity and engagement associated with the forum events.
- A "lead generation" advert for Facebook, would now follow to encourage further signups. The advert was in its final draft
- The communications team is supporting work on the Warrington Carbon Culture project.

### **5. Discussion of Warrington Climate Emergency Forum 2023**

- The first Climate Emergency Forum events programme had been reasonably successful with a positive response from those who took part.
- It had been challenging to get the message out via social media, where paid advertisement was sporadic due to issues with content being blocked from publishing.
- This raised the discussion of altering language used to communicate climate related content.
- A summary of events including the Eventbrite website traffic and the number of attendees of each event was presented to the group.
- The Climate Express event was the most well attended.
- The messages presented at each event seemed to be well received amongst attendees and encouraged wider discussions and networking.

- Furthermore, the events programme had a wider impact raising the profile of the commission and the strategy with growth across the commission's Facebook, X, and LinkedIn accounts noted.
- The programme was an important first step but needed to be followed up with further engagement. A summary of the programme would be presented in the next bulletin to share some of the information presented more widely.

## **6. Climate Commission Forward Plan for 2024**

- A new draft forward plan was presented to cover anticipated commission activities over 2024.
- The forward plan is a live document to help organise the forum's intended activities. Most of the actions in the 2023 plan had been progressed, though not always to the original timetable envisaged.
- Several core items in the 2024 timetable, e.g., commission meeting programme, e-bulletin, annual report production and climate emergency forum were repeated from the previous year.
- Some new planned activities focused on building engagement and developing some specific engagement networks as anticipated in the strategy.
- To develop business engagement, it may be possible to use information gathered from an environment business support programme commissioned by the council and the carbon culture project. Developing a business network offers a route to ongoing support.
- Rather than just one engagement programme – the annual climate emergency forum – the aim was to include an additional event or events earlier in the year.
- The importance of engaging younger people was discussed. It has been two years since the last schools conference, so it would be good to organise one this year. However, this requires substantial funding and support. The importance of engaging primary through to secondary children was flagged up.
- The UoC highlighted some academic research interest in youth engagement on sustainability.
- The possibility of creating an engagement network for young people was discussed.
- The next climate forum programme could pick up other subjects which were not part of the last forum programme.
- There was an opportunity to encourage engagement in the nature recovery work outlined earlier on the agenda. The link between wider youth engagement and work on the LNRS was raised.
- The National Lottery Community Action Fund for Climate and Energy was discussed. This funding aims to inspire and support communities across the UK to address the energy and climate crisis. It was agreed an additional meeting be organised, in-person, to get organisations together interested in creating a bid. Time was short as the programme was due to close to bids in "early 2024".

## **7. Council / commission partners updates**

### **Warrington Community Energy**

- Warrington Community Energy continues to work with Warrington Disability Partnership to give free energy advice.
- Warrington Community energy has put forward an expression of interest for Northwest Net Zero Hub community energy fund.
- The fund is designed to support community groups to consider options, design schemes and overcome barriers to investment.

### **Warrington Borough Council**

#### **Climate Emergency Action Plan**

- The first quarter of updates for the council's climate emergency action plan have been gathered with good signs of initial progress.
- The second cycle of updates is ongoing.

#### **Solar Together**

- The first Solar Together programme across Cheshire and Warrington had progressed well.
- Over 1000 households have accepted their quote to proceed with installation of the arrays. 175 of these households are in Warrington.
- Installations are underway, to be completed by the summer.
- The potential for a further round is under consideration. Experience from other places has shown there may be a greater up take on the second round as people see the benefits from the first.

#### **Carbon Culture**

- The climate forum had been used to launch parish and business engagement.

## **8. Supplementary Planning Document consultation response**

- The supplementary planning document presented at the previous commission meeting has been published on the council's website.
- This document is out for consultation, closing for feedback on the 7<sup>th</sup> February.
- Commissioners were encouraged to put a response together as either an individual or organisation on those documents.
- The chair would prepare a response on behalf of the commission, all with comments to make to pass on for consideration.

## **9. Any other business**

- No other business.

**Next meeting:** Our next meeting is Monday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2-4pm

