



WARRINGTON
CLIMATE EMERGENCY COMMISSION

Warrington Climate Emergency Commission

Teams meeting – Monday 8th July, 14:00 – 16:00

Representatives present:

- Independent Chair (Dr. David Ellis)
- Warrington Borough Council
- University of Chester
- Business Declares
- Warrington Community Energy
- Cheshire Wildlife Trust
- Education/Schools Representative

Items discussed on the agenda:

1. **Notes of previous meeting and action points not covered elsewhere on the agenda**
 - Notes were approved from the previous meeting.
 - The action log was updated.
2. **Local Transport Funding Commitment – Presentation from WBC’s Transport Manager**
 - A presentation was given on recent transport initiatives and future plans.
 - The Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) has been updated and will soon be published.
 - Recent efforts have been focused on the ‘Better by Bus’ campaign, which includes enhanced services, capped fares for adults and children, and concessionary travel all day.
 - It has recently been extended to include free travel for care leavers. Further enhancements are due from September 2024 and new routes to major employment sites will begin early 2025.
 - There have been several recent capital projects to implement new infrastructure and priority routes for bus and active travel. New schemes are in development for Winwick Road, which, if approved, will commence in Spring 2025 and conclude late 2025/early 2026.
 - The first few electric buses have arrived, funded via a £21m ZEBRA grant. The remaining buses will arrive over coming months. Installation of the charging infrastructure is almost complete at the new depot site.
 - 220 bus shelters across the borough have been replaced. Many utilise solar panels and wind turbines to power digital screens, and some have integrated green roofs.
 - Several upgrades have been completed on active travel routes, such as the Trans Pennine Trail. Accessibility improvements have also been completed at various sites, including lowering crossings and introducing tactile paving.
 - A consultation opens this week for new segregated cycle infrastructure on Bewsey Road, to supplement the cycle-priority CYCLOPS junction which has already been completed.
 - A new Warrington Cycle Hub opened in June near Central Station, operated by Cheshire Cycles and funded via the Town Deal. It contains cycle facilities, information, bike hire, bikes for sale, changing areas and showers.
 - New secure cycle shelters are due to be installed near the Bus Interchange by end of summer.

- Future works will utilise grants from the Active Travel Fund, Levelling Up Warrington North, DfT funds and council allocated funds.
- £121.5m has been allocated to Warrington for 7 years from April 2025, via the Local Transport Fund. The profile of these funds remains uncertain under the new Government.
- Questions were raised over the materials utilised for the resurfacing of the TPT project.
- Improvements were suggested for the Warrington buses app.
- Commissioners suggested the Cycle Hub could partner with the Walton Lea Partnership who sell refurbished bicycles. It was also noted that Birchwood Repair Café accept bicycle donations, which are refurbished and rehomed to people in need.
- The uptake of the Co-Wheels Electric Car Club was discussed. It is hoped that one vehicle will be relocated to Central Station to promote greater uptake from nearby apartment buildings. This will be complemented with improved messaging and communications.

3. Communications update

a. Newsletter

- The lead generation advert which ran on the Commission's Facebook in May resulted in almost 100 additional subscribers. The total newsletter audience is now around 380 (moving towards the commission's target for 500 by the end of the year).
- The last newsletter was issued in May and included a reasonable range of content. The next issue is due to go out in August. All Commissioners were invited to share any content to feature in the next newsletter.

b. Commission's website

- A meeting was held to discuss a Warrington climate action website. Several actions were agreed to progress the development of the site.
- Once the Commission have developed the draft structure and content, the council's communications team will support in building the website.
- A number of examples of other climate action websites were reviewed during the meeting. Contact has been made with a sustainability group in St Albans to share best practice.

4. Wider engagement

a. Events

- The Commission attended the Women's Tour of Britain event in town centre on Saturday 8th June, with a stall and inflatable Earth to engage attendees of the event. New leaflets were prepared ahead of the event, which share tips and resources to promote climate action. QR codes with a link to the newsletter subscription were also utilised. Both resources proved to be effective in engaging members of the public.
- The Green Garden Festival will be held on the 27th August at the Sky Garden. The Commission have been invited to host a stall at the event.

b. Public sector forum

- The first meeting of the Warrington public sector climate forum was held attended by representatives from the council and several local NHS bodies. Overall, it was a positive first meeting and there was a willingness from attendees to collaborate and share learning. NHS organisations have been tasked with developing climate action plans, so the opportunity for learning from others through the new forum was welcomed. The new forum planned to meet ahead of future commission meetings so relevance information could be reported at commission meetings.
- It was noted that the several commission members had attended the recent nature workshop at Walton Gardens. Here connections had been made with the Cheshire Sustainability Network. The chair of the commission had been invited to present at their next meeting.

c. Youth engagement opportunity

- Through the council's involvement in an Innovate UK grant funded programme, an opportunity to work with young people in the borough in line with the commission's aspirations had been identified. This was presented to the group.
- Working with a citizen engagement specialist charity called 'Involve', the proposal is for a project that would involve working with 20 local young people, who will be trained as citizen researchers to conduct conversations within their communities. The project would ultimately help develop a refreshed vision for the future of Warrington. The plan was to launch this vision at an event as part of the the Warrington climate emergency forum 2024 event programme.
- The proposal has been shaped taking account of previous commission discussions about the need to improve engagement with young people.
- The proposal was supported and several Commissioners volunteered to participate in the planning of the programme.
- It was agreed that the proposal should be progressed, involving relevant members of the Commission and other relevant stakeholders

5. Proposed face-to-face workshop meeting to plan future activity

- A workshop has been proposed for some time to gather members of the Commission in-person, to provide an opportunity for more effective collaboration and to facilitate the planning of future activities.
- The Chair proposed holding an in-person workshop at the end of July. It was agreed that this would be arranged.
- The council offered their Time Square offices as a venue.
- One priority for the workshop is to begin planning the programme of activities for this year's climate emergency forum.

6. Council / commission partners updates

- Warrington Community Energy has agreed to fund a solar panel installation on The Gateway, Sankey Street. The story will be shared for the next newsletter issue.

- The local energy advice project, funded through the Energy Redress Scheme, developed through a partnership with between Warrington Community Energy and Warrington Disability Partnership, is due to conclude in January 2025. Warrington Community Energy are looking to submit a further funding bid in September to extend the energy advice service until January 2027.
- Work to prepare a National Lottery funding bid is underway. It is expected that a submission will be made ahead of the deadline in December.
- The first phase of Solar Together, a group-buying solar panel scheme supported by Warrington Council in partnership with Cheshire East and Cheshire West & Chester councils, has now concluded. More than 550 installations took place through the scheme across Cheshire, including 95 installations in Warrington. A number of EV charge points were also installed at properties through the initiative. Following the success of the scheme, a second round is planned to commence in August.
- Groundwork is currently delivering the 'Race to Zero' project for WBC with UKSPF funding. Race to Zero aims to support decarbonisation plans among Warrington businesses. There is an event being held next Monday morning at the Village Hotel, to attract businesses to the support on offer. Commissioners were asked to share the event via relevant networks.
- Pure Leapfrog and Groundwork have met to discuss a cross-referral between the two projects working with businesses, in hope to build the legacy of the work with businesses and create a network of active businesses.

7. Any other business

- The Commission's terms of reference are to be reviewed.

Next meeting: Monday 9th September 2-4pm