

Warrington Climate Emergency Commission

Teams meeting – Monday 12th May 14:00 – 16:00

Organisations present:

- University of Chester
- Independent Chair
- Warrington Community Energy
- Warrington Chamber of Commerce
- Business Declares
- Natural England
- Warrington Borough Council
- Culture Warrington
- Warrington Voluntary Action
- Enterprise Cheshire and Warrington

Agenda:

1. Notes of previous meeting and action points not covered elsewhere on the agenda

- Notes were approved from the previous meeting.
- Action log was updated.

2. Update on the National Planning Policy Framework - *Warrington Borough Council*

- The planning policy and programme manager at the council gave an update on the National Planning Policy Framework.
- The framework helps local authorities to prepare their local plans and make decisions on planning applications.
- It was published in December 2024 following a consultation in July 2024.
- The main changes are to mandatory housing supply targets, a focus on grey belt land and new rules for green belt land development.
- The annual housing target has increased from 800 as set out in the local plan to 1000.
- If this need cannot be met through brownfield, green belt can be released to meet the need.
- Within the NPPF there is more consideration of climate mitigation, adaptation and nature recovery.
- It presents a significant opportunity to work closely with Homes England to better understand and ensure future developments mitigate and are adapted to climate change.
- Obligations for biodiversity net gain (BNG) are met through section 106 agreements with developers.
- Building control regime is key to specifying standards for new homes, through Part L which focuses on energy efficiency and emissions reduction.
- Energy efficiency and emissions reduction can also be addressed through design. For example, passive heating and cooling achieved through building orientation.

3. Update on the LNRS - *LNRS lead for Cheshire*

- The Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) Lead for Cheshire provided an update on the development of the strategy.

- A LNRS is a statutory strategy designed to identify priorities and map proposals for nature recovery and wider environmental benefits in Cheshire and Warrington.
- The Cheshire and Warrington LNRS is one of five being developed across the Northwest
- A public consultation on the strategy was carried out. It received 145 individual responses, which is on the lower side. However overall, the majority of responses were positive.
- A feedback report will be produced and uploaded onto the website for the public to view. It will also be part of the publication draft which is expected to go to cabinet in September.
- As of last week, Defra confirmed that there is a budget for LNRS delivery, but the amount is unknown. It should be confirmed following spending review.
- Work is ongoing across the Cheshire and Warrington authorities to shape delivery of the strategy. It is being discussed as part of devolution. As per the white paper, the LNRS will be held within the combined authority.

4. Communications and engagement update

a. Progress with the commission's website

- There was no update from the council's communications team.
- It was suggested that the commission needs to meet with the communications team again to progress the website's development.

b. Developing new engagement networks

- Update on business and parish council engagement - *Pure Leapfrog*
 - As part of Innovate UK's Net Zero Living Programme, Pure Leapfrog is delivering Carbon Literacy for SME's and town and parish councils.
 - Training sessions have been held both online and in-person and have been delivered by a Carbon Literacy Training Consultant.
 - So far, two SME training courses have taken place with a variety of sectors participating. Good feedback on the session was received.
 - One-to-one interviews are being undertaken with participants to establish the wants and needs of organisations and how a programme of follow-on support could provide this.
 - Two sessions have been held with parish councils, one online and one session in person. So far seven parish councillors have participated.
 - It was noted that engaging parish councillors is more challenging due to work and time commitments.
 - Feedback showed that parish councillors who attended felt empowered to act and drive improvements in their local areas.
 - Commissioners were encouraged to continue to promote the opportunity through their networks
- Community engagement network
 - There is now a People, Planet Pint event held in Warrington.
 - It was discussed as to whether the commission could tap into this group to help establish a community engagement network.
- Young people's engagement network
 - The planned kick off meeting with young people was postponed as there was not enough interest for first date proposed .

- A new date after school exams have finished is being planned.
- The opportunity will also be promoted to the Culture Warrington “young producer” cohorts and shared via the university.

c. Newsletter

- The latest issue of the newsletter was published last week.
- So far, the issue is performing well with over 40% open rate and good click through rates.
- Commissioners were encouraged to share the link to [sign-up to the mailing list](#) with their networks.
- The issue of the newsletter automatically being sent to spam was raised.

d. Event opportunities

- The Sky Garden is finalising events which will be held over the summer.

5. Partner updates

• Enterprise Cheshire and Warrington

- It was confirmed that the consortium bid for SPARK funding was successful and money will be received for technical feasibility of EV charging.
- Three sites across Cheshire and Warrington, one in each authority area, have been identified for potential charging sites.
- The regional skills plan highlights the skill requirements for a clean power transition. It highlights a gap in apprenticeship delivery, particularly for upskilling the workforce.

• Warrington Community Energy

- LED lighting has been installed at the gateway. Work to install solar at the site is progressing. A structural survey will need to be done due to the nature of the building
- Working in partnership with Warrington Disability Partnership a bid to extend the Energy Redress Scheme was made but unfortunately unsuccessful.

• Warrington Borough Council

- The Warrington Carbon Culture project is coming to an end.
- A final report is being produced which will be circulated once finalised.
- The council is hosting an APSE Energy event at Walton Hall on the 28th May, showcasing some of the councils net zero projects alongside others from elsewhere.

• Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board

- Warrington and Halton Hospital and Bridgewater Community Healthcare are working together as part of wider integration work. Their Green Plans are due to expire so are working on producing a new one together.
- The Integrated Care Board has just refreshed their Green Plan, and it was published in April. The plan focuses on climate adaptation.

6. Any other business

- Devolution update
 - There are live conversations with various officer groups regarding devolution
 - Secretary of state has provided a response stating that mayoral elections will be scheduled for May 2026.
 - There are seven workstreams, with one being environment and climate change.

- Work is ongoing to identify a pipeline of priority projects for the region.
- Update on Retrofit for Lets project – *Pure Leapfrog*
 - This project, focused on providing retrofit advice to landlords has now concluded.
 - The project was funded by DESNZ and the Northwest Net Zero Hub.
 - Due to the split incentive, the project aimed to increase engagement with landlords on the topic of retrofit as they are considered a hard-to-reach group.
 - The previous government backtracked on plans to introduce a mandatory requirement for rented property to achieve EPC C by 2030 which removed a major driver for landlord interest
 - Later in the project the new government signalled their intent to introduce this mandatory EPC C requirement. This increased engagement.
 - A total of 30 energy efficiency advice sessions were held. Advice was provided to 172 landlords. 96 in depth consultations were carried out. 47 retrofit assessments were completed, with 8 in Warrington.
 - One of the learnings was that the main driver is legislation.
- Funding Opportunities
 - It was highlighted that National Lottery funding for 'Our Shared Future' is still live and open until the end of May.
 - It was agreed that the commission would submit a bid which speaks to our intention of growing engagement networks in Warrington

Next meeting: Our next meeting is Monday 14th July 2-4pm