

Overview

The Sandy Lane EcoPlot is a proposed low-impact, off-grid land stewardship project in Irby, designed to support personal self-sufficiency, biodiversity, and regenerative land use. This project is fully aligned with Wirral Council's declared climate goals, biodiversity priorities, and national sustainability frameworks.

Key Policy Alignments

1. Wirral's Climate Emergency Declaration (2019)

- Wirral Council committed to achieving **net zero carbon emissions by 2030**.
- EcoPlot Contribution:
 - Solar power and possible wind turbine installation
 - Composting toilets (zero wastewater footprint)
 - No-dig, carbon-sequestering gardening
 - Off-grid water harvesting and minimal fossil fuel use

2. Cool Wirral Partnership Goals

- Supporting community-level climate resilience, behaviour change, and local action.
- EcoPlot Contribution:
 - Practical model of sustainable off-grid living
 - Digital outreach via blog with 5+ years of sustainable lifestyle content
 - Willingness to host online workshops or sustainable living guides

3. Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and Local Nature Recovery

- Under the Environment Act 2021, councils must ensure **10% biodiversity net gain** on developments.
- EcoPlot Contribution:
 - Wildflower meadow for pollinators
 - Pond creation to support frogs and amphibians
 - Wildlife shelters (hedgehogs, birds, insects)
 - Organic practices with no chemical use

4. Wirral Local Plan (Draft 2020+) and Greenbelt Management

- Emphasis on **protecting and enhancing greenbelt** land while exploring innovative land uses
 - EcoPlot Contribution:
 - No permanent buildings – shepherd’s hut/cabin only
 - Maintains greenbelt character while restoring underutilised land
 - Provides ecological, landscape, and informal educational value
-

National Context Alignment

5. DEFRA 25-Year Environment Plan

- Supports low-impact living, local food, and sustainable land management
- EcoPlot contributes by:
 - Practising regenerative growing
 - Restoring soil health
 - Encouraging carbon capture and wildlife protection

6. Permitted Development & Lawful Use Considerations

- Land with historic residential use (noted by council in 1987)
 - Low-impact, temporary structures may be more favourably reviewed under Class Q and related provisions
-

Summary: Why This Is a Council-Aligned Opportunity

The Sandy Lane EcoPlot is:

- Inherently low impact and rooted in sustainability
- Reinforcing existing council and national policy priorities
- Offering biodiversity, education, and ecological benefit
- Backed by a strong digital platform and local community relationships

This is an opportunity for Wirral to support a model eco-living project that promotes land regeneration, carbon reduction, and sustainable living – with minimal infrastructure and zero disruption.