

Climate Change Communications and Community Engagement Strategy

Agreed November 2021

1 Aims

The Climate Change Communications Strategy has three key aims.

1. **Tell** – To get our own house in order and communicate with communities, partners, businesses, Members and staff about our progress.
2. **Provide** – Provide community leadership on climate change working with a range of stakeholders and partners.
3. **Mobilise** – To enable the mobilisation of residents, communities and organisations to accept responsibility and adapt their behaviours.

2 Background

The Climate Change Action Plan provides a clear path to understand the actions the Council must now take to meet its key ambitions.

Climate change requires a huge effort by all sectors of the community. In a post-Covid climate, it is recognised that some communities desperately want to see the way we live change to a more environmentally sustainable one. But this is also balanced against some residents living in financial hardship and, in this case, climate change will certainly not be at the forefront of people's minds.

Climate change action requires a huge amount of motivation and continued positivity. Those working together on this agenda must recognise that every action counts and share in the successes. Different people will be motivated to act for different reasons. We recognise that messages around climate change must also cover co-benefits and that we need to repeat messages and utilise a variety of channels.

3 Communications Objectives

Our Communities

- To develop a clear narrative around the shared ambition towards achieving the Council's goals.
- To raise awareness within our communities about climate change risks (global and local) and the impacts this will and could have on our daily lives.
- To set an example and motivate others to do likewise.
- To help our communities (residents and visitors,) understand how they can play their part in mitigating and adapting to climate change.
- To inform our communities about the work the District Councils are doing in relation to climate change, particularly where this provides opportunities for local people or visitors to adapt their behaviours.

- To listen to the ideas and initiatives that our communities have in relation to climate change so that we can consider how to align our work with local ideas.

Our Partners and Business

- To raise awareness within our communities about climate change risks (global and local) and the impacts this will and could have on our daily lives.
- To share respective climate change priorities, targets opportunities and challenges with partners and business.
- To help local businesses and organisations understand how they can play their part in mitigating and adapting to climate change.
- To listen to the ideas and concerns of local businesses and organisations and use these to inform the action plan.
- To inform businesses about the work the District Councils are doing in relation to climate change.

Our Staff and Members

- To raise awareness about climate change risks (global and local) and the impacts this will and could have on our daily lives.
- To inform staff and Members on the work we are doing on climate change and motivate to support the work in meeting the climate change targets.
- To enable staff to champion climate change initiatives and narrative when they have contact with residents and other customers.

4 Key Activities

- Gain expert comments and quotes to reinforce messages and build trust.
- Planned, regular themed messages on an ongoing basis (#onesmallthing).
- Develop a suite of case studies to reflect progress, so that it can be seen to be real and achievable and to celebrate successes.
- Identify stakeholder involvement to discuss the work programme and be helpful 'critical friends' in the process. This will include a variety of forums for dialogue with these stakeholders.
- Ensure staff and councillors have the highest levels of awareness to play their part in climate communications through everyday communication mechanism.
- Use all our channels to reach all groups of our community and recognise that different channels will be important for different parts of our communities.
- Coordinate with partners (especially WCC) to support mutual messaging and to channel messaging through the most effective "mouthpiece".
- Link to co-benefits such as health, improved air quality, warmer homes, cheaper bills, etc.

- Think about how people make changes: the need, the capability, opportunity and motivation.

5 Communications Channels

There are a range of communication channels we can use. These need to be used to align with the message and the audience at different times and in different ways. Communication channels must consider the 'every contact counts' means of using effective and existing mechanisms or channels to deliver messages to the widest of audiences. All communications should consider which of these should be utilised at any given time and are broken down into internal and external action methods.

Internal	External
Member briefings	Website updates
Staff updates - Intranet	Press releases
Webinars – carbon connected sessions	Social Media
Staff briefings	Residents' newsletters including Social Tenants newsletters
	Webinars
Clear and constant message from senior managers	Stakeholder groups and other partner organisations
Team meetings	Conferences

6 Stakeholder mapping

We have held a People's Inquiry into climate change. We are committed to reporting to the People's Climate Change Inquiry members panel on our progress. Furthermore, a stakeholder mapping exercise will be completed to identify:

- "vocal friends" who the Council can work with to supplement our communications
- Stakeholders who are active around climate change who may have overlapping and/or contradictory message, whilst recognising the importance of keeping communication channels open
- Stakeholders who we need to work with to achieve our ambitions, but who may need some encouragement to support our communications strategy.

The Stakeholder mapping will be informed by the CCAP priorities and will therefore be completed following the adoption of the CCAP.

7 Communications and community engagement highlights from the past six months:

Action:	When:	Notes:
District Wide Council Tax Leaflet	2022/23	Distributed to all homes in Stratford District: Included information related to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All three climate change ambitions

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signposting to Act On Energy fuel bill and energy usage advice • E-Cargo Bikes hiring scheme • Reducing Food Waste
E-Cargo Bikes	Ongoing	Featured in Press Releases, Council Tax Leaflets and seen in use around Stratford.
Green Homes Grants scheme promotion/ Sustainable Warmth Campaign		The Sustainable Warmth 'green homes grants' private scheme was launched in July and has been promoted via press releases, social media, direct mailing and events.
Carbon Connected – Sustainable Food	May	A Carbon Connected session was recorded to share publicly supported by both the NFU and the Vegan Society to share information about sustainable food choices. Available on Website
Warm Winter Messaging	Winter 22/23	Regular messages signposting to Act On Energy advice related to financial assistance, broken heating systems, grants towards energy efficiency measures, and energy efficiency tips.
Trees Call To Action Partnership	May 2022	Press Release
Stratford View	July 22	Article Feature
WCC Love to ride campaign	September 22	Support for WCC event
Stratford Climate Pop-up climate hub	March 22	Provided information.
South Warwickshire Climate Champions	Ongoing	Showcasing individual or community action. Sign Up available via SDC climate change web pages.
Food Waste Information	From Aug 22 – ongoing	Ongoing communication with residents around food waste and the Council's new food waste collection service.

8 Rolling Four Months Communications and Engagement Plan February 2023 – May 2023

Action	When	Notes
Warm Winter Messaging	Ongoing throughout winter 2022/23	Regular messages signposting to Act On Energy advice related to financial assistance, broken heating systems, grants towards energy efficiency measures, and energy efficiency tips.
Local Climate Engagement	Ongoing – Pilot Events expected June 2023.	Working alongside partners to deliver a series of engagement sessions, with particular focus on rural communities

	Attended cabinet forum to brief councillors	to help communities develop their own climate change action and feedback into WDC CCAP.
Climate Change Champions	Ongoing	Continuing to showcase individual or community action. Sign up via the SDC climate change web pages.
Carbon Connected Sessions	Ongoing	Webinars/Recordings to share with staff and residents on themes including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air Quality • Sustainable Travel • Home Energy Efficiency
Green Homes Grants	Ongoing	Continue the promotion of the green homes grants schemes through regular press releases, social media, events, and radio advertising.
E-Cargo Bikes	Ongoing	Re-Advertisement of this scheme is due to take place in the spring. New decals due to feature on the E-Cargo bikes.
Food Waste and recycling Information	Ongoing	Ongoing communication with residents around food waste and the council's new food waste collection service.

9. Measuring Success

The measure of success with fully engaging with the community to drive down carbon emissions could realistically come from the bottom-line carbon emissions reduction data, for example from the domestic sector, although this is always two years behind.

There are also more immediate ways to establish the success of a communications exercise, and these are already monitored by the Media team as follows.

- Engagement – the number of people interacting with a social media post in some way (reacting, commenting, sharing).
- Link clicks – a measure of engagement which usually forms part of a call to action.
- Impressions – these are numbers given by the social media platforms that tell us how many accounts will have seen our post in their timeline. The more impressions, the more people who will potentially engage with our content.
- Press coverage – Where the press release has been picked up by the local newspapers for coverage. Whether the press release has been adapted (if and the overall tone of the newspaper's coverage (negative, neutral, positive).

- Website – Traffic to the climate change web page, how many visits, how long someone spends on the web page and number of people that have completed a form/survey/quiz.
- Events and Webinars – Numbers of people attending and feeling or 'vibe' of the event (negative, neutral, positive).

10 Governance and Reporting Progress

Progress reporting on the Communications Strategy will be through the WDC Climate Emergency PAB and the SDC Climate Change Panel on a quarterly basis along with updates to Committee as required. The four month rolling programme will form the basis of this reporting and, recognising the vital role of members in communications, will provide members with the opportunity to advice on the ongoing review of the rolling programme.