

Climate Change Communications and Community Engagement Strategy

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 message 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 – emails or PABs | Website updates |
| Staff updates - Intranet | Press releases |
| Webinars – carbon connected sessions | Social Media |
| Staff briefings | Residents newsletters including Social Tenants newsletters |
| Sustainability Officers Group | 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 Rolling Three Months Communications Plan

| Action | Who | When |
|---------------|------------|-------------|
|---------------|------------|-------------|

| | | |
|---|--|-----------------------|
| Develop SDC Webpages to mirror WDC's and then plan to merge into a single south Warwickshire webpage | Sustainability Officer | November 2021 |
| Follow up the Warwick People Inquiry by convening a "one year on" meeting of the Inquiry members to discuss progress and further ideas | Sustainability Officer / Programme Director Climate Change | November 2021 |
| Climate change training session for all Town and Parish Councils | Programme Director Climate Change | November 2021 |
| Contractors / suppliers climate change convention - opportunities for Council contracts and suppliers to understand the corporate climate change commitments. Link to the South Warwickshire Climate Change Business Forum | Sustainability Officer | November 2021 |
| Launch the South Warwickshire Climate Change Business Forum for large employers to share learn and share best practice | Sustainability Officer with Sustainability West Midlands | November 2021 |
| Establish communication links with business support organisations such as the BIDs, Chambers of Trade, Stratford and Leamington Business Forum, Chamber of Commerce and others to explore effective ways of communicating with SMEs | TBC | January 2022 |
| Hold regular public participation meetings with local environmental organisations, SDC and WDC Councillors to share and discuss ideas | Sustainability Officer | January 2022 |
| Continue with Carbon Connected sessions and climate change briefing for staff | Sustainability Officer | On-going |
| Winter Warm messages – develop a series of messages for residents on keeping warmer at home and link to financial support measures | Sustainability Officer | October November 2021 |

7. 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).

8 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 three 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.