



## Medway Council Climate Response - Communications and Engagement Approach

### Our Aims

- Ensure that everyone who lives, works, studies or visits Medway understands our journey to net zero carbon, and is equipped with the knowledge, tools and support required to make their contribution to it, and takes ownership and corporate or individual action to help us get there.
- Maintain a strong and consistent message across environmental communications issued by Medway Council and our key partners.
- Raise the profile of what we and other key partners are doing to reduce emissions and improve and protect the local environment.
- Inspire, promote, and enable action and collaboration towards reducing emissions and improving the environment in Kent.
- Create targeted behaviour change campaigns through collaborative working and better understanding of public perceptions and behaviours.
- Evaluate regularly how we're doing.

### Our Approach

- Remain positive, showing the added value and benefit of changing behaviour
- Have a clear call to action
- Not use 'green guilt' or environmental 'shaming' to force people to change their habits
- Allow people to feel part of the solution, not the problem
- Empower people to feel capable of making change which will contribute to helping us achieve net zero
- Use the Medway identity and link in with Kent Green Action where relevant
- Be factual, not political
- Be accessible, inclusive and represent the diverse community of Medway.

### Key Messages

- Medway has ambitious plans to tackle the climate challenge and reduce emissions. We can only do this by acting together as a community.
- We can all do our bit – together we can make change happen.
- Action we take now will benefit generations to come.
- We must reduce the impact of climate change and support nature recovery.

- Low carbon economic recovery presents opportunities for new jobs and infrastructure.
- Reducing emissions has environmental, social, health and economic benefits.
- Medway Council has an accountable action plan for the next five years.
- What will you do?

### **Engagement approach – Residents**

- Promote the action plan and drive to the website
- Small changes campaign - My Eco Journey...
- Make use of our spaces to engage e.g., libraries/hubs, sports centers, children's centers
- Campaigns – Recycling, reduce plastic use
- Create and deliver energy efficient awareness campaigns to housing tenants and private landlords and homeowners
- Hubub activities - what people can do to support
- Promote case studies: [https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200564/local\\_climate\\_change\\_projects](https://www.medway.gov.uk/info/200564/local_climate_change_projects)

### **Engagement Approach - Businesses**

- Resources and advice on website for businesses to use
- Develop business network to share expertise and knowledge with events
- Business climate change newsletter with case studies
- Commitments for organisations to sign up to for Medway Climate Friendly status – Medway Healthy Workplace Awards
- Lobbying for better business practice e.g., not leaving lights on all night
- Encourage businesses to appoint CC champion to help engage others in the company
- Our procurement rules set high standards for contractors

### **Engagement Approach - Communities**

- Neighbourhood groups – challenge each other – lead more climate friendly lives...green streets initiative building on local litter picks or greening our streets/alleyways
- Work with MVA to establish process to recruit volunteers to help champion in their communities and be part of the wider network.
- Share case studies/success stories via PR and website
- Adult Education family programme on how to reduce waste and consumption
- Creation of networks and projects to support the sharing economy e.g., sustainable cafes, resource libraries.
- Encourage participate in green category of Pride in Medway awards.

### **Engagement Approach – Education (Schools, FE and HE)**

- Set up young person's action network – get young people linked together to share ideas and support with Medway# and socials. Support with promoting case studies.
- Work with schools to develop lesson plans and home learning resources
- School governor intervention commitments to reducing carbon emissions
- Incorporate into our Public Health schools programme e.g., supporting Eco schools award programme.
- Support KM Green Schools Awards and promote successes
- Regular updates in Headway (schools' newsletter)
- Research programme led by local academics involving Medway university students on specific research projects.

### **Engagement approach - Medway Council staff and councillors**

- Behavioural change programme focused on reducing our carbon impact while working
- Regular CC updates
- Champions in each service – and each member of staff should be a CC champion
- Aware of all our priorities to support in their own work.
- Corporate values – gold thread
- Challenge services
- Dedicated section on intranet
- Improved induction
- Team volunteering opportunities for a team climate challenge – one/two days a year.

## **Channels**

- Develop and maintain our Climate Change area of the website to be a hub of practical information and resources for all stakeholders in one place. Bespoke and national/international resources. Toolkit with brands, messaging, and style guide on how we are doing.
- Dashboard on how we are doing, achievements and measurements
- Dedicated social media channels - Instagram, Twitter, FB, LinkedIn
- E-newsletters
- Videos on You Tube
- Calendar of campaigns we can all be part of
- Events in the community – all Medway events to have CC element and we must lead by example e.g. recycling bins, no paper, no plastic etc.
- Article in each edition of Medway Matters

## **PR approach**

### Aims

- Secure local media coverage of Medway Council's climate change action plan
- Explore trade media opportunities to promote the council's climate change work
- Child Friendly

### Approach

- Also need a USP for Medway – what makes us different
- Secure local media coverage of Medway Council's climate change action plan
- Planning around each milestone
- Explore trade media opportunities to promote the council's climate change work
- Promote climate change progress in Medway Matters
- Encourage CC agenda with KM group locally and regular joint activity – champion with us.

## **Risks and Challenges**

- Big expectations on the council – careful positioning regarding how much we are responsible for and can do (1.4%) – this is for all of us
- Huge subject – measured and measurable approach
- Climate change deniers
- Apathy – I can't be bothered, my small act won't count
- Resources to do it all.

**Evaluation – is critical**

- Monitor and collect data from all communications and engagement campaigns to evaluate success.
- Public perception survey annually focusing on residents' attitudes to the climate emergency and their own behaviours.
- Social media – reach and engagement with posts and video views
- Website analytics
- Staff engagement, induction completion,
- Event numbers and attendance.

## Climate change communications and engagement actions

### Three/six/nine/twelve months

*Table 1 communication and engagement actions to be completed within a three-month period, July to September 2021*

	<b>Three months (July-September 2022)</b>
<b>Action Plan</b>	Launch our refreshed Action Plan to our communities through digital communications and the media – call to action is to ask what people can do in their homes/communities to do their bit. We can also demo at our Autumn summit. Create shorter more accessible summary of our refreshed Action Plan on our website.
<b>Website</b>	Increase the number of case studies on our local climate change projects page Dashboard - create an online dashboard that tracks KPIs
<b>Governance</b>	Continue to establish community support network. Work with chairs of Medway community climate network
<b>Engagement</b>	Engage with community groups wishing to get involved in projects through 3 <sup>rd</sup> sector organisations and Community Network. Also set up a Champions training model Continue to run Small Changes campaign - particularly related to the current energy crisis and other comms campaigns around plastic free Medway and reducing our individual environmental impact. Improve the way the Council communicates about discount and energy grant schemes available to businesses and residents including those who are in fuel poverty, on a low income and are vulnerable to living in a cold home due to age/health conditions. This will include ensuring that information is available both online and via the telephone. Develop an informal staff network to become conduits for campaign information and share best practice. Continue to update the section on the intranet for staff with ideas and case studies of what we've done so far. Launch new staff volunteering day. Work with teams within the council to support them with their climate volunteering day and share case studies of work done in our community. Align campaigns to link to national/international days for 2022. Continue to support youth climate change project, led by Youth Services, complete climate game and promote. Climate Summit – develop schedule for the day and finalise details with partners.

	Promote the Sustainable Warmth programme, and increase sign ups (green homes grant third round – <a href="http://www.medway.gov.uk/greenhomesgrant">www.medway.gov.uk/greenhomesgrant</a> )
	Provide social media best practice session for community groups in Medway.
	Widen the delivery of internal carbon literacy training to council staff and start to develop e-training with workforce development team
	Regular updates across our website and social media regarding the new 'Greening Medway Strategy' this includes mowing schedules (highlighting biodiversity and the rationale behind leaving some areas to naturalise) and tree planting etc.
<b>PR</b>	PR – milestones to celebrate e.g. EV charging points
	If possible, have presence at some of our summer events for our climate change agenda

Table 2 communication and engagement actions to be completed within a six-month period, October to December 2021

	<b>Six months (October-December 2022)</b>
<b>Action Plan</b>	Continue to signpost people to our action plan through events and social media.
<b>Website</b>	Create and share toolkits for communities to use
	Signpost to content on the website for businesses and toolkit to use.
<b>Engagement</b>	Use council spaces to engage with people e.g., libraries
	Create a bank of volunteering opportunities which support the climate change agenda and support the delivery of the climate change action plan and promote them.
	Continue to align campaigns to link to national/international days for 2022 and regularly use our climate change social media channels to communicate key messages
	Engage with the Medway Place Board to develop awareness and explore joint opportunities to achieve net zero carbon targets, deliver training module and develop young champions programme.
	Work with Parish Councils to encourage them to adopt climate champions and work with us on common goals
	Regular updates in schools' newsletters and further engagement young people through Medway Primary and Secondary School Associations and Governing bodies encouraging them to include CC onto their agendas and commit to reducing carbon emissions.
	Include and promote climate change/energy campaigns on Adult social care portal
	Promote energy saving initiatives and grants and energy efficiency/renewable energy awareness programmes to homeowners and landlords.

	Climate change focus groups with vulnerable groups to receive ideas and feedback on climate action and accessibility from those most likely to be impacted by climate change
	Continue to run Small Changes campaign - particularly related to the current energy crisis and other comms campaigns around plastic free Medway and reducing our individual environmental impact.
	Work with Medway Development Company to develop and provide a Welcome Pack for new buyers
	Medway Matters features on Climate Change
	Continue running a competition for council departments to challenge them on how to improve sustainability and recognise contributions made
<b>PR</b>	Ongoing promotion of PR milestones.

Table 3 communication and engagement actions to be completed within a nine-month period, January to March 2022

	<b>Nine months (January-March 2023)</b>
<b>Action Plan</b>	Review and updating of the Action Plan with input from community groups
<b>Website</b>	Continue updates with case studies and relevant tips.
<b>Engagement</b>	Business climate change newsletter with case studies.
	Explore how we can secure funding to develop projects and networks to help facilitate sharing economy initiatives - Sustainable Cafes/Resource Libraries
	Medway Matters features on Climate Change
	Continue to explore engagement opportunities through new and existing community forums, including with under-represented groups.
	Support annual litter picks and measures to reduce the amount of litter across Medway
<b>PR</b>	Ongoing promotion of PR milestone

Table 4 communication and engagement actions to be completed by June 2022

	<b>Twelve months (up to June 2023)</b>
<b>Action Plan</b>	Implement an engagement exercise to obtain views of stakeholders to inform the next review of the Action Plan (post-election)
<b>Website</b>	How are we doing dashboard – action plans updated with comment on achievements over the past year.
	Further resources for communities and other stakeholders.
<b>Governance</b>	Governance system working well with flow of ideas, projects and case studies



<b>Engagement</b>	Medway Matters features on Climate Change
	Subject to funding, use the LGA guidance on Behaviour Change framework to develop/deliver a behavioural change programme to staff and councillors to reduce carbon impact while working at home/the office and in home lives e.g., sustainable transport options, energy efficiency, procurement, and waste.