

Climate Response Engagement Strategy 2025

Background:

Since Medway Council declared a climate emergency in 2019, engagement with the climate agenda has grown steadily across Medway and knowledge of the Council's role has also increased. The Climate Response Team has a dedicated Climate Response Engagement Officer, enabling a strong focus on raising awareness of net zero and the need to adapt to our changing climate. The team has a clear brand message supported by a strong presence across Medway's communities and through dedicated communication channels. Over time, a consistent language has been developed to talk about the Council's work. This is designed to be easily understandable and relatable to the actions Medway residents can take in their own lives with campaigns such as "Small Changes", "What's good for us is good for the planet". The team does not exist in isolation however and are supported by the corporate Communications team, teams across all areas of the council as well as established groups to help amplify the climate message.

Objectives:

We will communicate with all of our communities and staff to achieve the following objectives:

- **Inform** - Messaging around wider climate issues. Support understanding of climate change and adaptation with particular emphasis on Medway. Allow people to make informed choices about their personal lives and work areas and helps tackle misinformation. Raise the profile of what the Council and key partners and organisations are doing in Medway.
- **Empower** - Rooted in Medway communities. Partnership working with Medway residents and community action. Show the Medway community as an engaged, motivated group who are leading on changes. Inspire others to make changes and get involved. Engage in different ways to reach new audiences.
- **Act** - Demonstrate actions people can make in their personal lives and work areas to reduce their carbon footprint and adapt to the changing climate. Actions range from individual, community and systemic. Signpost to relevant resources to enable action.

Key messages:

"We all have a part to play in responding to climate change. Let's work together to achieve net zero by 2050 and increase Medway's resilience to the impacts of climate change."

This year (2025), our engagement will focus on the launch of the refreshed Climate Change Action Plan, providing an opportunity to engage and inform Medway residents about the five new priority areas (Knowledge and Empowerment; Clean, Efficient and Equitable Energy; Sustainable Travel and Transport; Resource Efficiency and Green and Resilient Medway).

We will continue to promote the links between climate action and the wider benefits gained from taking action, such as improved health, community cohesion and saving money. Our messaging will align with the One Medway Plan vision "#ProudToBeMedway" and the priority to enjoy clean, green, safe and connected communities.

Challenges:

- Huge and complex subject
- Climate change deniers
- Apathy – “What difference can I make?”
- Sufficient resources to do it all
- Lost in other messaging
- Reaching under-represented audiences
- Big expectations placed on the council balanced with acknowledgement of crucial leadership role

Engagement Activity in 2025:

Channel/Tool	Activity	Audience
Website	Refresh the climate change webpages to tie in with the refreshed Climate Change Action Plan. Publish annual progress reports.	All
Dedicated social media channels	Rerun #MedwaySmallChanges social media campaign. Focus on new year commitments for behaviour change.	Residents and communities
	Series of social media posts showing the low carbon changes Medway Council staff are making and the reasons why, to inspire others to make similar changes.	Residents, communities and staff
	Develop content and add to social media 2025 calendar including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The refreshed action plan – with focus on new five priority areas • Additional staff small changes videos • Domestic retrofit advice (Wim videos) • Solar Together Kent • Thermal imaging camera loan service • Great Big Green Week 	Residents and communities
Corporate social media channels	Promote positive climate action and opportunities within Medway.	Residents and communities
E-newsletter	Climate Response team to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage sign-ups to e-newsletter • Issue monthly content to promote community grants, campaigns and events. 	Residents and communities
Medway Matters	Climate content included in Council publication delivered to every household in Medway	Residents
Bespoke events	Climate Business event: Strengthening our relationships with the Medway Business community through a one-day green business showcase. The aims of the event are simple but far-reaching. Providing a platform to	Residents and communities

	<p>hear firsthand how local businesses are flourishing, will set a positive example of how changes to energy consumption, working practices and meeting the green expectations of customers can support a business to grow. It will inspire businesses in attendance to consider how they can also significantly contribute to our net zero commitments. The event will feature a series of guest speakers from the business community who will talk about their carbon reduction journey and the benefits this has brought to their business. There will also be several stalls in attendance to support our wider business offer and as well as networking opportunities. Following the event, we will build upon our library of Medway business case studies.</p>	
	<p>A Park for Life event (A Social History of Jackson Recreation Ground): Working in partnership with Karen Jones, Professor of Environmental and Cultural History at the University of Kent, to explore the social history of Jacksons Recreation Ground in Rochester and the important relationship between history, health and heritage. We will emphasise the importance of stewardship of green space in the fight against climate change and the impact on our relationship with the outdoors when facing the consequences of global heating. The event will be open to all Medway residents to take part and will capture people’s memories and aspirations for the future. The legacy of the project will be captured in a digital artwork which will represent a pride in the area and a focus on stewardship of the natural environment which needs to be preserved through acting on climate change.</p>	Residents and communities
	<p>Retrofit information sessions for homeowners: We have delivered six sessions across Medway on domestic retrofitting, in partnership with the University of Greenwich and Kent County Council, with the aim of providing helpful advice on improving energy efficiency in Medway homes. Based on feedback from previous sessions, we will continue to build on the success of the sessions by focusing on how we reach a greater number of people and empower people to make changes to their property.</p>	Residents
Corporate and community events	<p>Climate Response team to hold a stall at events throughout the year, to engage directly with the public, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medway Matters Live • Brompton Football Festival hosted by the Royal School of Military Engineering • Strood Together • Cherry Picnic • Love Gillingham • Sticks and Stones • Medway Food Partnership annual event 	Residents and communities
Community talks/presentations	<p>Climate Response team to attend community sessions to provide an update on the Council’s climate action as requested, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East Medway U3a • Rotary club 	Communities

<p>Community Climate Working Group</p>	<p>The Community Climate Working Group is a key stakeholder in Medway climate engagement. The group includes representatives from across Medway’s communities, including the NHS, Brompton Barracks, Medway's Eco Hubs, faith communities, social housing providers, businesses, the voluntary sector and higher education. The group will meet a further four times in 2025 and are developing a working subgroup to deliver a community project. The group will continue to amplify the Council’s climate initiatives, help improve our work by acting as a critical friend and work with us on partnership projects.</p>	<p>Communities</p>
<p>Member Climate Working Party</p>	<p>Members will continue to focus on supporting the implementation of Climate Ward Improvement Plans. The Climate Response team will highlight progress linking to actions and outcomes in the plans.</p>	<p>Residents and communities</p>
<p>Focused engagement</p>	<p>Schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assemblies/visits - Promotion of national and local campaigns and schemes through schools e-newsletter – Headway - Attend Medway Education Partnership meeting to update on the Council’s climate action and schools opportunities 	<p>Schools and Young People</p>
	<p>Young People and Families</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote content through the Family Hubs 	<p>Young People and Families</p>
	<p>Businesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Climate Response team to hold a stall at Medway Skills and Business Showcase - Continue to develop case studies of sustainable Medway businesses and promote - Share content through Town Centre Forums - Share content through Medway Business e-newsletter - Develop a targeted engagement approach following on from lessons learned from the Climate Business Event in May - Maintain representation through the Community Climate Working Group 	<p>Businesses</p>
	<p>Care Homes and Domiciliary Providers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share content via the Medway Care Portal, Adult Social Care newsletter and Care Forum meetings 	<p>Carers and care providers</p>
<p>Surveys and feedback</p>	<p>Include questions in the Citizen Panel survey and use Gov Poll to better understand resident attitudes to the climate emergency and their own behaviours as well as their awareness of council climate action and support available.</p> <p>Enable the critical friend role of the Community Working group by providing opportunities throughout the year for them to hear about, feedback on and help shape emerging council strategies and plans.</p>	<p>Residents and communities</p>

Staff e-newsletter/headlines	Engage staff by sharing opportunities and good news stories through our internal communication channels	Staff
Staff intranet	Maintain area on intranet for climate change content	Staff
Staff volunteering	Engage staff by sharing opportunities and good news stories through our internal communication channels	Staff and communities
Training	Provide bespoke training and content as requested. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better Medway Champions • Healthy Early Years • Making Every Contact Count 	Staff and communities
	Roll out Carbon Literacy training to staff, delivered by the Climate Response Team and accredited by the Carbon Literacy Project.	Staff

Additional engagement opportunities may also arise during the year which we will build into our planning.

Evaluation

The measure of success of engaging with the community to reduce carbon emissions will come from Medway area carbon emissions data, although it will be difficult to explicitly account for percentage reductions as a direct result of engagement. Measuring the success of our engagement work to increase Medway's resilience to a changing climate will also be difficult. Other more immediate ways to measure the impact of engagement will be reported against the delivery of the Climate Change Action Plan, such as number of followers on social media, event numbers and attendees.