

Board/Committee:	Climate Change Board
Date of meeting:	12/11/2020
Title:	Climate Change Community Engagement Framework
Author:	Julie Petty, Head of Corporate Policy and Community Safety
Status:	For discussion

Purpose

This report sets out the proposals for the Council’s Climate Change Community Engagement Framework to reflect the aspirations contained in the Climate Change Motion that was passed at Community Board on 4th March 2020.

Recommendation

That the Board provide their views on the matters contained in this report, specifically paragraph 3.1, to enable a Climate Change Community Engagement Framework to be produced.

1.0	Background
1.1	The Community Board passed a Climate Change Motion on 4 th March 2020.
1.2	<p>This motion contained three community engagement elements and it is proposed that these will be delivered through a Community Engagement Framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Motion item 5</u>: “Take steps to proactively include young people in the process, ensuring that they have a voice in shaping the future.” • <u>Motion item 6</u>: “Develop a Citizens’ Assembly in order to involve the wider population in this process. This group would help develop their own role, consider the latest climate science and expert advice on solutions and to consider systematically the climate change impact of each area of the Council’s activities.” • <u>Motion item 7</u>: “Establish a Climate Change Partnership group, involving Councillors, residents, young citizens, relevant experts, businesses, Citizens Assembly representatives and other relevant parties. It will also recommend ways to maximise local benefits of these actions in other sectors such as employment, health, transport and the local economy.”
2.0	Report
2.1	Community engagement is particularly important for issues such as Climate Change, which are inherently complex, have many points of interaction with other policy areas, involve significant policy changes, and require substantial behaviour change.

<p>2.2</p>	<p>To ensure effective and efficient delivery of community engagement and the Climate Change motion, an engagement framework is proposed (see Appendix 1 for initial draft).</p> <p>The attached framework is a draft version for discussion by the Board, and will be updated based on feedback from the Board.</p>
<p>2.3</p>	<p>The Climate Change Motion has 3 specific references to Community engagement and it is important to understand the purpose of each element so that a cohesive and effective framework is implemented.</p>
<p>2.4</p>	<p>Element 5 of the motion is:</p> <p>Take steps to proactively include young people in the process, ensuring that they have a voice in shaping the future.</p> <p>This is reflected in the Climate Change Community Engagement Framework. It should also be noted that opportunities such as virtual youth engagement sessions (due in October as a follow on from Summer Passport) will be utilised to gather feedback and participants.</p>
<p>2.5</p>	<p>Element 6 of the Motion is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Citizens' Assembly in order to involve the wider population in this process. This group would help develop their own role, consider the latest climate science and expert advice on solutions and to consider systematically the climate change impact of each area of the Council's activities. <p>The wording of this motion implies an ongoing process; however, this does not align with the model of Citizens' Assemblies: which run for a fixed time period (for example over two weekends) with its recommendations being used to shape policy and practice. Costs of a Citizens' Assembly are dependent on specific purpose and associated design and can range from £30,000-£100,000.</p>
<p>2.6</p>	<p>The Board's specific purpose for a Citizens' Assembly and its role is sought including the detail of the likely issue/s that will be subject to this process.</p> <p>A methodology and design can then be explored along with costings which can be reported back to this Board.</p>
<p>2.7</p>	<p>Element 7 of the Motion is:</p> <p>Establish a Climate Change Partnership group, involving Councillors, residents, young citizens, relevant experts, businesses, Citizens Assembly representatives and other relevant parties. It will also recommend ways to maximise local benefits of these actions in other sectors such as employment, health, transport and the local economy.</p>

	<p>The core purpose of this group, outlined above, seems to be to making recommendations to other sectors. To enable this it would need to have a high degree of expertise, significant resource and be viewed as a valid 'body' by all sectors.</p> <p>Some Local Authorities have set up Climate Change Partnerships which include key players (private, public and voluntary sector) which provide 'sounding boards' and facilitation of action across organisations and within the community. This is based on partnership working not through the establishment of a more formal recommendation mechanism and the former is the suggested way forward.</p>
3.0	Conclusion
3.1	<p>Board views on elements of the Climate Change Motion (6 and 7) are sought for integration into the final Climate Change Engagement Framework:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The specific purpose for a Citizens' Assembly and its role including the detail of the likely issue/s that will be subject to this process. • If Climate Change Partnership approach suggested in para 2.6 meets the intended Board requirements.

Financial Services comments:	
Legal Services comments:	
Equality and Diversity:	<i>The Climate Change Community Engagement Framework will be inclusive and maintain due regard to the public sector equality duty contained in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.</i>
Climate Change implications:	<i>A Climate Change Community Engagement Framework has a positive impact on the Council's Climate Change Activity.</i>
Crime and Disorder:	<i>N/A</i>
Service Improvement Plan implications:	<i>Actions required are already integrated into Service Plans.</i>
Corporate Plan:	<i>The Climate Change Community Engagement Framework will help the Council to deliver effective services, empower residents and enhance the environment.</i>
Risk Assessment:	<i>Failure to develop a Climate Change Community Engagement Framework could generate a risk in delivery of the Council's strategic approach towards Climate Change.</i>
Background Papers:	<i>No</i>
Appendices:	<i>Appendix 1</i>
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Climate Change Community Engagement Framework

Introduction

Community engagement is particularly important for issues such as climate change, which are inherently complex, have many points of interaction with other policy areas, involve significant policy changes, and require substantial behaviour change.

There are many approaches to engagement, with differing aims, strengths, weaknesses, risks and costs. This Climate Change Community Engagement Framework therefore sets out how the Council will aim to carry out engagement around the actions needed to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

In general terms, “engagement” refers to any relationship between the Council and relevant stakeholders. Relevant stakeholders will depend on the issue at hand, but may include all residents of the Borough as well as businesses and other organisations that have an interest in activities taking place in the Borough or which the Council is involved in delivering. Young people are considered particularly important stakeholders in relation to action on climate change, since they will be most affected by its impacts.

Engagement methods and principles

The Climate Change Community Engagement Framework includes a range of engagement methods. One way to organise these is by considering the degree to which each method empowers stakeholders to influence and participate in the design, implementation and evaluation of policies, services and initiatives. This is shown in table 1 below.

In practice, engagement activities will usually utilise several of these methods which will complement each other. For example, a successful Citizens’ Assembly might require not just involving assembly members in deciding on required changes, but also informing them of the science and policy background needed to make those decisions, consulting with residents beforehand to agree the questions the Citizens’ Assembly will consider, and informing residents of the Assembly, its deliberations and outcomes to increase legitimacy.

Table 1: Engagement methods

Method	Aim	Tools	Examples
Informing	To raise awareness and understanding of existing policies, services and initiatives, and to help increase participation in other engagement activities.	- Websites and social media - Newsletters - Press releases - Posters - Leaflets - Local meetings	- Coastline - gosport.gov.uk website - Planning application notices - Meetings with residents
Consulting	To allow stakeholders to give their opinion on specific proposals.	- Surveys - Consultation events	- Inviting responses to planning applications - Local plan consultations - Meetings with residents
Listening	To understand as fully as possible the needs, views and concerns of stakeholders, and to benefit from their ideas.	- Surveys - Focus groups - Stakeholder groups - Councillor surgeries - Social media - Online community engagement tools	- HCC's covid travel map and active places survey - Youth forums, e.g. summer passport engagement activities - School Councils
Involving	To involve stakeholders in the design, implementation and evaluation of policies, services and initiatives.	- Online community engagement tools - Workshops - Stakeholder groups	- HCC's active places summits - Citizens' assemblies - Participatory budgeting
Empowering	To build stakeholders' capacity and support them with funding, resources and expertise, so they can have partial or full control over and responsibility for the design, implementation and evaluation of policies, services and initiatives.	- Community enterprises - Voluntary sector - Cross-sector partnerships - Stakeholder groups	

Increasing empowerment

There are several advantages to increasing stakeholder empowerment, including:

- benefitting from their lived experience and local knowledge;
- creating a sense of shared purpose which can encourage wider behaviour change;
- developing a better understanding in stakeholders of the limits to actions the Council can take and competing priorities;
- generating advocates of the policies developed;
- and increasing the reach and scope of the Council's activities.

On the other hand, engagement activities with greater stakeholder empowerment can involve higher costs and require more time. The desire to empower

stakeholders can also conflict with constraints set by the need to follow expert advice, available budgets, existing commitments, or the need to coordinate with other Council activities.

The benefits of empowering stakeholders as fully as possible are dependent on ensuring that all stakeholders are identified so that engagement activities do not exclude people or organisations with an interest. It is also important to be aware of power imbalances between stakeholders that have the potential to disempower some people or groups. Engagement processes will be inclusive.

Good communication strategies are essential to successful engagement for several reasons. Firstly, it is important to reach as many stakeholders as possible. Secondly, for less empowering forms of engagement, it is important that stakeholders' expectations of the scope of the engagement are realistic, to avoid them becoming disillusioned which could lead to reduced participation in the future. Finally, for more empowering forms of engagement, it is important not only that stakeholders can influence the outcome, but also that they understand the influence they have had.

These considerations lead to the following eight principles which will inform all community engagement around climate change.

1. **Aim to engage stakeholders in ways that empower them as much as possible**, given time, cost and other constraints.
2. **Communicate as clearly as possible the scope of each engagement activity**, so that stakeholders fully understand how they will be involved and what they can and can't influence.
3. **Provide as much expert advice to stakeholders as possible** to enable more comprehensive and effective engagement.
4. **Carefully consider the stakeholders who should be involved in each engagement activity**, to ensure that everyone with an interest in the outcome is included.
5. **Proactively support stakeholders who might otherwise struggle to participate fully or have an equal voice in engagement activities**, to ensure all stakeholders have sufficient opportunity to influence the outcome.
6. In particular, **make every effort to engage with young people** and ensure they can influence actions taken.

7. **Feed back the outcome of engagement activities clearly** and for as long as necessary to ensure that stakeholders understand the impact their involvement has had.
8. **Identify and make use of best practice engagement practices** both within Gosport Borough Council and in other councils and organisations.