

<b>Board/Committee:</b>	Climate Change Board
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	21 <sup>st</sup> January 2021
<b>Title:</b>	Climate Change Community Engagement Framework
<b>Author:</b>	Julie Petty, Head of Corporate Policy and Community Safety
<b>Status:</b>	FOR DECISION

### **Purpose**

To consider and approve, if the Board agrees it to be appropriate, the Climate Change Community Engagement Framework set out in this report.

### **Recommendation**

1. That the Climate Change Community Engagement Framework set out in Appendix 1 be approved and published.
2. That engagement activities around climate change follow the Climate Change Community Engagement Framework, subject to the allocation of any necessary funding which is to be considered as and when required.
3. That the Climate Change Community Engagement Framework is periodically reviewed and updated as required.

#### **1 Background**

- 1.1 The Community Board passed a Climate Change Motion on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2020.
- 1.2 This motion contained three community engagement elements and it is proposed that these will be delivered through a Community Engagement Framework:
  - Motion item 5: “Take steps to proactively include young people in the process, ensuring that they have a voice in shaping the future.”
  - Motion item 6: “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.”
  - Motion item 7: “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.”

- 1.3 An initial draft of the Community Engagement Framework was discussed at the Climate Change Board on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2020.
- 1.4 An updated version, with changes arising from that discussion, is presented in Appendix 1 for approval by members.

## **2 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.
- 2.2 To ensure effective and efficient delivery of community engagement and the Climate Change motion, an engagement framework is proposed (see Appendix 1).
- 2.3 A draft version of this Framework was presented to the Climate Change Board on 12<sup>th</sup> November, and members' views were sought on two points in particular:
  - The purpose and role of the Citizens' Assembly mandated by item 6 of the Climate Change Motion.
  - The approach to take for the Climate Change Partnership group mandated by item 7 of the Climate Change Motion.
- 2.4 Members agreed that the Climate Change Partnership should provide a "sounding board" and a means to share ideas and best practice to reduce emissions across organisations and within the community, based on partnership working.
- 2.5 Members were keen to see an "open forum" approach that would allow for ongoing engagement. This could be provided by the Climate Change Partnership or other engagement mechanisms.
- 2.6 Members agreed that a focused, specific engagement activity would also add value and that this could be provided by the Citizens' Assembly when appropriate.
- 2.7 Members emphasised the importance of engaging young people, as required by item 5 of the Climate Change Motion
- 2.8 The Community Engagement Framework has therefore been updated to add details of the key engagement activities mandated by the Climate Change Motion, and reflect these views on how they should be delivered.
- 2.9 Members also highlighted the need to make effective use of online engagement tools.

2.10 The Community Engagement Framework has therefore been updated to add details of the types of online tools available, and how they would be used. This includes tools for seeking ideas and suggestions on an ongoing basis, which could be used in addition to the Climate Change Partnership to provide the open forum requested by members.

### **3 Risk Assessment**

- 3.1 There is no financial risk at this stage since separate approval will be required for any funding to deliver engagement activities based on the Climate Change Engagement Framework.
- 3.2 There is a risk of engagement activities leading to stakeholders becoming disillusioned, if the Council is unable to deliver actions identified by the engagement activities that would support efforts to reduce emissions. This could endanger delivery of the target to encourage residents and businesses to support and adopt measures towards the goal of carbon neutrality.
- 3.3 There is a risk if the Climate Change Community Engagement Framework is insufficiently flexible or encourages inappropriate engagement activities. To manage this, the Framework will be reviewed after the first six months and then annually, and updated if required to address any issues raised while delivering engagement activities based on the Framework.

### **4 Conclusion**

- 4.1 A Climate Change Community Engagement Framework is presented, which has been updated from the draft discussed at the Climate Change Board of 12<sup>th</sup> November to address comments from members.
- 4.2 Approval of the Climate Change Community Engagement Framework will help inform delivery of community engagement activities that are needed to support the Climate Change Motion.

<b>Financial Services comments:</b>	No cost implications.
<b>Legal Services comments:</b>	Any voluntary resource used as part of engagement activities would need to comply with the Council's internal volunteer policy (once drafted), and would require the Council to ensure that adequate insurance was in place.
<b>Climate Change:</b>	Approving a Climate Change Community Engagement Framework will contribute to delivery of the Climate Change Motion
<b>Crime and Disorder:</b>	N/A

<b>Equality and Diversity:</b>	The Climate Change Community Engagement Framework maintains due regard to the public sector equality duty contained in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. The Framework specifies that particular effort should be made to support stakeholders who might otherwise struggle to participate fully or have an equal voice in engagement activities, to ensure that engagement processes are inclusive.
<b>Service Improvement Plan implications:</b>	Actions required are already integrated into Service Plans.
<b>Corporate Plan:</b>	The Climate Change Community Engagement Framework will help the Council to deliver effective services, empower residents and enhance the environment.
<b>Risk Assessment:</b>	Low; see section 3 for details. Failure to develop a Climate Change Community Engagement Framework could generate a risk in delivery of the Council's strategic approach towards climate change.
<b>Background papers:</b>	None
<b>Appendices/Enclosures:</b>	
Appendix 1	Proposed Climate Change Community Engagement Framework
<b>Report author/ Lead Officer:</b>	Julie Petty, 023 9254 5381

# 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

### Online methods

Online engagement methods are able to reach a large audience cost effectively, and can also simplify collection and processing of opinions and ideas from stakeholders. There are several tools available that would be suitable for different online engagement activities; some examples of these are described below. Appropriate tools will be selected for each engagement activity.

- Social media tools such as Facebook can help to disseminate information widely and can also be used to encourage feedback.
- Survey tools such as Survey Monkey are particularly useful for collating and analysing responses to closed questions, but can also be used to receive more open-ended ideas or suggestions.

- Dedicated community engagement tools such as Commonplace can be used to seek ideas and suggestions on selected themes. These include map-based tools to allow ideas to be linked to specific locations.
- Discussion tools such as Slack and collaboration tools such as Padlet, Trello or Confluence, as well as shared document tools such as Google Docs, can help people share information, discuss ideas and reach common positions, and coordinate actions.
- Video conferencing tools such as Microsoft Teams allow meetings to be held online, and include options of splitting participants into smaller breakout rooms. These can be used to present information, for workshops, or to coordinate activities.
- Real-time information gathering tools such as Slido can be used to gather immediate feedback during online meetings, and these can be especially useful in larger meetings.

### Offline methods

Offline engagement is important to ensure that people who are digitally excluded are able to participate. Some offline engagement methods may also help to facilitate deeper engagement. Offline engagement methods include information dissemination via printed materials, exhibitions and presentations, information gathering by means of surveys, focus groups to obtain feedback, ideas and suggestions, and meetings to discuss options in detail.

### **Engagement types**

One way to organise the methods described above is by considering the degree to which they empower 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 types of engagement which will complement each other. For example, a successful Citizens' Assembly might involve 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 types**

**Increasing empowerment**

Type	Aim	Methods	Examples
<b>Informing</b>	To raise awareness and understanding of existing policies, services and initiatives, and to help increase participation in other engagement activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Websites and social media</li> <li>- Newsletters</li> <li>- Press releases</li> <li>- Posters</li> <li>- Leaflets</li> <li>- Local meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Coastline</li> <li>- gosport.gov.uk website</li> <li>- Planning application notices</li> <li>- Meetings with residents</li> </ul>
<b>Consulting</b>	To allow stakeholders to give their opinion on specific proposals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Surveys</li> <li>- Consultation events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inviting responses to planning applications</li> <li>- Local plan consultations</li> <li>- Meetings with residents</li> </ul>
<b>Listening</b>	To understand as fully as possible the needs, views and concerns of stakeholders, and to benefit from their ideas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Surveys</li> <li>- Focus groups</li> <li>- Stakeholder groups</li> <li>- Councillor surgeries</li> <li>- Social media</li> <li>- Online community engagement tools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- HCC's covid travel map and active places survey</li> <li>- Youth forums, e.g. summer passport engagement activities</li> <li>- School Councils</li> </ul>
<b>Involving</b>	To involve stakeholders in the design, implementation and evaluation of policies, services and initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Online community engagement tools</li> <li>- Workshops</li> <li>- Stakeholder groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- HCC's active places summits</li> <li>- Citizens' assemblies</li> <li>- Participatory budgeting</li> </ul>
<b>Empowering</b>	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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community enterprises</li> <li>- Voluntary sector</li> <li>- Cross-sector partnerships</li> <li>- Stakeholder groups</li> </ul>	

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;
- 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 and 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.

### **Engagement principles**

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.

### **Key engagement activities**

The Council will look to identify opportunities for engagement wherever possible and so it is not possible to specify in this Framework all activities that will be carried out. However, there are some key activities which will be needed to deliver the engagement priorities mandated in the Climate Change Motion passed on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2020. These are described in the following sections.

#### Climate Change Partnership

The Climate Change Partnership will be set up as a forum with two aims: to act as a “sounding board” for Council proposals, including generating suggestions for Council activities, and to share ideas and best practice to reduce emissions across organisations and within the community.

The Partnership would be run by its members and decide its precise terms of reference and the methods it would use to implement them; however these would be likely to include the following.

- An online forum, for example using tools such as Slack to facilitate discussion, and shared documents to share information and track actions.

- Regular meetings, both online and offline (when possible), to agree actions and to coordinate the Partnership's activities.
- Establishment of working groups to investigate and report back on specific topics, or coordinate specific actions.

The Partnership will aim to include as wide a range of stakeholders as possible, covering:

- Large businesses
- Business forums
- Schools and colleges (students, staff and governors)
- Youth clubs
- Residents Associations
- Environmental groups
- Faith groups
- Other community groups

At least one member of the Climate Change Board and at least one officer should also take part in the Partnership to represent the Council.

#### Citizens' Assembly

Citizens' Assemblies are a well-defined form of engagement that aim to ensure the changes needed to cut greenhouse gas emissions are shaped by the people that those changes will affect, and to ensure the public legitimacy of policies to achieve the changes.

The key features of Citizens' Assemblies are as follows.

- **Stratified random sampling** is used to select participants, to ensure they are representative of the Borough's residents. (In some cases, the process has been adjusted to allow over-representation of marginalised demographics.)
- **The assembly's deliberations are independently facilitated** to ensure all voices are heard and to help ensure the outcome is seen as legitimate.
- **An oversight panel** made up of representatives from a range of local organisations monitors the entire process and ensures that it is balanced and robust. This could be a working group of the Climate Change Partnership.

Citizens' Assemblies generally consist of three elements.

1. **Learning**, in which participants hear from expert witnesses, and are encouraged to think critically about the information they are hearing and question or challenge the speakers.
2. **Deliberation**, in which facilitated discussions take place to address the question(s) put to the assembly and critically assess the different options.
3. **Decision**, in which a facilitated process identifies points of agreement and disagreement and a report of recommendations from the assembly is published.

Citizens' Assemblies tend to result in several highly engaged individuals and those taking part will be encouraged to join the Climate Change Partnership. In addition, it will be important to ensure that the assembly's members are kept informed of actions being planned as a result of the recommendations made by the assembly, and have the chance to influence those actions.

#### Youth engagement

Given that the impact of greenhouse gas emissions generated or eliminated as a result of current policies and actions will play out over several decades, the views of young people on these policies and actions is particularly important. It can be hard for young people to have an equal voice when taking part in engagement activities with adults. Therefore, while young people will be encouraged to join the Climate Change Partnership and will be represented on the Citizens' Assembly, additional engagement activities involving only young people will also be required.