

Chesterfield Borough Council Climate Change Communications Strategy (2020 – 2023)

Working Draft as of 03/2011

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This plan sets out the council's strategic approach to proactively communicating with key stakeholders on climate change issues – both setting out what action the council is taking, and positioning CBC as a community leader to encourage behaviour change across the borough.
- 1.2 Communications, engagement and marketing activity has been ongoing throughout 2020, in conjunction with key partners – although momentum has been slowed due to the council's ongoing emergency response to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 1.3 This strategy builds on this previous work, setting out a strategic framework through which to:
- Develop and deliver a clear climate change narrative for the borough, and meaningful calls to action which resonate with local people
 - Continue to work closely with local stakeholders, as key agents of challenge, change and influence
 - Embed behavioural science techniques into the communications approach, which can be used to inspire and encourage our communities into action (for consideration where these techniques are deemed appropriate in relation to the communications objective and target audience).
- 1.4 A rolling annual communications plan is being developed, which sits under this strategy (running from March to March). This in turn will link to a series of detailed campaign plans which each align with the key themes, objectives and targets set out in the Climate Change Action Plan.

2.0 Strategic context

- 2.1 All council services align with and support the key priorities set out in the Council Plan. Tackling climate changes and related issues are embedded in service delivery across the council, and as such contributes to all priorities:
- Making Chesterfield a thriving borough
 - Improving quality of life for local people
 - Providing value for money services
- 2.2 In July 2019 CBC declared a Climate Change emergency in Chesterfield, prompted by a motion at Full Council by the Deputy Leader.
- 2.3 A Climate Change Working Group was established. The group produced a Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) which was approved in February 2020. It commits the council to being net zero by 2030 and the borough to be net zero by 2050 and sets out a range of actions and targets under key themes.
- 2.4 The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has presented new challenges, context and opportunity. In setting out its economic and community recovery strategies, the council has reaffirmed its commitment to embed green principles in service design and delivery.

- 2.5 The impact of climate change will have serious consequences around the world and will force people to adapt their behaviour. In Chesterfield we can expect consequences like increased flooding, extreme weather patterns and more. Communicating to change behaviour now can help both mitigate these effects and adapt for them.

3.0 Strategic communications principles

- 3.1 A number of key principles underpin this communications strategy:

3.2 Communicating in partnership

The council alone cannot decarbonise Chesterfield but must embrace a leadership role and work closely with a wide variety of community groups, individuals, third sector organisations and other partners in order to achieve its borough-wide ambitions. As such, partnership working and collaboration – where possible and appropriate – underpins the communications approach.

3.3 Stakeholder mapping

To inform this partnership approach, a full stakeholder mapping exercise is being carried out to identify key community groups (and reinforce relationships where they already exist). This will focus on both environmental campaign groups such as Transition Chesterfield, Chesterfield Climate Alliance, Plastic Free Chesterfield but will also look at wider community and grassroots organisations. This will be regularly refreshed and reviewed.

3.4 Evidence-based communications

Communications activity will be devised and delivered based on available internal and external insight where possible (e.g. demographic data), to inform evidence-based communications activity and allow for effective evaluation. This will include regular reviews and adoption (where appropriate) of the latest best practice in climate change communications.

3.5 Behavioural science models

This approach seeks to embed behavioural science techniques into the communications approach, which can be used to inspire and encourage our communities to change their behaviour and take action on climate change, e.g. the EAST model. See Appendix Two.

3.6 Innovation and value for money

In devising and delivering communications activity, the council will strive to use new and innovative channels and content where these present an effective and value-for-money option.

3.7 Embedding 'green' messages

The CCAP is cross-cutting and seeks to embed green principles in service design and delivery. The council's communication activity will reflect this, and a

consideration of climate change and related issues will be built into all communications and marketing plans to help achieve the objectives of the CCAP.

3.8 Council policies and procedures

At all times the council's communications activity must be in line with and adhere to its agreed corporate policies and procedures as a publicly accountable body. It will be delivered in line with its agreed media and social media protocols.

3.9 Ongoing evaluation

Specific evaluation methods will be built into specific communications campaigns, but the principle of ongoing evaluation is key to ensure activity remains relevant, effective and presents value for money.

3.10 Challenging misinformation ('fake' news)

Misinformation and 'fake' news are particularly prevalent on social media platforms and in hyperlocal digital communities. Incorrect information which arises in response to the council's climate change communications activity will be handled in line with CBC's established social media processes. This includes the use of the Government Communication Service (GCS) [RESIST Counter Disinformation Toolkit](#)

3.11 Digital-first – but mindful of digital exclusion

In line with the council's digital transformation work – and to contribute to the reduction of paper use, printing and postage by the council – communications activity will take a digital-first approach, using online channels where appropriate. However, it is noted that some members of the target audience will face digital exclusion or be hard-to-reach via digital methods. As such, offline and traditional methods of communication will be considered as part of specific campaigns, where appropriate to reach the target audience.

3.12 Language and tone

The use of clear and effective language – and striking the right tone – is crucial to effective communications. All communications activity will use Plain English principles, and the tone will be considered in line with the purpose of the message, e.g. to inform or to persuade. See Appendix One.

3.13 Localising and breaking down 'climate change'

While an overarching narrative which sets out the council's / partners' commitment to tackling climate change is useful, the notion that a single individual can directly affect 'climate change' as a whole issue can be difficult to convey – and challenging to relate to on personal level. Therefore, meaningful campaign messages – and tangible calls to action which emphasise collective as well as individual action – are being developed under the key themes outlined in the CCAP. See section 5.0.

3.14 Integrated communications

Promotional activity will draw on methods and tools across the full marketing mix, ensuring fully integrated, multi-channel campaigns (see Appendix Two).

3.15 Celebrating success

Individual and collective behaviour change can be influenced and encouraged through the sharing of positive examples. Communications activity will celebrate success and reward the 'good' to inspire others, while setting a baseline for challenge (see 7.3).

4.0 Objectives

4.1 SMART objectives will be developed for specific communication campaigns, but overall communications objectives are set out below:

- To raise awareness of climate change issues by sharing engaging and relatable information which resonates with local people and businesses.
- To position the council as a community leader on climate change issues, working in partnership with key stakeholders and demonstrating our action to 'get our own house in order'
- To work collaboratively with key stakeholders to contribute to common goals and leverage networks of influence and change – maximising the reach and effectiveness of key messages
- To ensure openness and transparency in communicating progress against the CCAP targets

5.0 Key themes

5.1 Target audiences must be able to identify with and relate to campaign content (see 3.13). We must focus on both the individual and collective actions that can help tackle climate change and demonstrate how individual, collective and organisational shifts in behaviour can support wider community-based action.

5.2 Meaningful campaign messages – and tangible calls to action – are being developed under the key themes outlined in the CCAP:

- Homes and Buildings
- Power and Electricity
- Transport
- Industry and Business
- Agriculture and Land Use
- Waste and Consumption
- Engagement and Campaigning (how to advocate and lead others)

5.3 Key campaigns (and supporting communication plans) will be developed under these themes, to achieve the specific objectives and targets set out in the CCAP.

6.0 Branding and corporate identity

6.1 A clear and engaging brand will be developed to identify climate change communications campaign material and messages.

- 6.2 This will be a CBC sub-brand and so must sit well alongside the existing council identity but establishing a new 'look and feel' will help audiences recognise and recall campaign material and set it aside from other 'climate change' messages in what is a saturated market.
- 6.3 It will aim to capture the aspirational notion of a 'Chesterfield of the future' – the kind of community that local people would like to live in and to pass on to future generations.
- 6.3 A range of new assets will be created for use across communications activity, including:
- A new logo
 - Associated straplines to support the logo
 - A brand colour pallet
 - A suite of graphics for use on social media and in publications
 - Partner / event toolkit to be used on stakeholders' communication channels and be used to support community-led events
 - Create an ongoing central focus point for the year (similar to NCC's 28for28) which all groups can get involved with and support

7.0 Audiences

- 7.1 Every resident of, and business / organisation within, the Borough has a part in to play in tackling climate change – individually and collectively.
- 7.2 As such the target audience of this overarching strategy is wide-ranging in scope. Where appropriate, specific target audiences will be identified in relation to specific campaign objectives, e.g. targeted selected age groups in relation to a defined call to action.
- 7.3 It should also be noted that differing motivation and engagement levels with climate change issues differs greatly within and across these groups, and tailored tactics will be embedded in specific campaigns.

Engagement / motivation levels	Tactics
Already engaged with climate change issues and want to make change	Promote and reward behaviour Encourage ongoing advocacy and leadership Support significant landmark projects
Want to engage on climate change issues but need information and support	Ensure information and support is easily available and engaging Use 'nudge' techniques to encourage behaviour change Celebrate successes
Not engaged an unlikely to engage on climate change issues	Understand barriers to engagement Challenge misinformation Tailor messaging to emphasise benefits of action outside of climate change narrative

7.4 Key audience groups are set out below:

7.4.1 External

- Chesterfield residents
- Chesterfield visitors
- Local businesses
 - Independent / small
 - High street / chain
 - Large scale employers, e.g. manufacturing /industry
- Local business networks
 - Destination Chesterfield
 - East Midlands Chamber
 - D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership
- Key local agencies
 - Derbyshire County Council
 - Staveley Town Council
 - Parish councils
 - Derbyshire Police
 - Local health authorities
- Key community stakeholders (a detailed list will be developed following a stakeholder mapping exercise)
- Local MPs
- Central government departments
- Education partners
 - Chesterfield schools
 - Chesterfield College
 - Derby University
- Media – including online / specialist trade / business press
- Community media

7.4.2 Internal

- Council employees – as members of staff, and as residents of Chesterfield where applicable
- Council contractors (who work in our buildings long term) e.g. Arvato employees
- Council Directors / Heads of Service
- Council elected members

8.0 **Communication channels**

- 8.1 A range of internal, external and partner communication channels – both paid-for, low-cost and no cost – are available to use.
- 8.2 Communication channels will be selected based on a consideration of target audience, specific objectives, timescales and the cost-effective use of the available budget.
- 8.3 Consideration will also be given to the environmental impact of channels / promotional items before they are employed, e.g. printed material, promotional items such as pens / trolley coins

8.4 Consideration is being given to the merit of introducing new channels in support of this strategy.

8.5 See Appendix Two for a list of available communications channels.

9.0 Key messages

9.1 Specific key messages will be developed in line with individual campaigns under key themes, but the overarching key messages are:

- We have declared a climate change emergency in Chesterfield – we must act now, to avoid severe consequences for our way of life
- We all have a part to play – this is everyone’s responsibility
- We want to protect our borough and create a sustainable town that we can be proud to pass to future generations
- Small actions add up to big changes
- The council is committed to action – we’re getting our own house in order, working towards a clear action plan and targets
- We’re working with our key partners to inform, motivate and lead our communities to a better future

10 Communications protocol

10.1 A communication protocol which sets out how the council will work in collaboration with key stakeholders especially when proactively / reactively dealing with the media will be developed, to ensure consistency and clarity of message where needed.

11.0 Budget

11.1 A budget of £40,000 is available to support CCAP communications until March 2023, with a further £40,000 allocated to promotional activities over the same timeframe.

11.2 This will be allocating in adherence with value for money considerations, and in-line with procurement procedures where applicable.

11.3 A detailed breakdown of budget spend is being developed in line with specific communications campaigns under key themes.

12.0 Detailed communications plans and activity schedules

12.1 A rolling annual climate change communications plan is being developed, which will sit underneath this overarching strategy, and which will be delivered in line with the principles set out in this strategic framework. This will align with financial years and the current plan under development will cover the period March 2021 to March 2022.

12.2 This consists of a series of proactive communication campaigns and activity, in line with the key themes and in support of the objectives and targets set out in the CCAP.

12.3 Communications activity is also being planned for a ‘spotlight’ on the CCAP – showing progress against key targets, and a call to action for residents to get involved.

13.0 Evaluation

- 13.1 It is vital to regularly review both this overarching strategy and individual communication actions, in order to understand effectiveness – and inform ongoing activity.
- 13.2 This will be carried out in line with the [Barcelona Principles](#) and look at the effects of communication rather than simply looking at reach, engagement or similar metrics.
- 13.3 The [AMEC Integrated Evaluation framework](#) and [GCS evaluation framework](#) should be implemented to measure the objectives of the plan against actionable results. Annual communication plans and SMART objectives should be fed into this framework in order to ensure objectives are being met and to ensure communications are as effective as possible.

APPENDIX ONE

What is meant by behaviour change?

Behavioural change is the transformation or modification of human activity. This is a central tenant of climate communications because it requires us all to adapt our behaviour in order to reduce carbon emissions, mitigate the effects of climate change and improve the wider environment. When encouraging behaviour change there are some key guiding principles.

The Government Communication Service have developed a model of behaviour change communications and this should be used when trying to get residents, businesses and others to adapt their behaviour. It is based around the COM-B Model (Capability, Opportunity, Motivation, Behaviour).

There is a large amount of research on changing behaviour around climate change, [this document](#) highlights how the COM-B model can be applied to a range of different actions and initiatives. These align closely with the key themes and serve as a guide on the capabilities, motivations and behaviours required for positive action on climate change.

EAST

You can use the EAST framework to consider how your communication activities can overcome barriers and realise your communications objectives through your proposition, messages and channel strategy. Your communication activities should aim to make the desired behaviour easy, attractive, social and timely where possible. Of these, the most important is easy, and the one you should devote the most attention to.

When creating and implementing a communications strategy, you can ask yourself the following questions:

Easy

- Are you making the ask simple and straightforward, e.g. breaking bigger actions down into simple, concrete steps?
- Are you making the desired behaviour the default choice where possible?
- Are you requiring unnecessary additional effort to fulfil the ask, e.g. the number of click-throughs required on online adverts?

Attractive

- Does your communications attract attention from your target audience?
- Is it personalised?

Social

- Do a majority of people already engage in the desired behaviour? If so, can you demonstrate that to your target audience
- Could people commit to the behaviour up front?
- Are you getting peers within your audience to advance your message?

Timely

- Are you communicating with your audience when they will be most receptive to your message?

- How immediate can you make the benefits of change?
- Can you get people to plan for future actions now?

Language

Language choice and tone are essential to help further differentiate council led climate communications. This will also further help make climate messages distinct from council communications and will further help ensure the climate brand is wider than just the council.

Tone

Climate communications should be upbeat and positive, it should focus on change for the better and not on the negative consequences of climate change. Where this opportunity to expand climate change communication in terms of general improvements to the borough as a whole, these should be taken. This will further help encourage more members of the community to get involved, because they may not be motivated by reducing emissions but may be motivated by reducing litter in the borough or similar initiatives.

Plain English

In order to increase wider engagement, climate communications should use plain English (as described by the Plain English Campaign) and avoid use of overly technical or scientific terminology. This removes a barrier which stops some members of the community engaging and acting on information related to climate change.

APPENDIX TWO - Communication channels

Communication channels will be selected based on a consideration of target audience, specific objectives, timescales and the cost-effective use of the available budget.

Consideration will also be given to the environmental impact of channels / promotional items before they are employed, and sustainable alternatives will be preferred.

Please note, this is not an exhaustive list but an indication of the channels which will be considered for use in specific campaigns.

Media and PR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Derbyshire Times ▪ Chesterfield Live (Derby Telegraph) ▪ Chesterfield Post ▪ S40 Local/S41 Local Magazine ▪ Twist ▪ Reflections ▪ Hasland Magazine ▪ Derbyshire Life ▪ BBC East Midlands and Look North ▪ BBC Radio Sheffield ▪ Greatest Hits Radio and Peak ▪ Spire Radio ▪ Chesterfield Radio
Digital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CBC social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube – other channels will be considered on merit) ▪ Partner social media channels ▪ Potential for e-newsletters ▪ Paid-for social media ▪ CBC website (content to be reviewed and refreshed) ▪ Visual storytelling – animations, videos, gifs ▪ Profile photo badges, if appropriate ▪ CBC staff intranet ▪ Hyperlocal online forums <p><i>Digital assets will be shared for use by partners as appropriate</i></p>
Stakeholder / partner comms channels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Information will be shared with key stakeholders for use on their communication channels
CBC Internal comms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Intranet ▪ Staff bulletins ▪ Staff events ▪ Blogs
Direct mail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Your Chesterfield residents' magazine ▪ Use of targeted mail / leaflets if this is appropriate for certain campaigns
Promotional items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interesting sustainable promotional items can be used to further promote action on climate (e.g. Seed Bombs)

Printed marketing collateral	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Flyers, posters, postcards, roller banners etc
Paid-for advertising	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Print▪ Social media▪ Outdoor – bus backs, bus shelters etc▪ Radio▪ Advertorial