

**Report to:**

## **CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Relevant Officer:**

Scott Butterfield, Strategy and Climate Lead

**Date of Meeting:**

20 March 2024

### **2024 CLIMATE COMMUNICATIONS PLAN**

#### **1.0 Purpose of the report:**

1.1 To present the outline Climate Communications Plan for 2024, including work undertaken to date.

#### **2.0 Recommendation(s):**

2.1 The Committee notes the report and comments on the Plan.

#### **3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):**

3.1 To ensure the continued awareness of action being taken by the council to raise awareness of climate mitigation and adaptation measures.

3.2 To ensure continued engagement with Climate Emergency plans in support of the Council's aims for reaching Net Zero in Blackpool before 2030.

3.3 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.4 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

#### **4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:**

4.1 None

#### **5.0 Council Priorities:**

5.1 The work supports both of the Council's priorities, and delivery of the Climate Emergency declared by Council in 2019.

#### **6.0 Background Information:**

6.1 Public engagement is a critical aspect that allows for the long term success of climate mitigation and adaptation actions, ensuring that residents are informed about the methods through which the council is working to ensure a 'Climate First' approach, and how they can contribute. It is important for the council to take a strong approach to communications to demonstrate leadership on climate matters. This provides a sound basis for further communications with the public where they can become informed in regards to climate positive actions that they can conduct

themselves.

- 6.2 On 5<sup>th</sup> July 2023, Scrutiny Committee requested that details of the Communications Plan be brought to a future meeting. Appendix A details the plan for 2024, including activity which has already been undertaken. The Plan is a live document which is reviewed and updated as and when needed, and in addition to the included actions, the Communications Team makes reference to how other council projects are being delivered in line with carbon reduction or climate adaptation principles in press releases and social media content.
- 6.3 Where appropriate, projects have their own specific detailed communications and marketing plans or objectives, for example around Blackpool Eco Homes, Electric Vehicle Infrastructure and Heat Networks. These projects, funded by external resources, include some provision for a communications and marketing budget where it supports the objectives of the project. Internal staff communication is also important, and is dealt with by various “task and finish” working groups such as the Staff Travel Group.
- 6.4 The Lancashire Climate Officers Group, chaired by the Strategy and Climate Lead, is holding a session in April to look at whether there are benefits to Councils collaborating more closely on climate communications, with any conclusions from this being fed back into the Blackpool plan. For example, there are numerous “awareness” days/weeks/months on topics relating to climate issues, and taking a selective approach to those most relevant to our objectives together with other councils could deliver more media coverage and impact.
- 6.5 In the medium term, our approach to climate communications will also need to support service design choices which make more environmentally-friendly behaviour the easy and attractive option for people; for example, making it easier for people to access more sustainable transport options.

Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

**List of Appendices:**

Appendix 6(a): Climate Communications Plan for 2024

**7.0 Financial Considerations:**

7.1 None.

**8.0 Legal considerations:**

8.1 None.

**9.0 Risk management considerations:**

9.1 None.

**10.0 Equalities considerations and the impact of this decision for our children and young people:**

10.1 An Equality Analysis was undertaken as part of the development of the Climate Action Plan, and ongoing consideration is given to how to ensure communication messages reach as much of the population as possible by using a variety of engagement channels.

10.2 The process of providing communications around the climate emergency puts forward information and guidance surrounding the movement to a more sustainable, low carbon future, allowing benefits to future generations. Outside the scope of the communications plan, work has been undertaken to encourage and support engagement by schools in Keep Britain Tidy's Eco-Schools programme. 23 Blackpool schools are now signed up, and Blackpool Sixth Form are organising a Lancashire Youth Climate Conference due to be held in October this year.

**11.0 Sustainability, climate change and ethical considerations:**

11.1 There is likely to be a positive impact on the sustainability of Blackpool throughout this plan, with the increase in public knowledge and understanding potentially leading to an uptake of more climate positive actions. Communication plan actions specifically linked to increasing public participation in carbon reduction initiatives will reduce their carbon impact and will aid in the push towards net zero.

**12.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:**

12.1 None relating to the production of this plan. Promotion of external consultation will be a consideration when updating the action plan in future.

**13.0 Background papers:**

13.1 None.