



Climate Change Communication Strategy

A West Sussex Case Study



Department for
**Communities and
Local Government**



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Introduction and Background

The purpose of this document is to develop a more systematic and effective approach to communicating climate change in West Sussex. The document draws on the experiences and lessons learned through climate change awareness raising projects in West Sussex, particularly those undertaken as part of the EU funded ESPACE (European Spatial Planning: Adapting to Climate Events) project (Appendix A), as well as DEFRA's (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) National Climate Change Communications Strategy.

ESPACE

Across West Sussex, the ESPACE project has been working to raise awareness of climate change, and how to adapt to the influences it will have on our lives. Large-scale surveys undertaken in 2004 and 2006 have highlighted gaps and changes in the understanding of climate change, and have helped to identify methods for raising awareness (Appendix B).

The National Climate Change Communications Strategy

Since the UK Climate Change programme was initiated in 2000, there has been a growing realisation by Government of the need for a co-ordinated climate change communications campaign to change public attitudes and behaviour. A national Climate Change Communications Strategy was commissioned by DEFRA in 2004 and "Tomorrow's Climate – Today's Challenge" was made public in Feb 2006. Amongst its many recommendations was the establishment of a Climate Challenge Fund, to support climate change communications at a regional and local level. The first round of funding has now been fully allocated, but it is hoped that future rounds will allow more projects to be developed. It also recommends that all climate change communications plans should now organise communication programmes along the lines proposed in order to ensure a consistency of messages.

Communicating Climate Change

As climate change is a global problem with wide-ranging impacts, it is essential that the climate change messages are communicated successfully with many different groups including residents, partners, opinion formers, and stakeholders.

Action on climate change consists of two complementary elements. **Mitigation** is concerned with the causes of global warming and calls for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Whilst **adaptation** is concerned with the impacts of a changing climate on society, the economy and the environment, and promotes activities to reduce vulnerability to extreme weather events and other longer term changes in our climate. This strategy looks to how to communicate both the mitigation and adaptation agendas.

Scope

This strategy provides a framework for delivering key messages on climate change issues to target audiences. This strategy discusses the actions recommended to raise awareness of climate change and its impacts, and the communication of these actions. Although the ESPACE project concentrated on adaptation, this strategy will also look at the communication of mitigation.

Aims

- To significantly raise the level of awareness of the community of the opportunities and threats brought about by climate change, and to accept their responsibilities to adapt to, and mitigate against its impacts.
- To provide advice and examples of best practice of how to communicate adaptation to climate change, and mitigation through reducing emissions.

The **goal** is to create a community that is well informed about climate change and thus able to make globally responsible choices.

The **challenge** is to engage people in the climate change debate in order to break down some of the barriers that exist and to connect people to the role that their attitude and lifestyle plays in causing the problem and working towards solutions. Table 1 below, is based on DEFRA's "Tomorrow's Climate, Today's Challenge" communication guide which highlights the shifts in attitudes that need to be achieved in order to face the challenge of engaging with people.

Where We're At		Where We Want to Be
People aren't clear what causes climate change and don't understand what needs to be done to tackle it.		People understand climate change and what is causing it.
People think that climate change won't affect them personally.		People see the impact it may have on their lives.
People don't include climate change as an important issue when making decisions.		People feel empowered and positive about tackling climate change.
Climate change is a depressing and negative issue.		People include climate change when making their decisions and embrace the positive changes that result.

Table 1. Shifting of attitudes (adapted from National Climate Change Communication Strategy) DEFRA 2006

Communicating Climate Concerns

Climate change is a complex issue. The complexity of the issue makes it difficult to understand, and causes controversy. It is also difficult to discern changes over short time-periods (five years) as normal variability masks the climate change trends.

The messages that need to be clearly communicated are:

- That climate change is real and the effects are long-term
- It is possible to adapt to the impacts climate change will bring and mitigate the causes
- There are risks to the "do-nothing" option

It is also important to recognise the potential conflicts that exist between the long-term changes climate change will bring and the short-term priorities that individuals and organisations work to.

The mechanisms available include:

- Promoting credible sources of information
- Preparing and utilising material on climate change
- Integrating the climate change issue in related communications
- Responding to questions and requests for information from the community
- Proactive outreach to community groups and leaders

It is also vital that champions from within the corporate sector and community leaders are identified and educated of the importance of climate change and the actions that they and others can take to adapt to this global environmental problem.

Communicating Differently

From the work in West Sussex and drawing on experiences of other communication experts, it has been found that there are 6 themes that should drive work to raise awareness. These 6 themes can serve as a checklist against which any suggested initiatives on communication and awareness raising should be selected and judged. They are known as the “Rules of the Game” (Appendix C).

1) **Blowing Away the Myths**

Challenging the habits of climate change communication. Research has shown that there is a need to communicate climate change in a different way.

- People are rarely motivated to act by threats to their long-term survival. In fact, when it comes to climate change, people are not even normally motivated by concern for their children’s future.
- It is also important not to create fear about climate change without showing what people can do about it. If people can simply avoid frightening issues, or put them to the back of their minds, they will.
- It’s often unhelpful to criticise behaviour that people consider normal in their home or family. Instead, make behaviour that reduces the threat of climate change seem positive and desirable.
- Don’t rely solely on logic, facts or even money-saving incentives – people need to be inspired and provoked.

People are constantly bombarded with information and have to develop filters, so that they can discriminate amongst the excess of messages coming at them. In particular, people are always ready to discount or completely ignore a message, for either of two reasons:

- The source isn’t trusted, there is some hidden motivation
- The message isn’t for them, it has no practical relevance to them

There may be a temptation to shout about climate change in order to get the message across, but the likelihood is that the message will be discounted or ignored. Described in sensational terms, a climate change message will fail the “anti-hype” test, and will be discounted as untrustworthy and most likely motivated (e.g. by the need to sell papers, the desire to make the public submissive to the authorities, the desire to justify higher insurance premiums). But also it’s likely to be ignored: if the problems are presented as insurmountable, then there’s nothing to be done, so there’s no practical meaning in the message.

Talks and events give an opportunity to offer advice to individuals or small groups, and answer questions about specific topics in a “safe” environment. This promotes trust and a chance to expand further on issues. These events also provide an opening to demonstrate the relevance of the topic to individuals and how they can be involved. Done well, a simple talk can lead to invitations to other similar events. (See ESPACE Case Study 1 for more details).

Information is helpful, but does not, by itself, stimulate change. Providing information is not wrong; relying on information alone is. To raise awareness and stimulate change, people need to better understand the big picture and be able to relate this to specific or limited action. This relates strongly to feedback of how small actions are part of the biggest picture. In every initiative, we must develop ways of communicating this link. Information should be appropriate and should be given where it matters.

*By encouraging individuals to pledge to do their bit, the **10% Challenge** helps to show how their personal actions fit into the bigger picture. (See ESPACE case study 2 for more details).*

2) A New Way of Thinking

Awareness of climate change is widespread, but at the ‘wrong’ level. Awareness in the general population is often at the ‘wrong’ level and no relationship exists between meaningful action and perceptions of climate change. “Climate change” by itself is too wide and too remote a subject for the general population without a link to immediate issues.

Meeting people on their own terms is crucial. It is difficult to create a meaningful link between the wider climate change issues and local or individual action. This does not mean that the specific action is wasted; however, it must be linked to the wider issues. Initiatives that people regard as relevant can then be linked to the wider climate change agenda and to raising climate change awareness.

***"Moving out of the Toilets"** is an annual event for all secondary school councils in West Sussex. It is popular with students as a way to meet and learn from the experiences of young people from all over the county. The idea is to help move school council members away from issues like the state of the toilets, and towards more decision making and real results. The conference held in December 2005 was based around the topic of climate change.*

The event was a successful engagement project that changed attitudes of young people attending a schools’ conference on climate change. Using unconventional language and mediums familiar to the audience, enabled participants to become more confident in discussing a wide range of environmental topics. (“Big Brother” style diary room).

Although “climate change” or “global warming” are familiar themes in the media, they are not always very gripping. As a news story, they lack colour; the action is slow and inconclusive, and in the end the story appears to be based on a mass of numbers which the experts are arguing about anyway. Consequently there is a massive overestimation of the expected increase in temperature in the next 10 years. Non-experts simply cannot believe that the expected rate of average temperature increase is big enough to be a serious problem. Since they know that the experts do think there is a problem, they infer that the expected temperature increase is something exciting.

For adaptation and mitigation messages, participants are unanimous. They want to see vivid examples of people and organisations doing something about climate change.

When they are talking about the possibility of promoting environment-friendly behaviour, participants consider both the carrot and the stick. Broadly speaking, they claim to be receptive to a stick in the form of regulation (national or preferably global) and a carrot in the form of positive communication, “encouragement rather than punishment”. But the examples of successful communication campaigns that they cite suggest a slightly different attitude. It’s always the campaigns against irresponsible driving and against smoking that participants refer to as possible models for good climate-change communications.

The conclusion, maybe, is that messages do indeed need to be encouraging and positive, but that people are perfectly ready to respond to the message of self-restraint and that an appeal to enlightened self-interest and responsible behaviour can be made to work.

*The **10% Challenge** has also shown how people acting together can make a real difference and helps to take people further on the journey towards climate friendliness. (See Case Study 2 for more details).*

3) Linking Policy and Communication

The Government’s climate change campaign “Tomorrow’s Climate – Today’s Challenge” provides national guidance for communicating climate change. In particular “The Rules of the Game” set out principles that all climate change communication plans can follow. This will help to ensure that consistency between messages is built in from the start.

Be consistent in your use of language and your explanation of climate change – this will help it stick in people’s minds.

*Climate change is now such a “front of mind” issue within West Sussex County Council that it is included in the **County Strategy, Corporate Plan and Local Area Agreement (LAA) targets**. It will be further enhanced by the development of a **Climate Change Strategy**, of which this **Communications Strategy** will form a part.*

4) Audience Principles

Action is a much better starting point than information for raising awareness. Any initiative needs to stimulate greater awareness through change. Limited or apparently superficial change may lead to deeper behavioural change. Evidence suggests that people are more likely to move to awareness from action than the other way around. However, awareness raising will not happen automatically with action, but needs to be a planned goal of any programme.

Most people are already doing something they think will help. A key theme is the relationship between this specific action of individuals, groups and organisations to a larger picture. The larger picture is ultimately climate change itself. Action must therefore be linked to information.

*The **Formula Sun** project engaged with participants through a fun activity to design, build and race solar power cars. One of the key elements of the project was to create an understanding as to why they were building these cars – climate change. (See Case Study 3 for more details).*

People's internal sense of agency (the feeling that their actions are meaningful) must be reinforced. Agency will be created when people know what to do, decide to do it and have the infrastructure necessary to allow them to do it. People will not sustain action if there are barriers preventing them from taking meaningful action. Each person's contribution is so small that we must create a wider context and remove as many barriers as possible. Experience has shown that external barriers will lead to a resistance in establishing awareness.

Targeting specific audiences is a classic communications tool, not always followed by climate change communications. Experience also shows that the delivery of messages from a partnership is also likely to be more successful.

*The **EcoFaith** project is a programme of sustainability that provides faith groups with information and advice on how individuals and groups can do "their bit". It was originally a partnership of 8 organisations, but it has been so successful that every Church in the Diocese of Chichester (500) is now involved. (See Case Study 4 for more details).*

5) Style Principles

Groups and networks are vital for awareness raising and initiatives. This relates to social groups that may already exist, e.g. schools, communities, etc., or to networks that may be established for specific actions/ initiatives. This relates to both individual initiatives and to the linking or 'networking' of initiatives.

*The "**Trees for Shade**" project has linked the existing Tree Warden, Travelwise and School networks to disseminate the message of climate change adaptation by promoting the planting of shade trees in school grounds. (See Case Study 5 for more details).*

Change will involve difficult emotions. One of the reasons that people back off the subject of climate change is that it is emotionally challenging or disturbing. People need support to address these emotions. Re-enforcing a positive message will go some way to overcoming this problem. Being 'forced' to deal with difficult emotions can be totally counter-productive and can lead to repressed behaviour.

Involve the media. The media plays an important role in raising awareness. It will be important to create a trusted, credible, recognised voice on climate change. Through the Communications Team, there is an opportunity to continue to build new relationships with the media to ensure opportunities to deliver the climate change message are capitalised on.

Develop a leadership role. West Sussex as a county needs to continue to develop a leadership role, as champions for individual awareness raising initiatives, the overall county awareness raising strategy and (possibly) for WSCC as an organisation. The County Council needs to be seen as being deeply involved and engaged.

*Signing the **Nottingham Declaration** on Climate Change and **AER Declaration** on Renewable Energy have enabled West Sussex County Council to show its commitment to leading the way in raising awareness of climate change. This is backed up by many other initiatives within West Sussex County Council (10% Commuter Challenge, Green Teams, the adoption of BREEAM [British Research Establishment: Environmental Assessment Method] standards for new Council developments).*

Feedback is vitally important. Reflection and learning must be part of the process, be it for awareness raising or action. People do not trust generalised claims, but want hard evidence from someone they trust. Feedback must be meaningful at the individual, group, organisational and, possibly, a wider national or even global level. Some feedback should be at the 'micro' level with relation to the 'macro' picture.

6) Effective Management

Awareness raising takes time. While there is a need for a sufficiently long timescale to allow initiatives to work, a sense of momentum is vital. All of the most successful public awareness campaigns are sustained consistently over a number of years. Initiatives often run out of steam through lack of positive re-enforcement and a sense of pace. During the process the positive message needs to be constantly re-enforced.

Generic tips for writing effective press release are provided by many communications experts. However, they will consider the following:

- Tailored according to the media to be used. E.g. Local papers tend to focus on more on prestige and community issues.
- Building relationships with media offers the opportunity for favourable coverage
- Timing is essential; journalists will not use yesterday's news

Communication Methodologies

Target Audiences

Targeting the communication by community can often be crucial to increasing awareness. Therefore, the most appropriate media needs to be selected for each community. There is often little statistical difference of climate change awareness between different communities, so selecting particular groupings can be difficult. However, the fact that there is a general low level of awareness does mean that some approaches may be as useful across the whole population.

Recommendation:

Following on from the work of ESPACE in West Sussex, target audiences should include schools, businesses, and community groups.

Branding and Key Messages

Branding messages is important in helping to develop a recognisable link to the project. The private sector acknowledges the tremendous 'brand value' to be gained from an established identity. Familiarity often brings reassurance and competitive 'edge'. It is therefore that branding is right and its use re-enforced

It is therefore important to develop brands or messages that:

- Utilise formats that build awareness
- Develop a single minded proposition that will be attractive to all residents/ businesses

- Educate on the reasons for changing to illustrate key success factors
- Encourage the community to convert – good for the environment = good for you = ‘feel good’ factor.
- Builds on established branding and key messages (“Tomorrow’s Climate, Today’s Challenge”).

The key messages this communication strategy wants to convey are:

- Everyone has a role to play a role by reducing their contribution to climate change (mitigation).
- Climate change will impact everyone – we all need to adapt (adaptation).

In addition, the following should also be taken into account:

- Climate change advice can add value and credibility.
- Climate change policies and measures should be integrated with other environmental issues and mainstream policies.
- Flexibility in policy making should be maintained to deal with uncertainty.
- Flexibility in policy and regulation will also allow innovation.

There are also a number of risks that should be considered:

- Lack of resources reduces ability to deliver messages.
- Lack of effective partnership for communication of messages.
- Other immediate policy pressures squeeze out incorporation of climate change in other partner’s activities.

Recommendations:

Both the “For Better Tomorrows” and “10% Challenge” brands are becoming widely recognised within the County as dealing with climate change and sustainability / environmental issues. Changing these now would not be advisable. Therefore it is even more important to ensure the messages used under these local brands are consistent with those of the National Campaign.

The West Sussex County Council “brand” is also a well recognised and trusted brand; this should also be built upon, as set-out in the County Council’s own Communications Plan.

Public Relations

Maintaining good relations with the public is very important for creating an environment in which the audience is receptive to the message. PR practice looks after reputation with the aim of earning understanding and can help to influence opinion and behaviour through:

- Build a strong and positive reputation of the organisation over time
- Engage the reader, listener or viewer more fully
- Provide credibility through endorsement of third parties
- Foster prestige, reputation
- Attract media attention thereby promoting the project

- Display commitment to stakeholders (customers, partners and target audience) through demonstration
- Create and maintain respectability in the eyes of the stakeholders
- Maintain resources through the goodwill of partners, politicians and managers

PR activities include media briefings, celebrity management, media releases, media launches, community consultation and media coverage evaluation.

Recommendation:

West Sussex County Council should seek buy in or endorsement from high profile figures within the community. This can include local celebrities, ambassadors, or people in influential positions. These relationships are important and should be carefully fostered.

Seasonality

Climate change issues are most likely to be raised in people's minds at times of extreme weather – winter storms/ floods - summer droughts/ water shortages – hurricanes/ heat waves/etc. It is important to be in a position to exploit these times to maximum benefit.

Recommendation:

Identify and promote 4 seasonal events in 2007/8.

- July – Water Festival*
- October – 20 years since the “big storm”*
- Jan – Floods and sea front flooding*
- March – Spring Watch*

Events for 2008/9 could also include Sussex Day.

Pre-prepare press releases that put climate change perspective on extreme weather events to enable quick response times.

Using Different Channels

A key part of successful promotion is knowing the most effective channels of communication to reach the target audience. The pros and cons of the available options have to be considered.

The core approach should be to target press and radio to reach households and businesses in West Sussex by community. The priority of the communications work is to convey the message that all residents need to do, is to undertake simple changes. The mixed media of visual press and aural radio can be used to convey a variety of messages and spur to action in different ways. All media usage needs to be cost effective in their reach of the target audience and the communities as a whole.

Recommendation:

Work closely with the West Sussex Sustainable Business Partnership to target business community. This could be as part of the continued development of the 10% Challenge.

Television and Radio

The survey undertaken in West Sussex highlighted the important role the television has in communicating messages. However, the cost of using this form of media for advertising can be restrictive. Radio broadcasts especially on local stations are both more affordable and can be used to target more specific audiences.

Recommendation:

Work with the communications team to identify good opportunities for TV coverage and work to ensure initiatives are promoted to TV where appropriate.

Raise awareness of the availability of an “expert” with the media, for a response to an incident.

Use the County Council’s radio recording and broadcast facilities to promote climate change awareness.

Printed Media

Surveys have also shown that the public do like to receive information via leaflets or newsletters. As such they are heavily relied upon as a key promotional tool. They are also relatively inexpensive to produce and provide relatively low cost advertising. Posters in particular are suitable for placing in public places. There are however, sustainability questions surrounding the publication of excess numbers of leaflets.

Recommendation:

Utilise West Sussex Connections to provide key climate change messages – tip of the season.

Work with the Communications team to ensure printed media is utilised effectively.

Electronic Media

As the availability of electronic media increases, the internet offers the ability to provide up-to-date and creative information. A website can have lower cost advantages and can act as a primary focus for campaigns and a source of contact for the target audience. Direct mail can appear “face-less”, whereas marketing via direct-e-mail helps overcome this potential barrier. On-line activities also enable closer contact with the audience, enabling awareness building. (Appendix D gives an outline for the effective use of the internet).

Recommendation:

Continue to develop the West Sussex County Council climate change web pages and intranet pages, incorporating interactive elements where appropriate. This could incorporate the “Climate for Change” web elements.

Continue to develop the 10% Challenge website.

Helplines

A telephone helpline provides an excellent means of interacting directly with the target audience and provides an opportunity to monitor customer feedback. A helpline can specifically provide:

- Direct access to advice and support
- Monitoring of effectiveness
- Information
- Recording
- Signposting to other initiatives.

Recommendation:

Ensure the Contact Centre information is up-to-date. Provide training if appropriate.

Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement is an effective way of embedding campaign messages and achieving long-term change. Stakeholder engagement allows the creation of active networks through establishing contacts. In short, stakeholders help provide:

- Endorsement for the campaign, extend the campaign reach and maintain momentum
- Reassurance of the target audience that the scheme is official, reputable and trustworthy
- Financial and in-kind contributions enabling cost effective use of resources (time and money)

Although anyone can be considered a stakeholder, in this context stakeholders are those influential individuals or groups that have a vested interest in the campaign success. They could be funders / contributors, decision makers or influencers.

Recommendations:

Develop programme of contact with County Local Committees to ensure climate change is on the agenda of key partnerships. Develop climate change LAA.

Direct Engagement

Direct engagement is used to communicate campaign messages directly to the target audience through a number of channels, the most appropriate of which will be derived by the target audience. The success of this methodology will be resource dependent.

Direct engagement can also give the opportunity to engage individuals who in turn could act as ambassadors, supporting the campaign message, and educating in more depth either to those who wish to become more involved or focusing on specific target audiences.

Community groups comprise a group of people who have shared values or a common interest, and are often highly cohesive and close-knit. The close ties between these people mean that they are more likely to follow through their commitment to activities and that appeal to their beliefs and values. Community based activities can be an effective way of tapping into community spirit and pride.

To establish community based initiative it is necessary to identify the range of community groups that are accessible, and to understand their values. This will help target specific messages to engage the group to support your objectives. Community groups that have the following characteristics should be targeted.

- An established community activity
- A good communications vehicle
- Clear community boundaries to help monitor impact.

Recommendation:

Develop a range of presentations tailored to influence key influential audiences (WI, NFU, House Builders' Federation, and West Sussex Economic Partnership).

Advertising

Advertising is a non-personal communication tool with principal aim of creating awareness. Although it doesn't focus on a specific target audience it can have powerful impact and a wide reach. Traditional awareness raising campaigns rely extensively on advertising using any or a combination of radio, TV, newspapers, posters, leaflets and direct marketing.

Advertising is thought to be a powerful influence on consumers especially when the benefits are aligned with the target audience values and aspirations or the intended action is convenient and tangible. Advertising repetition is important in maintaining awareness. Advertising and awareness raising alone is not strong enough to achieve sustainable behaviour change particularly for social issues. Advertising also has inherent cost implications.

Recommendations:

Develop posters / banners to use in public places and include advertising and promotion of the other climate change communication elements (water festival, storms, 10% Challenge etc).

Appendix A - ESPACE

Across West Sussex, the ESPACE project has been working to raise awareness of climate change and how we can adapt to the influence it will have on our lives. This strategy aims to draw on the experiences gained, to promote good climate change awareness.

European Spatial Planning: Adapting to Climate Events (ESPACE):

- Is a partnership of 10 organisations from across north west Europe who recognise climate change as a real issue.
- Aims to develop integrated spatial planning policy and guidance that will deliver sustainable, economic, social, and environmental development taking account of climate change.
- Will look to reshape future planning processes to ensure that adaptation to climate change is included at local, regional, national, and European levels.

Each of the 10 partners is developing their own elements of the project. West Sussex County Council is leading on the awareness-raising element of the ESPACE project.

Adaptation is required as:

- Climate patterns will continue to change in response to both natural and human factors. Efforts to combat greenhouse gas emissions will at most reduce the scale of climate, but not eliminate or reverse it;
- Climate change has the potential to impact on the economic, social and environmental well-being of West Sussex;
- Decisions which are being made now need to take account of the best currently available understanding of climate change and its impacts together with other pertinent social, economic and environmental factors
- These decisions should enable all localities, sectors, or communities to reduce the risks of, to maximise any opportunities associated with and to avoid further exacerbating the causes of climate change;

Spatial and adaptive planning systems need to be flexible and take account of:

- Different stakeholders will have important parts to play in helping decision makers to plan the optimum solutions.
- The different aspects of statutory, non-statutory, and business functions and of the ways in which these can become more closely aligned in responding to climate change;
- The different timeframes over which adaptation to climate change impacts will be possible and which different planning regimes currently address;
- Improving but incomplete levels of knowledge and certainty about the science of climate and climate change, and about the direction and magnitude of future socio-economic trends;
- The different but generally low levels of awareness of climate change within the political structures, professions, general public and media within the region and the UK.

To help bring about adaptation to climate change impacts, adaptive planning needs to build on programmes which:

- Raise awareness of the significance of climate change impacts and develop understanding about the need to mitigate and adapt to them.

Appendix B - Know Where You're At

Market Research Company, Rosslyn Research Ltd, was commissioned in 2004 to measure awareness of climate change amongst residents and businesses of West Sussex. The final aim of the research was to provide quantifiable measures of awareness across different geographic and demographic segments of the West Sussex population, and simultaneously to provide pointers as to how climate change communications can best be planned.

The aim of the survey was to explore what the concept of climate change means to various strands of the community and to match this concept-set against the expert community's interpretation and detailed expectations of climate change. The sample was constructed to represent the urban, rural, coastal, and business communities. In addition, age, gender, socio-economic, disabled, employment status and other relevant analysis breaks were used to highlight the differences in perception, awareness and attitude within sub-sectors of the community within the County, thereby identifying gaps and providing pointers as to how climate change communications can best be planned.

Initially, focus groups were established to gauge the level of awareness of climate change issues within the community and to understand the 'language' used by both residents and business leaders when discussing climate change. The results from this work helped to inform the development of the questionnaire for a quantitative survey.

In logistical terms, the backbone of the research was quantitative. Two large-scale surveys of c. 1,500 residents - mainly face-to-face interviews, with some telephone interviewing in addition were conducted. The first of these was undertaken in May 2004, and the second in late summer 2006. In addition a sample population in Hampshire was also surveyed.

A similar survey was also undertaken with Belgian Partner Regionaal Landschap Zenne, Zuun & Zonien, in an area to the west of Brussels. The results of this survey have also been compared to the UK survey results to get an understanding of the transnational relevance of awareness raising work.

Appendix C - The Rules of the Game

Principles of Climate Change Communication

Section 1: Blowing Away Myths

1. Challenging habits of climate change communication.

- **Don't rely on concern about children's future or human survival instincts.**
Recent surveys show that people without children may care more about climate change than those with children. "Fight or flight" human survival instincts have a time limit measured in minutes – they are little use for a change in climate measured in years.
- **Don't create fear without agency.**
Fear can create apathy if individuals have no 'agency' to act upon the threat. Use fear with great caution.
- **Don't attack or criticise home or family.**
It is unproductive to attack that which people hold dear.

2. Forget the climate change detractors.

Those who deny climate change science are irritating, but unimportant. The argument is not about *if* we should deal with climate change, but *how* we should deal with climate change.

3. There is no 'rational man'.

The evidence discredits the 'rational man' theory – we rarely weigh objectively the value of different decisions and then take the clear self-interested choice.

4. Information can't work alone.

Providing information is not wrong; relying on information alone to change attitudes *is* wrong. Remember also that money messages are important, but not *that* important.

Section 2: A New Way of Thinking

5. Climate change must be 'front of mind' before persuasion works.

Telling the public to take notice of climate change will only be successful when people realise (or remember) that climate change relates to them.

6. Use both peripheral and central processing.

Attracting attention to an issue can change attitudes, but peripheral messages can be just as effective.

7. Link climate change mitigation to positive desires/aspirations.

Traditional marketing links products to the aspirations of their target audience. Linking climate change mitigation to home improvement, self-improvement, green spaces or national pride are all worth investigating.

8. Use transmitters and social learning.

People learn through social interaction, and some people are better teachers and trendsetters than others. Targeting these people will ensure that messages are transmitted effectively.

9. Beware the impacts of cognitive dissonance.

Confronting someone with the difference between their attitude and their actions on climate change will make them more likely to change their *attitude* than their *actions*.

Section 3: Linking Policy and Communications

10. Everyone must use a clear and consistent explanation of climate change.

The public knows that climate change is important, but is less clear on exactly what it is and how it works.

11. Government policy and communications on climate change must be consistent.

Don't 'build in' inconsistency and failure from the start.

Section Four: Audience Principles

12. Create 'agency' for combating climate change.

Agency is created when people know what to do, decide for themselves to do it, have access to the infrastructure in which to act, and understand that their contribution is important.

13. Make climate change a 'home' not 'away' issue.

Climate change is global issue, but we will feel its impact at home – and we can act on it at home.

14. Raise the status of climate change mitigation behaviours.

Research shows that energy efficiency behaviours can make you seem poor and unattractive. We must work to overcome these emotional assumptions.

15. Target specific groups.

A classic marketing rule, and one not always followed by climate change communications from government and other sources.

Section Five: Style Principles

16. Create a trusted, credible, recognised voice on climate change.

We need trusted organisations and individuals that the media call upon to explain the implications of climate change to the average citizen.

17. Use emotions and visuals.

Another classic marketing rule: changing behaviour by disseminating information doesn't always work, but emotions and visuals usually do.

Section Six: Effective Management

18. The context affects everything.

The prioritisation of these principles must be subject to ongoing assessments of the UK situation on climate change.

19. The communications must be sustained over time.

All the most successful public awareness campaigns have been sustained consistently over many years.

20. Partnered delivery of messages will be more successful.

Experience shows that partnered delivery is often a key component for projects that are large, complex and have many stakeholders.

Appendix D - Effective Use of Websites:

- **Target users;** As with all media, make sure your approach is suitable to the audience.
- **Keep the design simple;** The better sites tend to make consistent use of a limited range of colours, fonts and graphics, and all pages share a look (without necessarily looking identical).
- **Adapt your writing style;** People don't read web pages, so keep it short and simple. Relevant images are essential.
- **Speed.** People won't wait: they use the Back button if the wait is too long. So it is important for pages to load as fast as possible.
- **Keep the technical bits simple;** Users don't like having to install plug-ins (and some can't, e.g. in schools).
- **Keep site up-to-date;** Old pages can ruin a site, and drop it down the search engine charts.
- **Make main pages easy to find from all points;** Getting stuck without a way out will put off visitors.
- **Fix broken links;** They are annoying. If possible make sure reciprocal links are also OK.
- **Search Engine Optimisation;** This will make it easier for people to find the site and encourage them to use it.
- **Make life easier for yourself;** Organise your site so that you have a few key pages that need regular attention (what's on, news, deadlines, announcements); then other pages can have less frequent attention.
- **Accessibility;** Accessible design is good design because it ensures clear navigation and well-structured content.
- **Spread the word;**
 - Send links in e-mails and not content.
 - Frequently asked questions: give the URL when you get asked the same old questions.
 - Give users reason to return: news, events, deadlines, RSS etc.
- **Feedback and constructive criticism.** Look at other sites and try to analyse why some sites are easy to use and others hard.