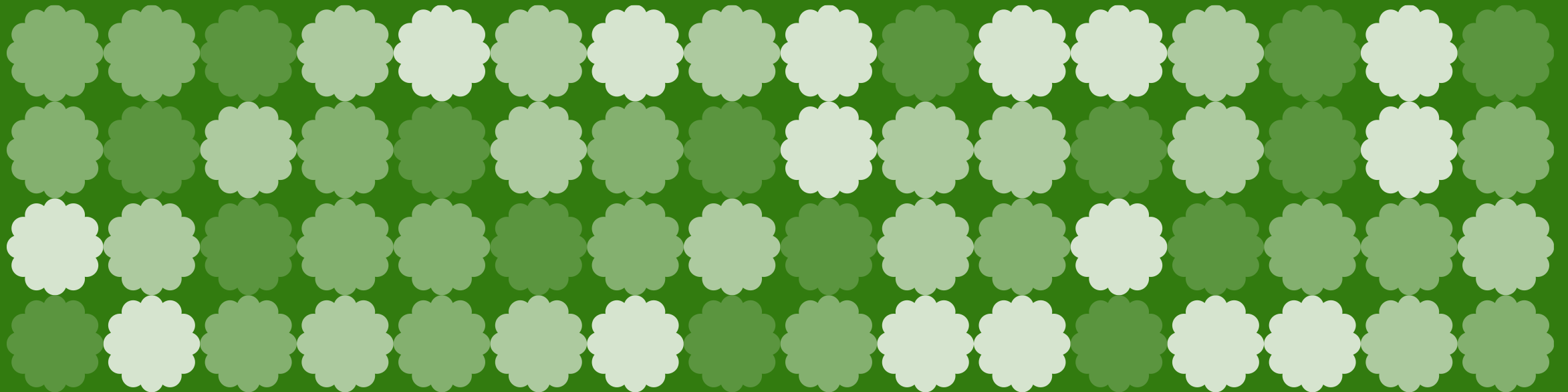


Green Communications and Engagement Strategy 2024-25

Item 9



Introduction



Background

We remain at an important point of transition for Greater Manchester's 'green' portfolio:



Development & launch of the next 5-Year Environment Plan (2025-29)

- Narrative of what we aim to deliver needs to make way for what we have achieved.
- Planning getting underway for developing next Environment Plan.



Refreshing our Greater Manchester Strategy (2024)

- To incorporate our devolution trailblazer goals and ensure our wider aims are fully informed by our city region's needs and what we are directly able to influence and change.



Tackling twin emergencies

- Climate emergency declared in July 2019.
- Biodiversity emergency announced in March 2022 – LNRS in development, State of Nature report published March 24.



Developing our devolution trailblazer

- Includes provision for closer working with government on climate and environment, including devolved funding trials for net zero and retrofit, and more power on local nature recovery.

Priority areas for communications

Greater Manchester's key environmental objective is to be carbon neutral by 2038 – our Five-Year Environment Plan outlines the urgent actions we all need to take to help achieve this.

- A framework for a Greater Manchester's green communications strategy was approved in 2023, identifying four priority areas where communications leads can have the most impact on the city-region's green ambitions:

Building evidence of GM's delivery

by establishing an engaging, content-led narrative of delivery towards overall visions, including by specific missions and programmes.

Delivering behaviour change

among residents, businesses, third sector / community partners, and colleagues from across the combined authority.

Securing resident / stakeholder insight

to provide people-powered insight for the development of the next 5-year environment plan and associated strategies.

Optimising our ways of working

with agreed city region comms and engagement priorities, a refreshed plan of action, clear roles & responsibilities, and resources for impact.

- Our strategy is co-owned and delivered in collaboration with districts and partners from the city region and beyond, and with a desire for greater resident involvement to inform our approaches.
- Work to ensure campaigns and activity across all partners is aligned with these priorities takes place through the Greater Manchester Green Communications Delivery Challenge Group, which meets every six weeks.

Our strategy



Communications objectives

This strategy is designed to meet the following objectives:

- To support the aims of the 5-Year Environment Plan and Greater Manchester's target of becoming a carbon neutral city-region by 2038.
- To provide communications, engagement and media expertise to support the delivery of Green portfolio programmes.
- To drive residents, communities and businesses to engage with and access GMCA's green programmes and initiatives e.g. funding, home energy efficiency advice etc.
- To encourage residents to change their behaviours / move to more sustainable lifestyles.
- To support and align with Greater Manchester's district councils and other delivery partners on cross-GM campaigns.
- To showcase how Greater Manchester is leading the way by linking up with NW Net Zero and others.
- To help link green messaging and themes into other portfolio area campaigns e.g. skills, economy.
- To support delivery of the GMCA Environment Team business plan.

Audiences

High level audience groups that Greater Manchester is seeking to reach and influence on green matters. Behaviour insights research has additionally highlighted attitudes and drivers across our broad GM audience, providing insight that can shape our tactics and target our activity more effectively.

- Greater Manchester residents – utilising LIFE segmentation (Light contributors, inactive sceptics, focused achievers & educated non-doers)
- Community groups/schools
- Community leaders and champions
- Local Authority officers
- Businesses (via Bee Net Zero activity)
- Educational institutions and academics
- Key green project partners
- Networks, working groups, challenge groups etc
- Green influencers
- MPs / Councillors
- National Government / bodies e.g. BEIS/DEFRA/EA etc
- Other Local Councils and Combined Authorities / peers
- Internal / employees

Strategy and tactics

Communications partners across Greater Manchester will take a shared approach to building awareness of delivery, driving behaviour change & engaging audience groups to gather stakeholder insight. Approach and tactics for individual project activity will be determined by specific audiences targeted, but broad approach will include:

- Shared high level messaging to be woven into all green communications activity, in turn creating a clear narrative of delivery for the environment in Greater Manchester – utilisation of Doing Things Differently for the Environment visual branding and messaging & consideration of culturally competent messaging to assist with those communities that may not understand the whole environment strategy.
- A multi-channel approach to make the most of the network of organisations that work on the green agenda across the city-region – fully-integrated campaign plans with activity that seeks to reach into audience groups that are often harder to reach e.g. digitally-excluded, older, English as a second language etc.
- Commitment from communications delivery challenge group members to regularly push activity through their external & internal channels / out to their audiences, amplifying and extending reach of campaigns.
- Production of campaign toolkits for key themes and projects, including messaging, graphics, templates etc – to be shared and utilised by all challenge group members and other intermediary groups.
- Positioning Green City channels as a central hub for the city-region, where campaign activity from all partners can be shared.

Key channels

Effectively utilising the full range of GM partner platforms will be vital to reaching and engaging our audiences.

- **GM Green City channels** – owned by GMCA, these should serve as a showcase / central hub for green efforts taking place across the city-region.
 - Website
 - Twitter
 - Quarterly newsletter (broad interest)
 - Quarterly stakeholders briefing (specialist interest)
- **Core GMCA channels** – websites, social, newsletters (internal and external), leadership updates etc, plus other related campaign / portfolio areas and their channels.
- **Partner channels** – owned by individual partners, these should be used to expand the reach of individual and overarching campaigns for GM where relevant.
 - Social media
 - Websites, consultation platforms, intranet e.g. Greener GM, NW Net Zero Hub
 - Newsletters and bulletins (internal, external and for specific stakeholder groups)
 - Forums

Monitoring

Tracking the performance of our campaigns, content and channels to understand impact and audience reach.

- Specific KPIs will be set for our individual campaigns / activities, reflecting the specific objectives / target outcomes of green portfolio projects e.g. ensuring the LEAD project enables 15,000 residents to access home energy efficiency advice, support and upgrades.
- Quarterly impact reports are produced to demonstrate the effectiveness of campaigns, communications activity, and engagement, reporting on progress the communication activities outlined in this strategy and individual campaign plans.
- We will operate our communications with a test and learn ethos, adjusting our approach, planned activity and content to insights gleaned from both project team and communications monitoring data e.g. identifying Green Spaces Fund application cold spot areas and using that intel to more effectively target future marketing activity.
- We will also utilise insight into our audience groups from wider GMCA and partner reports e.g. staff surveys, resident surveys, behaviour insights work, Bee Net Zero insight etc.

Planned comms activities 2024-2025

Rooting our activity in thematic priorities

Communications campaigns and other activity have been shaped to support the delivery of the GM Environment Team's thematic priority projects for 2024-25:

- **Cross-cutting**
 - *Development of next 5-Year Environment Plan:* audience insight, plan development and launch
 - *Annual Green Summit:* event development, sponsorship, delivery
 - *Sustainability Strategy:* internal activity working with sustainability team
- **Low Carbon**
 - *Renewable energy generation and storage:* LAEP outline business cases via Net Zero Accelerator, schools solar offer
 - *Decarbonisation of heat:* Heat pump delivery via Octopus / Daikin / YHB offer
 - *Domestic and public building retrofit:* Local Energy Advice Demonstrator and retrofit programmes (PSDS, SHDF, ECO4, YHB)
- **Natural Environment**
 - *Biodiversity and nature recovery:* Local Nature Recovery Strategy, Green Spaces Fund, GMEF, Biodiversity Net Gain
 - *Nature-based solutions:* SUDS projects and design guide, GM Adaptation Plan
 - *Water quality:* Integrated Water Management Plan, Natural Course project legacy
- **Sustainable Consumption and Production**
 - *Circular economy & sustainable waste management:* Single Use Plastics, schools pilot, GM refill, R4GM / Waste team link up
 - *Food waste reduction:* food vision for GM, R4GM / Waste team link up
 - *Behaviour change:* behavioural insights work phase 2, sustainable lifestyles

Cross-cutting communications activities

This list covers the key communications activities for 2024-25, which flow from the green portfolio's business plan priorities.

Each activity will have its own comms plan, detailing more granular activity taking place e.g. announcements, events etc.

Campaign / activity strand	Detail	Timescales
Supporting the development and roll out of the next Greater Manchester 5-Year Environment Plan	Public consultation / engagement activity, report design and messaging, launch comms.	Q1 – Q4
Driving delegate sign up, engagement and promotion of the Greater Manchester Green Summit	Event planning / design, driving delegate registrations, delegate engagement, sponsor comms, event management, branding and marketing materials.	TBC based on event date
Supporting GMCA's sustainability strategy	Supporting and inspiring GMCA and GMFRS staff to be sustainability leaders.	Ongoing / year round
Growing the GM Green City website	Encouraging partners to submit articles and link to the site via challenge group and districts, regular maintenance and updates, user journey analysis and refinement, SEO improvements.	Ongoing / year round
Support national and global awareness months, weeks, and days	Aligning our activity with dates including Earth Day, World Wetlands Day, No Mow May and Zero Waste Week.	Ongoing / year round

Low Carbon communications activities

Campaign / activity strand	Detail	Timescales
Delivering the Feel the Benefit campaign	GMCA-led fully-integrated campaign focused on the myriad home energy efficiency initiatives being delivered by GMCA and its partners (LEAD, ECO, YHB etc). Driving resident awareness and engagement in the advice, support and funding available to them, alongside highlighting how we are decarbonising social housing stock (SHDF).	Ongoing / year round
Delivering the Powering Our Schools campaign	Supporting next phase of the programme by driving schools to express their interest and publishing case studies on schools already benefiting from the programme.	Q2 – Q3
Promoting our emerging renewable energy generation and storage initiatives	Kick off comms for the Net Zero Accelerator with subsequent activity around delivery. Supporting partnership activity (Panasonic, High View Power (cryo storage), Carlton Power (Hydrogen). Supporting Energy Innovation Agency activity on new technologies.	TBC
Promoting our efforts to decarbonise heat	Supporting partner-led comms push on heat pumps, linking with relevant resident and business campaigns e.g. Feel the Benefit, Bee Net Zero. Shining a light on other initiatives to decarbonise heat e.g. heat networks, heat zoning etc.	TBC
Supporting continued decarbonisation of the public estate	Raising awareness of delivery successes from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme.	TBC

Natural Environment communications activities

Campaign / activity strand	Detail	Timescales
Driving awareness of and engagement in the development of Greater Manchester's Local Nature Recovery Strategy	Campaign to raise awareness of the issues facing nature in GM, engagement activity to secure input into the plan from key audiences, public consultation, report design and messaging, local nature champion profile pieces, strategy launch comms.	Ongoing / year round
Supporting community action and corporate investment in green spaces via the Greater Manchester Environment Fund	Promotion of potential future rounds of the Green Spaces Fund, growing the Greater Manchester Environment Fund comms strategy / approach, case studies of community-led delivery successes.	Ongoing / year round - GSF timings TBC
Supporting the development and launch of the GM Climate Adaptation plan	Report design and messaging, promotion of key nature-based solutions projects and activity e.g. Walkden SuDS, SuDS design guide etc.	Q2 – Q3
Supporting ongoing delivery of the Integrated Water Management Plan	Comms guidance for the project team, delivery case studies, Natural Course project legacy.	Q2 – Q3

Sustainable consumption & production communications activities

Campaign / activity strand	Detail	Timescales
Development and launch of a resident-targeted sustainable lifestyles campaign	Content-driven social campaign focused on what a sustainable lifestyle looks. Drawing on behaviour insights and working closely with the districts on delivery to drive GM residents to change their behaviours in achievable ways.	Q2 – Q4
Supporting the growth of Greater Manchester as a refill destination (Single Use Plastics Pact)	Supporting the national refills campaign, driving residents to make use of the refill app / refill stations, driving businesses to sign up as refill stations, promotion of schools taking part in refills pilot.	Ongoing / year round
Supporting the development of Greater Manchester's Zero Waste Strategy	Amplification of waste / R4GM-led campaigns and activity via Green City channels, weaving waste comms activity into wider Green communications campaigns.	Ongoing / year round

Recommendations

- Note updated communications strategy (slides 1-10)
- Comment on proposed communications activities for 2024-25 (slides 11-16)