

# SPONGE2020: communications and engagement strategy

Communicating the benefits of SuDS to local stakeholders

Copper Consultancy



**copper**

Creating a better  
*Southend*  
www.southend.gov.uk



# Introduction



**Annabel John**  
Account Director,  
Copper Consultancy



**Tom Warren**  
Senior Account Executive,  
Copper Consultancy

# About Copper

- Copper Consultancy is a specialist strategic communications and engagement consultancy
- We work on major infrastructure and development projects, helping to improve how projects are understood and perceived
- We are working with Southend-on-Sea Borough Council to build local awareness and support for SPONGE2020 as a key element of Southend's climate resilience



**copper**

Creating a better  
*Southend*  
[www.southend.gov.uk](http://www.southend.gov.uk)



# Southend SPONGE 2020

## Key communications aims are to:

- Inform and engage the public and key local stakeholders to achieve public buy-in
- Create a supportive environment for construction
- Communicate the benefits of the project and educate the wider public about Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) and environmental issues facing Southend
- Strengthen existing community links through the provision of environmentally friendly and visually appealing public places
- Encourage the implementation of adaptation measures in the homes/workplaces of local stakeholders
- Deliver long-term sustainable water management

# Target audiences

- Residents and businesses directly affected by SuDS pilot sites
- Key influencers within central Southend who we want to keep informed of the proposals
- Schools/youth groups to target with wider education activity linked to the SPONGE2020 project

# Strategy

- Our strategy will focus on communicating the benefits of the SPONGE2020 project and educating the public on wider climate change issues
- We will explain to stakeholders how SuDS is being implemented in Southend and keep them updated over the course of the project
- We will raise awareness of what this project is trying to achieve and how interested parties can get involved
- Through social media and a project-specific website, we will promote the project and provide relevant information on climate change, flood risks and SuDS
- We will also engage with the media, presenting a clear and tangible project story and show them why this project is important

# A phased approach to implementation

Project activity will be split into three phases:

- **Phase one:** public launch
- **Phase two:** engage and inform target audiences affected by the specific areas where SuDS schemes are being brought forward
- **Phase three:** keep those directly affected by the development of SuDS solutions regularly informed of construction works

# Communications tactics



**Q&A document**



**SPONGE2020 website**



**Social media**



**Councillor and MP briefing pack**



# Communications tactics



**Public information events**



**Media relations**



**Advertising**



**Direct Mail**

# Community engagement

We plan on focusing some of our engagement on the schools and youth groups which make up a key part of our target audience, through the following methods:

- **Education Toolkit** – an informative series of interactive activities and worksheets, which can be sent to schools and youth groups, providing information on SuDS and climate change issues
- **STEM Outreach** – identifying and contacting selected schools where the project team, supported by Copper, will deliver ‘guest lessons’ derived from our Education Toolkit



# Desired outputs

## As part of this project, we want to:

- Introduce SuDS to manage water flow rates and volumes of runoff to reduce the risk of flooding and reduce pollution – create attractive open spaces and better protect communities
- Deliver a successful communications programme which engages local residents, schools and businesses and makes them aware of the project benefits and their role in implementing innovative climate change adaptation measures
- Educate members of the public and provide them with up-to-date information about SuDS and climate change adaptation solutions
- Build local awareness and support for SPONGE2020, and demonstrate Southend-on-Sea Borough Council's proactive approach to implementing its own climate change solutions

# Q&A

