Melton Borough Council

Climate Change Consultation Report August 2022

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Climate Change Consultation Main Report

August 2022

Context

This report provides feedback on the climate change consultation undertaken by Melton Borough Council between 03 February and 30 April 2022.

The Council recognises that long term and ongoing engagement will be required to achieve its wider ambitions to help the Melton borough become a more sustainable place and reduce local greenhouse gas emissions. In this context, the climate change consultation described in this report should not be viewed as a traditional engagement activity or survey, it should be viewed as the first action undertaken to develop a long term engagement relationship with local people, groups, businesses and organisations.

The purpose of the online survey undertaken during the consultation period was twofold, first to better understand local views on climate change issues, to assist in the development of a draft climate change strategy for the area, and secondly to better understand how local people wish to engage with the Council and others around climate change.

Across the three month consultation period, the Council reached out to a large group of people, but the emphasis was opening up dialogue and communications with the Council. Success is therefore not only measured in terms of number of people who engaged in the survey. This is particularly true for engagement with local businesses and schools, where it is expected to take some time to build up new relationships around this agenda.

Who was engaged?

The plan for this consultation was based on raising general awareness and utilising existing connections and contacts to reach as wide an audience as possible. Special efforts were made to engage with young people, adults under 40, local businesses and others who are less likely to respond to standard online surveys, which included those from harder to engage with socio-economic groups.

A press release was released at the start of the consultation supplemented by a programme of regular social media posts designed to publicise the online survey and in person events. (It should be noted that there was more limited promotion of the consultation during the pre-election period in February-March 2022 due to a local by-election.)

Efforts were made to reach a wide audience and officers from across the Council, as well as elected members and other local groups who were all asked to share details

of the consultation with their contacts, including with followers on their social media accounts. This included the Vale of Belvoir Environment Group (VEG) on Facebook which had over 500 members, with special thanks to Cllr Pritchett for raising awareness of the consultation to this group as well as forwarding details of the consultation to his wider contacts.

Direct email engagement

Direct email contact was made with a large number of key stakeholders and members of the public who had previously registered interest in strategic Council consultations, with additional contacts derived from officers from across the Council. In total over 600 people were directly contacted via email and asked to respond to the survey, they included;

- 270 people registered on the Melton local plan consultation database, this included 68 members of the public alongside representatives from 144 different organisations included developers, land agents and a wide variety of statutory and non-statutory organisations with interest in strategic planning, development, land use and environmental issues.

- 204 members of the public who took part in the consultation that helped the Council develop its corporate strategy, who had registered an interest in taking part in future council consultations.

- Small group of local people who had previously contacted the Council in relation to climate change or environmental issues, who expressed an interest in taking part in climate change consultations.

- More than 130 additional local groups and organisations, this included;

  - Local climate action and environmental groups, including Bottesford Net Zero, Melton Transition, the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust and Climate Action Leicester and Leicestershire.

  - Key local businesses, including Samworth Brothers, National Farmers Union, Melton Markets, Mars and the Melton BID.

  - All primary and secondary school headteachers in the Melton borough.

  - Wide variety of organisations and groups, including those who work with or represent people with protected characteristics under equality legislation and additional groups and organisations who work or represent with vulnerable people locally.

  - Council tenants via an article in the '*Homes for Melton'* spring newsletter

  - Local organisations with an interest in health, wellbeing and physical activity (with thanks to the Council's physical activity officers).

- People and groups identified by survey respondents during the consultation period. Within the survey, participants were asked to identify any local groups, people, businesses or other organisations that they thought the Council should talk to about climate change locally. Real time monitoring of responses allowed new contacts to be identified and contacted via email throughout the majority of the consultation period.

Those identified and contacted at the beginning of the consultation period also received a reminder email within the last 10 days of the consultation period to encourage them to respond.

Consultation events and activities

Efforts were made to ensure participation in the consultation was with a wide cross section of local people. Efforts were made to try to engage those who might not respond to an online survey. Young people, local businesses, adults under the age of 40 and more vulnerable people were identified as key demographics for additional engagement activities. However limited time and resources meant that efforts were primarily concentrated on younger people during the consultation period. Young people were prioritised as they were consistently the group most identified by others as important to hear from.

Having not undertaken significant engagement on climate change before, a variety of different methods were trialled, in part to see how effective they were to help shape future engagement plans.

Youth engagement events and activities

Young people were a key target audience for engagement, officers attended a series of Melton Borough Council events across the easter holiday period for young people to help gauge young people's views (as well as those of their parents and carers). These events were targeted at 10-16 year olds but attracted a wider demographic. Free sunflower seed packs were given out to young people to help foster an interest in nature and wildlife as well as encourage them to talk with officers to share their thoughts on climate change issues. Views were shared either verbally to officers or by writing out post-it notes which were added to a comments display board, to help stimulate further discussions. In total four events were attended during the school easter holidays, as follows;

- Bottesford skate park - 11th April 2022
- The Edge community centre (Melton Mowbray) - 13th April 2022
- Breaking Boundaries event (Melton Mowbray town centre skatepark) - 20th April 2022
- Fairmead community centre (Melton Mowbray) - 21st April 2022

The engagement style varied depending on the event and number of participants, the community centre based events were with smaller groups, the benefits of these events were that they enabled longer discussions and sharing of views of young people from priority neighbourhood areas, the disadvantage was that turnout was unpredictable, zero in fact for the Fairmead event. Larger events, particularly the Breaking Boundaries event in Melton Mowbray were well attended and resulted in a large amount of engagement and interest. Feedback from officers suggests that having a variety of different services and activities being provided at these events helped to attract a wider cross section of young people and resulted in better quality engagement.

Image 1: Climate change stand at the Breaking Boundaries event, Melton Mowbray town park on 20th April 2022

School Engagement

Primary School Engagement

All primary head teachers were contacted and asked to let us know their views on climate change (and encouraged to complete the online survey), they were also asked to promote a drawing competition with their pupils and promote the survey to their parents/guardians, the latter was hoped to help to reach more people within the younger adult demographic (adults under 40) who tend to be poorly represented in council consultations.

The children's drawing competition was set up for primary school aged children, as a way for their views to be taken into consideration as well. Young people were asked to draw a picture to '*show us what they think our community should look like to help our* planet'. This competition was used to kickstart and build a new engagement relationship with local primary schools. The competition was also promoted at all the in-person events, on social media and within the tenants spring newsletter.

Secondary School Engagement

The climate change officer also met with the head teacher of Longfield school to start to build a relationship with them and better understand secondary schools perspectives on climate change. He also attended a youth café session to talk directly with young people of secondary school age. This was held at Brooksby Melton College in Melton Mowbray on the 4th May 2022. It involved the climate change officer undertaking a climate conversation and activity session with a mix of Longfield and John Ferneley School pupils.

Developing new working relationships with schools was always expected to be a longer term ambition, not something to be achieved within the consultation period. The aim during the consultation period was to open a dialogue with local schools, to receive some feedback to help develop future engagement plans, to start to build up new partnership working relationships and understand how the Council might support them to take action themselves.

Local businesses

Local business was also a key target audience for the consultation, in addition to directly emailing a number of prominent local businesses, an article was sent out to 450 people by the economic development team within its business bulletin to raise wider awareness of the consultation and online survey within the local business community on the 7th March 2022. This bulletin was opened by at least 115 people.

During the consultation period it was hoped to hold at least one engagement event at a local business forum or with an existing local business group, however this was not possible. Council officers are continuing to communicate with the BID and the economic development officers to look at how we can better engage with local businesses around climate change issues and plan to hold an event to consult with them to help inform the development of the climate change strategy and future engagement plans, to ensure that they reflect their needs and concerns.

Public engagement events

In efforts to reach wider groups of people, officers went out to the people rather than hold an in person consultation event at the Council's offices, running a pop-up market stall at a Melton Mowbray Market on Tuesday 19th April. Members of the

public passing by the stall were encouraged to let the Council know their thoughts on climate change issues, either verbally to officers or by writing out post-it notes which were added to a comments display board. A variety of leaflets and freebies were set up to try to entice people to come and talk to officers, this included again free sunflower seed packs for children as well as a variety of informational booklets and food waste portion measures to give away.

The marketplace event was not considered very successful, many of the people in the market were day visitors with limited links to the town and local people typically avoided or ignored officers attempts to engage with them. People appeared wary to approach the stall or engage in conversation with officers, perhaps not surprising in an environment where charity collectors and salespeople regularly approach members of the public. Future in-person consultation may be more effective at local community events where other organisational and informational stalls are expected.

The feedback from all of the events has been collated and presented by the type of respondent; adult feedback, young people feedback and school feedback.

Adult feedback from engagement events

The feedback from adults at the engagement events was mixed. Some felt that it was too late to take action to address climate change, that we could not achieve anything, or that there was little point, for example, because other countries emissions are so large. However the majority of those who spoke to officers felt that humans were the cause of climate change and action was needed, views expressed included that 'every little helps' in relation to individual actions, and when prompted to say what they were doing, they made reference largely to more sustainable shopping habits, such as bringing along reusable bags, buying local and seasonally, or reducing waste, such as not wasting food as well as home composting and recycling.

A few people expressed some concerns about recent increases in energy prices and the cost of living, relating this back to the energy efficiency of housing and high costs for those off the gas grid, including those who had oil heated homes, particularly in the Melton borough's rural areas. Many expressed a desire for more renewable energy generation in the borough, from more wind farms to domestic solar panels, several people asked why there are not solar panels on all new homes and why new homes were still being built with gas boilers.

Image 4: Word cloud visualisation of adult feedback from events

People mainly wanted to see leadership from the council, for it to lead by example and 'get its own house in order'. Other suggestions for the Council were mainly around its waste services, specific suggestions were that the Council reduce the price (or make free) the green bin (garden waste) collection service to increase recycling rates, that the Council should start to collect food waste, and that it needed to address overflowing bins in local parks.

Council officers being out and about asking people their views were also generally welcomed by those who stopped and talked to them, several people commented that it was good to see people informing others, seeking views and spreading knowledge about what you can do. However most people passing by the marketplace engagement event did not wish to stop and talk, engagement was more successful when undertaken as part of larger events, where several organisations or services had informational type stalls, particularly the breaking boundaries event in the town park, this finding should shape future in person engagement plans. Future

engagement events may also benefit from better signage and displays with council branding to ensure people could more clearly see it is the Council and understand what the engagement is about.

Adults accompanying young people frequently commented that they were aware of climate change and environmental issues through their children and them sharing what they were learning in school. It suggests that engagement with young people, especially through school networks could offer a good way to engage locally with not only young people but to spread information and learning to their wider family.

Young People's feedback from engagement events

It was notable that young people did not express views denying climate change or saying action was pointless, as some adults did. Their outlook was also much more optimistic. Young people accepted that action was required to address climate change, they mainly questioned why action and change was not happening and the need for adults, particularly those in positions of power, from the Government to large companies to take action.

Young people were also more likely to comment on the global impacts of climate change than adults did, they made comments on a wide range of impacts, from melting ice caps to plastic in rivers and seas and a talked about a wider range of actions and ideas for change than adults did.

There was a strong focus in young people's responses on waste, especially around littering, reusing and recycling. This may in part however reflect the fact that some of the young people took part in litter picking activities as part of the engagement events, but it was a consistent theme in all the responses from all events, suggesting this was a key area of interest. This was something that adults also mentioned a lot and there was also overlap in terms of interest in more wind turbines, solar panels and other renewable energy generation in the borough.

The young people also tended to mention things that were more relevant to their lives, such as walking to school and actions that they could do, like turning off lights and waiting for a bin to throw away their rubbish.

Young people at the youth café session said that there was quite a lot being taught about climate change at schools, but less focus on actions their schools were and could be doing. It suggests that the young people perceive there to be a gap around action and that there may be interest from pupils for an eco-schools type programme locally.
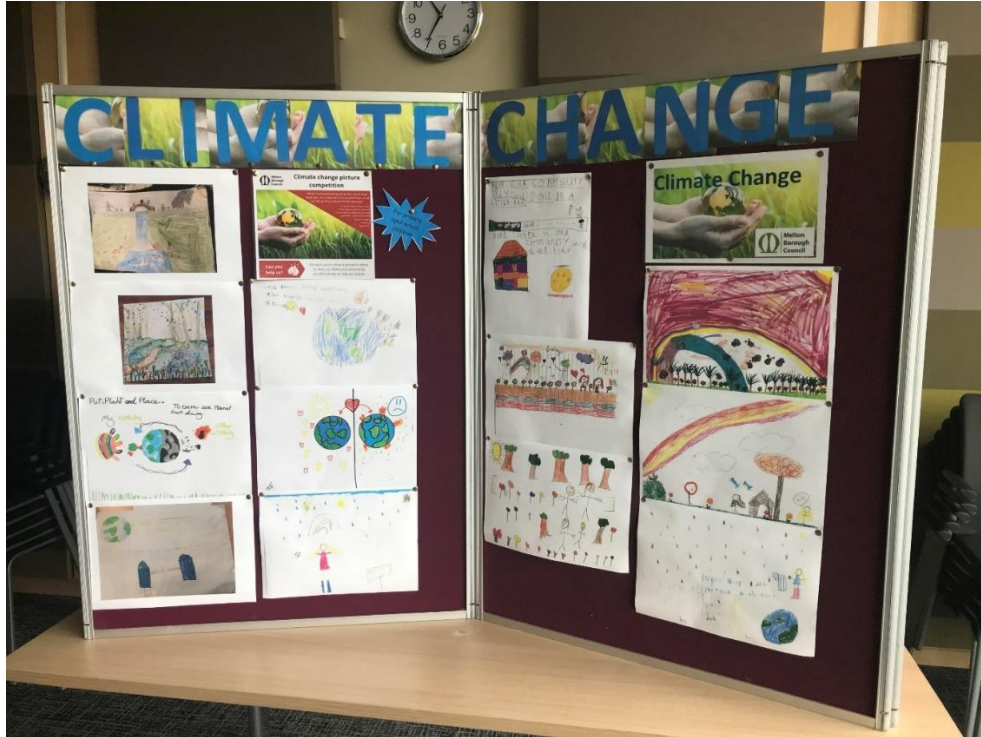
Image 5: Word cloud visualisation of young people's feedback from events

School feedback

Drawing competition entries

Image 2: Selection of children's drawing competition entries

The competition entries were used as a means to capture the views of younger primary school aged children. The entries received fell into several common themes, one being a good versus bad planet image, typically showing a clean blue and green planet, a happy place versus a sad planet that is dead, dying or on fire. Illustrating children's views on potential negative impacts of climate change. The other most common type of entry was a green natural landscape, depicting a happy place with a smiling sun, rainbows, happy people, abundant wildlife, blue rivers, trees, flowers and no litter. Trees were shown in the majority of drawings and litter and bins the other most common theme within drawings. Children strongly identified a healthy natural environment as being what a good place should look like. Drawings also tended to express meaning through emotions, a good planet or places were aligned strongly with happy smiling people and suns, whereas sad faces were shown next to litter or other environmental damage. What the children drew and the words they used alongside their drawings were pulled together into the word cloud visualisation below.

Image 3: word cloud to summarise children's drawings and words

Evaluation of primary school engagement

It was clear that the competition and survey promotion was not shared by many headteachers with their pupils and parents. The competition deadline was extended by a month and repromoted to head teachers, in case the reason for the delay was due to timing around the easter school holidays. However, there were very few entries, and it was not considered a successful engagement activity. One school did submit a number of competition entries from its pupils and there were a small number of individual entries. The direct email contact with school headteachers resulted in four responding to the online survey, the timing of their responses suggested that direct email was the reason for their awareness of the survey and their response to it.

It is recommended that the reasons for not sharing the competition and survey information are explored in any future conversations with headteachers. Particularly as primary schools sharing information with their parents and guardians is considered a good way to engage with adults under 45 who tend to be poorly represented in council consultations. It is recommended that discussions with trusts rather than individual schools be explored, to see if this is a more effective way to communicate and engage.

Secondary school headteacher feedback

Key points from the meeting with the headteacher of Longfield school were;

- Young people have a strong interest about climate change, nature and their environment
- Limited contact with local councils, tended to be around physical activity and active travel
- School has emphasis on reusing and recycling
- Keen on using nature spaces for children; gardening, food growing, wildlife and wellbeing
- Eco Schools type programme is a possible future opportunity
- Could work with students on an energy audit for the school buildings
- Young people enjoy working with and taking part in activities with outside organisations
- Climate change activities across different schools should be framed as collaboration rather than competitive

Primary school headteacher feedback

Image 6: Word cloud visualisation of primary school headteacher comments

Four primary schools headteachers responded to the online survey; their comments are shown here as they best fit within this section of the report. They are visualised above and summarised below;

- Stated that climate change is a priority for them, and they want more support and knowledge to help them deliver on it.
- An open invitation from all four respondents to the Council to work with their schools, to come and visit them and offer talks and run projects with their children.
- Environmental issues are already part of curriculum
- Already doing some activities in their outside spaces, such as creating wildlife areas and growing their own food.
- They wanted to know more about how they can implement positive schemes and change in their schools, particularly around waste and recycling but also around energy use and efficiency, including building improvements, and how they can make more sustainable choices regarding the consumables they use.
- Suggested that the Council's role could be to help bring school council's together, for example, to develop a school charter, as well as provide support and advice around waste and recycling.
- Consistent concerns raised about financial costs and to a lesser degree time.
- Would like to see us offer incentives and rewards for schools that do well.
- Said that children's voices need to be represented, as the generation that will be impacted the most.
- Felt that if we can get the children involved that their parents would follow.

The headteacher feedback showed a strong interest in climate change and environmental issues but also a need for support to deliver. It suggests that there is a role for some type of local eco-school programme which can support to schools across a variety of different areas, including directly running projects and activities for children. Waste management and recycling and decarbonisation of school buildings/energy efficiency appear to the top topics for engaging with schools.

Survey analysis

Who responded

Once the response data was validated, there was a total of 217 valid survey responses which were partially or fully completed. In addition there were three valid responses that were submitted in alternative formats, who provided detailed written comments.

Type of respondents

Around 4 out of 5 respondents to the survey were members of the public (79%). The remaining 19% of respondents were a mix of types of organisations, summarised below.

Chart 1: respondents to the survey by type of respondent

- Community group or charity
- Local business
- Members of public
- Parish Councillor or NP group
- Public sector
- Not stated
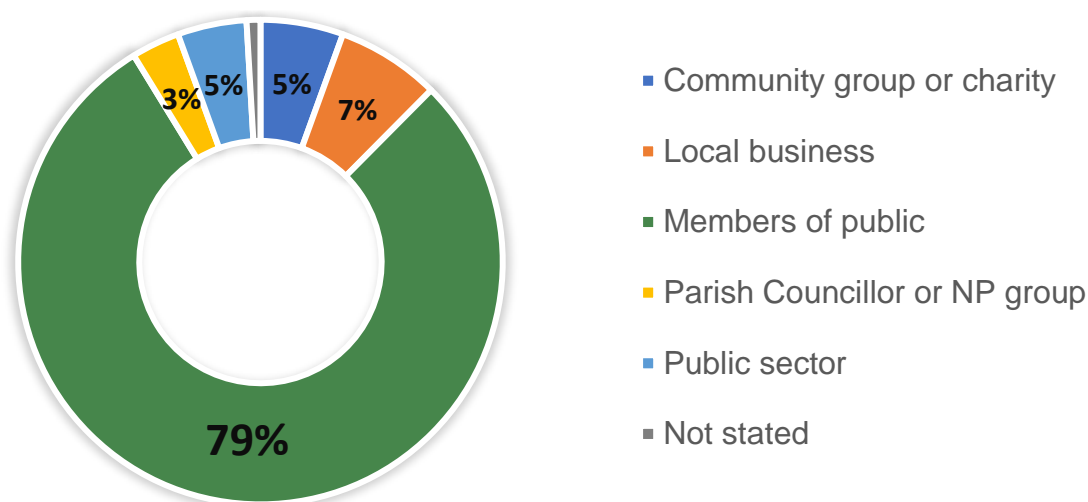
Table 1: respondents to the survey by type of respondent

Type of respondent	No.	%
Community group or charity	13	6%
Local business	15	7%
Member of public	172	79%
Parish councillor or neighbourhood plan group member	7	3%
Public sector organisation	11	5%
Not Stated	2	1%

Those responding on behalf of an organisations were asked to provide its name, not all respondents did so, a list of those who did is provided in appendix A.

Analysis has been broken down by type of respondent where appropriate in the report, to help identify differences between different groups and more clearly identify the views of members of the public. This should aid understanding for future communication and engagement actions which may wish to target specific groups. It

should be noted that the total number of responses by each type of organisation was small, therefore caution should be used when interpreting these responses.

Where respondents were from

Respondents were asked to provide the first five digits of their postcode. This enabled a simple analysis of where respondents were from.

Respondents were largely from the Melton borough; a small number did not answer the question (5) or were organisations whose main office address was based outside the Melton borough.

Chart 2: Members of public respondents postcode area

Only four members of the public provided a postcode outside the Melton borough, but all were relatively local NG or LE postcodes. Slightly more members of the public from rural areas of the borough responded to the survey than from Melton Mowbray (LE13). Members of the public from Melton Mowbray were therefore slightly underrepresented in the sample, given they make up around 53% of the local population but only 43% of respondents. This was driven by a particularly strong response from the north of the borough (the Vale of Belvoir, Waltham and Bottesford areas). This is thought to relate to VEG (Vale Environment Group), a Facebook group that highlighted the survey to its five hundred plus members. The strong response from this area suggests that the VEG group was an effective way to communicate with people from this area about environmental and climate change issues.

Equalities monitoring

Melton Borough Council is committed to providing high quality services fairly and without discrimination to all members of the community. The survey included equalities monitoring information to help to identify if any particular areas of the community were underrepresented. Completion of the equalities monitoring questions was entirely voluntary, and respondents were free to choose to complete all, none or part of these questions.

Members of the public

Around two out of three members of the public completed at least some of the equalities monitoring section of the survey, the full analysis is shown in appendix B, notable findings are summarised below;

- The sample size was relatively small and therefore it is not possible to make robust assumptions and draw definitive conclusions regarding the findings, particularly in relation to characteristics where the population is relatively homogenous.
- Slightly more likely to have been completed by females than males.
- Likely under representation in sample of people under 45 and over 75.
- Likely under representation of older people (over 65) with long term health issues or disabilities.
- The over and under 65's tended to report different types of long term illness and disabilities, the under 65's being more likely to report mental illness and those over 65 more likely to report sensory impairments.
- Much lower number of people than expected stated that they were Christian, with a correspondingly much higher than expected proportion of respondents stated that they had no religious beliefs and a slightly higher than expected number of people who held other faiths.

Organisational respondents

Those who completed the survey on behalf of an organisation were less likely to provide responses to the equalities monitoring section, only half did so. They were also likely to be between 45-64 years of age (79%) but were much more likely to be male, particularly if responding on behalf of a business or parish council.

Learning for future engagement on climate change

The equalities monitoring information provided suggests that future engagement plans need to look at how we can widen the age range of respondents, particularly those under 45 but also those over 75. Inclusion of more people over the age of 75 would also expect to help address the under representation of people with long term health conditions and disabilities in older age groups, give the links between ill health, disability and aging. It may also help to increase the number of Christians responding to the survey, given the similar links between aging and religious belief.

The survey was promoted to a wide variety of groups and organisations that related to a wide variety of protected characteristics to help ensure that the views of different people and groups can be taken into consideration. Three local church groups responded to the survey as a consequence, however there was limited engagement from other groups, which may mean that other methods of engagement need to be

considered to better reach them. The findings are also suggestive that we may need to consider how we can better engage with women in business.

The Council's standard equalities monitoring questionnaire does not ask about socio-economic status. This is an area of concern, as research suggests socio-economic stratification is a crucial factor for understanding variations in climate change views. It is advised to collect such information in future to help address this, particularly as it may help better deliver projects aimed at different socio-economic groups, for example, energy efficiency improvements to low income households.

Survey Analysis: main questions

Levels of concern about climate change

QN: Overall, how concerned, if at all, are you about climate change?

Chart 3: Respondents level of concern about climate change
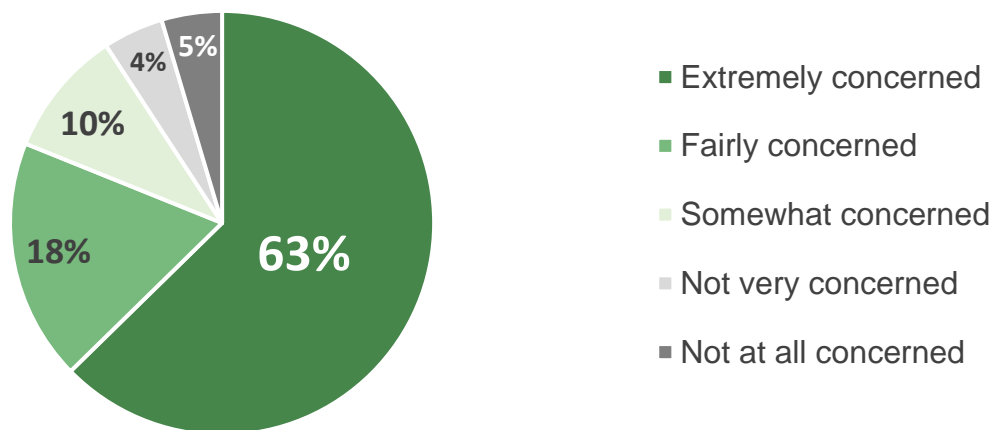
More than nine out of ten people said that they were concerned about climate change (91%). Four out of five were fairly to extremely concerned (81%) and just under two-thirds said they were extremely concerned (63%). Just under one in ten of respondents were not very or not at all concerned about climate change (9%).

Chart 4: Level of concern by respondent type
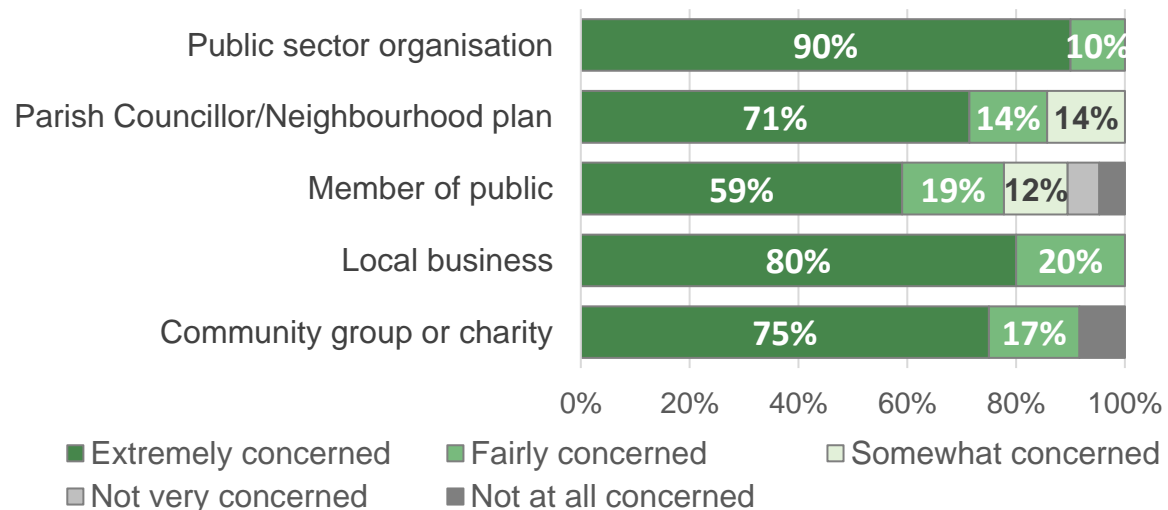
When examined by respondent type, those from public sector organisations showed the strongest level of concern, followed closely by local businesses. Generally organisations expressed stronger levels of concern than members of the public, however 89% of members of the public expressed at least some concern about climate change.

This question is worded to mirror a question used within the BEIS's quarterly public attitudes tracker, allowing the responses from members of the public to this question to be benchmarked against a national survey of over 4,000 people across the UK also undertaken in spring 2022. It found 85% of people to be fairly or extremely concerned about climate change, slightly less that the 89% found in the survey. It also found 3% of people to be not at all concerned about climate change, compared to 5% of members of the public who responded to the survey. Given the smaller sample and therefore lower confidence level of the data, respondents to this survey are considered broadly in line with national public attitudes tracker findings.

Within members of the public responses, women appeared to show greater level of concern about climate change than men (72% extremely concerned vs 51% for men), 20% of men were not concerned about climate change compared to just 5% of women. This is also consistent with findings of the BEIS tracker survey.

Chart 5: Level of concern by respondents postcode area

Legend:
- Extremely concerned
- Fairly concerned
- Somewhat concerned
- Not very concerned
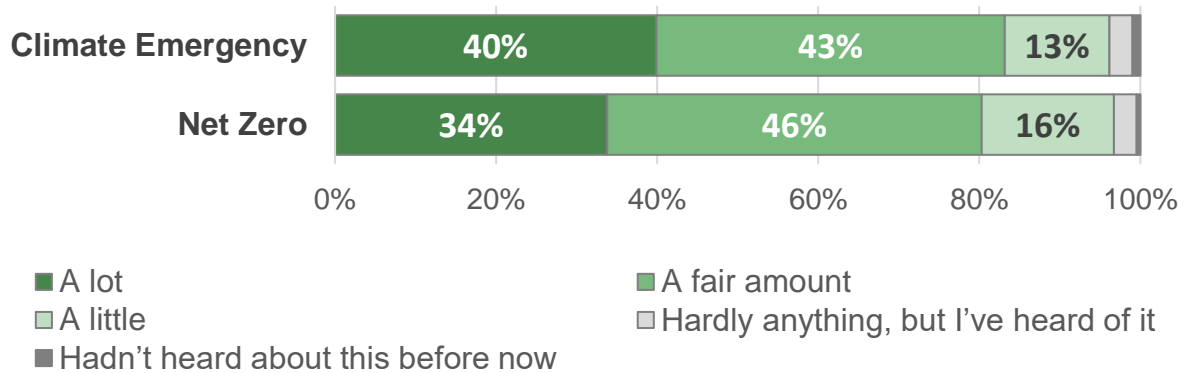- Not at all concerned
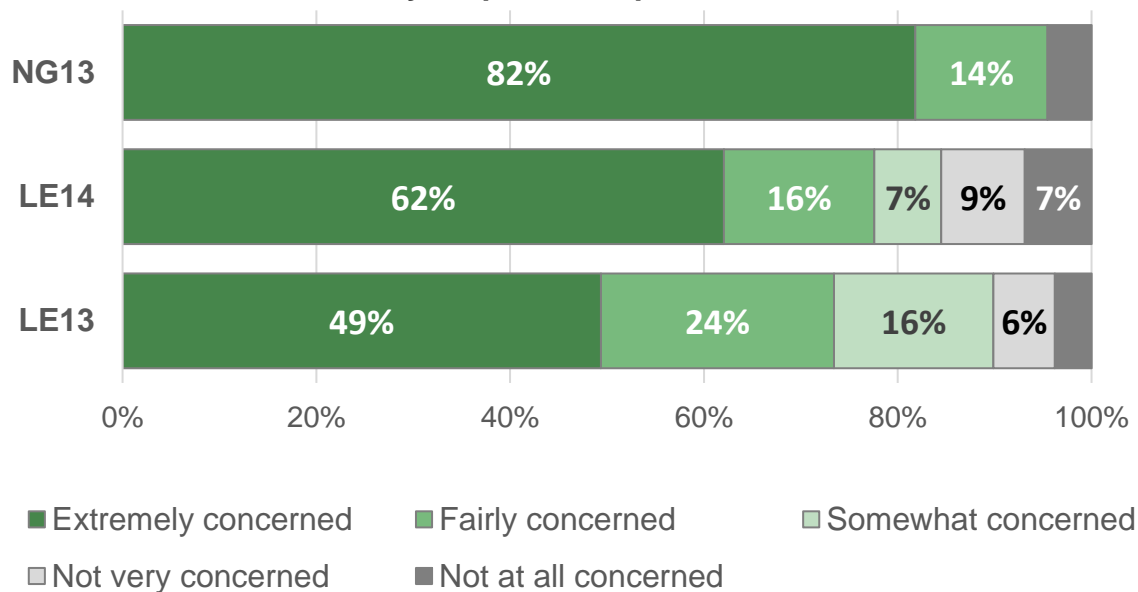
Based on analysis of the main postcode areas within the borough, there appeared to be a greater level of concern amongst people living in the rural areas, particularly those from north of the borough (NG13) in comparison to those who live in Melton Mowbray (LE13). This may in part reflect the sample of respondents, linked to awareness of survey through the VEG Facebook group.

Knowledge about climate change terminology

QN: Before today, how much, if anything, did you know about term 'Net Zero' /'Climate Emergency'
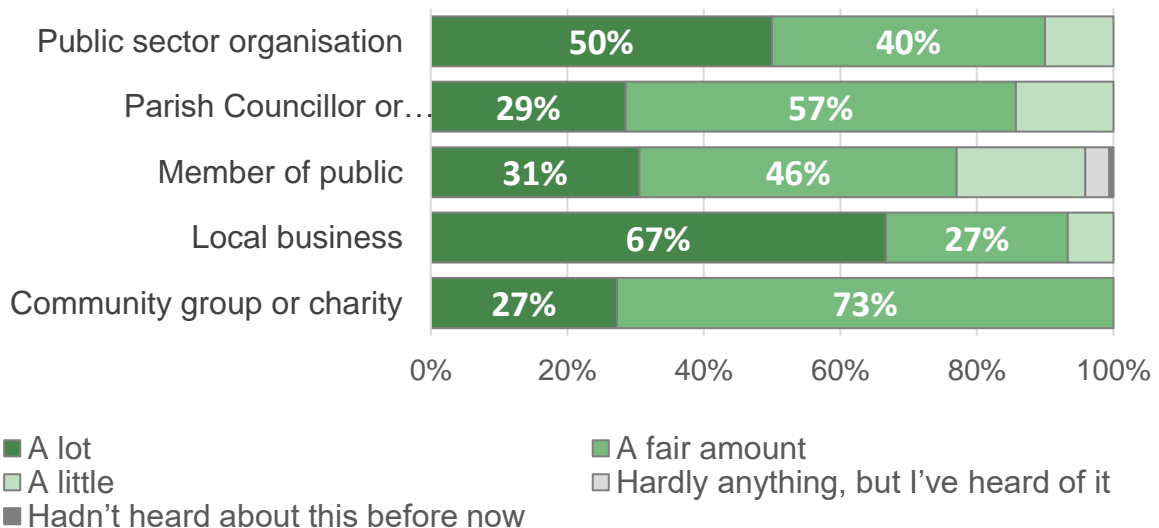
Respondents were asked about their knowledge about key climate change terms, 'net zero' and 'climate emergency' to help better understand their level of knowledge around climate change.

Chart 6: Levels of knowledge about terms 'net zero' and 'climate emergency'

	A lot	A fair amount	A little	Hardly anything, but I've heard of it	Hadn't heard about this before now
Climate Emergency	40%	43%	13%		
Net Zero	34%	46%	16%		

Legend:
- A lot
- A fair amount
- A little
- Hardly anything, but I've heard of it
- Hadn't heard about this before now

Overall most respondents said that they had at least a little amount of understanding of both these terms (96-97%) and over three quarters of respondents said that they knew at least a fair amount about the term 'net zero' and 'climate emergency' (80-83%). Only a small number of people (4-5%) said they didn't know anything or hardly anything about these terms. There was a strong correlation between knowledge levels for each of the two terms, but overall people were slightly more likely to be familiar and better understand the term 'climate emergency'. There was also a correlation with how knowledgeable people said they were about these terms and their overall level of concern about climate change, with those who said they knew more about these terms tending to also have a greater level of concern about climate change, and vice versa.

Chart 7: Levels of knowledge about term 'Net Zero' by type of respondent

	A lot	A fair amount	A little	Hardly anything, but I've heard of it	Hadn't heard about this before now
Public sector organisation	50%	40%			
Parish Councillor or…	29%	57%			
Member of public	31%	46%			
Local business	67%	27%			
Community group or charity	27%	73%			

Legend:
- A lot
- A fair amount
- A little
- Hardly anything, but I've heard of it
- Hadn't heard about this before now

All organisational respondents said they had at least a little knowledge about 'net zero', with 93% stating that they had at least a fair amount of knowledge about the term. Members of the public showed lower levels of understanding, although 96% had at least a little understanding of the term, only 77% felt they had at least a fair amount of knowledge. Local business respondents were the most likely to say that they knew a lot about 'net zero' (67%).

Comparison of public knowledge about 'net zero' with BEIS public tracker data

Again this question was worded to mirror a standard question within the BEIS quarterly public attitude tracker survey, allowing benchmarking comparison from survey undertaken across the UK in spring 2022. National data suggest that 49% of people survey felt they knew a least a fair amount about the term 'net zero', this is much lower than the 77% of members of the public who responded in the same way to the Council's survey. The BEIS survey found that 10% had no awareness of the term 'Net Zero' compared to just 1% of members of the public who responded to the Council's survey. This suggests that those who responded to the survey felt more informed than average about this term. It may indicate that the people who responded to the survey are more informed than the public at large, having above average understanding of and interest in climate change issues. This finding however is not wholly unexpected given the self-selecting nature of participation in the Council's survey in comparison to the randomised BEIS survey.

Chart 8: knowledge about term 'climate emergency' by type of respondent
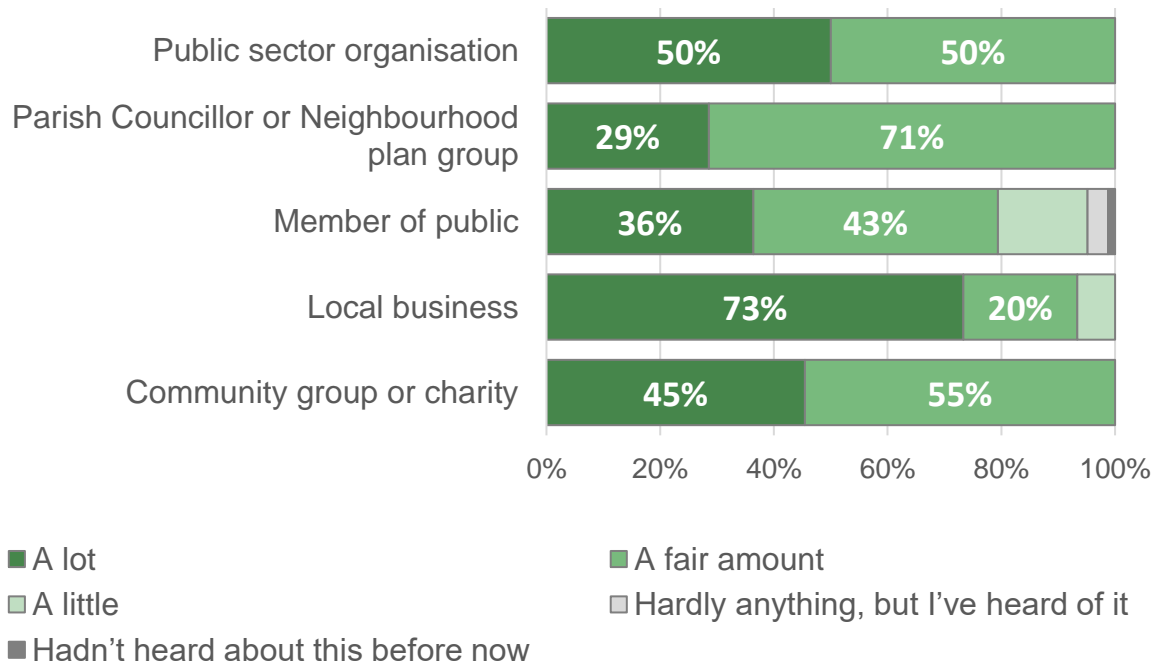
Organisational respondents again showed higher overall level of understanding, with 98% having at least a fair amount of knowledge about 'climate emergency'

compared with 79% for members of the public. All public sector organisations, parish councillors and community groups/charity respondents said that had at least a fair amount of understanding of the term. Local business respondents were most likely to say that they knew a lot about the term 'climate emergency' (73%).

Support for UK Government's net zero (2050) target

QN: To what extent do you support or oppose the UK's net zero target?

79% of respondents supported the UK government's Net Zero target for 2050 and all of those who did also all expressed some level of concern about climate change. The majority of those who strongly opposed the UK government's Net Zero targets were not concerned about climate change (89%). A number of respondents who were concerned about climate change were also somewhat opposed the target, on the whole these respondents voiced within the comments dissatisfaction with speed or ambitions of the Government target.

> *'Get really annoyed when local council writes things like 'Do you agree with Net Zero' because it's feeding into a culture war being created by oil and gas [companies]'*

Chart 9: Level of support for UK Net Zero target by level of concern about climate change
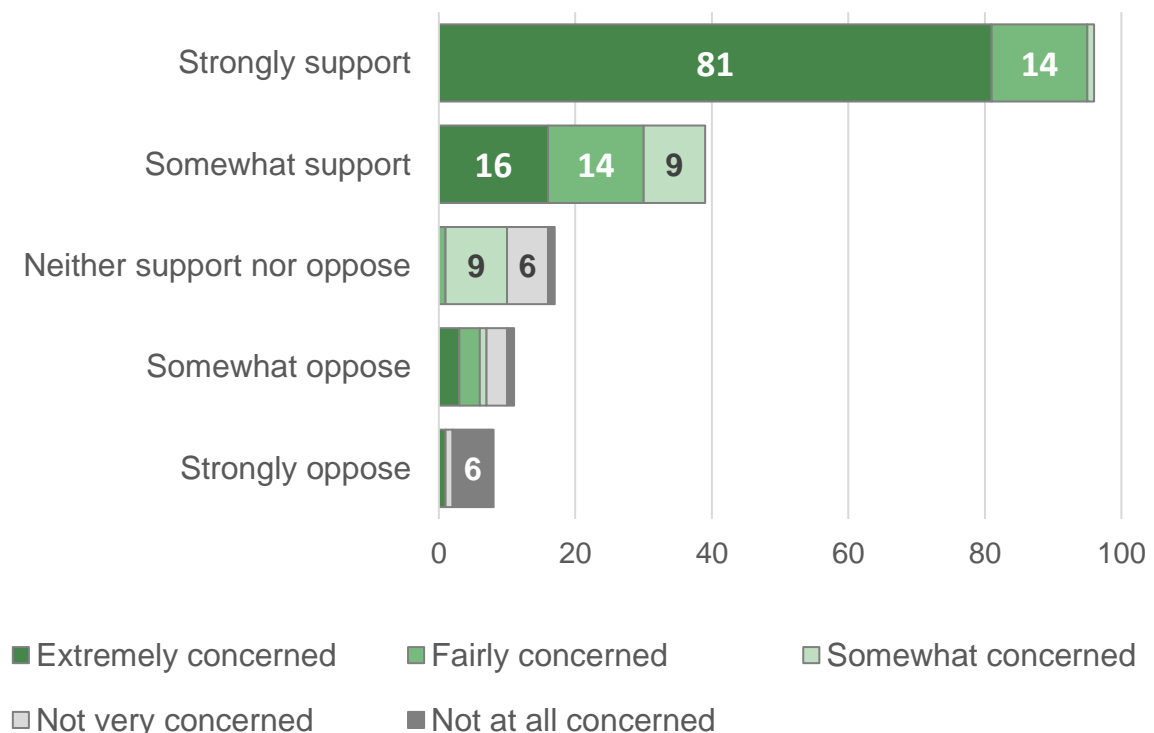
Commitment to preserving the environment and planet

QN: On a scale of 0-10 how much are you/national government/local government committed to preserving the environment and planet

Respondents were asked how committed they were to preserving the environment and planet on a scale of 0-10. They were also asked for their views on how committed they thought both national and local government were on the same scale.
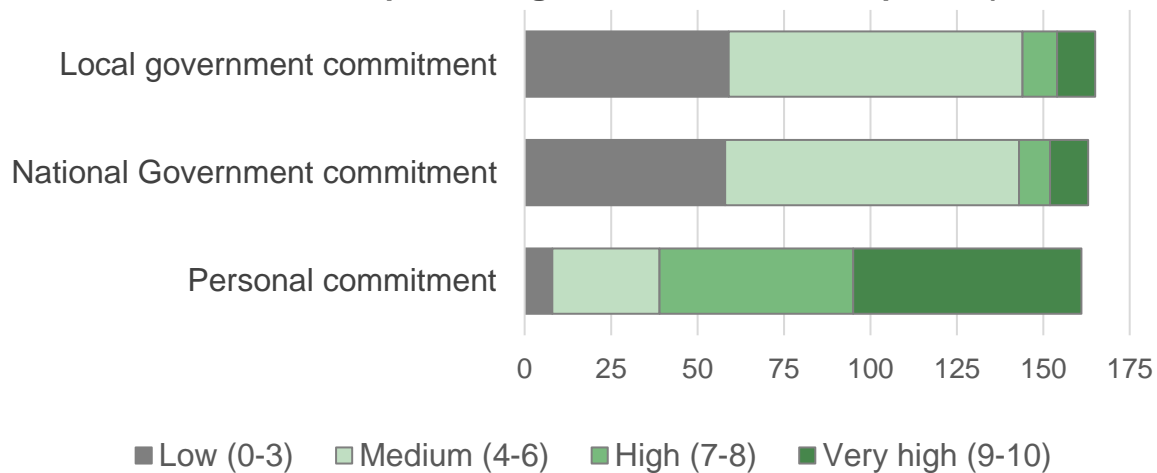
Chart 10: Commitment to preserving the environment and planet (scale: 0-10)

Respondents generally said that they were highly committed to preserving the environment and planet and much more so than they thought either national or local government were. Over three out of four people indicated that they were highly committed (77%) with only 5% indicating a low level of commitment. The mean average score out of 10 was 7.8 for personal commitment compared to 5 for perceived commitment levels for both local and national government.

Around a third of people said both national and local government had low levels of commitment and only 13% thought both types of government had high levels of commitment. There was little difference in people's views of both national or local government and cross reference interrogation of the data showed a strong level of corelation between scores given to each. Some responded to state that the question about local government was not specific enough, that some sections of local government were doing more than others, Leicester City being one example given.

There was also a strong correlation between an individual's personal commitment to protecting the environment and planet and their level of concern about climate change.

Chart 11: Level of personal commitment to protecting the environment and planet by concern about climate change
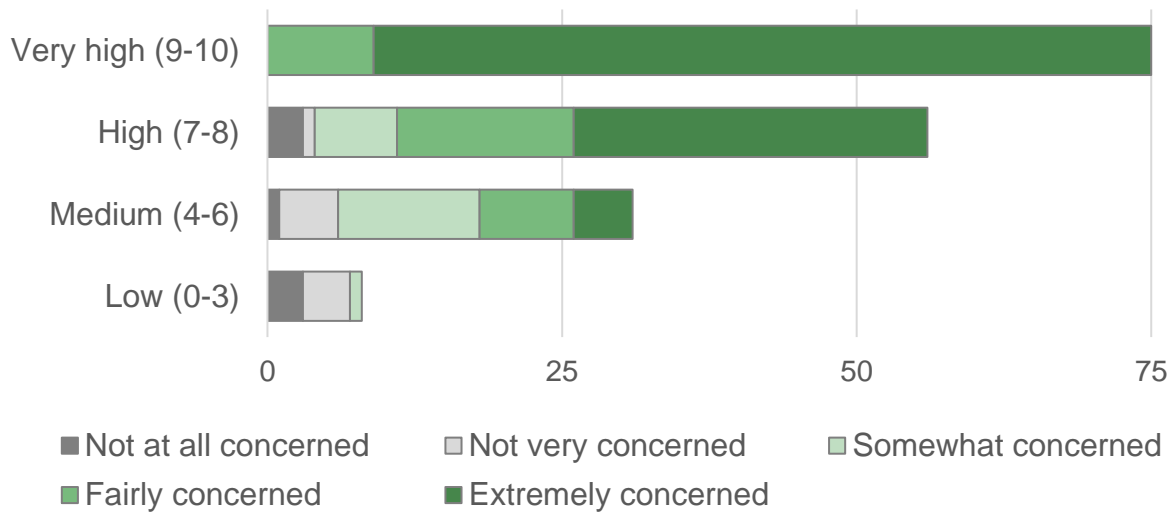
Some criticism was expressed within comments made across various parts of the survey about national and local government, including Melton Borough Council. A selection of representative comments are shown below;

"MBC is doing very little... need to be assisting us to go green, giving us real advice on how to reduce our emissions"

"It is being ignored by government under the influence of vested interests by the fossil fuel industry. We need low carbon legislation now, not in some distant future."

"I don't know much about what local government are doing but nationally, I have no faith net zero will be met, just more lies…"

"[MBC] need to use your power to enforce change… much more should be done! Don't just leave it to the individual!

"…my own efforts seem futile until the government changes."

"[businesses] don't see any support either in financial or non-financial terms from central government or local authority."

"I long for a visionary, future-focused local Government system that is well set to tackle such things as Climate Change."

What climate changes means to you…

QN: Let us know more about what climate change means to you.

Over 5,000 words were submitted to this open ended question by around two-thirds of all respondents (142). It is not possible to share all of these comments within this report. A thematic analysis was undertaken to pull out the main themes and a selection of respondents own words have been used to illustrate these themes,

which are set out below. (Some comments were considered in other sections of the survey as they did not directly relate to this question).

The three most commonly mentioned themes were;

It means changes to our environment…

The environmental impacts of climate change were commonly mentioned, particularly with regard to nature, wildlife and biodiversity or in relation to changes to weather patterns.

> *"I am concerned about how man is destroying our natural habitat. We are experiencing weather conditions that are not normal for our country."*

> *"It means being able to live into my old age in a world with adequate resources for all; food, clean water, clean air, safety, open spaces, wildlife. It is everything and if we ignore climate change then we will perish as other life forms have done before us."*

> *"I'm a farmer so see at first hand the impact of weather and climate. Obvious concerns about what food and how much we can produce in future and the effect on our biodiversity"*

> *"Our warming planet is not about hotter summers but the risk of ecological collapse"*

> *"100 million years of biodiversity… cannot be replaced with new plantings."*

It means we need to take action…

People said that that there is no time to wait to make changes and take action, they said that there has been too much talk and not enough action.

> *"It's a matter of make the change now or face the consequences."*

> *"Emergencies do not wait. If this is a global emergency, there needs to be much more positive action"*

> *"Every day of inactivity just makes it harder in the long term…"*

It will impact future generations…

Many felt we have a responsibility to future generations to try to protect them from the worst impacts. Many people made a personal link to their own children and grandchildren.

> *"I want a functioning planet for my grandson."*

> *"The inaction of the current generations will "bake in" the certainty [of climate change]. The future generations will not forgive us!"*

"Sadness that one of my adult children has decided not to have children as feels environmental future too bleak."

"It frightens me as to what the future may hold for my children and my children's children."

Other key views expressed

We have highlighted some of the other key views expressed by respondents below.

It is a climate <u>and environmental</u> emergency… a small number of respondents felt that thinking in terms of just a climate emergency was insufficient. That we need to recognise interlinked issues that needed to be addressed, which are wider than climate change alone, particularly the need to protect the natural environment.

"Climate change does not capture everything, plastic waste, biodiversity, protecting the environment are equally important."

"Climate and nature emergencies are linked and will have a massive effect on all of us. Both need to be tackled..."

"Climate change is just one part of the environmental crisis... To see climate change in isolation is a failure - we have to recognise that these multiple crises are inter-linked..."

It means a threat to our way of life… just under one in five responses expressed views around how climate change will impact humans. Impacting health and wellbeing, driving conflict, migration or its potential to result in human extinction. Others highlighted inequality, how the impacts will be felt differently by different groups and in different places.

"It's poorer parts of the world which will suffer most - flooding, drought, famine, etc., so we have a responsibility to limit climate change."

"…if we ignore climate change then we will perish as other life forms have done before us."

It is driven by our overconsumption… just over one in ten respondents said that our exploitation of resources and over consumption were driving climate change. Some linked this back to capitalism and unsustainable economic growth models. Ongoing population growth was also viewed as an important driver for some, others raised specific concerns about our consumption of goods from overseas.

"Climate change to me is the result of over consumption - capitalism. Exponential economic growth has tipped the balance of nature to the point of no return."

"People [are] using more resources than the planet can sustain"

"…more thought for profit rather than nature."

> *"…national government utterly focused on GDP and Growth (which by and large means consumption), this clouds their judgement."*

> *'…the average Brit consumes 1/3 more calories than they need - that's an environmental problem, not just a health problem.'*

It's natural.. eleven respondents to this question said that climate change was either not proven to be driven by human activity or was not happening. This correlated with the number of respondents who said that climate change did not concern them at all. The majority of these responses accepted that the climate was changing but countered that it was a natural phenomenon, with differing views regarding the degree climate change is influenced by human activity. It was noted that these respondents often expressed a care for nature and the environment and concerns about over consumption and waste. Some felt that only one narrow point of view has been put across, that their views were not being heard. There is a risk that these people may feel alienated from engaging in environmental issues even if they care about them, if climate change science and rationale is too strongly applied to issues and actions that they might otherwise support.

> *"Only one point of view is promoted…. There are other scientific views that are ignored which challenge the standard narrative."*

> *"It's evolutionary and related to nature. People are ill informed, and I think it's a con"*

> *"A lot of hassle for something that I won't see in my lifetime"*

> *"I am all for environmental and wildlife preservation but afraid cynical about the Green Agenda."*

> *'…there are genuine errors, omissions and a ready acceptance by the public at large, as well as very disturbingly by our MPs and others in trusted positions… huge gap between emotional but unproven and exaggerated "extinction" stories, and hard facts from truly independent scientists of whom there are thousands, but go unheard by the media at large; good news being no news.'*

> *"Climate change means changes to climate due to both natural and man-made influences. I am not convinced we fully understand how human activities influence climate change but believe that we undoubtedly are having an impact"*

Action is pointless… seven people said that action to tackle climate change was pointless or futile. Reasons given were because of the costs, that it was not our responsibility because other countries emissions were much bigger, because whatever we might do now would be too little and too late, or because it was not clear what the right thing to do was.

"Pointless. We account for less than 1% of global emissions. Until China and India are on board it's a pointless waste of our tax. Virtue signalling by politicians."

"We are probably too late to stop severe effects."

"Too many daft pie in the sky ideas and too few realistic solutions!"

It means rethinking agriculture and food production… many people made comments about food, primarily around future food security, moving away from animal based diets and food waste.

"We need a dramatic shift away from animal agriculture… then we may stand a chance at saving the planet."

"…increased inability to feed human population."

"…[consider] how we get our food and where we source it, the carbon footprint of transferring food and the waste involved."

"Climate change is a big concern, but I hate that the farmers are being used as an excuse when they are not the biggest contributor."

It means we need to adapt to and mitigate 'baked in' climate change… respondents emphasised the need to mitigate changes that have already happened, to acknowledge that the climate has already changed and that we may soon or already have reached tipping points which means we will see significant impacts. They suggest the need for us all to be better prepared, to take mitigation measures and start to adapt to our changing climate.

"We are probably too late to stop severe effects"

"We already have [climate change] baked in due to historic emissions… very unlikely we will be radical enough to turn that round before tipping points, arguably already reached due to lag effect..."

Other issues raised were generally around specific areas where respondents felt changes are needed such as housing, waste, transport, energy generation and plastics. These issues are discussed in more detail in other sections of this report.

- **Housing**; retrofitting housing stock, new housing design standards (provision of solar panels on roofs, need to move away from gas boilers, against greenfield sites for new housing growth), and some criticisms of the Council's approach to planning and development decisions.

- **Energy use**; need to end fossil fuel use, need for cleaner energy generation, also some concerns raised about (electric vehicle) batteries and the mining of their components.

- **Waste**; need to reduce waste and litter and improve local recycling facilities. Pollution from plastics was singled out as an area of concern.

- **Transport**; need for better public transport and cycling infrastructure to reduce car dependency, concerns over the cost of electric vehicles and need for EV charging infrastructure.

- **Costs and affordability**; primarily around the affordability to take actions they would like, such as buying an electric car or installing solar panels. Small number of comments around indirect costs imposed on people to meet climate change targets, for example, through regulation and taxation.

- **What people need to do;** concerns around what actions are most effective and what technological solutions are the right ones.

- **National and local government action;** lack of action from local and national government as discussed earlier in the report.

It was also noted that many people used emotive language to frame their views, they talked about their anxiety and fear around climate change. There was frustration and anger expressed about making changes to tackle climate change, from both those who felt change was too slow and those who felt it was unnecessary.

Making changes and taking action

QN: Please indicate how much you agree with the following statements…
- *The way we live our lives will have to change substantially to address climate change*
- *Technology will help reduce most of our carbon emissions, so people's lives will not have to change substantially*
- *Tackling climate change is important to me*

QN: Thinking just about your family, household, or organisation, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements;
- *I don't think I really need to change how I currently do things*
- *I feel a personal responsibility to reduce the impacts of climate change, even if it means making personal sacrifices*
- *I do not understand what I need to do*
- *I do not know how to make changes*
- *I worry about the financial cost to make the changes I would like to do*

Respondents were asked a series of questions about making changes to address climate change. 85% of respondents agreed that climate change was important to them. Overall respondents felt that they needed to make substantial changes to their lives to tackle climate change, with 83% agreeing with the statement that the '*way we live our lives will have to change substantially to address climate change'*. With

three out of four respondents said that they felt a personal responsibility to reduce the impacts of climate change, even if it meant making personal sacrifices (75%).

Chart 12: Level of agreement with statements about changes required to tackle climate change

The way we live our lives will have to change substantially to address climate change

75	57	14 7 6

0 20 40 60 80 100 120 140 160

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

Technology will help reduce most of our carbon emissions, so people's lives will not have to change substantially

7	32	33	64	20

0 20 40 60 80 100 120 140 160

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

Tackling climate change is important to me

91	44	11 6 7

0 20 40 60 80 100 120 140 160

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

I don't think I really need to change how I currently do things

12	18	27	77	24

0 20 40 60 80 100 120 140 160

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

I feel a personal responsibility to reduce the impacts of climate change, even if it means making personal sacrifices

44	76	17	10 12

0 20 40 60 80 100 120 140 160

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

Chart 12: Level of agreement with statements about changes required to tackle climate change [continued]

I do not understand what I need to do

1	21	42	59	36

0   20   40   60   80   100   120   140   160

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

I do not know how to make changes

4	17	36	65	35

0   20   40   60   80   100   120   140   160

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

I worry about the financial cost to make the changes I would like to do

42	64	28	15	9

0   20   40   60   80   100   120   140   160

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

Respondents were overall sceptical about technological led solutions rather than lifestyle changes being the right course of action, with only a quarter of people (25%) agreeing with the statement that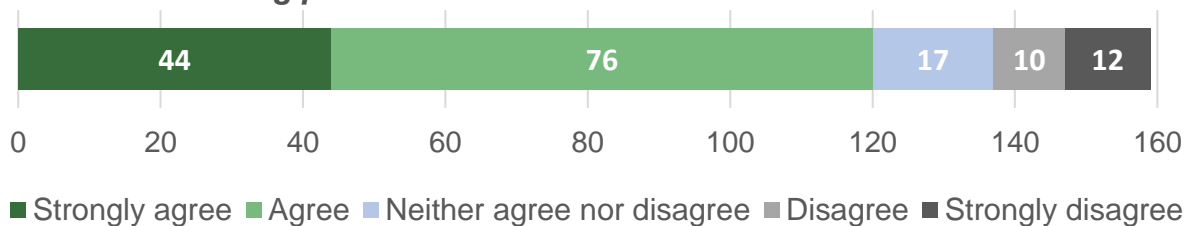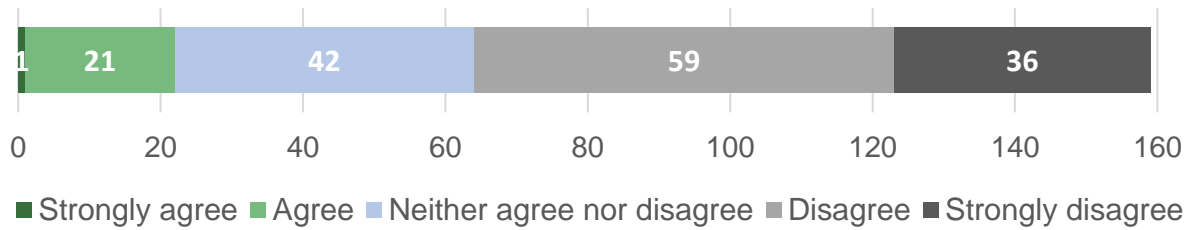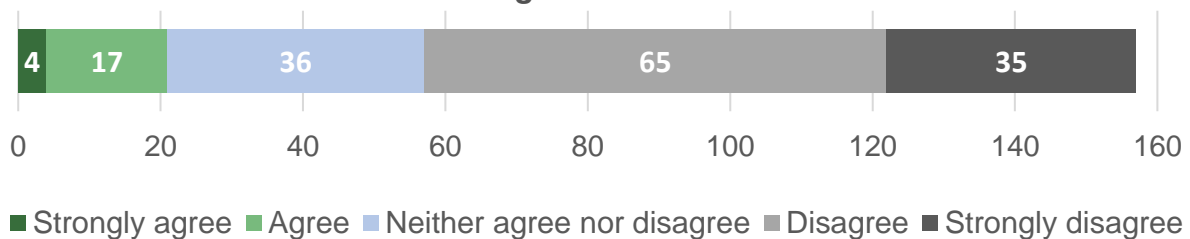 technology would help reduce most of our carbon emissions (so people's lives will not have to change substantially) (55% disagreed). Only 19% of respondents agreed with statement that '*I don't really need to change how I currently do things'*.

The majority of people indicated that they knew what they needed to do to tackle climate change and how to do it. Only 14% felt that they did not know what they needed to, and these responses correlated strongly with those who indicated that they did not know how to makes changes they needed to (15%). Comments made about being unsure what the right thing to do was, tended to express concerns that technologies were not yet advanced enough or that the right solutions to take have yet to be proven, that they might change, expressing uncertainty about what the right thing to do was rather than not understand what needed to be done.

"I am concerned that we are pushing people towards means of transport and heating systems where the technology is not yet capable of such a change…"

"Short term over reaction may cause more damage than it resolves."

Two out of three people (68%) said they were worried about the financial cost to make the changes they would like to do. There was a correlation in the data between level of understanding about what changes needed to be undertaken and climate change knowledge (cross analysis of '*I do not understand what I need to do'* and knowledge of terms '*Net Zero'* and '*Climate Emergency'*). It suggests that a person's level of knowledge about climate change is linked to their understanding of the changes and actions which are required to tackle it.

When the responses were examined by the type of respondent it showed that members of the public and parish council respondents felt that there was slightly less of a need to make changes to how they currently do things, they also held a slightly more optimistic view regarding technological solutions mitigating the need for changes in how they live. Non-business organisations were also slightly more likely to say that they did not know how to make the changes needed. Parish councils and community groups were on average the most concerned about how to fund the changes with local businesses the least concern. However the small number of people within these groups means this finding should be treated with caution and further tested.
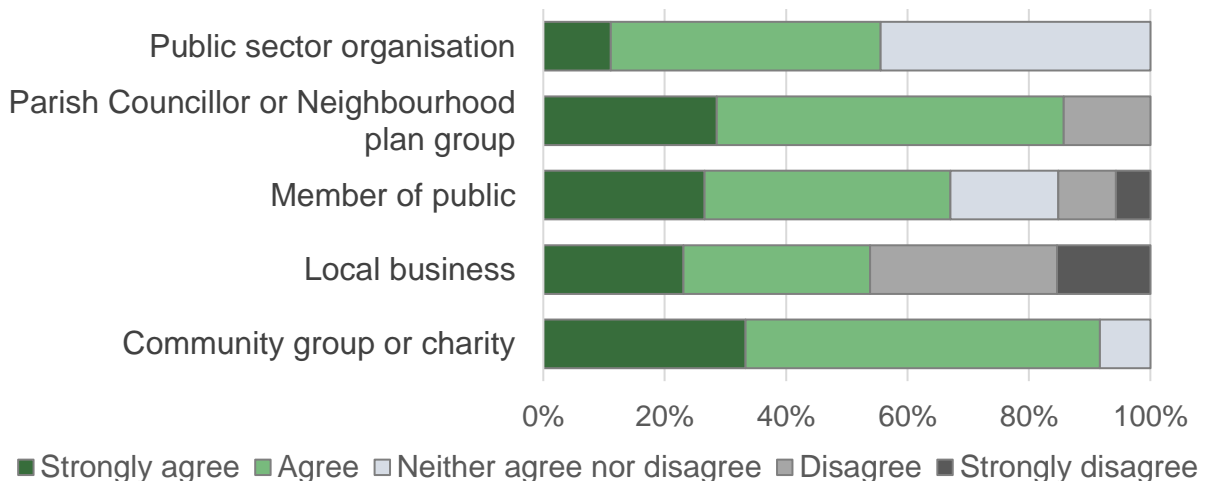
Chart 13: level of agreement with the statement '*I worry about the financial cost to make the changes I would like to do'* by respondent type

■Strongly agree ■Agree □Neither agree nor disagree ■Disagree ■Strongly disagree

Comments made tended to express concerns about being able to afford to make changes and take action, such as buying electric vehicles and undertake home improvements. Others, largely the small number of those with lower levels of concern about climate change, also raised concerns about indirect costs imposed

upon them, through taxation, use of tax payers money and regulations to meet emission targets.

> *"It is extremely difficult to make the right choices given the extent of people on low incomes and fixed incomes who are now struggling with the cost of living"*

> *"I am unlikely to be affected much by any actual climate change but will be heavily negatively affected in terms of my cost of living by governments, both national and local, rushed and ill thought out attempts to prevent it."*

> *"Unfortunately all it means to me is in the future I won't be able to afford a car, I won't be able to heat my house or cook food or have hot water."*

The importance given to different types of action

QN: There are many ways all of our actions can help reduce the impacts of climate change. We would like to understand how important you think the different actions listed below are...

Respondents were asked to rate a series of 21 actions on a scale of importance. These 21 actions related to measures to combat climate change and protect the environment in four category areas; homes and buildings, transport, the natural environment and waste and the use of resources. The majority of respondents rated each of the 21 issues as important or very important, the only narrow exception being 'drive electric vehicles' (49.5%).

The responses were also simply scored to create an average importance score for each action out of 10 (where 'very important' = 10 and 'not at all important' = 0, scored at equal intervals of 2.5). This allowed each action to be ranked in terms of overall importance for comparison purposes (chart 14).

The least important action, the one given the lowest overall ranked score was '*drive electric cars*' (5.83), ranked a full 0.5 points lower than the next action least important action, *'eat less meat & dairy / more plant-based diets'* (6.33), both these actions were rated notably lower in importance than all the other actions, which all ranked above 7.2/10.

The highest ranked scores were for '*minimise use of single use plastics, plastic packaging*' and '*repair, reuse, repurpose, and recycle more'*, closely followed by 'p*rotect and enhance biodiversity and wildlife habitats'*. Each of these actions score overall above 9.0/10.

Chart 14: Average level of importance of all actions ranked [all respondents]

Horizontal bar chart showing average importance scores (x-axis from 5.5 to 9.0):

- Minimise use of single use plastics, plastic packaging
- Repair, reuse, repurpose, and recycle more
- Protect and enhance biodiversity and wildlife habitats
- Better insulation
- Reduce food waste
- Enhance green spaces around housing and buildings
- Reduce how much we buy and consume
- Minimise landfill waste
- Plant more trees
- Reduce home energy use, efficient appliances/lighting
- Install renewable energy, such as solar panels to roofs
- Buy local
- Buy from companies with high sustainability standards
- Generate more renewable energy locally, wind & solar
- Cycle, walk, or use public transport more
- Reduce car use
- Reduce air travel
- Replace gas/oil boilers with low carbon heating systems
- Reduce water consumption
- Eat less meat & dairy / more plant-based diets
- Drive electric vehicles

Legend:
- Very important; average score above 8.75
- Important to very important; average score 7.5-8.75
- Somewhat important to important; average score 5.0-7.5

Chart 15: Average scored level of importance by issue [members of public]

Issue	
Repair, reuse, repurpose, and recycle more	
Protect and enhance biodiversity and wildlife habitats	
Better insulation	
Reduce food waste	
Minimise landfill waste	
Plant more trees	
Enhance green spaces around housing and buildings	
Minimise use of single use plastics, plastic packaging	
Reduce how much we buy and consume	
Reduce home energy use, efficient appliances/lighting	
Install renewable energy, such as solar panels to roofs	
Buy local	
Buy from companies with high sustainability standards	
Generate more renewable energy locally, wind & solar	
Cycle, walk, or use public transport more	
Reduce car use	
Reduce air travel	
Reduce water consumption	
Replace gas/oil boilers with low carbon heating systems	
Eat less meat & dairy / more plant-based diets	
Drive electric vehicles	

5.5   6.0   6.5   7.0   7.5   8.0   8.5   9.0

Very important; average score above 8.75

Important to very important; average score 7.5-8.75

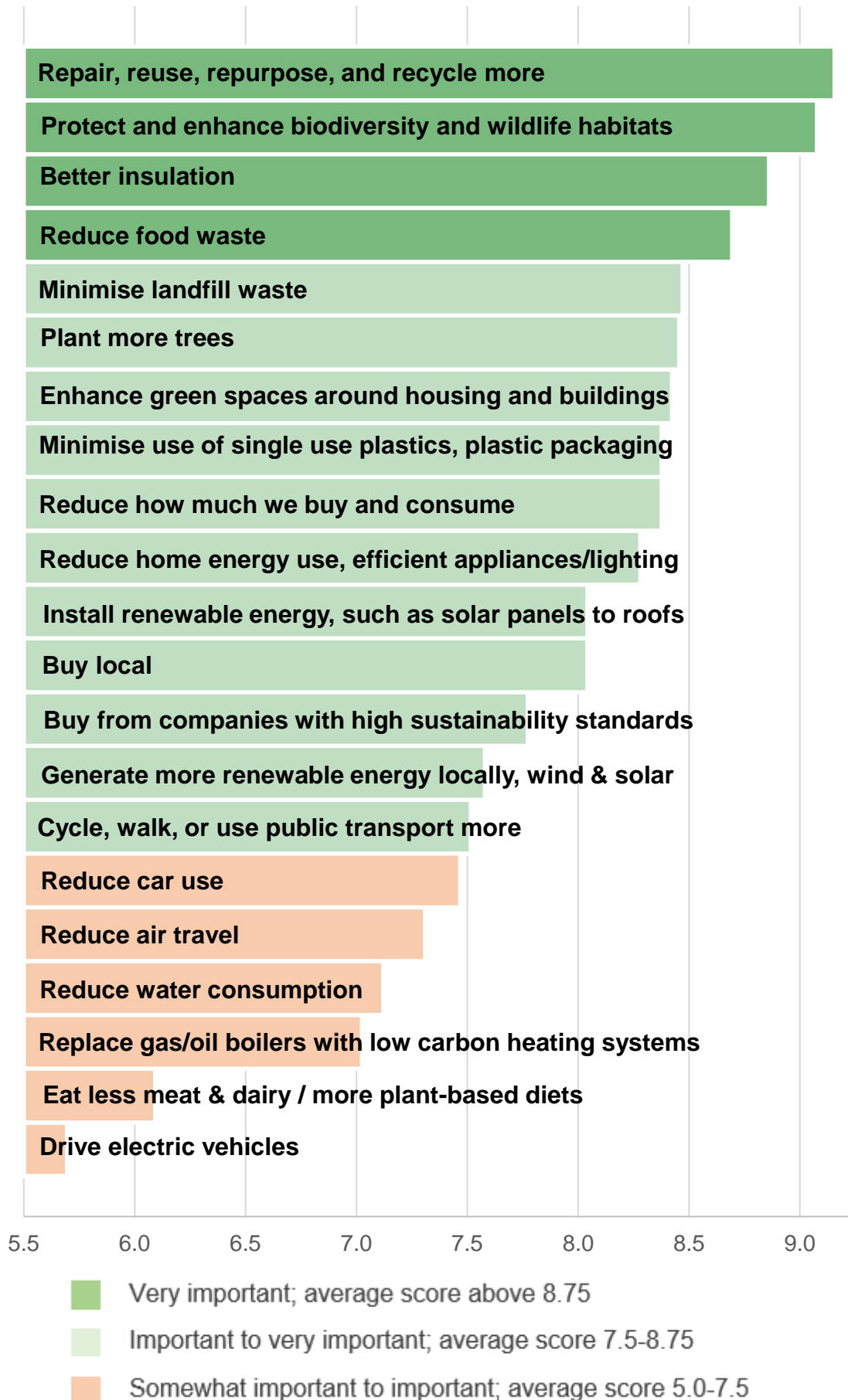Somewhat important to important; average score 5.0-7.5

Chart 15 then shows this same ranking information, but only for members of the public, to better understand and separate public views from organisational views. It also shows a similar spread of ranking, which is expected as members of the public make up 79% of the respondents. It does reveal that members of the public gave overall a lower level of importance to '*minimise use of single use plastics, plastic packaging*' (-0.71 lower than overall score), however this reflected a very high level of importance given to this issue by organisational respondents, rather than a particularly low level of importance given by members of the public.

Members of the public overall also gave a slightly lower level of importance than organisational respondents to '*eat less meat & dairy/more plant-based diets*' (-0.23) and '*replace gas/oil boilers with low carbon heating systems*' (-0.25). These are arguably also the issues that are mostly likely to impact their lives, homes and lifestyles. This finding is a general observation across the data in this section, that a lower level of importance is typically given to an action for which the respondent will be more negatively impacted by it, those that will require largest costs and lifestyle changes to achieve. The observed difference can be small and given the low number of respondents in each of the organisational group categories, the data is not considered sufficiently reliable for drawing conclusions, it rather suggests this as an issue to consider and explore further.

The 21 individual actions are discussed in more detail below, in the context of the four thematic groups; homes and buildings, transport, the natural environment and waste and the use of resources. This next section of the report also pulls together relevant comments made in other parts of the survey in relation to the four thematic areas, to reduce repetition and increase understanding of the scores attributed to act of the 21 actions.

Homes and Buildings

The five issues consulted about which related to homes and buildings were mostly rated as important or very important. The strongest support was for better insulation, where two out of three people stated that it was very important and only 3 respondents said that it was either 'not very' or 'not at all' important. It was ranked fourth highest for importance overall out of all 21 actions.

Chart 16: Level of importance given to climate and environmental actions relating to homes and buildings
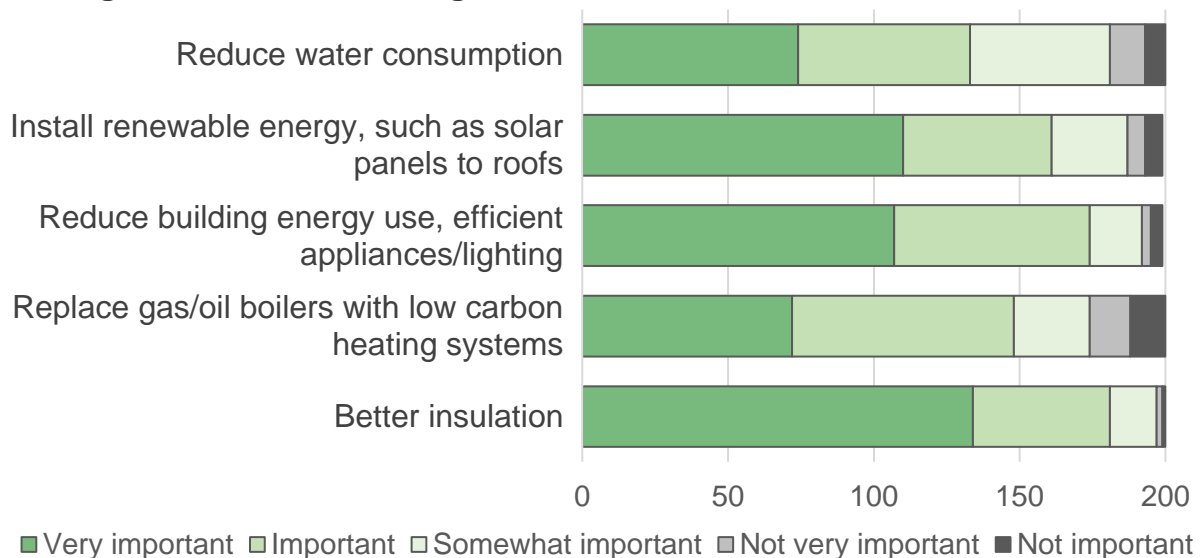
Replacing gas and oil boilers with low carbon heating systems was rated lowest within the housing and buildings category, 13% of respondents rated it 'not very' or 'not at all' important. This action ranked as the fourth lowest for importance overall out of all the 21 actions. However 74% of respondents rated this issues as important or very important. Examining by the type of respondent you can see that the group who would be most affected by works to building that they use, members of the public and businesses, were least likely to rate this issue as very important.

Chart 17: Importance given to replace oil and gas boiler heating systems by type of respondent
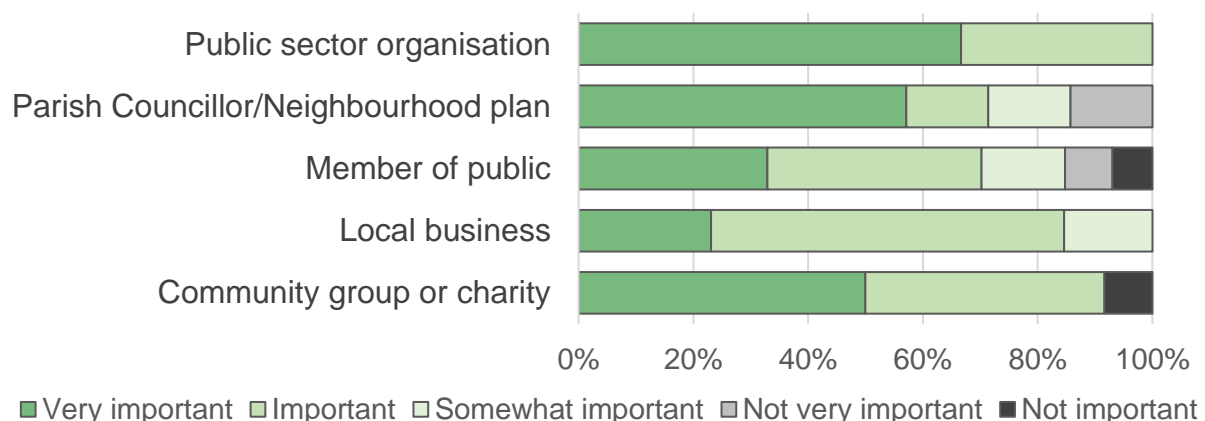
Actions to reduce energy demand were rated more important overall and above those to change or replace energy systems. Installing renewable energy, such as solar panels to roofs, was rated more important than replacing existing gas and oil heating systems to low carbon alternatives such as heat pumps. This is not an expected finding, given the strong climate change messaging around the need to move away from fossil fuel use in homes and buildings. This may reflect a disconnect about peoples understanding, other studies have suggested that the public do not know that heating in buildings is one of the very largest contributors to carbon emissions in the UK, with moderate awareness and low levels of knowledge about specific low carbon heating technologies such as heat pumps (BEIS, 2020, DG Cities, 2022).

'*Reduce water consumption*' was ranked the least important measure overall for homes and buildings actions, mainly because a higher proportion of people rated it as 'somewhat' important, only 10% of respondents stated that is was either 'not very' or 'not at all' important. '*Reduce water consumption*' was the third lowest rated action of all 21 issues asked about, and it was noted that there were few comments about water use in buildings in the consultation responses. The local area is an area of water scarcity, but was only reclassified as such in 2021 unlike for example, the south and east of England which has traditionally been the focus of attention for water scarcity in the UK for a long period, which could explain the lower level of importance given (EA, 2021). Studies have also found that people tend to significantly underestimate their water use (WRAS, 2019). This may be an area where future public awareness campaigning might be of some benefit. However, since the consultation period ended in April 2022, there has been UK heatwaves, warnings about below average rainfall and drought and significant coverage of sewage disposal into waterways, which may have already impacted the importance people may feel for this issue.

Businesses top two ranked actions were both related to homes and buildings, 'reduce building energy use' and 'better insulation', with 'install renewable energy generation rated as their 5th' most important action. It suggests that actions to help businesses save energy and money may be a particular area of interest for them.

The top action, most frequently mentioned in comments was for funding and support for measures such as insulation and solar panels. People also wanted the Council to ensure that new developments were more sustainable, and drive forwards higher house building standards, to see solar panels on new homes and move away from gas heating systems. A number of respondents wanted to see solar panel and other measures on local public buildings specifically.

Transport

Transport related actions tended to be given a lower overall level of importance than the other three categories. The four transport related actions all fell into the lower half of the rankings, falling within the bottom seven actions overall.

Chart 18: Level of importance given to climate/environmental actions relating to transport
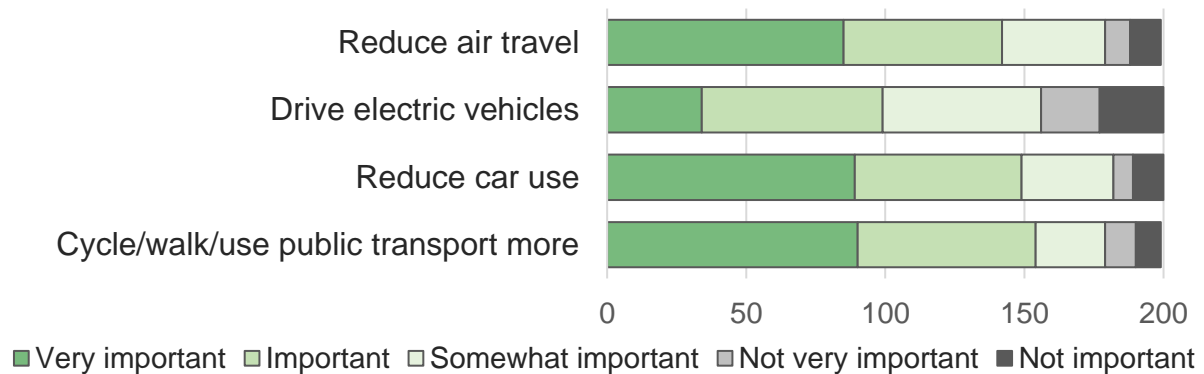

A high level of importance was still given to three of the four transport actions. Around three quarters of respondents rated '*reducing car use'* and '*cycling, walking or using public transport more'* as important or very important (77% and 75% respectively, with only 10% and 9% respectively rating them as either not very or not at all important). This correlation is not a surprising finding given these actions because that are closely related to one another. Respondents also gave almost equal levels of importance to *'reduce air travel'* (71% important or very important, 10% not very or not at all important).

The fourth action, '*driving electric vehicles'* was rated as much less important than the other transport actions, it was the lowest ranked out of all 21 actions surveyed, and a much lower proportion of respondents stated that this was a very important action to take. Overall only 49.5% of respondents felt it was an important or very important action, the only action where a majority did not rate it so. More than one in five (22%) stated that it was not very or not at all important, only '*eat less meat and dairy/eat more plant-based diets'* scored higher in terms of the proportion of people who felt it was not very or not at all important (25%). These two actions were considered notable outliers in the data, with much higher proportion of people saying that these actions were either not very or not at all important, when compared to all of the other actions (0-13% range for not very or not at all important for all other actions).

Although caution is required given the small number of respondents by each organisational type, no businesses rated '*drive electric vehicles'* as very important, the only action no business rated as very important. This finding may reflect the types of businesses that responded to the survey and/or the types of vehicles

required within them. Public sector respondents however rated '*drive electric vehicles'* much higher than others, they tended to rate all of the transport related actions higher than other groups. It may be that this reflects their organisations priorities or their greater awareness of co-related health benefits from these transport actions, such as increasing physical activity levels and reducing air pollution.

Chart 19: Importance given to driving electric vehicles by type of respondent
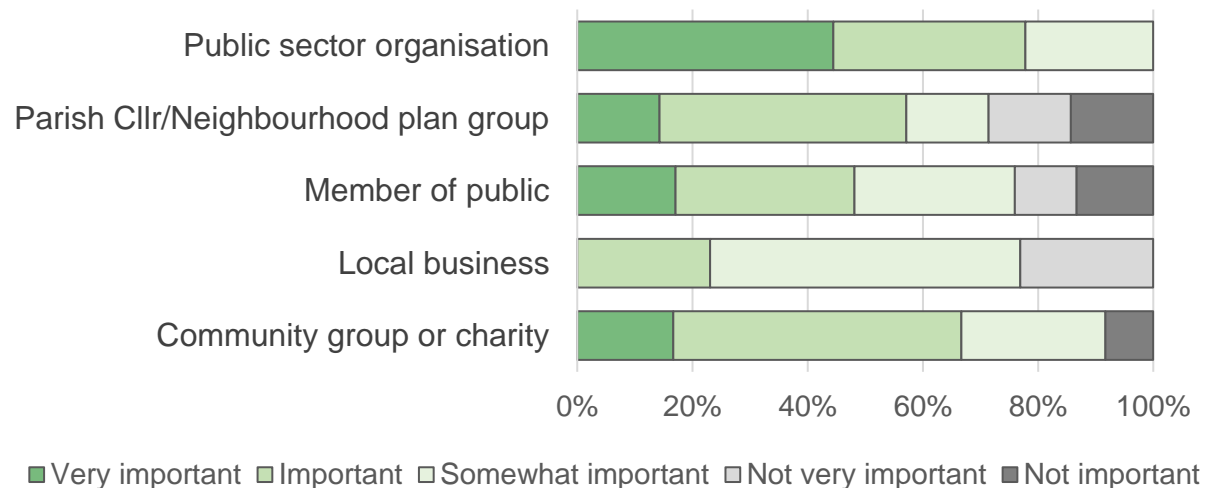
Examining comments made, the lower level of importance given to electric vehicle use is likely to in part reflect concerns about the environmental costs related to their production, particularly the mining of materials to make their batteries. A small number of respondents also suggested that it was unproven and that a mix of vehicle types including hydrogen may be required, particularly for larger more powerful vehicles such as buses and HGVs.

> *'Electric cars aren't a solution: they're just mildly less bad than fossil fuelled cars.'*

There were a large number of comments made about transport within the survey. These were largely focused on reducing car dependency by making alternatives modes of transport safer and more attractive. Respondents wanted to see improvements to public transport as well as highway and infrastructure improvements for walking and cycling. Actions that could help reduce the need to travel were also mentioned frequently, this included good quality broadband to help people work from home as well as improving leisure, retail, work opportunities and other facilities locally to reduce the need for people to travel to meet their needs, for example, by better utilising Melton hospital. Some mentioned the need to move to greener vehicles, electric or biodiesel buses as well as cars. Others highlighted the need for more EV chargepoints locally, including for those who do not have ability to accommodate charge points at their homes.

'Need to really work on road layouts, currently Melton is very difficult to walk round and dangerous for cycling. Paths need widening. Bike lanes need including and cars need to be squeezed out.'

'I can't switch to an electric vehicle until it's possible to have a cable from my house to the car parked outside (on street parking), this needs to be made possible.'

'Whilst rural transport is necessary, I see a large 56 seat bus drive in and out of our village most days completely empty, definitely a waste of resources. Timetables and vehicle sizes should be considered.'

'Create a proper plan for linking footpaths and create bicycle lanes. I would love to cycle in town, but I do not feel safe doing so.'

The natural environment

There was a high level of support for actions which protect and enhance the natural environment. 84-89% of respondents said that '*Protect and enhance biodiversity and wildlife habitats'*, '*enhance green spaces around housing and buildings'* and '*plant trees'* was either important or very important and only up to 3% of respondents said these actions were either not very or not important. The high level of importance given to these actions suggest that even respondents who are not very or not at all concerned about climate change widely supported these actions, that they appeal to most people, regardless of their views on climate change.

Chart 20: Level of importance given to climate/environmental actions relating to the natural environment
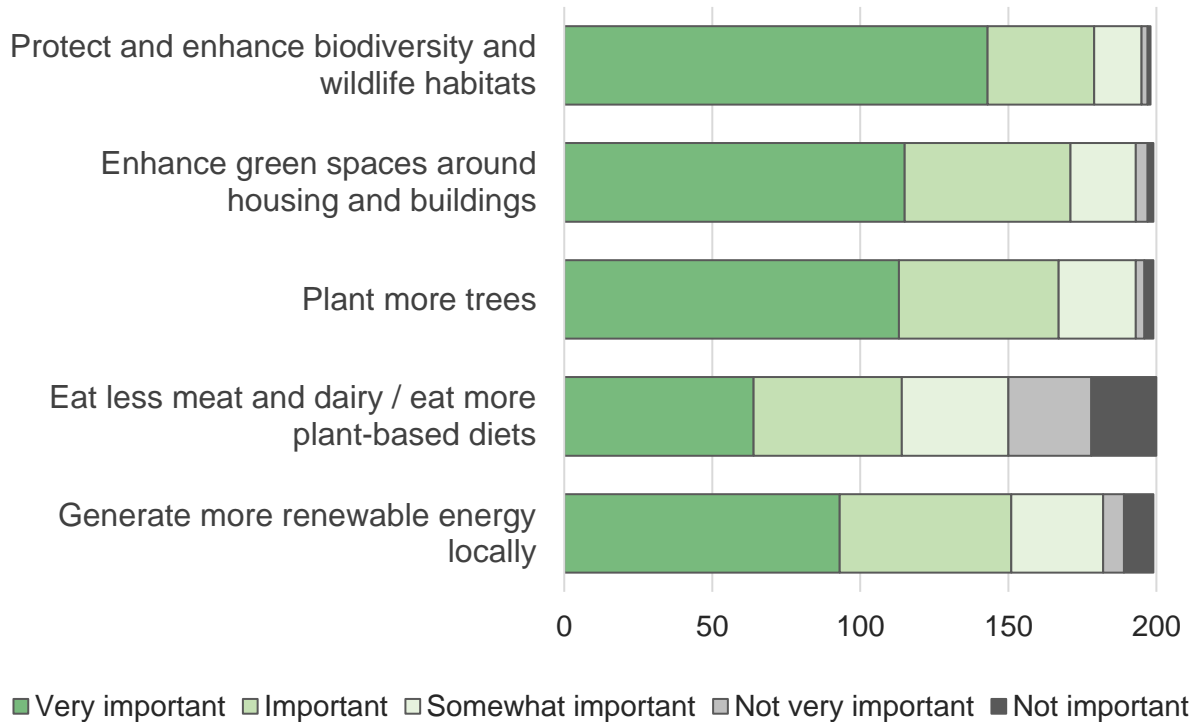
'Protecting and enhancing biodiversity and wildlife habitats' was one of the most strongly rated actions, it was ranked third in overall importance by respondents, and 70% of respondents rated it as very important. It was only rated as not very or not important three times, including by two local business respondents. Businesses were the group most likely to rate *'protecting and enhancing biodiversity and wildlife habitats'*, *'enhance green spaces around housing and buildings'* and '*plant trees'* as least important.

Comments made about the natural environment largely related to wanting the Council to better use its planning powers to achieve the best possible outcomes for nature as part of new developments or to see the better use of existing green spaces, such as wildflower verges, tree planting and the rewilding of land for nature. Some pointed out that there was an urgent need for more space for nature in Melton because it has less good quality sites than other similar areas.

> *'Melton Borough has a particularly low % of its land area of ecological interest and such sites should be especially protected and other land put into appropriate ecological management such as rewilding schemes'*

'*Eat less meat and dairy/eat more plant based diets'* received the lowest level of importance in this category and was ranked second lowest for importance out of all 21 actions.

Chart 21: Level of importance given to 'eat less meat and dairy/eat more plant based diets' by type of respondent
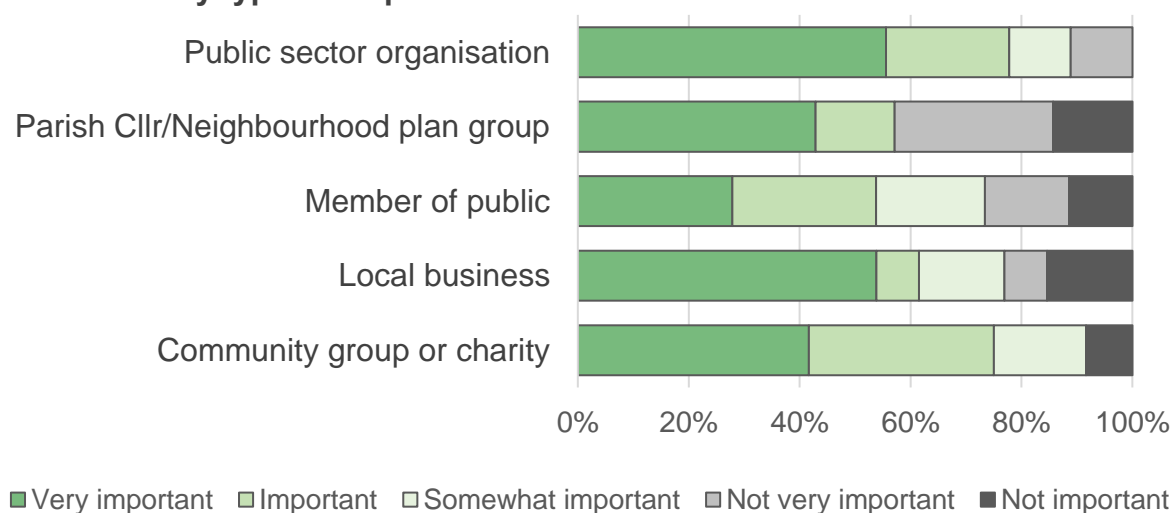
One in four people (25%) said '*eat less meat/eat more plant based diets'* was either not very or not important (25%), the highest proportion to rate any action as such. However the responses were somewhat polarised, with a majority of respondents stating that it was either 'important' or 'very important' (57%). Members of the public were slightly less likely to support this action (54% important/very important; 27% not very/not important) than other types of respondents. Again public sector respondents

tended to rate each of the natural environment actions as more important than other groups.

A number of interesting comments were made in relation to the Melton borough as the rural capital of food, and how it might use this to be a leader and champion for sustainable food production. Suggestions included promoting more sustainable food production and farming methods, having a sustainability presence at local food fairs and generally promoting local produce and local producers efforts to produce more sustainable food.

The last remaining action in this category was 'generate more renewable energy locally, from wind turbines and solar farms'. The scored a middle ranking overall viewed as an important to very important action.

Chart 22: Level of importance given to 'generate more renewable energy locally, from wind turbines and solar farms' by type of respondent
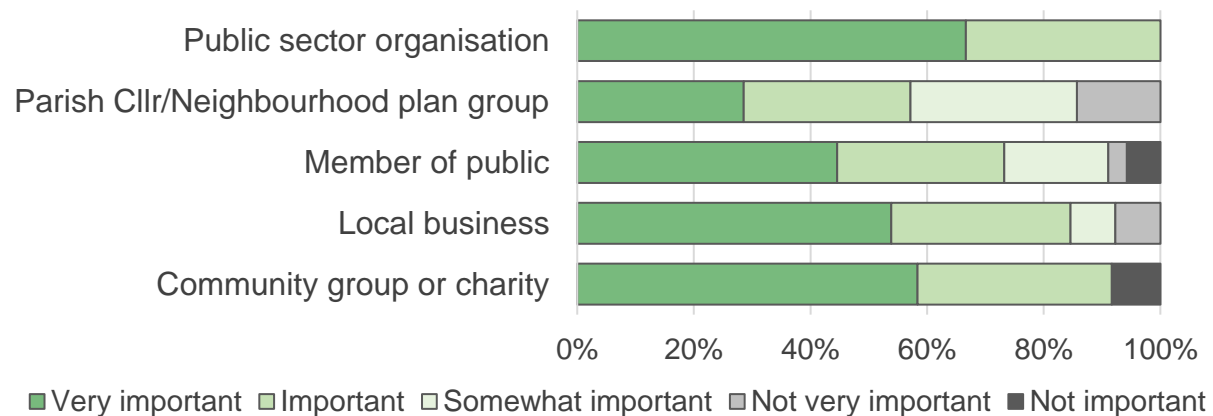
Examining comments throughout the survey, it was clear that the was strong general support for more renewable energy generation, for solar in particular, however it was largely support for solar panels on building roofs and brownfield sites rather than as solar farms on greenfield sites, particularly agricultural fields. There were numerous calls for solar panels on all new build homes in particular and several comments around potential to use them on warehouses and other business premises to meet businesses energy needs. Parish councils, who represent rural areas locally, showed a lower level of importance for more renewable energy generation than other types of organisations and members of the public on the whole, although the majority still rated it as important or very important (57%). Members of the public who live in Melton's rural areas also gave a slightly lower overall level of importance to this compared with people who live in Melton Mowbray, however two-thirds felt this was important or very important (65%), slightly higher than parish councillor respondents. Solar farms and wind turbines are more common in rural areas, the lower level of importance given from rural respondents may reflect their experience of local planning applications and renewable energy developments or reflect

concerns about the potential impact of them on their lives. Comments were also made by a small number of respondents to highlight the need for nuclear power as part of the overall mix, views on which were not specifically consulted upon.

Chart 23: Level of importance given to 'generate more renewable energy locally, from wind turbines and solar farms' by postcode area/respondent type
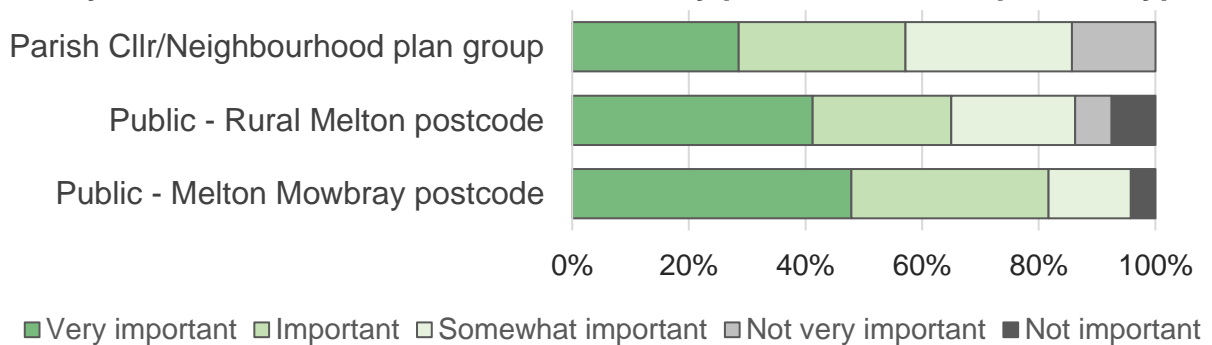
Waste and the use of resources

All of the actions within the waste and use of resources category of actions scored highly. '*Repair, reuse, repurpose, and recycle more*' and '*minimise use of single use plastics, including packaging*' were the top two rated actions within this category, with 92% of respondents rating these actions as either important or very important. 'B*uy local*' and *'buy from companies with high sustainability standards'* were the lowest rated action in this section, however, over three quarters of people thought that these were important or very important actions (81% and 79% respectively).

Chart 24: Level of importance given to climate and environmental actions relating to waste and the use of resources
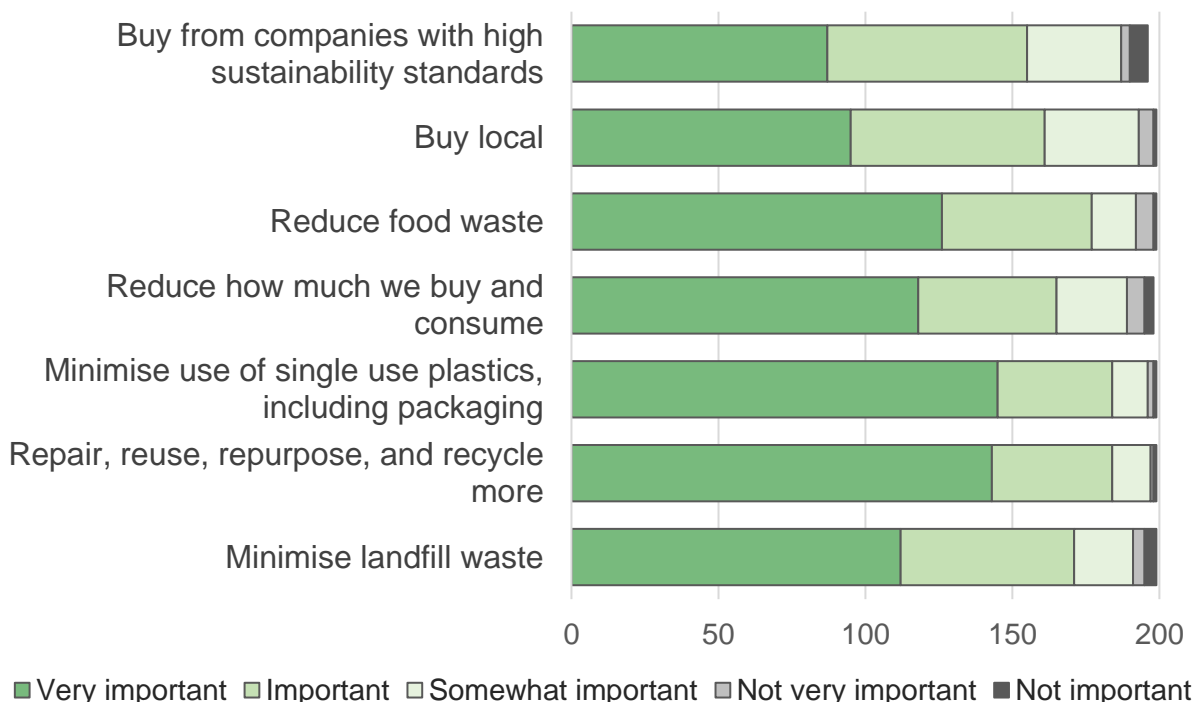
Less than 5% of respondents thought any of these actions were not very or not important. Again, the high level of importance given to all of these actions suggests that even respondents who are not very or not at all concerned about climate change felt that these three actions were at least somewhat important. It suggests that waste and use of resource actions transcend climate change discourse and appeal to nearly all people, regardless of their views on climate change.

Businesses rated '*Minimise use of single use plastics, including packaging*' and '*reduce how much we buy and consume*' as their third and fourth most important actions overall, again suggesting areas of potential interest to engage with them.

Comments were also made which reflected those in the previous section about unsustainable consumption being a driver of climate change. A number of people also specifically mentioned fly tipping and littering as issues of particular concern.

Other Actions

QN: Are there any other actions that you feel are important to tackle climate change or to help us all live more sustainably?

In addition to the 21 actions consulted upon, respondents were also able to set out any other actions which had not been included which they felt were important. There were 123 responses to this question, with over 4,000 words written. A large proportion of responses to this question related closely to or expanded upon the broad 21 actions already set out, for example, several people made comments around reducing dependency on buying products imported which strongly related to the 'buy local' action. Many other provided responses with ideas for specific actions to tackle climate change locally. These suggestions have been incorporated into appendix C of this document alongside other ideas made within other parts of the survey. Other actions suggested, outside the scope of those discussed above are shown below.

Development and Construction

The sustainability of new development and the impact of construction on overall emissions was the most common other action proposed. Comments made largely referred to the design of new housing developments and the Council's use of its local planning authority powers. A wide variety of comments were made in support of low carbon construction methods, net zero and future proofed new developments (will not require retrofitting), having solar panels on roofs and not relying on fossil fuel heating systems. Comments were also made about ensuring that new development protects nature, provides sufficient and good quality green spaces, and provides good quality cycling and walking routes. There was also a number of comments about prioritising the development of brownfield sites and the reuse of existing buildings, rather than developing greenfield sites, particularly in and around villages.

A smaller number of respondents also raised concerns about land at risk of flooding being used for new development, that rural villages are unsustainable places to build new homes (car dependent due to lack of facilities or public transport) and a small number of people simply said that we just need to stop building more houses. There was a strong desire for the Council to use its planning powers to secure better quality developments. It is noted that these comments closely reflect those made during the consultation on the Council's draft housing strategy in 2021.

Communication and engagement

A number of respondents also commented about the importance of communication and engaging with people, informing local people about issues and actions they can take. Talking with young people, including going into schools was a common theme. Communication and engagement are explored in more detail in the working together section of this report that follows the main questions.

Respondents biggest climate challenges and priorities

QN: Thinking just about your family, household, or organisation. What are your biggest climate challenges and priorities?

Respondents were asked to set out what they thought were their biggest climate change challenges and priorities. There were 160 responses to this open ended question. The most common themes were, costs and affordability, transportation including car dependency, waste, and reducing energy use.

Costs and affordability

The biggest challenge identified was affordability, many respondents said they would like to improve insulation, shop more sustainably, install solar panels, install a heat pump, or buy an electric vehicle but the cost was prohibitive. Some others also said that the personal financial cost to them did not seem worth it, as it would do little in the grand scheme of things to make a difference to overall emissions but be a heavy financial burden to them. The timing of the survey (Feb-Apr 2022) meant that responses towards the end of the consultation period started to cross over with an increasing public awareness of rising energy costs and the cost of living crisis. This meant that responses received at the end of the consultation period were more likely to talk about financial concerns in relation to energy use, for example, they said their challenge was 'keeping warm' reflecting concern about affording to heat their homes.

> *'We cannot afford to change our boiler or add more insulation even though I would love to add solar panels but they're out of our financial reach.'*

> *'…the things we need to do are out of our budget so go very low down the priorities.'*

'Minimizing my food supplies from non-local chains - sometimes difficult to buy things cheaply.'

Transportation

The next biggest challenge was around transportation, largely around car dependency locally. Many cited a lack of public transport options to make it a viable alternative to car use, and others said that the roads were unsafe for cycling and/or they lived too far away from places they needed to regularly go, to walk or cycle. Issues around public transport services included recent cuts to local bus services, a lack of evening service to access entertainment and unreliable or inconvenient services for regular commuting. Limited local shops and facilities mean some people felt that they had to travel further afield, often by car to meet their needs.

'I would love to not have a car but how would I get from Melton to Nottingham to visit my elderly parents. If I used an [electric] bike to travel into Melton is there a route where I would be safe from larger vehicles or somewhere to park it securely while I shopped?'

'The large volumes of cars & the speed they drive make cycling feel very unsafe, but I would love to do that more as a means to get around.'

'The trains don't enable us to use the cinema or theatre in the evenings and lack of shopping choices locally means a car is necessary but not really wanted.'

Another transport related challenge respondents mentioned frequently were their holidays, in relation to aviation emissions.

'We need to confront our holiday preferences to minimise damage and maximise mitigation.'

Waste Reduction

Waste reduction, including recycling and reuse, was another commonly mentioned challenge, the majority of the specific comments were around, plastic packaging and food waste. There was a strong sense of frustration about the lack of options to enable more sustainable choices to buy goods without plastic packaging, so change felt beyond the control of individuals. Food waste composting was also mentioned frequently by members of public as being an area of their waste that was challenging to deal with and there were a number of comments made in favour of a food waste collection service throughout the survey.

'I want to be able to re-use and re purpose items instead of sending them to landfill.'

'Greater confidence that recycled waste is actually being recycled and what we can do collectively and as individuals to increase this'

A variety of lifestyle challenges were mentioned, often alongside waste reduction issues, from learning how to do more nature friendly gardening, to growing your own food, and trying to consume less, more locally and more sustainably.

Reducing energy use

There was widespread recognition about the need to reduce energy use. Majority of comments were largely general, simply saying that their challenge was to reduce their energy use and/or move away from using fossil fuels. There was a clear interest in domestic solar panels and there were also specific challenges raised about retrofitting listed and older buildings to make them more energy efficient.

> *'My Victorian house is difficult to insulate. Solid brick walls cannot be effectively insulated without destroying the internal and external character...'*

> *'We'd like to see a solution for oil heating as we've tried to explore air source heat pumps, but it is not viable in our old, listed house.'*

> *'Cooking for one person uses the same energy as cooking for more than one, so single households can find it hard to reduce this energy use.'*

Time

Time was often described alongside costs as a reason for something being a challenge, respondents tended to say that sustainable choices required more time to be able to implement them into their lifestyles, for example, time to allow them to go to specialist shops to buy more sustainably or a lack of time to use alternatives to the car.

> *'…want to buy from a local refill shop but it only opens during my work hours.'*

Fairness and equality

Some people set out what changes and actions they had personally done to lower their personal environmental impacts in response to this question. A small number of these respondents highlighted equality and equity issues. They felt it was the turn of others to make changes like they already had, that they had done their fair share. Others felt that their individual actions were insignificant in the grand scheme of things.

> *'… believe my individual behaviour changes, to eat less meat and dairy, consume less, reduce fossil fuel use, garden for wildlife are insignificant to real change required.'*

> *'My concern is that as an individual I could do quite a lot of things which will involve significant expense. There will be households who are*

unwilling to do such things or are unable to afford them. That leaves me to question, rightly or wrongly, what impact what I do will have.'

'How do we live our lives and make choices which reduce climate changing emissions when the architecture of society and communities and travel and leisure remain so carbon intensive?'

No challenges

A small number of respondents said they had no challenges, as they did not wish to do anything or make changes in how they live due to climate change. These responses were mostly from those who had also said that they were not concerned about climate change. A small number of respondents also felt that rules and regulations to address climate change were a challenge for them personally, by impacting their lifestyles, limiting personal choice and increasing costs.

'We do not wish to ever have electric vehicles and think it is morally wrong to take away our choice by stopping production and charging more for something we enjoy such as 2 stroke engine bikes as a hobby which uses far less carbon footprint than most people's annual holidays on plane.'

Getting others on board

Asides from time and money another challenge set out was how to get others on board. This was expressed across a variety of perspectives, from increasing community awareness, to getting business suppliers to take sustainability seriously, and just getting other members of the family to sort out the recycling properly.

Confidence

There was a small number of responses that made reference to uncertainty or a lack of confidence in what the right actions and solutions are, most often made about switching to electric cars and installing heat pumps in homes. The wording used in comments suggests this is likely due to a lack of knowledge and familiarity with newer technologies, which makes them feel risky, particularly so if they have a high cost or require a big change in how people have traditionally done things. Some of the reason for this related to a lack of wider adoption, for example, limited chargepoint infrastructure being quoted as a barrier to electric vehicle uptake, in particular for the small number of respondents who highlighted that they did not have space for off street charging at home.

'I'd like to have electric vehicle, but the infrastructure isn't there to commit yet.'

'I don't know who can give an honest and impartial view of how to heat and insulate our house more efficiently.'

The responses were also examined by type of respondent, however, given the small sample size caution should be used when interpreting this information.

Business priorities and challenges

Businesses responded very similarly to other types of respondents. The main challenge raised by the majority of the 12 businesses who responded was working with others, their clients, customers and supply partners, to successfully implement change across their businesses. Some cited supply chain partners as a potential challenge, others said there was a need for wider structural change in how their sector operates. Some businesses were reliant on specific supply chain partners, which meant that they felt reliant on others making changes to help them become more sustainable. The challenge of increasing client and customer knowledge and awareness and providing training and development for staff was another issue that was raised by several respondents.

Costs appear to be of a lesser concern for the businesses who responded. The cost and affordability to make changes within their business was raised by only one business, another recognised the financial impact of making change, but said that they were happy to invest to make changes, but that it would increase costs to the customer. Other challenges mentioned were, how to eliminate plastic waste, the challenge of developing climate change plans and targets and reducing emission from transport and building energy use.

**Other organisations priorities and challenges**

The cost and affordability to make changes was the most commonly mentioned issue for other organisations. Several respondents mentioned challenge of operating out of older (and for some listed) buildings that were hard to make energy efficient. Time was also set out as a challenge for some organisations.

Although organisations did make reference to specific actions they wanted to take to reduce their emissions and impacts, such as recycling more and install renewable energy systems, their responses were much more focused on how their organisations work and interact with others. They tended to set out challenges such cultural change, increasing community awareness, and embedding climate change into their organisation's decision making processes.

Changes and action already being taken by respondents

QN: We would really like to hear about anything you have already done, or are planning to do, to reduce your emissions, help the local environment or live more sustainably.

Chart 25: Percentage of respondents making changes or taking action by type
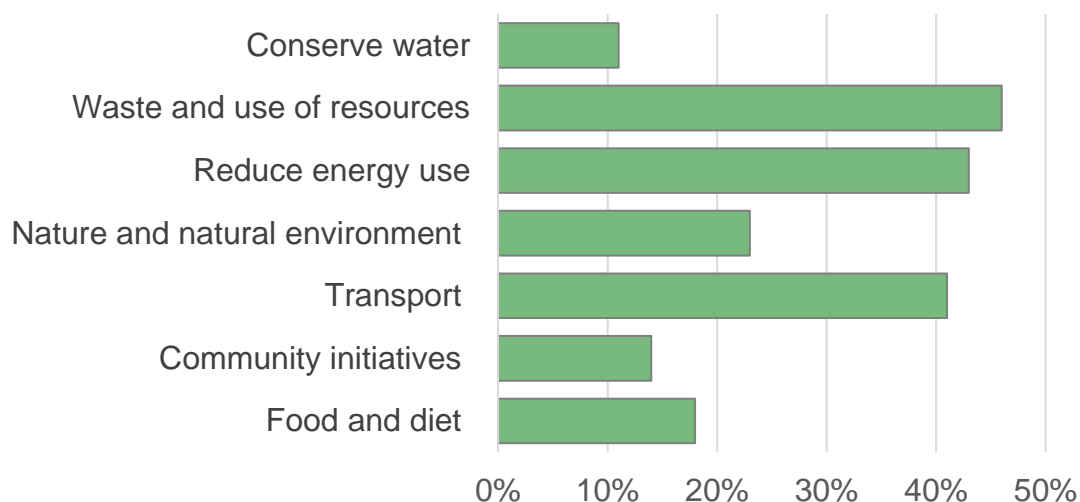
Respondents were given the opportunity to say what they were already doing, or are planning to do, to reduce their emissions, help the local environment or live more sustainably. There were 130 responses to this open ended question, 111 of which set out at least one specific action (a small number of responses said that they were doing 'everything' or 'nothing').

Food and diet

More than one in six people said that they were eating less meat or following a vegetarian or vegan diet (18%). Additional comments showed that people were also trying to make more sustainable food choices, one in six people said that they were trying to buy local (19%) and one in eight said that they grew some of their own food (14%). Smaller numbers of people also mentioned buying organic food (4%), buying seasonally (5%) and try to reduce and compost their food waste (both 8%).

Community initiatives

One in seven respondents (14%) said that they had organised or been part of some sort of community project or initiative. A variety of different initiatives were mentioned, from membership of a renewable community energy cooperative to organising litter picking events and from starting a local climate or environmental group to joining a community allotment or taking part in community tree planting projects.

Transport

Two in five respondents (41%) mentioned taking action or making changes related to transport. The most common action was to reduce car use and one in five respondents said they had done this (21%). This corresponded with the proportion of respondents stating that they were using public transport, walking and cycling more

to reduce their impacts (20%). One in 20 said they has given up at least one car in their household (5%).

Over one in ten said they had either given up flying completely, reduced how frequently they flew or only went on domestic UK holiday's to reduce their emissions (12%). Few respondents said they had bought an electric vehicle, but several said that they were committed to do so when they next needed to replace their current vehicle. Several also said that they currently drive a hybrid or smaller combustion engine vehicle to help reduce emissions (5%). A small number of respondents mentioned that had made changes to their lifestyles to reduce the need to travel, this included working from home.

Respondents said that the wanted to be able to reduce their car use. They wanted to see improvements in local public transport services, the introduction of safe cycleways, particularly into and around Melton Mowbray alongside better routes for walking. Increasing EV chargepoints was also a priority from a number of respondents as was better local facilities, to help reduced the need to travel.

There was a split of opinions about the Melton Mowbray Distributor road (MMDR). Some said that it should not be built, that it will increase traffic and the money would be better spent on modal shift, to increase cycling and walking and public transport options locally. Others equally however saw it as an opportunity to reimagine and redraw road networks to improve cycling and walking routes in and around the town. Some simply welcomed the promised removal of HGV's, that it would reduce noise and air pollution locally.

Nature and the natural environment

Almost one in four respondents (23%) said they had done something such as planting trees (14%) and/or created wildlife friendly areas in their garden or on other land they owned or managed (14%).

There were many comments about the natural environment. There was support for planting more trees in particular, but also for protecting or enhancing green spaces and providing more space for people to grow their own food. Suggestions were made about making better use of public land including verges and public open spaces, which could have potential for improvements to benefit nature, including 'no mow', tree and wildflower planting and rewilding opportunities. There were a large number of comments about planning and new development, many of these related to the impacts on the natural environment and desire to see planning powers used to minimise use of greenfield development and provide more green spaces, for leisure, nature and food growing opportunities, including allotments and orchards. Keeping local waterways clean and preventing polluted or foul water going into rivers and streams was also mentioned by a small number of respondents.

'Influence major land owners/farmers to make positive steps towards preserving the natural environment.'

Support net biodiversity gain strongly - the ambivalent attitude of the Council… has been of concern

'Look at some of the open spaces that are unused and uncared for and tidy up and plant trees and make them wildlife friendly.'

Energy use

Two in five respondents (43%) mentioned actions or changes they had made to reduce their energy use. The three most commonly mentioned actions were to adjust heating settings (17%), install solar panels (13%) and make homes and buildings more energy efficient (mainly via improved insultation and/or new doors and windows) (13%). Others said they wanted to or were thinking about installing solar panels. Around one in ten had reduced energy use from their lighting (switching off/energy saving bulbs/LED; 11%) and/or reduced their energy use, for example, by choosing energy efficient new appliances and switching devices off standby (9%). Only a small number had installed a heat pump (5%), but others did state that they had reduced their energy needs by installing a more energy efficient and lower impact gas or other fossil fuel boiler (6%). Other actions taken to reduce energy use or emissions included, having a renewable energy supplier, moving to a smaller or more energy efficient home, installing battery storage (for solar power) and using a smart meter.

Waste and use of resources

Just under half of respondents mentioned at least one action or change they had made to reduce waste and/or better use resources (46%). One in five people said that they recycled more (20%), several people noting their efforts to recycle hard to recycle goods (for example, crisp packets and other goods via Terracycle schemes). One in seven said they were making effort to reduce plastic use, primarily single use plastic (14%) by changing their shopping habits, for example using refill shops or swapping to non-plastic alternative products. One in eight said that they were trying to buy more ethically and sustainably, from considering how they invest money to buying products from companies with high ethical standards and accreditations (12%), and one in nine simply said that they were buying less to reduce impacts (11%). Other actions and changes included buying and selling second hand clothing and other goods (7%), trying to reuse and repair things rather than throw them away (5%) and litter picking (7%).

There were numerous comments that supported waste reduction and recycling. Action on single use plastic and food waste were the most often highlighted, some wanted to see a local food waste collection service introduced. People wanted to be

able to recycle more types of things, soft plastics in particular, and several comments were made in relation to people wanting more and clearer information on what they can recycle and improved communications around this.

Another top waste issue was the local recycling centres and disposal of bulky waste. People wanted the centres to be open longer and for it to be easier to dispose of things there. There were some frustrations about some of the recent temporary tip closures and the need for permits for vans and other things that make them harder to access or recycle items in. People suggested that making it easier to dispose of waste would help reduce fly tipping, some wanted to see improved/free collections of bulky items, especially if they personally would find it hard to dispose themselves (no car or ill health). Some suggested being able to buy and reuse items that people throw away at the recycling centres.

There were also a number of comments about over consumption, in line with those already set out in earlier sections of this report.

Conserve water use

One in nine mentioned that they tried to conserve water use and/or collect rainwater for use via water butts (11%) and one person stated that they had installed a rainwater harvesting system. The number of people saying that they were taking action to reduce their water use was somewhat at odds with the low priority it was given within the survey, it was found to be one of the lower priority actions and was mentioned very rarely within the comments made.

Tackling climate change locally

QN: How could the Council or other local organisations help you address the issues you have set out above?

QN: What do you think will be the biggest challenges to make the Melton borough carbon neutral?

QN: What do you think Melton Borough Council needs to do?

QN: Who else needs do you think needs to take action?... and what do they need to do?

QN: Please use this space to make any further comments about climate change, including the actions you think we need to take to become carbon neutral.

A series of open questions throughout the survey sought to better understand views on what needs to be done to tackle climate change in the Melton borough, including what they wanted both the Council and others to do specifically. These questions aimed to tease out more information from respondents primarily around what they would like to see the Council and others do locally to help them specifically as well as more generally and what they think different organisational roles should be.

To reduce repetition within this report comments made to these questions have been collated and set out by theme. Specific suggestions for actions are again presented in appendix C or incorporated into other parts of this report. This section therefore focuses on comments about how respondents want the Council and other organisations to respond to climate change.

Climate change within the Council as an organisation

Respondent talked about needed to see a change in the organisation in a very tangible way, that 'visual change' was important, that they needed to 'hear' it from leaders of the council. It suggests a need for strong communications about what the Council does.

> *'Show the community the Council does care and you're willing to make a start.'*

> *'…make sure it's an honest and roots-deep commitment. People perceive such efforts as little more than lip-service to push the problem onto them, it needs to be something the Council lead on and not something they boss people around because of.'*

There were a number of comments referring to the need to set out affordable and realistic plans to tackle climate change. People said that they wanted to see commitment from the Council across a wide range of carbon reduction and sustainability matters but there was emphasis on specific and measurable targets. They wanted to be able to see progress and able to hold the Council to account. Others said that they wanted the Council to lead by example, they wanted 'less talk and more action', for the Council to 'get its own house in order' before telling others what to do. They also wanted to see that the Council was making climate change and the natural environmental a priority in all of its decisions. Some felt that a culture change within the Council was required. Several respondents wanted to be able to get involved directly, to help scrutinise council plans and decisions.

> *'Set out a Vision, Plan and Progress system and encourage us all to be part of it.'*

> *'Be more visible in the community to provide impetus, leadership and focus on local initiative.'*

> *'Make sure that "carbon neutral" policies have the backing of the people in the town - otherwise it will not work'*

> *'Review all policies and procedures to ensure protection of the environment is THE priority.'*

> *'You've got to do a lot to achieve carbon neutral and you've got until 2050 but that doesn't mean you can drag your heels and then panic come 2045. Things need to [start changing] now...'*

Several respondents raised concerns about terminology used, a few people did not like the use of the phrase 'climate emergency' and others felt that there was a lot of greenwashing potential around terms such as 'carbon neutral', particularly that it may simply shift emissions (scope 3) to other people and places around the world.

'Carbon negative is a better aim'

'I think it is impossible to become carbon neutral'

'…we have to recognise that there are massive issues with 'net' zero (it's being gamed by business, it's too remote and hard for citizens to grasp, and no, planting trees isn't going to save us).'

'Stop asking questions like "Do you agree with Net Zero?" Simply by asking you throw open the possibility that it is somehow problematic or up for discussion.'

Several respondents stated that the Council needs to seek local buy in and support from local people to successfully achieve its climate change objectives. Others emphasised the need for a joined up approach for success. A consistent approach was also recommended, with criticism levelled at the national government for changing course on renewable energy and home improvement funding and initiatives. There were also number of comments about council engagement and communication, which have been considered elsewhere in this report. These comments however emphasised the need to get out and speak with a wide variety of local people, businesses and other organisations, to ensure the message gets out to everyone.

There were also a small number of comments that felt that the Council did not need to focus on climate change, that it should focus on other things that were more important or that the benefits of doing so were outweighed by the costs. Some said that it felt that the Council was trying to shift responsibility onto individuals.

'We need to worry about other priorities first, like jobs, housing and our ageing population'

'Be realistic, most people can't afford these half thought out ideas that cost a lot of money and will have very little impact on climate change'

'Just collect our bins, cut the grass [then] leave us alone.'

'The council should not interfere. Other than providing believable information and sorting themselves out.'

Who else needs to take action

Over a third of respondents when asked who else needs to take action locally said everyone, that we all have a part to play. These responses were supplemented with specific comments about the need for good quality information, guidance and

support, so everyone can understand what they should do. However others felt that individual actions only have a limited impact, it was the Government and big businesses that needed to take action.

> *'We all need to take action!!!!!!! we all need to do something, no matter how small we think it is, everything makes a difference'*

> *'we as individuals can only make a miniscule change. Big industry and our world governments are the ones who need convincing.'*

Businesses were the most commonly mentioned group, referred to by just under a quarter of people who responded to this question (23%). Comments mostly related to local businesses and how they need to implement change to become more sustainable, particularly in relation to packaging, energy use, transport, consumption and how it managed its outside spaces. Some felt that big businesses as the bigger polluter should be the priority, but some said that they might be hard to influence at a local level. Others suggested the need to support businesses to take action themselves, to innovate and come up with solutions for us all.

The most mentioned specific organisation was the Government, referred to by over one in five respondents (22%) usually in relation to funding, taking action to meet its climate targets, and targeting taxation and using regulation to achieve more effective change. Comments were largely generic but some specific measures such as introducing new housing standard requirements and providing funding to insulate homes were proposed by several respondents.

Public bodies, in particular local government were also mentioned frequently, this related to reducing their own emissions and becoming more sustainable as well as their roles to influence wider change. Leicestershire County Council, Leicester City Council and local parish councils in particular were viewed as having a role to help in various ways; to fill gaps left by central government, to provide locally relevant information and guidance; to better understand local issues and to work together to lobby for more funding from central government. Leicestershire County Council were the most mentioned public body, they were largely mentioned in terms of their waste, transport and highways roles. Suggestions about what they could do to help included, improvements to verge cutting regimes, less car dominant highways advice for planning applications, better household waste site management, improve public transport option and support on street EV chargepoints.

Training in schools and colleges to educate young people about issues and action they can take was mentioned by a few respondents, as were transport companies, who respondents felt could help improve local public transport options. Developers and housebuilders were identified as important in terms of needing to learn how to build more sustainable housing and farmers and landowners, including the Town

Estate, were mentioned because of their ability to enhance the natural environment and potentially store carbon, through rewilding and tree planting initiatives.

Working together

One of the aims of the consultation was to better understand how people wanted to communicate and engage with the Council around climate change. Respondents were asked about their preferred engagement and communication methods and for their views on developing a local climate change network or citizen panel.

Note: Given that the views expressed were via an online survey, the number of respondents *who prefer this method of engagement may be exaggerated/self-selecting, so caution is advised when interpreting these findings. It is advised that the Council continues to asked such questions to those it engages with, especially those who it engages using alternative methods to check these findings. The small number of respondents in each type of organisational group mean that these findings should be treated as indicative only.*

Engagement preferences

QN: How would you like the Council to engage with you on climate and sustainability issues? (Please tick all that apply)

- *Online surveys*
- *Telephone surveys*
- *Attendance at a group discussion (online)*
- *Attendance at a group discussion (in person)*
- *One to one meeting with a Council representative*
- *Through existing community and business groups and forums*
- *I do not want the Council to engage with me about this*
- *Other (please specify)*

Respondents were asked to identify all of the ways they would like the Council to engage with them about climate change from a selection of options, or state another option. Only 7% of those who responded stated that they did not wish to engage with the Council about climate change issues (13). On average each respondent supported 3-4 different methods of engagement.

Online surveys were the most commonly method of engagement by all respondents, 75% of all who responded to this question selected online survey as at least one way that they would like to be engaged with the Council around climate change (135). Not an unexpected finding given they were responding to an online survey. Online and in person group discussions was the next most type of engagement, followed by engaging through existing community and businesses groups and forums. Very few people wanted to engage with the Council via the telephone or on a one to one

basis, and all those who showed such a preference did so alongside other types of engagement.

Chart 25: Engagement preferences by type for all respondents
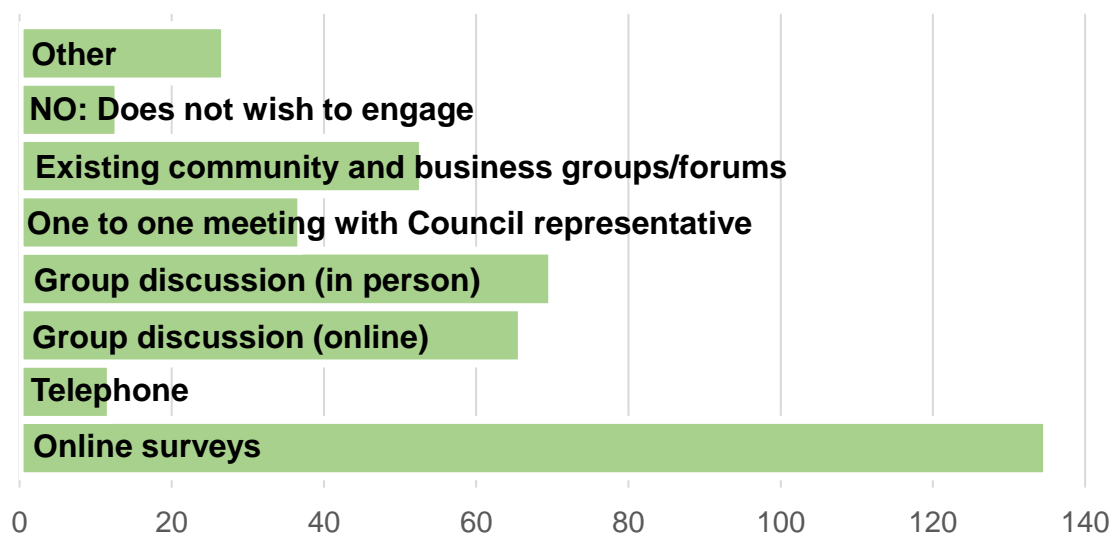
This question was then analysed in more detail by looking at the responses by respondent type, to help the Council understand which types of engagement might be preferred by different types of groups.

Engaging with community groups

Eleven community groups responded to this question, on average each respondent indicated 2-3 ways they would like to be engaged with. No community group respondents said they did not wish to engage with the Council on climate change issues.

Chart 26: Engagement preferences by type for community groups

Online survey	Telephone	Group discussion (online)	Group discussion (in person)	One to one meetings with Council	Existing community and business groups/ forums	Other
9	1	6	4	3	5	1
82%	27%	91%	45%	45%	73%	9%

Online surveys were the most popular method, with 9 respondents indicating a preference for this method of communication which included 3 who only wanted to engagement with the Council via online surveys. Only 2 did not select online survey engagement, each gave a single alternative preference, one for engagement through existing community and business groups and the other provided their own

suggestion, of undertaking engagement through *'visual displays and open events in communities to encourage community ownership'*.

Online groups and discussions were the next most popular form of engagement, with 6 respondents showing a preference for it, all of whom showed a cross over with a preference for online surveys as well. All 4 of the respondents who showed a preference for in person group discussions and all three who stated 1-2-1 meetings with council representatives also showed a preference for online group discussions as well. Telephone engagement was the least preferred method, with only one person showing any preference for it, alongside two other forms of online engagement.

Engaging with businesses

15 businesses responded to this question, on average each respondent indicated 3-4 ways they would like to be engaged with. No business respondents said they did not wish to engage with the Council on climate change issues.

Chart 27: Engagement preferences by type for businesses

Online survey	Telephone	Group discussion (online)	Group discussion (in person)	One to one meetings with Council	Existing community and business groups/ forums	Other
9	3	10	5	5	8	1
60%	20%	67%	33%	33%	53%	7%

Businesses strongest preference was for online group discussions not online surveys, with two thirds selecting this method of engagement. The next strongest was online surveys, followed closely by existing community and business forums. These three methods would capture at least one preference for each respondent. Telephone engagement was the least popular method, with only 3 respondents showing a preference for it, it is noted however that these three respondents supported all engagement methods and they ticked all of the boxes to this question.

Engaging with parish councils and neighbourhood plan groups

There were 7 parish councillor/neighbourhood plan groups responses to this question, on average each respondent indicated 2-3 ways they would like to be engaged with. One respondent said they did not wish to engage with the Council on climate change issues, they also stated in the 'other' box that they wanted the Council to lead by example.

Chart 28: Engagement preferences by type for Parish Councillors and neighbourhood plan groups

Online survey	Telephone	Group discussion (online)	Group discussion (in person)	One to one meeting with Council	Existing community and business groups/ forums	No	Other
4	2	3	2	2	1	1	3
57%	29%	43%	29%	29%	14%	14%	43%

The most popular option was online survey, with 4 respondents showing a preference for this type of engagement. Another online form of engagement, online group discussions was the second most common type of engagement selected by respondents. All of those who did not show a preference for online surveys suggested another preference in the 'other' response box, these are shown below.

'I want the council to lead by example'

'All of the above. It is an emergency. So therefore imagine we were about to join WW1 or WW2. We would use all of the above to get on and make the changes we needed to make.'

'Share information about potential solutions and available grants loans to make them possible'

Engaging with public organisations

10 public sector responses were made to this question, on average each respondent indicated 2-3 ways they would like to be engaged with. No respondents said they did not wish to engage with the Council on climate change issues.

Chart 29: Engagement preferences by type for public organisations

Online survey	Telephone	Group discussion (online)	Group discussion (in person)	One to one meetings with Council	Existing community and business groups/ forums	Other
5	0	5	6	3	2	2
50%	0%	50%	60%	30%	20%	20%

The most popular form of engagement for public sector organisations was in person group discussions, followed closely by online group discussions and online surveys. No respondents preferred engagement by telephone. A mixture of in person and

online discussions alongside online surveys engagement would capture at least one preference for all public sector respondents.

Both of the respondents who provided an 'other' response were from local primary schools, and they both stated that they would welcome bringing people into their schools to run projects with their pupils.

Engaging with members of the public

138 members of the public responded to this question, on average each respondent indicated 2-3 ways they would like to be engaged with. 11 respondents said they did not wish to engage with the Council on climate change issues.

Table 2: Engagement preferences by type for members of the public

Online survey	Telephone	Group discussion (online)	Group discussion (in person)	One to one meetings with Council	Existing community and business groups/ forums	No	Other
108	6	42	53	24	37	11	20
78%	4%	30%	38%	17%	27%	8%	14%

Just over 3 out of 4 people stated a preference for online survey engagement and over a third of this group only wanted to engage via online surveys. Only 6 members of the public showed a preference for telephone engagement, and those who did stated additional engagement preferences as well. The second lowest selected type of engagement, with 24 respondents, was for 1-2-1 engagement with a council representative, again none in this group showed a preference for this type of engagement alone.

Chart 30: Engagement preferences by type for members of the public who wished to engage but not via online surveys

Telephone	Group discussion (online)	Group discussion (in person)	One to one meetings with Council	Existing community and business groups/ forums	Other
0	6	6	2	7	11
0%	29%	29%	10%	33%	52%

Further analysis was undertaken to better understand the preferences of those who did wish to be engaged but not via online surveys. It suggests that a mix of online and in person group discussions alongside engagement though existing community and business groups and forums would maximise engagement options.

Members of the public also made a variety of comments under the 'other' response, only some of these comments related to types of engagement, most related to communications, taking action and providing advice services and these comments have been considered in other parts of the report as appropriate. Of the comments that were relevant to engagement, they tend to fall into three categories, a need to be accessible, visible and present; a need to use a wide variety of engagement methods to engage all of the community; and some cynicism about the need for or effectiveness of engagement. A selection of these comments are shown below;

'The monthly stall held in the market is a useful place to talk to a councillor'

'…if you want to talk to us then talk, be seen, be in the town, be in the pub, be in the churches, supermarkets, sports fields, just engage in any way you can.'

'Telephone is a waste of time [and] energy. Group Discussions - there is usually a preferred/promoted agenda so little point. Community groups /forum don't talk to each other…'

'All the above, but then to listen and act, not dismiss'

'A wide variety so to engage all the community'

'It is clear what needs doing, you don't need to talk about it. Follow a national agenda making information available online'

Communication preferences

Respondents were then asked how they would prefer the Council to communicate with them about climate change, again, selecting as all that applied from a series of different communications options.
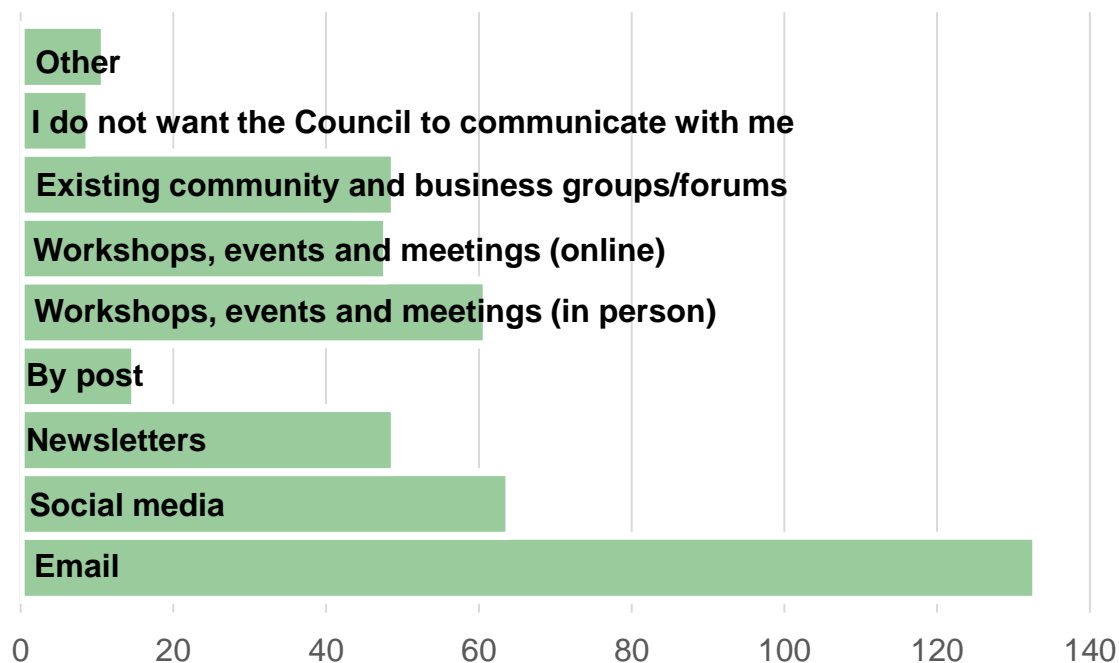
QN: How would prefer the Council to communicate with you on climate and sustainability issues? (Please tick all that apply)

- *Email*
- *Social Media*
- *Newsletters*
- *By post*
- *In person workshops, events and meetings*
- *Online workshops, events and meetings*
- *Through existing community and business groups and forums*
- *I do not want the Council to communicate with me about this*
- *Other (please specify)*

Note: Given that the main way to contact people to ask them to respond to the online survey was via email and social media, the number of respondents who prefer this method of communication may be exaggerated/self-selecting, so again caution is

advised when interpreting these findings. It is advised that the Council continue to ask such questions to those it engages with, especially those who it engages using alternative methods to check these findings. The small number of respondents in each organisational group mean that these findings should be treated as indicative only.

Chart 31: Communication preferences by type for all respondents

Email was the dominant method of communication selected by 74% respondents, with 21% of all respondents selecting email as the only way they would want the Council to communicate with them about climate change issues. 36% of respondents were also in favour of social media communications, but very few selected social media as the only form of communication they would like (1%).

Looking at preferences for those who did not wish to communicate via email, in terms of overall importance social media may be slightly better at extending communication reach than other form of communication, but only marginally so. Any of the three other next most popular types of communication (newsletters, in person workshops/meetings/events or communicating through existing community and business groups and forums) would be expected to have a similar outputs in terms of meeting peoples communication preferences.

Postal communications and online workshops, events and meetings were only selected alongside other methods of communication and no respondent only wished to communicate with the Council only in these ways.

Communications via online and in person events, workshops and meetings had a degree of cross over, however 37% who would like to communicate via in person

events would not like to do so online, and 21% of those who would like to communicate via online events would not wish to do so in person. It does suggest that both types of communications will cater to an element of different people.

To ensure a 100% reach, by meeting a least one of the preferred communication methods of all respondents, engagement would be required via email, social media, newsletters, in person workshops, events and meetings as well as through existing community and business forums.

It is recommended for future engagement activities and surveys to ask respondents where they heard about it type question, this will help provide greater insights into how effective different communication methods are. For example, officers antidotally noted an increase in responses to the survey from rural areas of the borough that coincided with promotion of the survey on the VEG (vale environment group) Facebook page, however no similar increase was noted when the survey was promoted on the Council's Facebook page.

The responses have again been subject to further analysis by respondent type, to help the Council better understand the preferences of different groups.

Communicating with community groups

Chart 32: Communication preferences by type for community groups

Email	Social media	Newsletters	By post	Workshops/ Events /meetings (in person)	Workshops/ events/ meetings (online)	Existing community and business groups/ forums	Other
8	4	7	1	4	3	5	1
73%	36%	64%	9%	36%	27%	45%	9%

Email was the most popular communication method for community groups, however only one stated this to be the only method of communication they would like (73%). Newsletter communications were the next most popular form of communication (64%) and all of those who did not wish to use email stated newsletters as at least one of their other preferred communication methods, so a combination of both would be expected to have the best reach. Just over a third supported social media or in person meetings and events (both 36%), however communicating via existing community and business networks and forums was marginally preferred (45%). One comment was made for 'other', for '*visual displays and open events in communities to encourage community ownership*' which aligns with in person workshops, meetings and events type communications. Postal communication was the least preferred form of communication.

Communicating with businesses

Chart 33: Communication preferences by type for businesses

Email	Social media	Newsletters	By post	Workshops/ Events /meetings (in person)	Workshops/ events/ meetings (online)	Existing community and business groups/ forums
11	5	2	1	3	3	4
85%	38%	15%	8%	23%	23%	31%

There was a stronger than average preference for email communications from local businesses, with 85% stating a preference for this type of communications from the Council. Both of the two respondents who did not prefer email communication stated a preference for communications via existing community and business groups and forums. Social media communications were welcomed by around a third of respondents in line with the overall average and there was again very limited support for postal communications. Businesses appeared to be less likely to want to communication with the Council through either online or in person meetings, workshops or events. They also showed low levels of support for newsletter communications.

Communicating with parish councillors and neighbourhood plan groups

Chart 34: Communication preferences by type for Parish Councils and Neighbourhood plan groups

Email	Social media	News-letters	Post	Workshops/ Events /meetings (in person)	Workshops/ events/ meetings (online)	Existing community and business groups/ forums	Does not want to communicate with the Council	Other
7	2	3	2	5	3	3	1	1
100%	29%	43%	29%	71%	43%	43%	14%	29%

All parish council/neighbourhood plan group respondents indicated a preference to communicate via email, the only group to do so. There was strong preference in this group to take part in in-person workshops, events and meetings (71%). It is not an unexpected findings given the existing working relationship between this group and

the Council, which already utilised these methods of communication regularly across different services, including a parish council liaison forum. There was lower than average support for social media communications and a higher than average support for both newsletters and postal communication. One respondent stated that they did not wish to receive communications from the Council about climate change, they made a comment in the other box to state that they would like the Council to *'let people know what they are doing to contribute'*.

Communicating with public organisations

Chart 35: Communication preferences by type for public organisations

Email	Social media	Workshops, events and meetings (in person)	Workshops, events and meetings (online)	Existing community and business groups/forums
7	2	5	4	1
78%	22%	56%	44%	11%

Public organisations showed strong support for email communications from the Council (78%) they also showed high levels of support for in person and online workshops, events and meetings. They showed limited interest in social media communications, and none wanted the Council to communicate with them via post or newsletters. Only 1 wanted to communicate via existing community and business groups and forums. The high level of support for meetings is not a surprising finding given existing partnership working arrangements between public organisations which tend to be organised around multi-organisation group meetings and email.

Communicating with members of the public

Table 3: Communication preferences by type for members of the public

Email	Social media	News-letters	Post	Workshops events and meetings (in person)	Workshops events and meetings (online)	Community and business groups /forums	Does not want any comms with the council	Other
100	51	38	12	45	36	37	8	7
72%	37%	28%	9%	33%	26%	27%	6%	5%

Email was the most preferred way for the Council to communicate with members of the public, with 73% of respondents selecting this method of communication, almost double the next category, social media (37%). 22% of all respondents only wanted the Council to communicate with them via email and a further 10% of all respondents only wanted the Council to communicate to them via social media and email.

A third of members of the public respondents wanted in person workshops, events and meetings (33%). In person meetings were slightly more preferred than online equivalents (33% compared to 26% respectively). There was a good degree of cross over between those in favour of both in person and online events and meetings, however just over a third of those who selected in person events did not wish to do so online, and vice versa 19% of those who wanted to take part in online events did not want to attend in person. Suggesting again that they will reach slightly different audiences.

Postal communication was the least popular form of communication and all of those who did select this did so in combination with other methods of communication. Very few people only selected social media (2) or newsletters (3) as the only form of communication they would like.

In addition to email communication, a combination of social media, newsletters, in person events and communicating through existing community and business networks would meet at least one preference of all respondents.

Members of the public were also able to provide comments about any other preferred communication method, several people stated that they wanted the council to communicate messages via local media outlets such as the Leicester Mercury and BBC East Midlands, which the Council currently do via press releases. The other comments received were around the provision of accessible online information that the public can access, suggestions included use of multimedia such as videos and ensuring that the public can access minutes of council meetings.

Views on a local climate network

QN: Do you think a local climate network is a good idea?

Respondents were provided with some brief text outlining what a climate network is and asked if they thought it was a good idea. 181 responses were received to this question, with 60% in support and 8% against the idea.

Chart 36: Do you think a local climate network is a good idea?

Legend:
- Yes
- Maybe
- Do not know
- No

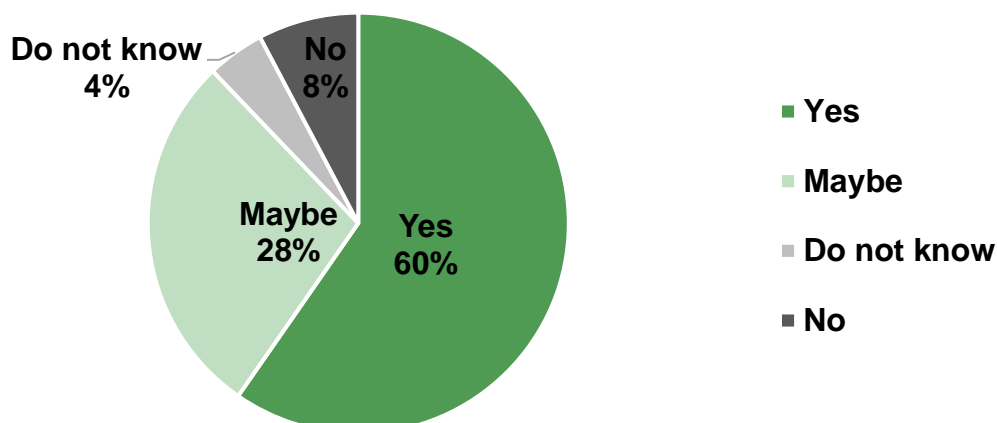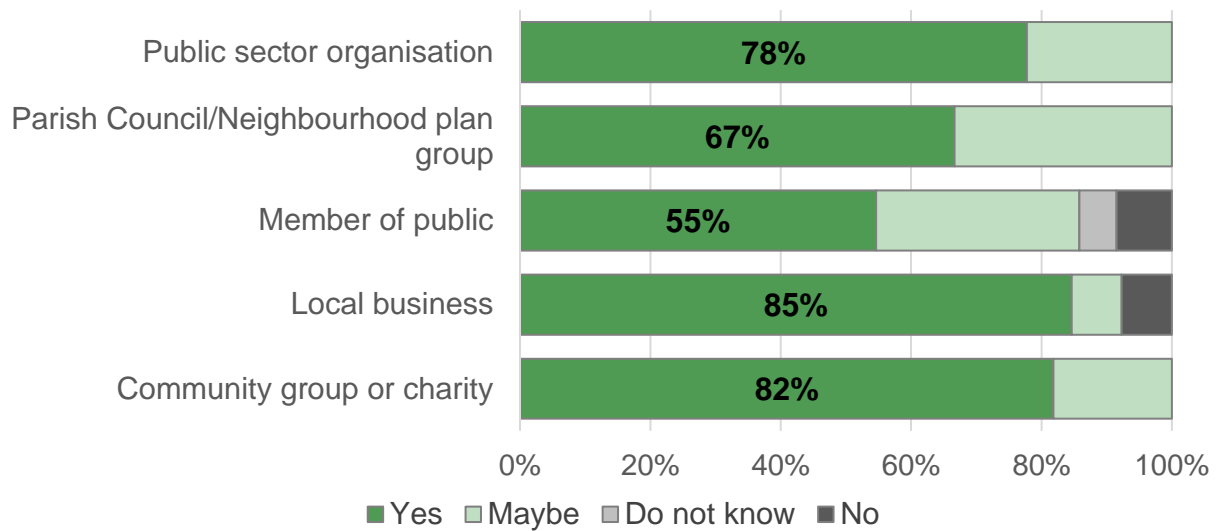Pie chart values: Do not know 4%, No 8%, Yes 60%, Maybe 28%

Chart 37: Support for a local climate network by respondent type

Support for a local climate network was stronger amongst organisational groups than for members of the public, particularly local businesses and community groups/charities. All organisational respondents stated 'yes' or 'maybe' bar one business respondent. Just over half of members of the public supported a local climate network (55%) with only 14 members of the public thought it would not be useful (9%).

Views also tended to correlate with an respondents overall concern about climate change. 95% of the 108 in support of a local climate network were fairly or extremely concerned about climate change and 64% of the 14 respondents who did not support a local climate network were not very or not at all concerned about climate change.

Reasons given about why respondents did not support a local climate network tended to be around;

- It becoming another 'talking shop' without delivering any change or action
- That it would be a waste of taxpayers' money, council resources would be better spent on existing services to improve the environment
- That it is not needed
- That it sounded like the Council were trying to pass responsibilities from themselves onto local people
- That it would be ineffective, as the Council and local groups have limited powers, and many issues require action and change at a national level
- That if might be inaccessible or undesirable to join if it ends up being run by 'same people' who always tend to join and dominate these things

Respondents were also asked to make comments on what a local climate network should do or how it might operate.

How should a local climate network operate?

Those who made comments about how it might be structured tended to describe an organisation which is not necessarily led by the Council or other public organisations and one that has a broad representation. Hub and spoke structure approaches were popular, some type of umbrella group to bring together local initiatives and groups already in place. People described a structure of a main group consists of representatives from smaller groups, but all working to a shared local vision. Several different forms were suggested, including spatial (by neighbourhoods/parish), sectoral or topic/interest group based structure. Other suggestions were made about how a local climate network might operate, they included;

- Not run in isolation, to feed into and work with other regional and national groups
- Be inclusive, include rural areas as well as the town
- Be led by a professional/expert and have informed leadership to help guide others
- Include wide section of local community, all sectors, the public, a council representative, community leaders, young people representative, businesses, charities, and community groups
- To not be led by or dominated by employed public officials/council officers
- Supported with necessary resources by the Council, such as support to facilitate meetings and financial funding
- Have good governance
- Consistent approach
- Be high profile
- Focus on delivery, things that lead to local action not just a talking forum, to have powers to get things altered and able to demonstrate its impacts
- Link into and learn from what existing groups and networks are already doing locally, for example, Bottesford Net Zero and Melton Transition, to not replicate unnecessarily
- Use local peoples knowledge, especially that of older generations
- Involve young people and children, it is their future
- Learn from how other areas have developed their own such networks are doing it, for example, Lincoln Climate Commission

What should a local climate network do?

Suggestions were also made about what a local climate network might do. Providing a trusted central point for advice and information was the most commonly mentioned role for any local climate network. The other main role was to hold events to raise

awareness in the local community, both through online and in person activities, from developing an online social media platform to going into local schools.

There were many comments which related to pulling things together into a central resource, where ideas and information can be shared in various ways. Many of these comments were around online resource, such as a website, forum or social media platform, however some respondents wanted to highlight the importance of in person spaces, events and activities as well. Specific suggestions made are summarised below;

- Collate and amplify all the good work in the local area
- Connect to other local and wider networks
- Inform local community and raise awareness
- Share expertise, experiences and best practice, help others to understand what works best where and why
- Develop a shared agreed vision
- Go into local schools and run projects with pupils, get local businesses to sponsor school initiatives
- Develop community champions
- Inform in an accessible way, such as, top tips, topic fact sheets, run events and workshops
- Have a network officer resource to liaise and link together community groups
- Develop an online forum/social media platform to freely share ideas
- Help people to get into the countryside, to help them to care about the local environment, and want to take action to protect it
- A physical space/central resource, such as an eco-hub in the town centre, space for community groups to use, to provide information and advice, signpost to local groups and activities, run workshops and promote local eco businesses
- Set up local buying groups
- Offer incentives to encourage community and local business to make changes themselves, sell benefits of taking action and making changes
- Use collective power to help lobby government and get funding for local initiatives
- Connect local communities with research institutes/universities, encourage them to undertake local research projects, to help increase understanding and drive effective local action
- Set up a local biodiversity action group
- Set up a local community energy partnership to support local renewable energy developments that also provide local community benefits
- Highlight and reward local businesses that are sustainable

Views on developing a local citizens panel

Respondents were asked for their views on forming a local citizens panel. A citizens' panel aims to be a representative, consultative body of local residents. They can operate in a number of ways, from completing regular surveys to taking part in citizens assembly's. A citizens' assembly brings together a citizens panel to learn about an issue, take time to discuss it with one another, and then make recommendations about what should happen. Citizens' panels can help to ensure that we hear from a variety of different voices. They do however need considerable support to set up and maintain and the Council has finite resources to use for engagement.
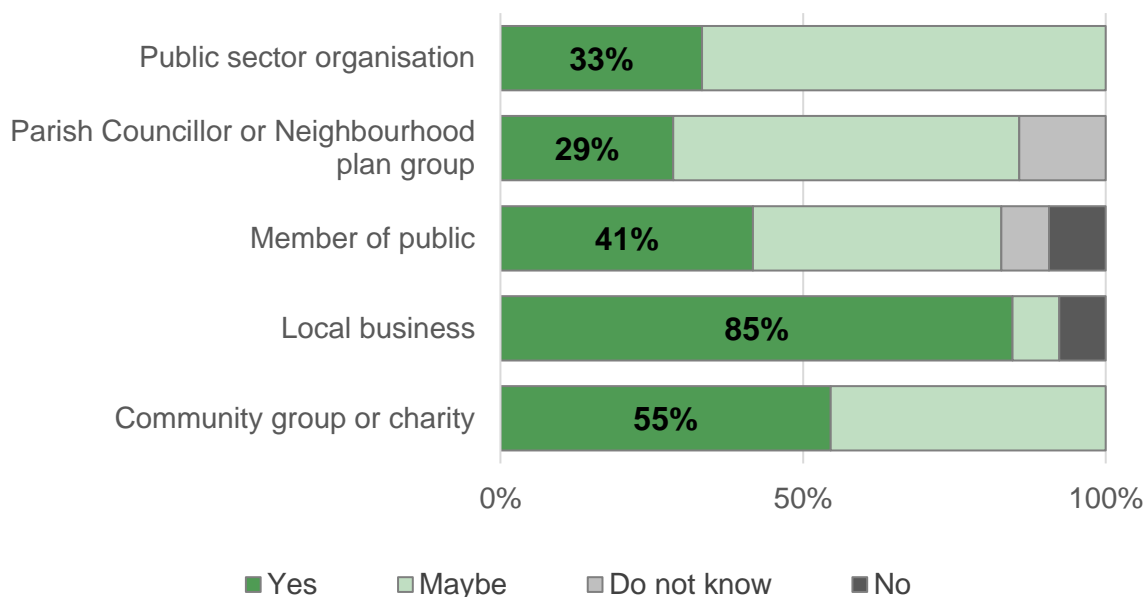
QN: Do you think a citizens panel is a good approach for the Melton borough?

Chart 38: Support for a citizens panel approach in the Melton borough
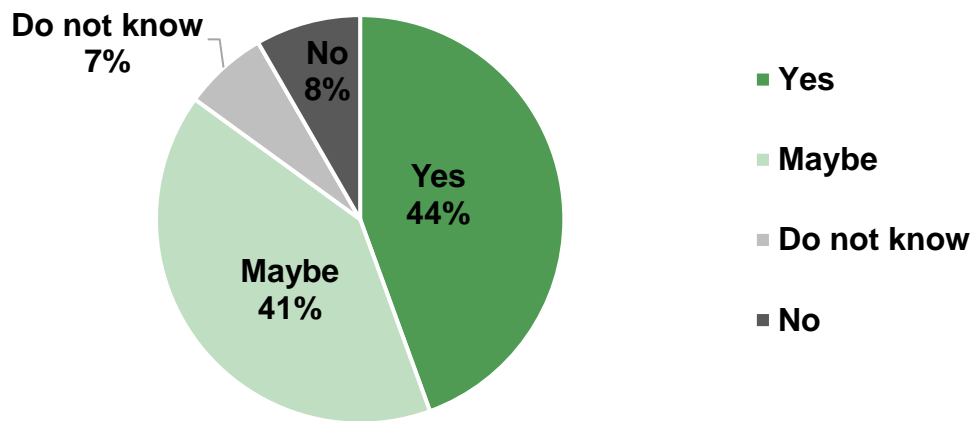
The level of support for a citizens panel was lower than that for a local climate network, with a minority in definite support of developing one locally. There was a large proportion of people who responded 'maybe' and 'do not know' rather than it being something people were against. Cross tabulation also showed that 64% of those opposed to a local climate network were also opposed to a citizens panel. Local businesses respondents were the most supportive of using local citizens panel approach (85%) and those in supported one closely mirrored those who also supported developing a local climate network.

Chart 39: Support for a local citizens panel by respondent type

	Yes	Maybe	Do not know	No
Public sector organisation	33%			
Parish Councillor or Neighbourhood plan group	29%			
Member of public	41%			
Local business	85%			
Community group or charity	55%			

Views on a local citizen panel

QN: Do you have any comments about the use of a citizen panel for climate change engagement in the Melton borough?

Respondents were asked for any comments about the use of a citizens panel for climate change engagement in the Melton borough. Those who made comments mainly expressed concerns about using such an approach locally. A summary of these comments is set out below;

- It would be just another 'talking shop'… all talk and no action
- Cost a lot of time for little reward, it may delay local action on climate change, that the Council should get on with it and stop wasting time
- A waste of taxpayers' money
- Will become bogged down in bureaucracy
- Box-ticking/greenwashing concerns, questioned if it would be taken seriously, respondents not convinced that it would result in any action, particularly if it made recommendations that were at odds with council plans
- That it is hard to set up a truly representative group
- That it is hard to maintain momentum and sustain such a group
- That local citizens may not all understand issues very well and may need significant support to increase their understanding
- How impacts of a panel could be effectively evaluated
- People may have personal agendas and vested interests
- A small panel cannot represent all local people's views
- Quick digital surveys just as good

Concerned were also raised several times about whether all voices would be heard fairly. Respondents suggested that it may be confrontational, strong voices may try to dominate, dissenting voices may not be tolerated and that it was not necessarily a good way for people to be able to confidently express their views and feel heard. These concerns were raised equally by people with opposing views about climate change. Those deeply concerned about climate change were concerned that those with vested interests, 'anti-green agendas' or a lack of understanding about issues would hijack debates and drown out their voices. Equally those with more sceptical views and those who expressed concerns about the speed and scale of change required were concerned others may simply disregard their 'dissenting' voices and equally dominate or drown them out as well.

The 44% of respondents did think a citizen panel was a good idea and those who made comments about why they supported it stated that this approach has been shown to be effective elsewhere and may have merit locally, that it might be a good approach for specific groups such as young people and schools or businesses. Many said that they supported citizens panels as a way to help improve local democracy and accountability. Other comments made included;

- Questioned whether it would take considerable support to set up and maintain as set out in the consultation document
- Said it would require careful steering and handling
- Panel would need to be diverse and include a range of socio and economic backgrounds, truly represent all members of the community, including rural residents
- Knowledgeable person would need to lead it
- Need to thoroughly inform members of any panel to be effective
- Keep it infrequent and focused on specific topics, looking for practical solutions
- It will need proper funding
- It could be used to scrutinise council proposals to ensure that it takes climate change into account
- Should be online
- Should involve collaboration with other organisations, not necessarily council led
- Needs to be listened to, effective with proper powers to make change happen
- Should not be Melton-centric [town]
- Should avoid being too bureaucratic
- Should share local knowledge

Establishing climate change and environmental contacts

The survey asked respondents if they would like to be kept informed about what the Council is doing in relation to climate change and sustainability and separately if they would also be interested in being contacted in the future regarding any climate change related engagement activities.

QN: (tick box) I would like to be kept informed about what the Council is doing in relation to climate change and sustainability.

QN: (tick box) I would be willing to be contacted in the future about other climate change related consultations and engagement activities.

In total 118 different people provided their contact details to enable future contact with them, a mix of 31 local organisations and 87 local people.

61% of those who responded to this part of the survey indicated that they would like to be kept informed about what the Council is doing in relation to climate change and sustainability, a group of 112 people in total. 45% of those who responded to this part of the survey indicated that they would be willing to be contacted about any future consultations or engagement activities, a group of 81 respondents.

Table 4: Number of respondents providing permission to contact them questions by type of contact and respondent type

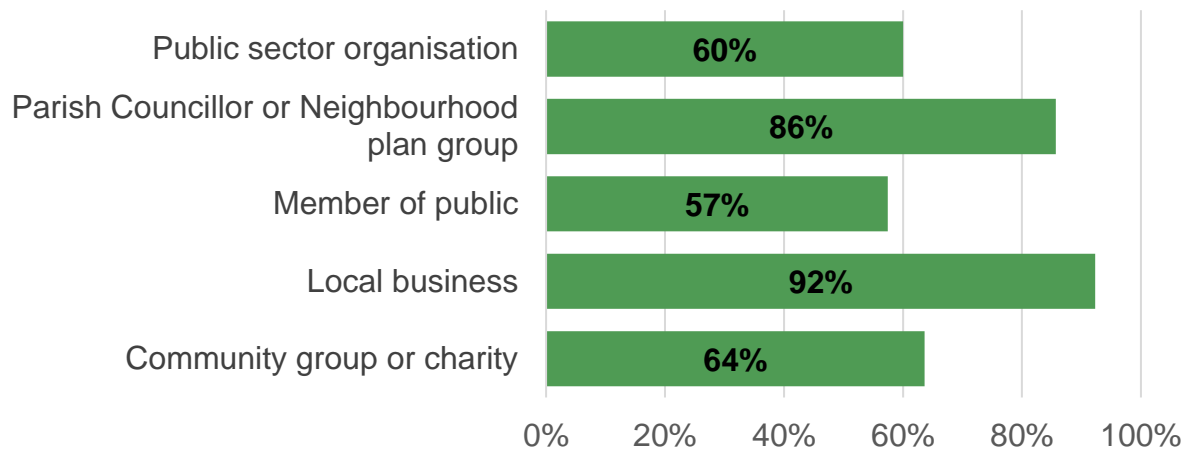|	Would like to be kept informed	Contact about future engagement
Community group or charity	7	7
Local business	12	8
Member of public	81	55
Parish Cllr or Neighbourhood plan group	6	5
Public sector organisation	9	6
All respondents	**112**	**81**

There was a large cross over between those who would like to keep informed about what the Council is doing and those who were willing to be contacted about future engagement activities, 70% of those who wanted to be kept informed also indicated that they would be happy to also be contacted about future engagement activities and vice versa, 95% of those willing to be contacted about future engagement activities also wanting to be kept informed about what the Council is doing.

Those responding on behalf of organisations covered a wide range of different types local businesses, organisations and community groups, which included several local

primary schools and a number of different organisations and groups with interests in local climate, environmental and sustainability issues.
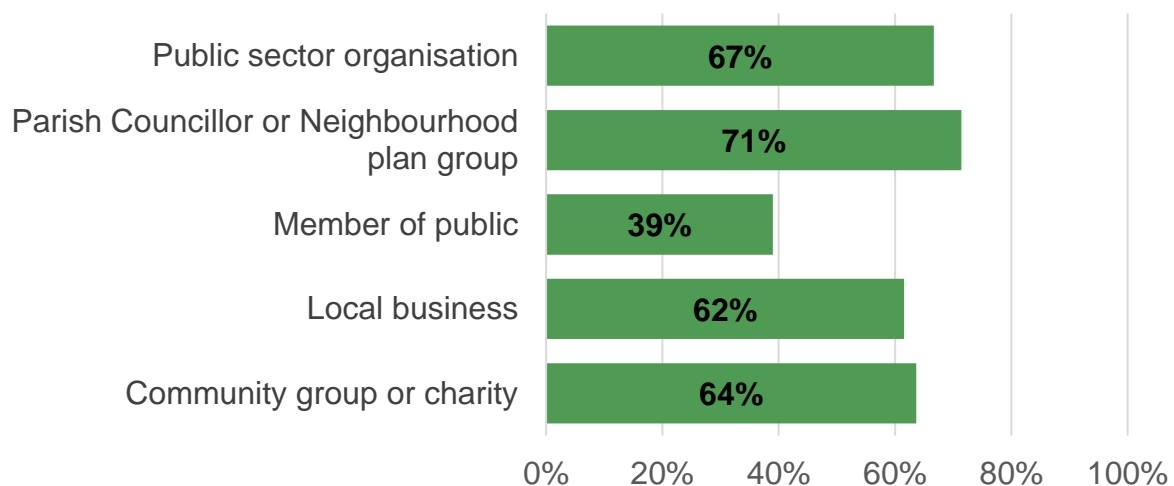
Local businesses and parish council/neighbourhood plan group respondents were most interested in being informed about what the Council is doing. Members of the public were less so, but the majority do want to (57%).

Chart 40: Percentage that want to be kept informed about what the Council is doing by type of respondent

Type of respondent	Percentage
Public sector organisation	60%
Parish Councillor or Neighbourhood plan group	86%
Member of public	57%
Local business	92%
Community group or charity	64%

There was also again a correlation between a respondents level of concern about climate change and wanting to stay informed. 74% of those who are extremely concerned wanted to stay informed, however one in four of those who were either not very or not at all concerned about climate change also said that they too wanted to stay informed (25%).

Chart 41: Percentage willing to be contacted about future climate change engagement activities by type of respondent

Type of respondent	Percentage
Public sector organisation	67%
Parish Councillor or Neighbourhood plan group	71%
Member of public	39%
Local business	62%
Community group or charity	64%

The proportion of organisational respondent indicating that they were willing to be contacted about any future engagement activities varied between 62% for local businesses to 71% for parish council/neighbourhood plan respondents. Those

responding on behalf of an organisation were much more likely to be willing to be directly contacted about any future consultations or engagement activities than members of the public (39%).

Local groups with an interest in climate and environmental issues

QN: Are you aware of any local groups with an interest in climate change or the environment that you think the Council should talk to?

This question sought to help the council learn more about any local groups undertaking climate change or environmental actions or projects locally. The local groups and organisation most frequently mentioned by respondents were Melton Transition, Bottesford Net Zero, the Vale Environment Group (Facebook group), local schools, the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife trust and Melton Space. A full list of all those mentioned is shown in table 5.

Table 5: Local groups and organisations with an interest in climate and environmental issues

Groups mentioned by type	Specific groups mentioned
Youth groups	• (Bottesford) Scouts
Schools and colleges	• Brooksby Melton College • Garden Ending Club at Bottesford primary school
Parish Councils	• Bottesford Parish Council
Canal and waterways societies	• Melton and Oakham Waterway Society • Severn Trent
Allotment and gardening groups	• Melton Community Allotment • Melton in Bloom
Local religious groups/churches	• Church of England • Greening Framland
Environmental focused groups and organisations	• VEG (Vale Environment Group) (Facebook) • The Environment Agency • Melton Wombles • Friends of the Country Park • The Sustainable Land Trust

	• Waltham on the Wolds Biodiversity Group
Climate action Groups	• Melton Transition • Bottesford Net Zero • CALL (Climate Action Leicester and Leicestershire) • XR (Extinction Rebellion) (Nottingham Branch) • Friends of the Earth (Leicester Branch)
Wildlife groups	• Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife trust • Vale of Belvoir Barn Owl Trust • Leicestershire and Rutland Beekeepers Association
Other community Groups	• Wellies • Melton Space
Businesses	• Mars • Samworth Brothers • Little Less Waste • The Grange
Other Groups	• Green Party (Melton and Rutland) • Melton Ramblers • WEA • The Town Estate • Melton Matters • Women's Institute • Rotary club • Round Table

Who respondents think the Council needs to reach out to talk to about local climate and environmental issues

QN: Are there any groups, businesses, organisations or people you think we need to make special efforts to reach out to?

Respondents were then asked about any groups, businesses, organisations or people that they thought the Council should make special efforts to reach out to discuss climate change and environmental issues. The groups and organisations named by respondents can be used to help ensure future engagement related to

climate change and the environment reaches all organisations and groups local people feel are important to be involved.

63 people responded to this question, with each respondent suggesting between one and seven groups, businesses or organisations, with a total of 115 recommendations in total, around 2 per person. Respondents suggested a wide variety of different types of people and organisations. They tended to provide generic responses, such as 'local businesses' rather than specifically identify individual organisations, although a number of specific local and national organisations and businesses were mentioned.

'I would say, just everyone, including the schools. We're all in it together'

The survey responses were monitored in real time and organisations and groups suggested by respondents were contacted and asked to complete the survey themselves (excluding responses received within the last two weeks of the consultation period).

The groups, businesses, organisations or people that respondents thought the Council should make special efforts to reach out to the most were young people and local businesses.

Local business

"Speak with businesses and see what they already do, share their efforts with other businesses, see what they would like to do and how you can help them achieve it."

29% of respondents said that the Council needs to reach out to a variety of local businesses. Larger local companies, as likely bigger emitters of local emissions, were identified as important and ARLA, PERA business park, MARS, Samworth Brothers, local supermarkets and the cattle market were specifically named. Respondents also stated that there may be benefits from working with these larger organisations, who are likely to have their own sustainability targets and projects and may offer a potential source of support for smaller local businesses or community initiatives.

There was an emphasis partially on agriculture and food related businesses, particularly farmers but also butchers, food manufacturers and restaurants. Several people mentioned that there was scope to learn from local farmers and food businesses that already do good work around sustainable food production and use of local supply chains and produce. Specific smaller businesses mentioned for their sustainable practice included Apteeki (now closed vegan restaurant), A Little Less Waste (a refill and sustainable retail business in Melton Mowbray) and the Larder (a café in Oakham).

Young people

"Go in face to face… ask them what they think about the environment and climate change. Ask them what they would do, what ideas they have. Really listen to them and see what ones you can implement… They are full of unlimited potential - tap into that."

Talking with young people through schools in particular as well as through colleges, early years providers, the young farmers association, the scouts and other local youth groups was recommended by one in four respondents. Those who made comments about why this was important suggested that young people may have good ideas. Other specific groups also mentioned were**;**

- **Local People –** in addition to young people, several responses said that we needed to speak with and listen to local people, they suggested ordinary people, not just those who most passionate about taking action about climate change. Other emphasised the needs to reach out to those who represent different groups including families and older people and across a variety of socio-economic groups, including travellers, vulnerable people, those who are fuel poor and others struggling with the cost of living. Older people were mentioned as a valuable source of local knowledge about the local environment, and a small number of respondents recommended to contact older person groups such as Age UK and U3A (university of the third age).

- **Local church groups** – were recommended by one in ten respondents, this included comments about their community reach and the work of the CofE as part of its eco church programme.

- **Parish councils** – Use connections and knowledge from parish councils, they can help develop links with smaller parish level groups such as wildlife groups, allotment holders and local tree planting schemes.

- **Farmers, landowners and others who maintain natural environment** – Leicestershire County Council (highway verges), farmers and other major local landowners as well as the Town Estate were all mentioned. People said the Council also needed to reach out to national organisations such as the National Farmers Union and the CLA (Country Land and Business Association). The local canal and waterway societies were both also mentioned (The Melton and Oakham Waterway Society and The Grantham Canal Society).

- **Transport organisations** – several respondents said that we needed to speak with transport providers and users, including those who operate local public transport services, Leicestershire County Council (as the local highways authority) and motorists.

- **Developers and construction industry** – because of the high level of emissions new development can create.

- **Other local groups and organisations** – a variety of local organisations and groups were highlighted, most were related to climate, environmental or wildlife organisations or groups, many of whom had been highlighted in the previous question. Some suggested going out to specific groups about specific issues that they will have expertise on, for example, ask the Melton Wombles group about where new bins might be needed or the local ramblers association about any issues on areas they visit.
  - Melton Transition
  - Bottesford Net Zero
  - Friends of the Earth (Leicester)
  - VEG (Vale Environment Group) (Facebook)
  - Melton Wombles
  - Wellies
  - Melton Space
  - Friends of the Country Park
  - Melton Community Allotment
  - Sustainable Land Trust
  - Waltham on the Wolds Biodiversity Group
  - Leicester and Rutland Wildlife Trust
  - Severn Trent
  - SAVE (save the vale environment) group
  - Melton Community Allotment and local allotment holders
  - British Geological Society (Keyworth)
  - Local Round Table, Rotary club and Women's Institute associations
  - Waste management firms
  - Melton and Rutland Conservatives

- **Other national/non-local organisations**;

  - The Environment Agency
  - Ecologi (carbon offsetting)
  - UK Green Building Council (sustainable construction and development)
  - National Trust (charitable trust and landowner outside Melton borough)
  - Ripple Energy (renewable energy)
  - The Environment Bank (habitat bank)
  - Sustainable Advantage (sustainability consultancy)
  - Pol.is (digital engagement tool)
 - British Geological Society (Keyworth)

- Other transition town and climate change groups and organisations
- Airports

Sharing knowledge, experiences and skills

QN: Would you be interested in sharing your knowledge, experiences or skills with others locally to help them take action to tackle climate change?

Respondents were asked if they would be interested in sharing their knowledge, experiences or skills with others locally to help them take action to tackle climate change. There were 176 response to this question with 35, equal to one in five respondents, stating that they were able to do so. A further 47 respondents, just over a quarter of all who responded (27%) said that they might be able to do so. A small number of those who responded 'no' stated that this was because they need to learn more.

Chart X: Proportion of respondents able to share knowledge, experiences or skills
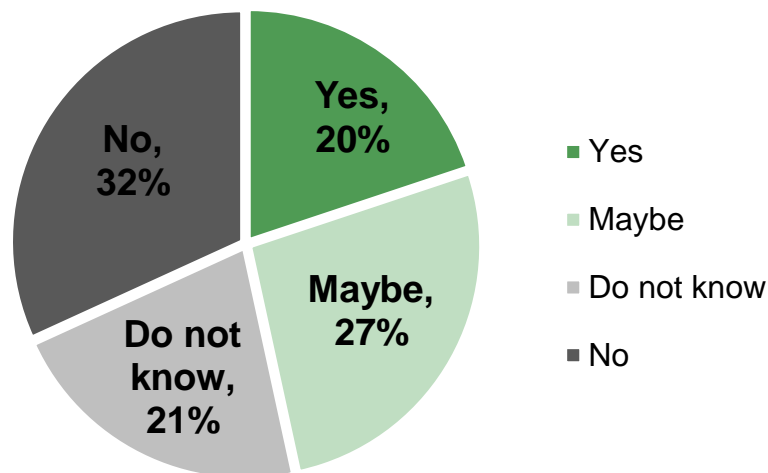
Those who said that they could, or might be able to, share their knowledge, experiences or skills with others tended to fall into four groups;

Share my story - local businesses, organisations and individuals who are willing to share what they have learnt on their own journeys to becoming more sustainable, from making changes within businesses, organisations and homes. This group of people may be able to provide real world trusted voices to help inform others about actions they can take themselves and help others draw on their learning and experiences to take similar actions.

> *'…While we are not experts we are further along than many businesses and are able to offer ideas we've had and discuss potential ideas we might have tried and found are not reasonable.'*

'Experience of solar panels, air source heat pump. Growing fruit and vegetables. Making compost and reducing food waste.'

Share my ideas – Those who feel that have some good ideas that they would like to share, not necessarily specific skills and knowledge, rather enthusiasm and a desire to contribute. Some said that their lack of knowledge was a potential benefit rather than a barrier, that they might be able to contribute fresh thinking and solutions. This group may be able to help feed into workshops and discussions, using their local knowledge to help create new ideas and solutions.

Share local voices – those who are part of local organisations, including climate groups and schools, who can represent voices of different groups of people. These organisations tended to have their own sustainability ambitions and are undertaking or want to undertake action themselves. These groups may be able to help share their experiences, they might be interested in closer and more joined up working with others doing similar projects, for example, as part of a local climate network. They may be able to offer connections to wider groups and people that then Council is likely to reach alone and be valuable in engaging and communicating more widely across the local community.

Share professional knowledge and expertise – a wide variety of different specific skills and knowledge were offered to be potentially shared, from environmental science and engineering knowledge and skills, to project management and leadership skills. This group also includes people with real life experience of supporting their organisation to become more sustainable and professionals who are experienced at advising others on sustainability in a variety of contexts. These individuals may be able to offer specific support, talks or training opportunities to others who are looking to take action. Their skills and knowledge might be useful to specific groups of people and organisations undertaking projects, including the Council, some examples are shown below;

'My business supports business to become more sustainable, specifically around the paradox between purpose and profit and the role of marketing in a world that consumes too much. Also have +5yrs experience working with families to help them reduce consumption. My business also offers training on how to communicate effectively about environmental concerns.'

'I work for an organisation that works with local authorities to deliver inclusive public engagement and research around the climate emergency and a just transition, including Citizen's panels.'

'…We are also in the process of becoming a B corp and can share our experience with other local businesses.'

The responses received to this question can be used to help develop future engagement and communication plans for a wide variety of different types of climate change and sustainability projects.

Improving climate change engagement

QN: Do you have any suggestions about how we might improve engagement around climate change locally?

There were 61 responses to this question, some of the responses to this question were general suggestions and ideas rather than comments on improving engagement around climate change locally. These have been considered in appendix C or other more appropriate parts of this this report.

Think about your messaging – make it simple, make it relevant, make it local. Make sure messaging is relevant to local people and local area. Use positive stories to set out what the council and others have done, including using voices that are representative/local people. Set out what will happen locally if we do not take action. Use simple techniques such as 'top tips' or showing how 'simple swaps' can impact a person's emissions. Highlight wider benefits, such as actions that can benefit the environment as well as help save money.

> *'[Show] theoretical projections of how Melton will look in the future if we carry on the way we are. Stop being so nice about it all. Shock tactics may need to be used before it's too late! Being nice about it isn't getting us anywhere.'*

> *'…show businesses that people will buy from them, show customers how they can reduce food wastage (and money wastage) and just feel better - with healthy food, community involvement etc…'*

Wider promotion and communication – beyond just email and social media, suggestions included posters in town and using local media outlets such as Radio 106 the Eye and the Melton Times. A number of people said that face to face opportunities were important to them, from public debates, workshops, attending community events to holding informal drop in sessions in community buildings such as local libraries, pubs, coffee shops and churches.

> *'If I don't look online and at you website every week, then how do I find out about what you are doing?'*

> *'Be seen. Be seen everywhere.. pubs, supermarkets, churches. Engage and talk and most of all listen to what people have to say to you. you may well be surprised by the quality of the answers.'*

Lead by example – walk the talk and ensure people can see and hear about what the Council is doing, make sure all communications consider climate change and the environment.

'…Show the community the Council does care and you're willing to make a start... Regain the community's trust, do something not just because it benefits you but because it benefits others too. Don't make promises you can't keep but also try and deliver on the smaller tasks. Turn up and help? Send a few councillors to the Wombles group to help litter pick. Be seen in the community.'

Work together – work with local organisations, get involved in what is already happening, work with local media outlets to keep issues high profile, work with national campaigning organisations. Do not reinvent the wheel, build on good work others are already doing, both locally and nationally.

'We are facilitating and running local community projects that draw in numerous partners and engage residents in the climate change agenda - getting involved with us would be fantastic!'

Know what you are talking about – make sure officer and staff are well informed, bring in experts where needed, listen to those with expertise.

'The Council needs to learn and be properly informed and pass that knowledge to residents'

Share and congratulate – suggestions ranged from annual competitions to social media call outs to congratulate those taking action locally, to help inspire others to do the same and normalise action. Incentives for those who make positive choices were suggested by several respondents, for example for choosing to walk not use the car.

Get into schools – they can spread the word more widely, they are the future, they are full of ideas

Build on rural capital of food – it is a local USP, take leadership on food sustainability, be seen talking about food sustainability at local food festivals.

Those who were more sceptical about climate change science and the need for action tended to not respond to this question, those who did said that they wanted for all sides of the debate to be listened to, for the Council to not overstate impacts and for it to stick to facts and realistic solutions.

'Stop producing one-sided surveys like this which presupposes that "everyone agrees" we must treat specious claims as to how we can change our climate as a realistic, science-based objective.'

Summary conclusion

The findings of the consultation are based on over 200 responses to the survey and numerous interactions from talking to a variety of people who engaged with the Council as part of the six consultation events held. This summary conclusion pulls together the key themes and findings set out in the main report.

The consultation has produced a large amount of information which will be useful for a variety of purposes, not all of it can be fully captured in this report or this summary. Information about specific topics and issues can be used to help shape the Council's proposed climate change strategy as well as individual projects and initiatives the Council and others may wish to support.

Who was consulted

The plan for this consultation was to reach as wide an audience as possible, in particular young people, adults under 40, local businesses and others who were considered less likely to respond. Efforts were made to reach a wide audience and officers from across the Council, as well as elected members and other local groups, who were all asked to also share details of the consultation with their contacts.

A press release was released at the start of the consultation period supplemented by a programme of regular social media posts designed to publicise the online survey and in person events. Direct email contact was made with a large number of key stakeholders and members of the public. In total over 600 people were directly contacted via email and asked to respond to the survey. Those directly consulted include;

- 270 people registered on the Melton local plan consultation database, which included 68 members of the public and 144 different organisations.

- 204 members of the public who had registered an interest in taking part in future council consultations.

- More than 130 additional local groups, businesses and organisations, including all local schools.

- Newsletter articles to reach council tenants and local businesses.

- Additional people and groups identified in real-time by survey respondents during the consultation period.

- Those who attended the 6 in-person consultation events, aimed primarily at increasing engagement with young people, who were prioritised to reflect feedback from consultees, who considered them a key group to engage with.

Respondents

A need to widen participation and take action to hear a wider variety of voices was found. The survey responses were not considered wholly representative of the local population and there is a need for the Council to engage better with adults under 40 and over 65 on this subject. Those who responded also appeared to have greater than average knowledge about climate change issues, suggesting a somewhat limited cohort of people with pre-existing interest in the subject matter. This highlights the need for additional consultation and engagement beyond online surveys and promotion on the Council's social media pages, particularly for harder to engage groups.

Communication and engagement

The in person events were a mixed success, the experiences suggest that larger scale community events, which are attended by a variety of different organisations are likely to be the most effective means of engaging and communicating in the future, with other smaller bespoke events likely to be useful only if a specific group of people need to be engaged. The data suggests online and in person community events will be effective for engaging with those that do not wish to comment through online surveys and that e-newsletters may be an effective means of communication for those who do not view the Council's social media.

The total number of organisational responses to the survey was relatively small, for statistical purposes. The survey findings in relation to local businesses, parish councils, public sector and community groups are considered suggestive and require further testing. It is suggested to undertake additional specific consultation with these groups (for example, as part of any consultation on a draft climate change strategy), having regard to the communication preferences set out in this report, for example, attending a local business forum to talk to local businesses, talking to public sector organisations via online meetings and holding a face to face session for parish councillors.

The responses also include specific information about individuals which can be used for communication and engagement purposes, with a network of over 100 contacts now in place. Many of whom said that they were willing to share their skills and experiences with others. There was a strong support for a local climate network, and the responses given provide a good foundation to start to develop one, another avenue that the Council and/or others may wish to explore. There was more limited conditional support for a local citizens panel, primarily because of concerns about the challenges of successfully running a representative network locally.

Respondents consistently said that young people were a key group to involve and there was an open invitation from all schools who took part to work with them. These

views were verified through the in person events, where young people showed a greater depth of knowledge when asked their views about climate change and they tended to share more ideas for change and action than adults. It was notable that young people did not express views denying human driven climate change or saying action was pointless, as some adults did. Feedback suggested that working with young people would have wider benefits, particularly in relation to disseminating information more widely, through family and friend networks, including the under 45's (includes many parents) a key group to widen participation with. There is an identified gap in support for schools and it is an avenue open to the Council and/or others to further explore, including the development of a local eco schools type programme or network.

Views on climate change

It was clear that those who responded to the survey were on the whole fairly or extremely concerned about climate change (80%), in line with levels of concern those found in national surveys. Many held very passionate views about the scale and scope of the challenges they felt we collectively face, using often emotive language to describe their views. Women on average were more concerned than men and those who lived in rural areas of the Melton borough tended to be more concerned than those who live Melton Mowbray.

The top concerns about the impacts of climate change were its impacts on the natural environment and the impact on future generations and their way of life, including that of respondents children and grandchildren. Those concerned about climate change also said that that there is no time to wait to take action, they also felt there has been too much talk and not enough action. Others wanted to point out that it is a climate and environmental emergency, that the two are interlinked and need to be considered together.

A small percentage of respondents were not at all concerned about climate change (5%). They tended to say that climate change was natural or question how much it was being driven by human activity. It was noted that these respondents often expressed a care for nature and the environment and concerns about over consumption and waste. Some felt that only one narrow point of view has been put across, that their views were not being heard. There is a risk that these people may feel alienated from engaging in environmental issues even if they care about them, if climate change science and rationale is too strongly applied to messaging around issues and actions that they might otherwise support.

Taking Action

Most people felt that climate change was important to them and that they will have to change the way they live their lives to tackle it (83% & 85% respectively). There was

also a strong level of support for individuals taking action themselves to tackle climate change, with three quarters of respondents saying that they felt a personal responsibility to reduce the impacts of climate change, even if it meant making personal sacrifices. Four out of five respondents felt that they needed to change how they currently do things, most thought that lifestyle changes were required, and scepticism was expressed about technological led solutions being the answer instead (81%).

Most people said that they knew what they needed to do and how to do it (86% and 85% respectively). Cross tabulation showed that a person's level of knowledge about climate change was linked to their understanding of the changes and actions which are required to tackle it, suggesting that those who know the least are less confident in what the right actions are. Comments made around making changes tended to express concerns that technologies were not yet advanced enough or that the right solutions to take are yet to be proven, that things might change or that they do not want to risk doing the wrong thing.

Two out of three people said they were worried about the financial cost to make the changes they would like to do. Comments made expressed concerns about affording to buy electric vehicles, install solar panels and undertake home improvements in particular, these were areas where people most wanted financial and other support.

Action to tackle climate change was also considered by a small number of respondents as pointless for a variety of reasons including, because other countries emissions were much bigger (so our efforts were insignificant) and because whatever we might do would be too little and too late.

The role of the Council

Many of the main takeaways in terms of what people want the Council to do were around how it operates as an organisation and its local leadership role. Comments made can be summarised as typically falling into the following categories;

- Embed it within the Council - make it influence every decision made
- Be seen and heard
- Less talk, more action
- Lead by example
- Get your own house in order
- Provide honest and impartial information

Key local issues

Measures to reduce waste and increase recycling and enhance and protect the natural environment received the strongest level of support overall, however there

was a good level of support for a wide range of actions. Reducing plastic waste was particularly important to organisational respondents.

The two actions viewed as least important for tackling climate change were driving electric cars and eating less meat and dairy/eating a more plant-based diets. They were considered notable outliers in the data, with much higher proportion of people saying that these actions were either not very or not at all important (22% and 25% respectively, all other actions range 0-13%). However, views on eating less meat were very polarised, with more than double that number thinking it was an important or very important thing to do (57%). A number of respondents expressed strong views on the need to change what we eat and how we produce food, several respondents suggested opportunities for the Council to lead on this, linking it to Melton's rural capital of food status with campaigns to promote more sustainable products and local producers. Views on driving electric cars were mixed because there were concerns raised about how green they are, including the mining of materials to make their batteries. Its lower level of importance also reflects the preference of respondents to modal shift, to use public transport, cycling and walking instead of the car.

The most strongly support actions and issues that people wanted to see addressed locally have been summarised into the five categories shown below;

- **Get planning right** – put the environment first in all planning decisions; solar panels on roofs, no more fossil fuel heating systems, make space for nature, build for people not cars.

- **Support for homes** – help households with information, support, schemes and funding for insulation, EV cars and chargepoints, solar panels and heat pumps; better guidance and rules for listed building retrofitting.

- **Cut the rubbish** – ditch plastic, explain what can be recycled, recycle more types of things, including food waste, and make getting rid of waste easier.

- **Make choosing how you move a reality** – reduce car dependency, better public transport options, safe cycleways and footpaths and more EV chargepoints, realise opportunities of MMDR

- **Enhance and protect the natural environment** – environmentally friendly management of green and open spaces, create more and better places for nature, improve the waterways, no solar farms on agricultural land.

These key actions can provide a framework for beginning to develop a local climate change strategy and provide direction in terms of the types of community projects and schemes that local people most wish to see.

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Appendix A: Organisations that responded to the survey

Community group or charity respondents

- Climate change action groups; Bottesford Net Zero, Climate Action Leicester and Leicestershire, and Melton Transition
- Leicestershire & Rutland Ornithological Society
- Local churches together
- Long Clawson Walk Together
- Melton Matters Wombles
- Melton Mowbray Methodist Church
- Melton Space
- St Bartholomew's Church Welby
- Sustainable Land Trust
- TDQ Cycling Group

Local businesses

- Development sector; a local planning consultant, HSSP (architects) and Gusto Homes (housing developer)
- Bottesford Cottage (hospitality)
- Buckminster Estate
- Gillstream Markets (Cattle Market)
- Hallmark Consumer Services (fulfilment services)
- Two local farmers
- Mars
- Samworth Brothers
- Seed social enterprise
- Soyfoods/Pauls Tofu
- Which Way (financial services)

Parish Councillor or Neighbourhood plan groups

Bottesford, Eaton, Hoby with Rotherby, Kirby & Frisby (others did not wish to identify who they were)

Public sector organisations

- Asfordby Hill, Great Dalby, Swallowdale and Stathern Primary Schools
- Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership
- Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Clinical Commissioning group
- National organisations; Natural England, Network Rail, The Environment Agency, Historic England

Appendix B: Equalities monitoring report

Melton Borough Council is committed to providing high quality services fairly and without discrimination to all members of the community. The survey included equalities monitoring information to help to identify if any particular areas of the community were underrepresented. Completion of the equalities monitoring questions was highlighted as entirely voluntary, and respondents were free to choose to complete all, none or part of these questions.

133 of all respondents provided some equalities information, 61% of all respondents. Excluding people who were respond on behalf of an organisation, there were up to 110 responses to equalities questions from members of the public, with almost 2 out 3 of all members of the public completing this section of the survey (64%). Only half of those responding on behalf of an organisation completed the equalities monitoring questions.

Given that this part of the survey was not completed by all of the respondents and its relatively small sample size, its findings should be used with caution.

1. Members of the public respondents

Age

Almost 4 out of 5 of those who provided equality information were over the age of 45 (78%). Those aged under 45 were underrepresented within the survey responses as were people over the age of 75. Responses from those aged 55-64 were significantly overrepresented. This suggests that the standard online survey format and existing communications plans are effective for this group. Additional actions may be required to target adults under 45 in future engagement activities, particularly those under the age of 25. The over 75's were also slightly underrepresented, suggesting that additional actions to reach older age groups should be sought in future engagement.

Chart A1: Age profile of resondents who completed the equalities age question compared to actual population

■ % respondents (members of public)   ■ % actual population over 16*
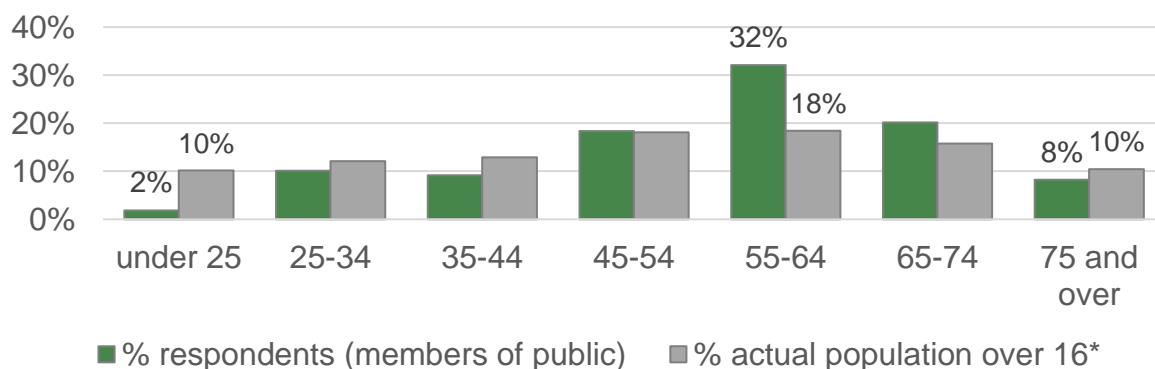
*[ONS mid 2020 population estimates](#)

Sex and gender

All respondents who indicated their gender said it was the same as their given birth gender/sex. Of those who responded, women appeared to be slightly more likely to complete the survey (54% of respondents were female and 47% male (n=103). Three people preferred not to state their birth sex, a further one person preferred not to state their birth sex and viewed their gender 'in another way' to male or female. Given the survey size this is in line with expected findings, although no statistics exist, Stonewall estimates around 1% of the population might identify as trans or non-binary.

Sexual orientation

Sexual orientation is an umbrella concept, which encapsulates sexual identity, behaviour and attraction. Around 9 in 10 people who responded to the question state that they were heterosexual (89%). Of the remaining 10% of responses, 6% preferred not to say and the remaining 4% identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual or having another sexual identity. Discounting those who preferred not to say, 95% of respondents identified as heterosexual and 5% stated other sexual orientations. This is relatively in line with expectations given the sample size and data from other larger populations surveys, which suggests that we should expect to see approximately 93% people identify as heterosexual (based on sexual orientation estimates from the Annual Population Survey, 2017).

Long term health conditions and disability

Respondents were asked if they had a health problem or a disability which had lasted or was expected to last at least 12 months. 24 respondents stated that they did, 22% of all respondents to this question (6% preferred not to say).

We might expect to see around 19% working aged adults and 46% of pensioners report having a long term illness or disability (Family Resources Survey, 2020). This suggests that older people with disabilities were slightly underrepresented. The lower than expected finding my simply be survey bias given the relatively small sample, but it may also reflect the lower response rate from those over the age of 75, the section of this group most likely to have a health problem or disability. Further it may also reflect that Melton has relatively low levels of income deprivation (260th income deprived local authority area) and there is a strong link between poverty and ill health and disability; areas with higher levels of income deprivation are more likely to have a more people with health conditions including serious mental illness, obesity, diabetes, and learning disabilities, however that would not explain why the under 65's who reported long term ill health or disability was broadly in line with expectations.

Chart A2: Percentage of people by age group who stated whether or not they had a long term health problem or disability, compared with national estimates
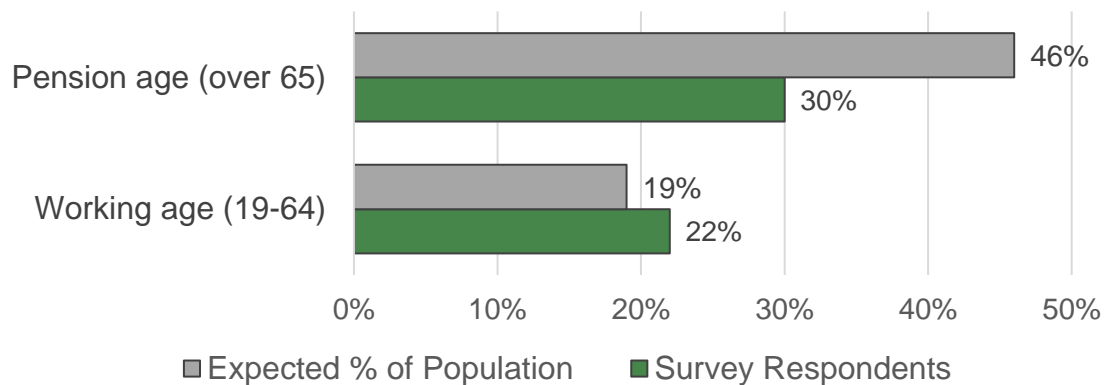
The 24 people reported a total of 30 disabilities, an average of 1.25 per person. Long-standing illness or health condition (for example, cancer, HIV, diabetes or chronic heart disease) was reported by a third of respondents with a long term health condition or disability. For other conditions, there was a notable difference in the types of disabilities reported by under and over 65's, however the small sample size means that this information is not statistically reliable. It does potentially suggest that ill health and disabilities between different age group are different, in particular that adults under 65 were much more likely to report having a mental health illness than the over 65's, who in turn were much more likely to report a sensory impairment that the under 65's. This should be considered and explored further in any future engagement activities.

Ethnic origin

99% of respondents described their ethnic origin as 'white', compared with a 97.7% baseline for the borough's population (Census, 2011), it is slightly higher than expected, however this is due to a slightly higher number of respondents who described their ethnic origin as 'white other', 6.7% compared to 2.4% of the population in the 2011 census data. Only one other ethnicity was stated, a person with a mixed ethnicity. Given the small sample size it is broadly in line with expectations. However the census data is somewhat out of date, it is due to be replaced by 2021 data imminently, which should give better indications regarding any changes in population make up.

Religion

There was a marked difference in the response to the baseline Census data. 57% of respondents stated that they had no religion, compared with only 24.4% of those in the 2011 Census data, more than double expected finding. This was seen with a corresponding decline in those who identified as Christian (68% in the 2011 census data but only 38% of those who responded to the question in the survey). Other

religions were also slightly higher than expected. Again the age of the census data is of concern when attempting to make comparisons, as is the small sample size. There is also a link between age of respondents and religion, seen in both this data and the census data, with those in the older age groups most likely to describe themselves as Christian and an already stated under representation of the oldest aged group (over 75's) to the survey.

Socio economic status

As highlighted above, one of the reasons for seeing low levels of long term ill health and disability in older people who completed the survey may relate to their socioeconomic status. This is not something that the Council's standard equalities monitoring form covers at present. Research suggests socioeconomic stratification is a crucial factor for understanding variations in climate change views. Collecting a small amount of simple data on variables such as household income, tenure and highest level of educational attainment in any future engagement surveys may help address this gap in knowledge as well as help to ensure that engagement plans successfully target a more representational cross section of local people.
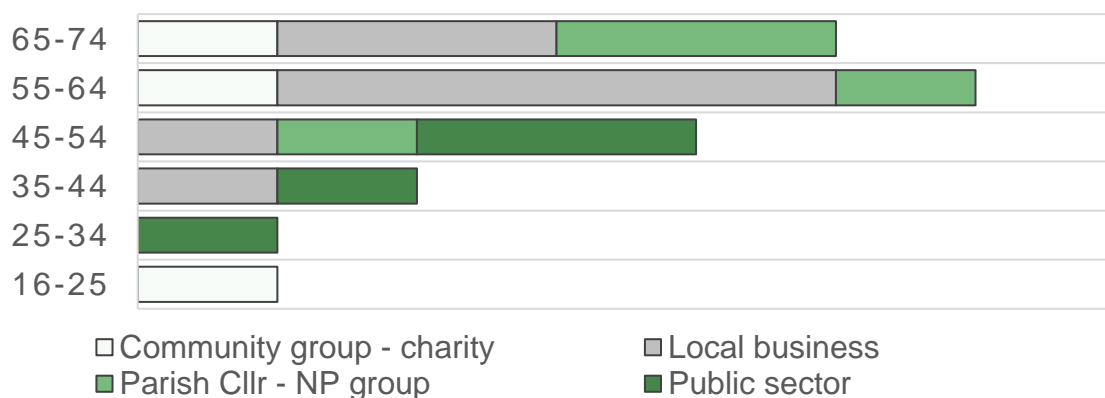
2. Organisational respondents

This information is not benchmarked against the local population, it is briefly considered to see if any gaps in terms of types of people responding from different types of organisations. It is recognised that this information is indicative at best, given that it was not completed by half of organisational respondents and the sample size is small.

Age

The age profile was similarly spread across respondents from organisations, who were also were primarily over the age of 45 (79%). However none were over the age of 74. A breakdown by type of age of respondent by organisation is shown below.

Chart A3: Age profile of respondents by organisation type who completed the equalities age question
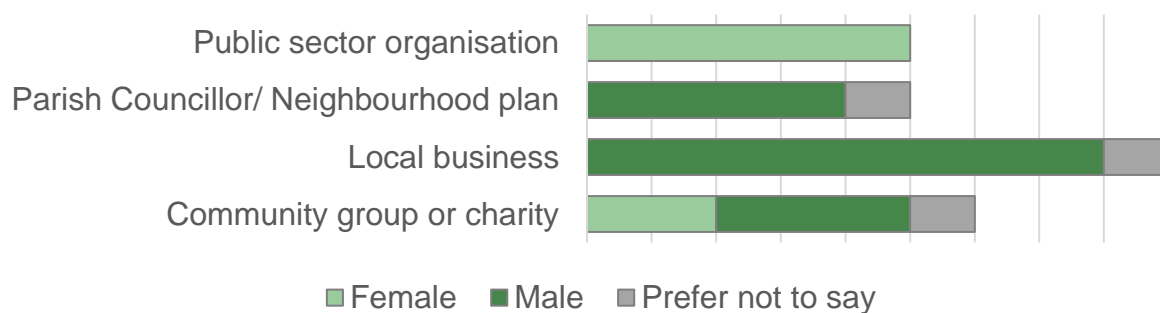
Age differences in respondents by their organisation type, when examined in detail tended to follow societal/sectoral patterns that reflect the makeup of these groups.

Sex and gender

All respondents indicated that their gender identify was the same as their birth gender. Those who responded on behalf of an organisation appeared to be much more likely to be male, overall 2 out of 3 organisational respondents stated they were male, all of those from Parish Councils/neighbourhood plan groups and businesses. All the respondents from public sector organisations conversely were female. Three respondents preferred 'not to say' both their birth gender and gender identity.

Chart A4: Gender identified by respondents by organisation type

The gender differences when examined in detail tended to follow societal/sectoral patterns that reflect the makeup of these groups. The above is suggestive at best, given the small sample size, but it would be prudent to continue to monitor and potentially take action to ensure that we hear from the views of women involved in local businesses based on these responses.

Other characteristics

The information in following sections has not been broken down or discussed in any detail, as it could potentially inadvertently identify an individual and is not likely to be statistically significant given the small sample size.

- **Sexual orientation.** 83% of respondents identified as heterosexual, 9% preferred not to say.
- **Long term health conditions and disability.** 15% of respondents stated that they had a long term health issue or disability.
- **Ethnic origin.** 95% of those who responded described themselves as white, the majority white British (86%; 9% 'white other').
- **Religion.** 45% stated they held no religious beliefs, 36% Christian faith, 14% held mix of other faiths.

Appendix C: What does Melton Borough Council needs to do?

Ideas and suggestions were made about what the Council needs to do, from both the in person events, written responses and within the survey responses. This appendix brings these suggestions together, sorted by theme. All these ideas have been suggested by at least one person, some numerous times, they have been presented without any weighting.

Some ideas suggested were not within the direct control of the Council, not things that it currently does, some were issues where other organisations were primarily responsible, for example, local transport planning, which is the responsibility of the County Council. Some of the ideas proposed are things that the Council already does, for these issues it may be that better communication locally is required to ensure that local people understand what is happening locally.

General

- Provide local leadership, show strong commitment
- Lead by example, walk the talk and be the change
- Be visible and heard, show people how the Council and its members actively embracing action and change
- Tackle the biggest local polluters first
- Help make changes more affordable, especially for most vulnerable and poorest members of the community
- Think both town and rural, not always the same solutions
- Work faster, bring forward your 2030 operational target; 2050 target is too slow/late
- Build consensus across political parties/groups
- Start acting like it is an emergency
- Amalgamate into a larger authority/work with other local authorities; ensure all public sector organisations work together as one partnership
- Lobby government for more powers, funding and better action/regulations
- Do not greenwash
- Provide more support for local community groups and organisations
- Providing climate awareness/literacy training for all staff and elected members

Decision making

- Plan properly, be realistic and take holistic approach to get best results
- Need local, regional and national co-operation to succeed
- Ensure it is a top priority for the Council, make a plan and stick to it
- Need council teams to be joined up and all working to achieve same aims
- Ensure carbon reduction is a key theme in all aspects of work and consider green impacts in all reports/decisions. Review and green proof the Council's policies
- Undertake a carbon audit to better understand the Council's emissions
- Set an incremental strategy moving forwards between now and 2050 and then report annually on progress
- Develop ambitious strategic plans (housing strategy, local plan)
- Decentralise services
- Let local volunteers work with the Council and scrutinise their plans
- Promote flexible and home working policies to enable staff to use alternatives to car
- Seated staff to make their own electricity with a chair fitted with a set of pedals driving a dynamo.

Finance and procurement

- Secure more funding to help locally
- Use borrowing powers to fund local test and exemplar projects
- Only invest in sustainable companies
- Disinvest in fossil fuels and lobby Leicestershire pension fund to do the same
- Procurement weightings should prioritise local contractors and those with high environmental standards
- Link business and council tax charges to a buildings energy efficiency rating, like car tax do/offer discounts to homes with solar panels or heat pumps
- Audit sustainability of spending, create an ethical checklist for carbon neutrality and environmental safety when allocating funds
- Ensure council budgets are sufficient to deliver change required
- Do not waste tax payers money, the Council needs to be more efficient, minimise staff payroll costs

Council buildings

- Solar panels, living biodiverse roofs and water recycling systems on all council buildings
- Solar panels/better insulated homes for council housing tenants, help those with lower incomes
- Retrofit/modernise all council buildings, to ensure energy efficient; including high standards of insulation; solar panels, as well as external window shades and blinds for over heating
- Undertake exemplar projects on own buildings to show the way for others
- Turn building lights and heating off when buildings are not in use/evenings
- Ensure renewable energy used to meet the Council's energy needs from grid
- Reduce council operational waste and recycle more
- Turn car parks into orchards
- Any new council buildings should meet high standards such as Passivhaus

Homes

- Provide well informed guidance on how to improve home insulation and heating, run initiative sand provide funding to encourage uptake
- Provide support, advice and funding for people living in hard to retrofit homes, including listed buildings.
- Provide a dedicated advice service for households in private sector, renters, owners and landlords.
- Use licencing powers to licence private rented sector, to require faster transition to C rated EPC rating for rented homes

Waste management

- Support the circular economy and waste hierarchy approach to waste
- Garden waste collection service should be free to use
- Give people who pay for green waste collection benefits like free compost
- Invest in better recycling facilities, that are open longer and easy to use
- Reopen Bottesford tip, improve access to rural waste and recycling centres
- A shop or collection point by the tip to be able to buy and recycle household items, could generate a revenue to help improve green issues locally
- Improve paint recycling faculties at the tip
- Support a local repair centre, local tool library and repair workshops
- Standardise recycling and waste services to make it simpler and easier
- Be able to recycle more types of items, including soft plastics
- Help us recycle hard to recycle items, such as crisp packets
- Widen pick up services to help those who cannot dispose waste themselves

- Install public litter bins that separate recyclable items from general waste
- Better communication and education about what people can recycle
- Recycle food waste/introduce a food waste collection service
- Central wash facility for recyclables, so we don't waste water rinsing at home
- Help local people to reuse/donate electronic goods still in good working order
- Do not charge people to get rid of waste (to make easier/reduce fly tipping)
- Review waste contract and contractor for greener options
- Ensure local recycling is not shipped to other countries to be dealt with
- Focus on littering, overflowing public bins and dog fowling
- Better pay for refuse collectors and street cleaners
- Bigger fines for fly tipping
- Zero/low emission refuse trucks for bin collections
- Send a few councillors to the Melton Wombles group to help litter pick

Open spaces and natural environment

- Use council owned open and green spaces for wildflowers/trees/planting that support wildlife and biodiversity
- Ban pesticides locally
- Do not use pesticides/weed killer sprays on council land, including car parks
- Use planting and solar PV panels to provide shading in council car parks
- take part in no mow May
- Do not cut grass verges (unless necessary for road safety)
- Protect existing nature including woodlands
- Promote re-wilding, tree planting, wildflowers and fallow grassland areas
- Support Melton and Grantham canal restoration and improving local waterways
- Develop a new county park type area to meet needs form new housing growth
- Create more greenspace
- Encourage the community to get involved in environmental and bio-diversity projects
- Make town centre greener
- Provide more trees/planting in urban streets for cooling
- Put up signage to stop people feeding bread to waterfowl, it is bad for them and can causes algal blooms
- Council should sign a zero peat use pledge
- Repurpose some of the Council's green spaces for more allotments
- Look at pollution of local waters, hold Environmental Agency and water companies to account

- Improve footpaths at Melton country park
- Provide stronger support for BNG (biodiversity net gain) and link its requirements with what farmers are trying to do and the subsidy replacement scheme
- Installing water butt's into town centre businesses so town estate can use rainwater to water the plants rather than mains

Planning and development

- Stop building new housing on greenfield sites, prioritise brownfield land first
- Reuse and repurpose existing buildings before building new
- Look at policies and provide clear guidance for those who live in listed homes/conservation areas about installing solar panels and what they can and cannot do to make them more efficient.
- Build new homes in sustainable locations, not in areas that lack facilities, they build in car dependency
- Build more smaller homes, less resources to build and less energy to run, can provide more sustainable choices for aging population
- Mandate solar panels on all new buildings
- No more fossil fuel heating systems for new buildings
- Ensure electric vehicle charge points (or cabling for them) in all new homes
- Ensure new homes are energy efficient, seek Passivhaus standards
- Ensure existing homes which have extensions or renovations have to improve their energy efficiency too
- Put environmental protection at the heart of every planning policy and use planning regulations and laws to maximum effect to meet environmental and climate priorities
- Ensure renewable energy is provided as part of applications to meet new industrial development's needs
- Don't allow trees or hedges to be cut down for development and take action against those who do so without permission
- Incorporate wildlife features into new developments (for example, bat and swift boxes, hedgehog highways)
- Require developers to provide support for home grown food, for example, plant fruit trees or bushes in new housing gardens
- Ensure soil provided for gardens of new homes is good quality
- Ensure appropriate native planting in new developments
- Ensure sufficient green spaces in new developments
- Adopt 15 minute neighbourhood principals
- Build higher density housing, aim for 50 dwellings per hectare

- Require hedge boundary treatments/no fences in new developments
- Require water butts to be provided for new homes
- Require water harvesting systems for new buildings
- Incorporate sustainable drainable systems (SuDS)
- Develop a local energy plan to help deliver renewable energy generation schemes suited to the local geography and benefiting the local community
- Use planning to promote nature recovery, help develop bigger, better, more joined up protected areas
- Design new development to promote opportunities for walking and cycling
- Design new development to mitigate against climate change impacts, including flooding and do not build in high flood risk areas
- Use planning system to protect existing gardens green spaces, stop households from removing hedges and trees and replacing them with high hard fencing, and stop installation of tarmac and other non-permeable driveways
- Use developer contributions to improve cycle routes and footpaths not for bus passes
- Support new homes with space for homeworking to reduce the need to travel

Transport

- Install more EV public chargepoints, install in council owned car parks/land as well as on street chargepoints.
- Ensure that every village has at least one public EV chargepoint
- Open up access to the chargepoint blocked by the COVID-19 testing centre
- Support more and better public transport, including commuter friendly timed public transport and services to Nottingham.
- Support cross boarder bus options/help those in villages to get to other larger settlements, towns and villages
- Reopen former train lines, run more services, at the right times
- Promote and increase London direct rail service
- Develop a dial and ride rural mini bus service
- Use electric or biodiesel for local buses
- Support better/safer walk to school routes, help get more children to walk to school
- Promote active travel for council staff
- Reform staff milage claims, to better reward use of vehicles that pollute less
- Reduce the need to travel, support homeworking
- Switch all council owned vehicles to electric
- Promote and encourage active travel, get more people cycling and walking

- Develop a plan to better connect footpaths
- Provide cycle lanes into Melton Mowbray town centre and across town, for safety have physical barrier to road not just lines
- Install more cycle parking in Melton Mowbray, spread it across the town
- Get traffic and pollution of the town, where you can offset it with planting. Get the MMDR (Melton Mowbray Distributer Road) completed as soon as possible
- Do not build the MMDR, it will only increase car use and traffic around town
- Disincentivise short car journeys within the town/inside MMDR and make internal road network work better for walking, cycling and buses by introducing dedicated lanes, traffic calming, one way systems and priority junctions
- Discourage car use, require parking permits, increase council car park fees
- Make town car parking free, to encourage people to shop locally
- Get cars out of the town centre, get lorries out of the town
- Develop a congestion charge for car travel within the MMDR to help subsidise public transport around the town
- Support development of car sharing schemes, for example, at railway station car park
- Reduce street lighting, amount and duration

Energy

- Don't use greenfield land for solar farms, solar on building roofs and brownfield sites first, like Melton airfield.
- Council should invest in local renewable energy schemes that benefit the local community
- Develop a local energy generation strategy. Assess opportunities for wider renewables, such as small scale hydro and biodigesters/anaerobic digestion energy in the borough
- Council tax scheme where you can borrow and then pay back the cost of putting solar panels on your roof over time through increased council tax payments
- Provide grants, schemes and other incentives to help encourage renewables installed in homes, consider a council tax reduction incentive
- Offer community energy officer/advice services to help people struggling with cost of living crisis reduce their bills and help the environment at the same time
- No fracking

Engagement, collaboration and education

- Get children involved, educate them, go out to schools, they pass learning on to wider networks, to their parents and grandparents
- Provide information and educate about climate change
- Run campaigns and provide information and guidance on what to do, how to live well and sustainably
- Offer an in person advice service
- Get involved, join in with what local groups are already doing
- Communicate using different methods, not just online and email
- Listen to local people and ask them what they want and what they think should be done, turn to local people rather than external consultants for advice
- Encourage public responsibility
- Run a campaign about gardens and how can be used to grow food and support wildlife and biodiversity
- Support people to better access local countryside and open spaces, it will help them care about the local environment
- Make sure all public bodies have same messaging and commitments
- create a positive image of where we are heading - not a negative one about change and giving things up
- Report progress regularly, release data, be open and honest, show if meeting targets or not
- Provide incentives/grants to householders including to install renewables and make their homes more energy efficient. Campaign for more local funding to do so
- Have a regular publication/article – for updates, progress and tips
- Find local sustainability champions
- Help and support local environmental/climate groups and do not stifle them, encourage them to have own ideas/innovate
- provide a dashboard to households on what they can do and what the benefit can be
- Set up a climate change hub where every organisation, charity, council, industry etc. can work together to ensure a cross cutting, delivered approach can be implemented, and let it make decisions
- Provide personal audits, so people can see what they specifically need to do
- Set up an environmental group in each parish or and environmental champion in each parish council
- Improve quality of surveys, for example, use question numbers for referencing, ensure able to print off your responses, provide facts and figures

not emotive language. Ensure quantitative questions have variety of answer choices to reflect varied views (beyond yes/no/do not know)

Food and agriculture

- As rural capital of food MBC should become a flagship council for promoting British food/buy local, be a voice to promote lower carbon local foods (for example, grass fed lamb and diary), minimising food waste and minimising food packaging
- Help to educate people how to cook more sustainably, teach people plant based recipes
- Provide support for people to reduce meat and dairy consumption and eat more fruit and veg
- Collaborate and influence landowners to promote sustainable agriculture schemes
- Make sure that farmers are presented as part of the solution not the problem
- Take a leadership role over tough agricultural and food issues for rural areas like Melton, including regenerative farming and need to reduce meat and dairy consumption
- Support community fridges to share surplus food
- Provide more affordable allotment areas with no restrictions of putting up a shed

Local businesses, the economy and economic development

- Support education and skills training for green economy (including growth in retrofit sector and for school leavers/apprentices)
- Better local jobs, to reduce need to commute
- More choice and better shopping facilities, both in town and in villages, to help ensure people can meet their needs locally/reduce the need to travel
- Improve local infrastructure and local leisure facilities, to help people meet needs locally/reduce the need to travel
- Reduce business rates to attract more independent shops and SME businesses into the town/borough
- Do not promote never ending economic growth, it is not sustainable
- Show support for local green economy and local green businesses, such as zero waste shops and local produce cafés.
- Shop local campaign and support, including local markets, craft workers and growers
- Get businesses involved and encourage local collective action e.g. to switch off their building lights in evenings, improve business recycling rates or switch to recyclable packaging

- Reward businesses that take action, give business rate discounts for installing green measures such as solar panels
- Fine businesses that do not switch lights off at night
- Ask business to support the Council to reach its carbon neutral targets
- Help for businesses to audit their emissions, develop their own plans and targets
- Funding for local businesses to help them make changes
- Seek funding/sponsorship from local businesses to help community projects and action
- Create of local freight hubs with zero emission local delivery from them to final destination/last mile.