

# Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2023 – 2030

CONSULTATION REPORT  
MARCH 2023

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# Background to the Report

This Report is the result of a consultation exercise to elicit the response of residents of Charnwood Borough to our Draft Climate Strategy and Action Plan. The consultation comprised an online survey and two focus groups held with Further Education students at Loughborough College. The Council administered the survey and publicised it to residents, but we were supported in developing the consultation questions, the focus groups and analysing the outcome by external consultants, Environmental Solutions Through Partnership Ltd.

We will consider the availability of resources and, where practicable and appropriate, adjust the Draft Climate Strategy and Action plan to reflect the views of those responding to the consultation.

# Context

This report provides feedback on the climate change consultation Charnwood Borough Council undertook between 23rd January and 6th March 2023.

Leading up to the start of 2023, we have been updating and refreshing our Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan. By 2030, we aim to have achieved “carbon neutrality”.

The purpose of the consultation was:

- To provide feedback from residents on the draft Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan.
- To understand how concerned the residents of the Borough are about the local impacts of climate change.
- To elicit the views of other stakeholders interested in the impact of climate change on the Borough and throughout Leicestershire.

Within the consultation, there were opportunities for respondents to comment on the degree of partnership working we have engaged in and what action residents themselves may be taking to mitigate the effects of climate change.

The responses highlighted are intended to indicate the wide range of views expressed by those participating in the consultation. A consensus of opinion was achieved by analysing the results and responses of the online survey and the individual responses the Council received. The full set of responses is held by the Council.

The report concludes with a series of considerations that we will consider prior to publication of the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan.

# Consultation Events and Activities

The consultation on the draft Strategy and Action Plan comprised an online survey. This was posted on the “Current Consultations” page of the Council website and widely communicated through the website. Other channels used to publicise the consultation included:

- Social media channels to more than 20,000 followers.
- Shared with more than 16,000 subscribers to Charnwood Borough Council’s email alert service.
- Given press coverage in the Loughborough Echo and Leicester Mercury.
- Shared with more than 200 organisations, businesses, business groups, environmental and community groups and residents’ associations.
- Shared with all parish councils in the Charnwood Borough Council area along with schools, transport organisations and businesses.
- Circulated to employees of Charnwood Borough Council and Members of the Council.

The survey was opened to respondents on 23rd January 2023 and was available for six-weeks, closing on 6th March 2023.

Young people were identified as a key demographic for additional engagement activities. This is the group that will experience the greatest impact from our changing climate, but younger people are less likely to respond to a conventional survey. To gain greater insight into the views of younger people, two small focus groups were run at Loughborough College. The results of the focus groups can be found later in this report. Relevant outcomes from the focus groups are included in our recommendations.

# Who Responded?

- There was a total of 129 valid online survey responses.
- 96% (124) of the responses were from residents in their personal capacity.
- 4% (5) responded on behalf of organisations.



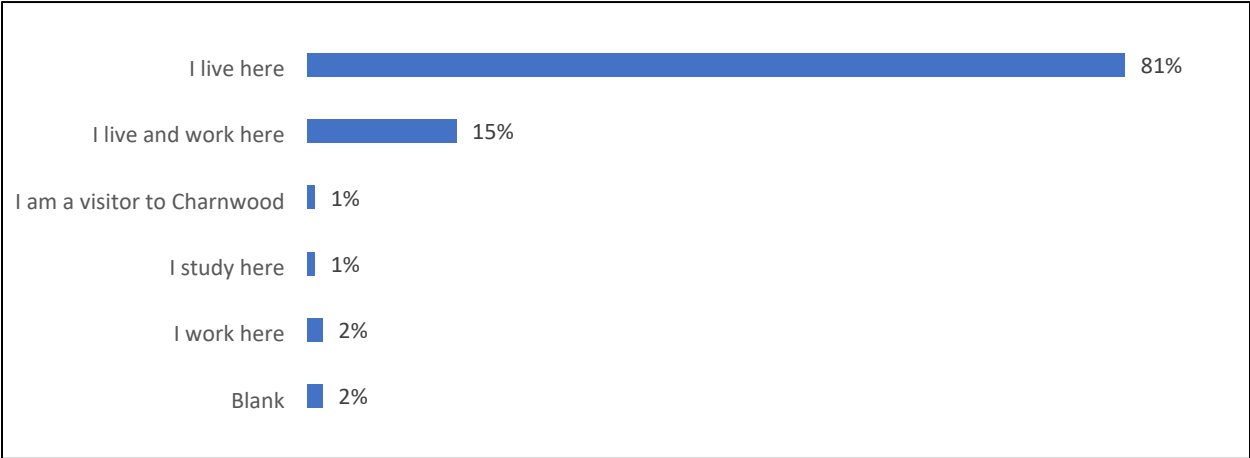
In addition, six responses were received by direct email on behalf of the following organisations and individuals:

- The National Forest Company
- Climate Action Leicester and Leicestershire.
- Charnwood Labour Group.
- The Environment Agency.
- NHS Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Integrated Care Board (LLR ICB).
- A visiting Fellow at Loughborough University's Engineering Systems of Systems Research Group, one of the 129 respondents to the online consultation also submitted an additional commentary.

Of the 129 responses to the online consultation:

- 81% (104) respondents live in the Borough.
- 15% (19) both live and work in the Borough.
- 4% (4) were visitors to Charnwood for other reasons.

Two people chose not to respond to this question.

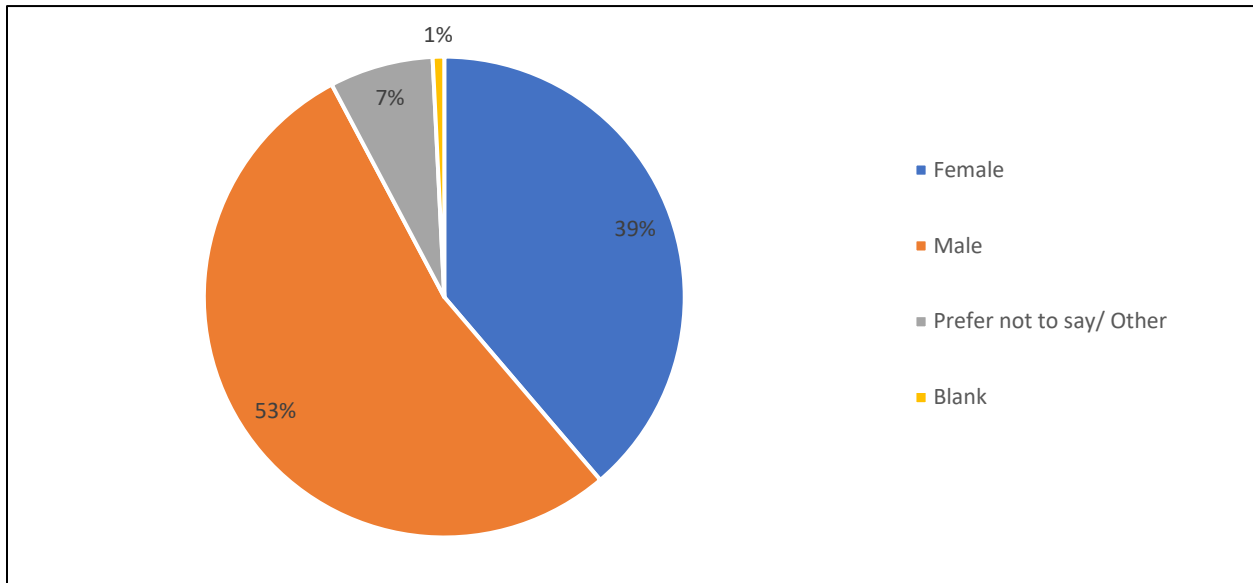




## Equalities Monitoring

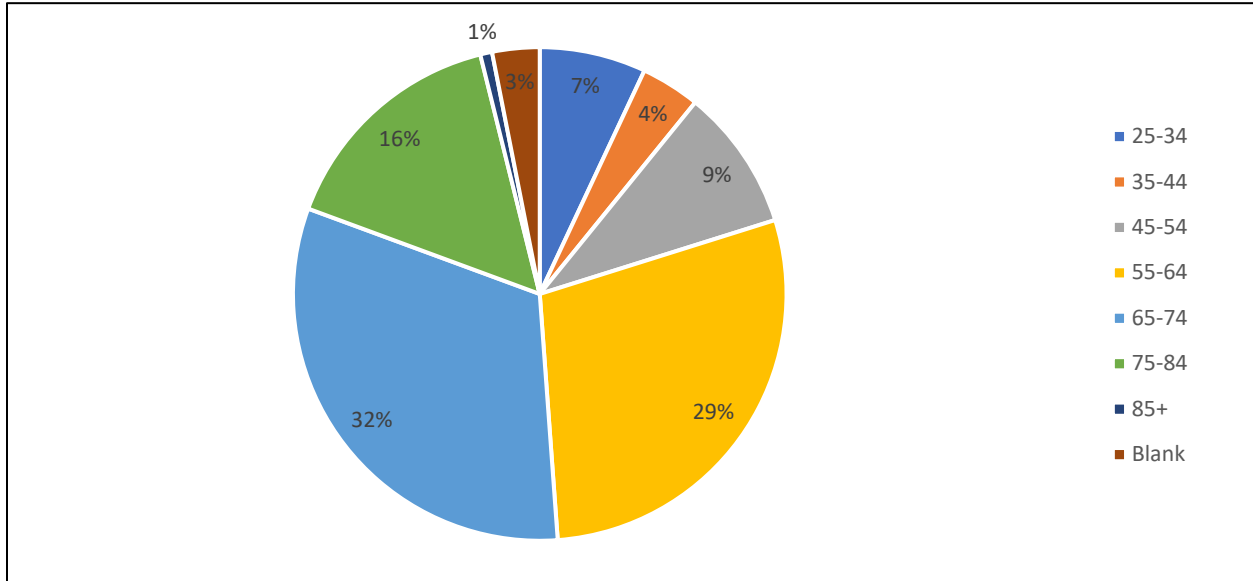
The Council is committed to providing services fairly and without discrimination to all members of the community. The survey included equalities monitoring information to help identify if any members of the community were under-represented. Completion of the relevant questions was entirely voluntary, and respondents were free to choose to complete all, none or part of these questions.

- 53% (69) of the respondents identified as male.
- 39% (50) of the respondents identified as female.
- 7% (9) of those who responded preferred not to say which gender they identified as or identified as “other”.
- 1 person chose not to respond to this question.



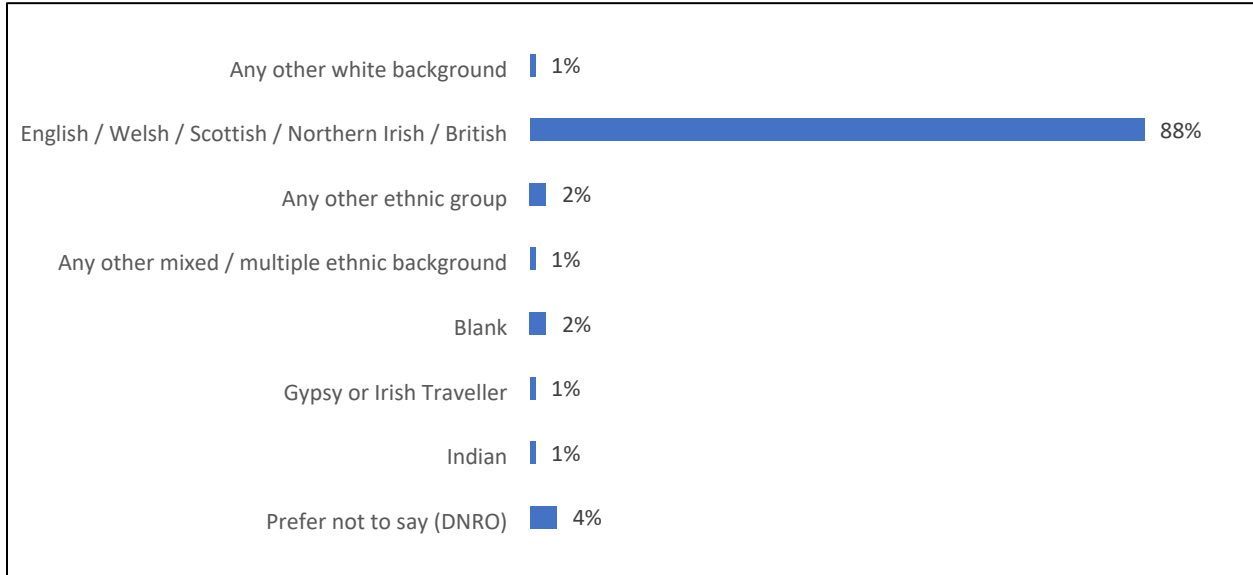
## Age Range

- There were no respondents to the online survey under the age of 25.
- 49% (63) of the respondents were aged between 26 and 64, of which, those between 55 and 64 made up the greatest number (29% or 37 of the overall cohort).
- 50% (62) of those who chose to respond to the survey were 65 years old or above.
- 4 people chose not to answer this question.



## Ethnicity

- A clear majority of respondents, 88% (114 of 129) identified as English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British.
- 4% (5) respondents preferred not to say which ethnic group they belonged to.
- 5% (7) of the respondents were from other ethnic backgrounds.
- Three people chose not to answer the question.

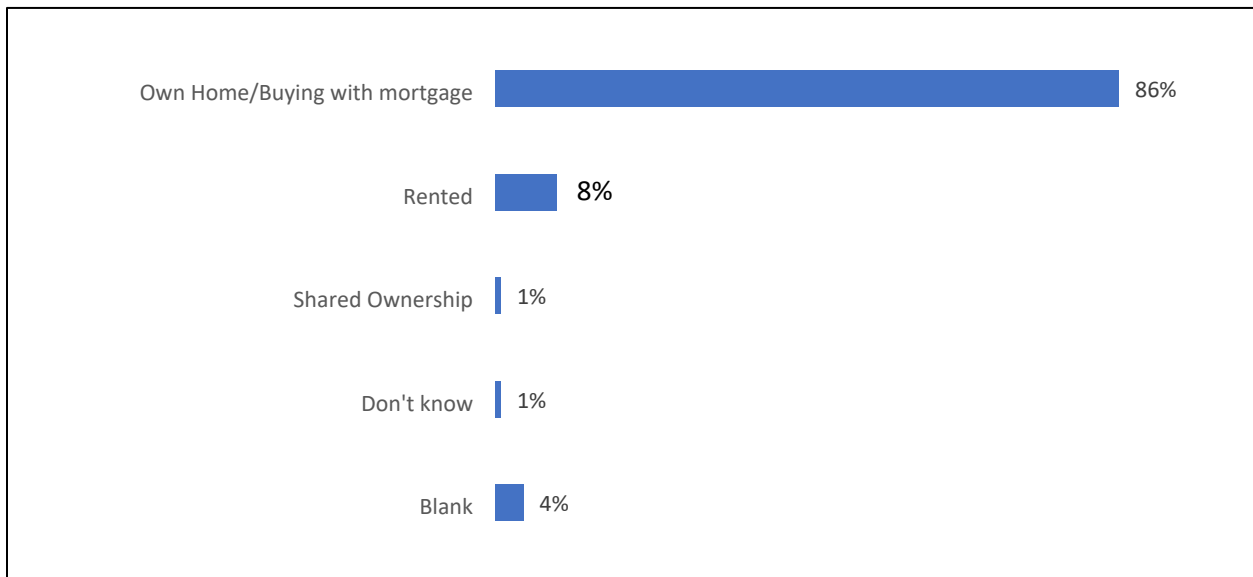


The proportions are not vastly different to the demographics of the Borough, so no group can be said to be under- or over-represented (2013 data suggests that 12.5% of Charnwood residents do not identify as English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British).

## Housing Tenure

Of the 129 people who responded to the survey:

- 86% (111) either own their own home outright or are buying their home using a mortgage.
- 8% (11) are in rented (private, local authority or housing association) properties.
- 1% (1) respondent is in a shared ownership property.
- One respondent did not know which category applied and five people chose not to answer this question.



## Other Points

63% (81) of the respondents asked to be kept informed of climate change matters by the Council and left their email addresses for this purpose.

63% (82) learned about the consultation via Charnwood Borough Council email alerts, 9% (11) via the Council's Facebook page and 5% (6) via other social media accounts.

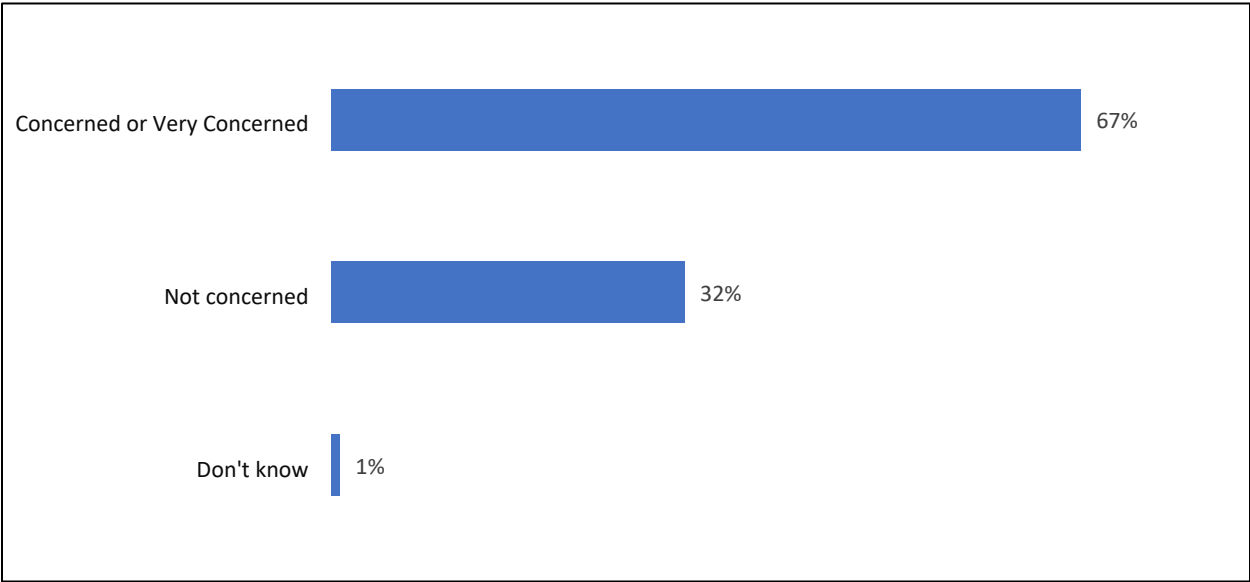
## Concerns About Climate Change

The first, substantive question on the consultation survey was about the respondents' feelings about climate change.

### ***How concerned are you about the impact of climate change on Charnwood Borough?***

Of the 129 responses,

- 67% (87) were concerned or very concerned.
- 32% (41) were not concerned.
- One respondent did not know whether they were concerned or not concerned.



The majority, 67%, of the respondents are, therefore, concerned about the impact of climate change on the Borough. This is lower than the UK average. In September 2022, the Office of National Statistics (ONS) reached the conclusion that 74% of adults reported feeling worried about climate change.

The consultation also elicited feedback from several respondents who can be categorised as climate change “sceptics” or “deniers”. A climate change sceptic is someone who does not believe that changes in the earth’s climate risk environmental catastrophe (Collins Dictionary) whereas a climate change denier is one who denies that changes in the Earth's climate or weather patterns are caused by human activity (merriam-webster.com).

# Strategic Themes

The draft Climate Change Strategy sets out our response to climate change in a series of themes. Theme 6, Governance and Finance is an internal facing theme and it was not considered appropriate to seek public views on this part of the Strategy. Theme 7, Partnership and Communication was addressed separately in the survey and details will be provided below.

The remaining five themes are:

1. Transport.
2. Planning, Land Use and Biodiversity.
3. Buildings and Heating (energy).
4. Resources including Food & Waste.
5. Business & Economy.

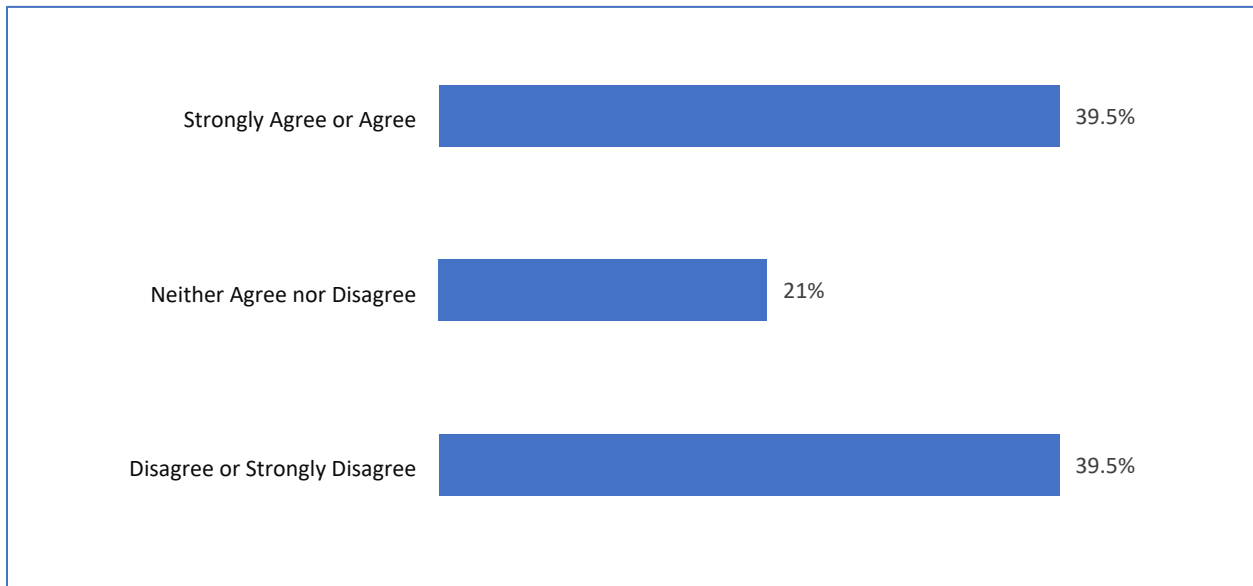
Questions 2 – 7 of the survey related to these five themes and whether the respondents agreed or disagreed that the draft Strategy would bring lasting opportunities and benefits to the Borough. In addition to asking respondents if they agreed or disagreed with the statements, a supplementary question asked for any additional comments about the themes or if there was anything else that should be included. Narrative responses can be found at the end of this section.

## Theme 1 - Transport

Respondents were asked to agree or disagree with the statement:

***The climate change strategy will bring opportunities and lasting benefits to the Borough, by: delivering low-carbon, affordable transport options; and decarbonising transport within our own operations and services.***

- 39.5% (51) agreed or strongly agreed.
- 21% (27) felt unable to agree or disagree.
- 39.5% (51) disagreed or strongly disagreed.

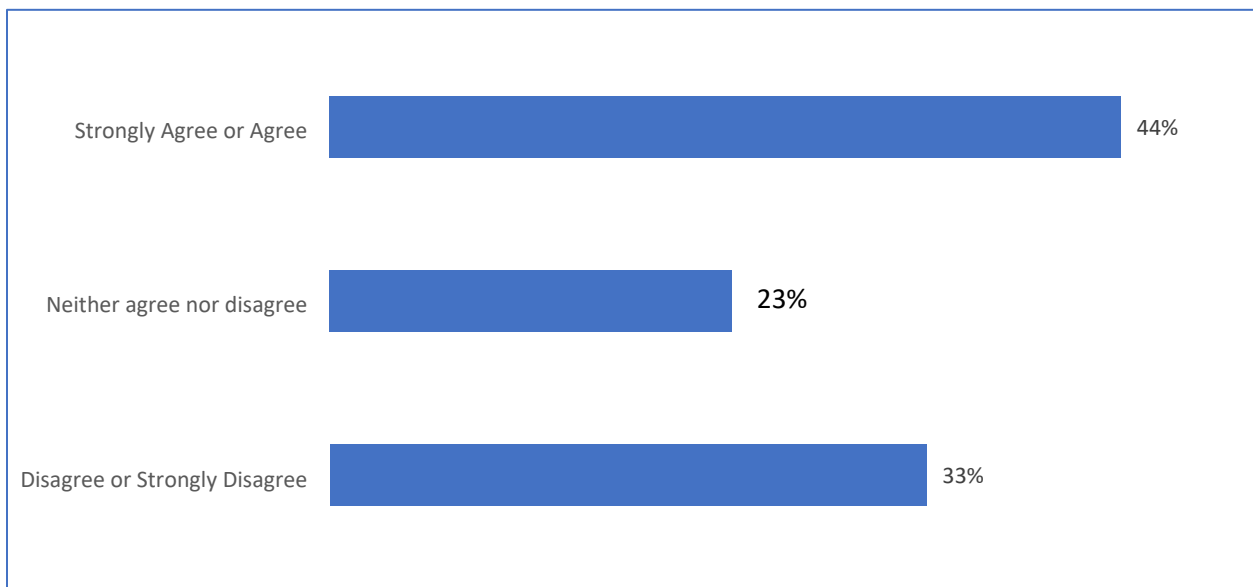


## Theme 2 – Planning, Land Use and Biodiversity

Respondents were asked to agree or disagree with the statement:

***The climate change strategy will bring opportunities and lasting benefits to the Borough by: conserving biodiversity and habitats in the Borough; encouraging a low carbon economy to support climate resilience; reducing air pollution in the Borough; reducing flood risk; and managing the impacts of extreme weather.***

- 44% (57) agreed or strongly agreed.
- 23% (29) felt unable to agree or disagree.
- 33% (43) disagreed or strongly disagreed.



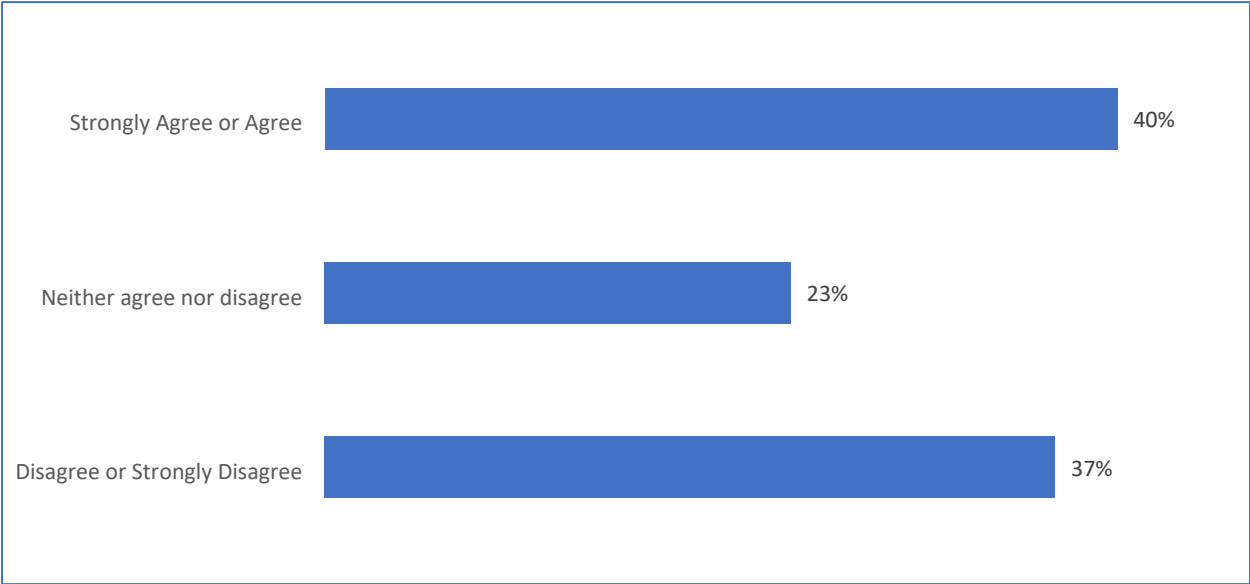


### Theme 3 – Buildings and Heating (Energy)

Respondents were asked to agree or disagree with the statement:

***The climate change strategy will bring opportunities and lasting benefits to the Borough by: reducing energy bills for me or my organisation; reducing energy bills for the Council; and encouraging the use of renewable energy in the transition to a low-carbon economy.***

- 40% (51 of those who responded to the question) agreed or strongly agreed.
- 23% (30) of those who responded to the question) felt unable to agree or disagree.
- 37% (47) of those who responded to the question) disagreed or strongly disagreed.
- One respondent did not answer this question.

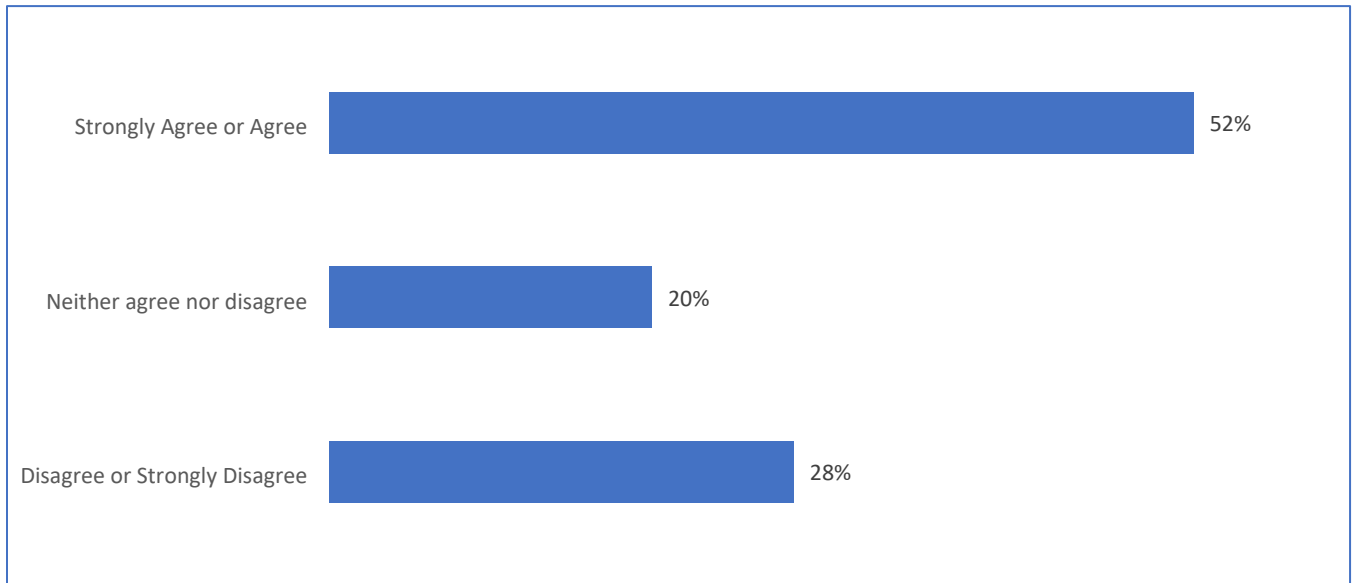


## Theme 4 – Resources, including Food and Waste

Respondents were asked to agree or disagree with the statement:

***The climate change strategy will bring opportunities and lasting benefits to the Borough by: Reducing waste, encouraging re-use and recycling and by moving towards a circular economy; and promoting allotments and community orchards along with locally produced food and goods.***

- 52% (67 of those who responded to the question) agreed or strongly agreed.
- 20% (25) of those who responded to the question) felt unable to agree or disagree.
- 28% (36) of those who responded to the question) disagreed or strongly disagreed.
- One respondent did not answer this question.



## Theme 5 – Business and Economy

Respondents were asked to agree or disagree with the statement:

***The climate change strategy will bring opportunities and lasting benefits to the Borough by: strengthening the competitiveness of businesses in the Borough; helping businesses to adopt sustainable practices; and attracting new jobs and investment in "green" industries to the Borough?***

- 37% (48) agreed or strongly agreed.
- 29% (37) felt unable to agree or disagree.
- 33% (43) disagreed or strongly disagreed.
- 1% (One respondent) did not answer this question.



## Other Points

Additional observations made by the respondents included:

1. The Council needs to focus on the links between environmental issues, recognising that biodiversity is also under threat.
2. We are generating too much waste, particularly from single-use plastics.
3. 21% of respondents (27) expressed the view that climate change is either not proven to be the result of human activity or is not happening. This may correlate with those respondents who responded to the first question by indicating that climate change did not concern them at all. Some of these respondents claimed to care for the environment. They were particularly concerned about over-consumption and waste. Some claimed that any proposed actions on their part

were “common sense” rather than being driven by any desire to follow an environmental agenda.

Other issues were raised around the specific strategic themes where respondents would like to see changes to Council policy.

**1. Transport**

The need for more charging points for electric vehicles; spend more on active travel; reduce the focus on cars and provision of car parking; increase the frequency and reliability of public transport; look at the use of e-cargo bikes.

**2. Planning, Land Use and Biodiversity**

Encourage tree planting, particularly in urban areas; work with farmers and other agencies; take action on second homes; reduce the amount of development on green field sites; and ensure developments take into account climate change.

**3. Buildings and Heating (Energy)**

Improve housing stock; make sure any new builds include energy saving/renewable resources; support small scale development of solar and wind energy to meet the needs of individual properties and communities.

**4. Resources, including food and waste**

We need to know the whole-life impact of recycling on the environment.

**5. Business and economy**

New business should be encouraged as we need to focus on the economy; and the Council should focus on things it can control before trying to influence businesses.

**6. General comments** included:

- a. There is not enough sense of urgency.
- b. Referring to climate change rather than “climate emergency” dilutes action.
- c. There is a need for specific targets.
- d. “Encouragement” is insufficient.
- e. The Council should use its profile to urge all to adopt climate-friendly policies and practices.
- f. This strategy should be accompanied by new money rather than cutbacks elsewhere.

# Leadership

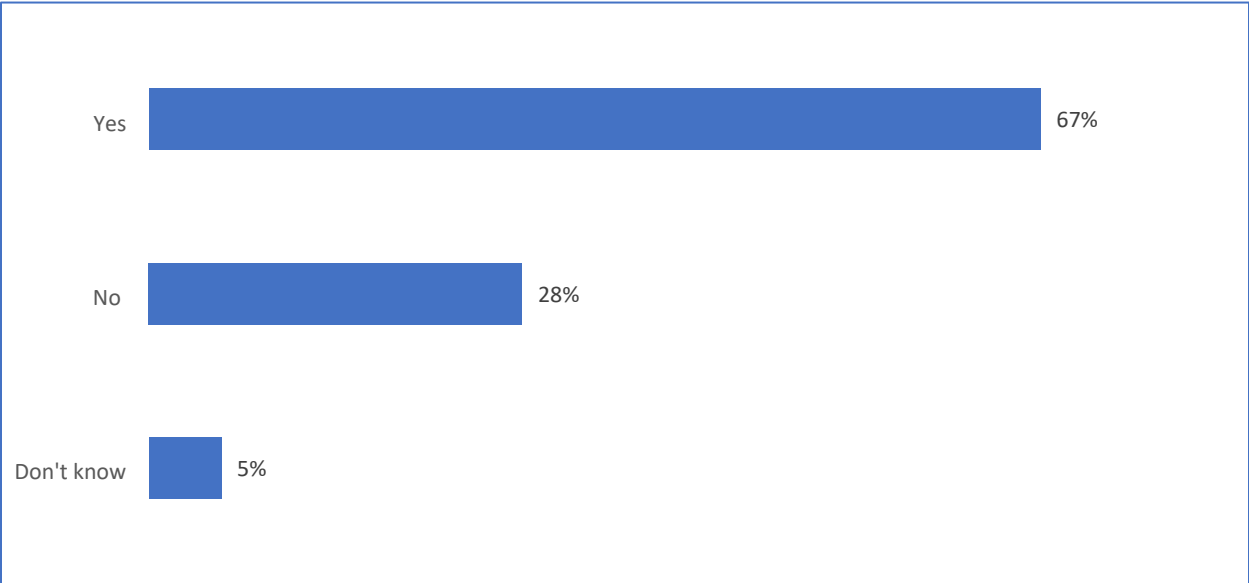
The Council has, since completing the Nottingham Declaration in 2005, aimed to adopt a leadership role in relation to climate change and has actively developed policies to address this issue over the past 18 years. To gauge awareness of this role, the consultation asked for feedback on the degree of climate leadership we have exhibited.

Respondents were asked:

***Should the Council be providing leadership in the context of climate change?***

Responses were as follows:

- Yes 67% (86)
- No 28% (36)
- Don't know 5% (7)



There is, therefore, support for us to maintain our leadership position and be confident in the action we are taking.

Respondents were then asked:

***Is there anything more you think the Council can do to provide leadership in the context of climate change?***

Responses fell into several categories:

- Participants who do not accept that climate change is an issue and who would prefer the Council to focus on other issues.
- Those who take the opposite view and do not think the Council is going far enough or quickly enough to mitigate against and adapt to the changes likely to arise from a changing climate. It was suggested that we appoint a climate control manager to take forward our climate change agenda.
- Respondents who equated leadership with transparency and involving residents more in decision-making.
- Those who want the Council to take a more visible leadership role, promoting a clearer environmental agenda and helping residents to identify what they can do to become more sustainable. This would include the provision of affordable carbon literacy courses.
- A group of respondents want the Council to lead by example. This would include:
  - Installing many more EV charging points.
  - Extinguishing lights in the Town Hall and Council offices overnight.
  - Promote food recycling.
  - Adopt policies that are less focused on the private car.
- Several respondents suggested that we set up a “one stop” portal where residents and businesses can get access to relevant and up to date information about energy efficiency and financial support for the measures.

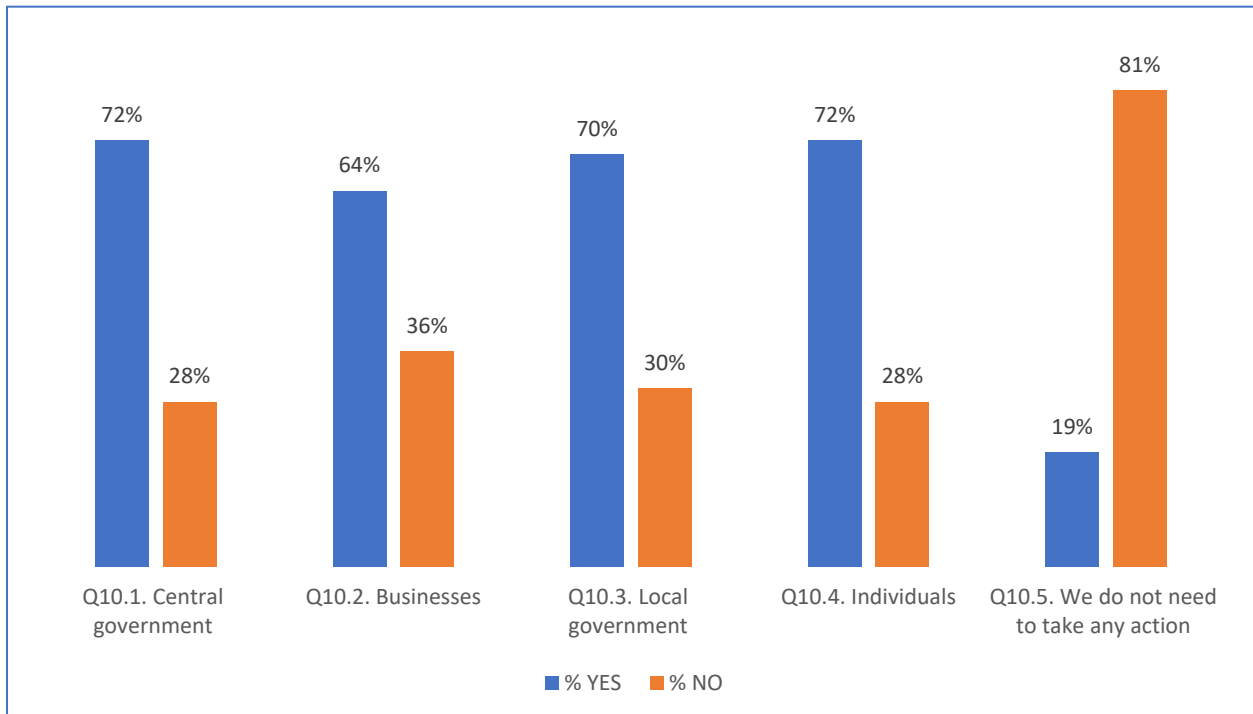
The full set of responses is held by the Council.

Related to the Council's leadership on this issue, respondents were asked:

**Who should take responsibility for acting to mitigate or adapt to climate change?**

This question required multiple answers. Responses were as follows:

	Central government	Businesses	Local government	Individuals	We do not need to take any action
<b>YES</b>	72% (93)	64% (82)	70% (90)	72% (93)	19% (25)
<b>NO</b>	28% (36)	36% (47)	30% (39)	28% (36)	81% (104)
<b>TOTAL</b>	129	129	129	129	129



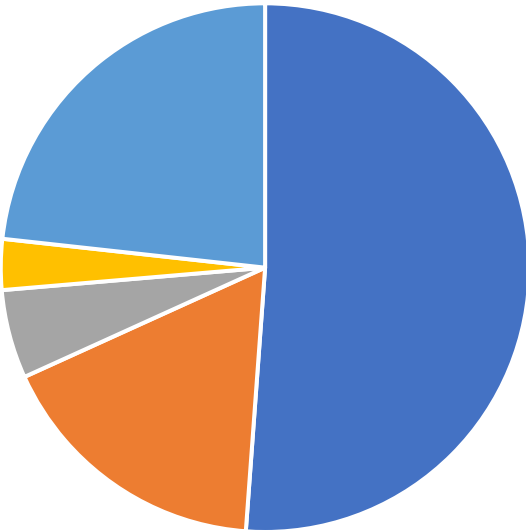
In line with previous responses, there was a minority who do not accept climate change as an issue, suggesting that action is unnecessary. Most respondents believe that individuals, alongside central government should take responsibility for acting to mitigate or adapt to climate change.

# Collaboration

The Council can have direct impact where a policy of collaboration with other bodies is adopted. Respondents were asked about the importance of this collaboration with neighbouring councils, Leicestershire County Council in particular, the Borough’s educational institutions, local businesses and community groups.

The results from this set of questions are as follows:

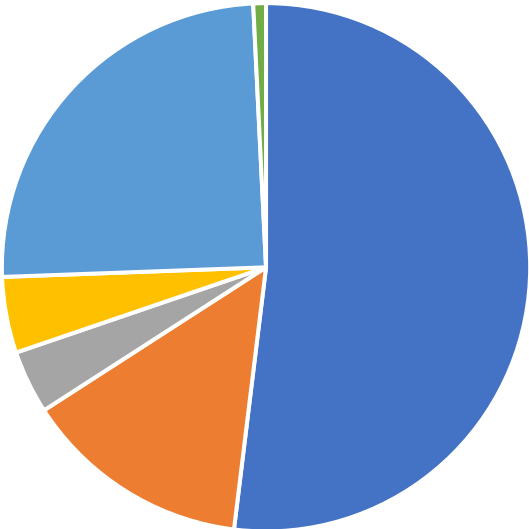
***Charnwood Borough collaborates with neighbouring Councils on joint strategies to mitigate the effects of climate change and to influence a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. Given the potential consequences of climate change, how important is this collaboration?***



	Very Important	Important	Neither Important nor Unimportant	Not Important	A distraction from more important issues	Don't Know
Percentage	51%	17%	5%	3%	23%	0%
Number	66	22	7	4	30	0
Key						

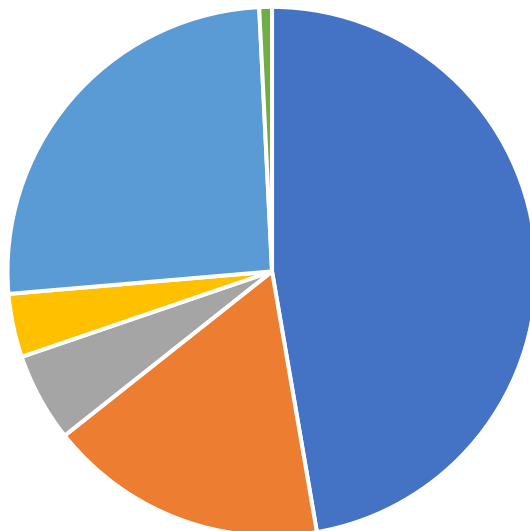


**Collaboration with Leicestershire County Council enables Charnwood Borough Council to influence county-wide action on climate change. Given the potential consequences of climate change, how important is this collaboration?**



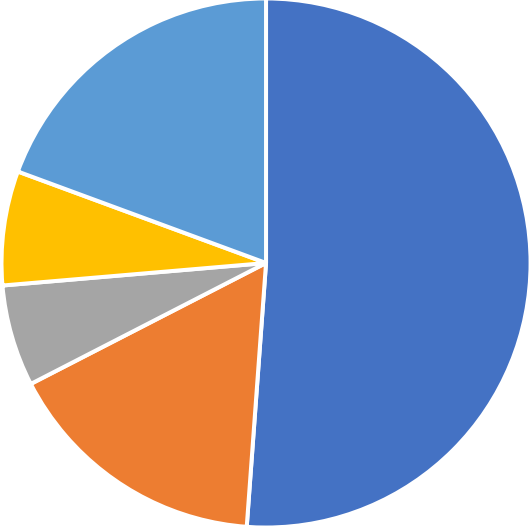
	Very Important	Important	Neither Important nor Unimportant	Not Important	A distraction from more important issues	Don't Know
Percentage	52%	14%	4%	5%	25%	1%
Number	67	18	5	6	32	1
Key						

**Charnwood Borough Council has formed partnerships with educational institutions which may allow us to convey our climate change strategy and influence projects that have a positive impact on the community, while mitigating and adapting to climate change. How important are these partnerships?**



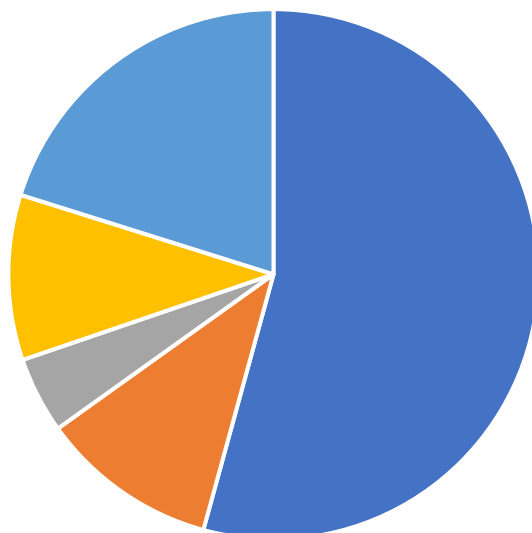
	Very Important	Important	Neither Important nor Unimportant	Not Important	A distraction from more important issues	Don't Know
Percentage	47%	17%	5%	4%	26%	1%
Number	61	22	7	5	33	1
Key						

**How important is it that Charnwood Borough Council engages with local businesses to influence them to mitigate and adapt to climate change?**



	Very Important	Important	Neither Important nor Unimportant	Not Important	A distraction from more important issues	Don't Know
Percentage	51%	16%	6%	7%	19%	0%
Number	66	21	8	9	25	0
Key						

**How important is it that Charnwood Borough Council engages with local communities and community groups to influence them to mitigate and adapt to climate change?**



	Very Important	Important	Neither Important nor Unimportant	Not Important	A distraction from more important issues	Don't Know
Percentage	54%	11%	5%	10%	20%	0%
Number	70	14	6	13	26	0
Key						

In addition, respondents were asked if there were any other local bodies or community groups we should be working with. Thirty-three respondents thought there were other bodies that had been omitted from the strategy, some highlighting multiple organisations. Some of the organisations identified were not local and others were already included in the draft Strategy and Action Plan, but a full list is provided at Appendix C. Engagement with local communities and community groups was important to most respondents with 65% (84) indicating that this was important or very important.

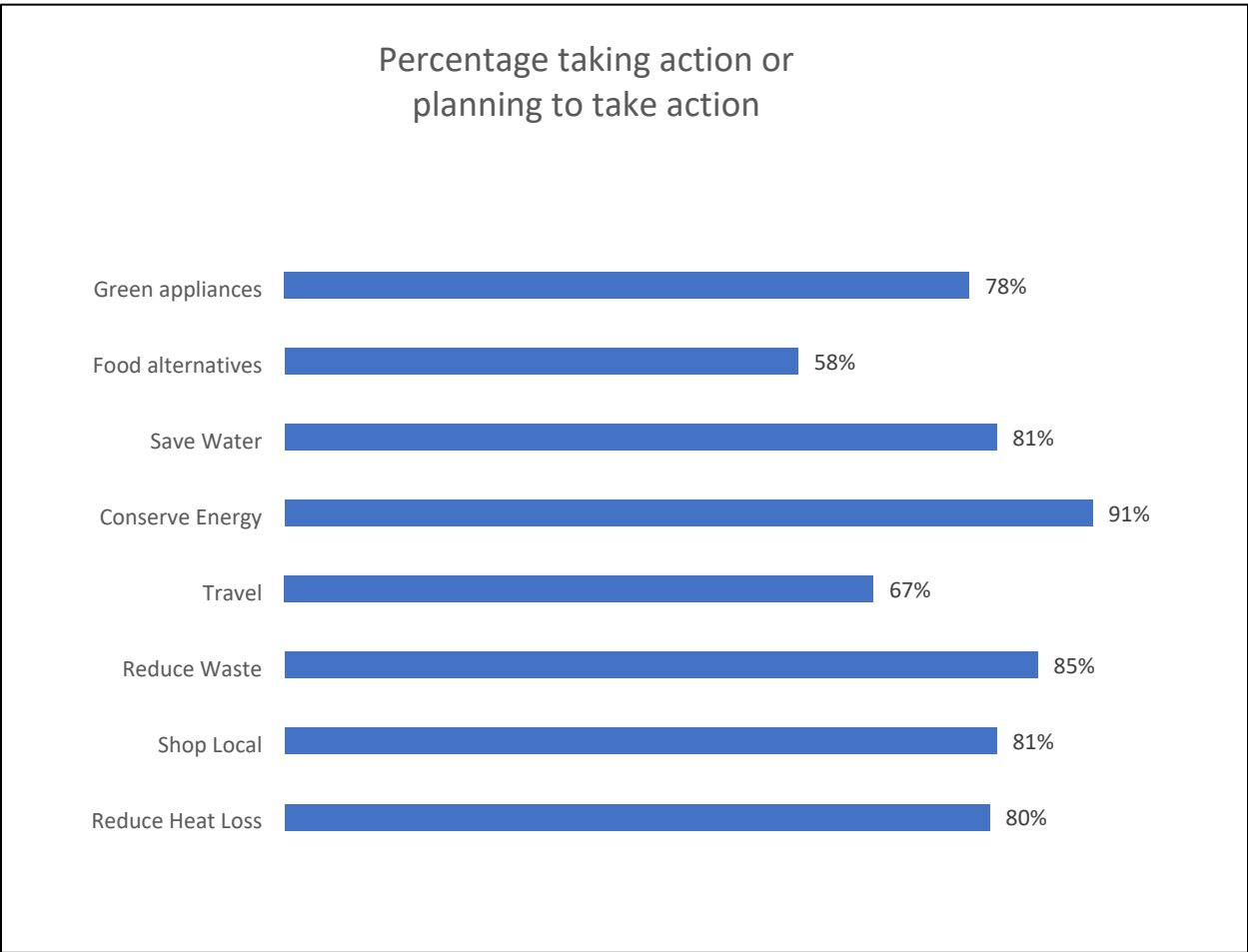
It is clear from the responses to this set of questions that Charnwood Borough Council's role as influencer and collaborator is important. Collaboration with other local Councils and the upper tier of local government was considered important, along with the need to remain engaged with businesses. Links with educational institutions appeared to be marginally less important to respondents. This may be explained by the age range of those responding.

# Individual Action

The companion document to the draft Climate Change Strategy is the Climate Change Action Plan. This document sets out a series of actions that we would like to encourage residents to take. These actions will contribute to the reduction in emissions of greenhouse gases. The consultation asked a series of questions about these actions and the extent to which respondents either:

- are doing something to mitigate their emissions; or
- might be inclined to do so in the future.

The responses are summarised below.



## Observations

### “Green” Appliances

Despite the lack of precision in the use of the word “green”, most people understand this to mean an energy efficient appliance. The use of energy ratings on domestic appliances over recent years means that most consumers will be aware of the benefits of purchasing appliances rated as far up the energy efficiency scale as practicable.

Generally, to replace a working electrical appliance with a more energy efficient model may not be the most environmentally responsible option. However, appliances do break down and need replacing and 78% of respondents would choose the “green” option when this occurs.

### Food alternatives:

There has been publicity around food choices recently, particularly around the contribution of meat to emissions of greenhouse gases. However, food choices are personal and closely linked to our cultural identities, so changes may take time and effort to embed. Against this background, it is encouraging to see that 58% of the respondents are either acting now or will do so during this year.

### Saving Water:

Water in the United Kingdom is generally considered to be an abundant resource and, in comparison to other utilities, relatively cheap. Few people realise that significant amounts of energy are expended by the water companies in treating our drinking water supply and that conserving water can also help to reduce overall energy use.

### Conserving Energy:

The 90% of respondents planning or taking action to conserve energy may be affected by the high cost of energy. This is particularly due to the timing of this survey, as much as concerns about climate change. However, reduction of energy use may be helpful in mitigating the effects of climate change and, perhaps, reducing overall energy demand.

### Travel:

The responses to this question did not allow those participating to provide multiple answers so it is possible that those opting for more active travel are using multiple modes. The question was asked at a time when prices of petrol and diesel had stabilised, following significant increases in the price per litre of fuel. In these circumstances, it is possible the move towards more active travel is the result of cost pressures rather than anything to do with climate change. However, there appear to be opportunities to persuade residents to make greater use of public transport and active travel - if the infrastructure is available and responds to individual needs.

### Waste:

The responses to this question suggest that some of the residents who appear to reject the idea of climate change are taking action to reduce the amount of waste they send to landfill. The percentage who are acting or intend to do so is 85%. According to the WRAP Recycling Tracker Report 2021, 88% of UK households consider recycling to be an established norm.

## Other Suggestions

Respondents were asked if there were any other actions to mitigate or adapt to the effects of climate change that they would recommend to others.

- 57% (74) offered ideas.
- 1% (2) said they had no advice to offer.
- 42% (53) chose not to respond.

Notable ideas include:

- Offer carbon literacy courses and encourage better education about climate change for all ages.
- Cultivate more plants that provide shade, including trees.
- Avoid using herbicides and pesticides in gardens.
- Encourage composting.
- Harvest rainwater.
- Share tools and appliances.
- Repair broken items rather than replacing them, perhaps using Council supported repair shops.
- Avoid throwing things away – donate to charities.
- Car sharing.
- Avoid air travel.
- Volunteer with a wildlife charity.
- Comment on unsustainable planning applications.
- Wash cars fewer times and avoid commercial car washing facilities.



- Actively work to reduce the prevalence of single-use plastics across the Borough, starting with the Council themselves.

At least one respondent made the point that their reasons for acting in this way is due to economic pressures rather than because they offer a greener alternative.

Again, the full set of responses is held by the Council.

# Loughborough College Focus Groups

## Introduction

Younger people have a key role to play in determining the action taken in relation to climate change. However, at the start of the consultation process, it was identified that this group was unlikely to respond to conventional online consultation. This proved to be the case, with there being no respondent to the online consultation under the age of 24. A focus group involving younger people was proposed as a method of eliciting their views about climate change.

An approach to Loughborough College led to agreement for the Council to run a focus group for a small number of students. Ten students were invited to each of two focus groups which took place at the college on Wednesday 1st March 2023. The first session was attended by 8 students and the second by 10.

Each focus group followed the same format with an interactive presentation using audience polling to gather the participants' responses. While recognising that a face-to-face, interactive session would lead to a wider ranging discussion, it was thought important to try to correlate the questions as closely as possible to those asked in the online consultation.

## Consolidated Report from Audience Polling

Two focus groups were held at Loughborough College and an audience polling application was used to gather feedback during both sessions. This part of the report that has been compiled by consolidating the output from the polls and linking it with other comments and observations from the participants during the sessions.

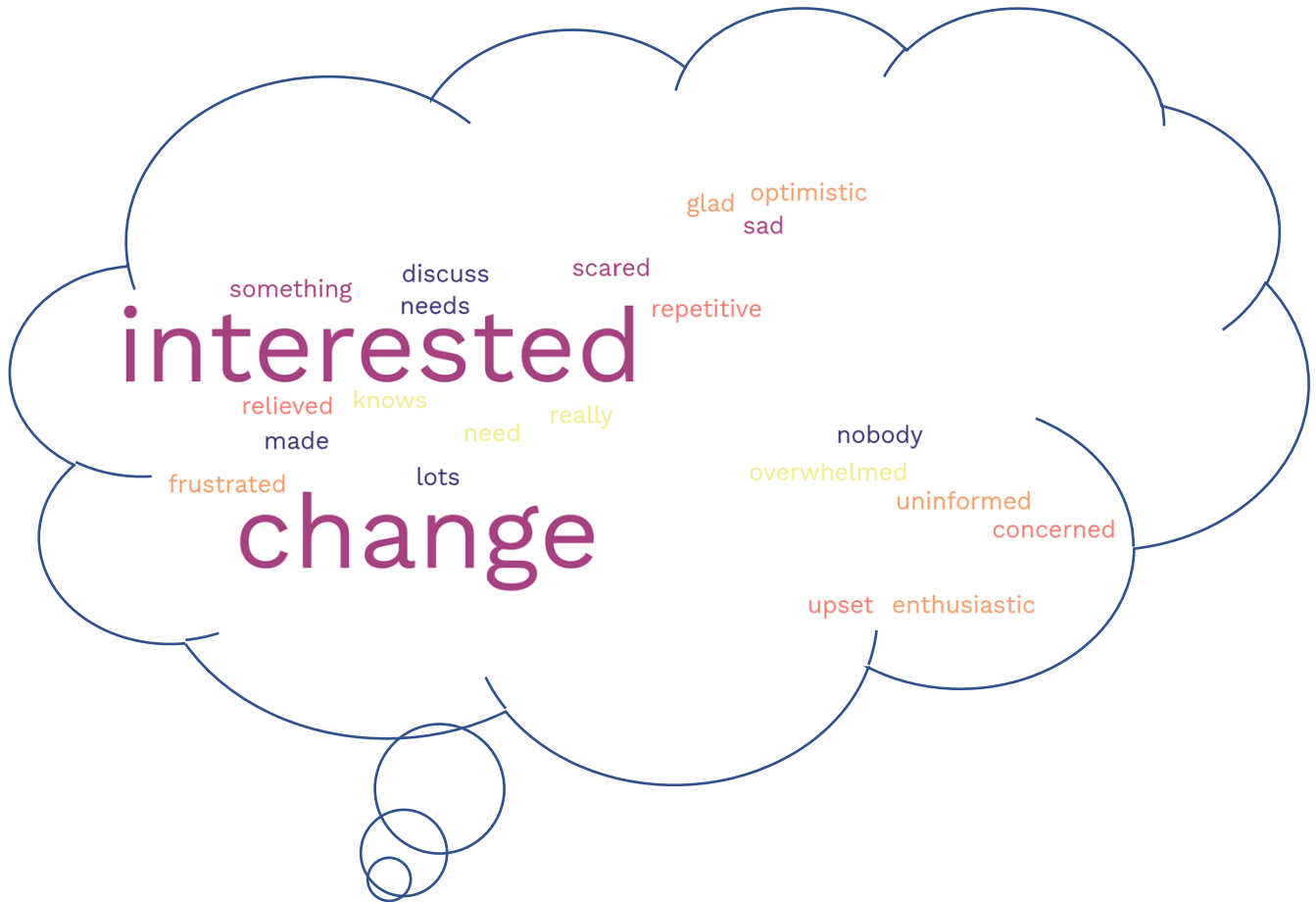
It should be noted that each student participating in the Focus Groups received a £30 local shopping voucher for their time and engagement.

Prior to the Focus Groups, participants had been provided with electronic versions of the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan. A limited number of paper copies were provided during the sessions.

After a brief introduction to the purpose of the sessions and to the polling application, participants were asked:

***How do you feel when you hear people talking about climate change?***

Those attending were asked to provide single word responses, but they could do this multiple times. In the word cloud below, the size of the word is related to the number of times it was used in the responses.



It was good to note that the group remains interested in this important topic and that they want change to happen.

The groups then watched a short video to introduce climate change and some of its causes and consequences.

Following this, the participants were introduced to Charnwood Borough, the Draft Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan and the purpose of the focus group.

Following this scene setting, participants were asked:

***What do you think of Charnwood Borough as a place?***

Free-text responses to this question were invited and the unedited responses are set out below:

- A place that has a lot of responsibilities.  
I don't consider it as a great place however people there are doing there best to make charnwood borough better
- Charnwood covers a bigger area than I first thought but is small compared to other areas in the city
- I think that it is well looked after in some areas and has a lot of greenery as in trees and parks.
- Misaligned values in some areas
- Not where it should be. Should have more to offer than it does, and be a more appealing place to live.
- Small
- Impressive in terms of opportunity & access to experience
- Lack of resources into this police force
- Rural
- Vast area
- Varied in terms of working class but quaint and aesthetically pleasing in most places
- I feel it has allowed me to create a satisfactory lifestyle.
- Environmental friendly
- Open and clean environment
- It is quite a nice place but you see quite a bit of rubbish on the roads witch makes it look less messy.
- It's quite a diverse place with many different aspects of society within a relatively small area
- I think Charnwood Borough has a good amount of places or things to do, is kept fairly clean, however it seems to be going downhill.
- Full of green areas with lots of national areas

The discussion then moved onto climate change, with the question:

***Does climate change affect you in your daily life? If so, how?***

Free-text responses were again invited and the (unedited) responses are set out below:

- I feel like climate change has affected how long we have hot days in summer which leads people to want to travel out of the UK to get sun which is worse for the planet.
- Yes, it affects my feelings towards my family back in Syria as well as Turkey. As earthquake is a reason for climate change.
- Yes as I suffer from asthma and I can have and Daly's with that when the airs not clean
- Personally, I'm unsure & openly admit that is due to my lack of knowledge. Potentially where house prices are concerned and the cost of living as a whole.
- it doesn't affect my daily life but long term it will start to as the small changes now will cause larger changes
- Not as much as it probably should do. It doesn't stop holidays abroad, or travelling around the UK etc.
- It changed my travel style . Although public transport still affects the environment but less as I decide I won't drive and will use trains for my transport
- Server flooding has become more regular
- I think it makes me second guess my actions such as walking instead of driving. i have mixed feelings due to it needing certain sacrifices.
- Not really
- In my opinion climate change does not effect my daily life in a negative sense however it does effect my life for example my carbon footprint is a thing to worry about more then ever and will be even more so in the future
- Not really, you can manage with all climate changes unless it's severe
- Makes the summer a lot more hot and means that a lot of the things we buy especially energy more expensive
- Yes it does. The weather has changed a lot. Creating really hot days.
- Yes, because it causes ranges of temperatures, which could make winters expensive or make it hard to grow crops resulting in varied prices.
- Eating habits such as choosing more healthy and sustainable food
- To some degree, hotter summers make living on a boat nearly unbearable whilst rubbish polluting the water ways is very visible.

Using a series of images from Charnwood and beyond, participants then looked in more depth at the potential consequences of climate change for the Borough. They were

asked some direct questions and discussion was encouraged. Most of those in the session had contributions to the discussion, with their own observations and some questions about the causes and consequences of climate change. Transport and public transport in particular were issues for the participants with convenience of personal transport (cars) being contrasted with the inconvenience of public transport.

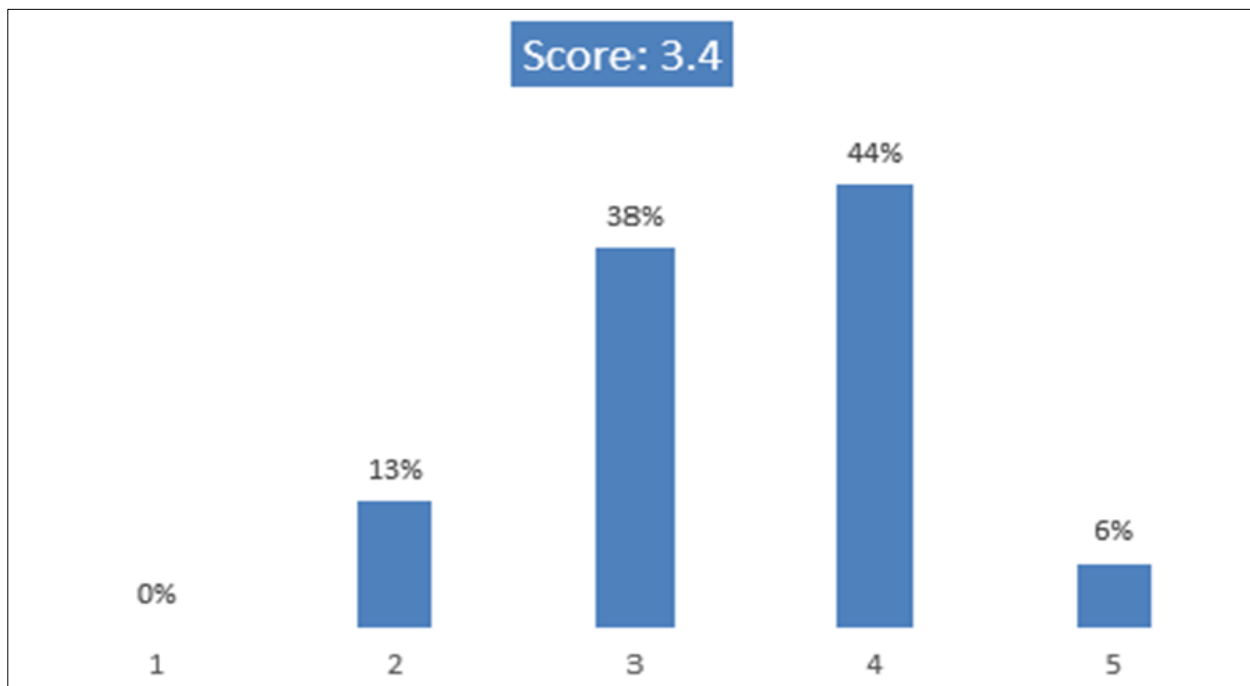
This was followed up with the next poll question:

***As you become more aware of climate change and its impacts, how likely are you to take action?***

This was a rating question using a score of 1 – 5 where:

- score of 1 = unlikely to act
- score of 5 = going to do something as soon as you leave the room

The outcome is displayed below:



A discussion took place about the actions that we, as individuals, can take to avoid some of the worst consequences of climate change, based on what the participants have learned about them. At least one of those participating had taken part in direct action, and several were aware of the climate activist Greta Thunberg and her contribution to the debate.

Using the road map graphic from the Draft Climate Change Strategy, the participants were introduced to the Council’s response to climate change, starting in 2005 when the Council signed the Nottingham Declaration and published their first climate change strategy.

The groups were asked:

***What do you think about Charnwood BC’s response to climate change up to now?***



This question generated a second word cloud. The prominence of “progressive” and “positive” are important outcomes when the age of the participants is considered.



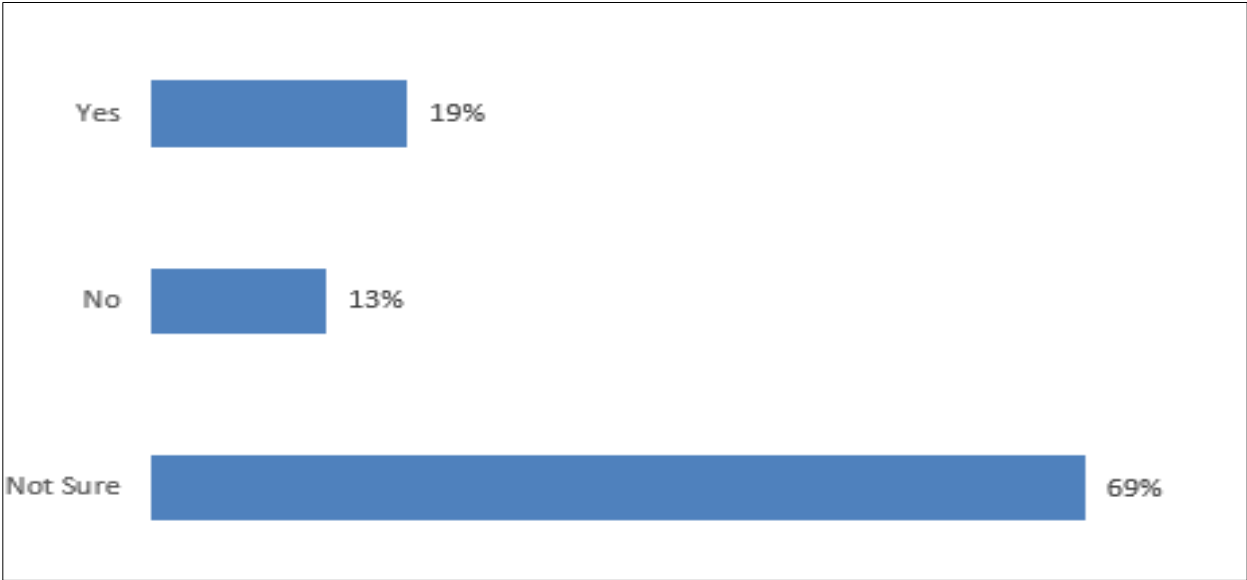
To correlate with the questions asked in the online consultation, participants were then introduced to the seven strategic themes outlined in the Council’s Draft Climate Change Strategy. After some discussion, the participants were asked:

***Do you think the themed actions proposed by Charnwood BC will enable them to be carbon neutral by 2030?***

The options given in the poll were:

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

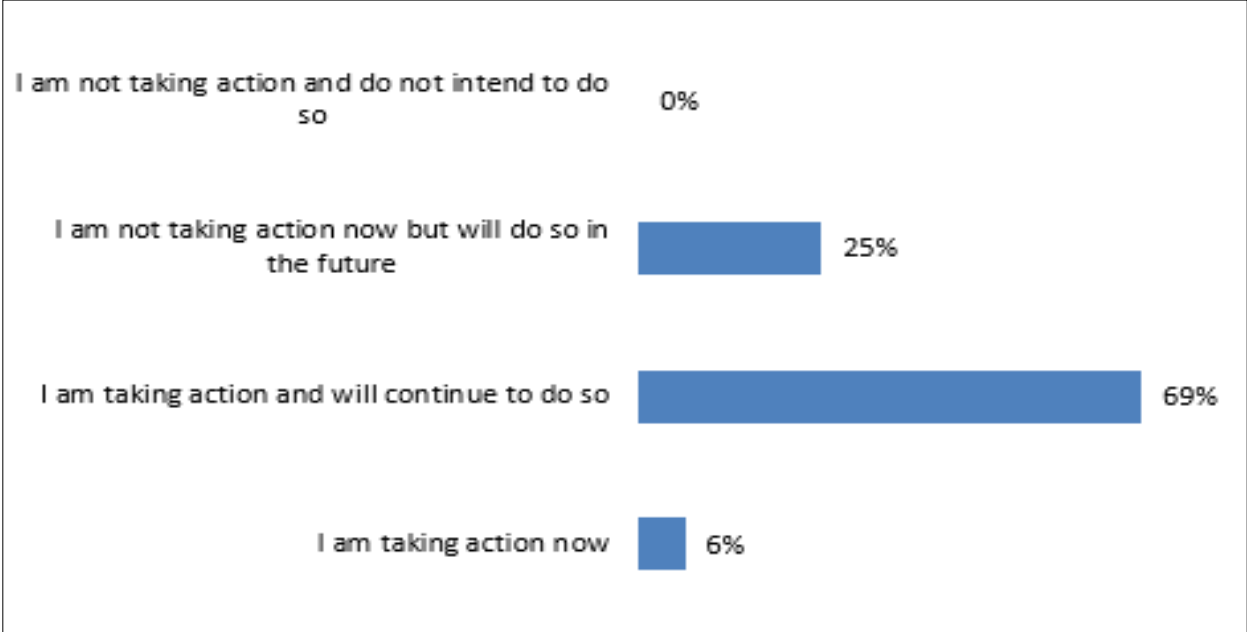
Despite the brevity of the introduction to the themes, it was, perhaps, encouraging that 19% thought that the Council’s plans will enable them to become carbon neutral but probably expected that the majority were unsure.



The Draft Climate Change Action Plan includes a series of recommended actions for individuals. Again, to align the responses with the online consultation, participants were asked about their intentions, with the following question:

***Will you act on any of these suggestions?***

The potential responses are listed below and the percentages of the participants responding are highlighted.

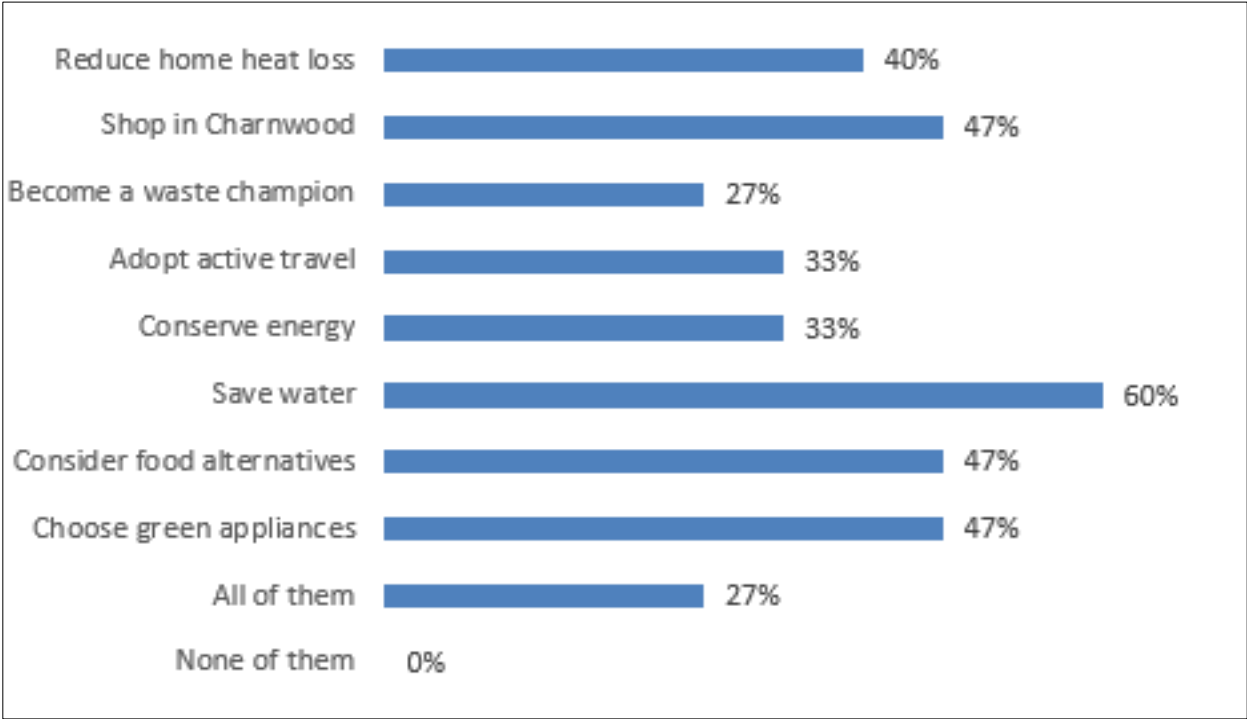


It was good to note that all of those taking part intended to take action, with the majority taking action and pledging to continue to do so.

To understand more about their intentions, they were then asked:

***Which of these actions do you intend to take?***

Participants were given the opportunity to provide multiple answers to this question and there were options to indicate that they were acting in all these areas or none of them. 27% indicated that they were taking action in all these areas and, encouragingly, all the participants claimed to be taking action in at least one area.



Approaching the end of the session, the following question was asked:

***Based on what you have heard today, is there any other action you think Charnwood BC could take to minimise the impact of climate change?***

This was to ascertain if participants in the age group had any ideas on other action the Council may be able to take. Free-text responses were invited and the (unedited) responses are set out below:

- The new houses being built they could have solar panels on them i under they the land gets sold but when planning permission gets up in they could say that all or at least 50% of the house have to have solar panels on them.
- Informing the public of what they could do to encourage and inspire people to become more climate friendly.
- Recycle more. Lots of stuff is recyclable but only at specific places.
- Listen to the voices of the public more reaching out as you have today is crucial to engage the public , especially with the younger generation as they will be most affected.
- They could tell the public the negatives of the future if not impacted on
- Recycling - Don't use red boxes as due to wind it spread all the litter and ends up littering all around.
- Tell more people there is an option to leave packaging at stores
- Hear out different opinions of the public on what they suggest about the impact of the climate change
- I think they could introduce waste bins for used disposable vapes and other e cigarettes to reduce the amount of lithium batteries going to landfill or the streets or other means .
- Cleaner waterways
- Support second hand businesses (vintage + charity shops)
- Recycling options can be increased due to what seems to be limited variety
- stricter implementation
- Community gardens to provide local produce
- Vape recycling

The participants were then advised the next steps following the completion of these focus groups and the online consultation and were left with the following final words:

- Charnwood Borough Council is passionate about a sustainable future.
- Our website contains the Council's Climate Change Strategy and lots more!
- Join the conversation using twitter or Facebook (or one of the other social medial platforms we use).
- DO SOMETHING!

In summary, notable points from the focus groups are:

1. Participants did not express anxiety or concern about climate change, instead using words such as “interested” and “change”.
2. Climate change does not affect their daily life to any measurable extent although some thought it should influence them more than it does.
3. All of those participating intend to take action as they become more aware of climate change.
4. When asked about Charnwood BC’s response to climate change up to now, they used words such as “progressive” and “positive” but most of them were unsure if the Council’s actions would enable them to become carbon neutral by 2030.
5. When presented with options for taking individual action to mitigate their emissions of greenhouse gases, more than two thirds of those participating indicated that they are already taking action and will continue to do so.

# Summary and Conclusion

The findings of the consultation are based on 129 responses to the survey and the participation of 18 students from Loughborough College in the focus groups. In addition, five organisations and one individual submitted detailed and in-depth responses to the survey.

The consultation process demonstrated that the residents of the Borough broadly support action taken by the Council to reduce the impact of climate change and to adapt to the consequences. However, stakeholders appear to have incomplete knowledge of the Council's responsibilities and our ability to take decisive action in some of the areas highlighted. Overall, the consultation can be considered a worthwhile exercise and the Loughborough College focus groups provided valuable additional information from a younger cohort.

Action to mitigate against climate change or to adapt to its consequences will always be seen by a minority as a waste of money, time and effort. There are, however, opportunities to engage this group in action to safeguard and enhance the environment such as reduction in waste and litter, conserving energy and saving water. Whilst not directly linked to climate change, actions in these areas can contribute to reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and has an indirect effect on the climate.

The consultation has offered additional opportunities to engage with the community and shown that the community is, broadly, open to working alongside the Council for the benefit of Charnwood and its surroundings. Many of the respondents provided contact information to facilitate continued engagement with the Council.

Feedback from the focus groups suggested that working with young people may have wider benefits. There is a gap in obtaining feedback from younger people and there is an opportunity for the Council to continue to work with Loughborough College students in relation to climate change and other, related areas.

It was clear that those who responded to the survey were concerned about climate change, in line with levels of concern found in national surveys. Many of those commenting held strong views about the challenges we face, and some used emotive language to express their views. Several pointed out that we face issues in relation to both the climate and the wider environment and that the two need to be considered together. The good news is that actions such as tree planting can have a beneficial effect on the climate whilst also enhancing and promoting biodiversity, improving air quality generally and providing a more congenial environment for leisure and recreation (providing the newly planted areas are accessible by the public).

A small number of respondents were not concerned about climate change, suggesting that it was natural. Others were sceptical about humanity's contribution to the changes. These respondents did, however, often show concern for the environment and highlight

issues of over-consumption and waste management. There is, therefore, an opportunity to engage with people expressing these views if the conversation is broadened beyond the confines of action to deal with climate change. As identified above, due to the linked nature of the issues, any action to reduce the harm we are doing to the environment generally will have multiple benefits.

Individuals are clearly taking action to deal with climate change. A significant percentage of the respondents indicated that they are already taking multiple actions to mitigate against the effects or that they intended to do so during 2023. There was concern about the financial cost to individuals of making some of the necessary changes. The affordability of electric vehicles, installing solar panels or other forms of renewable energy and the cost of home insulation and similar measures were highlighted. Financial support would be beneficial but there is also a need for clear and impartial information on the best course of action for households.

Some important outcomes for the Council relate to its local leadership role. Respondents were generally supportive of the Council's actions to date. Suggestions about what people want to see from the Council going forward included:

- Embed the issue of climate change within the Council's decision-making process. All decisions must consider the impact on the climate.
- Any decision that contradicts climate change policy should be fully explained and justified to residents.
- Put the environment first in planning decisions. Make sure that new developments maximise the use of solar panels, avoid fossil fuel heating systems, make space for nature and that policies are much less car-centric.
- Lead by example.
- Take action to reduce your own emissions and impact.
- Provide honest and impartial information to residents.
- Continue measures to reduce waste and increase recycling and to protect and enhance the natural environment.

# Considerations

Ideas and suggestions were made about what the Council need to do, from both the survey responses and the focus groups. This part of the report brings these suggestions together, sorted, wherever possible in accordance with five of the seven Strategic Themes from the Draft Climate Change Strategy:

1. Transport.
2. Planning, Land Use and Biodiversity.
3. Buildings and Heating (energy).
4. Resources including Food & Waste.
5. Business & Economy.

Theme 6, Governance and Finance is an internal facing theme and it was not considered appropriate to seek public views on this part of the Strategy. Theme 7, Partnership and Communication was addressed separately.

All these considerations have been suggested by at least one person, some several times. Here, they are presented without weighting. Considerations have been derived from where a consensus of opinion was evident. Some ideas may not be within our direct control, and some were issues where other organisations are primarily responsible. Where ideas are not within our direct control, or relate to action we are already taking, improved communication may be required to make sure that residents understand the situation.

## Theme 1 – Transport

1. Where it is within the remit of the Council, work to reduce the focus of transport policy on infrastructure and facilities that increase the use of private cars. This could mean:
  - a. Repurposing car parks.
  - b. Restricting traffic in certain areas of the Borough's towns and villages.
  - c. Increasing the number of pedestrian-only areas of towns.
  - d. Increasing the frequency and reliability of public transport.

Where such action is outside the Council's remit seek to influence others to take similar action.

2. Set up a Borough-wide car-sharing scheme and encourage its use by individuals and businesses. Car sharing is a relatively quick and easy way to reduce the number of individual car journeys taken. This can reduce costs for travellers, reduce vehicle emissions and reduce congestion. This could be a quick win that shows the Council is responding to calls to become less car-centric in transport policy.



## Theme 2 – Planning, Land Use and Biodiversity

1. Continue to reinforce the connection between climate change and the other environmental issues we currently face, with specific attention to loss of biodiversity, over-use of resources and reducing waste. This may encourage more residents to support the Council's action.
2. Encourage developers to use brownfield sites and discourage them from seeking permission to develop additional green field sites when new housing and other developments are proposed. It is also important that we are seen to encourage developers to acknowledge the problem of climate change and to take action to mitigate and adapt to the effects when putting forward development plans.
3. Keep a watching brief on action taken by other local authorities on the issue of the growth in the number of second homes; and adopt appropriate policy in due course.
4. Improve the information we provide to residents, explaining more effectively about decisions made. This is particularly the case in relation to planning and the criteria that have been considered in reaching a decision.
5. Engage in more tree planting, particularly in urban areas, and influence others to take similar action.

## Theme 3 – Buildings and Heating (Energy)

1. Set up a website or physical location that allows residents to obtain comprehensive, up to date information, advice, and support about energy efficiency measures for their homes and how to gain access to funding available to them.

## Theme 4 – Resources, including Food and Waste

1. Provide facilities and support for local groups who wish to set up Repair Cafes, Tool Libraries or "Libraries of Things".
2. Work to reduce the amount of single-use plastic used by the Council and employees. This should be publicised across the Borough, to encourage both individuals and businesses to follow our lead.

## Theme 5 – Business & Economy

1. The Council should maintain our position and work with those individuals, groups and businesses who share our vision.

## Leadership

1. Be confident that action to deal with climate change is broadly supported by our residents.
2. Demonstrate that climate change is at the forefront of our decision making. This should include explanations about how climate change has affected any decision made, particularly any that appears to be at odds with the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan.
3. Explain to our residents about the responsibilities of the Council and how these relate to other tiers of local government.
4. Review the consultation responses and, considering the availability of resources, where appropriate and practicable adjust the Draft Climate Strategy and Action Plan accordingly.

## Collaboration

1. Be seen to engage with relevant additional local and national bodies, collaborating with them to tackle climate change.
2. Follow-up on Loughborough College's desire to develop the successful collaboration which was begun with the climate change focus groups.

## Next Steps

We will consider the availability of resources and, where practicable and appropriate, adjust the Draft Climate Strategy and Action plan in accordance with these considerations.

# Appendix A:

## Organisations who responded separately

Direct Responses were received from:

**National Forest Company**

**Climate Action Leicester and Leicestershire**

**Charnwood Labour Group**

**Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Integrated Care Board**

**Environment Agency**

# Appendix B:

## Individuals who responded separately

A direct Response was received from a visiting Fellow at Loughborough University's Engineering Systems of Systems Research Group.

# Appendix C

## Additional Collaborations

The following additional Organisations were identified by respondents as not being documented in the partnership area of the Strategy:

- British Horse Society.
- Campaign for Better Transport.
- Campaign for Rural England.
- Charnwood Forest Regional Park Board.
- Climate Action Leicester and Leicestershire.
- Cycling UK. and other active travel advocates
- Faith groups such as Loughborough Churches Partnership.
- Forestry England.
- Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Integrated Care Board (NHS)
- Leicestershire and Rutland Association of Rural Councils.
- Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust
- Loughborough Air Quality Protection Group.
- Midlands Net Zero Hub.
- Mother and toddler groups.
- National Farmers Union.
- Parish Council Tree and Environmental Wardens networks.
- The National Trust.
- The Prince's Trust.
- Transition Loughborough.
- Watermead Day Nursery.

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