

# Runnymede Borough Council

## Summer of Engagement Report & Summary of Findings

October 2023



## 1. Executive Summary and Key Recommendations

The RBC 'Summer of Engagement on Climate Change' has sought the views of individuals and groups across the borough to inform the Council's Climate Change Action Plan. This report details the key findings of this engagement, which can be summarised in the following concluding points drawn from the data:

- Approximately **a third** of respondents in all surveys are **worried** about climate change and its potential impacts, however a larger proportion indicate a **strong collective sense of responsibility** to act. Whereas young people were largely unaware of RBC actions on climate change to date, most business respondents were supportive of the Council's net zero targets.
- There are a wide range of actions and behavioural changes taking place across the borough in response to climate change.
- For travel, there is a **preference for walking** as much as possible among residents and young people, with public transport utilised less frequently, and private petrol/diesel vehicle use still dominant. Key barriers identified which are preventing people from walking, cycling, or using public transport more often include **poor infrastructure, lack of reliability, and cost**.
- At home, **small habitual behaviour changes**, such as turning off lights when leaving rooms and recycling, are favoured to larger infrastructural changes/investments such as renewable technology installation. When spending money, residents and businesses consider **the sustainability ethos** of their suppliers. The popularity of meal planning and energy efficiency measures, such as smart meters, may reflect an environmental focus, but may also highlight **financial motivations** for changing behaviours. Barriers to action include the **upfront costs**, and **lack of time**, with businesses indicating a lack of government **incentives** and lack of resources to act as important.
- In order to improve the borough's green spaces, residents most often focused on **reducing littering**, closely followed by making more space for nature, rewilding appropriate areas, and tree planting. Businesses indicated their willingness to play a role in facilitating tree planting on their sites. For young people, **protecting more wildlife** was favoured over additional tree planting.
- When asked about RBC Climate Change Action Plan priorities, the key focus areas varied between groups. For residents, **improved transport** and **increasing tree planting** were most favoured. Young people strongly signalled a desire for **more education and engagement** in school, which was also a feature of many focus group and meeting discussions. For businesses, **access to funding, expertise**, and **green procurement processes** were all signalled as important.

Through this summary of findings, several key themes have emerged which should be key considerations in drafting the Climate Change Action Plan:

- **The Council should lead by example.** Evident among respondents is a strong interest regarding RBC's commitment to climate change action and the role played by the Council in promoting more sustainable behaviours. RBC should act as a leader on the topic in realising the Council and borough-wide net zero targets.

- **Climate change actions need to be visible.** The summary of findings indicates that there are many individuals and groups across Runnymede that are unaware of RBC's action on climate change to date, or its future plans for further action. Several options are available to address this, including improved Council communications and raising awareness of climate change activities at events. Ensuring this commitment, actions, and benefits are communicated to the full diversity of groups present in the borough is essential to demonstrate leadership and empower communities to act.
- **Building partnerships and supporting community action are critical.** While RBC should lead the way on climate action, building sustainable partnerships and facilitating communities to act will be essential for achieving Net Zero ambitions. These partnerships could either be between the Council and other parties or facilitated by the Council bringing together actors across the borough in collaboration. This summary highlights the actions already taking place across the borough, alongside the barriers to further action that the Council should support communities to overcome.
- **Co-benefits of environmental behaviours require illumination.** It is evident in this summary that residents, businesses, and local groups have many competing priorities. There is a need to recognise this and communicate the co-benefits of more sustainable behaviours alongside the environmental gains. Dependent on the behaviour, this may include cost savings, improved public health, empowering communities, and reduced traffic congestion.
- **Education and information remain essential.** While the survey results indicate that the importance of information and education varies by group and by theme, the heavy focus place on information provision and awareness raising during focus groups and meetings was profound. This can be related to multiple areas, including tackling misinformation, highlighting co-benefits, facilitating access to financial support, and raising awareness of collective impact. While the locations and methods for providing this will be diverse and the information should be tailored appropriately to the target audience and change, the centrality of this topic to success is key.

## 2. Introduction and Methodology

The development and implementation of a Climate Change Action Plan is crucial to bring the Runnymede Borough Council (RBC) Climate Change Strategy 2022-2030 vision into reality. A key objective of the Strategy is to “positively engage with residents, businesses, community groups, national and local government and universities to share information and encourage positive behavioural change to adapt to or mitigate climate change”.

This applies to the very early stages of developing an Action Plan - it must be informed by robust evidence and wide stakeholder engagement promoting a community-inclusive approach. A community focus enables an understanding of local preferences and aspirations that builds local support for climate action, while identifying priorities and barriers to sustainable behavioural change across the borough. This in turn allows the Action Plan to include measures to encourage and enable changes in behaviour across the Borough, within the Council’s sphere of influence, in addition to actions to become net zero across the Council’s own estate.

The aims of early engagement included:

- to begin to communicate a positive vision and clear local narrative on climate change, particularly about how the public can help achieve climate and environment goals (recognising that most Borough emissions are outside the direct control of the Council);
- to gain clarity about current attitudes towards climate change, and get an early indication of appetite for behaviour change;
- to understand actions that residents, organisations and young people have already taken, and identify the barriers people face in taking further action that the Council could try and address through its Action Plan; and
- to start building support in the community for getting to net zero, and reduce the risk of resistance to any new policies and initiatives which may be introduced to help meet ambitious climate change targets.

In June 2023, RBC launched a ‘Summer of Engagement on Climate Change’. The findings of this engagement are summarised in the following report.

To ensure that a wide range of stakeholder views were captured, including from different socio-economic backgrounds and hard to reach groups, a variety of engagement methods were adopted. Mass engagement was promoted through an online climate change survey, with hard copies available at libraries and on request, which went live from 1 June to 16 July 2023. The Council used the Built-ID ‘Give My View’ platform, which used digital marketing to extend the reach of the survey to different groups across Runnymede. Built-ID aims to strengthen community empowerment in decision-making, and their platform is designed with a visual, intuitive, and time conscious focus.

Three separate surveys were developed, each with tailored questions to target three different stakeholder groups: residents, young people (under 18s), and businesses. The survey questions are reflected in the analysis of findings from Section 3 onwards and the full list of questions from all surveys is shown in Annex A.

The survey was promoted through multiple channels, primarily by direct digital marketing through the use of social media. However, links to the surveys were also circulated widely to local secondary schools, to community groups and business networks across the Borough,

via newsletters and noticeboards, Council media including the Business Runnymede website, at events such as Great Big Green Week, the Black Cherry Fayre and Surrey Youth Games, and at local stakeholder meetings.

The three surveys received a combined 1,290 responses (Residents: 815, Young people (under 18s): 450, Businesses: 25). Across all surveys, most respondents were from Chertsey, Addlestone & Rowtown, and Egham. This potentially reflects the greater concentrations of residents and businesses, and greater success of survey promotional activities, in these areas.

Supplementary virtual and in-person engagement activities accompanied the online survey to further involve businesses, community groups, and residents. These included:

- Business meetings with the Towns Teams in Chertsey and Addlestone, and the Business Runnymede Steering Group.
- Focus groups with Resident Association and Neighbourhood Forum members.
- Meetings with Showmen's Guild, Surrey Gypsy Traveller Communities Forum Committee, Egham Residents Association, and St John's Eco-church.
- Attendance at Community Action Meetings in Egham Hythe, Chertsey, Englefield Green, and Addlestone.
- Great Big Green Week, Black Cherry Fayre, and Surrey Youth Games events.

### 3. Format of this Report

This report seeks to summarise the feedback received from stakeholders on various matters related to climate change as captured during the Summer of Engagement. Section 4 of the report focusses on attitudes to climate change. Sections 5-9 analyse current actions being taken in the community to address climate change, aligned to key thematic areas proposed in the Action Plan. Section 10 highlights existing barriers to action, and Section 11 summarises perspectives on RBC Action Plan priorities which would support further activities to combat climate change. A summary of findings and key recommendations is provided in the opening section of this report – Executive Summary and Key Recommendations.

## 4. Attitudes towards Climate Change and RBC Targets

### ***4.1 Headline RBC Engagement Statistics***

*Only 20% of young people indicated that they are “not really concerned” about climate change.*

*52% of businesses consider climate change “a high priority”.*

*40% of residents felt “a community effort is needed” resonated most with them in relation to climate change.*

## 4.2 UK Context

The 2021 Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle Survey found that 75% of adults in Great Britain were “very worried” or “somewhat worried” about the impacts of climate change, and 90% were either neutral or felt negatively about the future of the environment<sup>1</sup>. A further study by Bath University on young people (aged 16-25) suggested that 80% of respondents were “moderately” to “extremely” worried about climate change<sup>2</sup>.

## 4.3 RBC Engagement Findings

Figure 1: How worried are you about climate change? (Source: RBC Young People Survey)

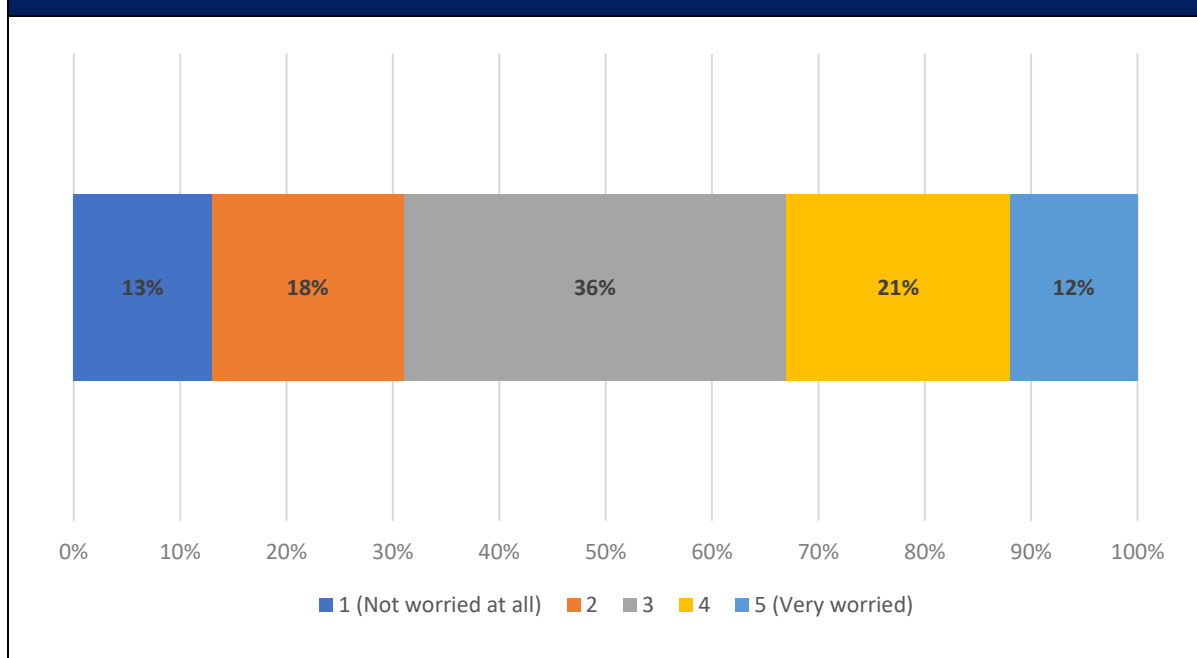


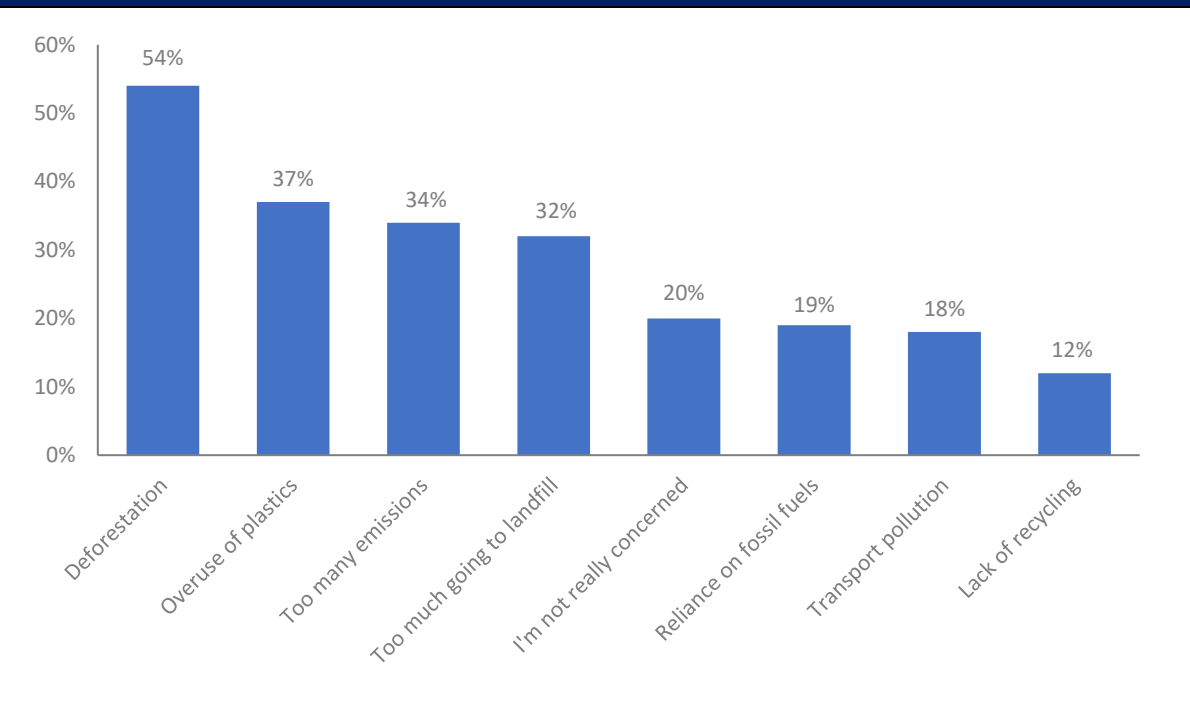
Figure 1 shows the results of 449 responses from the Young People’s Survey which used a sliding scale from 1, representing the response ‘Not worried at all’, to 5, representing the response ‘Very worried’, to gauge climate change concern. The highest frequency answer was 3 (36%) indicating a neutral attitude, or that respondents didn’t know how to feel about it. It is notable that a third of young people completing the survey are ‘Worried’ or ‘Very Worried’ about climate change.

<sup>1</sup> ONS (2021) *Three-quarters of adults in Great Britain worry about climate change.*

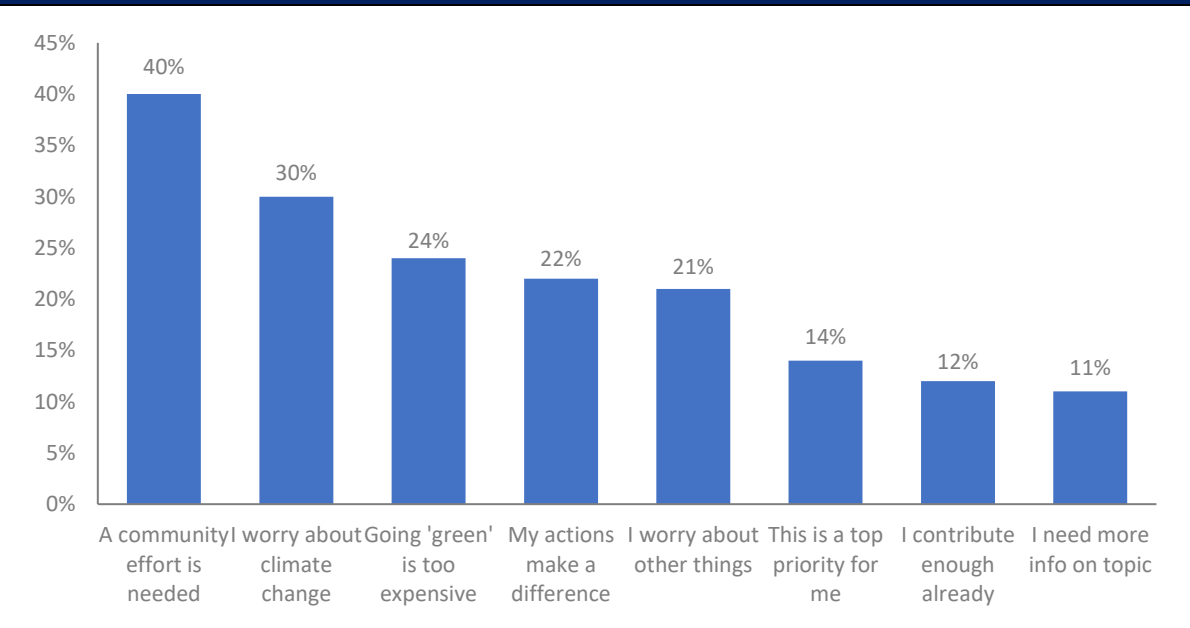
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/articles/threequartersofadultsingreatbritainworryaboutclimatechange/2021-11-05>

<sup>2</sup> Hickman, C. et al (2021) Climate anxiety in children and young people and their beliefs about government responses to climate change: a global survey. *The Lancet Planetary Health*, 5, e863-e873.

**Figure 2: What concerns you about climate change? (Choice of up to three answers) (Source: RBC Young People Survey)**



**Figure 3: Which of these statements resonate most with you in relation to climate change? (Choice of up to three answers) (Source: RBC Resident Survey)**



When delving further into the aspects of climate change which most concern young people, the most selected responses were 'Deforestation' (54%), followed by 'Overuse of plastics' (37%) reflected in Figure 2. Both activities have impacts that are very visual and heavily associated with damage to wildlife and biodiversity, which this graph indicates may be a focus for young people. Only 20% indicated that they are "not really concerned".

The climate change concern frequencies reflected among young people were closely mirrored in the 706 responses to the Residents Survey displayed in Figure 3. 30% of respondents indicated that they “Worry about climate change”, and 14% consider climate change a “Top priority”.

**Figure 4: In regard to climate change, which of the following do you resonate with most? (Choice of up to 4 answers) (Source: RBC Business Survey)**

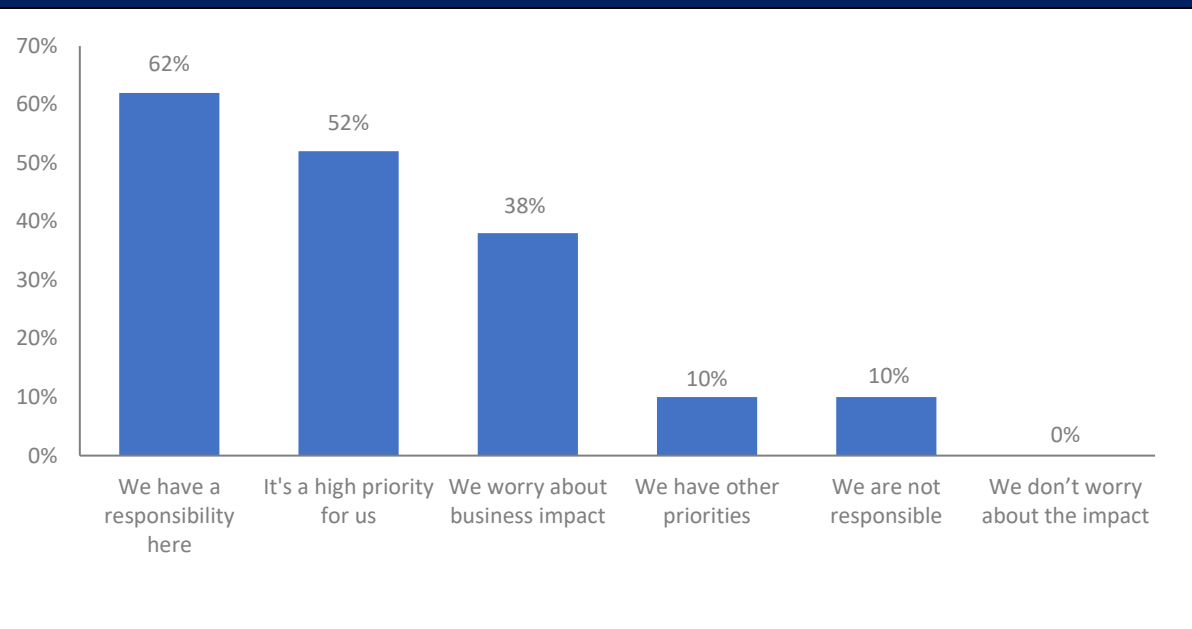


Figure 4 displays findings from the Business survey, which reflects greater concern about the impact of climate change among businesses (38%) and the high priority placed on mitigating and adapting to climate change (52%) from the 21 responses. This concern was prevalent during conversation with Showmen’s Guild, where extreme weather events more likely to occur with climate change, such as heavy rain and strong winds, force rides to close and make access to and from show grounds challenging. None of the business respondents answered “We don’t worry about the impact”.

While around a third of respondents across all surveys indicated that they worry about climate change, a far higher percentage revealed a sense of responsibility to act. In Figure 3, only 12% of residents feel “I contribute enough already”, with “A community effort is needed” resonating with the greatest number of participants (40%). Shown in Figure 4, 62% of business felt “We have a responsibility here”, with only 10% indicating that “We are not responsible”.

Respondents in the Egham Hythe Community Action Group embodied this, discussing the Eco-church certification which has been obtained by St Paul’s Church, and several others in the borough, for their commitments to environmental action. Although a question on sense of responsibility was not expressly asked in the Young People’s survey, trends of shifting behaviour indicate that there is also a strong sense of ownership for acting on climate change, as explored in the following sections.



In conjunction with questions on broader climate change issues, respondents in the Business Survey and Young People’s Survey were asked about their knowledge of RBC actions on climate change, and whether they support the Council’s Net Zero ambitions.

**Figure 5: Are you aware of what RBC is already doing to tackle climate change? (Source: RBC Young People Survey)**

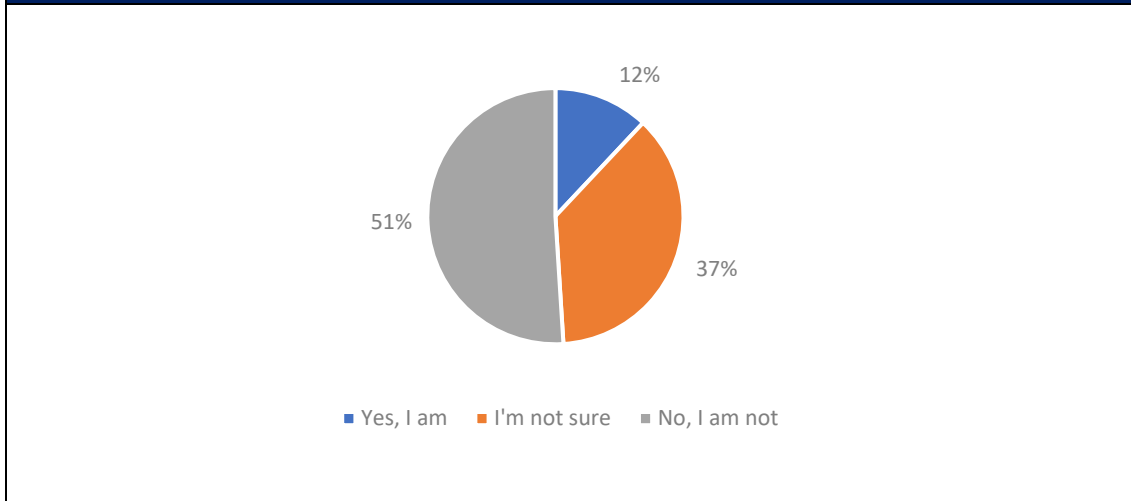


Figure 5 indicates that 51% of young people are not aware of RBC’s actions on climate change and a further 37% were not sure. This points to a potential requirement to make the Council’s actions more visible to young people.

**Figure 6: Do you support RBC’s commitments to reach net zero carbon emissions? (Source: RBC Business Survey)**

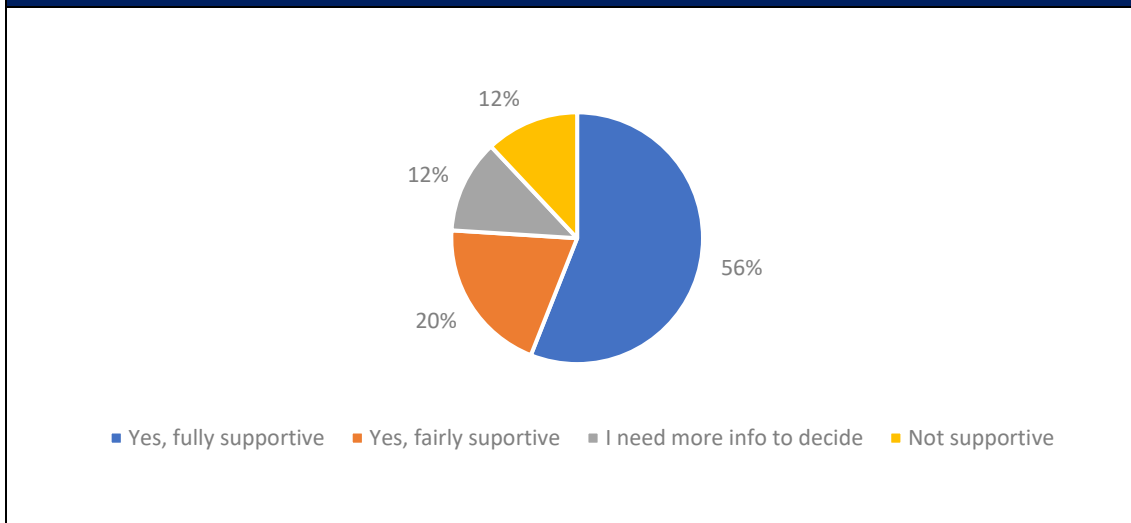


Figure 6 gauges the perspectives of businesses on their support for RBC Net Zero commitments. It is positive to see that 56% are supportive of these targets for Council estate Net Zero by 2030 and borough-wide Net Zero by 2050. Of respondents selecting ‘Not supportive’, they were asked why this was. One respondent stated that the UK’s efforts will make no difference as other country’s emissions are significantly greater than ours. Another

said that it will be costly, and RBC already faces financial challenges. A further comment stated that the effects of climate change are already being felt and that to achieve net zero carbon emissions for the Borough we should aim for 2030 rather than 2050.

There was positive feedback from groups present at the Business Runnymede Steering Group meeting on the 'Sustainable Business' category of the Runnymede Business Awards. This was viewed as a good way of raising awareness and sharing best practice examples of how small-medium sized businesses in the Borough are approaching sustainability issues.

## 5. Climate Change Actions

### 5.1 UK Context

Encouraging and supporting a transition to more sustainable behaviours across all groups is recognised as a critical element of responding to climate change. According to the Climate Change Committee, whilst local authorities are directly responsible for between 2-5% of their local area's emissions, they have the power to influence around a third of emissions in their local area through service delivery, policies, enabling activities and investments, and their wider leadership role<sup>3</sup>. Local authorities should take as many enabling actions as possible to help change behaviours and habits of local individuals, businesses, and organisations. These can range from seemingly small changes in habitual behaviours, such as turning off lights when leaving rooms, to larger scale infrastructural changes, including installing renewable energy sources on private property or switching from a petrol/diesel vehicle to EV. Positively, studies indicate that change is happening. A poll by the Met Office in 2023 indicated that 59% of the British public are consciously making decisions to support a low-carbon lifestyle<sup>4</sup> and the Office for National Statistics 2021 Opinions and Lifestyle Survey Report in 2021 found 81% of British adults were making lifestyle changes in response to climate change<sup>5</sup>.

### 5.2 RBC Engagement Findings

Sections 5 to 8 explore changes in behaviours occurring across Runnymede in response to climate change. This will be addressed according to the following relevant themes in the draft Action Plan:

- Active & Sustainable Travel (barriers to further action are also fully explored as barrier questions were explicitly linked to this theme in the survey)
- Greener Homes & Buildings

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<sup>3</sup> Climate Change Committee (2020) *Local Authorities and the Sixth Carbon Budget*.

<https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/local-authorities-and-the-sixth-carbon-budget/>

<sup>4</sup> Met Office (2023) *Over half of public making low-carbon decisions*. <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/about-us/press-office/news/weather-and-climate/2023/over-half-of-british-public-say-they-are-making-conscious-decisions-to-live-a-low-carbon-lifestyle-and-they-want-to-do-more>

<sup>5</sup> ONS (2021) *Three-quarters of adults in Great Britain worry about climate change*.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/articles/threequartersofadultsingreatbritainworryaboutclimatechange/2021-11-05>

- Reducing Borough-wide Waste
- Natural Environment & Biodiversity

## 6. Active & Sustainable Travel

### 6.1 *Headline RBC Engagement Statistics*

**53%** of residents *“walk as much as possible”*.

**26%** of young people use **public transport** to get around the borough.

*“Cost”* and *“Poor infrastructure”* are key barriers to using sustainable transport.

### 6.2 *RBC Baseline Emissions and UK Context*

The Runnymede Council Estate and Area Greenhouse Gases (GHG) Baseline Report identifies ‘Transport’ as the largest emissions contributor across the borough, accounting for 54% of emissions in 2020. Of the total 299ktCO<sub>2</sub>e emissions from transport, 58% came from private petrol and diesel cars. Of RBC emissions in 2021/22, 10% of emissions were from the council fleet, waste collection & transport, commuting, and business travel<sup>6</sup>.

The DESNZ Public Attitudes Tracker on Net Zero and Climate Change in Spring 2023 found that, nationally, 53% of respondents were choosing to walk or cycle, and 34% were choosing to use public transport, rather than use a car and 10% drive a hybrid or electric vehicle. This same study found that choosing to walk or cycle rather than use a car was perceived by the highest percentage of respondents (44%) as having the biggest impact on tackling climate change in the UK<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Aether (2023) *Runnymede Climate Change Study: Council Estate and Area GHG Baseline*.

<sup>7</sup> DESNZ (2023) *DESNZ Public Attitudes Tracker: Net Zero and Climate Change: Spring 2023, UK*.  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/public-attitudes-tracking-survey>

### 6.3 RBC Engagement Findings

**Figure 7: Are you taking any of the following actions to reduce emissions when travelling? (Choice of up to three answers) (Source: RBC Resident Survey)**

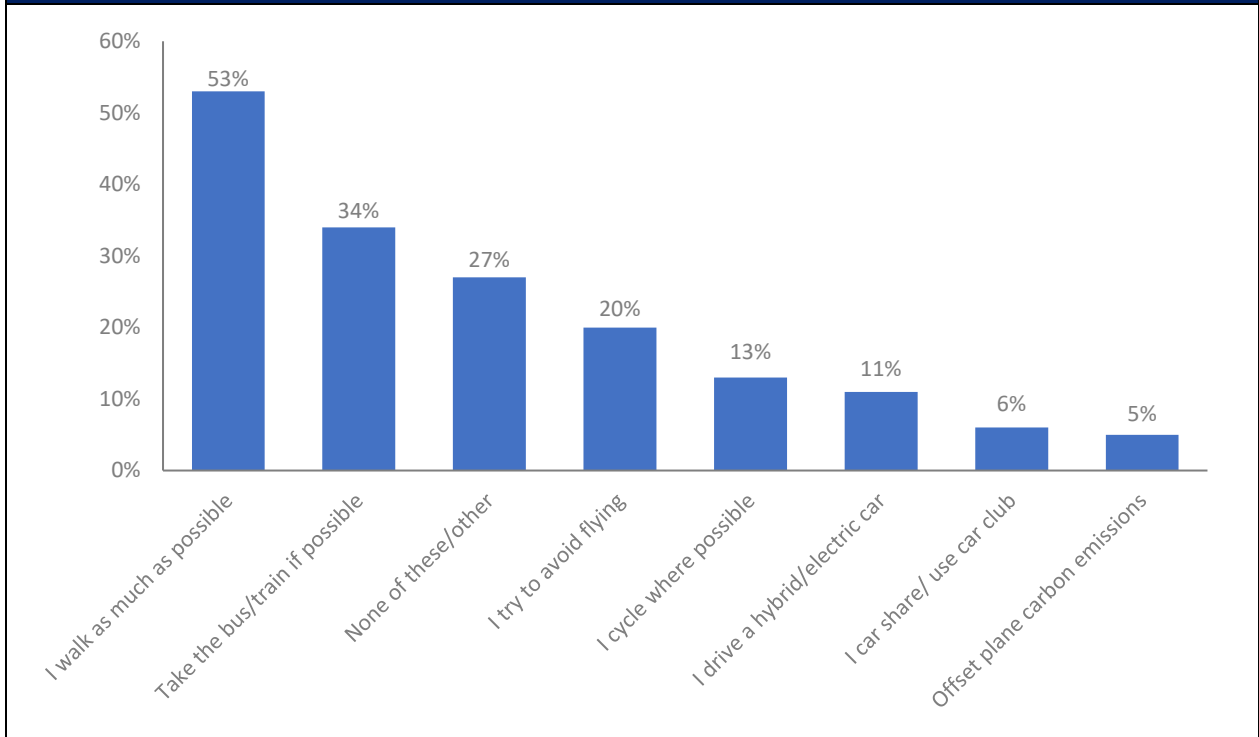
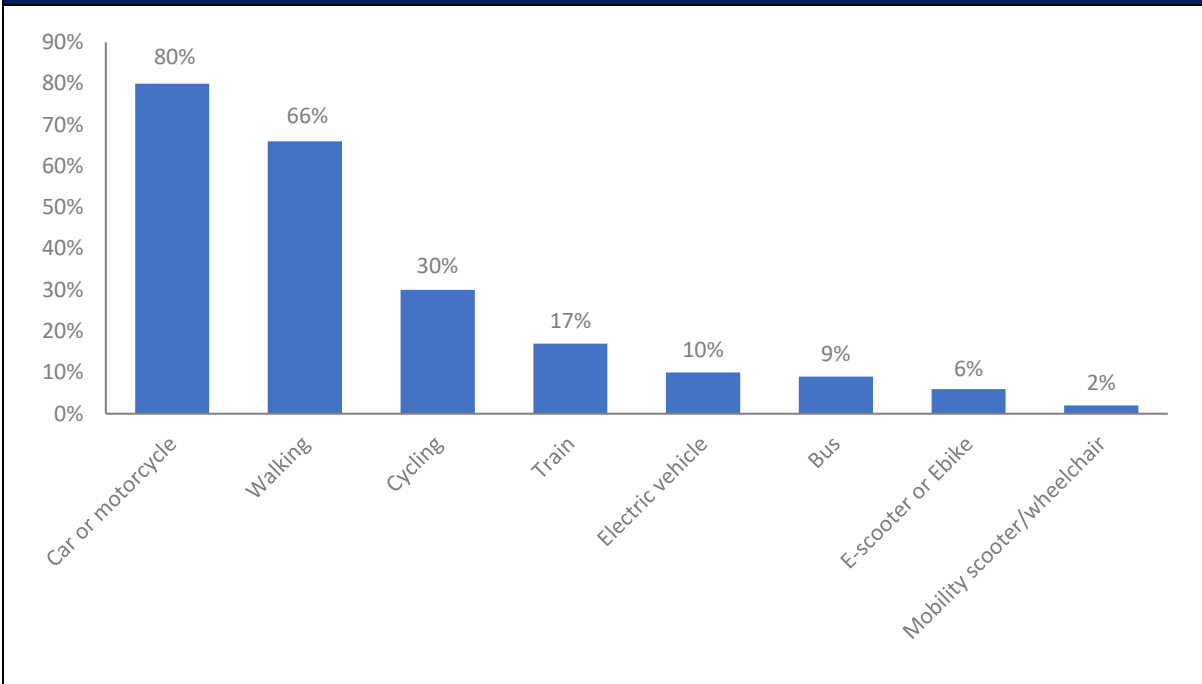


Figure 7 shows the results from 577 responses to the Resident survey on transport. 53% indicated that they walk as much as possible, and 34% use public transport as much as possible, closely mirroring the national picture. Cycling is a comparably less popular option, and car clubs/car sharing is only taken up by 6% of residents. A respondent at the Addlestone Community Action Group encourages car sharing at their organisation and has seen the multiple environmental and financial benefits that such an approach can offer.

Of the 27% responding 'None of these/Other', the follow-up question asked, "What other actions do you take to reduce emissions when travelling?". The most common response – 32 out of 102 responses – was 'Nothing'.

**Figure 8: What ways of getting around Runnymede do you and your family use most? (Choice of up to three answers) (Source: RBC Young People Survey)**



In the Young People’s and Business surveys, questions were asked on what modes of transport are most often used to travel around the borough. Figure 8 shows outcomes from the Young People’s survey, indicating that 80% use a car/motorcycle, 66% walk, and 30% cycle. Train and bus usage is low, used by 17% and 9% of respondents, respectively.

**Figure 9: What are the modes of transport most used by your staff to get to work? (Choice of up to 4 answers) (Source: RBC Business Survey)**

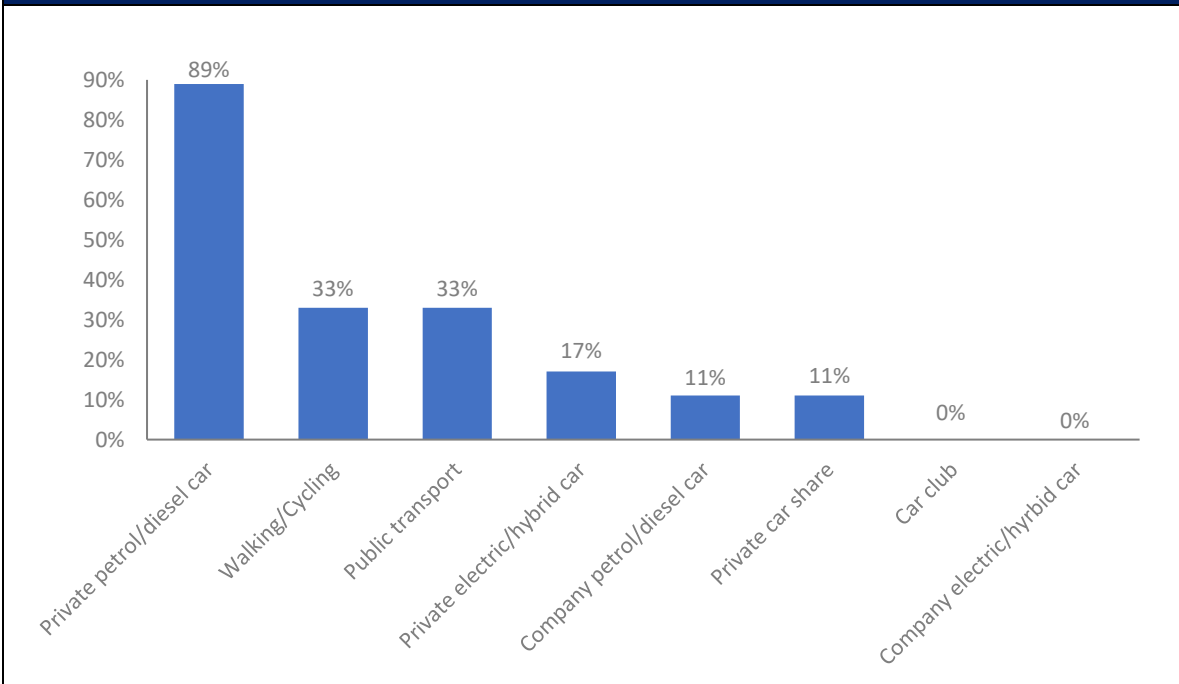
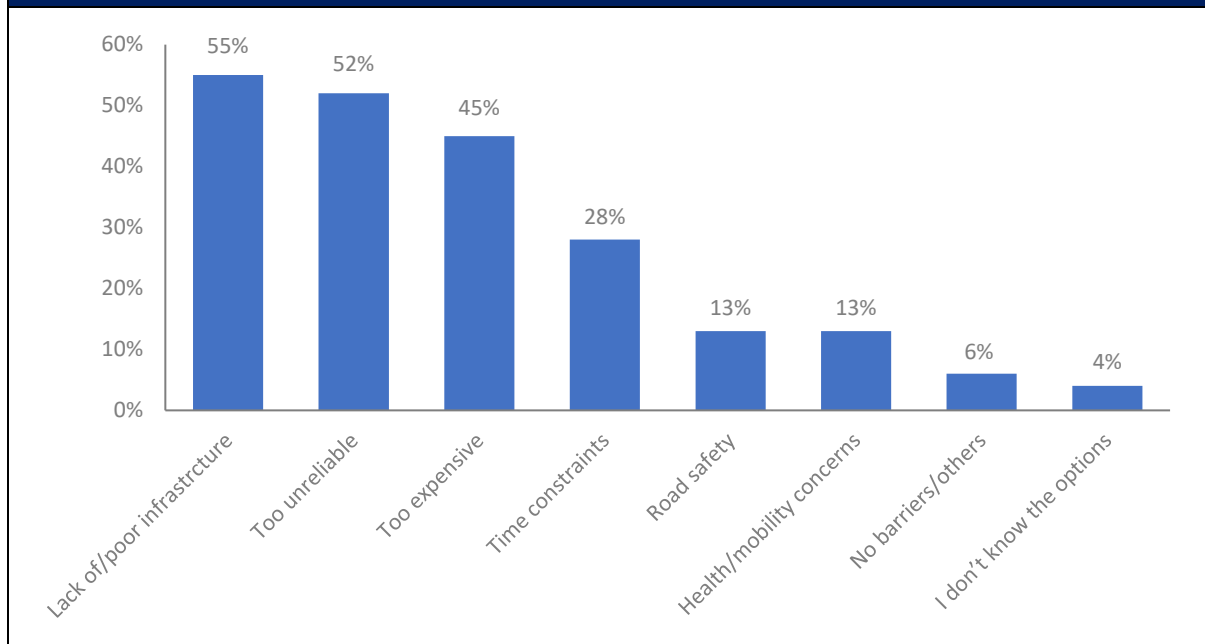


Figure 9 shows the results to the question in the Business Survey that asked what modes of transport staff take when commuting to work. A clear preference for private petrol/diesel vehicles is evident, selected by 89% of respondents. Walking/cycling and public transport were selected by 33%. In a separate question, businesses were asked whether they owned a fleet of vehicles, and if so, what types of vehicles this fleet was comprised of. Of 13 responses, 61% indicated they only have petrol/diesel vehicles, with a further 23% indicating that they mainly use petrol/diesel vehicles.

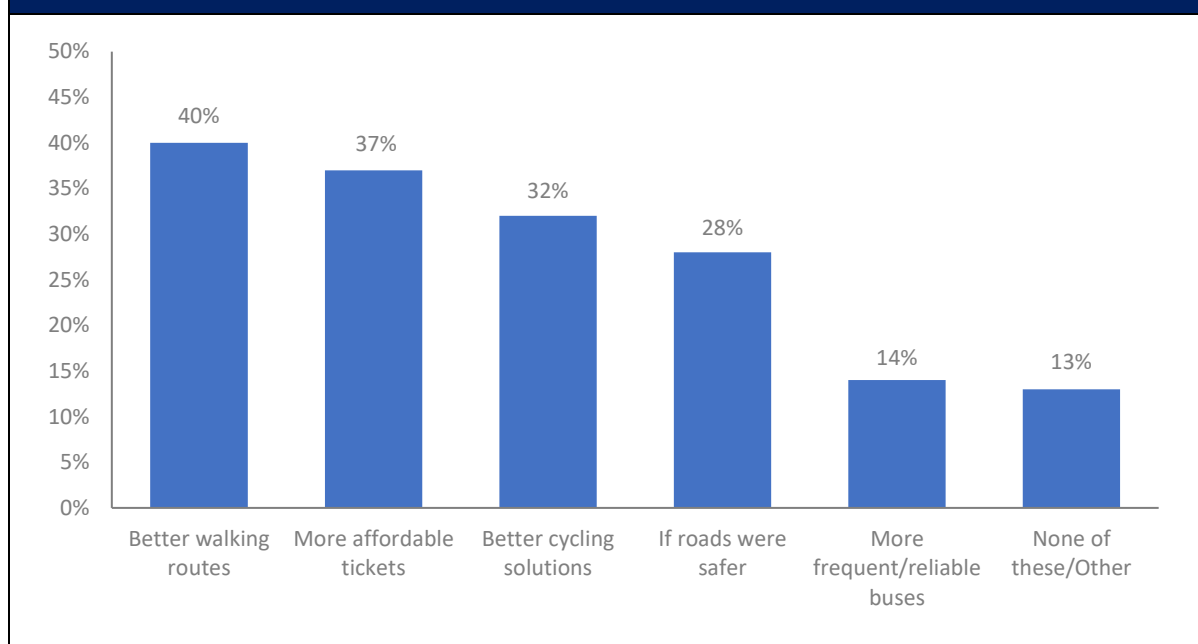
**Figure 10: What makes it difficult for you to use more sustainable transport? (Choice of up to three answers) (Source: RBC Resident Survey)**



All surveys asked about the barriers preventing use of more sustainable forms of transport. Figure 10 details the 572 responses to this question from the Resident's survey. Several key themes emerge here, including 'Lack of/poor infrastructure', 'Too unreliable' (which links to 'Time constraints'), and 'Too expensive'. Although not explicitly asked, it is reasonable to suggest that 'Too unreliable' and 'Too expensive' refer to public transport (train/bus), whereas 'Lack of/Poor infrastructure' and 'Time constraints' may equally apply to walking and cycling.

Public transport infrastructure and electrifying bus fleets were discussed with Egham Resident's Association Members, who noted key routes that were not served by public transport; and with the Chertsey Community Action Meeting participants who highlighted a lack of bus provision and the need to seek co-benefits from sustainable transport options, such as cost-effectiveness. The need for reliable and cheaper public transport was also noted in the Business survey, alongside improved provision of EV charging and government schemes which support business action on climate change.

**Figure 11: What would help you use sustainable transport more often? (e.g. bus/bike/train) (Choice of up to three answers) (Source: RBC Young People Survey)**



The Young People’s Survey notes similar barriers to those identified in the Resident’s Survey across 439 responses (Figure 11). ‘Better walking routes’ was the most frequently selected response to promote more sustainable transport (40%), with 37% selecting more affordable tickets, and 32% better cycling solutions. Of those selecting ‘None of these/Other’, the most frequent comment was ‘Ease/Convenience’.

## 7. Greener Homes & Buildings

### 7.1 *Headline RBC Engagement Statistics*

**66%** of residents had **“changed daily habits/behaviours”** to reduce energy emissions.

**80%** of young people **“turn off lights when leaving a room”**.

Only **6%** of residents and **10%** of businesses have **“explored energy grants”**.

### 7.2 *RBC Baseline Emissions and UK Context*

Residential and commercial/industrial property, and their associated energy usage, comprise the second largest sources of borough-wide emissions in Runnymede (43% in 2020). Council buildings for scope 1 and 2 emissions only, and Housing (tenant consumption) for scope 3 emissions, are also the largest emissions contributors for RBC<sup>8</sup>. As green homes and energy consumption are intricately linked, they are simultaneously addressed in this section. In the DESNZ Public Attitudes Tracker, activities related to reducing emissions at

<sup>8</sup> Aether (2023) *Runnymede Climate Change Study: Council Estate and Area GHG Baseline*.

home, including installing low carbon heating systems (40%), minimising daily energy usage (37%), and installing insulation (33%) were among the behaviours perceived to have the biggest impact on tackling climate change in the UK. 80% of respondents minimised energy used at home, with small habitual changes such as turning off lights and washing at lower temperatures, and 51% consider the energy efficiency of goods they purchase<sup>9</sup>.

### 7.3 RBC Engagement Findings

**Figure 12: Have you done any of the below to manage your emissions from energy use at home? (Choice of up to three answers) (Source: RBC Resident Survey)**

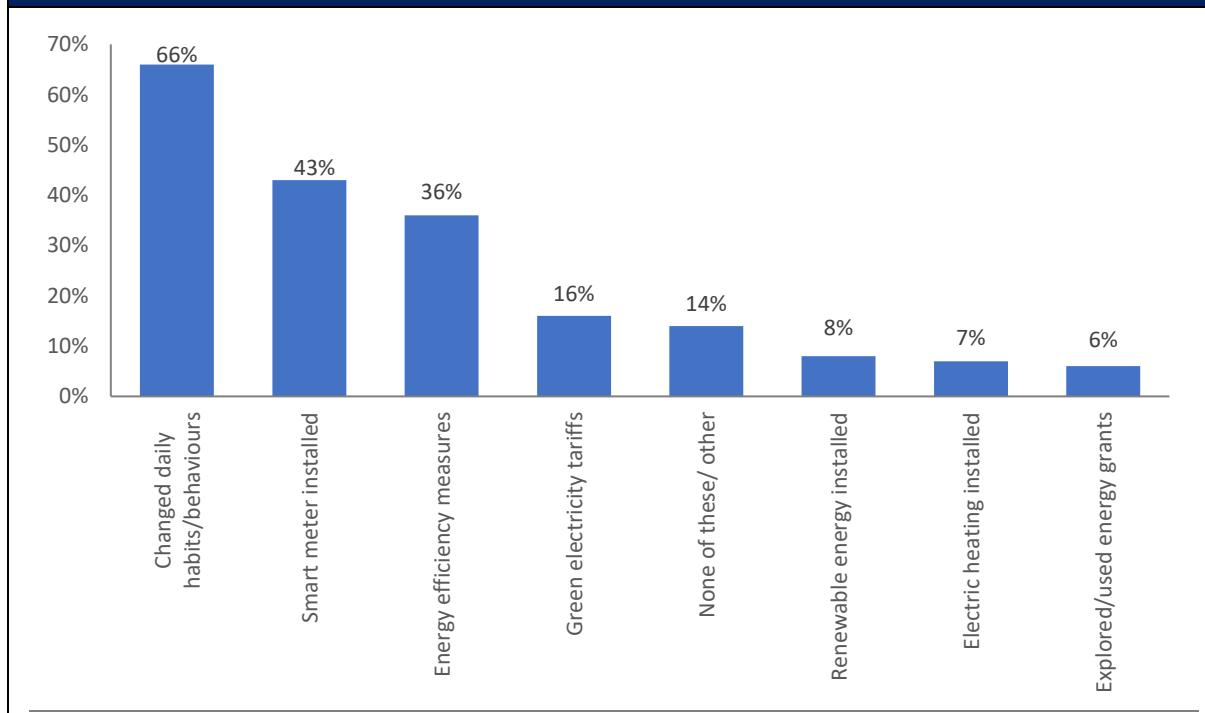
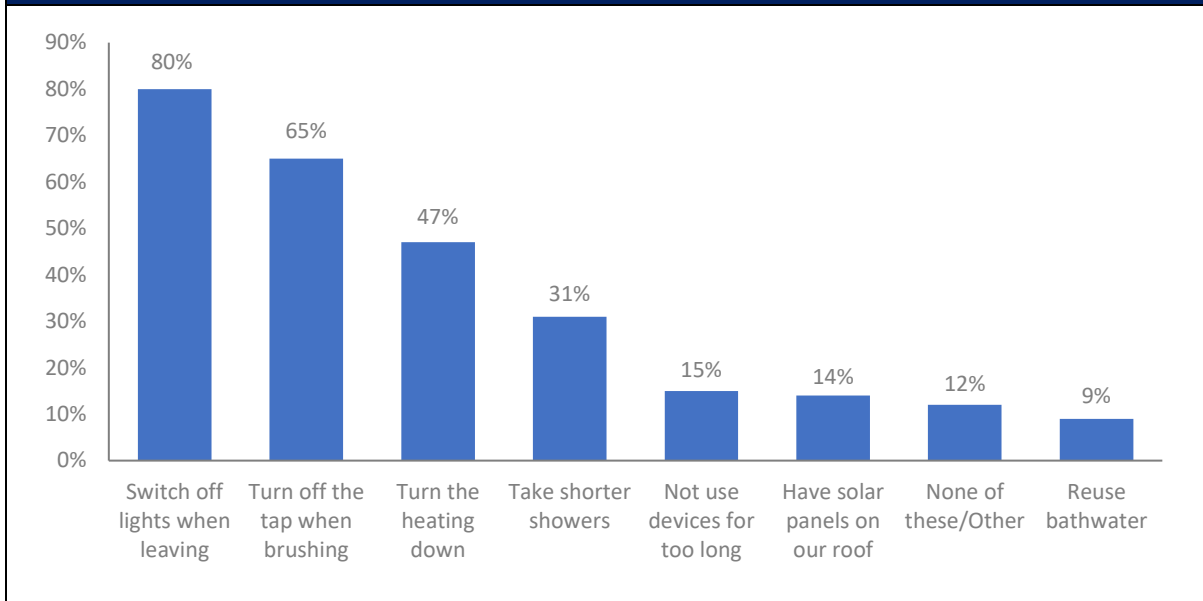


Figure 12 reveals the behavioural changes made by residents to manage their at-home energy emissions. “Changed daily habits” was the most frequent response, selected by 66% of 677 respondents, followed by “Smart meter installed”. Comparably, a much lower percentage have made changes to their energy infrastructure, such as installing renewables (8%) or electric heating (7%). The Surrey Gypsy and Traveller Communities Forum identified a particular problem being that they live in caravans heavily reliant on gas bottles and enabling connection to electrical mains could facilitate a sustainable transition. Of the 14% responding ‘None of these/Other’, the most common response to the follow-up question ‘What else do you do to help reduce energy & water use?’ was “Nothing”.

<sup>9</sup> DESNZ (2023) DESNZ Public Attitudes Tracker: Net Zero and Climate Change: Spring 2023, UK.

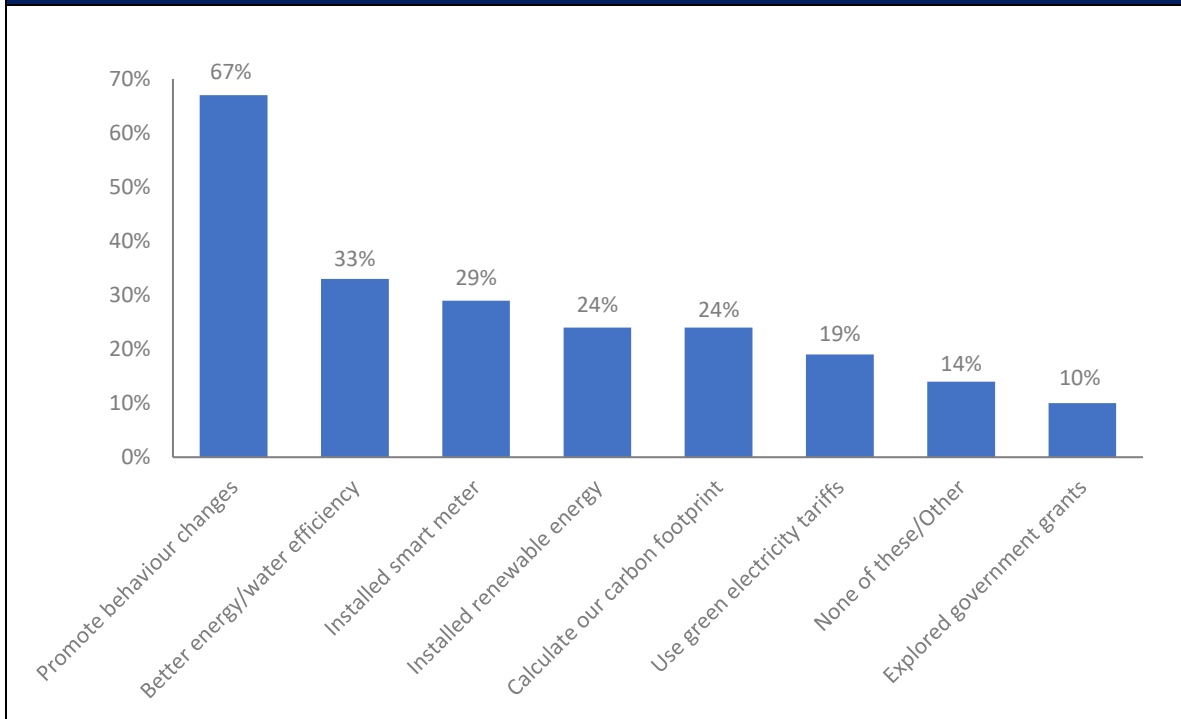


**Figure 13: What things do you and your family do to help reduce your energy and water use? (Choice of up to three answers) (Source: RBC Young People Survey)**



These findings are also broadly reflected in Figure 13, from the Young Peoples’s Survey. 80% signal that they “Switch off lights when leaving”, 65% ‘Turn off the tap when brushing’ and 47% “Turn down heating”.

**Figure 14: Do you do any of the following to reduce your organisations energy & water use? (Choice of up to 3 answers) (Source: RBC Business Survey)**



According to responses from the Business Survey shown in Figure 14, “Promoting behaviour change” is the most common approach to reduce energy and water consumption (67%).

Compared with results from the Resident's Survey reflected in Figure 12, a lower percentage of businesses have installed a smart meter (29%), but a higher percentage have installed renewable energy (24%) and explored government grants (10%). 24% of the 21 respondents also indicated that they have "Calculated our carbon footprint", however it is unclear if this is with the intention of regularly tracking any improvements.

Respondents at Showmen's Guild detailed several initiatives they are looking into to reduce their environmental impact, including alternative fuels, digital payment systems, solar panels in their offices, and setting up a Zoom suite.

Business survey participants were explicitly asked "What would make it easier to lower energy use/use green energy?". Of 12 responses to this open question, 'Information and Education', 'Grant Funding', and "Energy Company Actions" were noted among the themes.

## 8. Reducing Borough-wide Waste

### 8.1 *Headline RBC Engagement Statistics*

**62%** of residents *"donate to charity/reuse shops"*.

**60%** of young people *"recycle paper, glass, and card"*.

**53%** of businesses consider *"the sustainability ethos of the supplier"*.

### 8.2 *RBC Baseline Emissions and UK Context*

Although waste accounted for a relatively small 3% of borough-wide emissions in 2020<sup>10</sup>, behaviours related to minimising waste and consuming sustainably are among the most widely adopted in the UK. The DESNZ Public Attitudes Tracker Spring 2023 reveals that, nationally, 86% of respondents recycle household waste, and 79% seek to minimise the food they throw away<sup>11</sup>.

Consumption decisions are often closely linked to waste, including choices surrounding food, clothing, electricals, and many other items. The origin of raw materials, transport of processed items, frequency of product uses, and how waste is disposed of all have emissions implications. Shifting these behaviours in favour of more sustainable practices, such as buying only what is required, purchasing locally, and recycling, can reduce emissions which originate from multiple sources in the supply chain, whilst building a circular economy and reducing virgin material demand.

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<sup>10</sup> Aether (2023) *Runnymede Climate Change Study: Council Estate and Area GHG Baseline*.

<sup>11</sup> DESNZ (2023) *DESNZ Public Attitudes Tracker: Net Zero and Climate Change: Spring 2023, UK*.

### 8.3 RBC Engagement Findings

**Figure 15: Are you doing any of the following to reduce waste and consume sustainably? (Choice of up to three answers) (Source: RBC Resident Survey)**

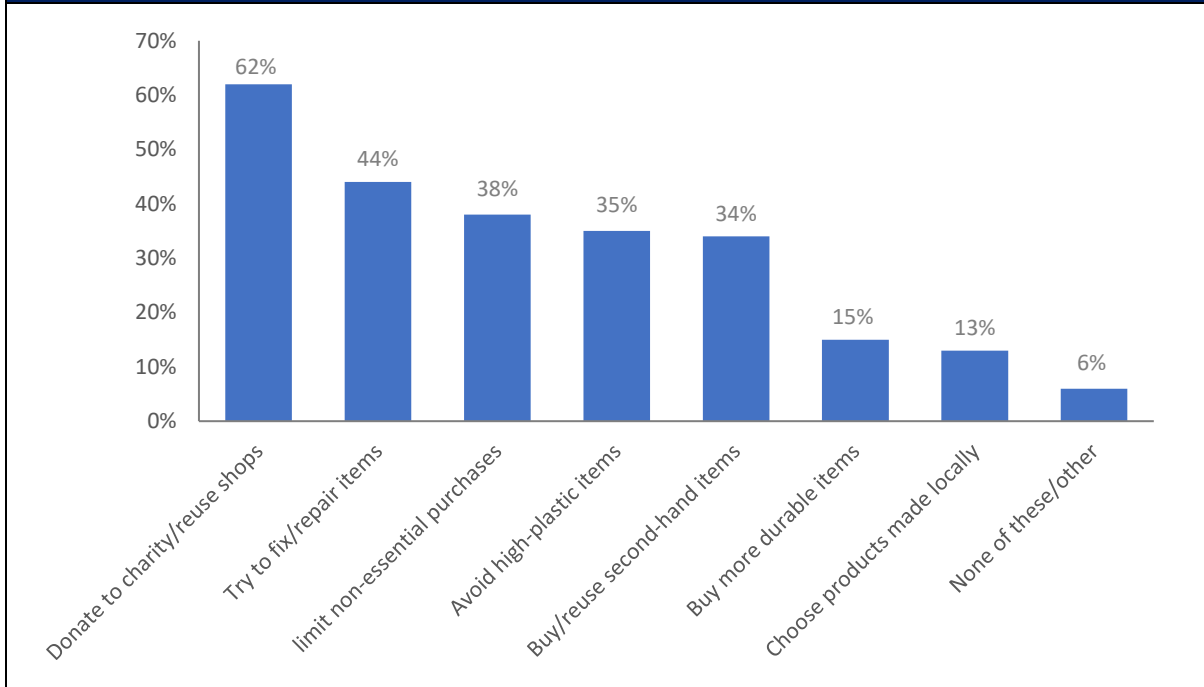
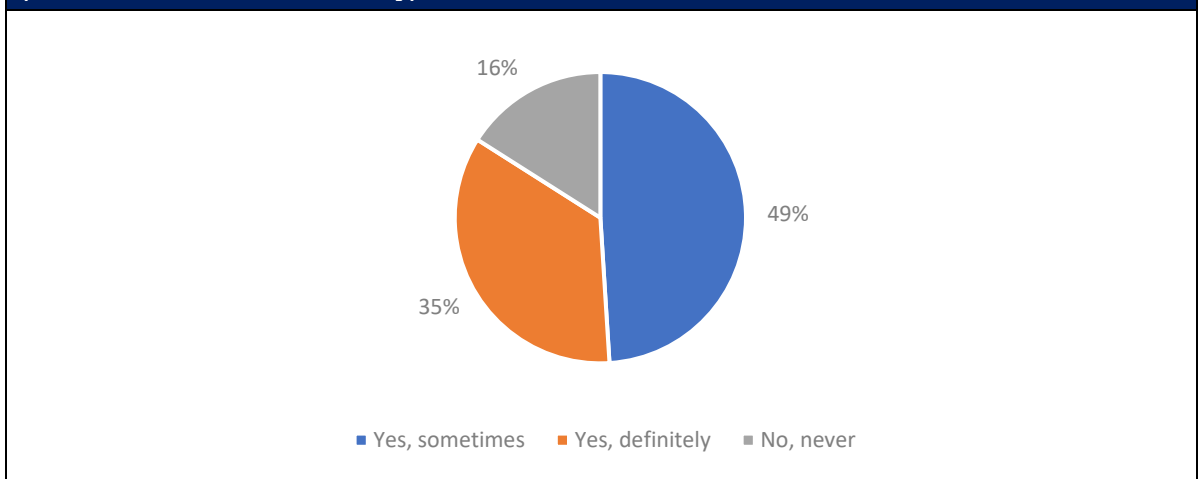


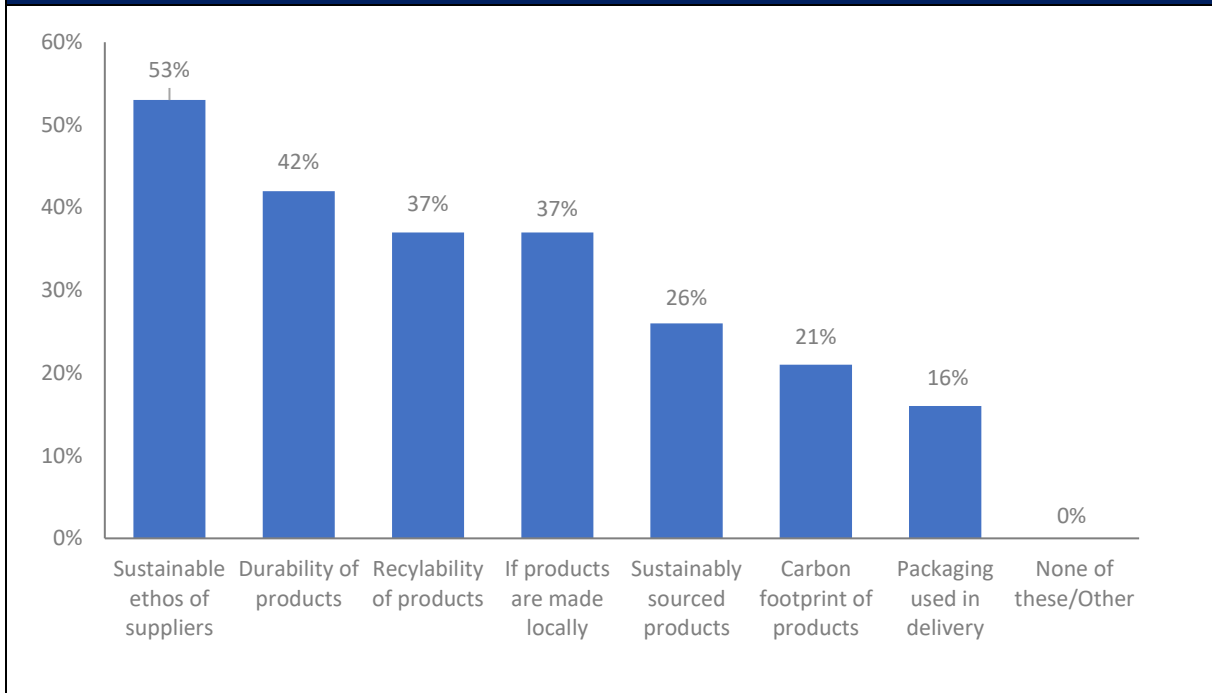
Figure 15 shows the results of 608 Residents responses to waste reduction and sustainable consumption behaviours. The most popular response is “Donate to charity/reuse shops”, selected by 62% of respondents, followed by “Try to fix/repair items”. By comparison, 34% indicated that they “Buy second-hand items”, with 13% “Choosing products made locally”. Participants of the Englefield Green Community Action Meeting discussed community fridge and community gardening initiatives, which combat food waste and enable local produce to be grown and shared within the surrounding area.

**Figure 16: Do you think about the sustainability of services/orgs you spend money on? (Source: RBC Resident Survey)**



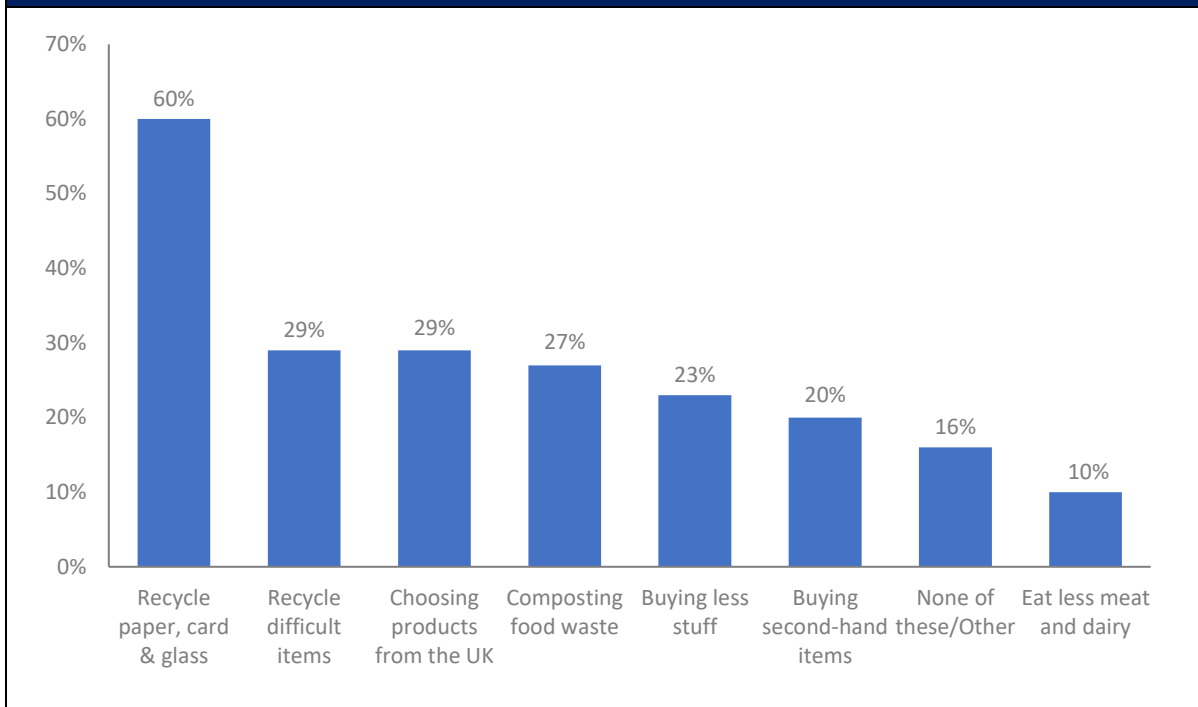
The majority of residents consider the sustainability of services and organisations they spend money on, as shown in Figure 16, with 35% responding “Yes, definitely” and 49% responding “Yes, sometimes”.

**Figure 17: When making purchase decisions, do you consider any of the following? (Choice of up to 3 answers) (Source: RBC Business Survey)**



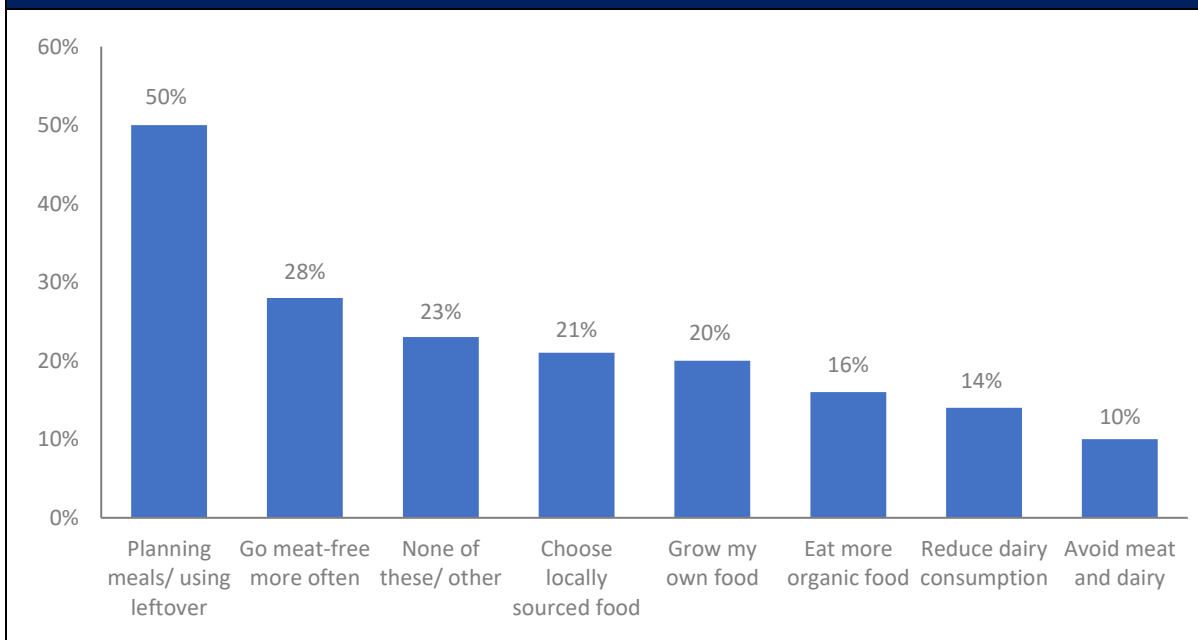
This focus on sustainability is similarly reflected in the Business Survey (Figure 17) where “Sustainable ethos of suppliers” was the most common response among business participants (53%) when asked what businesses consider during their purchase decisions. “Durability”, “Recyclability”, and “Locality” were also important features.

**Figure 18: What things do you and your family do to help reduce waste and eat sustainably? (Choice of up to three answers) (Source: RBC Young People Survey)**



Young People’s behaviours to reduce waste and eat sustainably are reflected in Figure 18. Recycling items at home, such as paper, card, and glass, was most popular with 60%. 29% recycle difficult items (those not recycled at home). “Eat less meat and dairy” was least selected with only 10%.

**Figure 19: Have you made any changes to your food buying and eating habits? (Choice of up to three answers) (Source: RBC Resident Survey)**



“Avoiding meat and dairy” was also an unpopular behavioural change amongst Resident’s Survey respondents, selected by 10% of 635 respondents reflected in Figure 19. “Planning meals/using leftovers” was the most common approach with 50% selecting this option. While this may reflect changes in response to the environment, it may equally reflect other priorities, such as the increased cost of living and the need to reduce food costs. 21% selected “Choose locally sourced food” and 20% selected “Grow my own food”.

Of the 23% that selected “None of these/Other”, 108 answered the follow-up question ‘What other changes have you made to your food buying and eating habits?’. 53 respondents indicated that no changes had been made, with “Buying less food” and “Buying cheaper food” noted in 14 and 15 responses, respectively, potentially reflecting the increased financial burdens being felt by households.

Supermarket representatives at the Addlestone Town Team Focus Group further indicated a commitment to reducing waste. This is achieved through donating surplus food directly through community groups and local charities, or through using food redistribution platforms such as Olio and Caboodle which enable connections with groups and volunteers.

## 9. Natural Environment & Biodiversity

### **9.1 Headline RBC Engagement Statistics**

*“Protect more **wildlife areas**” was the favoured option for improving the natural environment among **young people**.*

***55%** of residents believe “**Reducing littering**” would be the main driver of improved green space.*

***68%** of businesses can “**Grow/plant trees on site**”.*

### **9.2 RBC Baseline Emissions Context**

Green spaces and a healthy natural environment play a multitude of critical roles, including carbon sequestration and storage, improving attention and well-being among residents, and providing areas for biodiversity to thrive. The Runnymede Council Estate and Area GHG Baseline Report by Aether indicates that land use in the borough was responsible for sequestering, rather than emitting, 4.2ktCO<sub>2</sub>e in 2020. The report notes that this is due to the presence of woodland and grassland areas across Runnymede which act as carbon sinks. While this value appears small relative to the borough wide emissions, it is equivalent to approximately 3 times the scope 1 and scope 2 emissions of RBC in 2020/21. In addition to ensuring these spaces exist, ensuring they are well maintained and managed is important to realising the full suite of benefits for humans and nature that these spaces can provide.

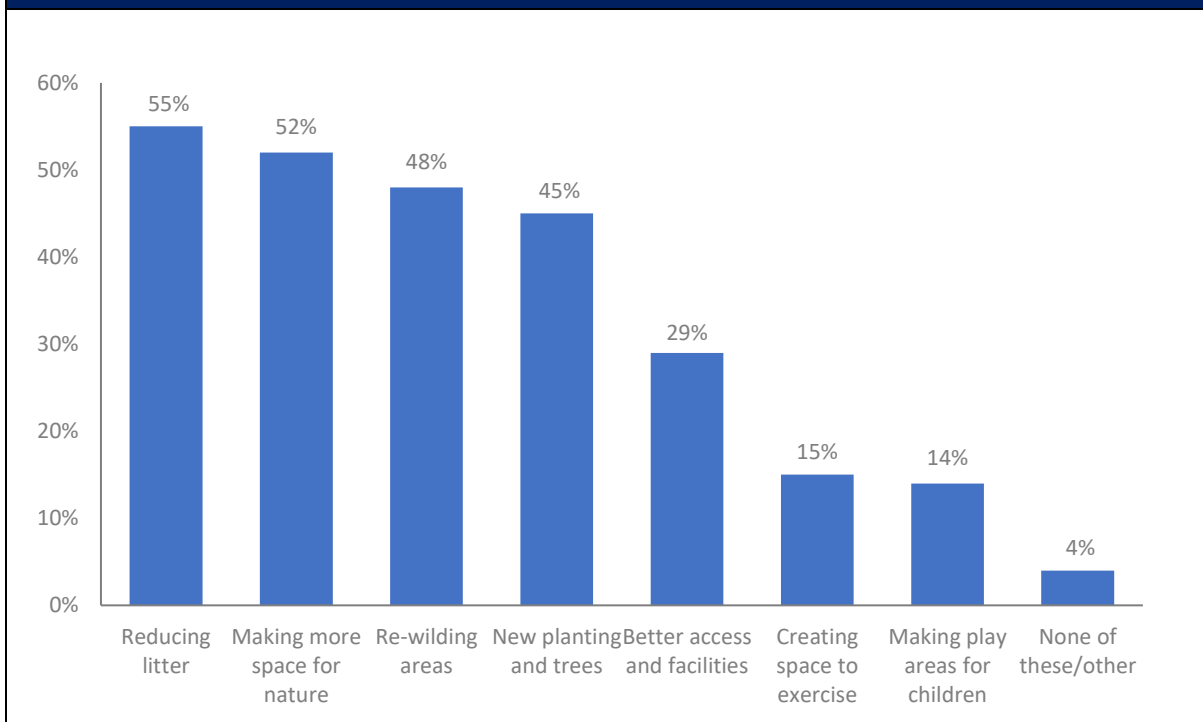
### 9.3 RBC Engagement Findings

**Figure 20: How would you like Runnymede’s environment to be improved? (Ranked)**  
(Source: RBC Young People Survey)



Young people were asked to rank four options to indicate in which ways they would like to see the environment of Runnymede improved. The 425 responses are summarised in Figure 20. ‘Protect more wildlife areas’ ranked highest and was the ranked first by 185 (44%) of respondents, followed by ‘Improve our rivers and lakes’ selected by 102 respondents (24%). ‘More trees’ in both parks and streets were ranked below these. The results here may indicate a preference among young people for actions which support biodiversity and wildlife, over and above those which may support greater carbon sequestration.

**Figure 21: What should be the main drivers in improving our green spaces? (Choice of up to three answers)**  
(Source: RBC Resident Survey)



In the Resident’s Survey, a similar question was asked related to improving green spaces in the borough, with the outcomes of 570 responses shown in Figure 21. While ‘Making more space for nature’ and ‘Rewilding areas’, answers (comparable to the favoured ‘Protect more wildlife areas’ response by young people) were chosen by 52% and 48% of residents respectively, the most frequently selected answer was ‘Reducing littering’ (55%). A large proportion (45%) of residents also selected ‘New planting and trees’ as a method to improve green spaces.

**Figure 22: Could you help improve Runnymede’s environment by doing any of the following? (Choice of up to 3 answers) (Source: RBC Business Survey)**

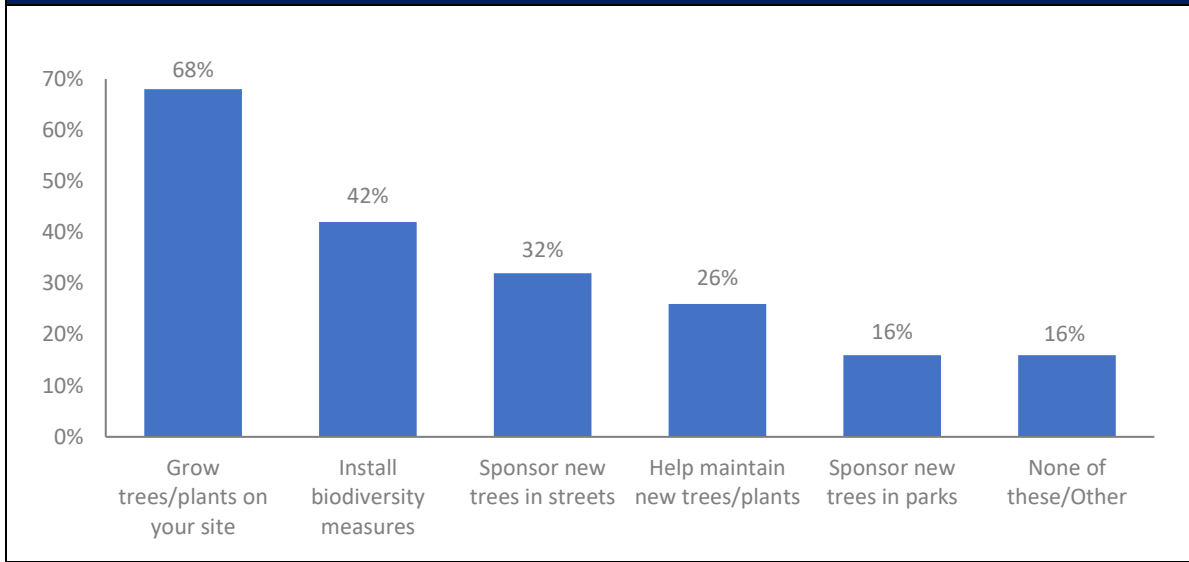


Figure 22 indicates that new planting could be supported by local businesses, with 68% stating that they “Could grow trees/plants on site”. “Installing biodiversity measures” and “Sponsor new trees in streets” were also popular measures that could be taken. This highlights the potential for synergies across multiple stakeholder groups in the borough moving forward. Running programs or events which allow residents and young people to work with businesses to plant trees on their private sites can realise a host of environmental and social benefits, including empowering communities, building community networks, carbon sequestration, and access to nature.

## 10. Barriers to Climate Change Action

### 10.1 Headline RBC Engagement Statistics

**63%** of businesses struggle to reduce emissions as “Green alternatives are **costly**”.

“**Upfront costs/too expensive**” make it difficult for **43%** of residents to take action.

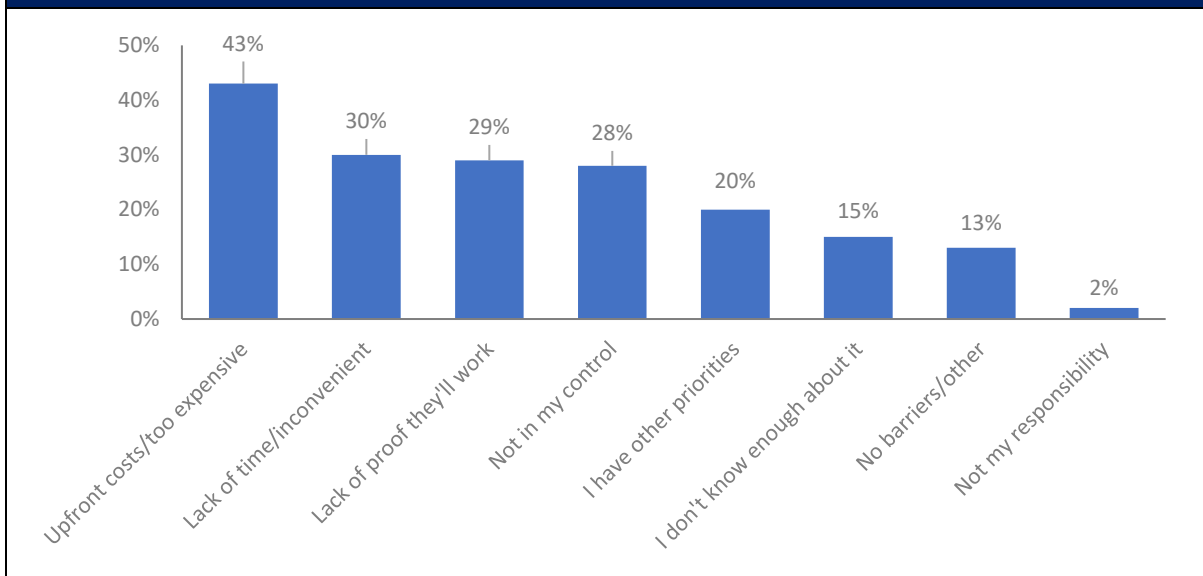
**42%** of businesses “**Lack the resources to act**” on reducing emissions.



## 10.2 RBC Engagement Findings

It is evident from the surveys that many individuals and groups are either making behavioural changes, or are willing to do more, in response to climate change. However, there remain many barriers to further action. These barriers cover a wide range of practical and psychological limitations, including a lack of resources, alternative priorities, lack of necessary information, or limited motivation. Understanding the dominant processes preventing further action on climate change is crucial to establish and implement policies and projects which will help to change behaviour.

**Figure 23: What makes it difficult to take some of the actions we've described? (Choice of up to three answers) (Source: RBC Resident Survey)**



'Upfront costs/too expensive' was the most frequently selected difficulty preventing residents acting on energy emissions, food habits, and consumption patterns, selected by 43% of 587 respondents shown in Figure 23. This likely reflects the high initial outlay on large-scale infrastructural changes, such as installing renewables, which have a relatively greater impact on reducing emissions. Considering this, access to grants may be of particular value to local people. However, access to these grants was found to be challenging in some cases. Feedback from the Surrey Gypsy and Traveller Communities Forum indicated that applying for grants was especially difficult for these groups due to not having a fixed address. Similarly, respondents in the Chertsey Town Teams focus group indicated that funding from some programs was very restrictive and extremely prescribed criteria prevents access to financial support from those that may want to act.

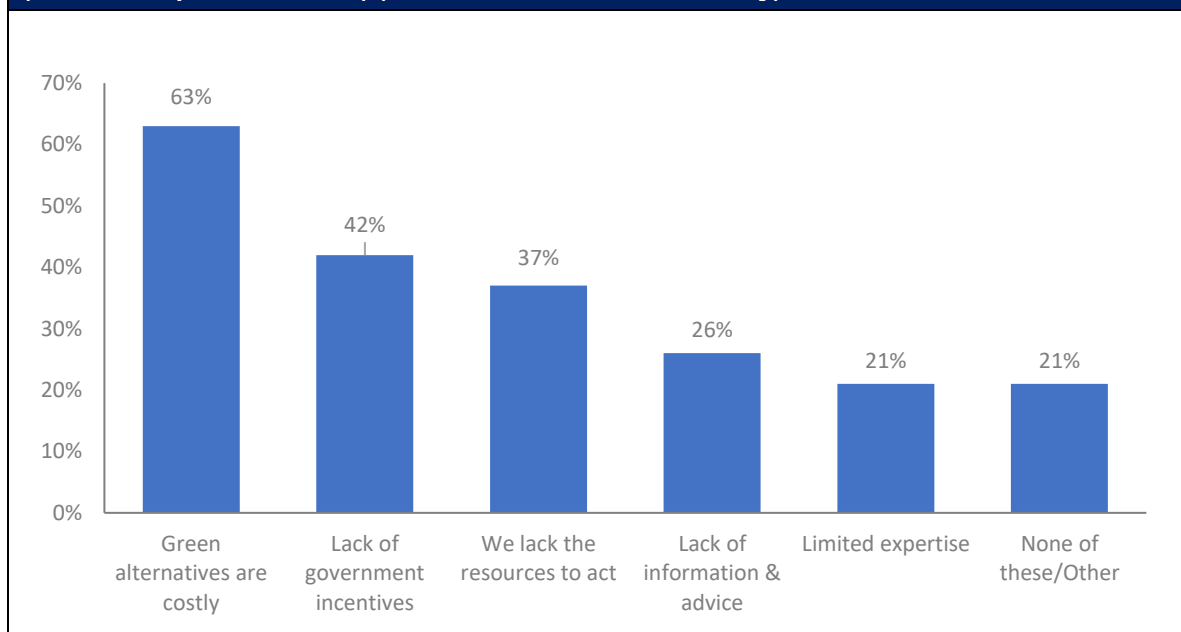
The Council could play a pivotal role, working with other organisations, to raise awareness of any opportunities that do arise and ensure that grants/financial support is available and accessible for widespread uptake of sustainable initiatives.

"Lack of time" and "I have other priorities" were selected by 30% and 20% of respondents, respectively in Figure 23, reflecting a need to ensure strategies seek co-benefits and fit within the daily lives of residents. One Chertsey Town Teams meeting participant described

how the planning approval for solar panels had taken longer than anticipated, leading them to miss the grant window. While this may be a difficult process to weigh up, the importance of a quick turnaround on these decisions is evident.

“Lack of proof they’ll work” and “I don’t know enough about it” responses, with scepticism around some proposed climate solutions such as EV cars mentioned during the Chertsey Town Team meeting, point to a lack of accurate or convincing information surrounding the benefits of certain behavioural changes. There may be some sectors where information is more crucial, such as that expressed during the Chertsey Community Action Meeting where a lack of awareness among residents on recycling locations and what can be recycled were key themes. Only 2% of respondents selected “Not my responsibility”.

**Figure 24: What makes it difficult for your organisation to reduce your carbon emissions? (Choice of up to 3 answers) (Source: RBC Business Survey)**



The expense barrier reflected by residents was similarly echoed by local businesses, as reflected in Figure 24. “Green alternatives are costly” was selected by 63% of respondents, and “Lack of government incentives” by 42% of respondents. This demonstrates the implications of green behaviours on businesses with a dominant focus on their finances.

Along a similar theme, a Business Runnymede Steering Group participant indicated that they had considered a shift to offering carbon offsetting services for their business activities but was concerned about losing business by highlighting this issue. Furthermore, respondents at Showmen’s Guild stated that while there are currently no EV lorries in their fleet, the greener models are more expensive and would need to come with incentives, such as reduced showground rental rates or VAT exemptions, or grants, if they are to be viable. This further reflects the dominant revenue motive among businesses, and how climate change actions are likely required to achieve co-benefits if to be widely adopted.

Referring to Figure 14, it is interesting that despite the cost limitations on businesses, only 10% have explored government grants. This points to a potential role for RBC in facilitating access to this information. During the Business Runnymede session, issues with getting planning approval for sustainable infrastructure, such as solar PV and heat pumps, were

also mentioned. Showmen's Guild highlighted further limitations in shifting to greener energy - due to the lack of electrical supply on showground sites, the community has stuck with generators and calor gas tanks which are suitable for regular travel.

Although "Lack of resources to act", "Lack of information" and "Limited expertise" were selected by comparably smaller percentages of businesses, illustrated in Figure 24, the responses still indicate that more support is needed. A respondent in the Addlestone Town Teams meeting indicated that a further barrier for some businesses is the need for Head Office approvals on decisions. Capacitating businesses to act and providing clear, regular information and access to experts on how they can act, are actions which RBC could adopt to support a sustainable transition.

## 11. Action Plan Priorities

### **11.1 Headline RBC Engagement Statistics**

***56% of businesses believe RBC should prioritise facilitating 'Access to Funds'.***

***Education in school was the most popular priority with young people.***

***'Improve travel and transport' was the most frequent priority for residents.***

### **11.2 RBC Engagement Findings**

The primary objective of the Council's 'Summer of Engagement on Climate Change' was to inform the RBC Climate Change Action Plan. By engaging local stakeholders in this process, the Action Plan can ensure these groups are consulted in decision-making and ensure the outputs are meaningful and stand the best opportunity of engaging those around the borough. While several possible actions have already been identified through exploring responses to questions on climate change attitudes, behaviours, and barriers, the following section reflects on explicit questions to all respondents on the RBC Action Plan and the priority areas for focus.

**Figure 25: Which wider community actions should be prioritised in RBC's Action Plan? (Choice of up to three answers) (Source: RBC Resident Survey)**

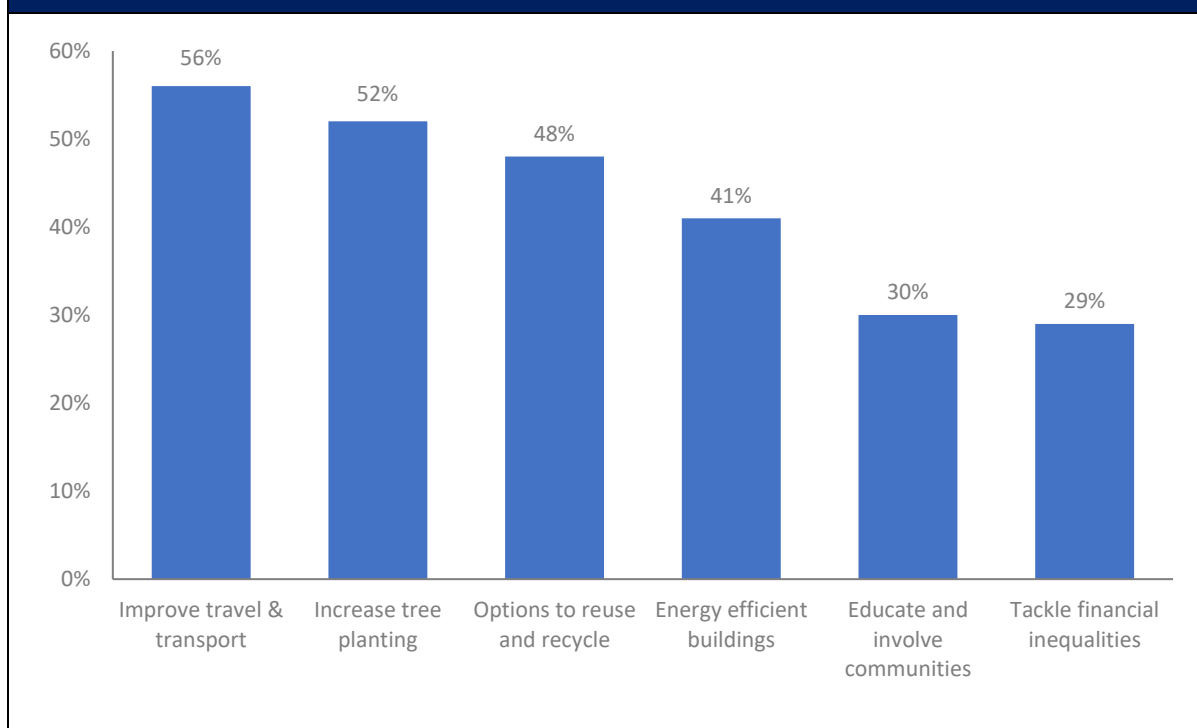
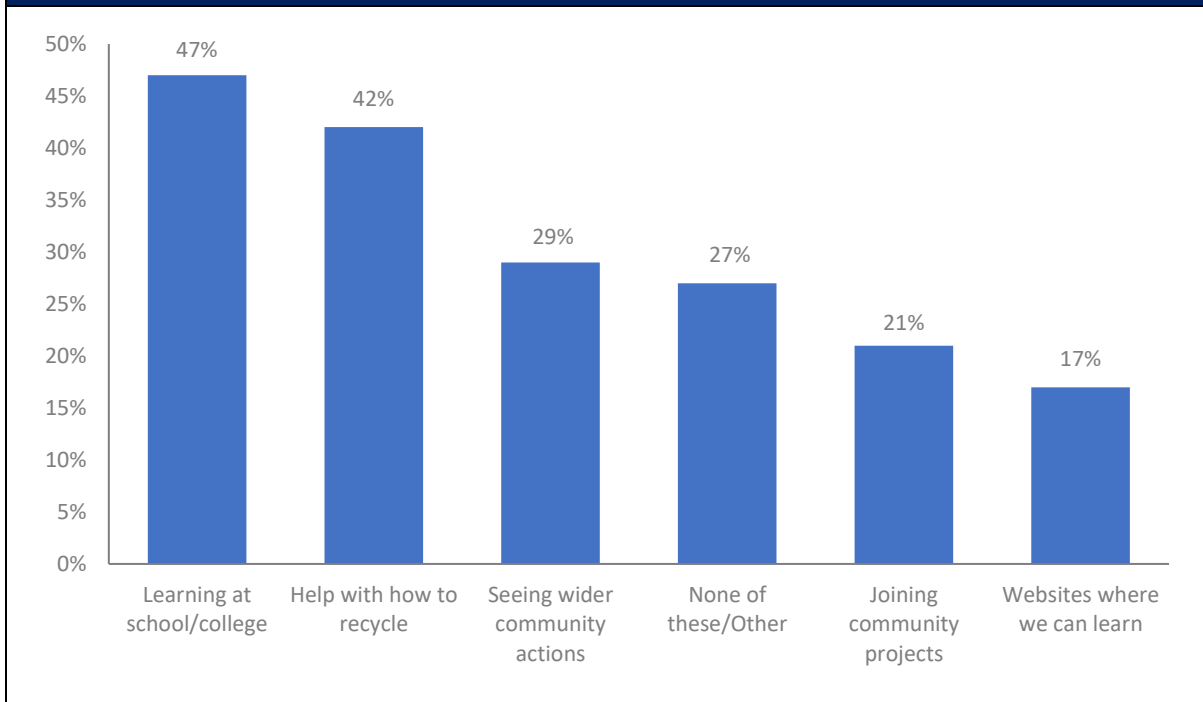


Figure 25 collates 547 responses from residents on actions to be prioritised in the RBC Action Plan. While it is evident that residents perceive multiple areas of focus, 'Improve travel and transport' (56%) and 'Increase tree planting' (52%) were the most frequently selected. Aligned to the theme of 'Improve travel and transport', feedback from Surrey Police representatives during the Business Runnymede Steering Group session identified a need to ensure storage facilities for sustainable transport (e.g., bicycles) are secure and reduce the risk of crime by working in collaboration with business, developers, and police.

Although, 'Educate and involve communities' (30%) and 'Tackle financial inequalities' (29%) were chosen least often, they were still considered to be important by a substantial number of respondents.

Community communication and engagement was a key theme in many meetings and focus groups discussions. During the Egham Resident's Association meeting and Community Action Meeting in Egham Hythe, the importance of RBC signposting climate change initiatives and information was evident. However, caution needs to be taken to ensure communication with residents uses clear, non-technical language; demonstrates the collective benefits of individual actions to build motivation; and recognises the diversity of audiences that need to be engaged. Respondents in the Chertsey Community Action Meeting pointed to a need to understand the audience, communicate regularly e.g., at events and pop-ups, and getting out into the community as key features of successfully communicating actions and intentions with the borough.

**Figure 26: What is most important to help you and your family tackle climate change? (Source: RBC Young People Survey)**



A comparable question was asked of young people, with the 424 responses received summarised in Figure 26. Similar to the residents' responses, a range of priorities are deemed important, most notably 'Learning at school/college' and 'Help with how to recycle'. Both priorities fall into the broader category of 'Education and Information provision' which is a key focus for young people.

While this highlights potential knowledge gaps, it is very encouraging to see that there is a desire amongst young people to engage with climate change topics and learn more about them. Local college representatives at the Business Runnymede steering group emphasised the importance of the Council engaging with colleges and their students, and potentially delivering carbon literacy training to a younger audience.

With only 17% of young people selecting 'Websites where we can learn', there is an inferred preference from this data that in-person sessions with face-to-face engagement are valued over online information.

**Figure 27: Which of these potential key actions do you think RBC should prioritise? (Choice of up to 4 answers) (Source: RBC Business Survey)**

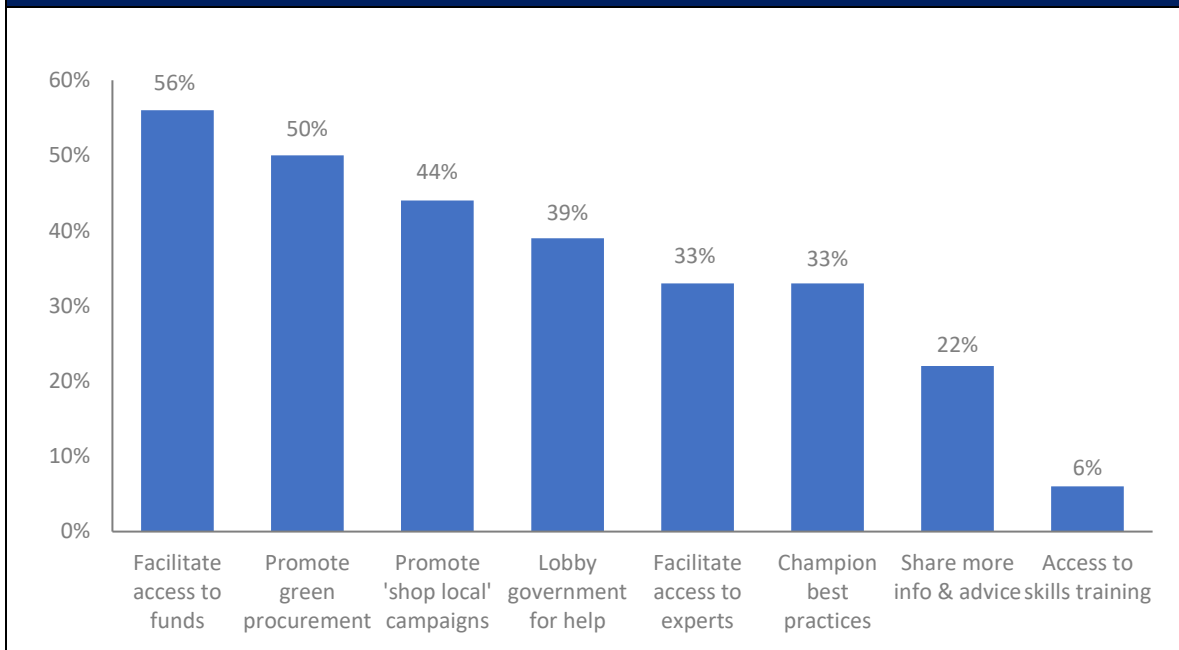


Figure 27 outlines the key priority action areas for RBC based on the Business Survey responses. Some responses follow the 'Education and Information provision' theme of young people, such as 'Facilitate access to experts'. This was a central theme of the Addlestone Town Teams focus group, where the potential RBC role of raising awareness among communities and businesses of platforms enabling the redistribution of surplus food, and more generally on climate change action, was evident.

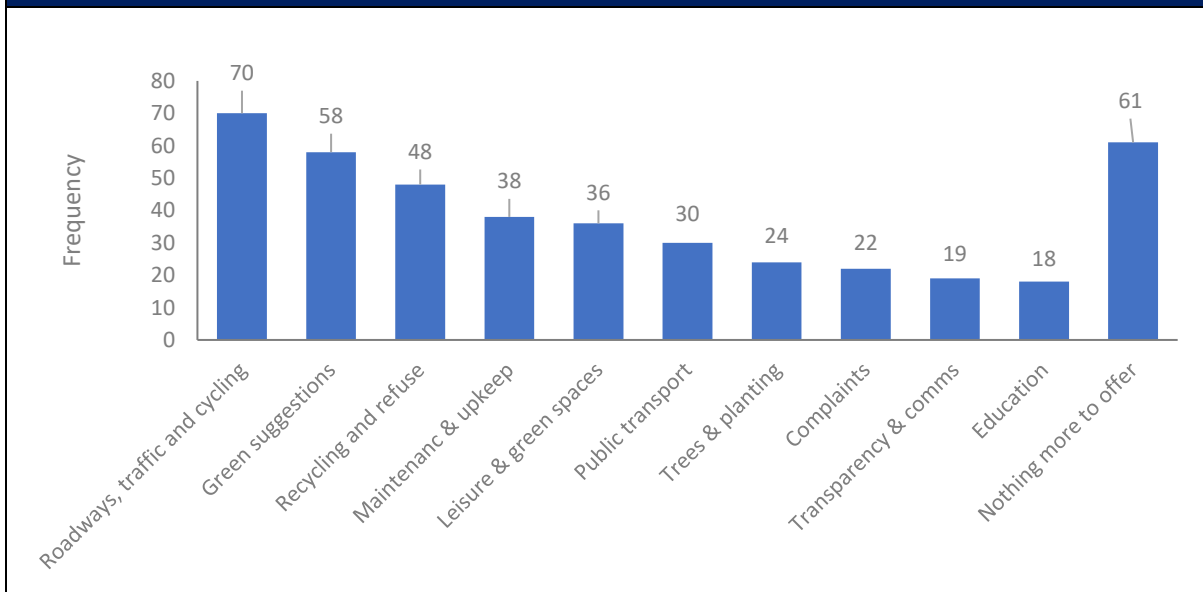
Furthermore, those attending responded well to suggestions that the Council could create and share 'best practice' toolkits on initiatives such as community fridges, which could then be replicated in other areas of the borough.

Showmen's Guild respondents also showed support for further information and publicising green policies and grants which could then be shared on their own platforms. Of greater focus for businesses are 'Access to funds' selected by 56% of respondents. This follows from the dominant barriers for further action on climate change for business relating to lack of resources and finance to overcome potentially costly emissions reduction initiatives. Given the low percentage of businesses that have explored government grants (Figure 14), RBC could play an important role in raising awareness of such grant opportunities.

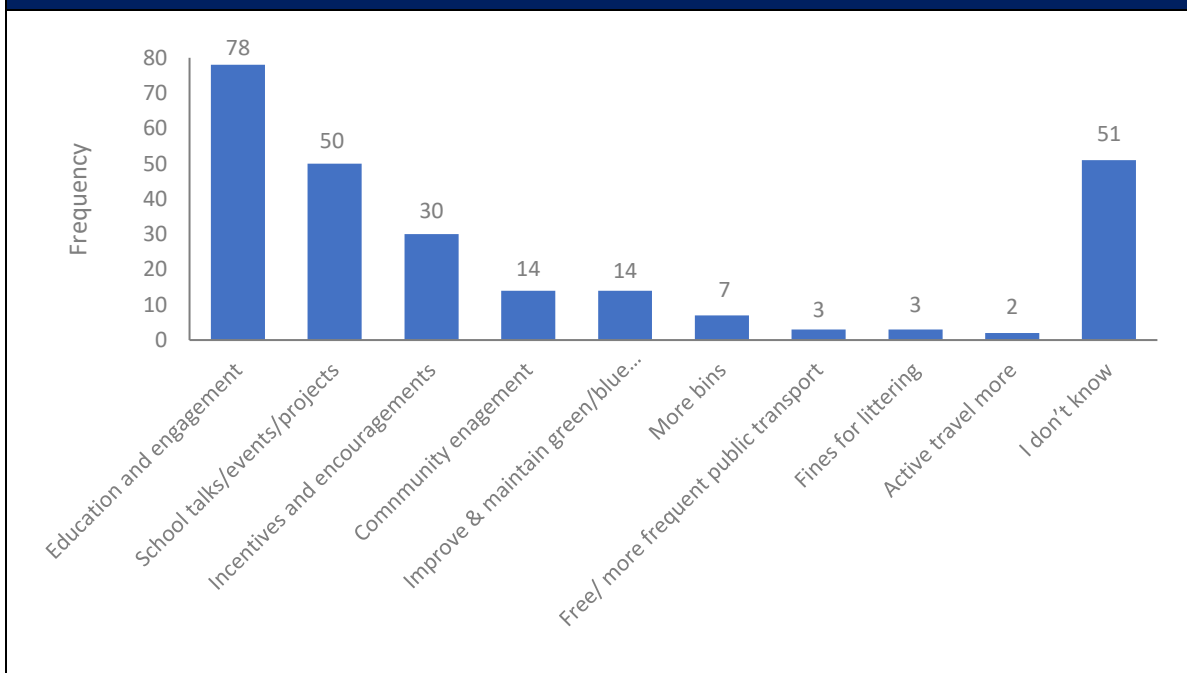
'Promote green procurement' was also a popular focus and is now supported by the new 'Procurement policy for Social Value' and 'Sustainable Procurement policy' implemented by RBC. Raising awareness of this among local businesses should be a focus to ensure they recognise the Council's ongoing commitments to empowering communities and the environment. This need for the Council to lead by example was also reflected in the Egham Residents Association meeting and Chertsey Community Action Meeting, where questions concerning the Council's new developments, potential emissions, and net zero ambitions were asked, and Chertsey Town Team meeting with a need to improve recycling facilities and facilitate the right infrastructure for action.

The final section of each survey sought qualitative responses on RBC Action Plan priorities. The key themes mentioned are detailed for the Resident’s Survey and Young People’s Survey in Figures 28 and 29. Both heavily reflect the priorities identified in Figure 25 and 26, reinforcing the key focus areas among these groups. Resident’s comments were most frequently associated with ‘Roadways, traffic, and cycling’, whereas ‘education and engagement’ and ‘school events’ were dominant themes among young people.

**Figure 28: ‘Do you have other comments/suggestions/priorities for shaping RBC’s Action Plan?’ (Source: RBC Resident Survey)**



**Figure 29: How could the Council work with young people more on climate change? (Source: RBC Young People Survey)**



### 11.3 RBC Engagement Findings – Qualitative Responses

The following section reports on some of the raw responses from these qualitative questions on the RBC Action Plan and Council priorities, supplemented by feedback from focus groups and meetings across the borough, organised around key themes. As far as possible these themes are aligned to those already presented in this summary and with those proposed in the draft Climate Change Action Plan. The qualitative responses included do not serve as an exhaustive list of all comments received across the three surveys, but those selected are indicative of the key themes. The following coding indicates the comment source:

- (R) - Resident's Survey Response
- (Y) - Young People's Survey Response
- (B) - Business Survey
- (O) - Other engagement method (to be stated alongside the comment)

#### Climate Change Denial

A significant theme arising in the Resident's Survey was **climate change denial**. Several respondents stated that anthropogenic climate change is made-up, referenced with terms such as 'scam', 'propaganda' and 'con':

- *"Nothing because Co2 emissions are a scam being used to implement more Gov't control and taxation"* (R)
- *"Nothing, because it is a scam. Stop wasting our money"* (R)
- *"I don't - anthropogenic climate change is a con"* (R)
- *"The government are screwing everyone over so no one will afford utilities including water. Working families get no help at all. Everything comes at a massive cost. Screw climate change"* (R)
- *"Climate change so-called solutions make governments and corporations lots of money, and poor people poorer."* (R)

On occasion, information regarding greenhouse gas emissions or anthropogenic climate change was used to justify these perspectives:

- *"Nothing. Carbon emissions are not the problem there is only 0.04 percent carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Scientific fact. Climate change is the biggest con perpetrated on mankind."* (R)
- *"Nothing at all. Carbon dioxide is the gas of life, without it we can't breathe and plants won't grow. Climate change is an evil scam. Stop the chemtrails and geo engineering."* (R)

#### Active and Sustainable Travel

Active travel and public transport were recurring themes among Resident's Survey respondents, acknowledging the importance of **sustainable transport**, but expressing concerns around difficulties in using it. Residents commented on issues concerning **reliability, convenience and cost** of public transport:

- *"Please improve public transport so it runs later. If we had a service like London. I would hardly ever use the car."* (R)



- *“Public transport is a joke in Surrey! £5 for 10 mins to Woking?! One bus every 30 mins???” (R)*
- *“To get people out of cars reduce public transport prices and improve the services.” (R)*
- *“Use of public transport/ bus in Egham is extremely unreliable and more expensive than in London!” (R)*
- *“Better public transport availability. Buses stop very early.” (R)*

Limited public transport has made many people feel like they need to maintain private vehicles. However, residents mentioned that to switch from petrol/diesel to more sustainable options, such as electric vehicles, there needs to be more **EV charging infrastructure**, alongside **planning/funding support** for their implementation:

- *“Install electric car charging points” (R)*
- *“With the drive towards electric vehicles there is a need for the infrastructure to support them. No where near enough accessible charging points. Until every public car parking space has a charging point the move to ban petrol vehicles is frankly ridiculous.” (R)*
- *“Most of the street had their front garden converted into a parking space a few years ago. We applied for it last year and were refused! We want to install an electric car charger asap and change our diesel car into an electric one.” (R)*
- *“Give more incentives to use fully electric vehicles. Follow Norway’s lead and make it beneficial to drive non-polluting and quiet vehicles. Currently electric charge points installed in Virginia Water useless as not dedicated to electric vehicle, limited parking for slow charge and too expensive.” (R)*

Many residents desire improved **cycling and walking infrastructure** to facilitate active and sustainable travel options. The lack of well-maintained and separated cycle networks were often cited as making cycling unsafe within the borough:

- *“A more effective, safer and efficient cycle path network.” (R)*
- *“Upgrade cycling facilities, cyclists use the 1st metre of a road, usually the worst maintained. More off road cycling like gravel paths.” (R)*
- *“NCN routes and cycle paths in borough are a disgrace and need to be avoided at all costs for safety reasons.” (R)*
- *“Better pedestrianisation of towns to encourage more people out of their cars. Better public transport. Better and more cycle and walking paths.” (R)*
- *“Maintenance of existing walking & cycling pathways will make of more likely that people will use these facilities. This should be prioritised ahead of or equivalent to any road maintenance programmes.” (R)*

Moving away from an explicit focus on active and sustainable transport, **Road maintenance** was also a recurring theme with many stating that the quality of the roads needs improvement:

- *“The roads quality is absolutely appalling, I hurt my back driving over potholes! Worst in the UK!” (R)*
- *“Fill in the POTHLES that we pay council tax for to help” (R)*
- *“Fix the POTHLES!” (R)*
- *“Get the infrastructure right first, the roads are in a terrible state, I often feel I’m looking down at the road to avoid potholes rather than looking ahead and behind at traffic”. (R)*

## Reducing borough-wide Waste

Several respondents requested an improvement in **recycling and waste management** services. The focusses for improvement varied. Some wanted more recycling bins, while others wanted an expansion of the current items that are allowed to be recycled:

- *“More recycling bins for households”* (R)
- *“Better (actually have) refuse and recycling services for flats.”* (R)
- *“More recycling facilities to deal with items not currently recycled in Runnymede”* (R)
- *“I still don't know if I can recycle Tetra Pak, at the moment I'm collecting them and then driving them to a tip in Lyne.”* (R)
- *“Upgrade Lyne Recycling centre to at least include separate facilities for glass & different plastics”* (R)
- *“Offer a recycling service to businesses”* (B)
- *A major issue for gypsy and traveller communities is the lack of a fixed address, which means they are unable to sign up for local bin or recycling services* (O - Surrey Gypsy and Traveller Communities Forum)
- *Meeting discussed the lack of recycling facilities for businesses. Although respondents would like to be able to recycle their commercial waste on site or at events, they lack the infrastructure to do this, and private recycling services are deemed expensive* (O - Chertsey Town Teams Meeting).
- *Issues with recycling in flat shares and shared bin areas, which also raises problems for refuse collectors* (O - Chertsey Community Action Meeting).

## Natural Environment and Biodiversity

Many respondents identified issues regarding green spaces, including various suggestions for how to best act on these concerns.

Residents and young people believe that there should be **more trees** planted, alongside a concurrent focus on **biodiversity** through programmes such as **rewilding** within the borough's green spaces:

- *“Please plant more trees, keep them green spaces green and encourage wildlife. Plant more wild flowers in the borders fir the bees”* (R)
- *“More rewilding/no mow areas/flowers for pollinators- coupled with better communications so that people don't complain about 'untidy' verges etc. Better use of council areas for nature (e.g., roundabouts.”* (R)
- *“Please do understand that tree planting is a very small part of maintaining our attempting to increase biodiversity. meadows, various grasslands, scrub land, natural regeneration through successional stages, wood pasture and parkland, hedgerows, cutting regimes, dead wood standing buried or piled are all important. Protecting existing established trees is more important than planting new ones.”* (R)
- *“Please consider leaving verges and areas of green space to rewild. This would reduce the cost of maintenance and letting grasses and plants to grow significantly improves the environment for a wildlife”.* (R)
- *“Plant more trees and protect more wildlife”* (Y)
- *“Plant more trees throughout public parks and around streets.”* (Y)
- *“Stop deforestation”* (Y)
- *“Stop hurting the environment”* (Y)

Building **new developments** on Green Belt land was another concern among residents. Many residents wanted to maintain the borough's green spaces rather than lose them to new housing developments. Residents also cited a **lack of infrastructure** to support the new developments:

- *"Stop building on green belt land."* (R)
- *"Stop building on green spaces around Chertsey. Trees are being taken down increasing flood liability. Local areas are being ruined, mass housing being erected while local services, roads, natural areas and facilities crumble."* (R)
- *"Stop building new homes especially on green sites - the area is overcrowded as it is with lots of building planned on the few remaining green spaces we have - this leads to terrible traffic and pollution as well as less green space - build new homes in less crowded/busy places or redevelop the large amounts of empty office spaces."* (R)
- *"Stop building on green belts! If building more houses, you need more schools more doctors and more dentists!"*. (R)
- *"Stop building on what was once green belt land that was moved to suite home building."* (R)

Several residents mentioned that they want green spaces such as **parks to be better maintained** and to host **better facilities**. However, some of these comments somewhat contradict requests to rewild green spaces:

- *"Sort out the children s paddling pools and facilities in local parks."* (R)
- *"Not very green having to drive to Runnymede pleasure park."* (R)
- *"Perhaps the RBC could clear roadside Kerbs of weeds and mow green spaces eg parks"* (R)
- *"Please look again at the park keeping the majority of parks and greenspaces have become an overgrown rubbish strewn mess."* (R)
- *"Please make our park areas more playable. Poorly kept parks, grass too long and too many weeds. Really devastated at such poor park areas, and public toilets are locked?!!!"*. (R)

**Littering** was also an identified issue, with mention of litter being seen across the borough in streets and green spaces:

- *"A program to deter people from littering...I think Runnymede is covered In Litter"* (R)
- *"Also, there is far too much litter thrown out of cars spoiling the roads and verges."* (R)
- *"More regular street cleaning and either bigger bins or more regular emptying of the existing ones in and around Egham is a lovely place but I see so much litter."* (R)
- *"Have more public recycle bins so there is less litter"*. (Y)
- *"More bins - less rubbish on floor"*. (Y)

However, there was a positive desire among young people to be involved in **solutions** on littering, engaging in volunteer litter picks or in environmental improvement groups:

- *"Volunteering and litter picking"*. (Y)
- *"Take trips to parks to litter pick"*. (Y)
- *"Litter picking"*. (Y)
- *"Maybe create some groups to help you improve the environment by picking up litter and other things"*. (Y)

## Cost and Incentives

Many residents noted that **cost** was a significant barrier for reducing daily emissions, especially in the current climate with an ongoing cost of living crisis:

- *“Make it more affordable and accessible. Rent is already too expensive. Then there’s the taxes. For people like me who is not paid enough, I couldn’t care less if the world burns down due to climate change.”* (R)
- *“Reduce cost of public transport, reduce roadworks that cause traffic pollution”.* (R)
- *“None, cannot afford hybrid/electric car”.* (R)

Among young people, businesses and various meetings, a focus on **incentives and benefits** was seen as needed to encourage more involvement with climate change action and promote behavioural change:

- *“Create events that give out good rewards”.* (Y)
- *“Create free activities to help clean up the roads and areas with the promise of rewards to the highest achieving helper.”* (Y)
- *“Create jobs and clubs that will appeal to the eyes of young people and also grant rewards as this will encourage more to join and continue.”* (Y)
- *“Give them a reward for helping out and giving them chances to get out of school on help days”.* (Y)
- *“Give away free seeds to residents”.* (B)
- *“I’d hope that the current £2 bus scheme could continue in order to encourage public transport usage”.* (B)
- *Potential for voucher scheme for secondary school children to cycle to school, similar to a cycle to work scheme* (O - Runnymede Business Steering Group).
- *Incentives believed to be a key part of behaviour change* (O - Egham Residents Association).

A response in the Business Survey reflected the cost of action for the Council alongside residents and business, and a need to provide **co-benefits** from action:

- *“But really this is going to cost a lot of money but it is money we have to spend. The key is to make sure it creates smart opportunity for the local community and local businesses and not a dumb cost.”* (B)

## Climate Change Education and Engagement

A key feature throughout all surveys was a need for education relating to climate change. Among the Resident’s Survey respondents, some were willing to reduce their emissions but **lacked the guidance** or the know-how to do so:

- *“Lack of education on some subjects”* (R)
- *“Lack of information”* (R)
- *“Greater awareness of sustainability / green issues and how small actions make a difference would really help. Relatively few people seem to consider what actions they could easily make part of their everyday activities.”* (R)
- *“By enhancing public discussions and showing with different approaches how small actions by each individual can have an impact if performed by the whole community”* (Y)

To address this issue, **education** was a frequent suggestion, with many residents and young people stating that education on climate change from a young age is especially important:

- *“Education from a young age about environmental effect on Their Future.” (R)*
- *“Education is an absolute priority - along with actively tackling miss-information & climate breakdown denial.” (R)*
- *“Education is key and start teaching children from a young age how important looking after our environment it.” (R)*
- *“Add more climate change awareness in school” (Y)*
- *“By going school to school educating people.” (Y)*
- *“By making lessons about climate change fun and interactive.” (Y)*
- *“Educate children about the negatives of climate change and what it’s doing to the world.” (Y)*
- *“Focus on the promoting of awareness by inviting in experts” (B)*

Among young people, there was an apparent preference for this education occurring **within schools**, and the **Council** coming into schools to talk about these topics:

- *“Come into schools for assemblies and talk about climate change and ways to prevent it.” (Y)*
- *“Come to schools and educate everyone about how we can stop or tackle climate change.” (Y)*
- *“Have a lesson every few weeks in school where a member of the council could talk to year groups individually about the progress they made on the environment in the past month. This way, we can see how much the council does and what we can do as well to help them out in the best way possible.” (Y)*

Alongside education, **community engagement** was a recurring theme, with residents and young people feeling they should be given the opportunity to contribute to the climate action taken within the borough. Furthermore, these groups wanted **support from the Council** in their own climate actions and creation of clubs/projects:

- *“Community involvement should not be instead of council action, but a supplement it” (R)*
- *“Education, engagement core to successful” (R)*
- *“We need to start thinking about what individuals and communities need to start doing in terms of adaptation and not just mitigation.” (R)*
- *“Involve community in how to improve local issues” (R)*
- *“Allow schools to do more talks with the council to allow views to be passed on as well as having more chances for young people to get out and do more things to help the community” (Y)*
- *“By setting up community events to teach young ones about climate change” (Y)*
- *“Create a club for children who want to tackle climate change.” (Y)*
- *“Create groups of young people to plant trees and learn about what climate change is and what we can do to help.” (Y)*
- *“They could start a teenage community challenge.” (Y)*
- *“Do community projects” (Y)*
- *Discussion topic focussed on previous initiatives where a skip was placed in a specific location for a period of time to combat fly tipping. Residents were made aware in advance, and this was often co-ordinated with litter picks in the surrounding area (O - Chertsey Community Action Meeting).*
- *A respondent indicated that loneliness in the borough is an issue, and that opportunities to engage with community initiatives presents potential co-benefits for both the environment and mental health (O - Community Action Meeting Egham Hythe)*

[Annex A – Survey Questions for RBC Residents, Young People, and Businesses \(designed by Built ID Ltd and hosted on their ‘Give my View’ platform\)](#)

## Residents Survey Questions

### Screen 1

1. Which area of Runnymede do you live in?

Addlestone & Rowtown / Ottershaw / Thorpe / Woodham & New Haw / Egham / Englefield Green / Longcross & Lyne / Chertsey / Virginia Water / None of these areas

**Screen 2** – Quick Fact. Runnymede Borough Council (RBC) would love to hear about the positive steps communities are already taking to tackle climate change, but also explore some of the difficulties people are facing, so that we can understand how we can help.

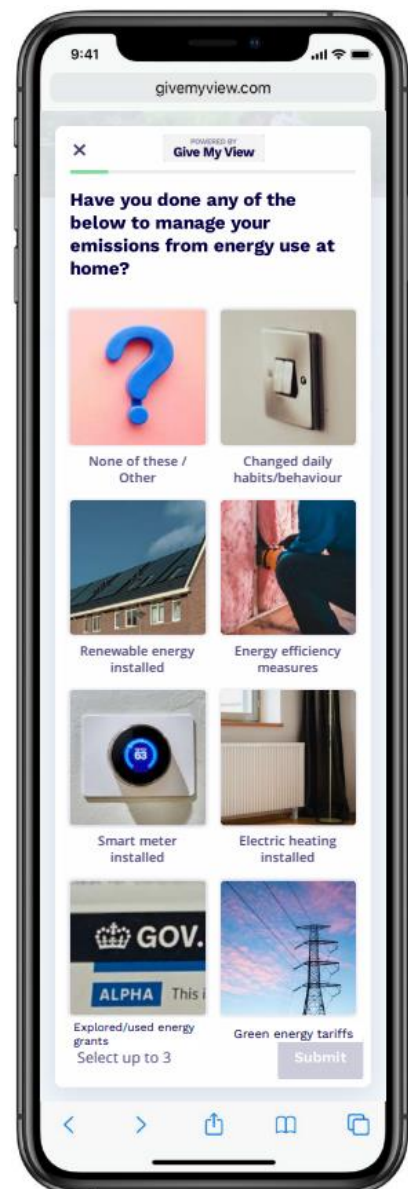
### Screen 3

2. Which of these statements resonate most with you in relation to climate change? [Select up to 3]
  - This is top priority for me
  - I contribute enough already
  - I worry about climate change
  - I worry about other things
  - A community effort is needed
  - Going ‘green’ is too expensive
  - Need more info on the topic
  - My actions make a difference

### Screen 4

3. Have you done any of the below to manage your emissions from energy use at home?
  - Energy efficiency measures
  - Electric heating installed
  - Renewable energy installed
  - Changed daily habits / behaviour
  - Smart meter installed
  - Green energy tariffs
  - Explored/used energy grants
  - None of these / other

**Screen 5** – [If ‘other’ selected] What else do you do to reduce your carbon emissions at home?



## Screen 6

4. Have you made any of these changes to your food buying and eating habits?
- Avoid meat and dairy
  - Meat-free more often
  - Reduce dairy consumption
  - Eat more organic food
  - Grow my own food
  - Choose locally sourced food
  - Planning meals/using leftovers
  - None of these/other

**Screen 7** – [If 'other' selected] What other changes have you made to your food buying and eating habits?

## Screen 8

5. Are you doing any of the following to help reduce waste and consume sustainably? [Select up to 3]
- Donate to charity/reuse shops
  - Try to repair/fix items
  - Choose products made locally
  - Buy/reuse second-hand items
  - Limit non-essential purchases
  - Avoid high-plastic items
  - Buy more durable items
  - None of these / other

**Screen 9** [If 'other' selected] What else do you do to help reduce waste and consume sustainably?

## Screen 10

6. Do you recycle items that can't be put in your recycling bin (e.g., plastic bags, batteries, electrical goods, wrapping paper)
- Yes / No / Sometimes

## Screen 11

7. What makes it difficult to take some of the actions we've described? [Select up to 3]
- I have other priorities
  - Not my responsibility
  - Lack of proof they'll work
  - I don't know enough about it
  - Lack of time/inconvenient
  - Upfront costs / too expensive
  - Not in my control
  - No barriers/other



**Screen 12** – [If ‘other’ selected] What makes it difficult to take some of the actions we’ve described

**Screen 13**

8. Are you taking any of the following actions to reduce emissions when travelling? [Select up to 3]
- I car share / use car club
  - I try to avoid flying
  - Take the bus/train where possible
  - Offset plane carbon emissions
  - I drive a hybrid/electric car
  - I walk as much as possible
  - I cycle where possible
  - None of these / other

**Screen 14** – [If ‘other’ selected] What other actions to you take to reduce emissions when travelling?

**Screen 15**

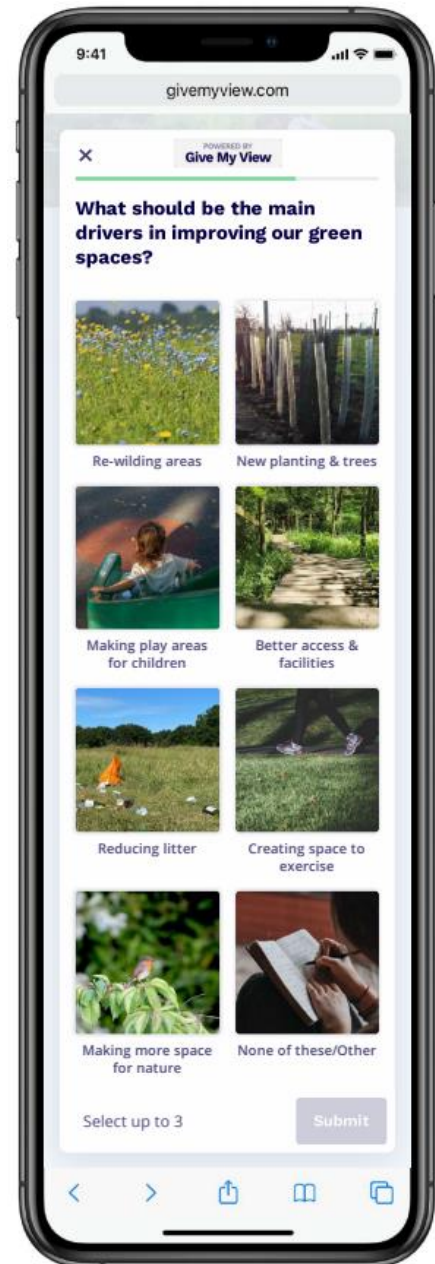
9. What makes it difficult for you to use more sustainable transport?
- Road safety
  - Lack of / poor quality infrastructure
  - Too expensive
  - Time constraints
  - Health / mobility concerns
  - I don’t know the options
  - Too unreliable
  - No barriers / other

**Screen 16** – [If ‘other’ selected] What else makes it difficult to use more sustainable transport?

**Screen 17**

10. What should be the main drivers in improving our green spaces? [Select 3]
- Boosting biodiversity & nature
  - Ease of access
  - Spaces for mental health/wellbeing
  - Spaces children can play
  - Opportunities to exercise
  - Good places to meet others
  - Opportunities to cool down
  - More trees to store carbon

**Screen 18** – What else should we do to improve our green spaces?





### **Screen 19**

11. Do you think about the sustainability of services / organisations that you spend your money on?

- No, never
- Yes, definitely
- Yes, sometimes

**Screen 20** – Quick fact: “RBC’s Climate Change Action Plan will contain steps to help reduce emissions as well as achieve cleaner air, green jobs, public health/biodiversity improvements. Your input will help them know what to prioritise.

### **Screen 21**

12. Which wider community actions should be prioritised in RBC’s action plan?

- increase reuse and recycling
- make buildings more energy efficient
- improve active travel & public transport
- educate, involve and inform communities
- increase tree planting and improve biodiversity
- tackle financial inequalities

### **Screen 22**

13. Do you have any other suggestions / comments / priorities for shaping RBC’s Action Plan?

## Young People's Survey (under 18s)

### Screen 1

1. Which area of Runnymede do you live in? (or learn in, if you don't live here!)

Addlestone & Rowtown / Ottershaw / Thorpe / Woodham & New Haw / Egham / Englefield Green / Longcross & Lyne / Chertsey / Virginia Water / None of these areas

### Screen 2

Quick fact: Runnymede Borough Council (RBC) is on a mission to help address climate change.

This survey is for people aged under 18, but there are some rules about who can fill it in:

- **Under 13s:** we'll send you a paper survey. Please ask a parent/guardian to contact [climatechange@runnymede.gov.uk](mailto:climatechange@runnymede.gov.uk)
- **13-18s:** go ahead, but please ask your guardian before you share your email.

### Screen 3

1. How worried are you about climate change? [Slider vote: Not worried at all – Very worried]

### Screen 4

2. What concerns you about climate change? [Select up to 3]

- Reliance on fossil fuels
- Overuse of plastics
- Too much going to landfills
- Transport pollution
- Lack of recycling
- Deforestation
- Too many emissions
- I'm not really concerned

### Screen 5

3. Are you aware of what RBC is already doing to tackle climate change?

- Yes I am
- No, I am not
- I'm not sure

### Screen 6

4. What things do you and your family do to help reduce your energy and water use? [Select up to 4]

- Turn off the tap when brushing
- Take shorter showers



- Turn the heating down
- Switch off lights when leaving
- Not use devices for too long
- Have solar panels on our roof
- Reuse the bath water
- None of these / other

**Screen 7** – [If ‘other’] What else do you do to help reduce energy and water use?

### Screen 8

5. What ways of getting around Runnymede do you and your family use the most? [Select up to 3]

- Bus
- Train
- Walking
- E-scooter / e-bike
- Electric vehicle
- Car / motorcycle
- Cycling
- Mobility scooter / wheelchair

### Screen 9

6. What would help you use sustainable transport more often (e.g. buses/bikes/trains)? [Select up to 2]

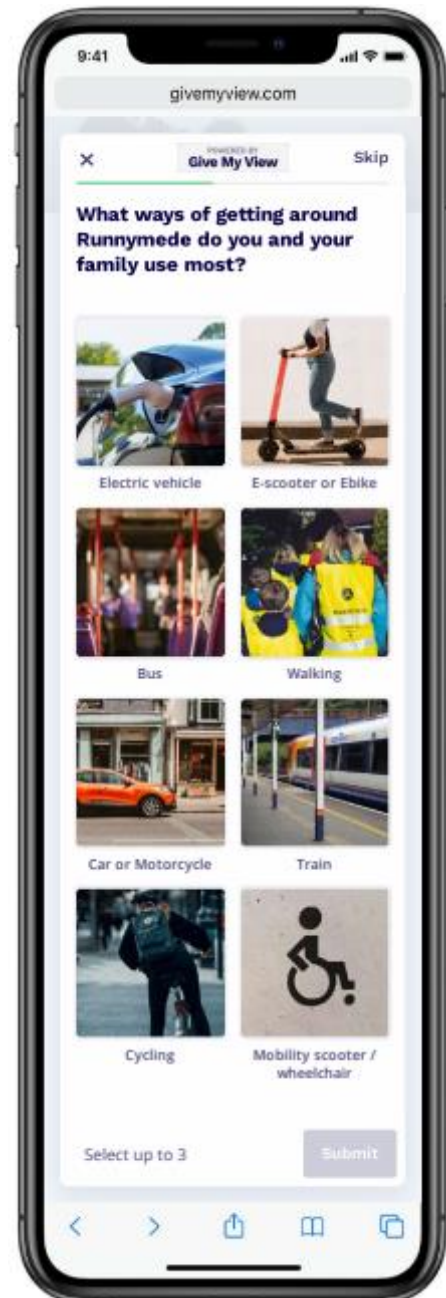
- If the roads were safer
- Better walking routes
- More affordable tickets
- Better cycling routes
- More frequent/reliable buses
- None of these / other

**Screen 10** – [If ‘other’] What stops you from using sustainable transport?

### Screen 11

7. What things do you and your family do to help reduce waste and eat sustainably? [Select up to 3]

- Recycle difficult items
- Recycle paper, card & glass
- Composting food waste
- Choosing products from the UK
- Eating less meat & dairy
- Buying second-hand items
- Buying less stuff
- None of these / other



### Screen 12

8. How would you like Runnymede's environment to be improved? [Highest priority – lowest priority]

- More trees & plants on streets
- More trees & plants in the parks
- Protect more wildlife areas
- Improve our rivers & lakes

### Screen 13

9. What is most important to help you & your family tackle climate change? [Select up to 3]

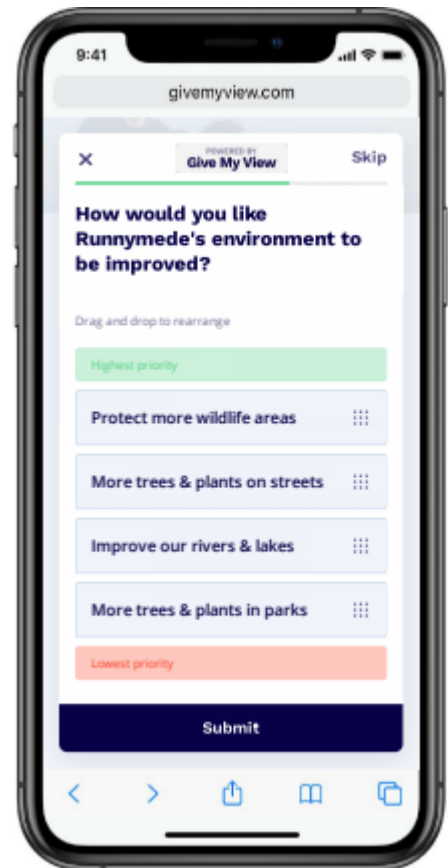
- Joining community projects
- Learning at school/college
- Websites where we can learn
- Help with how to recycle
- Seeing wider community actions
- None of these things/ other

### Screen 14

10. How could the Council work with young people more on climate change? [2000 word limit]

### Screen 15

11. Please let us know any other thoughts for RBC's Climate Change Action Plan? [2000 word limit]



## Organisations Survey Questions

### Screen 1

1. Which area of Runnymede do you operate in?

Addlestone & Rowtown / Ottershaw / Thorpe / Woodham & New Haw / Egham /  
Englefield Green / Longcross & Lyne / Chertsey / Virginia Water / None of these areas

### Screen 2

Quick Fact: Runnymede Borough Council (RBC) is developing an action plan containing a number of key actions, including those for partners in the wider community such as businesses and organisations, to help achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

This survey needs to be completed by someone who's familiar with the challenges and opportunities the organisation faces in taking climate change action.

### Screen 3

2. Do you support RBC's commitments to reach net zero carbon emissions?
  - Yes, fully supportive
  - Yes, fairly supportive
  - Not supportive
  - I need more info to decide

**Screen 4** [If not supportive] It would be great to know why you feel this way, please do let us know. [Open text]

### Screen 5

3. In regard to climate change, which of the following do you resonate with the most?  
[Select up to 4]
  - It's a high priority for us
  - We have other priorities
  - We worry about business impact
  - We don't worry about impact
  - We have a responsibility here
  - We are not responsible

### Screen 6

4. Do you do any of the following to reduce your organisation's energy & water use?  
[Select up to 3]
  - Better energy/water efficiency
  - Installed smart meter
  - Installed renewable energy
  - Calculate our carbon footprint
  - Use green electricity tariffs
  - Explored government grants
  - Promote behaviour changes
  - None of these / other

**Screen 7** – [If 'other'] What else do you do to reduce your organisation's energy & water use

### Screen 8

5. What would make it easier to lower energy use/use green energy? [2000 word limit]

### Screen 9

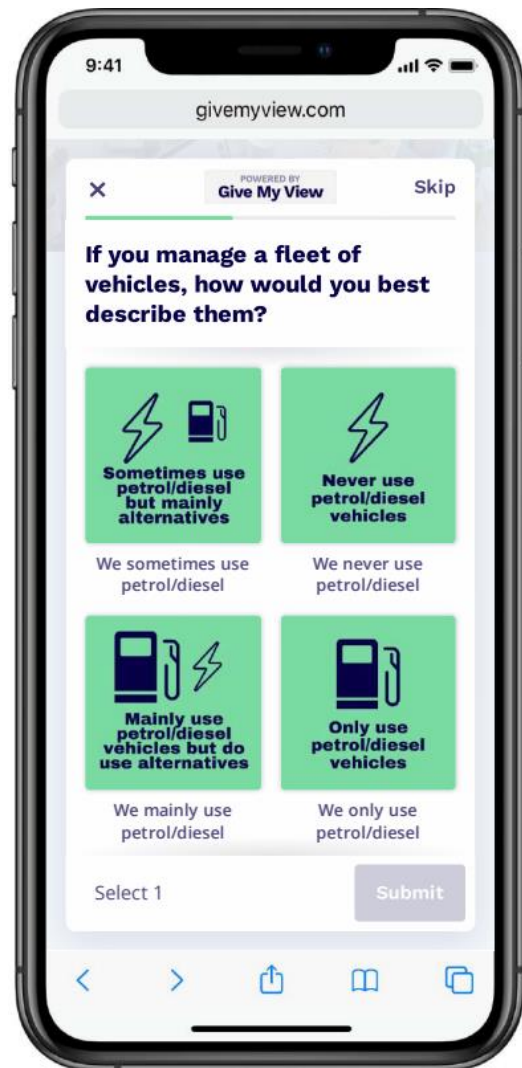
6. If you manage a fleet of vehicles, how would you best describe them? [Option to skip]
- Mainly use petrol/diesel vehicles
  - Mainly use petrol/diesel, but do use alternatives
  - Sometimes use petrol / diesel, but mainly use alternatives
  - Never use petrol / diesel vehicles

### Screen 10

7. What are the modes of transport most used by your staff to get to work? [Select up to 4]
- Company electric/hybrid car
  - Private electric/hybrid car
  - Company petrol/diesel car
  - Private petrol/diesel car
  - Private car share
  - Walking / Cycle
  - Public transport
  - Car club

### Screen 11

8. What would encourage staff to take more sustainable modes of transport? [2000 word limit]



### Screen 12

9. When making purchase decisions, do you consider any of the following? [Select up to 3]
- Packaging used in delivery
  - Durability of products
  - Recyclability of products
  - If products are made locally
  - Sustainable ethos of suppliers
  - Sustainably sourced products
  - Carbon footprint of products
  - None of these / other

### Screen 13

10. What would make it easier for your organisation to buy sustainably / reduce waste? [2000 word limit]

### Screen 14

11. Could you help improve Runnymede's environment by doing any of the following? (Yes/No)

- Grow trees/plants on your site
- Sponsor new trees in parks
- Sponsor new trees in streets
- Help maintain new trees/plants
- Apply biodiversity measures
- None of these / other

### Screen 15

12. What else do you think you can do to help Runnymede's environment? [2000 words]

### Screen 16

13. What makes it difficult for your organisation to reduce carbon emissions? [Select up to 3]

- Lack of information & advice
- We lack the resources to act
- Green alternatives are costly
- Limited expertise
- Lack of government incentives
- None of these / other

### Screen 17

14. What else makes it difficult to reduce your organisations' carbon emissions?

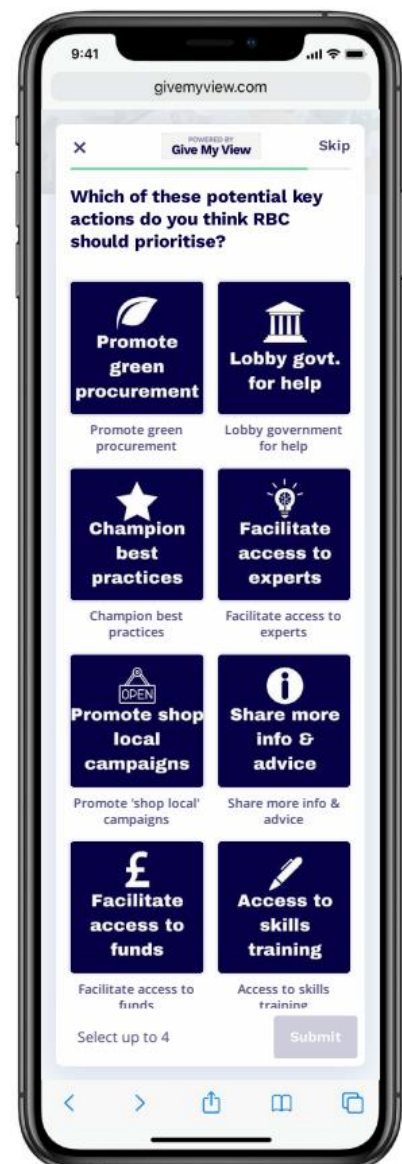
### Screen 18

15. Which of these potential actions do you think RBC should prioritise? [Select up to 4]

- Facilitate access to funds
- Facilitate access to experts
- Champion best practices
- Access to green skills training
- Share more info & advice
- Promote green procurement
- Lobby govt. for help
- Promote 'shop local' campaigns

### Screen 19

16. Do you have any other comments/suggestions/priorities for shaping RBC's action plan? [2000 word limit]



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