



WELWYN HATFIELD

Report name: Community Climate Action Survey

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Position: Climate Change Officer

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Welwyn Hatfield declared a climate emergency in 2019 and is committed to being net zero as an organisation by 2030 and as a borough by 2050.

The Council understands it is vital to include residents in our pathway to net zero as a borough by 2050. Whilst the Council has no direct control over people's decisions and lifestyle choices, we do have a responsibility and role to play in educating, encouraging, enabling and empowering people to make positive behaviour changes.

1.3 Aims and objectives

As such, we launched a climate action survey, offering residents the chance to have their say and the chance to win a £30 electronic gift card for RSPB. The aim of the survey was to gauge current levels of resident engagement with climate related issues, gain a better understanding of what people are currently doing to mitigate or adapt to climate change and what motivates them. The overall objective is to develop future actions/initiatives/events to facilitate the aspirations of those within our borough to support of the net zero boroughwide target of 2050.

Figure 1 Council Sphere of Influence



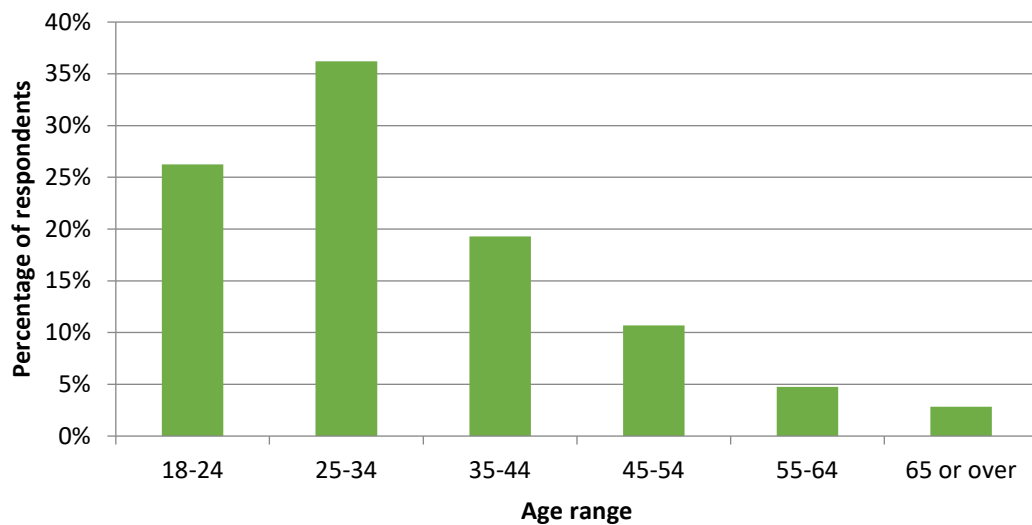
(Source; Councillor workbook – The local path to net zero | Local Government Association)

2 RESULTS

This section presents the findings of the survey. We would like to extend our thanks to all the participants of the community climate action survey.

2.1 Question One - What is your age group?

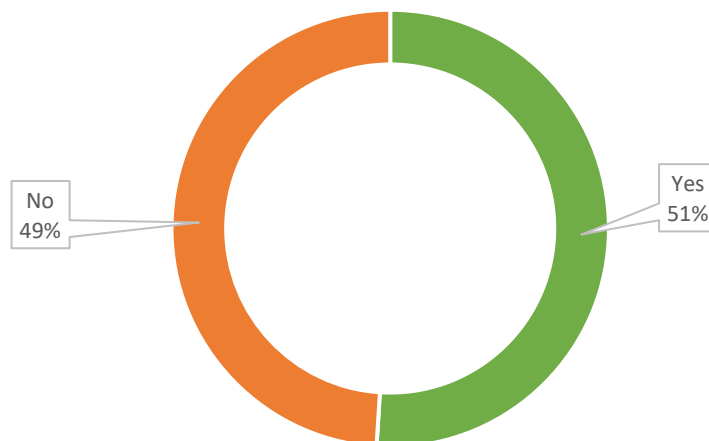
Answer Choices	Responses	
	Number	Percentage
18-24	177	26
25-34	244	36
35-44	130	19
45-54	72	11
55-64	32	5
65 or over	19	3
Answered	674	99
Did not respond	4	1



The majority of respondents were aged 25-34 (35%), followed by 18-24 (26%), 35 – 44 (19%), 45-54 (11%) 55- 64 (5%) and over 65 (3%). Four people did not answer this question.

2.2 Question Two - Would you be interested in receiving an e-newsletter that provides climate action updates, promotes initiatives/events around the borough, signposts to funding/grants etc?

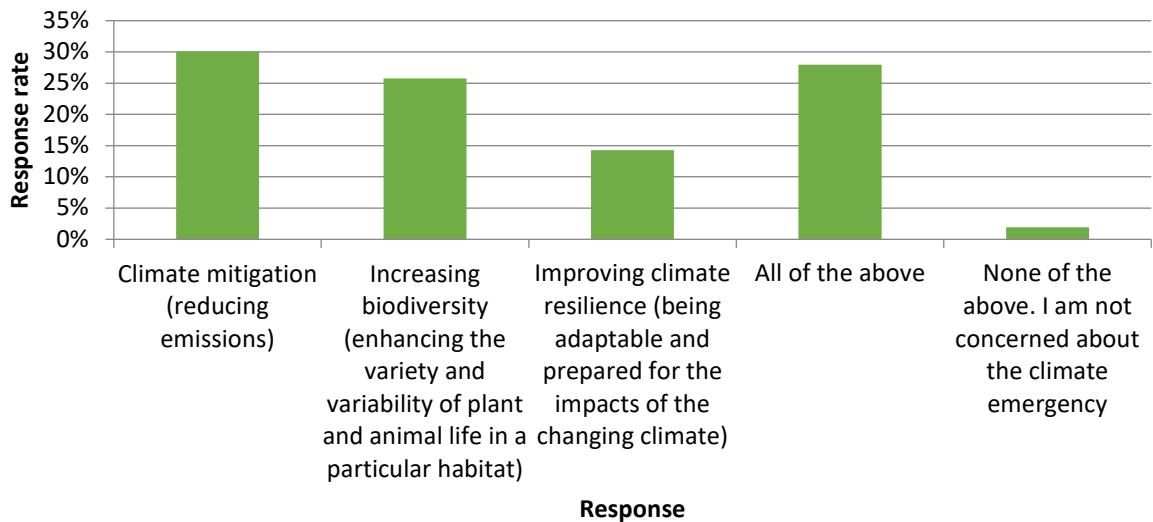
Answer Choices	Responses	
	Number	Percentage
Yes	346	51
No	326	49
Answered	672	99
Did not respond	6	1



Just over half (51%) of respondents were interested in signing up to a e newsletter about climate action in the borough, 49% of respondents were not interested, and 1 person did not answer.

2.3 Question Three - What is most important to you in regard to the climate emergency?

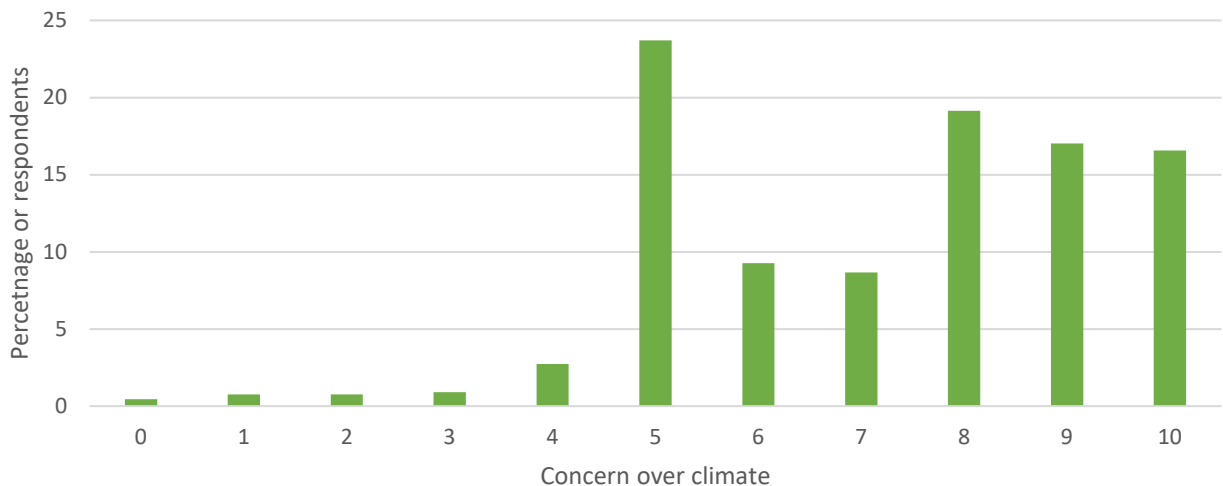
Answer Choices	Responses	
	Number	Percentage
Climate mitigation (reducing emissions)	202	30
Increasing biodiversity (enhancing the variety and variability of plant and animal life in a particular habitat)	173	26
Improving climate resilience (being adaptable and prepared for the impacts of the changing climate)	96	14
All of the above	188	28
None of the above. I am not concerned about the climate emergency	13	2
Answered	674	99
Did not respond	4	1



2% of respondents were not concerned about the climate emergency, whilst 30% viewed reducing emissions as the most important aspect of the climate emergency, 26% view increasing biodiversity as most important, and 14% chose improving resilience. 28% of respondents view all of the above as equally important in tackling the climate emergency. 1 person did not answer this question.

2.4 Question Four - On a scale of 1 to 10, how worried are you about Climate Change? (1 is not worried at all, 10 is extremely worried)

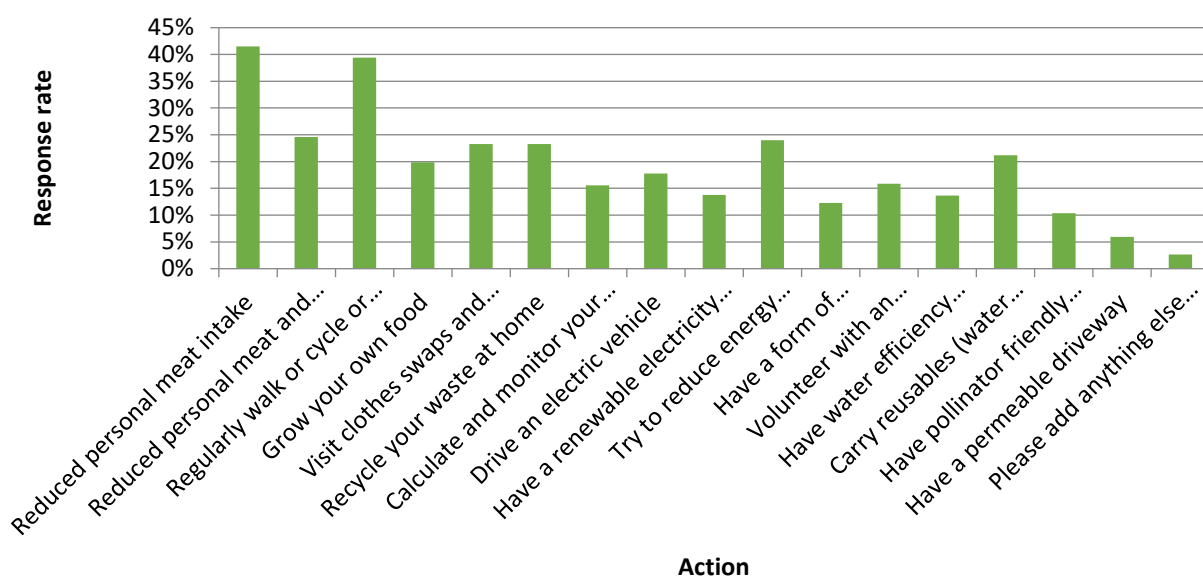
Answer Choices	Responses	
	Number	Percentage
0	3	0
1	5	1
2	5	1
3	6	1
4	18	3
5	156	24
6	61	9
7	57	9
8	126	19
9	112	17
10	109	17
Answered	660	97
Did not respond	18	3



The responses were varied, however the vast majority of people scored 5 or above in the sliding scale, suggesting that most people have some level of concern about climate change.

2.5 Question Five - Which of the following behavioural/ lifestyle choices apply to you as a result of your feelings towards the climate emergency?

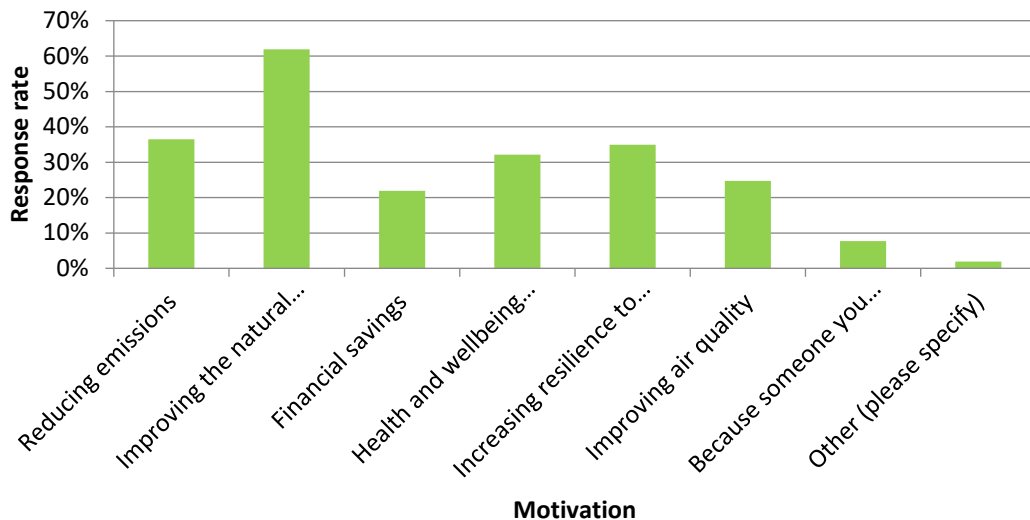
Answer Choices	Responses	
	Number	Percentage
Reduced personal meat intake	280	41
Reduced personal meat and dairy intake	166	25
Regularly walk or cycle or take public transport	266	39
Grow your own food	134	20
Visit clothes swaps and charity shops to avoid fast fashion	157	23
Recycle your waste at home	157	23
Calculate and monitor your own carbon footprint	105	16
Drive an electric vehicle	120	18
Have a renewable electricity provider	93	14
Try to reduce energy use/improve energy efficiency around your home	162	24
Have a form of renewable/low carbon technology installed at your home	83	12
Volunteer with an environmental community group	107	16
Have water efficiency measures installed at your home (such as dual flush, flow restrictors, water butt)	92	14
Carry reusables (water bottle/coffee cup/bags)	143	21
Have pollinator friendly plants in your garden	70	10
Have a permeable driveway	40	6
Please add anything else that you deem relevant	18	3
Answered	675	99.6
Did not respond	3	0.4



Out of 675 responses, the action most respondents take to tackle climate change is to reduce their personal meat intake (41%), followed by regularly walking or cycling (39%)

2.6 Question Six - - What motivates you to make these behavioural/lifestyle choices?

Answer Choices	Responses	
	Number	Percentage
Reducing emissions	246	36
Improving the natural environment	418	62
Financial savings	148	22
Health and wellbeing improvement	217	32
Increasing resilience to the impacts of climate change	236	35
Improving air quality	167	25
Because someone you know does it	52	8
Other (please specify)	13	2
Answered	675	99.6
Did not respond	3	0.4



The majority of respondents who made positive behavioural changes/lifestyle choices, said they did so to improve the natural environment (63%), followed by reducing emissions (36%), increasing resilience to the impacts of climate change (35%), health and wellbeing improvement (32%), improving air quality (25%), financial savings (22%) because someone they know does it (8%). 3 people skipped this question. Please note that respondents were allowed to choose more than one motivational reason in this question.

2.7 Question Seven - From the list above in question 5, is there anything you would like to do, but currently can't/don't do? If so, what is it and what is the main barrier to this?

75 people did not complete this question, however, from the 603 that did, a couple of examples have been extracted;

Energy

- I would like to have solar panels, but we live in the conservation area and not sure if we would be allowed but we have not yet applied;
- Would like heat pump, solar panels etc, but suspect I might need to bring my wiring up to spec and it seems like a lot of work;
- I would like to change central heating boiler from gas to heat pump, however the main problem is cost of installation;
- Improve energy efficiency in home further, but cost is a large barrier;
- I would like to install solar panels but my roof orientation is sub-optimal;
- Would like solar panels but cost is crazy;
- instal a heat pump - cost and efficiency concerns;
- I don't have a renewable energy-saving device at home, because I have no place to know about this device;
- The high cost of being able to use solar panels to power the house was definitely a major factor in our choice;
- I want to have renewable electricity suppliers, but price fluctuations in the energy market can make the economics of renewable energy projects suffer;

- Have solar panels installed at home - concerned about efficacy, installation, longevity, inhibited by cost of installation;
- I can't install low-carbon technologies in your home; the family's economic condition is not good, so cannot buy;
- Renewable/ low carbon technology. Cost, payback and planning restrictions - live in EMS area;
- The main barriers to having a renewable electricity provider are the availability of renewable energy providers;
- The main obstacles to improving energy efficiency are the cost of energy equipment and energy efficiency improvements;
- High initial costs: Although the operating costs of renewable energy are falling, initial investments are still high;
- Reducing energy use in the home/improving energy efficiency: Major barriers include the cost of energy equipment, knowledge and skills for energy efficiency improvement, and the availability of energy supplies;
- I want to own renewable electricity providers, but I face economic barriers: renewable energy providers have to compete with conventional energy sources in a market that is often subsidised by fossil fuels; and
- Owning a renewable electricity provider: Major barriers the availability of renewable energy providers, the cost of electricity supply, and local grid infrastructure constraints

Food (growing and eating)

- I would like to grow food but feel as though it is too time consuming;
- Cut back on meat, which is hard for me to do because I love meat;
- Reducing my personal meat and dairy intake is an obstacle for me; our family members need a lot of meat and dairy for their health;
- I don't have the means to grow my own food because I don't live in an environment that is equipped for it;
- Grow your own food - There is no suitable land or time;
- Grow your own food because there is currently no financial or technical support;
- Reduced personal meat and dairy intake, habits and cultural factors are barrier;
- I think it's about boycotting meat, meat as part of my life. I think it's hard for me to resist it;
- I would love to grow my own plants, but I don't have the material support and knowledge to do that;
- Growing your own food, the main obstacles are lack of farming space;
- The main obstacle to reducing personal meat intake is the lack of alternatives;
- Yes, Grow your own food, The main obstacle is that the family does not have land;
- Growing your own food: Major barriers include lack of space, time, knowledge and skills, and possible climatic and seasonal constraints;
- Pest problems in gardens: The main barriers include pest control knowledge and skills, climate and soil conditions, and the availability of control methods; and
- I think it's meat, I like it, and it's a big part of my menu.
- Growing pollinator friendly plants in your garden is something I'd like to do but can't do at the moment. The main obstacle for me is not having much time to practice and my family is allergic to pollen.

Active and sustainable Travel

- Major barrier to cycling is the lack of connectivity between local cycle routes across the centre of Hatfield where cycling is illegal;
- Public transport not good and reliable enough;

- I would probably use buses more if there was a better service;
- Would like to have an electric car instead of petrol, but the cost barrier to entry is too high;
- Exercise, due to relatively fat, the amount of exercise is relatively small;
- I will not drive an electric car because they are not safe;
- Walk or bike, for work reasons, this cannot be implemented;
- I would change to electric vehicle however communal council parking areas for residence don't have any charge points. Would swap if provided with one;
- Drive an electric vehicle, I can't buy an electric car because of some family reasons;
- I want to drive an electric car but I don't have the financial resources;
- I would like to purchase an electric car; the main barrier is cost;
- Cannot consider electric vehicle as I don't have vehicle access to my house for charging;
- Cycle routes not provided throughout town, some roads are narrow and cars drive too close;
- Bus routes not suitable to get to work;
- Regularly walk or cycle or take public transport: My son tried public transport for almost a year but found the service (bus) very unreliable with cancellations and lateness. Many stops have no shelters and protection from the wind and rain. For this reason I know drive him to/from Stevenage resulting in four journeys per day totalling 44 miles;
- Want to reduce car use, bicycle travel. But the reason for the work could not be implemented;
- Frequent walking, the main barriers include transportation accessibility, travel distance;
- Drive an electrical car, cannot afford one and no place to have electric charge point;
- Walk more but can't due to a back problem;
- Drive an electric vehicle, the main obstacle at the moment is not enough money,
- I would prefer an EV but they are so expensive. I'd like to travel by train more, but again - so expensive and it's cheaper to drive;
- Purchase an electric car - cost is prohibitive based on current family income;
- Driving electric vehicles: Major barriers include the cost of electric vehicles, the availability of charging facilities and the range limits of electric vehicles;
- Frequent walking, the main obstacles include schedule and personal preference;
- Regularly walk or cycle or take public transport. The reason for the work cannot be achieved; and
- Buses are very poorly run - unreliable and expensive. It prohibits their use to get to work or appointments on a regular basis.

Resources; water and waste

- I would like to recycle grey water, e.g. reuse my bath water to flush my toilet, but I don't have the ability to put a tank in to store the water due to the way the house was built in 1956;
- Understanding what actually happens to our recycling. A lot of bad press about councils dumping in general waste and not actually recycling the recycling which makes you wonder if there another way to recycle;
- I can't recycle waste at home. My housing does not allow that;
- Recycling at home: Major barriers include the availability of waste separation facilities, the way waste is disposed of, and the level of involvement of family members;
- Do not have any more recycling bins;
- Recycling at home, the main obstacles are the availability of waste separation facilities;
- Installing water-saving devices at home: The main barriers include the cost of the equipment, the skill of the installation, and the limitations of rental housing;
- Visit clothing exchanges and charity shops to avoid fast fashion: the main barriers include shopping habits, purchasing power and the range of options available; and
- The main barrier to visiting clothing exchanges and charity shops is lack of purchasing power.

Volunteering

- I have a full time job and am not volunteering with an environmental community group for the time being;
- I volunteer with an environmental community organization and the main obstacle is time management because I have to work so I don't have enough time to volunteer;
- Yes, I volunteer at an environmental community organization, but the volunteer activity is too far away, so I can't go;
- Yes, I volunteer with an environmental community organization, but I don't have enough time to do it, I work full time;
- Volunteer with an environmental community organization: Major barriers include available community organizing opportunities, scheduling, and personal interest matching;
- The main barrier to volunteering with an environmental community organization is the community organizing opportunities available;
- Volunteer for an environmental group, unfortunately my time is restricted as I have young children; and
- Volunteer with an environmental community group, but I have no time.

General

- Calculating and monitoring an individual's carbon footprint: Major barriers include collecting accurate data, acquiring knowledge of relevant tools and indicators, and tracking the persistence of individual behaviour; and
- I'd like to calculate and monitor my own carbon footprint but unfortunately, I don't have the equipment for that;

2.8 Question Eight - The council would like to help educate, encourage, enable and empower our residents, community groups and businesses to take climate action. Is there anything we are currently doing (that could be upscaled) or could be doing that would help facilitate this?

602 respondents answered this question; a section of which are outlined below;

Communication and education

- More articles on climate action in Council magazine;
- Educate residents on not concreting over front gardens;
- Publicize more;
- The council could support and promote community-led initiatives and projects focused on sustainability, such as community gardens, recycling programs, or local clean-up efforts. Encouraging community involvement can help build a sense of shared purpose and responsibility;
- Continuing education and advocacy;
- Encourage people to research the views of EXPERTS such as Ian Plimer, Patrick Moore (ex president of Greenpeace) and many others;
- More articles on climate action in Council magazine;
- Carry out some educational activities or community activities in gardening;
- I suggest that we can do more environmental protection activities to publicize some things that will play a role in protecting the climate environment and get used to using different publicity methods to create influence so that more people can protect our living environment together;

- Make more use of social media to publicize and appeal, and make some games or rewards to inspire young people's awareness of environmental protection, because I think young people and middle-aged people are the main groups in this environment;
- I think more publicity needs to be done to let more people know;
- Initiate and support community climate change awareness activities such as talks, seminars and workshops;
- Provide climate awareness education and training, including the impacts and solutions of climate change;
- More outreach work with community groups;
- Much more information in the one magazine;
- Highlight simple habit changes that can be made to lifestyles - encouraging a gradual transition;
- More publicity re damage cars cause eg pollution, traffic congestion all over Herts. Problems of animal based diet - meat and dairy. Educate educate educate. Increase public transport. Awareness of damage caused by weed killers, pesticides etc. Huge emissions of flying etc'
- Should be broadcast widely on council material and central govt should be taking action instead of watering it down;
- Occasional (twice a year?) online meetings/conferences on carbon reduction, biodiversity, behaviour change etc. for local residents and groups. Stalls at annual community fairs in WGC and Hatfield promoting sustainable living, a repair shop/centre;
- Increase the intensity of invention and call on everyone to work together;
- Show us what you are doing for the environment in the One Magazine;
- More information in the council magazine about climate or perhaps a climate special. Email updates would be good especially if there were things we could join in with;
- Education Programs: Developing and expanding educational programs focused on climate change, sustainability, and environmental conservation for residents of all ages. This could include workshops, seminars, and educational materials tailored to different audience groups;
- Community Engagement Events: Organizing community events such as eco-fairs, tree planting initiatives, or clean-up campaigns to raise awareness and foster a sense of environmental stewardship among residents;
- Business Sustainability Support: Providing resources and guidance to local businesses on adopting sustainable practices, reducing carbon footprint, and implementing energy-efficient technologies;
- Establish a reward activity to reduce carbon emissions and encourage more people to participate in it so as to reduce the bad behaviour of the environment;
- Teach children at school to learn about the impact of climate change on our living environment and cultivate some habits from an early age; and
- Building partnerships with local businesses to promote sustainable practices, such as reducing single-use plastics, implementing energy-saving measures, or sourcing products locally, can have a significant impact on the community's overall carbon footprint.

Nature

- Continue to promote, support and extend environmental volunteering such as Wood Wardens & Tree Warden scheme;
- Allow even more verges to be planted with wildflowers and reducing council mowing to help biodiversity;
- Plant more trees;
- Plant more hedgerows;

- Promote sustainable agriculture and food production and support local and organic farming;
- Establish community gardening programs to promote urban agriculture and food self-sufficiency;
- I like the fact that, in Haldens at least, you are leaving the grass verges & some green areas to grow wild in the spring/summer for the benefit of invertebrates and biodiversity in general. However I feel this should be better communicated, as many people I speak with when out and about assume it's because the council are cutting costs ie. they are not aware of the link with the climate and extinction crisis we are in the midst of; and
- Green Infrastructure Projects: Supporting the development of green spaces, urban gardens, and sustainable urban planning to enhance the local environment and mitigate climate impacts.

Energy

- Promote energy-saving measures and energy efficiency improvements, such as the installation of high-efficiency insulation materials, LED lighting and energy-efficient appliances in buildings. Provide energy audit and consulting services to help residents and businesses reduce their energy consumption;
- More schemes for installation of insulation;
- Provide residents with more funding and info on heating our homes climate friendly;
- Energy efficiency in council estate and council housing;
- The council could offer financial incentives or rebates for residents and businesses to invest in renewable energy, energy-efficient appliances, electric vehicles, and other sustainable technologies. This could help to reduce the financial barriers to adopting greener practices;
- Participate more in vegetarian-related activities;
- Provide support and financial assistance to help residents, community groups and businesses implement renewable energy projects. This can include providing grants for renewable energy projects, providing technical advice, and assisting with project planning and development;
- We would like to install solar panels on the south facing sloping roof of St Francis Church just off Parkway, but we suspect that being in a Conservation Area, Estate Management might veto this. Given the climate emergency, why not relax restrictions?;
- Renewable Energy Initiatives: Investing in or promoting the use of renewable energy sources such as solar panels or wind turbines for community buildings or public spaces;
- Residents: possibility of green heating (eg ground source heat pump) demo streets - economy of scale + some top-up grant?;
- Maybe the council could produce simple leaflets (online or in the magazine) on how to improve energy efficiency, where to start etc; and
- Help local communities to set up a renewable energy project (like a wind turbine, or local solar farm) that benefits locals residents. Something where people feel they have ownership.

Resources; water and waste

- Positive personalised direct advice to residents to recycle more and waste less;
- Encourage more home composting with reduced price compost bins;
- Community Waste days - where people bring their white/bulky goods to a central place in their locality and the Council takes it away;
- Increased local recycling banks in Welwyn;
- Encourage the reduction or elimination of plastic products such as plastic bags garbage bags plastic bottles and so on around the borough;

- Waste Reduction Programs: Implementing or expanding recycling programs, composting facilities, and initiatives to reduce single-use plastics within the community; and
- my suggestion would be to organize food education so that families can reduce the need for meat and dairy products.

Sustainable or active travel

- Call on everyone to choose green travel and lifestyle to reduce carbon emissions and choose public transportation or bicycles;
- Free or reduced car parking fees for electric cars;
- Subsidise buses so people will be encouraged to travel by public transport;
- Continue increasing investment in high quality cycling infrastructure and subsidise public transport;
- Encouraging car sharing, more accessible local knowledge about local transport, more initiatives about how to choose and cook cheap, local sustainability sourced food, more bike community schemes;
- Build more cycling and walking paths and improve the public transport system so that more people choose environmentally friendly modes of transport;
- Establish community shared transportation programs, such as bike sharing, electric car sharing, etc;
- Sustainable Transportation Promotion: Encouraging the use of public transportation, cycling, walking, or carpooling through incentives or infrastructure improvements;
- Would like to see better and cheaper public transport in all areas of the borough; and
- Schools: no parking zones to encourage active transport; safe cycle & walking routes for all schools.

General

- Encourage people to change their pensions to more sustainable funds;
- Stop building more houses;
- Policy Advocacy: Working with local government officials to advocate for policies that promote sustainable development practices and prioritize climate action at a municipal level;
- Upscale existing efforts;
- Establishment of a Climate Action Fund to provide financial support to residents, community groups and businesses for the implementation of sustainable development projects, energy transition and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, among others;
- I think they local council should lead by example as much as they are able. Every decision made should have the environment at the heart of it;
- Hopefully the Council pension fund does not invest in fossil fuels; and
- Information on changing your bank to a more ethical one.

3 NEXT STEPS

We will review all comments and assess the feasibility of initiating or implementing them. Three actions are already in progress which will help facilitate some of the suggestions made.

3.1 Establish the Climate Action Hub

Work has already begun on creating this centralised one stop shop for everything climate related. The purpose of the Climate Action Hub is to;

- Recognise that climate change is an opportunity to create new relationships with people, particularly groups that are possibly harder to reach but may be impacted by climate change the most;
- Demonstrate we are adopting a whole borough approach to tackling the climate crisis. We aren't leaving communities behind in our net zero targets;
- Educate, encourage, engage and empower community groups to enabling wide spread climate action;
- Inspire others to take action and learn from what others are doing well;
- Alleviate any feeling of being overwhelmed or anxious about the scale of the climate crisis by creating stronger, sustainable communities;
- Send direct updates and good news stories – through an e bulletin;
- Share knowledge and expertise and provide tools within the community to facilitate climate action;
- Develop partnership working with others to increase the impact of an idea or project and raise ambition;
- Provide an avenue for resident feedback about the council Climate Action Plan and Strategy and projects being delivered around the borough;
- Create a sense of community;
- Provide links to calculators (such as bespoke water and carbon);
- Promote local events and initiatives;
- Signpost to local volunteering opportunities;
- Provide links to best practice guidance and educational articles;
- Signposting to funding opportunities;
- Signposting to other climate related things, such as energy efficiency advice and climate anxiety groups; and
- Promote good news stories and case studies about how individuals or organisations have taken climate action and are making progress on their environmental objectives.
- Climate Hub Logo – designed to reflect key themes of our climate agenda (transport, home efficiency/decarbonisation, community, nature and resources)



3.2 Develop a number of in person events for the next financial year 2024/25.

Tied in with National or International environmentally themed events, we will look to hold a number of in person events to promote our climate agenda and engage the community. We will expand upon existing events to allow for maximum impact/benefit and look to partnerships and other stakeholders to ensure we do not duplicate events. This may include, and not be limited to~~e~~;

- Nature photo competition
- Environmental themed movie screenings (such as “Wall – E”, for the children and “Don’t look up” for the adults)
- Sustainable/vegetarian/vegan food market
- Bike repair pop up shops
- Alphabet trail in the woodland
- Clothes swap shop