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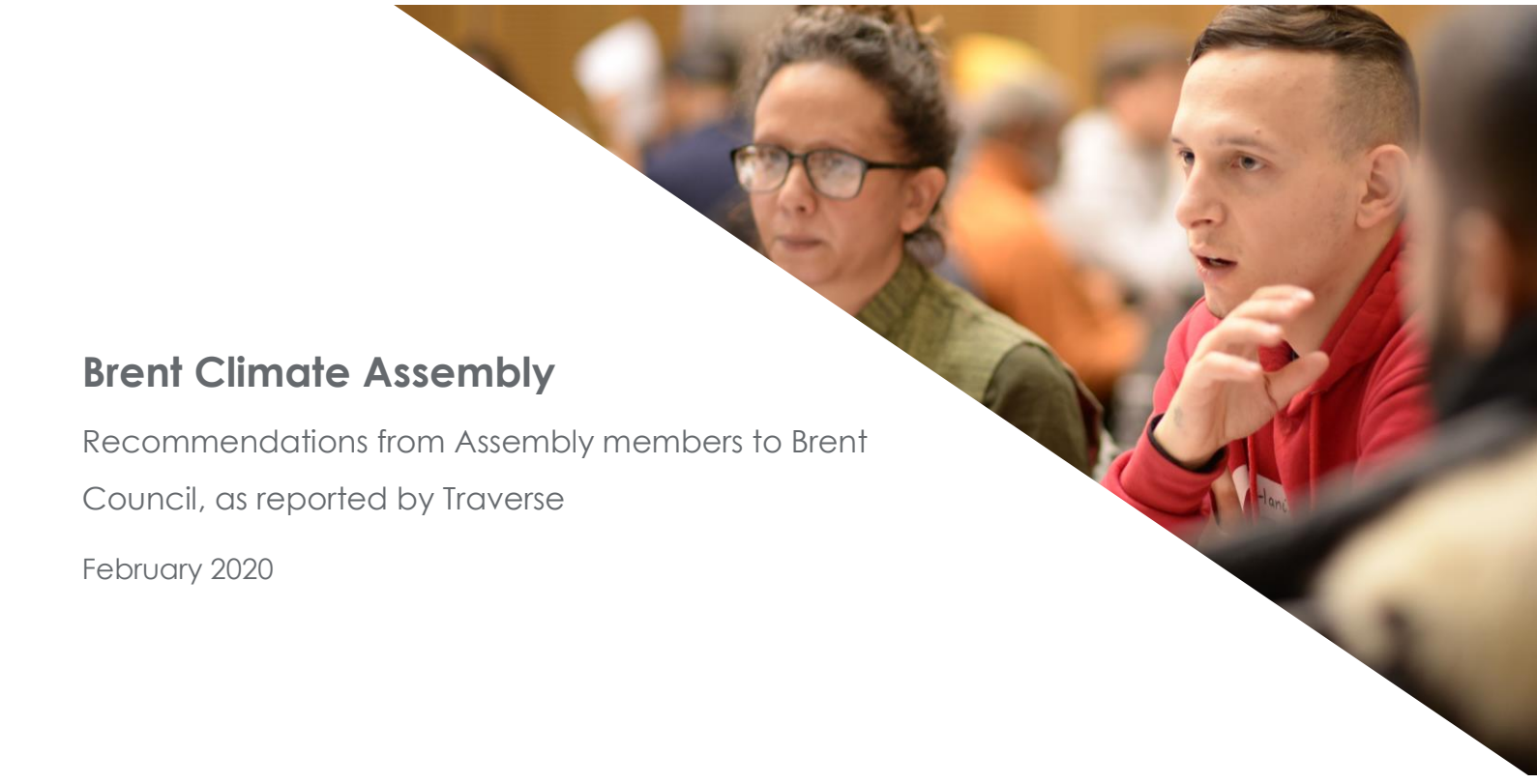

Brent Climate Assembly

Recommendations from Assembly members to Brent Council, as reported by Traverse

February 2020

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1. Executive Summary

Background

Brent Council declared a climate emergency in July 2019. As part of their response, the Council commissioned Traverse to deliver the Brent Climate Assembly in Autumn 2019. The aim of the Assembly was to bring together fifty randomly selected residents to learn about climate change, discuss potential actions for addressing it in Brent, and make recommendations for the Council to take forward. The Assembly focused on this over-arching question:

How can we work together to limit climate change and its impact while protecting our environment, our health and our wellbeing? Consider the Council, businesses and organisations, individuals.

The Assembly

Traverse designed and facilitated three all-day workshops on three Saturdays in November-December, with 53 of the residents recruited remaining involved until the final event. An advisory board oversaw the design of the process and specialists in a range of relevant fields attended the workshops to present evidence and to support people's discussions.

- **At the first meeting:** Assembly members were presented with information on climate science and climate change on a global, national and local level.
- **At the second meeting:** Assembly members were asked to consider what responses to climate change could look like in relation to several thematic areas – from adapting to flood and heat to transport and housing. They were also asked to come up with criteria against which potential actions could be assessed.
- **At the third meeting:** Assembly members considered a range of possible actions relevant to the thematic areas and discussed these in groups before reviewing all the proposed actions and making recommendations to the Council.

The number of Assembly members who thought they knew 'quite a bit' or had a 'thorough understanding' of climate change increased over the course of the events. The number of people who thought climate change should be a priority for Brent Council increased between events 1 and 2, but fell back in event 3.

Based on feedback from members, the most impactful evidence they heard related to the UK's prominence as a contributor to carbon emissions, coupled with the knowledge that poorer nations in the global south will bear the brunt of climate change impacts whilst having the least capacity to respond. This left many Assembly members with a strong sense that fairness and responsibility are important themes in thinking about who needs to take action.

Criteria for assessing possible actions to address climate change

Are the costs (in money, time, inconvenience) proportionate to the impact it will have?	For instance, some things may be relatively low impact but also low cost. But if it's high cost and low impact, should we bother? Costs mean financial costs but also time and inconvenience to certain people, organisations or groups.
Is it realistic and achievable?	For instance, is it in our power locally to do this? Can people be forced or incentivised to make this happen?
Will the distribution of costs and burdens be fair?	For instance, will this be disproportionately hard on certain people? Think in terms of financial impacts, lifestyle impacts, people's homes and communities.
Will it have wider benefits, e.g. on people's health/wellbeing/quality of life?	In other words, can this 'kill two birds with one stone'? Think in terms of cost (e.g. saving on heating bills), being healthy, quality of the local environment, supporting wildlife etc.
Can it be done transparently so that impacts are visible and measurable?	Some things will be more immediate in their impact and others less, but either way, will the Council (or someone else) be able to assess how well it's working? Can people be held accountable for this, so that it's clear to local people what is being achieved?

The recommendations

One of the key features of a citizens' assembly is it generates recommendations which decision-makers must commit to consider. Working in their table groups, the Assembly members considered a range of possible future actions during the final workshop, and were asked to apply criteria they had developed at a previous session to assess which they thought should be taken forward locally. Members were also invited to create their own actions for their colleagues to consider. Once each group had put forward a set of actions for consideration, every member was asked to tour the room, read the actions presented and indicate which they thought should be prioritised (using a pack of 30 sticky dots each).

Actions relating to consumption, resources and waste attracted most support, followed by transport. 'Existing housing and buildings' actions were third most popular.

'Votes cast' for actions within these themes

Consumption, resources & waste	358
Transport	205
Existing housing and buildings	161
Nature & biodiversity	157
Planning policy and new development	97
Adapting to global heating	95
Renewable energy	66
Politics	40

- **Four of the top ten recommendations related to consumption and waste.** It was a theme more tangible and immediate than some, and where it was easier to see how the council, communities, businesses and residents could all take practical actions. Some of the most-supported actions were about **the council enabling individuals and businesses to do more**. There was also a neighbourhood element to this, with a high level of support for promoting **community projects to limit and localise consumption** and the generation of waste. **Removing / reducing single-use plastics** also scored highly.
- Assembly members had learnt that existing buildings account for 77% of Brent's territorial carbon emissions, which may explain why **three of the top ten recommendations related to action on existing buildings – with a fourth related to new developments. Insulation and cladding was the most popular area for action under this theme.**
- **Supporting public transport** was the highest scoring action area within the *Transport* theme. There was recognition that important aspects of this were responsibilities for the Mayor of London, so Assembly members saw the role of Brent Council as lobbying and making the case wherever they could not take actions directly.
- One group proposed that policies to address climate change should somehow be made binding so they were **immune to changes in political leadership.** This was framed as a point about changes in 'government' but could be taken to mean changes at the local authority level too. It reflected a view that an issue as important as this should be 'protected' from party politics and, by implication, that decisions about addressing the climate and ecological crisis should seek to be cross-party.
- In relation to the Renewables theme, there was support for **increasing solar energy generation**, to be promoted through subsidisation, easy installation and help for people to understand how they could produce and sell back their energy to the grid.
- In relation to Biodiversity theme, Assembly members focused on **maintaining and promoting green spaces** that were accessible for all residents and on **increasing the number of trees** in the borough.

Assembly members said the Council should:

As an organisation…	Help neighbourhoods to…	Help individuals to…	Help businesses to…
• Be proactive and use different methods of communication to reach different audiences • Be transparent and open to feedback • Consider impacts across the whole borough • Educate and support residents on the most important issues	• Establish a forum, with budget, to generate ideas and hold the Council to account • Encourage good environmental behaviours at a community level • Foster local support for green spaces • Use an 'estate representative' system to get neighbourhoods more involved	• Be more mindful of how you can help or hinder in daily life • Be equipped with better information • Have an open mind towards local action and work with others (neighborhoods, Council, and businesses) • Transmit more ideas to the Council to implement	• Behave more positively (through incentives) • Use fewer resources (through information) • Contribute to the local environment (through deployment of tax revenues) • Take actions on their own premises (eg: solar panels, tree-planting)

2. Introduction

2.1. Context

On 8 July 2019, Brent Council joined more than 200 councils around the UK in declaring a climate and ecological emergency. The Council has committed to do all it can to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030.

The Council has already instigated a series of green initiatives, including introducing a diesel levy on parking permits to incentivise greener transport; creating a seven-mile bee corridor to boost biodiversity; and helping businesses to think about their impact through the Plastic Free Wembley initiative.

As part of their efforts to address the climate emergency, the Council commissioned Traverse, a London-based independent research organisation, to deliver the Brent Climate Assembly in Autumn 2019. The aim of the Assembly was to bring together fifty randomly selected residents to learn about climate change, discuss potential actions for addressing it in Brent, and make recommendations for the Council to take forward.

2.1.1. Research question and objectives

The agreed aims and objectives of the Brent Climate Assembly were to:

- Identify opportunities for collaborative action between the Council and the community – which are actionable and reasoned, based on the science.
- Set up conversations and increase the understanding of the climate emergency and what action needs to be taken.

The Assembly was guided by one overarching research question:

How can we work together to limit climate change and its impact while protecting our environment, our health and our wellbeing? Consider the Council, businesses and organisations, individuals.

2.2. How to read this report

This report comprises an executive summary, four sections and two appendices.

- Executive summary: Overview of all findings
- Section 1: This introductory section, covering context, objectives and research question
- Section 2: Covering a brief outline of the methodology and the Assembly members' journey through the three Assembly meetings
- Section 3: Outlining of criteria and recommendations which the Assembly put forward
- Section 4: Learning and next steps
- Appendix A: Detailed methodology

- Appendix B: Data

Findings and recommendations are reported thematically, based on the outputs of discussions across all the table groups that made up the Assembly. Each chapter begins with a high-level summary.

3. How the Brent Climate Assembly was run

The first section of this chapter briefly outlines the methodology used in designing and convening the Brent Climate Assembly. The second section describes the journey that Assembly members took through the meetings, including reflections on how their views and feelings towards climate change evolved over time. This chapter also considers the views and values that appeared to inform Assembly members' recommendations.

3.1. Methodology

3.1.1. Advisory Board and specialists

Traverse convened an advisory board to provide specialist expertise and independent advice throughout the process. The Advisory Board reviewed the objectives, research question, materials and the communications strategy for the outputs. The project team met with the Advisory Board three times during the process and liaised with them over email between meetings to get their views and guidance.

Traverse also developed a network of experts in the fields of climate science, policy making, economy, and action-taking on a local and national level. Experts from this network were invited to inform and comment on the process, and to attend Assembly meetings where their expertise would be most valuable to Assembly members. Eleven experts attended the events in total.

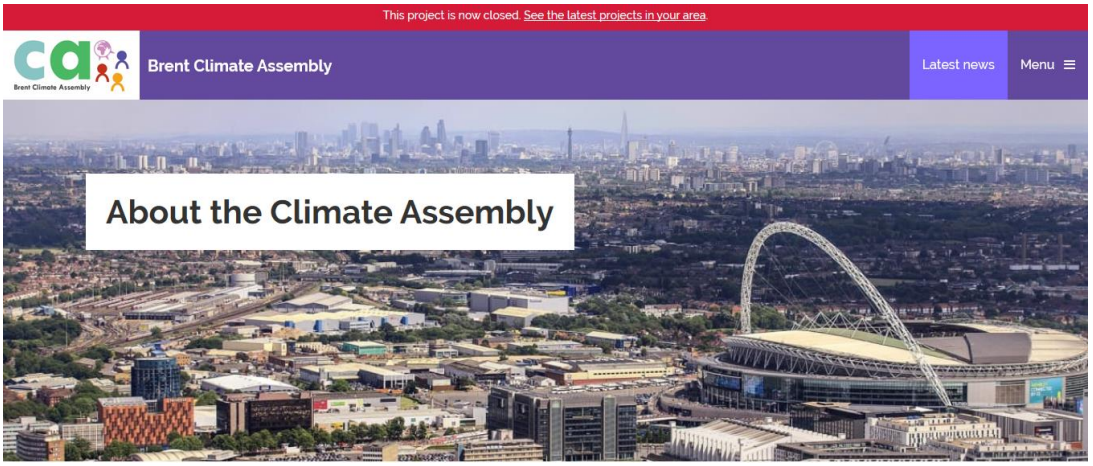
For a full list of Advisory Board members and Experts, please see Appendix A, section 5.5 and 5.6.

3.1.2. *Recruitment*

It was crucial for the credibility of the process that Assembly members were drawn from across the local community, so that the Assembly 'looked and felt' like a microcosm of Brent. Members were recruited using randomised recruitment methods to reflect the local population in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic group, and locality. Appendix A, section 5.4 describes the sampling and recruitment methodology in full.

3.1.3. *Website*

Traverse worked in partnership with Commonplace to set up a micro-site where the wider the public could submit their own responses to the research question being posed. The micro-site was designed to make the process as transparent as possible, and to enable individual residents and community organisations to feed ideas into the Assembly's deliberations. For more information on the micro-site and what information it included, see Appendix A, section 5.7.



3.1.4. Assembly meetings

The Assembly met at Brent Civic Centre over three Saturdays in November and December 2019[1]. In total, 53 people attended all three meetings.

The focus and objectives of the three Assembly meetings were as follows:

Assembly meeting 1: Set the scene (5 hours)	- Get to know each other - Get to know the process - Explore issues related to climate change
Assembly meeting 2: Explore options (5 hours)	- Explore current approaches the Council and others are taking and think about potential future actions
Assembly meeting 3: Develop recommendations (5 hours)	- Make recommendations for Brent Council so they can take action

The focus of the first Assembly Meeting was to help members understand the key facts and figures around climate change, and to think about the connections between impacts and actions locally, nationally and internationally.

At the first Assembly meeting, members were presented with information on climate science and climate change on a global, national and local level through a series of posters at stands around the room (see examples of posters and outline of areas covered in Appendix A, section 5.9). Assembly members also had the opportunity to listen to and interact with experts throughout all three meetings to support their discussions (see Appendix A, section 5.6 for a full list of participating experts).

At the second meeting, Assembly members were asked to consider what responses to climate change could look like in relation to several thematic areas – from adapting to flood and heat to transport and housing. Views and ideas from Brent Youth Parliament were presented to the room, along with those submitted from residents and local groups via the micro-site. Specialists with expertise across the different thematic areas joined in with group discussions and took part in a question and answer session in the afternoon session.

At the third meeting, Assembly members considered a range of possible actions relevant to the thematic areas – including generating their own actions – and discussed these in groups before reviewing all the proposed

[1] An evening workshop was organised between Assembly meeting 1 and 2 in order to recruit additional Assembly members and bring them up to speed so that they could attend meeting 2 the following week.

actions and making recommendations to the Council.

At the start of each meeting, Assembly members were asked to review the key messages we had taken away from the previous session so that the process was co-driven and that key points accurately reflected thoughts and opinions of the room (see Appendix A, section 5.10 for more detail on design, data capture and analysis throughout the process).

For a detailed overview of the process design, please see Appendix A, section 5.8 and 5.9.

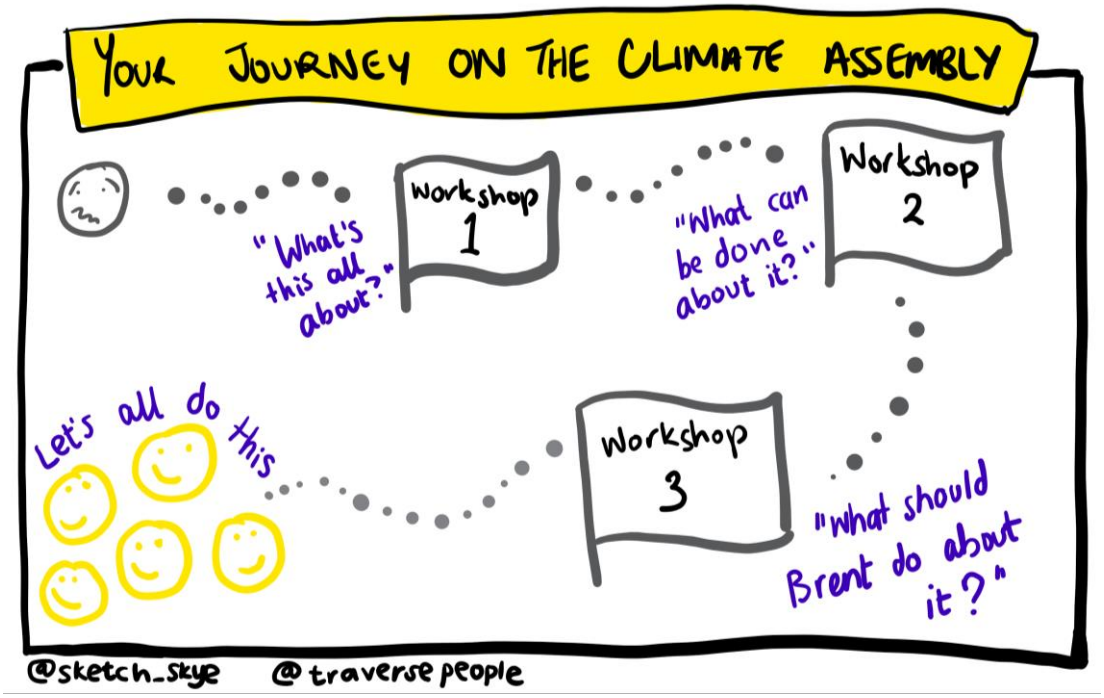
3.2. Participant journey

When Assembly members arrived at the first meeting, they did not know what the content of the workshops would be. Prior understanding of or interest in the topic was not part of the recruitment criteria, so we expected members to vary widely in their knowledge of and views about climate change.

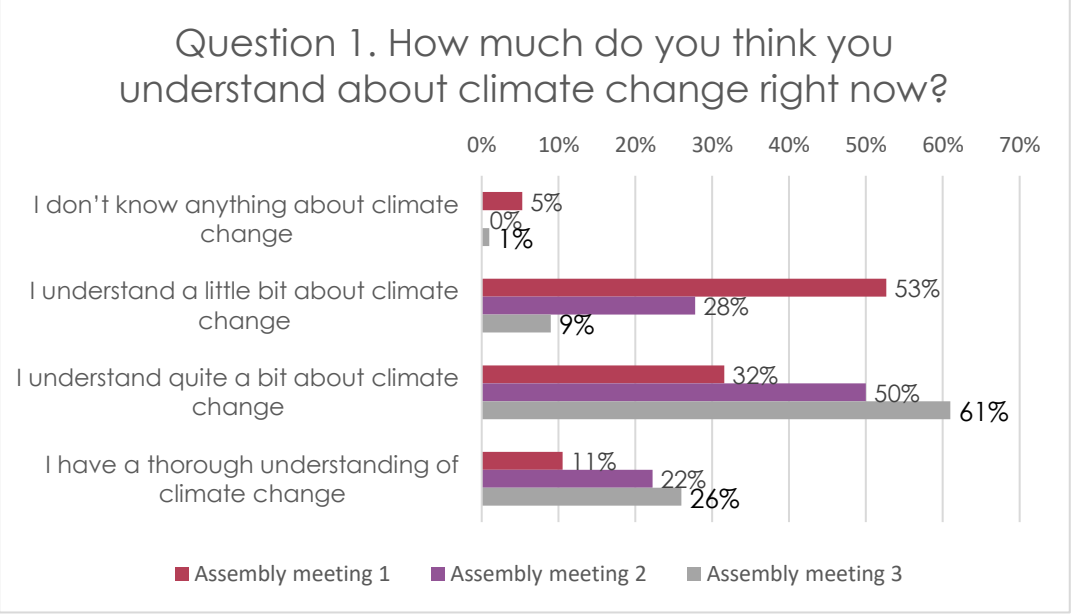
We tracked members' views at each of the three Assembly meetings by asking them to answer three questions, using clicker pads:

- How much do you think you understand about climate change right now?
- To what extent does being 'environmentally friendly' affect the decisions you make in your daily life?
- How much of a priority do you think addressing climate change should be for the Council?

This section explores Assembly members' answers to these questions and how their views and feelings evolved throughout the process, based on their group discussions.



3.2.1. What's this all about? Understanding the topic over time



Most Assembly members initially felt they understood 'a little bit' about climate change. Some described feeling confused about the concept and what it meant. Others felt they did not know how climate change is currently being responded to locally or globally, or what those responses should look like. From the start, some Assembly members felt that climate change had to

be everyone's problem, whilst others thought the responsibility should lie with global leaders and big companies who seemed not to be doing enough. Feeling overwhelmed, confused, angry and depressed made climate change an issue that some said they would rather not think about.

"Blaming us lot as drivers, when really BRIC countries [Brazil, Russia, India, China] are the ones emitting… It's also corporate. It's frustrating really."
Assembly member, Brent Climate Assembly

Reactions to information and evidence presented

We asked Assembly members how the information they were seeing and hearing was impacting on their thoughts and feelings about climate change. Facilitators heard that as people's awareness increased, so too did their sense of urgency.

"I went away and I read things. I noticed things I hadn't noticed before."
Assembly member, Brent Climate Assembly

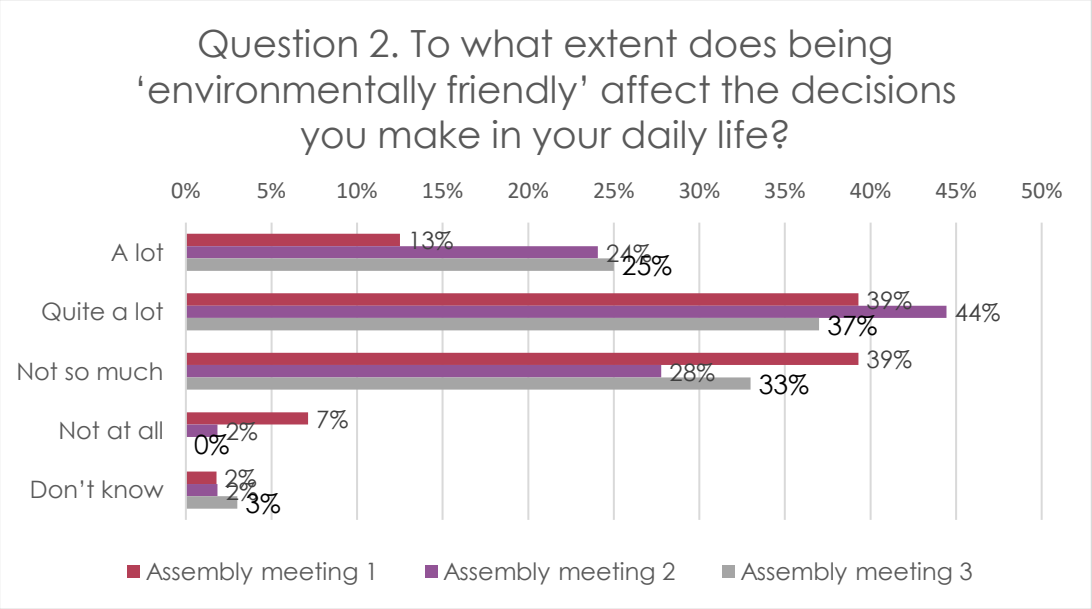
Many Assembly members said that they felt more alarmed as the Assembly meetings progressed. Information on the effects of rising temperatures combined with input from a range of experts, who spoke about the immediate and long-term impacts of climate change. Some Assembly members talked about being surprised that climate change was already affecting the UK through, for example, increased risk of flooding. Information about local initiatives from around the world – and in their own area – helped some Assembly members to feel less overwhelmed and some said they felt inspired to find out more about what they could do individually and as a community to take positive action.

Based on feedback from members, the single most impactful element of the events was a presentation on the historic levels of emissions by nation.

Delivered by Tessa Khan, this illustrated the UK's pre-eminence as a global emitter throughout the 19th Century and its continuing importance during the 20th Century, so that even today it remains the fifth biggest emitter in history. Combined with the message that poorer nations in the global south will bear the brunt of climate change impacts, whilst having the least capacity to respond, many members were left with a strong sense that **fairness and responsibility** are important themes in thinking about who needs to take action. This was a theme throughout group discussions.

"It hit home what a responsibility we have versus smaller countries that don't have the means and didn't cause global warming". Assembly member, Brent Climate Assembly

3.2.2. *What can be done about it: willingness to take individual action – but how?*



When asked at the end of the first Assembly meeting, half of members believed being environmentally friendly affected their decisions they made in their day to day life quite a lot. From group conversations, however, it appeared most people were unsure how their actions affected the environment either positively or negatively.

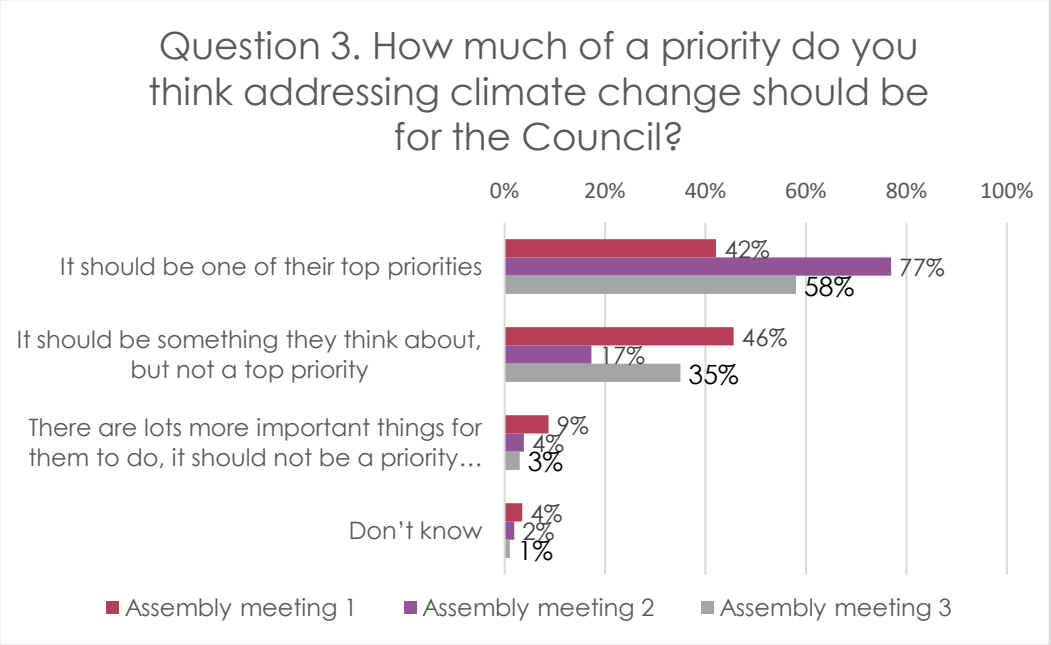
This led to discussion about how people could *know* if their actions were environmentally friendly or not. There was a strong desire in the room for **information and guidance** about how individuals and households could be more environmentally friendly. Members talked about this in terms of **education** – so that more people would know what to do – and **incentivisation,** so that more people would change their behaviours.

The question of how to be more environmentally friendly on an individual level was present throughout the Assembly meetings and its importance in the discussion increased as Assembly members were exposed to more information about how their everyday actions such as recycling, heating homes, and getting around affect climate change. Understanding how day-to-day life contributes to emissions clearly effected how some Assembly members thought and felt about climate change.

> *"It's good to educate kids in schools, but what about adults, like us? If it wasn't for this event, I wouldn't really know what I should do." Assembly member, Brent Climate Assembly*

The number of Assembly members who felt they were being environmentally friendly in their daily actions increased only slightly throughout the process according to voting data (see graph above). A few highlighted that whilst they understood how their decisions might have a negative impact on the environment, they were still not sure what they could do better.

3.2.3. *What should Brent do about it: addressing climate change - a top priority or not?*



Between the first and second assembly meeting there was a sharp increase in number of members who believed climate change should be a top priority for Brent Council. At the third meeting, this number fell slightly. We cannot be sure what was behind this final change, but it may have been partly due to the timing of the general election – which took place later that week – and a heightened awareness of other issues and their importance. It may also reflect an appreciation that many of the actions members wanted to see were beyond the control of their council, and that this translated into a view that climate change should be a greater priority for *other levels of government* instead of / as well as local authorities.

Assembly members talked a lot about the costs of responding to climate change locally and were concerned in particular that policies to reach Net Zero would impact on the affordability of housing and people's standard of living.

For some members, as the Assembly meetings progressed and they learnt more about the urgency of acting on climate change, they questioned why Brent Council had not prioritised this issue before. Others were positive that by convening the Assembly, the Council was investing in the issue and inviting itself to be held to account by residents. Assembly members urged the Council to listen to the Assembly members, and other Brent residents when acting on climate change.

"If they (Brent) want to be a leader they have to be the first to act on something - they must put our work into practice." Assembly member, Brent Climate Assembly

4. Responding to climate change in Brent

4.1. Criteria for decision-making

At the second event, Assembly members were asked to come up with criteria against which potential actions could be assessed. The criteria would then be used by members to help them decide on recommendations to the Council at the third and final event. The criteria also exist as an output in their own right – a set of 'tests' that Brent Council can use to help determine the actions it takes in response to the climate crisis.

Assembly members discussed possible criteria in their table groups, which generated an initial long list. The Traverse facilitators took these away and by identifying which were common to most or all of the groups, were able to present back a core set of five criteria at the third and final event. Members were happy that these were a good representation of their discussions. **These five criteria are shown in the table below:**

Are the costs (in money, time, inconvenience) proportionate to the impact it will have?	For instance, some things may be relatively low impact but also low cost. But if it's high cost and low impact, should we bother? Costs mean financial costs but also time and inconvenience to certain people, organisations or groups.
Is it realistic and achievable?	For instance, is it in our power locally to do this? Can people be forced or incentivised to make this happen?
Will the distribution of costs and burdens be fair?	For instance, will this be disproportionately hard on certain people? Think in terms of financial impacts, lifestyle impacts, people's homes and communities.
Will it have wider benefits, e.g. on people's health/wellbeing/quality of life?	In other words, can this 'kill two birds with one stone'? Think in terms of cost (e.g. saving on heating bills), being healthy, quality of the local environment, supporting wildlife etc.
Can it be done transparently so that impacts are visible and measurable?	Some things will be more immediate in their impact and others less, but either way, will the Council (or someone else) be able to assess how well it's working? Can people be held accountable for this, so that it's clear to local people what is being achieved?

Group discussions between members generated three further key points for the Council to take on board when defining actions, focused on timescales,

helping residents to be better informed and enabling residents to be involved:

- Having a mix of timescales, with some actions to be taken now, and some to be taken in the long-term.
- Residents should be able to take part in the decision-making process for how actions are implemented.
- All people should be educated and informed about why this matters, and how people can play their part.

For a full list of criteria, please see Appendix 5.12.

4.1. Recommendations for action

At the third event, Assembly members were asked to recommend a set of actions for Brent Council to take forward, based on the information they had seen, heard and discussed during the previous events. To make this more manageable, the Traverse project team – working with the council and advisory board – created a long list of potential actions for members to consider. A total of 46 actions or areas of action were presented on A4 cards (we called these 'action cards' – see Appendix A, 5.9.2 for an example) and were grouped into seven topic areas:

- Transport (T)
- Existing housing and buildings (EHB)
- Consumption, resources and waste (CRW)
- Planning policy and new development (PPND)
- Adapting to global heating – flooding, heatwaves and drought (AGH)
- Nature and biodiversity (NB)
- Renewable energy (RE)

In each table group, pairs focused on one or two of these themes and the potential actions under those themes. Each table group then came back together to agree which action cards they wanted to put forward as recommendations, to make additional comments on those cards, or to come up with their own actions on blank cards provided. As part of their discussions, members were asked to reflect on whether they thought actions met the agreed criteria, and whether any of the criteria felt particularly important or raised certain questions that the council would need to consider.

During the lunch break, all the action cards put forward by each group were posted up around the room (clustered by theme). In many cases, different groups had proposed some of the same actions, hence many action cards appeared more than once. In the final part of this exercise, each Assembly

member was given 30 coloured stickers to apply to the actions they wanted to see taken forward. In this way, individual Assembly members were able to 'vote' for actions that had been proposed through discussions within each group. Through this process, the Assembly has put forward a long list of recommendations which they would like Brent Council to act on, with the voting exercise indicating which garnered most interest and the strongest support.

The top 10 recommendations and suggestions for action are shown in the table below. In brackets we indicate the theme under which this action appears, although as Assembly members reflected, some clearly connect to other themes or can be seen as cross-cutting. An additional theme was created following the event – Politics (P) – to provide a category for an action card generated by one of the groups, on "Mechanisms to ensure action continues regardless of who is in power".

For all recommendations, please refer to Appendix 5.13.

Actions (Theme)	Score	Key suggestions
1. Improved waste collection and biodegradable bin bags (CRW)	57	More collections and collection points for recycling Free bins (internal food caddies and bin liners) provided by council for every home Incentives for waste reduction and recycling behaviour for businesses
2. Support Use of Public Transport (T)	56	Incentives for tube, bus and trains Affordable transport and fares Encouragement and raising awareness of benefits of public transport
3. Improve insulation and cladding (EHB)	54	Every home to have subsidised and affordable insulation Grants or services for quick housing fixes for individuals Minimum insulation standards for landlords to adhere to
4. Clear waste and recycling instructions (CRW)	50	Council advertising, promotion and instructions More information provided by and for businesses Education from various outlets – workshops, leaflets, online
5. Support locally sourced food/community gardens (CRW)	49	Council to assess existing land, re-purpose areas of their green spaces Businesses to co-op with the neighbourhood to utilise green spaces for local food products Incentivisation schemes to buy local Education in schools, pop-up shops on growing food, shopping locally and being self-sufficient
6. Zero carbon new developments (PPND)	49	Transparent and clear framework for builders to follow Businesses to set an example, be incentivised to accelerate change
7. Remove/reduce single use plastic (CRW)	48	Council to lead by only working with suppliers that have high environmental standards Financial incentives and disincentive schemes for plastics for businesses and individuals in borough

Actions (Theme)	Score	Key suggestions
8. Adapt Buildings (AGH)	44	Council to adapt their own properties Council to offer incentives for all private homeowners to make adaptations Tighter legislation for businesses to adapt their buildings
9. Mechanisms to ensure action continues regardless of who is in power (P)	40	Written into plans Create a group that meets regularly to hold the council to account
10. Incentivise Energy Efficiency (EHB)	40	Council to encourage homeowners and offer benefits and rewards Energy-rating adjusted council tax Promote awareness of efficient energy schemes people can join

4.2. Exploring recommendations by themes

The themes were constructed to help make potential actions easier for Assembly members to navigate. They were developed by the facilitation team, not Assembly members themselves, and above all are a 'sorting tool'. That said, looking at members' votes for actions by theme can help to give a clearer picture of where the Assembly's recommendations focus. As the summary table below shows, actions relating to consumption, resources and waste attracted most support, followed by transport. 'Existing housing and buildings' actions were third most popular.

Consumption, resources & waste	358
Transport	205
Existing housing and buildings	161
Nature & biodiversity	157
Planning policy and new development	97
Adapting to global heating	95
Renewable energy	66
Politics	40

4.2.1. Consumption, resources and waste – actions for everyone

Four of the top ten recommendations related to consumption and waste. It was a theme more tangible and immediate than some, and where it was easier to

see how the council, communities, businesses and residents could all take practical actions. The popularity of this theme also reflects the evidence presented to the Assembly which demonstrated that carbon emissions relating to consumption in Brent were 4-5 times higher than those from the borough's buildings and road transport. The Assembly put the emphasis on educating, informing and incentivising good behaviours, alongside interest in community food-growing, repair and reuse schemes.

Some of the most-supported actions were about **the council enabling individuals and businesses to do more.** This could be through **education, information and incentivisation** (e.g. around consumption and its impacts, about recycling and other positive behaviours); and through **enhanced provision** (e.g. of appropriate waste collection bins and biodegradable bags).

There was also a **neighbourhood element** to this, with a high level of support for promoting community projects to limit and localise consumption and the generation of waste, including **food growing, shopping locally and encouragement to repair and reuse** such as through repair cafes. Here there were some clear overlaps with support for improved green spaces and biodiversity.

Removing / reducing single-use plastics also scored highly as an action the Council could take in-house and could support businesses and residents with borough-wide. It was suggested the Council use its purchasing power here, building this into its expectations of contractors and suppliers.

What's the message?

The most popular actions put forward around this theme were practical, inclusive, more apparently within the control of the Council to deliver (unlike some themes). They also offered the prospect of a better local environment for people to enjoy – a cleaner borough where the sources of litter are better dealt with; where community gardens promote strengthened local networks, healthy eating and nicer green spaces; and where the local economy benefits.

4.2.2. Existing and new buildings – insulation, adaptations and efficiency

Assembly members had learnt that existing buildings account for 77% of Brent's territorial carbon emissions, which may explain why **three of the top ten recommendations related to action on existing buildings – with a fourth related to new developments.** These were presented under three different thematic headings (Existing Housing & Buildings, Planning Policy, Adapting to Global Heating) but it makes sense to discuss them together in this report.

Insulation and cladding was the most popular area for action. Assembly members understood this to be an important way for the borough to make real inroads into reducing its carbon footprint, and was something that would benefit residents directly in terms of reduced heating costs. Specific actions

they put forward included financial support from the Council so that these improvements could be rolled out across Brent's housing stock – it was felt that people could not be expected to pay for work themselves.

In addition to full insulation and cladding for homes, it was suggested that grants could be given or a service established to enable smaller 'quick fixes' in homes that would make them more energy efficient. This could go hand in hand with a roll-out of smart meters to help make residents more energy use-aware and to generate useful data on usage patterns. Another suggestion was that landlords be required to meet certain insulation standards in any homes that they let. Introducing reduced council tax rates for more energy efficient homes was seen as one way to incentivise and reward improvements to existing homes.

Introducing a policy of **zero carbon new developments** was also popular in relation to buildings and energy efficiency. Assembly members said that developers would need clear guidelines to follow, and they proposed that developers be given incentives to move more quickly on this. **Setting up district heating systems** was strongly supported and seen as one vehicle for improving the way in which homes are heated. This would need clear coordination, enforcement and regulation, it was said.

Adapting buildings to higher temperatures and flooding was the other action area to feature in the top ten in relation to the built environment. Measures such as introducing green roofs to help cool down buildings were seen as cost-effective and practical. Assembly members said this should involve the Council adapting its own properties, and information and incentivization for homeowners and businesses to make adaptations.

What's the message?

Assembly members appreciated the scale of the challenge in relation to energy efficiency in the borough's buildings and believe this is something where the Council needs to show leadership and make the necessary investment.

There is an expectation that the Council leads by example by improving its own properties; and that the potential gains in terms of carbon emissions make it worth investing public money in private properties to get them up to scratch. There were concerns about what this would cost, but also a feeling that there was no alternative as this was such an important source of emissions, yet the costs could not be put on individuals.

The 'social gains' were also compelling for Assembly members, with actions promising to improve the quality of people's housing and reduce fuel poverty.

There was an expectation that the Council's role would be to both incentivise and enforce, especially in relation to developers, landlords and businesses in the borough. Holding companies to account around their environmental impacts was a strong theme.

4.2.3. Transport – making the case and making it easier

Supporting public transport was the highest scoring action area within this theme, and featured within the top ten. There was recognition that important aspects of this were responsibilities for the Mayor of London, so Assembly members saw the role of Brent Council as lobbying and making the case wherever they could not take actions directly. One element of this was pricing, **making public transport more affordable** whilst another was **accessibility and ease of use**, creating a fully integrated transport system that disincentivised car use.

Outside of the top ten, **electrification of public transport** – and the infrastructure to enable it – was also a high scoring recommendation. Some Assembly members wanted to see incentives for businesses to change over to electric vehicles as well.

Other popular recommendations included **support of non-motorised transport alternatives**. Assembly members discussed creating more cycling lanes, bike storage, safer cycling paths, more pedestrianised high streets and workplace incentives for walking and cycling. This offered the prospect of action more directly in the Council's control. Some Assembly members suggested better regulation around cycling – such as a code of conduct, registration, insurance, mandatory helmet-wearing and higher penalties for jumping red lights – could help to make it safer and more mainstream as a form of transport.

What's the message?

Encouraging public transport and improving the carbon footprint of transport – through electrification – are popular ideas, though clearly require work from organisations beyond the Council and beyond Brent. Assembly members' expectation of the Council is that they make the case for change to the Mayor of London, and that accessibility and affordability need to be part of the 'offer' that makes public transport more attractive in this part of London. Locally the expectation is that the council makes it easier for people to choose walking and cycling through the way places are designed.

4.2.4. *Approach to policy-making – ensuring it is 'protected' from political change*

One group proposed that policies to address climate change should somehow be made binding so they could not be undone by changes in political leadership. This was framed as a point about changes in 'government' but could be taken to mean changes at the local authority level too.

This was a popular idea which featured in the top ten. It reflected a view that an issue as important as this should be 'protected' from party politics and, by implication, that decisions about addressing the climate and ecological crisis should seek to be cross-party.

What's the message?

This point sits outside the main thematic areas of action that groups discussed. That someone proposed it – and that so many people agreed with it – reflects Assembly members' concerns that politicians would end up watering down their action plans if they proved too difficult to deliver. It also reflects that politicians had apparently been so slow to act on climate change until now.

This was a message for government as much as for Brent Council, but 'What will the Council do with our recommendations?' was a question that many Assembly members had at the final event. The Assembly has a clear expectation that the Council commits itself to taking the necessary action to address the climate and ecological emergency and is concerned that that commitment is maintained.

4.2.5. *Renewable Energy – Opportunities for clean, affordable energy*

Actions relating specifically to renewable energy featured within the long list of recommendations, though not within the top ten. There was support for increasing solar energy generation, to be promoted through subsidisation, easy installation and help for people to understand how they could produce and sell back their energy to the grid. Information on which energy suppliers use more renewable sources would help residents make decisions about suppliers, it was suggested.

Where there was interest in renewable energy sources, the connection was often made with affordability and greater independence for residents and communities away from big suppliers.

4.2.6. *Biodiversity – Accessible and a key part of the Borough*

Under this theme, and outside of the top ten, Assembly members focused on **maintaining and promoting green spaces** that were accessible for all residents and on **increasing the number of trees in the borough.** Some said the council should stop cutting down trees and be more strategic in where they are planted. Assembly members made the connection with the planning of new homes and buildings, proposing that consideration of

biodiversity should be threaded through planning policy so that tree planting, wildlife corridors, green roofs and other positive actions be factored into decision-making on new development.

Education across all topic areas was seen as important, but there was particular emphasis by members on the need to **increase biodiversity awareness in schools**, starting at an early age as part of the education curriculum, put through by the education board.

What's the message?

Under this theme there was no single action or set of actions that stood out for Assembly members, but a more over-arching principle that biodiversity should be imbedded in the life of the borough – from the design and maintenance of public spaces, to homes, to places of work.

As throughout the themes, biodiversity resonated most strongly with Assembly members when it offered knock-on benefits for health and quality of life, in this case connected to the quality of green spaces.

4.3. Roles and responsibilities / the role of Brent Council

In the final Climate Assembly event, members were asked to consider what they thought the role of the Council should be overall. This was framed in terms of what the Council should do internally (e.g. within its own properties), and what could they do externally to support/influence businesses, communities and individuals to act. The following table captures the main messages from the Assembly about how the Council should seek to support different actors.

Assembly members said the Council should:

As an organisation…	Help neighbourhoods to…	Help individuals to…	Help businesses to…
• Be proactive and use different methods of communication to reach different audiences • Be transparent and open to feedback • Consider impacts across the whole borough • Educate and support residents on the most important issues	• Establish a forum, with budget, to generate ideas and hold the Council to account • Encourage good environmental behaviours at a community level • Foster local support for green spaces • Use an 'estate representative' system to get neighbourhoods more involved	• Be more mindful of how you can help or hinder in daily life • Be equipped with better information • Have an open mind towards local action and work with others (neighborhoods, Council, and businesses) • Transmit more ideas to the Council to implement	• Behave more positively (through incentives) • Use fewer resources (through information) • Contribute to the local environment (through deployment of tax revenues) • Take actions on their own premises (eg: solar panels, tree-planting)

4.3.1. Important themes in Assembly discussions

From comments on action cards and sentiments expressed across all three workshops, suggestions from Assembly members on what the Council should do consistently involved **schemes, incentives, and positive and enabling actions.** This demonstrated a general desire by Assembly members for a Council which takes the lead, supports people to understand and make good decisions, and which keeps its citizens informed about progress – as well as continuing to get their input.

Clearly communicating that businesses and corporations would also be **subject to policy changes and play their part in reaching these shared environmental goals** was in the back of many Assembly members' minds and was observed across all three workshops. Several Assembly members expressed frustration on an apparent lack of pressure on businesses and developers.

Following from this, Assembly members mentioned ideas about **closing the**

feedback loop. There was positivity about the idea of the Council keeping residents informed about how different actors in the local system are performing around climate change actions. Some Assembly members were even keen to have the Council conduct routine checks and surveys and continue engagement through forums like the Climate Assembly.

5. Where to from here

5.1. Key learning for future climate assemblies

In order to maximize their impact, climate assemblies need to provide comprehensive and accessible education on the climate crisis, and strike the right balance between providing direction and structure on the one hand and freedom to explore and generate a range of ideas on the other. We tried to get this balance right throughout the Brent Climate Assembly, though with less time pressure we would ideally have given less structure to the recommendations-setting phase of the work.

How can citizens' assemblies educate people about the climate crisis?

One of the strengths of the citizens' assembly process – that it comprises randomly selected residents – also creates one of the process's biggest challenges. Climate change and its governance are complex issues, so how can you get a room of people who may not have thought about climate change previously in a position to be making policy recommendations? As more councils are hosting assemblies it is useful to reflect on what worked well in Brent.

1) Timeframe: developing an interest, recalling content and building rapport

In scheduling assembly processes, commissioners and facilitators need to provide participants with **as much time to engage as possible**. On reflection, a fourth workshop with our Assembly members would have allowed them to take a more prominent role in the framing and phrasing of their recommendations, and in the development of the final report. The project budget could not have withstood that additional pressure, however, and some Assembly members may have been unable to extend the level of their commitment too. **Where four events can be accommodated this would be beneficial,** but this has to be weighed up against cost and time implications for commissioners.

At the end of the final meeting, Assembly members shared feedback about the process. Overall, they thought the format of meeting every other week for three Saturdays **supported their learning**[2] - two weeks between meetings allowed time for information to sink in, but was not so long that content was forgotten. Several members talked to their facilitators about articles they had read or news segments they had listened to between meetings – things they said they would previously have ignored.

"I was able to reflect on what we talked about." Assembly member, Brent Climate Assembly

"There were things I've seen online that I've now read about because my interest was sparked." Assembly member, Brent Climate Assembly

[2] Note that some members had joined the Assembly after the first event, attending the midweek 'catch-up session' prior to Event 2 instead

The substantial amount of time that Assembly members invested in the process also meant that the great majority **took their involvement seriously**. At the final meeting, people were clearly focused and ready to make recommendations. They had **built rapport** within their groups and with their facilitators, and that positive dynamic helped them to engage in thorough discussions.

2) Presenting high volumes of information: group discussion rather than independent reading

That said, **recalling the content from previous Assembly meetings was not easy.** In the second event, key points from the previous meeting were displayed on posters around the room gallery-style. This format required members to read independently at the beginning of the day. It was evident that several members disengaged from this activity. Facilitators also fed back that some in their groups had been overwhelmed by the amount of information on show. In response to this, we modified this exercise in the third event and positioned the recall activity within a group conversation so there was **less reading for individuals**. Instead, group **members paired up** to work through prompt material and to share their thoughts from the previous event together. Then, as part of a table discussion, **the group worked to remember** the key findings from the last meeting.

3) Messages that make an impact

When reflecting on the process, many Assembly members had been particularly struck by learning about the **UK's historical responsibility for climate change**. Understanding the global context proved to be very important. At the final event, participants at five of the seven tables referenced the short animation from Event 1 that had showed the UK's contribution to carbon emissions so clearly.

"One fact that really hit me was Britain's historic emissions, [it was] really informative and shaped my thoughts for the rest of the events." Assembly member, Brent Climate Assembly

Assembly members connected this to other ideas presented about **climate justice,** and the notion that the people being most impacted by climate change were in nations least equipped to tackle it and least responsible for causing it. This was, in turn, part of a bigger theme of **'fairness'** and the importance of our response to climate change impacting and benefiting people fairly, both at home and abroad. This resonated with Assembly members and came up throughout the events' discussions, including within the criteria they set for assessing potential actions.

4) The role of experts

Assembly members felt positively about the experts and their contributions. Members felt that the experts were approachable and helped to give clarity, with some being particularly memorable for members. When Ruth London, Director of Fuel Poverty Action, talked about **housing retrofits in relation to improving people's living conditions** – and the moral responsibility

for this – it prompted an unusual round of applause and the message stuck.

5) It's important to make the 'story' accessible, not just the words

We were always aware that meeting materials and presentations needed to be **free from jargon**. We were constantly reminded how easy it is to overlook the inaccessibility of some language for some people, and the need to make it as simple as possible. Some Assembly members, for instance, were initially unfamiliar with the term 'emissions'.

A bigger challenge than simplifying language, however, was **simplifying the 'story' of climate change** so that members were able to understand the issues in sufficient breadth and depth whilst keeping sight of the main messages. During the action card activity, for example, it was challenging for people to think about climate action from the perspective of different actors, different levels of geography (local, national, or global) and different time frames (past, present and future). This complexity is real and we didn't want to over-simplify it in a way that would narrow Assembly members' considerations, but there was a lot for people to navigate and make sense of. For future assemblies, organisers should spend time thinking about how to simplify these stories as well as simplifying language, especially during the later workshops.

How can citizens' assemblies strike the right balance between structure and freedom?

A blank slate can be both empowering and overwhelming. When designing climate assemblies, we need to guarantee that assembly members do not become paralyzed by endless choice, nor their discussions and recommendations constrained by too few options. Overall Assembly members felt they were able to speak their mind and contribute their views.

> *"I got to contribute in my own way and didn't have to hold back. People don't expect the things I say when they first see me, but I was able to say those things here." Assembly member, Brent Climate Assembly*

This quote comes from a young Assembly member, who had previously participated in the Greater London Authority's youth parliament. She felt that the youth parliament did not want to hear what she had to say, but that the Brent Climate Assembly was different. Others also said they felt the Assembly had given them space to be passionate and critical. We would argue it is important to leave room for critical views and to ensure there is a ground rule related to a 'judgement-free zone'. With these rules in place, assembly members will find it easier to speak their mind. Establishing consistent table groups and facilitators also helps to create a positive atmosphere for discussion.

Action cards were an important vehicle in taking Assembly members from two events dedicated to learning and discussion to generating a set of recommendations. The action cards provided members with a lot of information, and arguably too much. Several participants questioned the

balance between so many 'pre-written' action cards to the blank cards which invited them to create their own from scratch. Some said they did not have the time or the brain power left to think as creatively as they would have liked. On the other hand, other Assembly members liked how the cards took information and ideas from previous workshops and brought them together in a clear, concise way. One table tried to redress the balance by placing the blank cards at the top of the pile and 'pre-written' cards in the back. This way, Assembly members could get their original ideas on paper first.

Similarly, some Assembly members felt the 'sticky dot' voting exercise was reductive, and that **fuller conversations** about the actions would have allowed them to elaborate. The culmination of a set of paired and group discussions earlier in the day, our judgement was that the voting exercise was necessary to give a definitive set of recommendations – generated by the whole Assembly – within the time available. Hosting a fourth event would help to overcome this challenge. In future we would emphasise to assembly members that the voting exercise is not designed to 'eliminate' certain ideas from the process, but to provide a sense of where the assembly's greatest interest lies, and that all ideas will be captured and reported.

In summary, the meetings worked best when there was a clear framework for discussion so that people were not 'lost' in the material, but also when there were clear opportunities to step outside of those frameworks to be more creative. **Supporting assembly members** should therefore mean both supporting them to sift through the content with some 'pre-packed' ideas, but also supporting them in shaping their own unique ideas. The assembly process should strive to **create space for that diversity** so that whilst it is guided, it always feels **owned by its members**.

5.2. What's next for Brent?

If public participation is to continue, the Council will have to decide how and with whom.

Next steps for the Assembly: could the members be involved further?

During the last meeting, many Assembly members made it very clear that they wanted to continue to be involved in climate action planning in the borough, and that Brent should make an effort to bring more voices into the conversation. Some members asked: "How would I know these things if I weren't in the room?" This is a good question. Brent Council will need to decide how it will continue to involve residents in the decision-making process. They need to ask some of the same questions we asked during recruitment for the Assembly, including, how do you reach people who may not otherwise be talking about climate change, and how do you skill them up to enter the discussion.

The 'how' decision could itself be made through a dialogue process. The

Council could work with communities to co-design creative ways to keep community voices at the heart of climate policy.

The Council could start conversations about how to be involved in Brent's climate action plan with existing community groups. These groups, importantly, should not be limited to environmental groups; instead, the net should be cast wide and include groups who work on all sorts of issues in the borough, from housing groups to faith groups to recreational groups. The council could go to them or streamline the process and host them within the council. These conversations would be about how to be involved in Brent's climate action.

At the second Assembly Meeting, several members proposed that Brent set-up a climate pop-up space, similar to the one in Camden. The pop-up space could move around the borough and provide a place for residents to come together to continue working on climate action solutions.

Assembly members thought that accountability – e.g. a way to ensure that Brent acts on its climate agenda and continues to include the voices of the public – is very important. They suggested forming a public accountability body that provides regular scrutiny for the council. This was a popular idea, and evidence from outside the meeting room also suggests that it is very important. This raises the question of who would form this accountability body.

In the same vein, there is a question of how Assembly members can continue to be involved. Many expressed an interest in continued involvement, and there would be benefits to this – perhaps in the form of scrutiny. The education process embedded in the Assembly was intensive and has produced a group of well-informed citizens who would now be in a stronger position to comment on the council's plans with understanding and nuance. Furthermore, they are already invested in the process.

However, how fair is it to continue to elevate the voices of these randomly selected individuals? They cannot be said to have a mandate to 'represent' other residents. Some options for the council include:

- The council invites members to be part of a scrutinising body, e.g. quarterly catch-up for Assembly members to feedback on climate action progress. The Assembly members existing knowledge would speed up this process, but it is preventing new voices from entering the conversation.
- The council could create new structures for residents' scrutiny –such as the idea of an accountability body – and open it up to new members. This would be a more onerous task and involved educating new members, but would include fresh voices.
- The council could take a more hands-off approach and encourage former Assembly members to join local groups or organise themselves. For example, some members could create their own group that the council does not mediate and agree to keep meeting. The council

could still provide a forum for local groups to feed into the decision-making process.

Further engagement and consultation with the rest of Brent residents: How to encourage action in the community?

When asked how Brent should engage with other resident on the climate crisis, Assembly members suggested that the council uses this process as a starting point. They could share information about what happened, what was discussed, the criteria the group developed and the recommendations.

One group became focused on a different outreach problem: the Council should not be concerned with what it should tell residents, it should be concerned with listening to what residents are already telling them. The group felt positively about the Assembly because they were able to share some of their existing ideas and concerns with the council, which they had never had the opportunity to do.

A few group members used an app to report problems in the borough, but felt this was the first time they had been able to express what works and doesn't work for them in Brent. It is this information, they argued, that Brent needs to consider when making and delivering its climate plan, e.g. struggling to pay the bills in council housing, being frustrated by a road system that does not work. In addition to thinking about what to tell Brent residents, the council should think about how to listen to what residents are telling them and adapt their plans in response. As one group member said,

"The council needs to hear the voices of the people and apply what they heard to their actions." Assembly member, Brent Climate Assembly

The Council may consider taking the Assembly's recommendations to the wider public, e.g. via a survey. However, those survey respondents will not have experienced the same deliberative process and heard the same evidence, so the Council should consider what this exercise would achieve and how the views of the informed Assembly members would be weighed up against those of other residents.

The Council needs to think about its role in enabling community involvement in a more regular, formalised process. The accountability body described above is one example of this. This poses some questions about structure – i.e. what's the governance around that accountability body and where does it fit – and also questions about the skills and capacity needed within the Council to help the input of that body to be effective and meaningful.

5.3. An opportunity for Assembly members to comment

This report has been shared with Assembly members to give them an opportunity to read it and comment prior to publication. It was important for us to check that members see it as a fair reflection of their work and their

experience of the process. Twelve members have read the full report and provided feedback:

- Nine of these agreed that the report was a fair reflection of the Brent Climate Assembly and its recommendations, whilst three said they didn't know.
- Nine also said they wanted to have the chance to participate in Brent Council's future work with residents to oversee and comment on their climate actions.

Two people added comments:

'I think the report is an excellent and an accurate reflection of the Assembly.'

'It is an excellent and concise report.'

Appendix A – Detailed methodology

5.4. Recruitment

5.4.1. Recruitment methodology

Sampling approach

Assembly Members were recruited to reflect the population of Brent. Sixty were recruited to ensure attendance of at least 50 by the final Assembly event. The sampling quota was based on demographic statistics from the National Office for Statistics. Members were sampled according to their age, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic background, and where they live within the Borough. The aim was to ensure that there was a mix of members in each Assembly meeting to ensure different views were heard. The sampling quota was reviewed and approved by Brent Council and the Advisory Board before being sent to the recruiters.

The first 40 members were successfully recruited in line with the quota requirements. To meet the total number of members and ensure that the sample size was relevant, we adjusted the quotas for the final 20 members.

The following groups proved difficult to recruit:

- Males
- 25-34 year olds
- 65+ year olds
- 'White other' ethnic group (in Brent this group consists mainly of Polish people)
- Socio-economic group DE
- South-West Brent inhabitants

One Guajarati speaker and one Hindi speaker attended the meetings with two translators.

Recruitment approach

We worked with Plus Four to recruit members using a combination of on-street, list and social media recruitment methods. It was decided that the electoral roll would not be used because of the high percentage of people who opt-out of being on the open register. The social media recruitment method was applied later in the process to ease recruitment of the last Assembly members. The target audience for the social media campaign was restricted to Brent residents younger than 35. Anyone expressing interest was then screened by Plus Four. During recruitment, prospective Assembly members were told that they would be sharing their views on what actions Brent Council should take to address the climate emergency. This was not the case for social media recruitment which did not mention climate change.

Assembly members were given the following incentives for attending:

Meeting 1	Meeting 2	Meeting 3
£40	£40	£100

5.4.2. Target vs actual quotas

Following best practice, we aimed to over-recruit (60 to achieve a minimum of 50) to allow for drop-outs over the course of the three meetings. The drop-out rate between recruitment and Assembly Event 1 was high, with only 41 members attending out of 59 recruited. To ensure the second event was well attended, we organised an additional session in the preceding week to top-up the numbers and bring those new Assembly members up to speed. This was successful with 16 new members attending this mid-week session and 55 members attending the second meeting. 53 attended the final event (and thus had attended three events in total). The table below shows the original target quotas against these final event numbers. In some cases, the targets were relaxed and the target number revised down.

Category	Quota Detail	TOTAL	
		Target	Actual (attended three events)
Gender	Female	28-32	25
	Male	28-32	28
	Total	56-64	53
Age group	16-18	3-4	3
	19-24	5-6	5
	25-34	12 (revised down)	9
	35-44	10-12	15
	45-54	8-10	9
	55-64	6-8	9
	65+	4 (revised down)	3
Ethnicity	White British / Irish	12-14	12
	White Other	8-10	5
	Asian / Asian British Inc. Gujarati/Hindi as main language	15-17 (revised down) 4	16 2
	Black / Black British	10-12	10
	Other (including mixed)	6-8	8

Area	NW	14-16	12
	NE	14-16	16
	SW	14-16	11
	SE	14-16	14
SEG	AB	11-14	11
	C1	17-19	18
	C2	10-12	15
	DE	17-19	9

The social grades are summarised as follows:

- **AB**: Higher and intermediate managerial/administrative/ professional occupations,
- **C1**: Supervisory, clerical and junior managerial/ administrative/ professional occupations,
- **C2**: Skilled manual occupations,
- **DE**: Semi-skilled and unskilled manual occupations; unemployed and lowest grade occupations.

5.5. Advisory Board

The Advisory Board was established prior to the first meeting and helped develop the framing question used for the Climate Assembly. The Advisory Board also reviewed the proposed process, content and structure to ensure that Assembly members were provided with information and evidence in order to deliberate in an informed manner. The Advisory Board was comprised of three independent members, each contributing a different expertise.

Below is a list of the Advisory Board members and their roles.

Name	Role/organisation
Richard Jackson	**Director of Environmental Sustainability, University College London (UCL) Estates**
Joanne Wade	**Deputy Director, Association for Decentralised Energy**
Keith Garrett	**Co-director, Sortition Foundation**

5.6. Independent experts

A variety of independent experts attended each meeting in order to present information and answer any technical questions that may come up during the meetings, to ensure that members are making informed decisions. The experts also contributed to the design of the meetings to ensure that the

information being presented is current and accurate.

Below is a list of the experts and their roles.

Name	Role/organisation	Meeting attended
Alice Bell	**Co-director, Possible**	Meeting 1
Tessa Khan	**Co-director of the Climate Litigation Network / Urgenda**	Meeting 1
Neil Grant	**PhD student, the Grantham Institute for Climate Change and the Environment**	Meeting 1
Ruth London	**Director of Fuel Poverty Action**	Meeting 2
Jim Watson	**Professor of Energy Policy at University College London (UCL) Institute for Sustainable Resources, Director of the UK Energy Research Centre and an Associate with SPRU, University of Sussex**	Meeting 2
Tim Schwanen	**Professor of Transport Studies and Geography, and Director of the Transport Studies Unit at University of Oxford**	Meeting 2
Peter Tilston	**Project Director, West London Waste Authority**	Meeting 2
Daniel Brittle	**Programme Manager Groundwork London**	Meeting 2
Sam Fankhauser	**Director of the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and Director of the ESRC-funded Centre for Climate**	Meeting 3

	Change Economics and Policy, both at The London School of Economics and Political Science	
Rebecca Elliot	**Economics of climate change; Professor of Sociology, LSE**	Meeting 3
Agamemnon Otero	**CEO of Repowering London**	Meeting 3

5.7. Micro-site

The micro-site was designed and hosted by Commonplace, an online community consultation platform. The micro-site was established in order to host information about:

1. The Assembly – background, purpose, remit and objectives.
2. The partners involved in the Assembly – Brent Council, Traverse and the independent experts.
3. Facts about climate change, and what Brent Council is already doing to mitigate the effects.
4. A summary of the meetings as they happen, including which experts were in attendance.

The micro-site was open for comments from October 25th to November 17th for anyone interested in contributing their views, not just Assembly members. Anyone contributing on the micro-site was answering the same research question as Assembly members during the meetings. The comments (totalling 326) were thematically analysed and summarised and then incorporated into the meetings which broadened participation to beyond the people in the room. All comments have been downloaded and forwarded to Brent Council.

5.8. Climate Assembly process plans

The process plan is a document which provides a detailed running order of each meeting. It covers what activities will occur when, and how the outcomes of the activities will contribute to answering the research questions. Below are the process plans for all three meetings.

5.8.1. Meeting 1

Introduction

On 8 July 2019, Brent Council declared a climate emergency and passed a motion aiming to:

- Do all reasonable in the Council's gift to aim for carbon neutrality for 2030 and work with government to achieve the national 2050 target
- Empower a Lead Member to take responsibility for tackling climate change in Brent and produce a report on this subject within 6 months which also promotes the importance of local biodiversity
- Develop a Carbon Offset Fund and Strategy
- Redirect our investments into renewables and carbon free/neutral technologies
- Continue to deliver reductions in emissions through support for district energy & renewables

The Council has spearheaded numerous green initiatives, including introducing a diesel levy on parking permits to incentivise greener transport, creating a seven-mile bee corridor to boost biodiversity, and helping businesses to think about their impact through the Plastic Free Wembley initiative. Now, as part of their efforts to address the climate emergency, they have partnered with Traverse to deliver a Brent Climate Assembly.

Research question

The Brent Climate Assembly will focus on answering one key question:

How can we work together to limit climate change and its impact while protecting our environment, our health and our wellbeing? Consider the Council, businesses and organisations, individuals.

Process outline

	Meeting 1: Set the scene	**Meeting 2:** Present options	**Meeting 3:** Develop recommendations
Key topics	- **Assembly process** - **Climate change internationally, nationally and locally** - **Fairness, responsibility and roles** - **Scale and vision**	**Case studies:** - **Evidence of success / impacts** - **Cost-benefit** - **Finance**	- **Decision making and consensus testing** - **Case studies**
Member objectives	- Get to know each other and the techniques for the three days. - Understand scope, context and science behind climate change. - Understand Brent's current approach. - Develop confidence to engage with specialists and critically evaluate evidence.	- Start developing a framework for assessing options. - Explore current systemic approach and potential policy options through different lenses. - Become aware of the financial systems and structures. - Hear from technical experts, young people and Council reps.	- Develop approach to decision-making. - Draft recommendations for Brent Council's climate action. - Assess their recommendations for Brent Council's climate action, thinking about intersections across sectors and effects on people to support making recommendations grounded in lived experience. - Finalise recommen-dations.

Outline approach – Day 1

Time	Activity
9.30	Registration
10.00	**Introduction**
10.30	Session 1: Journals
10.50	Session 2: Working together agreement
11.15	**Coffee**
11.30	Session 3: Key note
11.50	Session 4: Discovery session
12.45-13.30	**Lunch**
13.35	Session 5: Discovery reflection
14.00	Session 6: Climate Change, Brent, and the wider world (Jurisdiction)
14.45	Closing presentation
15.00	**Close**

5.8.2. Meeting 2

Outline approach – Day 2

Time	Activity
9.30	Registration
10.00	**Introduction**
10.20	Session 1: Reflect on the first meeting
10.50	Session 2: How to assess options
11.15	**Coffee**
11.30	Session 3: Key note – Brent Youth Parliament
11.50	Session 4: Options World Café

13.00	**Lunch**
13.30	Session 5: Reflect on options
14.00	Session 6: Panel Q&A
14.45	Closing presentation
15.00	**Close**

5.8.3. Meeting 3

Outline approach – Day 3

Time	Activity
9.30	**Registration**
10.00	**Introduction**
10.30	**Session 1: Reflect on previous meetings**
11.05	**Session 2: Three specialists introduce themselves**
11.20	**Coffee**
11.30	**Session 3: Deliberating options by theme**
13.10	Lunch
13.40	**Session 4: Voting on the recommendations using sticky dots and identifying the top ten recommendations overall**
14.10	**Session 5: Step back and reflect in home groups**
14.30	**Closing presentation – opinion tracker voting, commitment to next steps from Council**
15.00	Close

5.9. Materials used in meetings

5.9.1. Discovery session posters

Information posters were used in the first meeting to inform and educate members on:

- Climate change and sustainability in Brent.
- Introduction to climate change.
- Climate change in the global context.
- Agreements, policy and targets for climate change in the UK.

The content of the posters is summarised below alongside some examples.

Introduction to climate change

Explanation of what climate change means, what the causes of climate change are, and its effects on our planet.

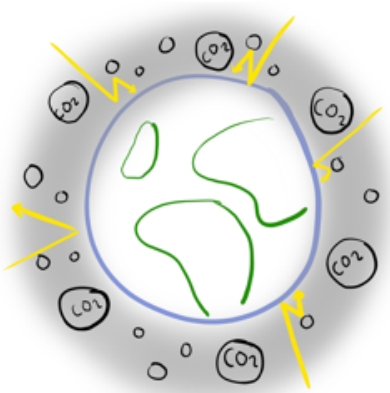
What is it?

Climate change is the long-term shift in weather patterns across the world.

What causes it?

Currently, the **biggest driver** of climate change is human activity.

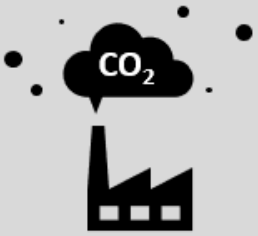
The greenhouse gas effect is where **greenhouse gases,** including carbon dioxide (CO_2) build up in the atmosphere and act like a blanket.



When sunlight enters our atmosphere and bounces off the earth, it gets turned into infrared radiation. The blanket of greenhouse gases traps some of this radiation as heat in the atmosphere – warming up the planet over time.

What is a greenhouse gas?

A greenhouse gas (GHG), is a gas that absorbs and emits energy from radiation. Carbon dioxide is the most common GHG. Other GHGs include methane and nitrous oxide.



Effects on our planet

Even if we stop all emissions today, there will still be some change in our climate.

Climate change has already impacted our planet. These impacts will be **worse** and **more frequent** if we don't cut emissions fast enough.

Impacts on our climate system include:

- Extreme weather events (droughts, floods, heatwaves)
- Rising ocean levels
- Ocean acidification (changing what can live in our oceans)

Research and evidence help us to make decisions about how to cut emissions and reduce the impacts.

Time is critical – 2019 is a turning point!

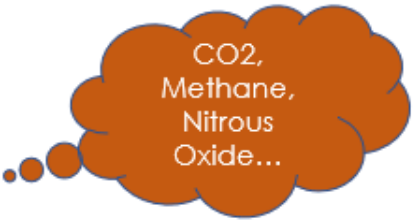
Climate change and sustainability in Brent.

Explanation on how Brent is currently negatively contributing to climate change, and the Council's approach to counteracting the effects. The posters also featured four different carbon scenarios, listing the impact that certain actions would have in reducing carbon emission levels by 2030.

Emission Breakdown

Consumption emissions in Brent using UK-wide estimates

- Brent's consumption emissions in 2016 are actually estimated to be **4 to 5 times** the size of **government emissions estimates**
- How come?
  - UK consumption emissions look at all greenhouse gases – Govt. statistics **only measure CO2**



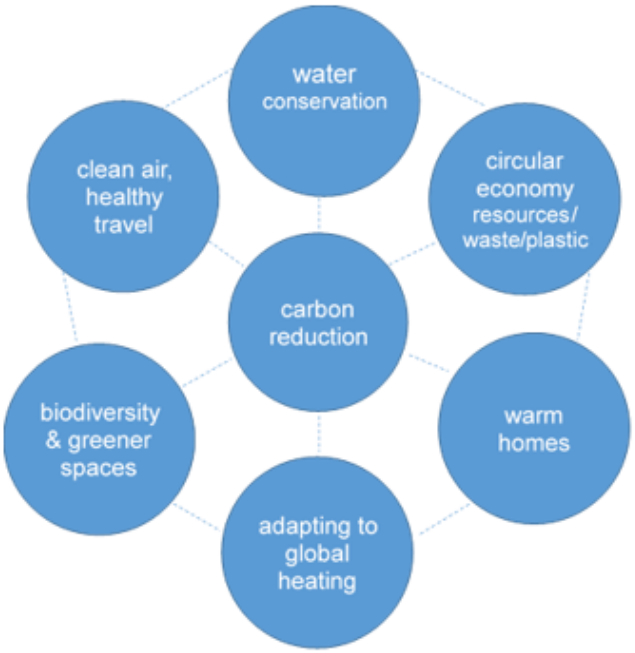
  - Govt. doesn't include other key emission producing sectors, like **agriculture, industrial, and waste**

  - Govt. doesn't include **air and sea travel**, or imported emissions in the UK or abroad

Knowing how all our consumption patterns affect emissions can help us make more informed lifestyle choices and decisions in our local areas.

Brent's Approach

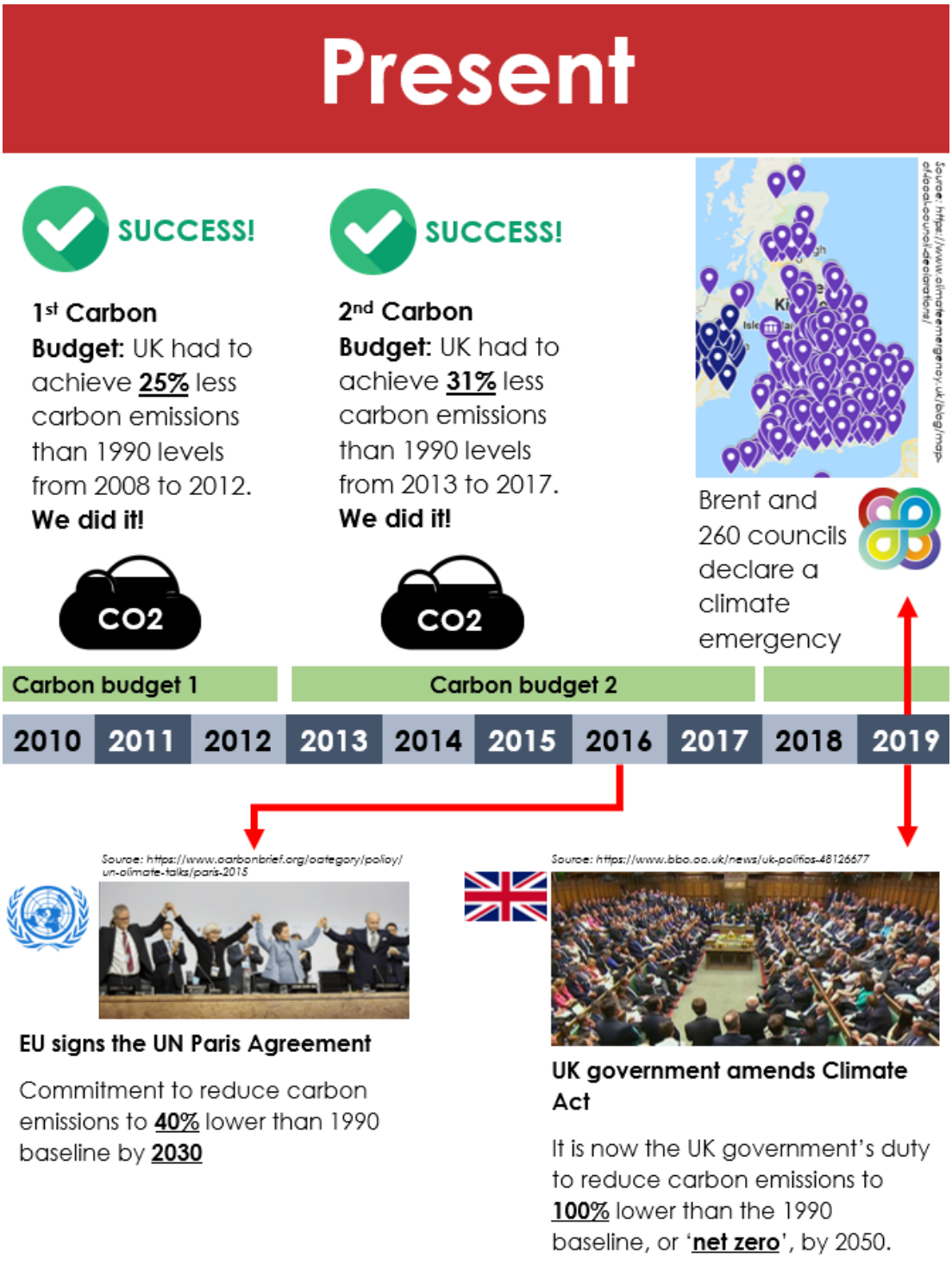
After calling its climate and ecological emergency, Brent Council is tackling climate change through these connected environmental issues:



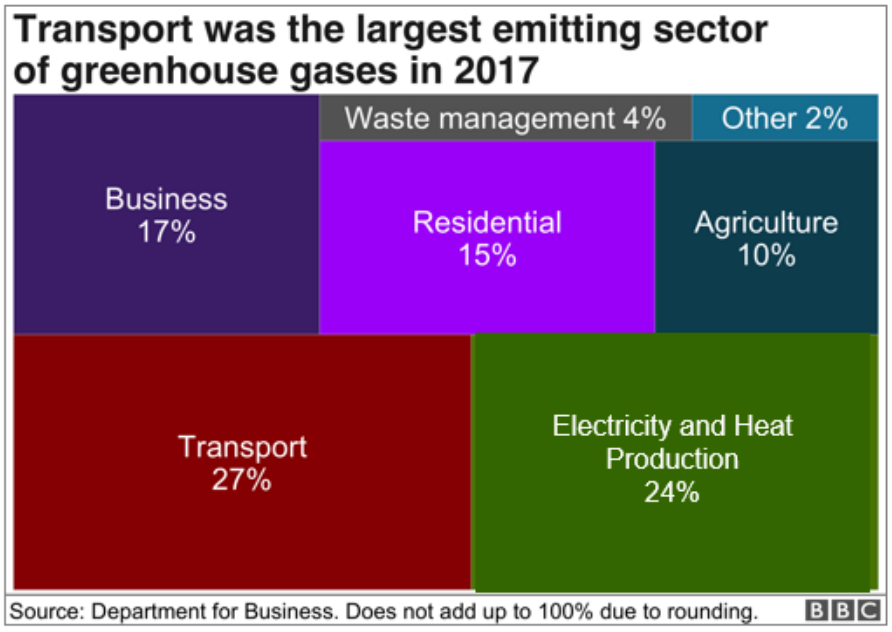
The council believes that these issues all affect each other, and if tackled properly, can reduce carbon emissions and bring positive change to local communities, by **improving people's health, wellbeing and by cutting costs.**

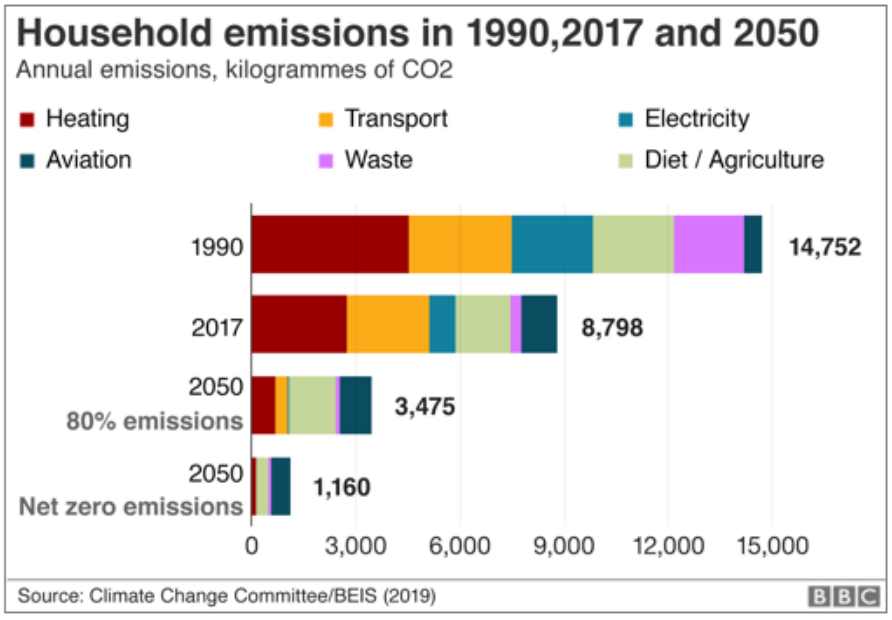
The UK: agreements, policy and targets

A focus on the UK's past, current and future efforts in tackling climate change. Also provides context for what the biggest emitters of UK emissions are throughout time.



What makes up UK emissions?





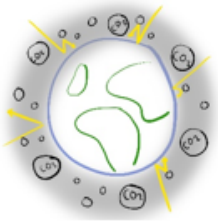
Introduction to the global context.

An overview of global initiatives to tackle climate change, including unilateral agreements between nation states or individual cities.

International climate negotiations

Why countries work together

Every county emits greenhouse gases. Those emissions and their impacts on the environment don't respect borders – so the actions of one nation can impact all nations.



When greenhouse gases are released they surround the entire planet.

Therefore, individual nations' emissions are polluting a **shared** global atmosphere.

These negotiations are based on:

- The power that national governments have,
- Collaborating for a common good, and
- How science, technology and regulation limit the release of greenhouse gases.

Port Meadow, an open common in Oxford

5.9.2. Action cards

The action cards are based on the content generated in the second meeting and were used in the third meeting to assess members' recommendations. The action cards are divided into seven themes:

- Transport
- Existing housing and buildings
- Renewable energy
- Planning policy and new development
- Consumption, resources and waste
- Nature and biodiversity
- Adapting to global heating – flooding, heatwaves and drought

Each action card lists an idea to tackle its respective theme and provides a brief explanation of the idea.

5.10. Data processing, analysis and reporting

Over the three meetings we collected mostly qualitative data as well as some non-attributable quantitative data. Qualitative data was captured by table facilitators in proformas designed to guide the sessions and ensure that the research question is answered throughout the day.

The data from all three meetings was compiled into a spreadsheet for analysis. This format helps to compare data from different tables and identify key overarching themes. After each set of meetings, we reviewed the data and used the findings to help shape the next meeting, as well as report back to Brent Council and the Advisory Board. Assembly members also reviewed a summarised version of the findings at the beginning of every meeting.

Every meeting featured the same anonymised voting exercise, asking Assembly members to express how they felt about the following statements:

- How much do you think you understand about climate change right now?
- To what extent does being 'environmentally friendly' affect the decisions you make in your daily life?
- How much of a priority do you think addressing climate change should be for the Council?

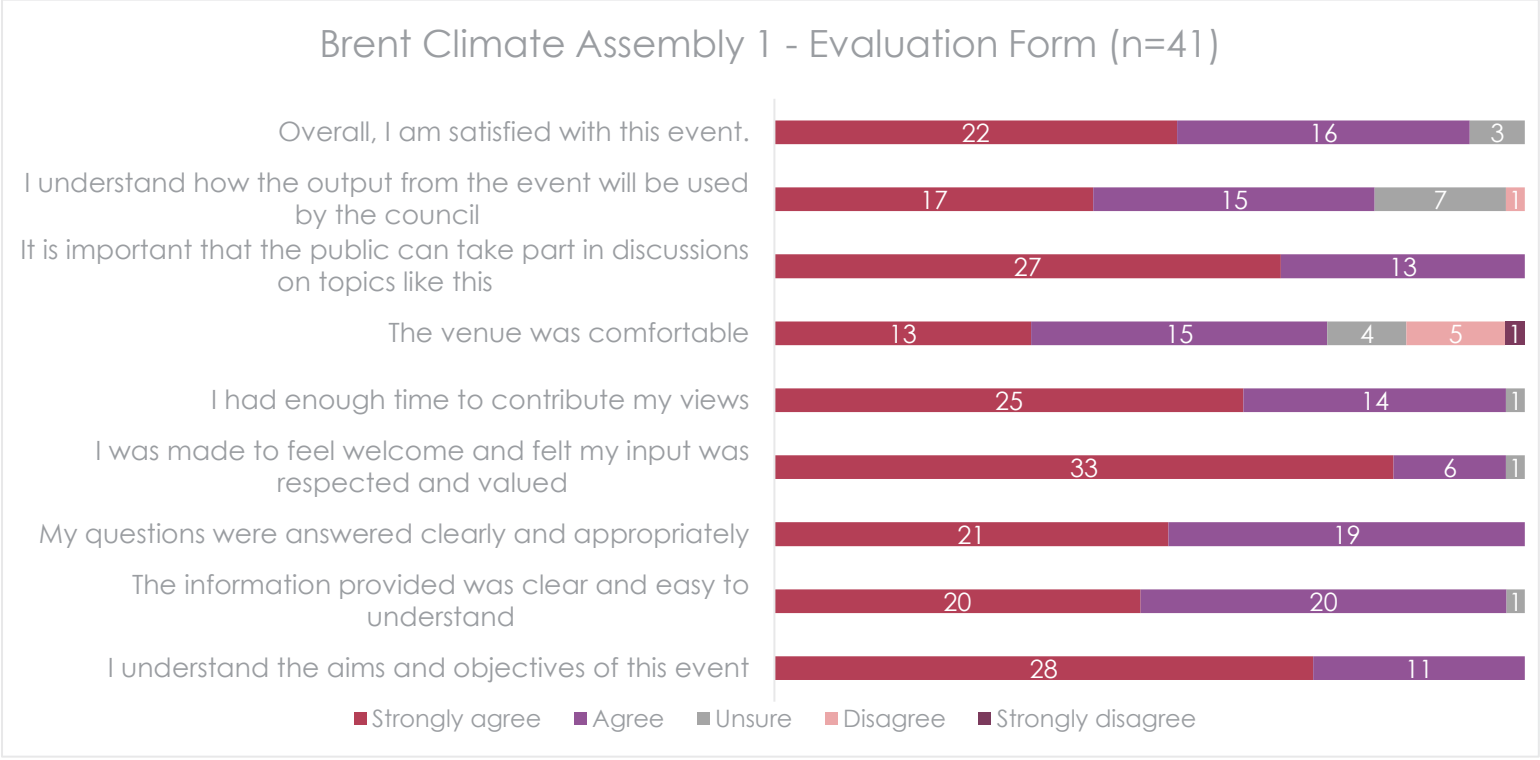
The voting results from each meeting is downloaded into a spreadsheet using the proprietary voting keypad software and then turned into graphs to analyse.

The outcomes of both quantitative and qualitative analysis are summarised in this report.

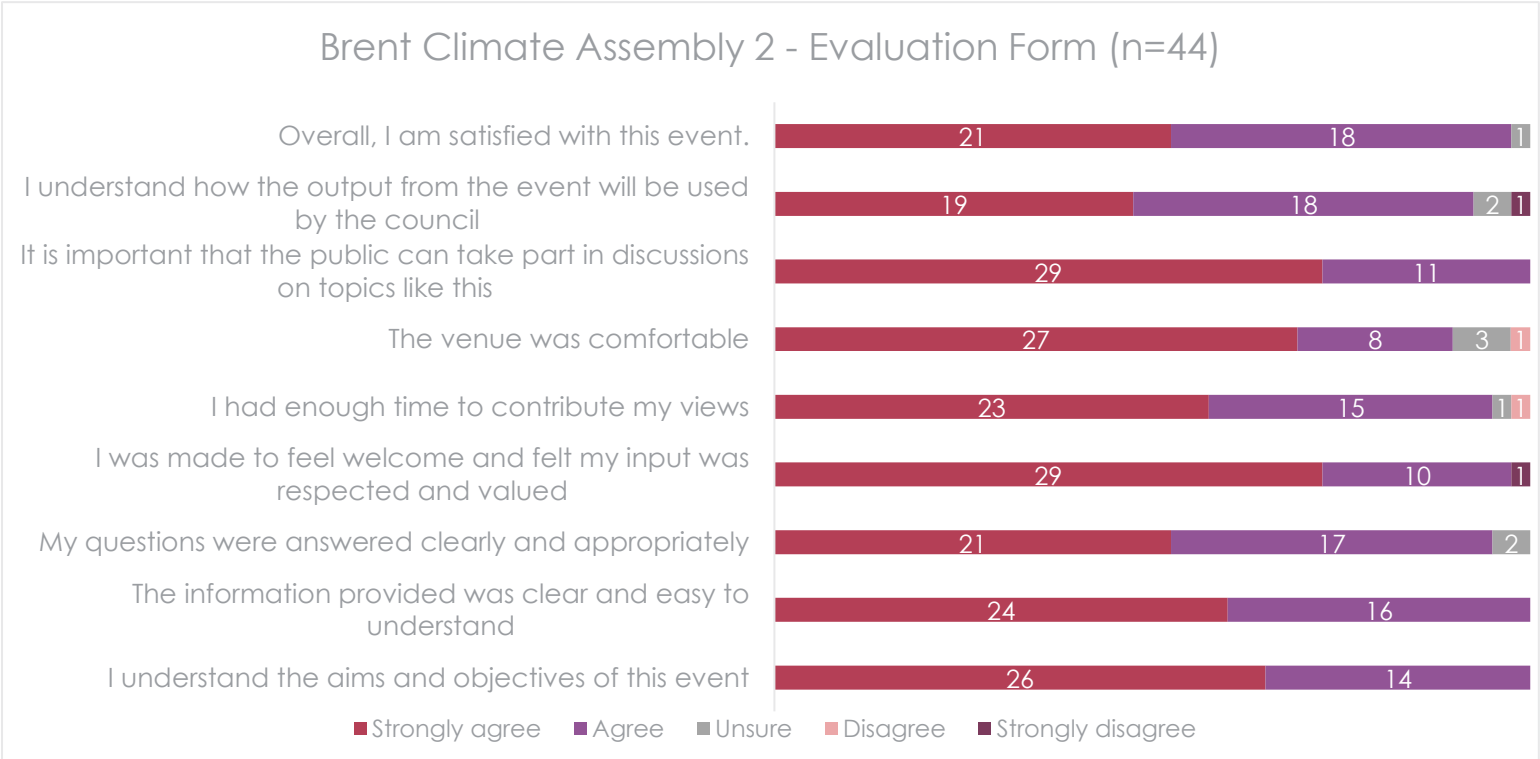
Appendix B - Data

5.11. Feedback form data

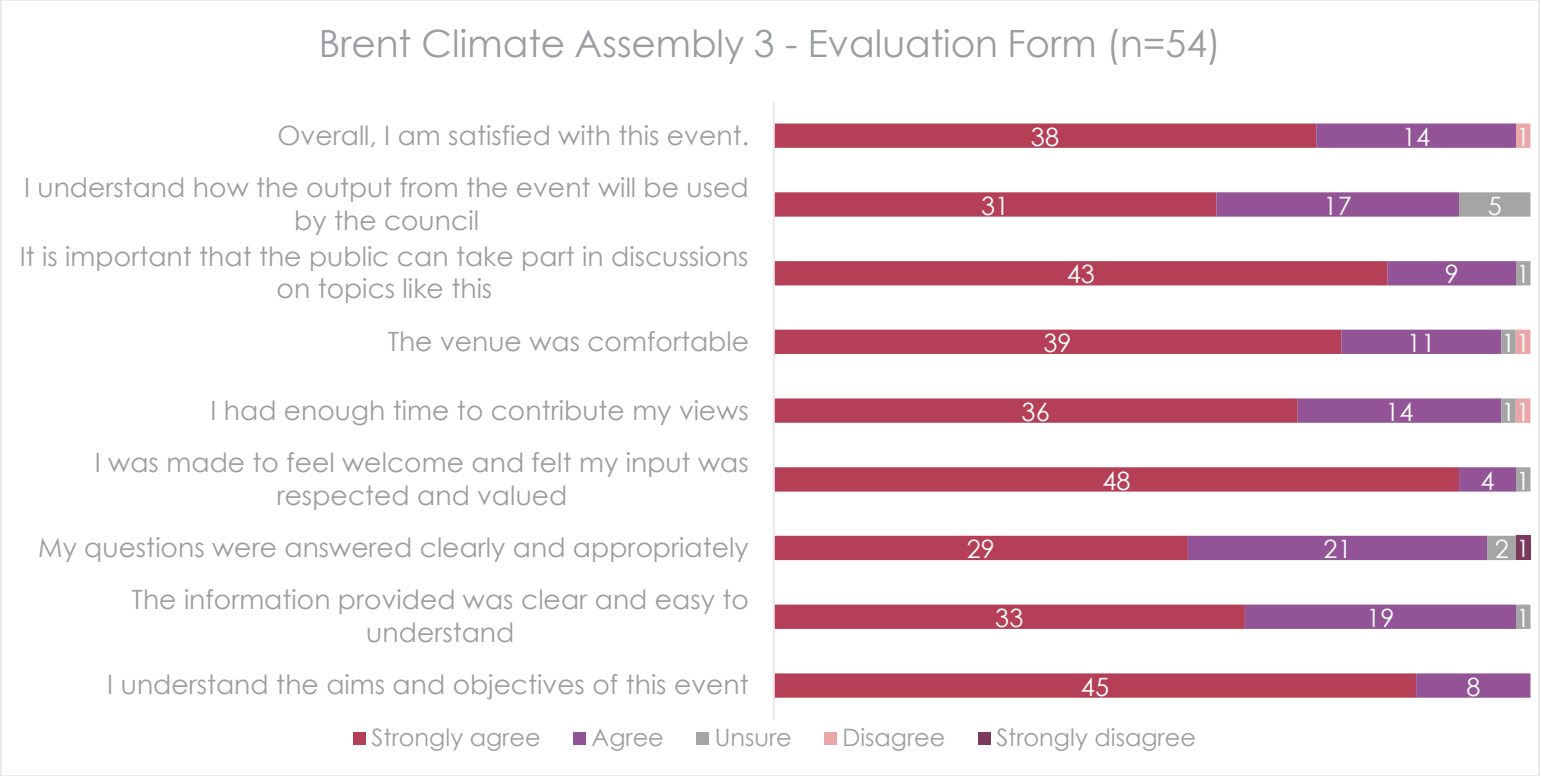
Meeting 1 data



Meeting 2 data



Meeting 3 data



5.11.1. Summary of qualitative feedback

Most comments in meeting 1 were about how cold the venue was, and the lack of warm food options at lunch. This was amended for meetings 1 and 2, which is reflected in the increased positive responses for the statement "the venue was comfortable". One member commented that the day felt too long.

Overall the comments in the second meeting were positive, with one respondent saying that they would have liked to receive more details throughout the day. One member also noted that they had had a disagreement with another member.

Comments in meeting 3 can be separated into two broad categories:

1. Members want to be kept up to date with progress after the Assembly, as well as reassurance that actions were being taken.
2. The Assembly format of deliberative engagement should be applied to other social issues such as caring for the elderly.
3. In the future participation should be broadened to include wider demographic groups such as young people.

5.12. Comprehensive criteria list

The core criteria that Assembly members generated have been summarised and reported on in section 3.1 of this report. Below is a list of secondary criteria that came out of meeting 2.

Overall, across the range of actions taken forward…

- There should be a mix of timescales, with some actions we can take now and some over the longer term
- Residents should be able to take part in the decision-making progress about how actions are implemented
- People should be educated and informed about why this matters and how they can play their part

'Some other things to think about'

- Prioritise things which help Brent stand out
- Ensure Wembley isn't the only focus – interventions need to be all over the Borough
- Focus on helping people save money
- The Council needs to ensure that work undertaken is high quality
- Is this a choice, or is it compulsory?
- Can communities help to make this happen themselves, e.g. through volunteering?
- Are we sure it is safe?
- Prioritise actions which can be delivered quickly
- How will it affect people's daily lives?
- Can this also help local businesses/retailers/organisations?
- The initiatives should not displace people.
- The initiatives should not make the cost of living more expensive for the working class.

5.13. Comprehensive topic area and action card list

The table below lists every topic area and respective action ranked from most to least popular by members.

Topic area	Action card	Sticky dot count
Consumption, resources and waste	Improved waste collection and biodegradable bin bags	**57**
Transport	Use of public transport	**56**
Existing housing and buildings	Insulation and cladding	**54**
Consumption, resources and waste	Clear waste and recycling instructions	**50**
Consumption, resources and waste	Support locally-sourced food/community gardens	**49**
Planning policy	Zero carbon new developments	**49**
Consumption, resources and waste	Remove/reduce single use plastic	**48**
Adapting to global heating	Adapt buildings	**44**
Politics	Mechanisms to ensure action continues regardless of who is in power	**40**
Existing housing and buildings	Incentivise energy efficiency	**40**
Transport	Electrify public transport	39
Planning policy	District heating	35
Consumption, resources and waste	Waste collection/biodegradable bin bags	34
Consumption, resources and waste	Awareness of impacts of consumption	32
Transport	Non-motorised transport/ alternatives to motorised transport	32
Nature & biodiversity	Maintain and promote green spaces	30
Consumption and waste	Repairing and repair cafes	30
Nature & biodiversity	Plant and maintain more trees	29
Transport	Improve cycling infrastructure	29
Nature & biodiversity	Increase biodiversity awareness in schools	27
Transport	Support/transition to electric vehicles	26
Consumption, resources and waste	Sustainable investment	25
Renewable energy	Support for solar energy	25
Renewable energy	better building regulation inspections following greener building regulations that force	25

	new developments to be carbon neutral at least	
Nature & biodiversity	Integrate biodiversity into planning considerations	23
Nature & biodiversity	Create green roofs	23
Existing housing and buildings	Energy efficient appliances	22
Adapting to global heating	Underground water storage	21
Existing housing and buildings	Roll out smart metres	21
Existing housing and buildings	Work with landlords for stricter standards	21
Renewable energy	Transition from gas to electric	16
Consumption, resources and waste	Brent climate change awareness day	15
Biodiversity	Rewild more spaces	13
Biodiversity	Create wildlife corridors	12
Transport	Improving lighting and safety	11
Consumption, resources and waste	Using recycled fabrics	10
Adapting to global heating	Water butts and rainwater collection	8
Consumption, resources and waste	Stopping convenience culture	8
Transport	Think about why people are travelling (to work, shop) Brent can encourage people to work close to where they live. Encourage businesses to open a branch in Brent	8
Planning policy	Energy infrastructure regulation	7
Adapting to global heating	Create more shaded areas	6
Adapting to global heating	Design with SUDS	6
Planning policy	Allow visible solar panels in conservation areas	6
Adapting to global heating	Water squares	5
Adapting to global heating	Reflective roofs	5
Transport	Support the ULEZ	4
Existing housing and buildings	Employ a heating advisor	3

5.14. Total action card votes by theme

The table below shows the number of votes cast for the various actions, grouped by theme.

Consumption, resources & waste	358
Transport	205
Existing housing and buildings	161
Nature & biodiversity	157
Planning policy	97
Adapting to global heating	95
Renewable energy	66
Politics	40

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