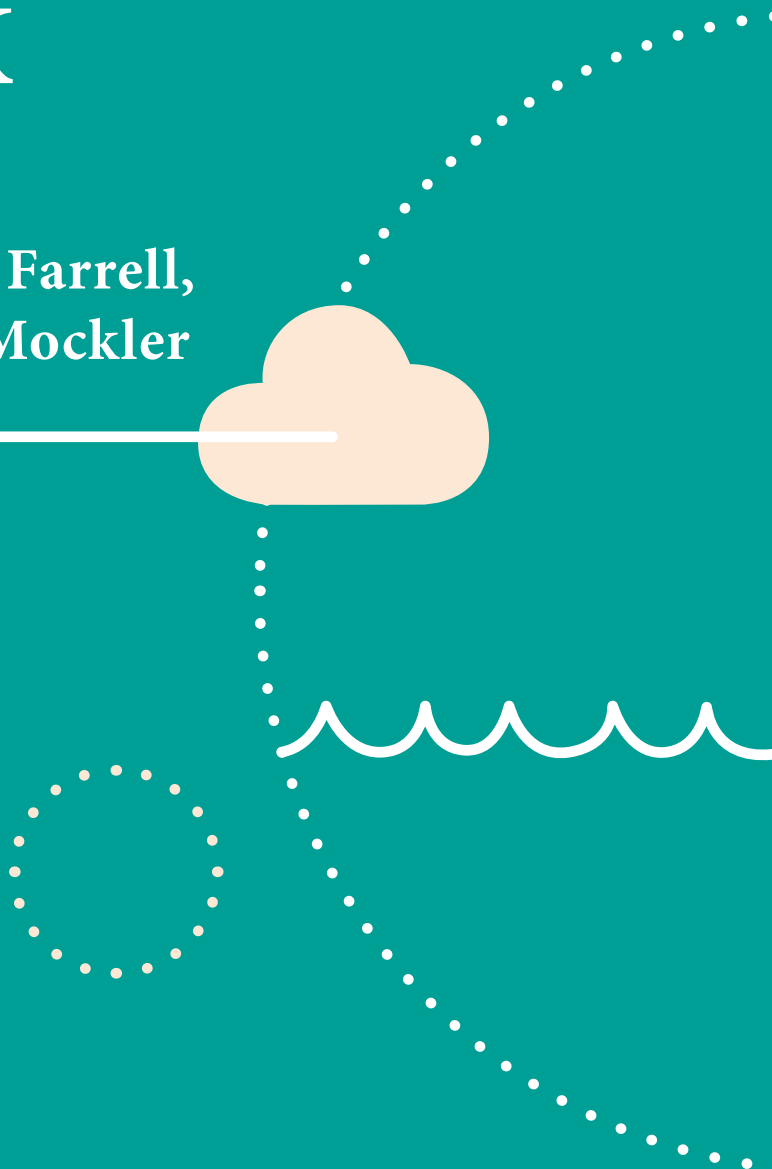
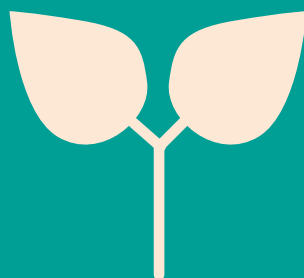


Evaluation of Climate Assembly UK

Stephen Elstub, David M. Farrell,
Jayne Carrick & Patricia Mockler

July 2021



About the Report

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About the Authors

Stephen Elstub is a Reader in British Politics in the School of Geography, Politics & Sociology, Newcastle University. E-mail: stephen.elstub@ncl.ac.uk

David Farrell is Professor of Politics in the School of Politics and International Relations, University College Dublin.

Jayne Carrick is a Research Assistant in the School of Geography, Politics & Sociology, Newcastle University.

Patricia Mockler is a PhD candidate in the Department of Political Studies, Queen's University.

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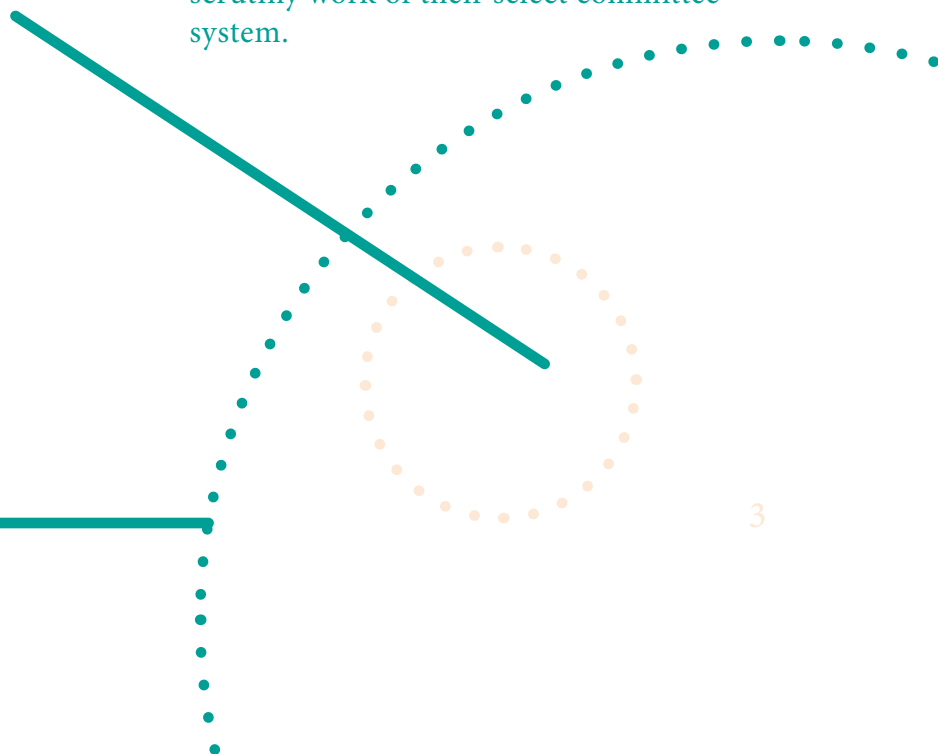


Executive Summary

Overview

This report provides an evaluation of Climate Assembly UK (CAUK). This was a citizens' assembly commissioned by six select committees from the House of Commons: Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS); Environmental Audit; Housing, Communities and Local Government, Science and Technology; Transport; and Treasury. It was tasked with providing recommendations on how the UK can achieve the Government's legally binding target of achieving Net-Zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. CAUK was comprised of 108 randomly selected members of the public from across the UK. These assembly members were guided through a process of learning, deliberation, and voting by a team of external experts, advocates, and facilitators. The assembly was held over three in-person weekends in a hotel in Birmingham and (due to the coronavirus pandemic) three online weekends, between 24 January and 17 May 2020.

Our evaluation was commissioned by the UK Parliament in autumn 2019. It assesses the extent to which CAUK promoted norms of deliberative democracy and met established standards of citizens' assemblies. By 'deliberation' we mean an inclusive approach to decision-making in which participants justify what they want with reasons and listen to each other's justifications respectfully and with an open mind. We also assessed the relationship CAUK had to parliament, climate policy, the media, and the public. To achieve these aims, we adopted a mixed method approach that utilised surveys, interviews, non-participant observation and content analysis. Our overriding conclusion is that CAUK was a highly valuable process that enabled a diverse group of UK citizens to engage in parliamentary scrutiny of government on climate policy in an informed and meaningful manner. The case demonstrates a significant step forward in the UK Parliament's public engagement strategy and based on our evidence, they should seek to establish more citizens' assemblies in the future to feed into the scrutiny work of their select committee system.



Assembly Members

- Deliberation requires people to be exposed to a diversity of views. Citizens' assemblies aim to be descriptively representative of the population.
- The assembly members were broadly demographically representative of the UK population.
- CAUK was not dominated by those that usually participate more e.g. more educated, older, White, men. This indicates that the recruitment strategy successfully overcame some of the traditional barriers to participation.
- The assembly members were attitudinally diverse and broadly representative of the UK population on the issue of climate change before CAUK began.
- The proportion of assembly members that stated they were concerned about climate change increased between the recruitment survey and the start of CAUK.

Witnesses and Evidence

- Citizens' assemblies typically provide diverse and balanced information through a range of expert and advocate witnesses.
- The provision of evidence in CAUK provided crucial information to assist the assembly members in determining ways the UK can decarbonise.
- The assembly members were well supported to engage with this evidence. It was: presented in a variety of formats, was recapped, and was supplemented with plenary and carousel Q&A sessions with the witnesses. The assembly were supported in their learning journey by expert leads and a critical thinking session to help the AMs assess competing evidence.
- The expert witnesses thought that the organisers had prepared them well to provide sufficient, pertinent, and relevant information and evidence.
- Most assembly members thought they (themselves and CAUK as a whole) were provided with enough information to complete the task and believed the information was balanced. They understood and learnt from the information provided and they asked relevant questions throughout the process.
- Splitting CAUK into topic groups reduced the provision of information to individual assembly members about the full scope of their remit.

Deliberation, Facilitation and Decision-Making

- Citizens' assemblies are designed and facilitated to promote the norms of deliberation and democratic decision-making.
- The deliberative quality of most of the CAUK discussions was very good: they were very focused on the topic, demands (although made infrequently by assembly members) were primarily justified with reasons that focused mainly on the common good. The discussions were also very respectful, inclusive, and the assembly members were free to speak their opinions.
- The facilitation in CAUK contributed to this deliberative quality.
- The facilitators remained neutral on the climate change and decarbonisation issue.
- The decision-making process was fair and democratic with assembly members agreeing with the decisions made and the process for making them.
- More opportunities to co-ordinate recommendations for decarbonisation should have been provided, especially across the topic groups.

Impact on Assembly Members

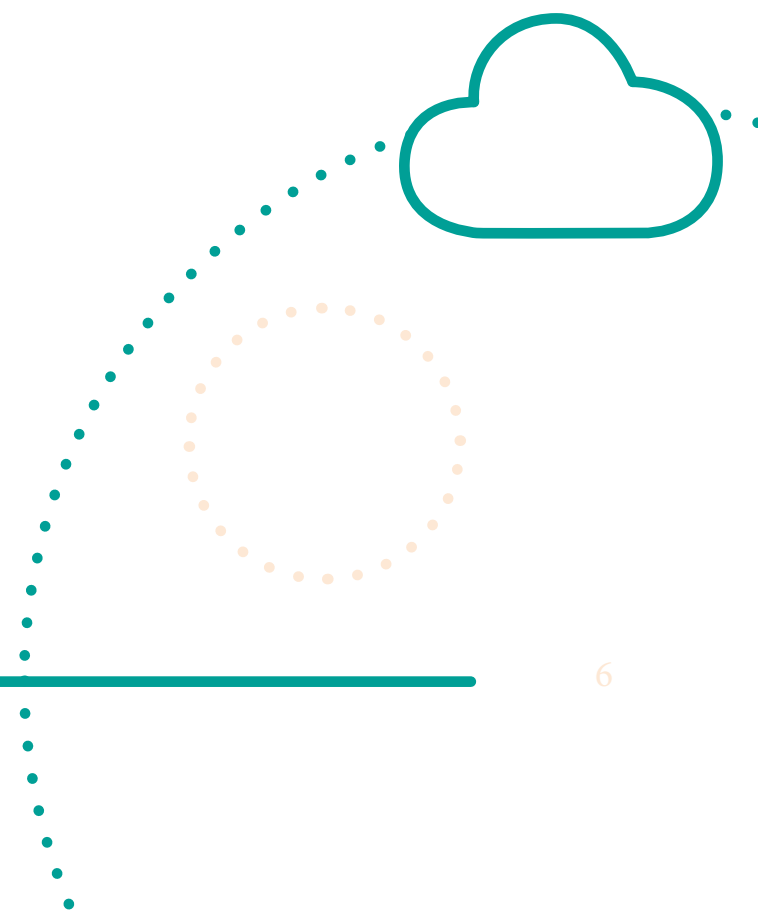
- Assembly members became more knowledgeable on the issues of climate change and reaching Net Zero.
- Assembly members' opinions on the achievability of the Net Zero target evolved over the course of CAUK. They felt that the target was more achievable by the end of CAUK than they did at the beginning.
- Hearing from other assembly members and the expert panels were both influential in this opinion shift.
- Assembly members' confidence in their ability to engage in political participation increased.
- By the end of CAUK, more assembly members indicated that they thought the UK political system works well and more indicated that they thought they had a say in what the UK Parliament does compared with the beginning of CAUK.

Impact on Parliament and Policy

- CAUK is seen to have been a success by the select committees and many of the recommendations are being actively engaged with. A number of committees have launched inquiries referencing the CAUK's recommendations.
- Factors that compromised the influence of CAUK on the committees included: the length and breadth of the report, the turnover in committee membership due to the 2019 general election, the ambition of the CAUK remit, and an initial absence of a clear plan by the committees of how to deal with CAUK recommendations.
- Factors that compromised the influence of CAUK over government policy included: the division of CAUK assembly members into separate thematic groups and the lack of public awareness of the process.
- As a form of democratic innovation, the common view within the Select Committees was that – although expensive – citizens' assemblies have an important contribution to make in supporting the policy process and Parliament should use this approach to public engagement more in the future.

Impact on the Public and Media

- Ideally CAUK would stimulate public debate and influence public opinion about climate change and decarbonisation.
- CAUK received more media coverage than any previous citizens' assembly in the UK and the coverage was largely positive.
- Despite this, public awareness of CAUK was very low throughout.
- When people are informed about the process, they trust it and see it as making a legitimate contribution to UK climate policy.
- The communications budget was insufficient for CAUK to make a real impact on the public, especially in a news context dominated by Brexit and the pandemic.



Recommendations

Participant Recruitment

1. **Attitudinal Sampling:** moving beyond sampling participants on demographic criteria to also sample on attitudes to climate change when recruiting assembly members ensured more balance across the assembly. This should be used for citizens' assembly recruitment more generally.
2. **Topic Information:** to reduce self-selection amongst those more interested in the issue, and to prevent participants researching the issue in advance of the start of the assembly, as little information as possible should be provided during participant recruitment about the topic the citizens' assembly will address.

Assembly Scope and Evidence

3. **Assembly Member Input:** climate change and decarbonisation are huge issues in scope (as well as importance). Four weekends (the duration of CAUK) are an insufficient amount of time for a climate assembly and the split into topic groups to address this was not ideal. Rather, assembly members should be empowered to refine the scope of the assembly and the types of information they receive themselves.

Online Assemblies

4. **Hybrid In-Person and Online Assemblies:** the quality of deliberation in the online sessions of CAUK was superior to the in-person sessions. This does indicate that it is perhaps not necessary for an entire assembly to be conducted in-person. There could be a combination of in-person and online sessions. This could reduce the costs of assemblies too, or enable them to be longer.
5. **Online Social Sessions:** if citizens' assemblies are held online, entirely or in part, there should be space made available for assembly members to socialise together. The social side enhances the experience for the assembly members, but can also improve deliberation and engagement with evidence in the formal sessions.

Links to Parliament

6. **MPs Attending:** if an MP is a member of a committee that commissions a citizens' assembly then they should attend as an observer. The first-hand experience of seeing the process makes it much more likely that they will see the value of it, and this increases the chances that they will take on board the recommendations.
7. **Ongoing Information:** regular updates about the progress of the mini-public should be provided to the relevant parliamentary committees throughout the process to ensure committee members are kept on board and can invest more in the process.



Evaluation of CAUK

8. Timing of Citizens' Assemblies in the Electoral Cycle: to reduce the disruptions that elections can cause to parliamentary committee memberships, citizens' assemblies, commissioned by the committees, should be held towards the start of a parliament (where possible).
9. Citizens' Assembly Review Group: parliaments should have 'Citizens' Assembly Review Groups' to oversee the use of citizens' assemblies and similar processes across the committee system. The review group could manage a parliamentary budget for this type of public engagement and ensure that the planned remit is appropriate for a citizens' assembly. This would ensure the committee had the commitment and cross-party support to take on board the citizens' assembly recommendations and ensure the committee(s) have clear plans for how they will deal with the recommendations before they receive them.
11. Communications Strategy: in order to promote broader public awareness and engagement with citizens' assemblies, there needs to be a bespoke and co-ordinated communication strategy that is sufficiently funded.
12. Public Engagement: opportunities for engagement with members of the public who are not recruited as assembly members should be built into the design of the process.

Communication and Engagement

10. Citizens' Assembly Report: the length of the CAUK report affected engagement with the recommendations. Key results could still be made available in more diverse and digestible forms. For example, interactive digital content could be generated.

Contents

<i>About the Authors</i>	2
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	2
<i>Executive Summary</i>	3
<i>List of Tables</i>	10
<i>List of Figures</i>	11
<hr/>	
1. Introduction	14
<hr/>	
2. Climate Assembly UK	16
<hr/>	
3. Evaluating CAUK	26
<hr/>	
4. The Assembly Members	34
<hr/>	
5. Witness Selection and Evidence Provision in CAUK	42
<hr/>	
6. Deliberation, Facilitation, and Decision-Making in CAUK	55
<hr/>	
7. Impact of CAUK Participation on the Assembly Members	75
<hr/>	
8. CAUK Impact on Parliament and Policy	82
<hr/>	
9. CAUK Impact on the Public and Media	92
<hr/>	
10. CAUK Evaluation Summary and Recommendations	104
<hr/>	
<i>References</i>	112
<i>Appendices</i>	114



List of Tables

Table 3.1: Approach to the evaluation of CAUK

Table 4.1: Ages of the assembly members compared to the UK population

Table 4.2: Education level of the assembly members compared to the UK population

Table 4.3: Residence of assembly members compared to the UK population

Table 5.1: Results of small group discussion content analysis

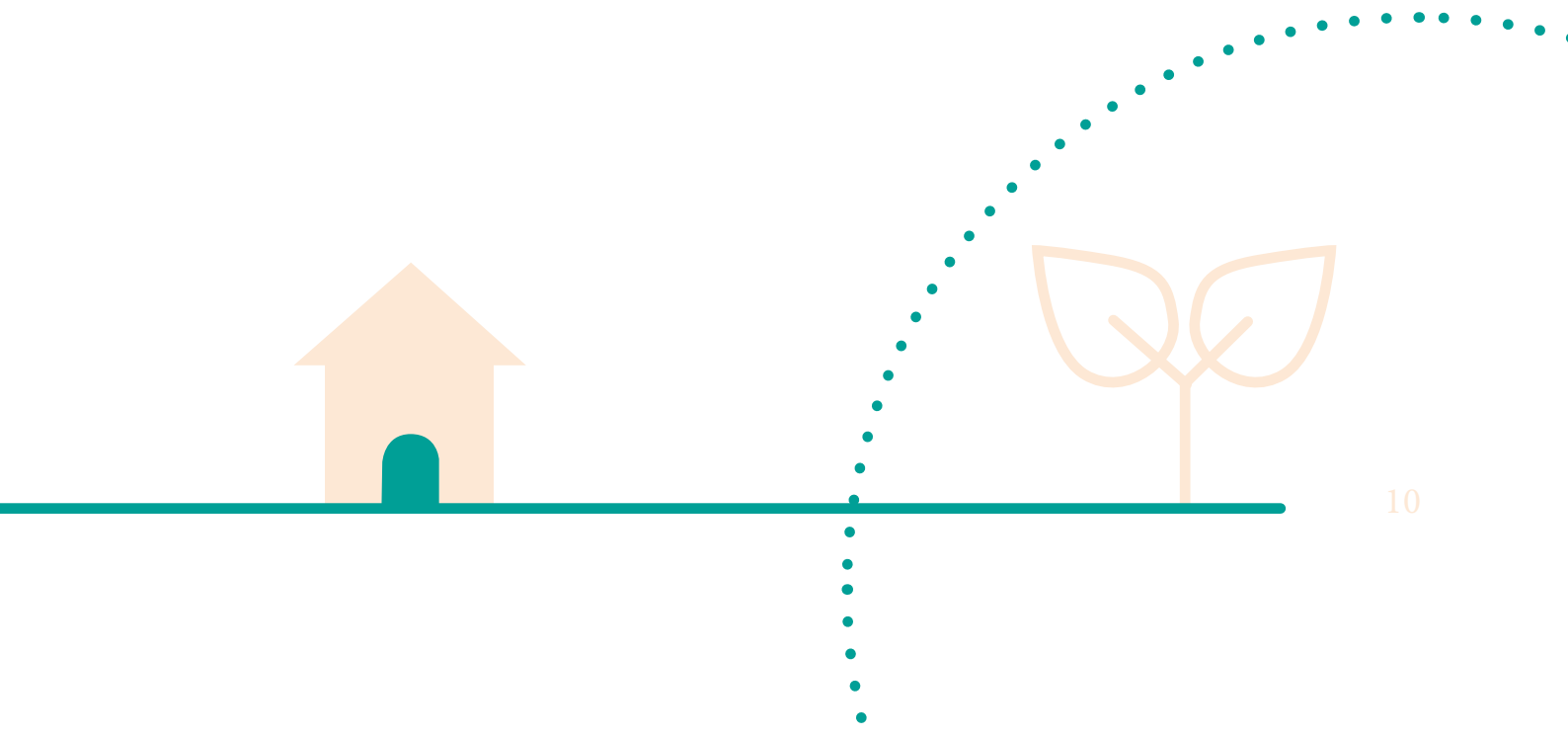
Table 6.1: Content analysis results for deliberation in CAUK small group discussions

Table 6.2: Content analysis results for deliberation in CAUK small group discussions by format

Table 6.3: Results of the content analysis of facilitator contributions to CAUK small group discussions

Table 6.4: Results of the content analysis of facilitator contributions to CAUK small group discussions by format

Table 9.1: Number of media pieces mentioning CAUK



List of Figures

Figure 4.1: Political Party affiliation compared to voting in the 2019 UK general election

Figure 4.2: Political views on left-right scale

Figure 4.3: Political activity

Figure 4.4: AM Concern about climate change

Figure 4.5: Urgency that climate change should be addressed

Figure 4.6: Knowledge of climate change

Figure 5.1: Extent the AMs thought they had enough information to address the task

Figure 5.2: Extent the AMs thought the CAUK as a whole had enough information to address the task

Figure 5.3: Extent that expert witnesses thought that were given enough information about CAUK and their role within it, in advance

Figure 5.4: Extent the AMs understood the speakers

Figure 5.5: Extent the AMs felt they had learnt a lot from the speakers

Figure 5.6: Extent that the AMs felt the information was balanced

Figure 5.7: % of AMs who trusted in the information received

Figure 5.8: No. of expert witnesses who considered that AMs received balanced information

Figure 6.1: Correlation between level of justification and facilitator request for justification

Figure 6.2: Perceptions of respect amongst AMs

Evaluation of CAUK

Figure 6.3: Extent AMs felt respected by CAUK facilitators

Figure 6.4: AM Perceptions of feeling included by facilitators

Figure 6.5: Percentage of AM discussion contributions by gender over the weekends

Figure 6.6: Percentage of AM discussion contributions by gender and weekend format

Figure 6.7: AMs views on the extent facilitators ensured opposing views were heard

Figure 6.8: Extent AMs felt they had opportunities to express their views

Figure 6.9: Extent AMs thought no-one dominated the CAUK discussions

Figure 6.10: Extent AMs thought facilitators tried to influence the discussion

Figure 6.11: Extent AMs agreed with proposed principles and decisions made in CAUK

Figure 6.12: Extent AMs thought the decisions made in CAUK reflected their views

Figure 6.13: Extent AMs thought they influenced the decisions made in CAUK

Figure 6.14: Extent AMs in different topic groups felt they influenced the decisions made in the online sessions of CAUK

Figure 6.15: Extent AMs agreed with the way in which decisions were made in CAUK

Figure 7.1: AM's self-reported knowledge change

Figure 7.2: Changes in objective measures of member knowledge

Figure 7.3: Aspects of the assembly that encouraged AMs to change their mind about the achievability of net zero after Weekend 1

Figure 7.4: Aspects of the assembly that encouraged AMs to change their mind about the achievability of net zero after Weekend 2

Figure 9.1: Public's knowledge of CAUK

Evaluation of CAUK

Figure 9.2: % of respondents that selected each statement to describe what CAUK does

Figure 9.3: Public engagement with CAUK

Figure 9.4: % of respondents in favour of CAUK identifying key challenges facing the UK

Figure 9.5: % of respondents in favour of CAUK proposing policy solutions for the challenge the UK faces (e.g. new laws)

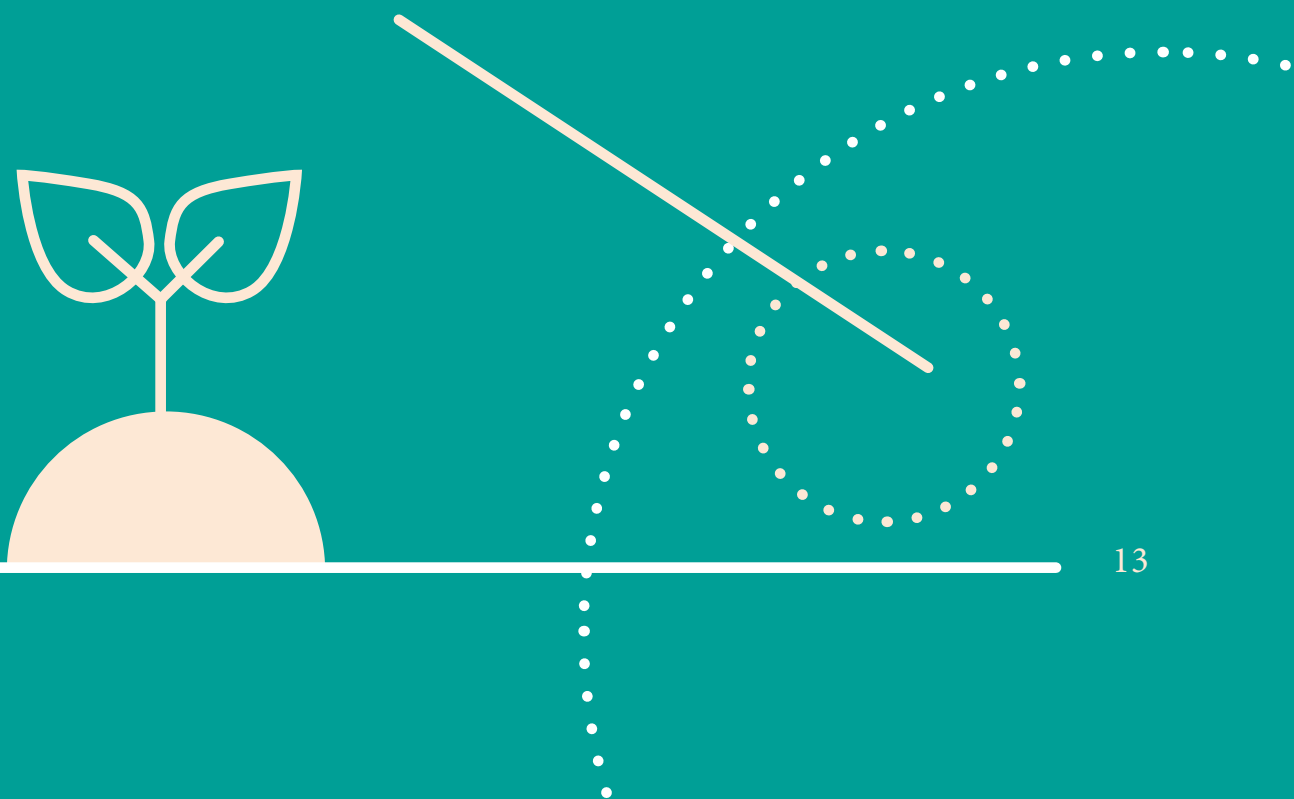
Figure 9.6: % of respondents in favour of CAUK identifying ways the UK can reduce carbon emissions

Figure 9.7: Type of media coverage throughout CAUK

Figure: 9.8: Primary focus of media articles

Figure 9.9: Media skew of CAUK process

Figure: 9.10: Media skew of climate change



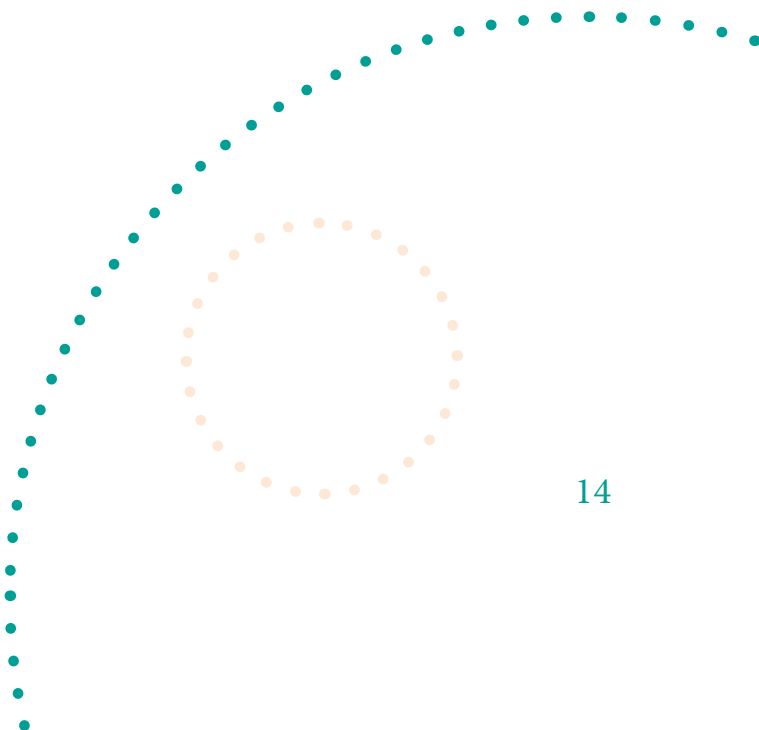


1. Introduction

This report provides an evaluation of Climate Assembly UK (CAUK). This was a citizens' assembly (CA), commissioned by six select committees from the House of Commons: Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS); Environmental Audit; Housing, Communities and Local Government; Science and Technology; Transport; and Treasury. It was tasked with providing recommendations on how the UK can achieve the Government's legally binding target of achieving Net-Zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

A CA is a type of mini-public. Mini-publics assemble a representative, or at least diverse, set of citizens to deliberate on policy issues. The participants are provided with a range of information and perspectives on the issue by advocates and experts, the discussions are usually facilitated to promote deliberative norms, and they result in a set of recommendations (Elstub 2014; Curato et al. 2021). By deliberation we mean an inclusive approach to decision-making in which participants justify what they want with reasons and listen to each others' justifications respectfully and with an open mind. CAs can be one of the larger types of mini-publics. While the number of participants vary, they typically have approximately 100 assembly members (OECD 2020) and have tangible links to a political institution such as government or parliament (Elstub 2014). Notable cases include the Irish Constitutional Convention and Citizens' Assembly (Farrell and Suiter 2019); the Canadian Citizens' Assemblies in British Columbia and Ontario, and the Dutch Citizens' Assembly (Fournier et al. 2011), all of which have addressed constitutional issues including electoral reform.

More recently there has been a wave of Climate Assemblies, particularly in the UK held by local governments, devolved sub-national governments like Scotland, and regional authorities like the North of Tyne Combined Authority, but also at the national level with Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, and Spain having either already held, or scheduled, a national climate assembly. This flux of climate assemblies reflects rising public awareness of, and increased political attention to, the climate change issue in the run-up to the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26). CAUK reflected the setting of a new net-zero climate change target for the UK and the House of Commons' recognition of the impact that decisions about how to reach that target would have on people's lives. Others have suggested that a CA, recruited through a civic lottery, could be better able to address long-term goals than governments that often focus on short-term goals due to electoral cycles (Smith 2021).



CAUK is the first nationwide CA in the UK, the first national climate assembly in the UK, and the second CA to be commissioned by House of Commons select committees following the Citizens' Assembly on Social Care in 2018 (Elstubb and Carrick 2019). It is good practice to evaluate mini-publics so that lessons can be learnt and improvements made for the future. Moreover, if CAUK is to have some impact, or claims for influence, on decision-making in parliament, its democratic credentials should be assessed. This is particularly the case with CAUK, precisely because CAs are a relatively new approach in the parliamentary context. Therefore, learning from the process for future improvement is vital.

Our evaluation was commissioned by the UK Parliament in autumn 2019. It assesses what went on in the assembly and the extent to which CAUK promoted norms of deliberative democracy and met established standards of mini-publics and CAs. We also assessed what went on outside of the assembly, specifically the relationship CAUK had to parliament, and climate policy more generally, but also the public's awareness and perception of it and the media's role in this. To achieve this, we adopted a mixed method approach that utilised surveys, interviews, non-participant observation, and content analysis.

The report is divided into nine further chapters. In chapter 2 we give a more detailed overview of the design and organisation of CAUK. In chapter 3 we provide more detail on the nature of our evaluation. Chapter 4 describes the citizens that were recruited to be assembly members (AMs) and assesses how representative of the public they were. Chapter 5 considers how information on climate change and decarbonisation was included into the assembly. In chapter 6 we assess the quality of deliberation in CAUK, the role of facilitation in achieving this, and evaluate how democratic the decision-making process was. The extent the AMs learnt and changed their views about climate change, paths to Net Zero, political participation and the political system are examined in chapter 7. In chapter 8 we assess what the six committees think about the CAUK process and recommendations and what they are doing with the latter. How aware the public are of CAUK and their thoughts on the assembly are analysed in chapter 9, along with the role of the media in communicating this CA to the public. In chapter 10 we summarise the key findings of our evaluation and make some suggestions for how future CAs and climate assemblies should be run.



2. Climate Assembly UK

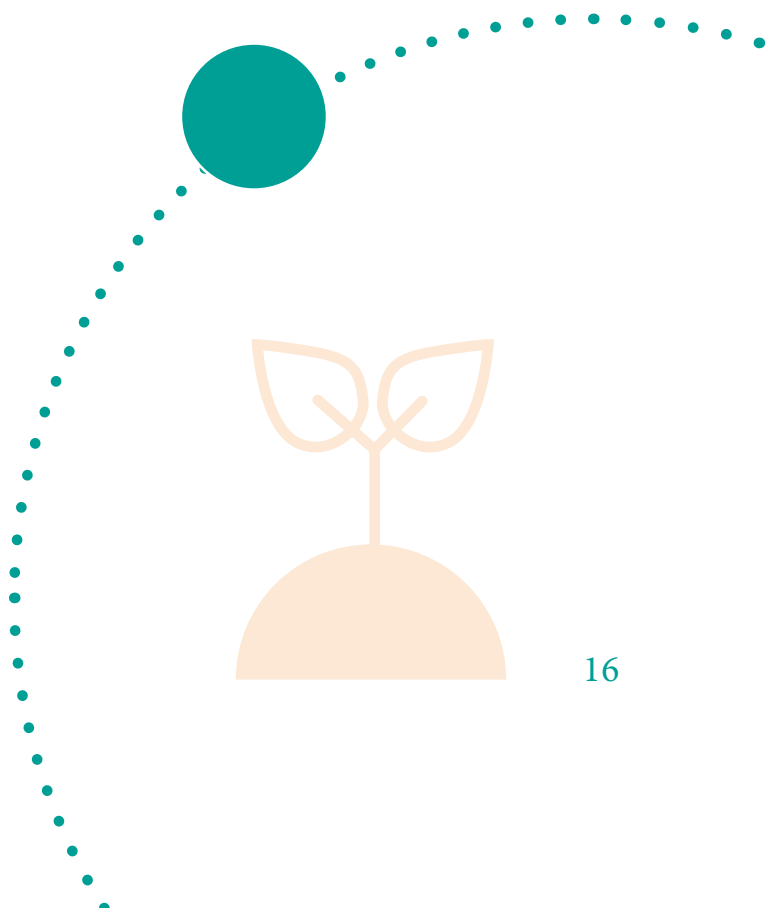
2.1 Introduction

In this chapter we give an overview of the key aspects of Climate Assembly UK (CAUK) process. A more detailed overview of CAUK can be found in the assembly [report](#) (CAUK 2020) and [website](#).

CAUK comprised of 108 randomly selected members of the public from across the UK. The assembly was scheduled to be held over four weekends in a hotel in Birmingham between 24 January and 22 March 2020. However, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the last weekend (scheduled for 20th–22nd March) was moved online and the planned activities were undertaken over three weekends, between 18 April and 17 May 2020.

CAUK was commissioned by six select committees from the House of Commons: Business Energy and Industrial Strategy; Environmental Audit; Housing, Communities and Local Government, Science and Technology; Transport; and Treasury. It was convened to consider the question: ‘How should the UK meet its target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050?’ To address this task, the assembly members (AMs) were guided through a process of learning, deliberation, and voting by a team of external experts, advocates, and facilitators. To deliver the assembly, the House of Commons ran a competitive tendering process in summer 2019. In September of that year the delivery contract was awarded to Involve, a UK public participation charity. The Sortition Foundation (who managed the assembly recruitment process) and MySociety (who led on the website and digital elements) were sub-contractors in Involve’s bid.

The external experts were collectively responsible for providing balanced information to inform the decision-making process. They undertook one of four roles: expert leads, advisory panel members, academic panel members, and expert and advocate witnesses. These roles are described in section 2.2. The facilitators were responsible for ensuring that the assembly members discussions were inclusive, deliberative, and focused on the task. In this chapter we detail the key decisions that were made prior to the start of CAUK, the CAUK process itself, and the key events that have occurred since the CAUK process culminated in a report launch in 2020.



2.2 Before the Assembly

Parliament commissioned Involve to organise CAUK and provided them with a list of topic areas, agenda-setting questions, and areas to prioritise and deprioritise, which collectively covered the six select committee's interests on climate change and Net Zero.

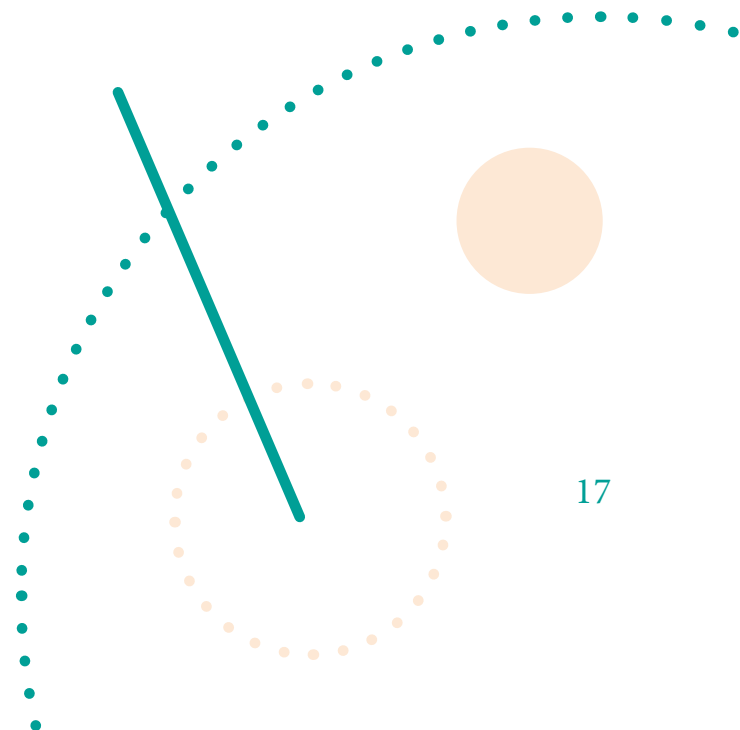
To ensure that the information provided to the assembly members was balanced and focused on the areas of interest to the commissioning select committees, a team of expert leads were convened to oversee the process. The expert leads were: Chris Stark, Climate Change Committee; Professor Jim Watson, University College London; Professor Lorraine Whitmarsh, University of Bath; and Professor Rebecca Willis, University of Lancaster. The expert leads were selected by Involve based on advice received from trusted experts in the sector, and were approved by Parliament at the end of the tender process.

The expert leads were advised by an academic panel and an advisory panel. The members of both panels were initially proposed by climate change specialists in the Parliamentary Office of Science & Technology (POST) and agreed in consultation with the expert leads. The academic panel comprised of 12 academics from universities across the UK. A full list of the Academic Panel members can be found [here](#). The advisory panel comprised of 19 external experts from private, public, and charity sectors, including Confederation of British Industry (CBI), Citizens' Advice, and the National Trust.

A full list of the advisory panel can be found [here](#). POST and the expert leads sought to ensure that there was balance on the advisory panel with respect to demographics, stakeholder groups, and political backgrounds.

With guidance from the academic panel, the expert leads drafted content for CAUK, which was then issued to the advisory panel for comment. The advisory panel met on four occasions between 7 November and February 2020 to give feedback on the content of the information to be provided to assembly members, including who was invited to present (expert witnesses) and what they should be asked to cover. They were also asked to comment on documents between meetings as were POST.

A range of expert and advocate witnesses from academia, as well as the private, public and charity sectors were invited to present at CAUK and address AM questions. The expert leads and some of the panel members also delivered presentations. A full list of the presenters and recordings of each presentation are available [here](#).





As well as determining who presented information, the expert leads, with guidance from the academic and advisory panels, also managed the content of the information delivered. Each witness was given a brief for the content of their presentations, and each presentation was reviewed by the expert leads before the events to check they fulfilled and complied with the brief provided. All speakers were given the opportunity to speak to an expert lead in advance to discuss their presentations. They were also asked to provide their slides in advance so they could be reviewed for accessibility by the Lead facilitators.

To ensure the assembly members received a balanced and wide range of evidence that was interesting as well as informative, each presenter was also given the role of either ‘informant’ or ‘advocate’. Informants were asked to provide a balanced account of data and information on their allocated subject reflecting scientific consensus and alternative viewpoints, whereas advocates were asked to give their own views or the views of their organisation on their allocated topic. The AMs were told in advance whether a speaker was an informant or an advocate.

There was also a substantial observer programme for interested stakeholders, MPs, and officials at all of the assembly weekends, that was managed by POST.

Recruitment Process

The 108 AMs were a randomly selected, stratified sample of UK citizens. The process was designed so that the AMs were broadly representative of the UK population with respect to key demographics and attitudes to climate change. This was achieved in a staged process managed by the Sortition Foundation.

In the first stage, 30,000 invitations to join “the UK-wide citizens’ assembly on: ‘How should the UK tackle climate change?’” were posted out to households from across the UK. The invitations were sent to addresses randomly selected from the royal mail address file; 80% were randomly selected from the whole file and 20% were randomly selected from addresses in the most deprived areas. Previous studies (Verba et al. 1995) have indicated that those from deprived areas are less likely to engage in political decision-making, due to economic and social barriers to participation; so, targeting invitations to deprived areas aims to ensure that those areas are represented in the assembly. The addressees were invited to reply if they were interested and available to attend CAUK on a series of given dates, were 16 years old or over, were permanent residents in the UK, and did not hold any of the political roles listed here; 1,748 (5.8% of invitees) responded. Those that responded were asked to provide some basic demographic and attitudinal details to facilitate the stratification that occurred in stage 2 of the participant recruitment process.



These details included: age, gender, level of education, ethnicity, postcode (to enable geographic stratification), and concern about climate change. Postcodes were recorded to ensure the participants came from all parts of the UK and because people's experience of addressing climate change will vary significantly depending on whether they live in a rural or urban setting, and so ensuring a mixture here was an important recruitment factor. Concern about climate change was assessed by asking the question, 'How concerned, if at all, are you about climate change, sometimes referred to as 'global warming'?' Respondents were then stratified according to results of a national Ipsos MORI poll on attitudes to climate change from July 2019, which was used as a proxy for national opinion on the issue.

In the second stage of the recruitment process, a computer randomly selected a stratified sample of those that responded to the invitation based on the demographic and attitudinal details provided, also ensuring that no more than one person was selected from any one household. It is worth noting that most CAs, outside of the UK, do not sample on attitudes to the topic at hand. Through this process 110 AMs were selected to be representative of the UK population. In the third, and final, stage of the recruitment process, those selected were contacted to confirm attendance.

There were 23 people who 'dropped out' at this stage, who were replaced from a standby list comprising those who accepted the invitation at stage 2, but not selected. This was done based on the same stratification criteria to ensure assembly members as a whole continued to reflect the make-up on the wider UK population. Full details of the recruitment process can be found [here](#). The effectiveness of the recruitment strategy in achieving its aims is evaluated in chapter 4.

2.3 The Assembly: Structure and Design

Like other CAs, the CAUK process was designed to first inform the participants, before they deliberate and make informed decisions on the given topic between themselves, guided by facilitators. Each weekend had a different focus, with most of the information presented during weekend 1 and 2, then most of the deliberations and decision-making undertaken in weekend 3 and during the subsequent online weekends (4a, 4b, and 4c). A summary of the programme of learning, deliberations and decision-making is provided below; a detailed account is available [here](#).

Because good deliberation is extremely challenging to achieve between large numbers of people, at each weekend, the AMs sat at tables of seven or eight participants with one facilitator per table: this is the procedure commonly adopted in CAs and other mini-publics. AMs were allocated a table to sit for each activity and the table seating was changed at the end of each day.



To ensure diversity in each small group the allocation of AMs to tables was done through stratification, using key demographics and attitudes to climate change. There were 15 tables in total, located in the same room for most of weekend 1 and part of weekend 2. During part of weekend 2 and the whole of weekend 3, the AMs were split into three different topic groups: how we travel; in the home; and what we buy and land use, food and farming. This was to ensure the assembly covered the range of topics requested by parliament to address the task of how to reach net-zero carbon emissions over four weekends. Whilst this division is unusual for mini-publics generally it is more common in climate assemblies, due to the scope of the issue. The three topic groups sat in separate rooms with five tables of AMs in each topic room. When the assembly went online (weekends 4a, 4b, and 4c) the AMs returned to one group. To replicate the table groups online, the AMs were allocated to virtual breakout rooms for the question-and-answer sessions and deliberations.

Weekend 1 (24-26 January 2020)

The AMs arrived in Birmingham on Friday afternoon and left on Sunday afternoon. Friday evening was focused on AMs meeting each other and introductions. The facilitators and expert leads gave an overview of the process. The AMs were also asked to develop and approve a set of conversation guidelines that reflected how they felt assembly discussions could be most productive and enjoyable. Copies of the list were displayed around the assembly rooms as reminders at each weekend.

During the online weekend, the AMs were reminded about the conversation guidelines at the start of each session by the facilitators. Particularly relevant guidelines were highlighted, e.g. a guideline on confidentiality to remind the assembly members not to record the sessions.

On the first Saturday of CAUK, AMs received background information about climate change and the path to Net Zero via 2 expert panels. The first panel, held on Saturday morning, was an introduction to climate change, presented by 3 academics and Chris Stark from the Climate Change Committee, who all acted as ‘informants.’ During the second panel, held on Saturday afternoon, five advocates discussed ethical questions about the path to Net Zero. After both panels, the 15 table groups were split into three different rooms to question the panel members (who rotated between the rooms). The AMs discussed, and agreed, their priority questions within their small groups, then panel members visited each room in turn to answer questions from the AMs in plenary.

On Saturday evening, the AMs heard Sir David Attenborough speak as a guest keynote speaker. He was asked not to give his own views on the question the assembly was considering, namely, how to get to net zero. Sir David thanked the AMs for their time and commitment. Many of the AMs said that hearing Sir David speak was a highlight of the experience and helped to galvanise participation.

On Sunday, the AMs made their first decisions about the principles and values they want the Government to use to guide the path to Net Zero. This was informed by one further panel, on Sunday morning where two of the expert leads presented information about practical challenges of reaching Net Zero, and took part in a question-and-answer session in plenary. In their table groups the AMs then discussed and proposed principles they think should underpin the path to Net Zero. The suggestions from each table were collated and sorted by the facilitators. Finally, the AMs voted on 25 principles via the Mentimeter app. To ensure all assembly members were included in the vote, smart phones were provided to those that did not have their own.

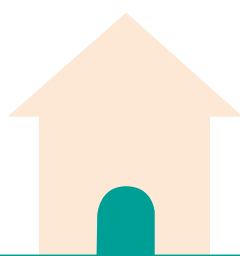
Voting by App for the first vote provided instant results and avoided the need for independent supervision of the counting (as the App counts the votes automatically), so the AMs received the results immediately. In the following weekends, the voting was undertaken via secret ballot, under the supervision of a parliamentary official. The votes from the secret ballots were also counted under the supervision of parliamentary officials, and the votes revealed during the weekends after, so there were delays between the voting and receiving the results. During the online weekends, the secret ballots were undertaken using Survey Monkey.

Weekend 2 (7-9 February 2020)

The second weekend was focused on learning. On the Friday evening, to prepare the AMs for receiving a range of evidence, that could sometimes appear contradictory, an expert witness from academia and a member of the advisory panel delivered a presentation on deliberative processes and evaluating evidence.

On Saturday morning the assembly learnt more about where the UK's energy comes from via a panel of two informants, followed by a question-and-answer session in plenary. The AMs then heard from Rachel Reeves MP, who at the time was the Chair of the BEIS Select Committee, who talked about why they commissioned CAUK and what they might do with the results. Ms Reeves then took questions from the AMs in plenary.

On Saturday afternoon the AMs were split into the three topic groups: how we travel; in the home; and what we buy and land use, food and farming. The members of each group were selected randomly and stratified (based on the same criteria used at the recruitment stage), so that the membership of each group remained as representative and diverse as possible.



Small adjustments were made to split up loud voices to minimise the potential for individuals to dominate the discussions and to maintain diversity. AMs were not allowed to switch groups.

For the remainder of weekend 2, the AMs heard presentations in each of their topic groups via two panels of experts, who were a combination of informants and advocates. Question-and-answer sessions followed each panel in each topic group. In contrast to previous sessions, where questions were asked in plenary, in each topic group, each expert sat with each table in turn answering the assembly members' questions. Assembly members then spent time considering what they felt was most important from the evidence they had heard. The facilitators themed these lists between the weekends, turning them into resources that assembly members could use at Weekend 3.

Weekend 3 (28 February – 1 March 2020)

Weekend 3 focused on deliberation and voting, with the AMs remaining in the topic groups. On the Friday night the AMs heard an introduction to the topics for the groups that they were not in, and collated their thoughts on the key considerations they felt decision-makers should bear in mind when looking at those topics. The expert leads were available to answer any questions. The facilitators collated and themed these considerations overnight so that AMs, who were looking at those, could take into account the views of their fellow AMs in their topic groups the next day.

On Saturday and Sunday the agenda followed by each topic group varied slightly to take account of differences in the topics they were considering. Roughly speaking, on Saturday morning the AMs reviewed and discussed what they had learnt about their topics in weekend 2. They then voted on what considerations Government and Parliament should bear in mind when making decisions about their topic and the path to Net Zero. Then on Saturday afternoon, the expert leads presented a range of 'future scenarios' that they had pre-prepared with reference to AMs' discussions at weekend 2. AMs discussed and voted on these futures (by secret ballot) to give a sense of the overall shape of the future they wanted to see. AMs' qualitative views on these 'futures' were also collected, to allow for a presentation of their views in the assembly report that was more nuanced than just the results of the vote. For the rest of Saturday and Sunday, the expert leads presented a range of policy options to each topic group, which the AMs discussed on their tables and voted on (by secret ballot). Again, assembly members' qualitative views on each policy option were also captured.



Online Weekends

As discussed above, due to the national lockdown in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the activities scheduled for weekend 4 were moved online. To make the workload manageable, the activities were spread across three weekends during April and May 2020.

Prior to the first online weekend, Involve ensured each AM could connect to the online sessions, either via video conferencing software (Zoom) or by telephone. Trial sessions were held to check each AM could follow the connection instructions and to familiarise assembly members with the platform. Hard copies of the presentations were posted or emailed out to each AM before each of the online sessions. The slides were numbered, and the speakers referred to the slide numbers during their presentation so that AMs who could not see each presentation were able to follow the talks.

Weekend 4a (18 and 19 April 2020)

All AMs met as one group (albeit virtually) to hear presentations about where the UK's electricity comes from and options for low carbon alternatives, specifically: onshore and offshore wind; solar energy; biomass; nuclear and fossil fuels with carbon capture and storage. The evidence was presented by four experts, including two of the expert leads. The presentations were followed by a series of question-and-answer sessions, where the experts visited small groups of AMs (in virtual breakout rooms) in turn. On Sunday, the AMs discussed the topic in breakout rooms and voted on preferred sources of low carbon electricity.

Weekend 4b (2 and 3 May 2020)

Again, meeting as one group, the AMs heard presentations about options for removing greenhouse gasses from the atmosphere, specifically: forests and better forest management; restoring and managing peatlands and wetlands; enhancing the storage of carbon in the soil; using wood in construction; bioenergy with carbon capture and storage; and direct air carbon capture and storage. The evidence was presented by two of the expert leads and two advocates. The presentations were followed by a series of question-and-answer sessions, where the experts visited small groups of AMs (in virtual breakout rooms) in turn. On Sunday, the AMs discussed the topic in virtual breakout rooms and voted on the six options for removing greenhouse gas emissions from the atmosphere. The voting was completed via secret ballot using online survey software.

Weekend 4c (16 and 17 May 2020)

On the last weekend of CAUK, the AMs discussed the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the path to Net Zero. Chris Stark, on behalf of the four expert leads, introduced the topic, which was followed by group discussions in virtual breakout rooms. This topic was introduced in response to feedback from the AMs and in the context of the unfolding pandemic.

On Sunday, the AMs discussed and proposed a series of 'final recommendations' for the report in virtual breakout rooms. They then voted on 41 additional recommendations for the report via secret ballot using online survey software.



2.4 After the Assembly: The Report Launches and Select Committee Inquiries

Results from CAUK were reported in two phases. An interim briefing report, issued in June 2020, focused on the assembly's discussions around the response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The final report, published on 10th September 2020, contained the full set of recommendations and results across all themes, including Covid-19. The publication of the final report was accompanied by an online launch event and a series of online sectoral briefings, and both the final and interim reports received media coverage. The coverage of the CAUK process and launch, as well as its effect on public awareness of the process, is evaluated in chapter 9 of this report.

The online launch event, held on 10 September 2020, was chaired by Darren Jones, MP, current Chair of the BEIS select committee. Expert leads and Involve staff discussed the process, the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy responded to the report, and AMs reflected on their experience. Chairs and members of each of the six commissioning select committees gave their initial responses to the results and discussed how the results may be used in current and future inquiries. A separate closed online launch event was held for Members of the House of Lords later in the day.

In the House of Commons later the same afternoon, Darren Jones MP announced that the BEIS committee would be undertaking an 'overarching inquiry' on the implementation of CAUK's

recommendations to 'complement' their existing work on Net Zero, and that the Committee would be 'mainstreaming' the assembly's findings throughout its work. At the time of writing, another three of the commissioning select committees are using CAUK's recommendations as evidence in their inquiries: the Transport Committee's inquiry on Road Pricing and Zero Emission Vehicles; the Treasury Committee's Decarbonisation of the UK economy and Green finance inquiry; and the Environmental Audit Committee's inquiry into Energy efficiency of existing homes. Since the launch, CAUK's results have also fed into the Climate Change Committee's (2020) 'Sixth Carbon Budget' report, providing a guide to citizens' priorities and what trade-offs people would make to achieve Net Zero fairly.

Since the launch of the report, over 20 briefings have been undertaken with the commissioning committees and government departments as well as external stakeholders, including Non-Governmental Organisations, business groups, trade associations, health groups and think tanks (particularly those associated with CAUK's themes, e.g. travel). The briefings summarised relevant results from the different themes. There were around 1,000 attendees across all the briefings, including over 400 departmental civil servants and over 500 external stakeholders (it is likely that some of these were repeat attendees between briefings though this was not measured).

2.5 Conclusion

In accordance with best practice (Roberts et al. 2020), CAUK was designed and managed by an independent steering group. The steering group members were selected by the expert leads and the POST from external organisations, including academia and the private, public and charity sectors. The steering group determined the scope and content of the assembly, while taking into account the questions the commissioning bodies (six HoC select committees) wanted to address.

The AMs were selected via random and stratified sampling to be representative of the UK population, in accordance with best practice (Curato et al. 2020). The success of the recruitment strategy is evaluated in chapter 4 of this report.

Like other mini-publics, the process was designed to provide information to the AMs before they engaged in deliberation and decision-making, so that the participants could make informed decisions. Unlike most other mini-publics (other exceptions being the French Citizens' Convention for Climate and the Scottish Climate Assembly and several local citizens' assemblies covering climate change), the AMs were split into three different topic groups for part of the process, so that the assembly could cover the scope and address the task set. This meant that each AM did not receive the information or make decisions for all topics. The balance and range of information provided and its presentation, as well as the impact this had on the assembly members and their learning and decision-making is evaluated in chapter 5 of this report.

The process and publication of the results were accompanied by media coverage and official (online) launch events. There was also media coverage of the assembly around its weekend meetings, and briefings for stakeholders held throughout the process. Some politicians and wider stakeholders attended assembly weekends to observe its proceedings. The impact of the media coverage and launch events on the public's awareness of CAUK as an innovative (deliberative) process in democratic decision-making is evaluated in chapter 9. We now turn to provide an overview of our evaluation.

3. Evaluating Climate Assembly UK

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the focus of the evaluation and the methods used. Firstly, we outline which elements of CAUK we are evaluating and specify our criteria for the evaluation (section 3.2). The methods used for the evaluation are then outlined (section 3.3). The elements of the CAUK process that will be evaluated, the criteria for their evaluation, and the methods used as the basis of the evaluation are summarised in Table 3.1.

3.2. Elements and Criteria for CAUK

There are four broad elements of the CAUK process we seek to evaluate. The extent to which the process was deliberative; the manner in which the members' views on climate change and decarbonisation evolved through the process and the causes of this evolution; the impact the process had on parliament; and the impact it had on the public. Here we explain the rationale and outline our related research questions.

Deliberative Process: CAs are usually designed and organised to generate the norms of deliberative democracy (Elstub 2014; Curato et al. 2021). We therefore seek to assess the extent to which the process was deliberative. There are a number of aspects to be examined here.

Assembly Member Recruitment:

deliberation involves the consideration of a range of views on the issue at hand. It is therefore important that the assembly members are diverse and representative of the broader population with respect to key demographic criteria and their views on the issue of climate change.

We therefore ask:

- Were the AMs demographically representative of the broader population?
- Were the AMs attitudinally diverse on the topic of climate change?

Witness Selection and Evidence

Provision: it is usual in CAs for the members to be provided with information and views relevant to the topic from witnesses, often selected because they have expertise on the issue. The members should be provided with a range of information and views, where relevant. These witnesses should be able to communicate well to the assembly and give the members key resources required to address the task. Our evaluation therefore seeks to establish:

- Did AMs receive sufficient, pertinent, and relevant information and evidence to address the task?
- Was the information that the AMs received understandable and useable?
- Was there balance in the information provided?





Facilitation, deliberation, and

decision-making: participant discussions in CAs are facilitated to ensure they keep to deliberative norms: for instance, the discussions should be inclusive with all participants having an opportunity to have their views heard; participants should justify their views, listen to the views of others, and respect the views of others. To understand the role of the facilitation in CAUK we ask:

- What was the quality of deliberation and facilitation in each session?
- To what extent did AMs feel included/empowered throughout the process?
- How were issues prioritised within the assembly?
- Were AMs satisfied with the outcome? Did they feel they contributed to it, and did it secure their consent?

Impact on Assembly Members: it is crucial that the AMs in a CA approach the issue and the discussions with an open mind and are therefore willing to listen to the range of views and evidence provided. If they do then it is likely that the participants will become more informed about the issue, and that they might also change or develop their opinion on the issue. As a result of participating in the CA they may change their attitudes to civic and political participation more generally, and also towards the UK political system.

We therefore address the following questions:

- Did AM knowledge on climate change and decarbonisation increase?
- Did opinions related to climate change and decarbonisation evolve (and if so, how and to what extent) as a result of (i) knowledge acquisition from experts and (ii) deliberation within the group?
- Did attitudes on civic and political participation evolve?
- What were the critical learning and opinion formation points in the process?

Impact on Parliament and Policy: CAUK should have an influence on parliament and particularly on the six committees that commissioned it. It could also have an influence on climate policy. To assess this, we ask:

- What do the committee members, staff and government think of CAUK and its recommendations?
- How was the CAUK report and recommendations received and dealt with by the select committees?
- What influence did CAUK have on the six committees? Was CAUK coherently linked to parliament? Did the CAUK results feed into the work of the House of Commons' select committees?





One key element of policy impact not covered in our evaluation was stakeholders, in part due to budgetary constraints, but also because we had not anticipated the extent a variety of civil society and business organisations would engage with the assembly. We therefore recommend further evaluation on this impact aspect.

Impact on Wider Public: it is also possible for CAs to influence public debate and opinion on climate change and decarbonisation.

For this to be possible CAUK needs media coverage. We therefore evaluate:

- What levels of awareness of the CAUK process were there among the wider public and how, if at all, did this change over time?
- How legitimate is CAUK in the eyes of the public at large?
- What was the extent and nature of the media coverage CAUK received?

Table 3.1: Approach to the evaluation of CAUK

1. Deliberative Process		
Participant recruitment; witness selection; evidence provision; facilitation	Diversity, representatives, credibility; deliberative quality	Member survey & interviews, expert witness surveys, non-participant observation, content analysis of small group discussions
2. Impact on Participants		
Evolution of members knowledge and views, levels of awareness & political engagement	Knowledge gains, opinion change, internal and external efficacy changes	Member survey & interviews & non-participant observation
3. Impact on Parliament & Policy		
Influence on parliamentary committees	Engagement with CAUK recommendations, government scrutiny	Interviews with committee members, staff, and government civil servants; non-participant observation; documentary analysis
4. Impact on Wider Public		
Media coverage, public awareness & trust	Objective knowledge of and attitudes towards CAUK and skew of media coverage	National survey questions and content analysis of media coverage

3.3. Methods Used for CAUK Evaluation

Due to the complexity of the evaluation we have taken a mixed methods approach, which is considered to be the best approach for researching democratic innovations like CAs (Escobar and Thompson 2019). Each method used on its own has its limitations, but by combining them these limitations are compensated for. The combination of quantitative and qualitative methods selected for the evaluation provides us with the resources to establish what occurred within CAUK, but also how it related to the UK political system more broadly. Here we give an overview of each method.

Assembly Member Surveys

Surveys of the AMs were completed at the start and end of each CAUK weekend. The surveys were designed in collaboration with the Centre for Climate Change and Social Transformations (CAST) (Cherry et al. 2021). Participation in the surveys was voluntary and dependent on the AMs signing a consent form that detailed the purposes of the research and evaluation and how their data would be stored and used, and by whom. Of the 110 AMs, 99 consented. For weekends 1, 2, and 3 the surveys were undertaken in person in Birmingham. The 'start' or 'pre' surveys were completed on the Friday night when the AMs had assembled in the hotel and before the substantive CAUK sessions started on the Saturday morning. The 'end' or 'post' surveys were completed on the Sunday afternoon of weekends 1, 2 and 3, after the formal CAUK sessions had ended and before the AMs left the hotel.

The surveys were issued in hard copy by the table facilitators and each AM was asked to complete the survey at their allocated tables. The AM surveys at the start and end of weekends 4a to 4c were issued to the AMs digitally during the week before and after the CAUK online sessions.

The 'pre' and 'post' surveys comprised a series of closed questions (and some open questions) covering: the AMs knowledge of and attitudes about climate change; their experiences during the in-person and online weekends; their political attitudes and interests; and activities between the weekends. The analysis of these questionnaires enables us to track how knowledge, opinions, attitudes, abilities and experiences evolve throughout the different stages of the process. Each member had a unique ID to add to each survey they completed enabling us to use panel analysis to track this evolution at an individual level, rather than in the aggregate, while still preserving member anonymity and enabling us to link answers to participants' demographic and attitudinal data.





Assembly Member Interviews

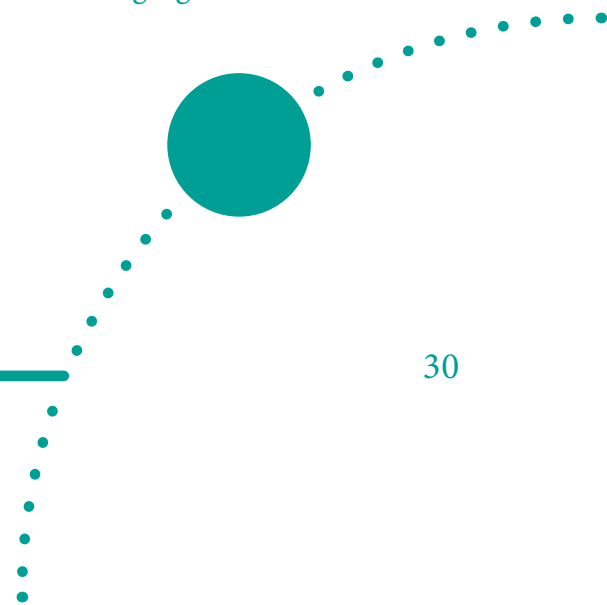
We conducted 28 interviews with AMs in June and July 2020. All of the AMs were asked to indicate if they were willing to participate in a follow-up interview during the survey administered in the last weekend of the assembly. 75 participants consented to being contacted for this purpose. A sample of 30 AMs, that broadly reflected the demographic (gender, age, qualification, ethnicity, geography) and attitudinal (concern about climate change) makeup of the assembly, was created. Potential interviewees were contacted via email. When a potential interviewee declined, another person was chosen from the list who resembled the person who declined as closely as possible in terms of the selection criteria described above. AMs were asked questions about their motivation for participating in the assembly, their perspectives on specific aspects of the experience (information provision, discussion), and their perspectives and level of engagement on climate change and politics. The interviews were conducted in collaboration with CAST (Cherry et al. 2021). The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and then coded according to the research questions, but also to capture emerging themes.

Expert Witness Survey

A survey of the expert witnesses was undertaken in September 2020. Invitations to complete the survey were issued via email to all 48 of the expert witnesses who presented evidence at CAUK, including the expert leads; 21 witnesses responded to the survey. It comprised of a series of open and closed questions on the witnesses' motivations and expectations prior to taking part, and their experiences of presenting and engaging with Assembly members.

Non-Participant Observation

A member of the research team attended, and observed, each of CAUK's in-person weekends (1-3) in Birmingham. The research team were given audio recordings of the online sessions (weekends 4a-4c), including the presentations and small group discussions. A member of the research team also attended the online report launch (10 September 2020) and each of the subsequent online stakeholder briefings (14-21 September 2020). The researchers recorded their observations in a field diary, structured around the research questions. These were then coded and analysed according to the research questions, but also to capture emerging themes.





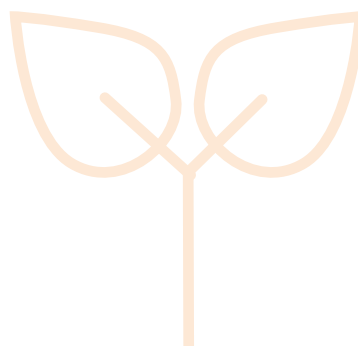
Content Analysis of Small Group Discussions

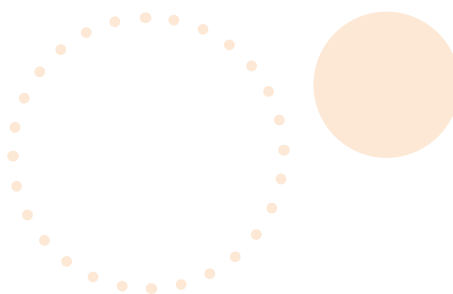
All small group discussions in the assembly were recorded, except for those that included members that had not consented to be part of the research. To assess the deliberative quality of these discussions, throughout the assembly, we transcribed and coded one session from each weekend. This method supplements our subjective assessments of deliberative quality with more objective analysis. As not all discussions in a CA are designed to be deliberative, we identified the sessions from each weekend that we thought had the greatest chance of containing deliberative norms. We then used a random number generator to select a table/online breakout group to analyse from the session, while ensuring we had a range of different facilitators in our sample. These recordings were then transcribed and coded to assess the presence of deliberative norms and different types of facilitation techniques. The code book is designed so that, generally, the higher the score awarded the better the discussion contribution is, from a deliberative perspective. The codebook can be found in the appendix (A1). All ‘assembly member codes’ are applied to each verbal contribution in the discussion made by an AM, with a total sample of 1,036 of these interventions, which we call speech acts. All facilitator codes are applied to each verbal contribution in a discussion made by a facilitator, with a total sample of 596 facilitator speech acts. 20% of the discussions were coded blind by a second coder to ensure the coding was reliable.

All inter-coder reliability scores are above the common thresholds for satisfactory reliability, with the majority fair to moderate or substantial levels of agreement between coders and some even perfect agreement. The inter-coder reliability results can be found in the appendix (A2).

Parliament, Government and CAUK Interviews and Documentary Analysis

We conducted 16 semi-structured interviews with four Chairs, or former Chairs, of select committees; seven Clerks, or former Clerks, of the committees; a member of the CAUK communications team, a member of the CAUK organising team and three other civil servants or researchers involved in the promotion of the CAUK report and recommendations. The interviews were carried out via zoom or teams, between mid-September and mid-November 2020. They were asked questions about the motivations behind the establishment of CAUK; how the process of establishing it unfolded; levels of contact with the process; thoughts on the process and the recommendations; and future committee plans to act on the recommendations. This was supplemented by analysis of documents including the CAUK report and media strategy document, committee inquiry materials and Government White Papers.





Population Survey

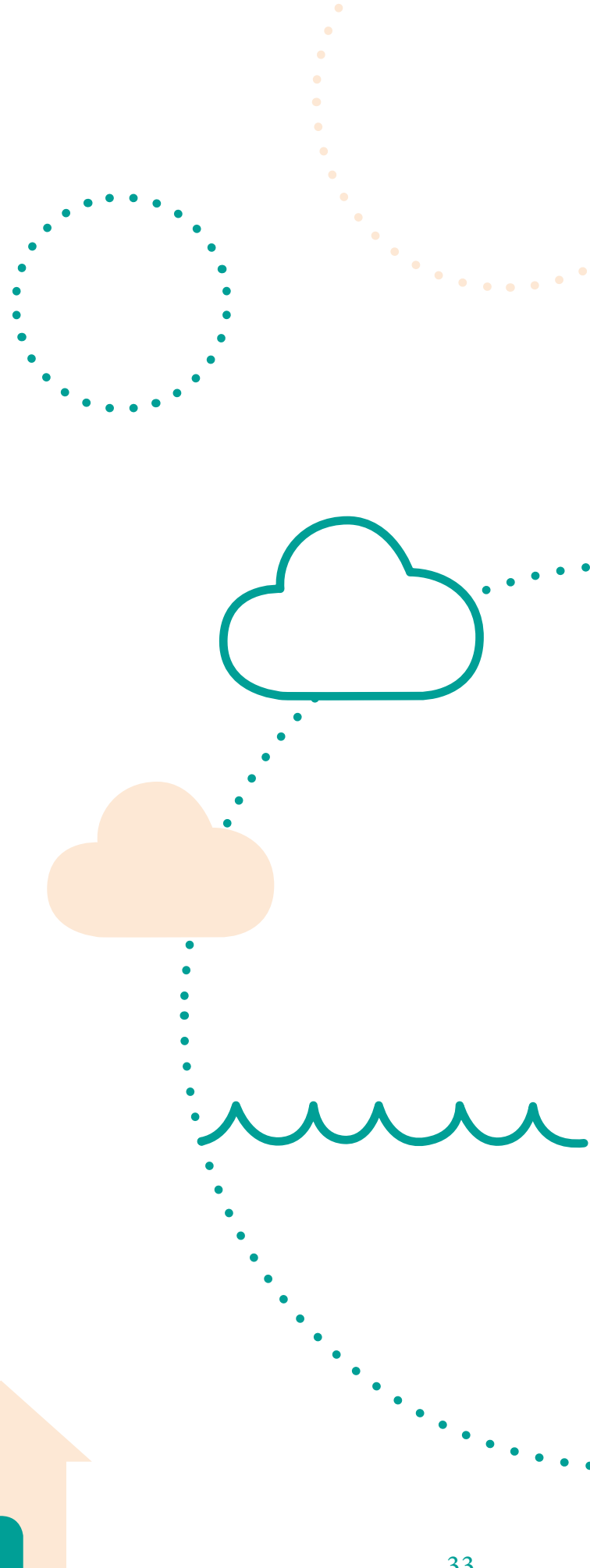
To assess public awareness and trust in the CA, surveys of the UK public were completed at the start and end of CAUK, as well as just after the launch of the CAUK report. The surveys were timed to coincide with publicity surrounding these milestones to ensure that the potential for public awareness of CAUK was at its greatest. The logic behind this was that if the public was unaware of the process at these points then it was likely to be unaware of it at any point. YouGov were commissioned to undertake the surveys from a randomly selected sample of members of the UK public. When conducting nationally representative internet-based surveys, YouGov use active 'quota' sampling to target respondents from their panel of registered users in the right demographics to produce a sample representative of the overall population (YouGov 2021). The first wave of the survey, completed on 24 January 2020, on the first day of CAUK, comprised 1,679 members of the public, and acted as our baseline. The second wave of the survey (completed on 20 May 2020, the week after weekend 4c), comprised 1,808 members of the public. The third wave of the survey, (completed on 14 September, after the online launch of the CAUK report), comprised 1,671 members of the UK public. Each survey consisted of four to six closed questions that asked about knowledge of, engagement with, and trust of, CAUK. Ten-point scales were used in order to capture small fluctuations in these elements over time. In addition, there were questions about views on climate change, and some standard demographic questions.

Media Analysis

To evaluate the media coverage a sample of the print, broadcast, and online articles were analysed to examine the level of publicity throughout the process. We focussed on the same three milestones as for our three population surveys: the first weekend of CAUK in January 2020, the last weekend of CAUK in May 2020, and the launch of the results report in September 2020. Analysing the media coverage during the times immediately prior to the distribution of our population survey questions enabled us to ascertain the opportunities the public had had to become aware of CAUK. A database of media coverage was collected by Parliament staff (the media and communications team of the House of Commons select committees) on print, broadcast, and online articles. The social media activity was collated by Kitsch Inc, a private digital media company that supported the assembly's work. Taking a sample of 20 media sources at each milestone, we assessed the length of each article and its primary focus (in terms of the assembly process, the issue of climate change, or a mix of them both) and whether the coverage was positive or negative. We sampled to ensure a variety of types of outlet, with a preference for those with the greatest reach based on viewing, listening, or readership figures.

3.4. Conclusion

Our evaluation of CAUK assesses what happens within the assembly and how it relates to key parts of the UK political system. With respect to the internal aspects, we evaluate the deliberative process including participant recruitment, facilitation, and decision-making process. We are interested in the extent to which the AMs learnt and changed their views and behaviour as a result of their involvement in CAUK. With respect to the external aspects, we evaluate the influence CAUK has on the UK Parliament, in particular the six commissioning select committees, and climate policy more generally. We are interested in public awareness and trust of the process and the media's role in this. To implement this evaluation, we adopt a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods including surveys, interviews, document analysis, observation, and content analysis.





4. The Assembly Members

4.1 Introduction

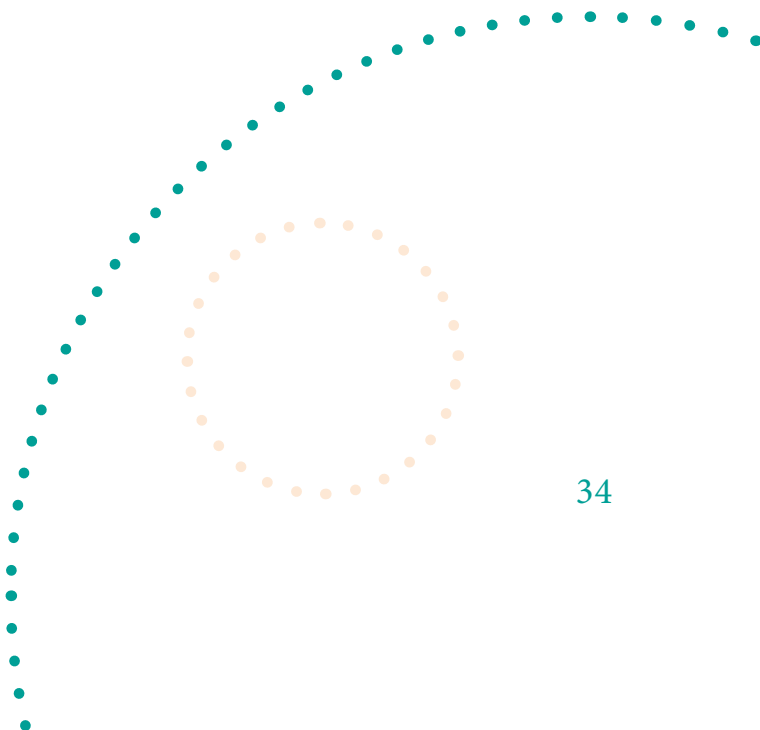
There are three reasons why it is important that participants of mini-publics are randomly selected. First, everyone in a population should have an equal chance of being selected and therefore have an equal opportunity to influence decision-making. Second, the participants should be representative of the broader population with respect to key demographics and attitudes on the topic. Demographic characteristics can influence public opinion on policy issues and also the legitimacy of the process, and its outcomes could be enhanced if the public recognise that people like them are involved. Third, random selection reduces self-selection that tends to result in those with vested interests and the loudest voices participating. In contrast, randomly selected participants are more likely to have open minds to listening to and reflecting on evidence. In CAs it is common practice to further attempt to lower the barriers to participation felt by some social groups by using financial incentives and covering travel, accommodation, and childcare costs¹. To assess if the recruitment of AMs for CAUK fulfilled these objectives, this chapter evaluates whether they were demographically representative of the broader population (section 4.2) and attitudinally diverse on the topic of climate change (section 4.3).

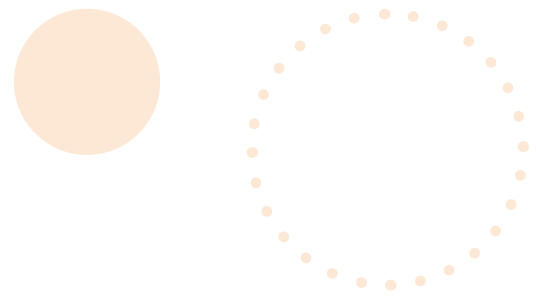
Full details of the recruitment process are available [here](#) and in chapter 2 of this report.

In summary, 30,000 letters were sent to addresses randomly selected from the Royal Mail's Postcode Address file inviting residents (over 16 years old) to participate in CAUK. The response rate to the invitations to participate was 5.8%. The respondents were asked to complete a short survey comprising demographic and attitudinal questions. The results of this 'recruitment' survey were used to identify 110 participants that were demographically and attitudinally representative of the UK population, via random stratified sampling. In the event, 108 AMs attended and participated in CAUK; two participants dropped out just before the start of the first weekend.

The assessment of the recruitment of AMs in this chapter is based on the results of the surveys of AMs, supplemented with researchers' observation fieldnotes.

¹ For CAUK, the assembly members received £150 for each weekend they attended, and their costs were covered. When applicable, other costs such as for childcare and the attendance of parents/guardians were also covered.





4.2 How demographically representative the Assembly Members were of the broader population

Of the 99 AMs who agreed to their data being used by the evaluation and research teams, 54% were female and 46% were male, compared to 51% and 49% respectively in the UK population. It is, however, noted that according to the Climate Assembly UK report (2020) the gender of the AMs more closely matched the UK population (51% female, 49% male, and one AM was non-binary). This difference is due to fewer male AMs consenting to their data being used in the research and evaluation work. The Climate Assembly UK team itself, which wrote the report, had consent from all participants to use their data; the figures it includes are therefore for all 108 AMs.

Previous studies indicate that citizens are more likely to participate in politics as they get older (Verba et al. 1995). In CAUK, the youngest AM was 16 years and the oldest was 79 years. Table 4.1 shows that the ages of the AMs broadly correspond to the UK population. Further, the median age group was 45-59 years, corresponding to the median age group in the UK population. This indicates that the recruitment strategy successfully overcame the tendency of older citizens to be over-represented in political decision-making.

Table 4.1: Ages of the assembly members compared to the UK population

Age group	% of AMs	% in UK pop ^{a&b}	% Difference (= AMs – UK pop)
16-29	21.2	21.7	-0.5
30-44	25.3	23.8	1.5
45-59	25.3	25.0	0.3
60+	28.3	29.4	-1.1

a: ONS population data, August 2019

b: population aged 16 years +

Previous studies have further shown that more educated citizens are more likely to be politically active (Verba et al. 1995). In the recruitment survey, the AMs were asked about their highest level of educational achievement. Table 4.2 shows that although those possessing level 4 education and above were slightly over-represented (there were 3.3% more AMs with level 4 education and above than in the UK population), the AMs broadly corresponded with the UK population in terms of educational achievement.



Table 4.2: Education level of the assembly members compared to the UK population			
Level of Education	% of AMs	% in UK pop ^c	% Difference (= AMs – UK pop)
No qualifications / level 1 (1 - 4 GCSEs or equivalent)	37.4	37.0	0.4
Level 2 (>5 GCSE or equivalent) / level 3 (>2 A-levels or equivalent) / Apprenticeship	32.3	35.0	-2.7
Level 4 (first or higher degree) and above	30.3	27.0	3.3

c: according to the UK census, 2011

Previous studies have shown that citizens from ethnic minority backgrounds are less likely to engage in political activity than all other ethnic groups combined (Verba et al. 1995). The recruitment survey asked about the AM's ethnicity. From those who agreed for their data to be used by the evaluation and research teams, 15.2% of the AMs were from ethnic minority backgrounds, compared to 14.5% in the UK population. This indicates that the recruitment strategy overcame the tendency of White citizens to be over-represented in political decision-making.

Table 4.3: Residence of assembly members compared to the UK population			
Region	% of AMs	% in UK pop ^c	% Difference (= AMs – UK pop)
East Midlands	37.4	37.0	0.4
East of England	8.1	9.4 ^d	-1.3
London	12.1	13.5 ^d	-1.4
North East	4.0	4.0 ^d	0.0
North West	11.1	11.0 ^d	0.1
NI	4.0	2.8 ^e	1.2
Scotland	9.1	8.2 ^e	0.9
South East	13.1	13.8 ^d	-0.7
South West	9.1	8.5 ^d	0.6
Wales	5.1	4.7 ^e	0.4
West Midlands	8.1	8.9 ^d	-0.8
Yorks & Humber	8.1	8.3 ^d	-0.2

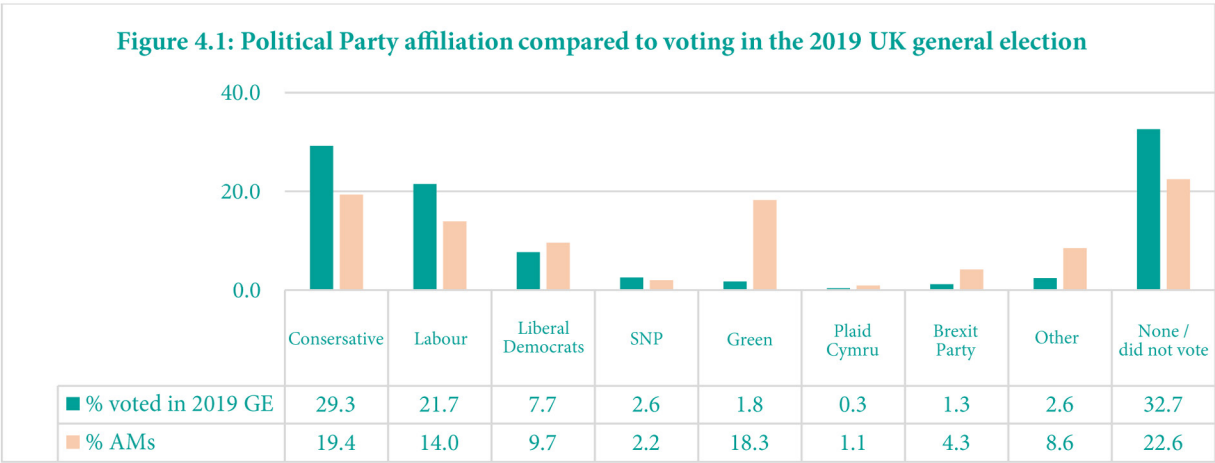
d: Population of England in 2019 by region (Statista, 2020) e: ONS population estimates, 2019

The results of the recruitment survey also indicated how geographically diverse and representative of the UK population the AMs were. Table 4.3 shows that all regions of the UK were represented, and that the proportion of AMs from each region was within 1.4% of the UK population. The urban/rural split did diverge a little more from the UK population: 22% of AMs said they live in a rural area, compared to 17% of the UK population (DEFRA, 2020) - a difference of 5.2%.

The results of the recruitment survey indicate that the AMs were broadly representative of the UK population in terms of sex, age, region, education, ethnicity, and rural/urban residence. The largest differences between the AMs and the UK population were in education (3.3% more AMs with level 4 and above qualifications than the UK population) and the urban/rural split (5.2% more rural residents than the UK population). However, level of education is the most significant determinant of political participation and does affect recruitment in mini-publics (Elstub 2014).

Because people tend to sit with ‘people like them’, it is also important that activities are organised so to retain diversity (newDemocracy Foundation, 2018). The researchers’ field notes confirmed that CAUK’s activities were organised so that the mix of AMs at each activity was diverse; as explained in chapter 2 (section 2.3), the table seating at each activity was pre-allocated via stratified random selection. Fieldnotes also noted that during break times and some mealtimes when AMs could sit where they like, some obvious cliques formed.

As well as being demographically representative, it is important that the AMs were representative of the UK population in terms of their political allegiances. On the first weekend of CAUK, the AMs were asked about their party affiliation, specifically if they felt close to a political party. Figure 4.1 shows how their party affiliations compared to 2019 UK General Election vote share.

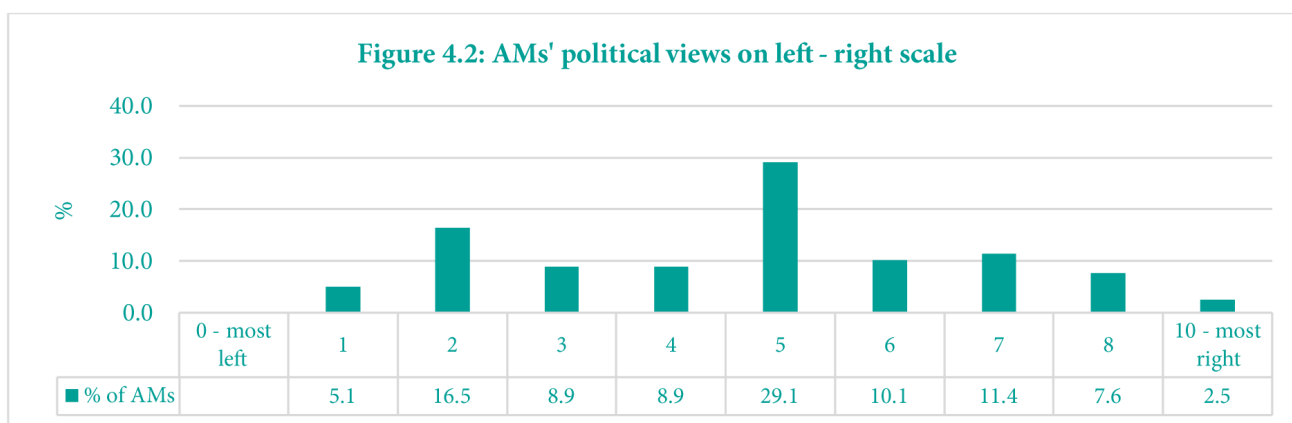




As Figure 4.1 indicates, 77% of the AMs said they felt close to a political party, and the main political parties were represented within the AMs. Of the AMs that felt close to a political party, the largest proportion felt closest to the Conservative Party (19.4%). However, compared to the percentage of votes received from eligible voters in the 2019 general election, citizens affiliated with the Conservative and Labour Party voters appear under-represented. Conversely, the proportion of AMs that felt close to the Green Party (18.3%) appear over-represented considering that only 1.8% of eligible voters voted for the Green Party in the 2019 general election.

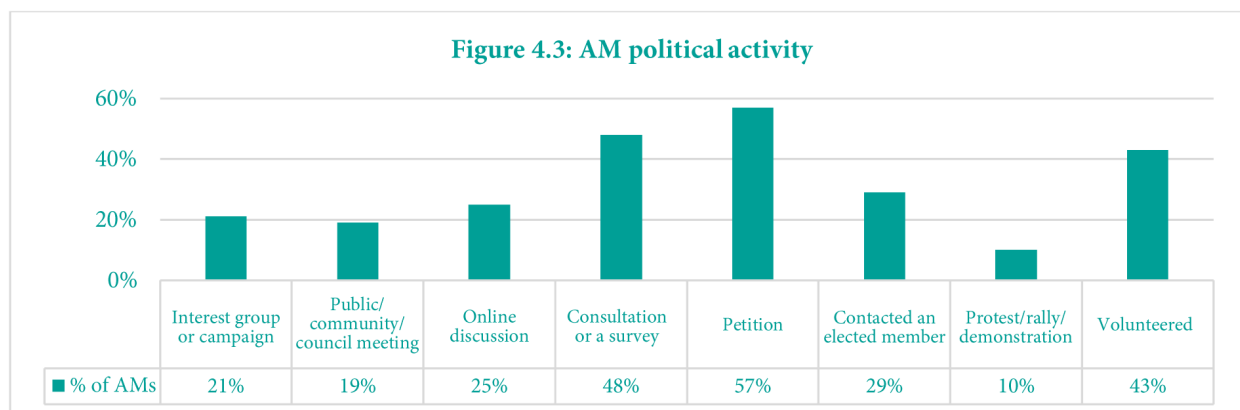
Because the invitations to CAUK would have indicated the topic was about climate change, it is unsurprising that supporters of the Green Party were more inclined to respond. Nevertheless, it does indicate that questions on party allegiance should be included in the recruitment process to overcome this problem.

To further assess the AMs political leanings, on the first weekend of CAUK, the AMs were also asked where they considered themselves on the left-right political spectrum. Figure 4.2 shows that most AMs selected the mid-point on the 11-point scale: from 0 (most left) to 10 (most right). The median was also in the centre (5). The results indicate that the AMs were ideologically diverse.



To assess if the recruitment strategy had overcome the self-selection bias by those that are most politically active, the AMs were asked if they had engaged in a range of political activities during the last 12 months. Figure 4.3 shows that less than half of the Assembly Members had engaged in each of the political activities in the last 12

months, except for signing a petition, which 57% of AMs had done. This indicates that the recruitment strategy overcame the tendency for public engagement in political decision-making to only include the politically active.



4.3 Attitudinal diversity on the topic of climate change

An important feature of mini-publics is that they are not dominated by participants who have a strong interest in the issue at hand, and also that there's a range of views on the topic. In the recruitment survey, and evaluation survey issued on the 1st weekend of CAUK, the AMs were asked how concerned they were about climate change

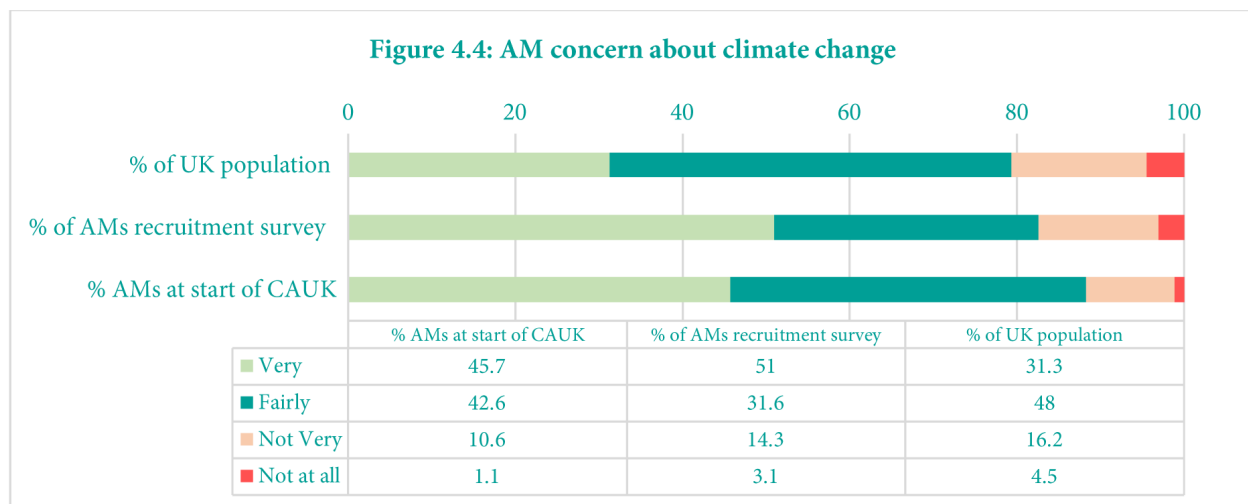


Figure 4.4 shows that, like the UK population, most of the AMs were fairly concerned, or very concerned, about climate change. Perhaps unsurprisingly given the subject of the assembly, a slightly larger proportion of the AMs (82%-88%) reported that they were very or fairly concerned than the general public (80%)². Interestingly, the proportion of AMs stating they were very, or fairly, concerned about climate change increased between the recruitment survey (82%) and the start of CAUK (88%), perhaps reflecting a development of interest associated with being selected as a Climate Assembly Member and attending the event. However, there was no statistically significant mean difference between the level of concern recorded in the recruitment survey and the start of CAUK.

²These population survey results come from the 2nd wave of our own survey. We recognise that CAUK recruitment was based on a population survey completed in 2019 that indicated a higher % of UK citizens were concerned with climate change (85%).

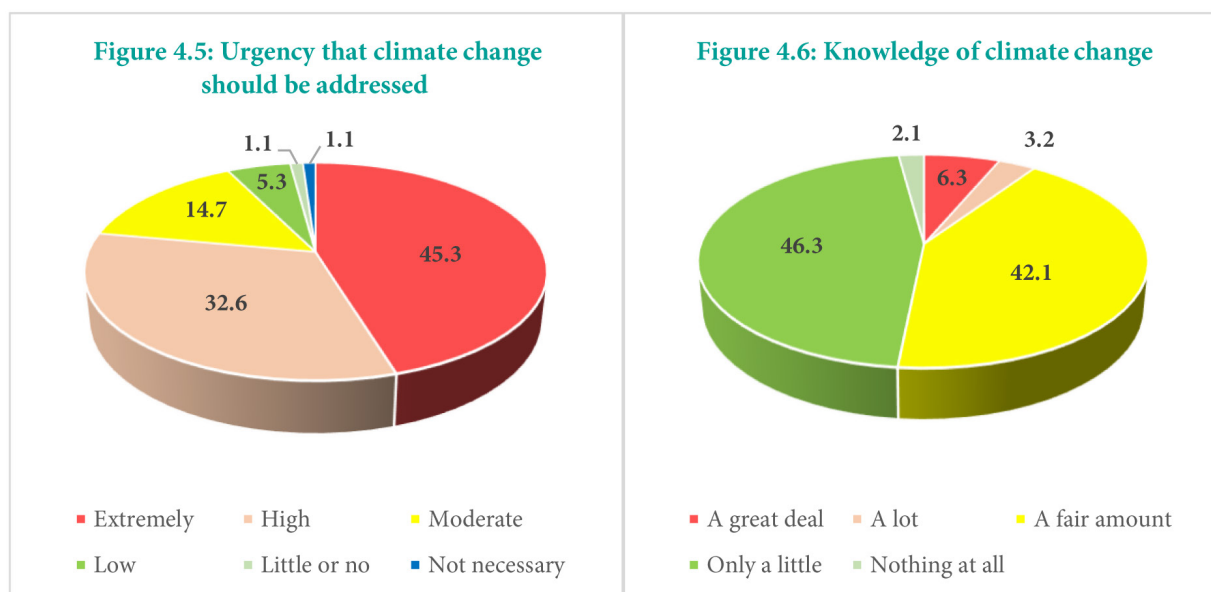


It does show that it was right to ask about views on climate change in the recruitment survey as it helped to ensure a more representative sample was recruited. This was a good innovation to the CA model, which, outside of the UK, usually just recruits on demographics.

Reflecting the UK population, some AMs were unconcerned by the issue of climate change. The researchers' fieldnotes recorded that there were self-proclaimed and loud 'climate sceptics' among the AMs, some of whom did actively attempt to influence other AMs with alternative viewpoints to the presented evidence.

As well as being broadly representative of the UK population in their concern for climate change, the AMs were also asked about their level of engagement with the issue. The results of the survey at the start of CAUK also showed that 77% of the AMs were not members of a conservation or environmental group (such as National Trust, RSPB, Extinction Rebellion etc.). This supports the conclusion that the AMs were not dominated by those with an interest in environmental issues more broadly.

Figures 4.5 and 4.6 provide further evidence that the AMs were diverse in their attitudes to tackling climate change and their knowledge of the issue. Although 78% of the AMs thought that climate change required highly, or extremely, urgent action (Figure 4.5), only 9.5% of AMs thought they knew a great deal or a lot about climate change (at the start of CAUK).

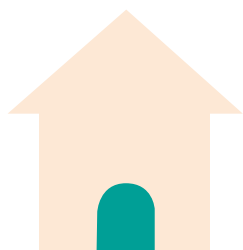
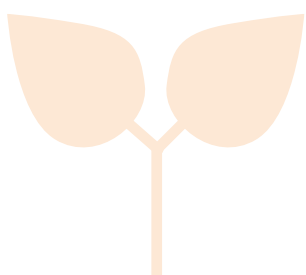


4.4 Conclusion

The results of the AMs survey show that the AMs were broadly demographically representative of the UK population. According to the researchers' field notes the deliberative sessions were managed to maintain the diversity of the small group discussions.

The results show that the AMs were not dominated by those that usually participate, e.g. more educated, White, politically active individuals. This indicates that the recruitment strategy (stratified random sampling) successfully overcame some of the traditional barriers to participation.

Although Green Party members were overrepresented when compared to the 2019 UK general election vote share, the AMs were diverse in terms of the political spectrum. The AMs were also attitudinally diverse and broadly representative of the UK population on the issue of climate change before CAUK began. The proportion of AMs that stated they were very, or fairly, concerned about climate change increased between the recruitment survey (82%) and the start of CAUK (88%). This may be due to AMs becoming increasingly interested in the topic between volunteering and attending CAUK.



5. Witness Selection & Evidence

5.1 Introduction

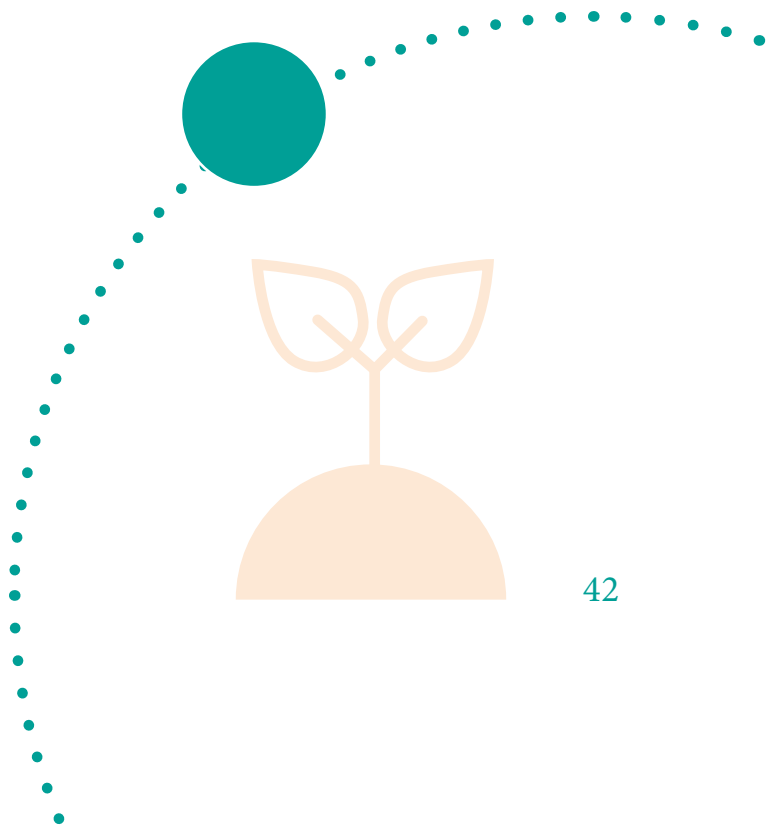
Mini-publics aim for participants to become more knowledgeable about the topic at hand during the process. For CAUK to be considered legitimate, committee members and the public must be able to recognise that the AMs came to informed decisions. This is dependent on the AMs being provided with useful, accessible, and balanced information (Roberts et al. 2020) from expert and advocate witnesses that were, themselves, well prepared for the assembly context.

In this chapter we evaluate the provision of evidence, based on researchers' fieldnotes, a survey of the expert witnesses, and the surveys of AMs during the process. This is supplemented with interview data from MPs, Parliamentary staff, CAUK organisers and AMs, as well as analysis of the transcripts of small group discussions. In section 5.2, we start by assessing the sufficiency, pertinence and relevance of the evidence provided, according to the AMs. We then evaluate how prepared the expert witnesses felt they were to provide sufficient, pertinent, and relevant evidence. In section 5.3, we assess if the AMs understood the evidence provided and were able to use it, according to the AMs themselves, and supplemented with observations by the researchers. Finally, in section 5.4, we evaluate the balance of information provided, from the views of the AMs and witnesses.

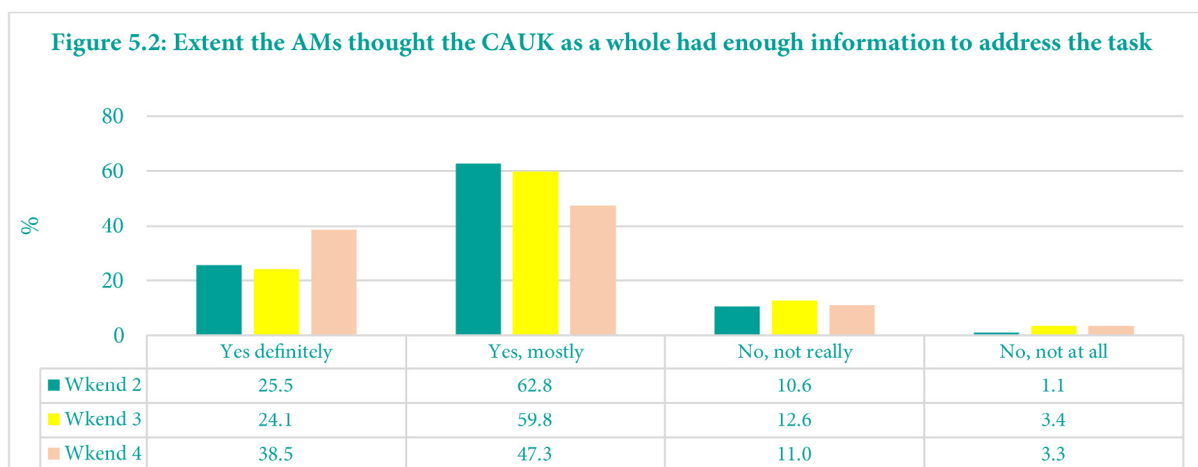
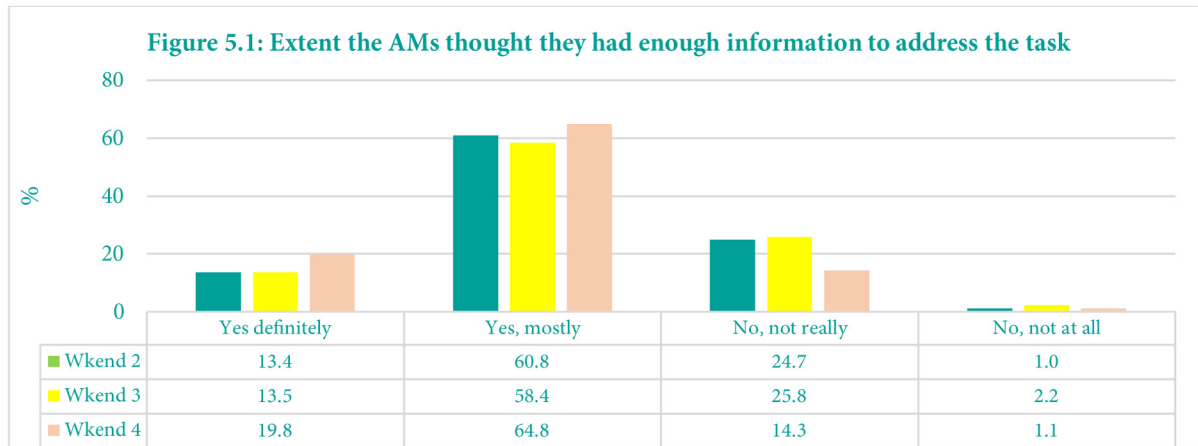
5.2 Sufficiency, pertinence, and relevance of the information and evidence received by the Assembly Members to address the task

The AMs were tasked with the question: 'How should the UK meet its target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050?'. To assess if they had been provided with sufficient relevant and pertinent information to address this task, the surveys of AMs asked about the information provided. The results of the surveys after weekends 2, 3 and 4c show that more than 70% of AMs said that they (themselves) definitely, or mostly, had enough information to address the task (see Figure 5.1).

The AMs were also asked if they thought the citizens' assembly (as a whole) had enough information to address the task, after weekends 2, 3 and 4c. Figure 5.2 shows that over 80% of AMs thought that CAUK (as a whole) definitely, or mostly, had enough information to address the task.



Evaluation of CAUK



Moreover, there are statistically significant mean differences between the responses given to both weekends after the in-person weekends (2 and 3) and the online weekends (4c); on average the AMs moved towards 'yes, definitely'. This indicates that they became more satisfied that they (themselves) and CAUK (as a whole) had been provided with sufficient information as the assembly progressed and moved between in-person and online. This suggests that as the AMs approached the finalisation of their recommendations, they were increasingly confident that they had the resources required to address the task they had been given.

The results of the content analysis of the small group discussion displayed in Table 5.1 indicates that the members' discussions (on average 89%) contained no requests for additional information. It further indicates that AMs asked for more information as the process progressed, with significantly more requests for information and references on expert opinions during the online weekends. It seems unlikely that these differences relate to differences between online and in-person deliberation. Rather, the fact that the online weekends were towards the end of the process where the AMs were finalising their recommendations meant they focused on the expert information they received more keenly than they did early in the process.

Evaluation of CAUK

But also the topics at this stage of the process, such as the means of generating electricity and greenhouse gas removals, were perhaps more complex than those covered previously.

Table 5.1: Results of small group discussion content analysis

	1	2	3	4a	4b	4c	Significance	
Request for information								
No request	97.9%	96.7%	93.2%	74.6%	88.0%	70.8%	X ² =	133.9
Requests process information	1.8%	2.0%	3.4%	4.6%	3.0%	0.9%	p	<0.001
Requests topic information	0.3%	1.3%	3.4%	20.8%	9.0%	28.3%		
Expert opinion								
No reference	100.0%	100.0%	96.6%	70.0%	88.6%	82.1%	X ² =	147.1
Expert opinion supported	0.0%	0.0%	3.4%	26.9%	10.8%	17.0%	p	<0.001
Expert opinion contrasted	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.1%	0.6%	0.9%		

To provide sufficient, relevant, and pertinent information, the witnesses needed to be properly briefed about CAUK and their role in it. The survey of witnesses asked them whether they were given enough information about CAUK. Figure 5.3 shows that most of the witnesses agreed, or strongly agreed, that they were given enough information about how CAUK operates (18 out of 21) and its aims (20 out of 21) in advance.



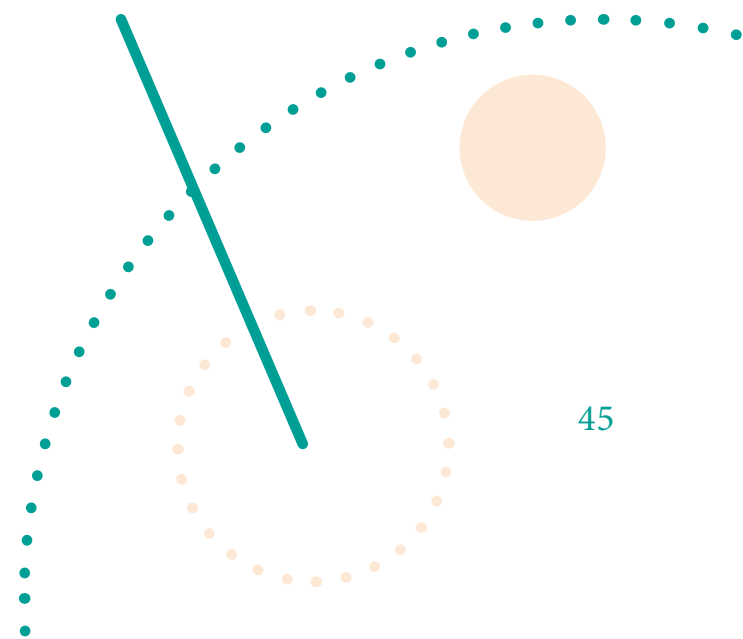
Figure 5.3 also shows that most expert witnesses agreed, or strongly agreed, that they were adequately briefed on their role within CAUK (18 out of 21) and what was required from their contributions (17 out of 21). The survey asked the witnesses about their expectations of presenting at CAUK. In open-ended questions, several of the witnesses commented on how well they were briefed beforehand, stating: ‘the expectations were quite clearly set out beforehand.’ Illustrating that the witnesses understood and were comfortable with the expectations for them to provide sufficient, pertinent, and relevant information and evidence, several commented on what they expected: ‘to provide information and enjoy hearing different perspectives’; ‘I expected that the question topics and levels of knowledge from the members would be very wide ranging’; ‘my expectation was that I could share my expertise ... but more importantly to discuss it in more detail in small Q&A sessions with the assembly members.’

The researchers’ fieldnotes supported the assertion that a high volume of evidence was provided. However, they did note some concerns that the volume of information in the time available could overwhelm the AMs. In an interview one AM reflected that they got ‘the feeling that a lot of people were ending the day very confused ... don’t forget, we came from nothing ... very little information ... and we are suddenly supposed to sort of take it and make a decision.’ In weekend 3, an AM said that they had not been given enough time to receive and digest all the information from the first two weekends.

A couple of other AMs agreed. However, most AMs were clearly happy with the information provided.

The witnesses also revealed some concern about the volume of information that they were expected to present within the time constraints. One witness worried that ‘it would be challenging to meet the brief’ due to the complexity of the topic and the time available. Others agreed: one stated that they ‘expected it would be challenging to make [their] presentation simple enough’, and another worried about ‘explaining my area clearly within the time available.’

The researchers noted that the presenters and organisers recognised that the volume of information may be a challenge to some of the AMs. In weekend 1, one of the speakers tried to manage the AMs expectations, stating ‘we’re cramming a lot in.’ Nevertheless, the researchers also noted that that evidence was regularly reviewed with the expert leads providing recaps and overviews of evidence provided in previous weekends.





Despite the volume of information provided, the researchers' fieldnotes recorded that some AMs identified gaps in the evidence provision. For example, some asked why specific issues were not covered, such as freight transport, and tidal and wave technology. AMs also queried the depth of some topics. For example, one AM wrote to the organisers appealing for the inclusion of additional information on carbon neutral fuel.³ In response to an open question in the survey, one expert witness encapsulated the issues arising from time constraints and gaps in information: 'I felt the whole thing was rather compressed. Some sectors were not covered ... Ideally, the members should have more time and ability to call for additional speakers.' The researchers observed that, when questioned about gaps in information, the lead facilitators often blamed time constraints for limiting evidence provision. This is not an unusual phenomenon in mini-publics. There are inevitable trade-offs that have to be made between depth and scope of evidence. At the beginning of the assembly's design process Parliament specified certain topics that should be deprioritised in the case of time constraints on the basis of the committees' interests. These included freight transport, green investment, direct industrial emissions and consumption emissions (i.e. emissions from processes that take place outside of the UK but are 'imported' via goods and services).

The researchers' fieldnotes noted that access to sufficient information was limited by splitting the AMs into three topic groups on weekend 2. The lead facilitators told the AMs that there would be opportunities for each group to hear about what other groups discussed; however, these opportunities were limited. The researchers noted that on Saturday evening of weekend 2, the AMs received a three-minute presentation of what was discussed in each room just before dinner when they were likely to be tired and hungry. The lead facilitators told the AMs that if they were interested in another topic area, they should look at the live feed streams for a full recap. As detailed in Chapter 2 of this report, there were more substantial efforts to integrate the work of the thematic groups on the Friday evening of weekend 3. Nevertheless, it was decided that AMs should only vote on recommendations from their own topic group because the other AMs had not had enough opportunity to make a sufficiently informed vote (Interview, CAUK Organiser). It is, however, certainly the case that time is frequently a limiting factor at CAs, and balancing the sufficiency of information with time to deliberate is difficult, as noted in previous studies (Farrell and Suiter 2019).

³ Freight was not covered as the remit from parliament was to look at personal transport. Tidal and wave was touched on but not covered in depth – the introductory presentation for the 'where our electricity comes from' theme explained the rationale for this. There was space for AMs to write on their ballot papers about tidal and wave (and hydro and geothermal) and their views on them are included in full in the assembly report (CAUK 2020).

5.3 Understandable and useable information

To fulfil the aim of the AMs being more knowledgeable by the end of the process, the information provided needed to be understandable and useable.

To assess if the AMs had understood the information and were able to use it, the surveys of AMs asked if they had understood the speakers’ presentations

and if they learnt a lot from the information provided. Figure 5.4 shows that most AMs (>90%) agreed, or strongly agreed, that they understood the information presented by the speakers during weekends 1 and 2. There is no statistically significant mean difference between the responses given in weekends 1 and 2, indicating the extent they understood the speakers did not change over this period.

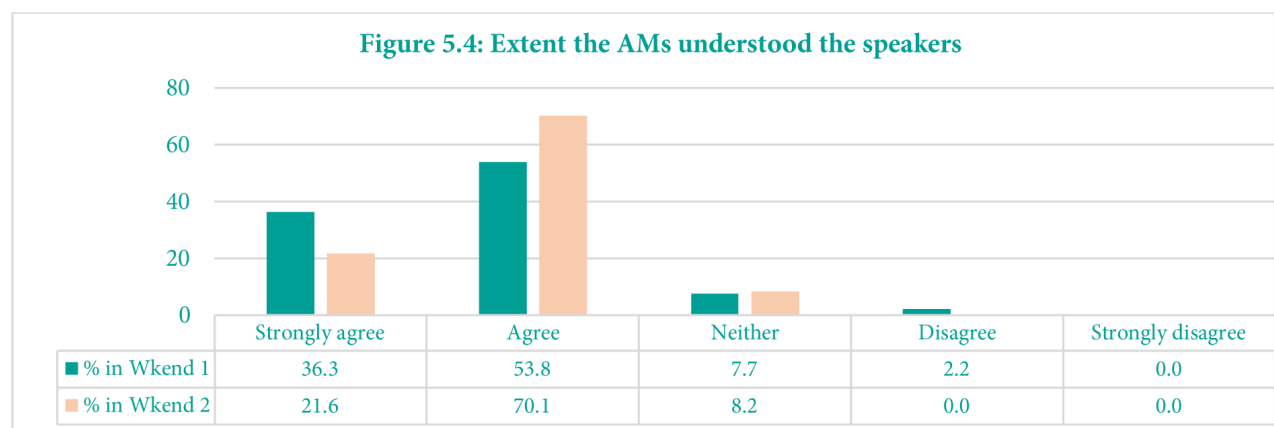
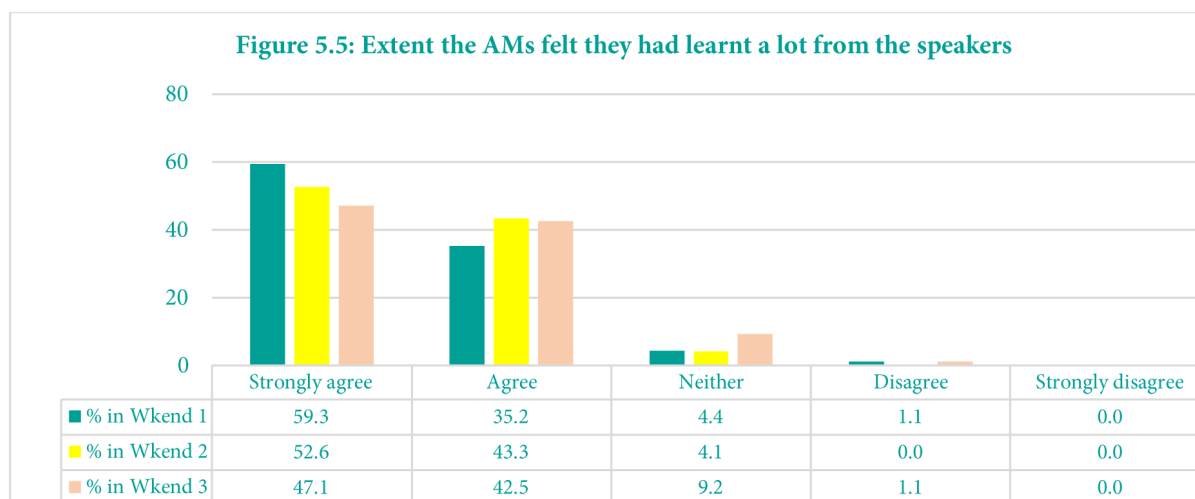
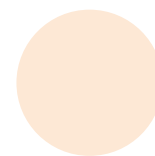


Figure 5.5 overleaf shows that most of the AMs also agreed, or strongly agreed, that they had learnt a lot from the information provided during weekends 1, 2 and 3. However, there is a statistically significant mean difference between the responses given after weekend 1 and 3 (-0.2); on average, the AMs moved slightly towards strongly disagree between weekends 1 and 3, indicating that learning decreased as the process progressed, with the most amount of learning occurring in the early stages of CAUK, when most of the information was provided.



Although most AMs seemed satisfied by the information provided, the researchers recorded that the format of some presentations did limit how understandable and useable the information was.

Specifically, the researchers noted that slides were sometimes too crowded and used graphics that were not fully explained. Additionally, some of the speakers ran out of time, rushed through their content, or used jargon. For example, in weekend 4a one of the speakers was asked to explain a complex graph by at least four AMs in one group and two in another. In response, the speaker blamed limited time, which meant she had to condense her explanation. As described in Chapter 2, a support package was in place for expert witnesses, including expert lead liaison and lead facilitator slide review for accessibility. Not all witnesses took up this package of support (Interview, CAUK organiser). Reviewing the evidence to be provided was easier for the online weekends because the presentations were pre-recorded, rather than delivered live, so additional material could be recorded to enhance accessibility (Interview, CAUK organiser).

The researcher's fieldnotes also recorded that the sound quality and visibility of the talks occasionally hampered how understandable the information was. In weekend 1 the researcher noted that the sound quality was sometimes poor, and some speakers were softly spoken and hard to hear. The researcher also recorded that AMs could not see the slides properly (from the back of the room) as they were too low, cutting off the bottom. These were the exceptions though.

There were systems in place to supplement and aid AMs' understanding of the information provided and mitigate the risks that AMs may miss information during the presentations. Firstly, there was a session on how to interpret competing evidence. Secondly, evidence was provided in a variety of formats, which would help meet the learning needs of a diverse group. There were presentations, a variety of question-and-answer formats, panels where evidence could be directly compared, and hard copy material.



The question-and-answer sessions were undertaken in different formats across the weekends. Sometimes the expert witnesses sat at the front of the room and questions were asked and answered in plenary. More often, the experts spent time with each small group at their table (or ‘visited’ each small group in their virtual ‘breakout room’ during the online weekends). During the table discussions, the table facilitators could call over speakers or expert leads to answer questions and clarify points and at the end of each presentations the expert lead sometimes asked the speakers to clarify specific points. Thirdly, the expert leads were ever-present throughout the process, and able to support the AMs in digesting the evidence they received. For example, after the presentations, the expert leads would ask speakers to clarify specific points. Fourth, AMs were given cards to hold up during the presentations to indicate that they wanted the speaker to slow down or clarify a point. The researchers’ fieldnotes recorded that the card system generally worked well (although there were some inconsistencies). These have all been identified as best practice for evidence provision in mini-publics (Roberts et al. 2020).

The results of the content analysis of the small group discussions displayed in Table 5.1 indicates that most AM discussion contributions (92%) did not refer directly to the witness’s information. However, analysis of references to expert opinion by event format reveals statistically significant differences between the in-person and online formats. In-person weekends contained more speech acts with

no reference to expert opinion (99.5%) compared to online weekends (80.8%). Online weekends contained 17.7% speech acts which supported expert opinion, compared to 0.5% during in-person weekends. This reflected the fact that the online weekends were towards the end of the process, which meant they focused on the expert information they received more than had been the case earlier in the process, but the issues dealt with at that stage of the process were, arguably, also more technical.

In the plenary Q&A sessions, AMs were given the choice of asking their question themselves or having a facilitator ask it on their behalf. As a result, the facilitators asked quite a lot of the questions. This potentially reduced the sense of ownership AMs had in their own questions and introduced the risk that the meaning of the questions was incorrectly interpreted by the table facilitator. Nevertheless, it is still preferable to the question not being asked at all. Importantly, questions were developed and selected by each small group, meaning that quieter and less confident members could still have their questions asked. The researchers observed that the AMs seemed to appreciate the speakers coming round to their tables to answer their questions in carousel. There were more opportunities for the AMs to ask their own questions, to ask several questions, and engage in interactive dialogue with the speakers, which has been recognised as good practice (Roberts et al. 2020).



However, there are limitations of this approach; answering questions at individual tables reduces the opportunities for other AMs to learn from the answers given. It also means that the expert witnesses were often repeating the same answers to several groups, which was perhaps not always an efficient use of the limited time available.

The Q&A sessions provided the speakers with the opportunity to reflect on how well the AMs understood the evidence provided. The researchers' fieldnotes recorded several occasions where the speakers commented on how well the AMs understood the content. In weekend 2, one speaker stated that they were 'amazed that Assembly Members really grasped and understood' the content. However, some witnesses did raise concerns about how well the AMs understood the 'clearly complex' evidence and considered that 'it could be worth allowing more time for questions.' The witnesses also reflected that the 'time to present a lot of information was very short ... assembly members received a lot of information to digest in a very short time.' Therefore, some respondents thought there should have been 'longer time for presenting than 10 minutes' and 'more time to ... run through slides.' On the other hand the longer the presentations, the harder it is to retain the attention of all of the AMs.

To provide useful and understandable information the speakers needed to be well prepared for the Q&A sessions. Responses to open questions in the witness survey indicate that they understood the importance of providing understandable and useable information to AMs.

One of the witnesses commented that 'my main focus was on making sure what I was saying was accessible and engaging for as broad an audience as possible.' This caused some concern for the witnesses; one was 'apprehensive about presenting my work in a jargon-free way.'

Generally, the researchers observed that the speakers engaged well with the AMs during the Q&A sessions. Several of the witnesses commented on how engaged the AMs were with the information provided, indicating that it was understood and useable. The experts considered that it was rewarding 'seeing how engaged the members were with the issues.' One of the expert witnesses recalled that: 'after the session, I was down in the foyer of the hotel and one of the assembly members approached me to say thank you for my presentation. He said that my speech was the one that hit home the most and my answers to the questions inspired him which was a really lovely end to the day.'

The researchers' fieldnotes recorded some occasions when speakers did not answer the questions well. In weekend 1, one speaker is asked: 'what do you mean by the State?' The speaker was caught off-guard by the question and offered quite a poor explanation. Another speaker in weekend 1 struggled to answer questions about how we can decarbonise and admitted she was 'really rambling.' But these were the exceptions.





5.4 Balance of the information provided

It is important for the legitimacy of CAUK that the information provided to the AMs was balanced. To achieve this CAUK included an advisory panel with a range of perspectives represented (see [here](#) for details of who was on the panel). At the CAUK business briefing a panel member, Tanisha Beebee from the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), stated that: ‘business groups were on the advisory group to ensure the information [provided to AMs] wasn’t biased.’

The AMs were provided with some information about climate change at the start of the process, but the primary focus of the information and evidence in CAUK was on methods of decarbonisation.

In the surveys after weekends 1, 2 and 3, the AMs were asked if they were provided with fair and balanced information

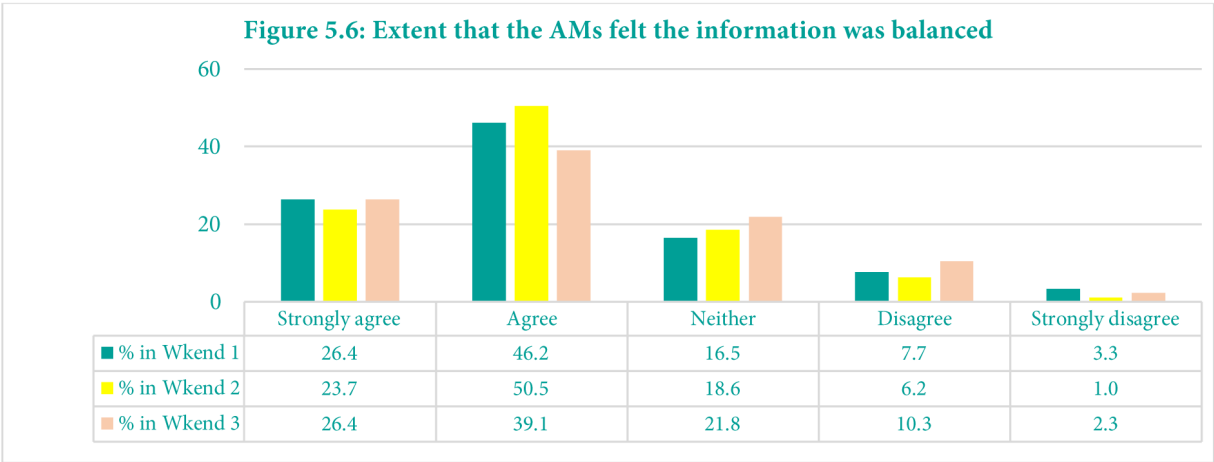


Figure 5.6 shows that most AMs (>65%) agreed, or strongly agreed, that the information was fair and balanced. Analysis shows that there are no statistically significant mean differences between the responses given after weekends 1 to 3, indicating this opinion did not change across these weekends.

The researchers’ fieldnotes recorded some of the concerns that AMs expressed about the balance of information provided.

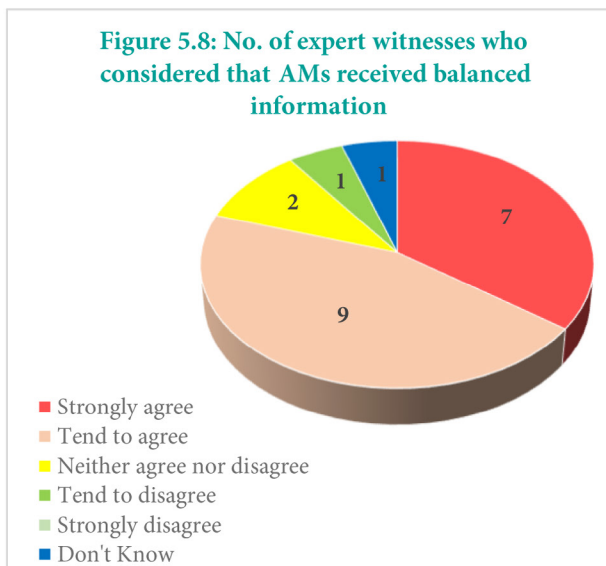
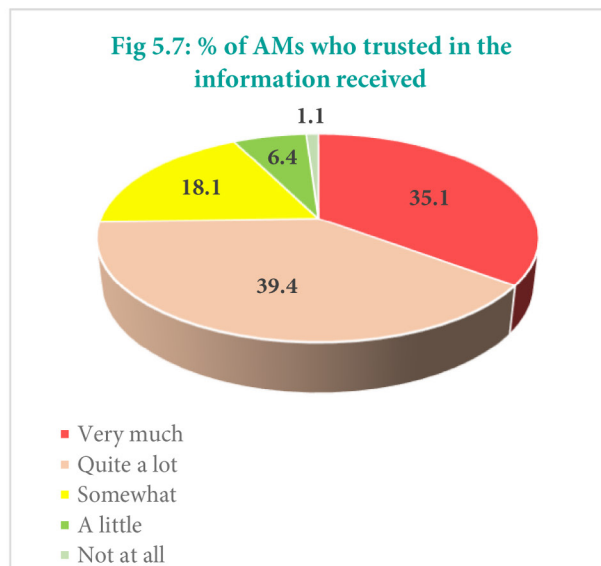
In weekend 2 some AMs felt the presentations were England-centric and in weekend 4b some felt ‘pushed towards’ Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS). During weekend 3, one AM was recorded stating: ‘I’m increasingly hearing from other people that we’re just being steered in directions with the information we’re being given.’ This comment certainly indicates there was some distrust among some of the AMs. This could, in part, be because some AMs were less concerned than others about climate change, yet it was beyond the remit of the



assembly to cover whether climate change was real and caused by human activity, as these are scientific questions. However, Figure 5.7 shows that by the beginning of the online weekends (weekend 4a), most AMs (74.5%) trusted the information they had received very much, or quite a lot.

The results of the survey of expert witnesses indicates that most (16 out of 20, or 80%) agreed, or strongly agreed, that from what they saw the AMs received balanced information (see Figure 5.8). This is supported by the witnesses responses to the open questions; one expert witness stated that they understood ‘the importance

of sharing balanced and accurate evidence and of providing balanced responses to questions, without giving personal opinions.’ However, some witnesses were critical of the balance of information provided. One of the two witnesses who neither agreed nor disagreed that the AMs received balanced information, complained that ‘some speakers did not constrain themselves to the boundaries set.’ The expert witnesses who disagreed that the AMs received balanced information commented that they were ‘being somewhat directed to present a particular view which was not one that I held.’



One expert witness recommended that future mini-publics should have ‘less emphasis on getting stakeholders with a specific interest/bias, and more time for disinterested input.’ Another noted that they had observed that ‘two advocates presented markedly differently. One was balanced support from an academic, the other was a sales pitch from a commercial player glossing over the challenges of their preferred solution.’ These comments might reflect a failure of some of the witnesses to distinguish between different witness roles.



It is quite common in mini-publics to have those who present scientific evidence do so ‘neutrally’ compared to advocates who outline particular positions. It very much depends on how contested the specific topic is in determining the type of witness required. Providing a range of positions are included, including advocates is considered good practice, especially if they appear in a panel together where their recommendations can be compared side by side (Roberts et al. 2020).

5.5 Conclusion

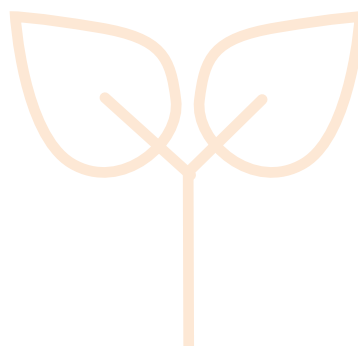
Overall, the evaluation indicates that the provision of evidence in CAUK provided crucial information to assist the AMs in devising ways the UK can decarbonise. According to the results of the surveys, most AMs thought they (themselves and the CA as a whole) were provided with enough information to complete the task.

There was a high volume of evidence presented, in a variety of formats, which was recapped, and which AMs could explore during Q&A sessions with the speakers with the support of the expert leads and a critical thinking session to help the AMs assess competing evidence. All these measures are seen as good practice in mini-publics (Roberts et al. 2020). However, the volume of information, pace of delivery, and use of jargon sometimes overwhelmed some of the AMs and left them feeling that some topics had not been given the detail needed. Nevertheless, AMs did ask relevant questions throughout the process.

Splitting the Assembly into topic groups on weekend 2 did, however, reduce the provision of information to individual AMs about the full scope of their remit. This inevitably compromised the ability of the assembly to co-ordinate their recommendations across these topics as AMs only had knowledge of the aspects relating to the thematic group they were part of.

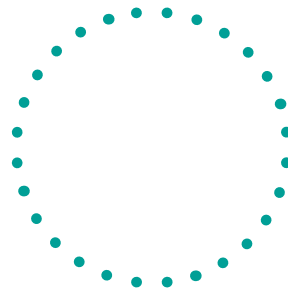
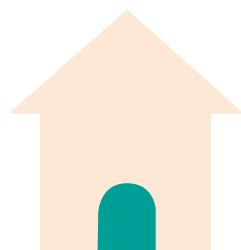
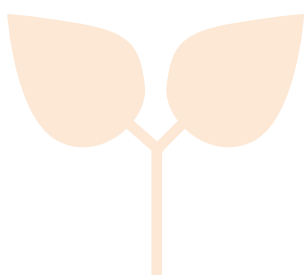
According to the results of the surveys, the overwhelming majority of AMs agreed that they understood and learnt a lot from the information provided. This was supported by several witnesses who commented that the AMs asked relevant, diverse, and informed questions and were engaged with the topic. This indicates that the information the AMs received was understandable and useable.

To ensure that a balance of information was provided, a range of views were represented on CAUK’s advisory panel which approved the witnesses for the assembly. According to the results of the surveys, most AMs agreed they had been given fair and balanced information. Most of the witnesses also thought that the AMs had been provided with balanced information. The expert witnesses mostly agreed that the organisers had prepared them well to provide sufficient, pertinent, and relevant information and evidence. They felt that they had received enough information beforehand about the process and their role in it and knew what was expected of them.



Evaluation of CAUK

Although some expert witnesses found their role of providing sufficient, pertinent, and relevant information challenging in the limited time available, they did, in the main, achieve this. Some of the witnesses also expressed concern about the time available for the AMs to receive and digest the volume and breadth of information about the complex topic. Some witnesses suggested that more time could have been given to the presentations and question-and-answer sessions. This could be due to a lack of prior experience of presenting to mini-publics where presentation times tend to be constricted.





6. Deliberation, Facilitation, and Decision-Making in CAUK

6.1. Introduction

A deliberative process is an inclusive one in which all participants can speak freely, justify their views, move beyond their own self-interest, listen to the views of others with an open mind and show respect for other participants and their opinions. In mini-publics, participant discussions are usually facilitated because these are a hard combination of norms to achieve in practice (Escobar 2019). The deliberation should then determine the decisions taken, which should also be an inclusive process. In this chapter we draw on our content analysis of the small group discussions, AM survey and interview data and non-participant observations to assess the quality of deliberation in CAUK, the contribution the facilitation made to this, and the decision-making process. We reflect on the extent to which the discussions focused on the issue, included demands on what should be done, and the extent these demands were justified and respected. We analyse how inclusive the process was, and the extent AMs were able to speak freely. Given previous research has highlighted the difference between online and in-person deliberation amongst citizens, we also compare the different modes of deliberation in CAUK (Grönlund et al. 2009).

6.2. Deliberation and Facilitation in CAUK

To encourage good deliberation in CAUK ‘conversation guidelines’ were developed and agreed with AMs in weekend 1, some of which were pre-determined. This is

common in mini-publics, although best practice is to start with a blank slate rather than a pre-determined list, thus allowing the participants to devise their own guidelines. The more the members feel the conversation guidelines come from them and have been determined by them, then the more likely they are to adhere to them, self-regulate their behaviour accordingly, and help the facilitator regulate the behaviour of the members (Elstubb et al. 2019). CAUK did not start with this blank slate approach; nevertheless, ‘guidelines’ were agreed, and it is important to examine whether key deliberative norms were present in the small group discussions.

Pertinence

Good deliberation requires a focused discussion, in this case on climate change and decarbonisation. Results from our content analysis of the small group discussions in Table 6.1 show that most member comments were pertinent (93%), indicating that facilitation, overall, kept the discussions to the topic. However, Table 6.2 shows there is a statistically significant difference between the in-person and online formats. The online weekend contained more pertinent AM discussion contributions (97.5%) than the in-person weekends (89.6%). This might not be due to any changes in facilitation, but rather because the AMs became increasingly focused on the topic the closer they got to the end of their task.



Table 6.1: Content analysis results for deliberation in CAUK small group discussions			
Criterion	% coded	Criterion	% coded
Speech act format		Level of generality	
Speech acts without demands	80.3	No argument	13.8
Speech acts with demands	19.7	Personal interest	7.9
		Specific group interest	14.8
		Interest of marginalised group	8.4
		General interest	55.2
Pertinence		Respect towards demands	
No	6.8	No respect	0.1
Yes	93.2	Neutral	81.4
		Explicit respect	18.5
Level of justification		Respect towards person	
No justification	13.9	No respect	0.4
Inferior justification	68.3	Neutral	79.6
Superior justification	17.8	Explicit respect	19.9

Demands

When people deliberate, they should make demands about what should be done, in this case how the UK could reach Net Zero carbon emissions. What is surprising is that, as shown in the ‘speech act format’ section of Table 6.1, only 20% of the AM discussion interventions across all the weekends included demands such as a call for action or a recommendation. There is little comparative data on this as most studies of deliberative quality in mini-publics that use content analysis only code speech acts with demands, but this does seem to be a low number. It could be due to session design as AMs were often asked to give positive and negative views on proposals, rather than necessarily offering their own proposals. Table 6.2 shows that there were less demands during the in-person debates (13.8%) than the online

debates (28.9%). Rather than this being due to the mode of participation, we expect it shows that as the AMs became closer to finalising their recommendations, they were more likely to make proposals. Indeed, the sessions may have been designed accordingly too.

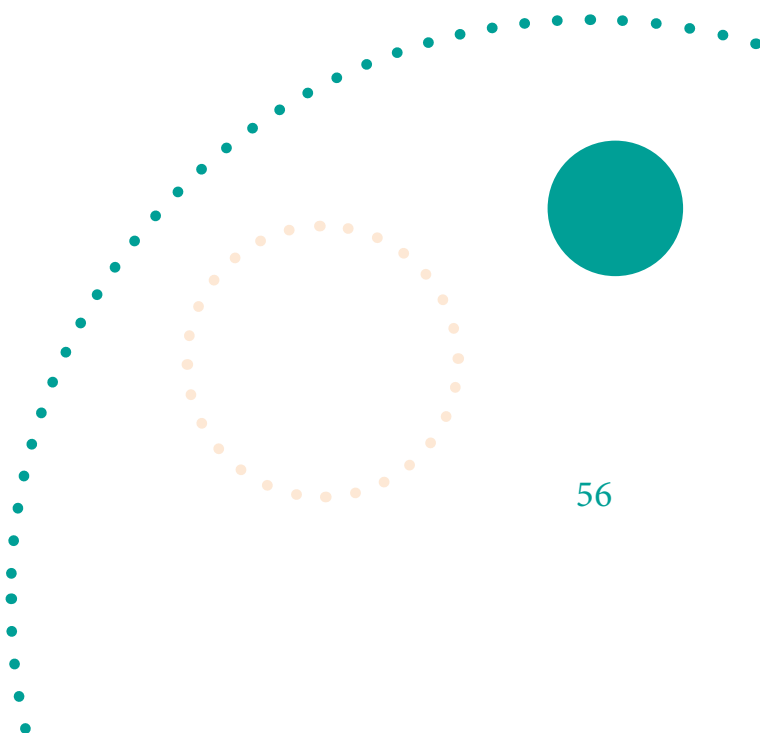




Table 6.2: Content analysis results for deliberation in CAUK small group discussions by format

Weekends Compared	Format		Significance	
	In person	Online		
Speech act format				
Speech acts without demands	86.2%	71.1%	X²=	33.371
Speech acts with demands	13.8%	28.9%	P	<0.001
Pertinence				
No	10.0%	2.5%	X²=	20.730
Yes	90.0%	97.5%	P	<0.001
Level of justification				
No justification	28.7%	4.4%	X²=	25.745
Inferior justification	50.0%	78.9%	P	<0.001
Superior justification	21.3%	16.7%		
Level of generality				
No argument	28.4%	4.4%	X²=	56.619
Personal interest	2.5%	9.6%	P	<0.001
Specific group interest	27.2%	7.0%		
Interest of marginalised group	13.6%	5.3%		
General interest	28.4%	73.7%		
Respect towards demands				
No respect	0.0%	0.3%	X²=	2.219
Neutral	83.0%	80.3%	P	0.330
Explicit respect	17.0%	19.4%		
Respect towards person				
No respect	0.4%	0.5%	X²=	2.629
Neutral	81.9%	77.6%	P	2.690
Explicit respect	17.7%	21.9%		

Justification

Quality deliberation requires people to justify their demands with reasons. Of those member contributions to discussions that did have demands, Table 6.1 shows that most (86%) were justified. However, the bulk of these justifications were ‘inferior’ (68%), where the justification provided is not concretely linked to the demand it is justifying. It is a common finding in mini-publics though that participants struggle to provide complete justifications of their demands (Elstub and Pomatto 2018). Take this quote from one of the discussions calling for the limiting of long-haul leisure travel: ‘Limiting long haul leisure or at least ensuring it is offset in some way seems an important thing to do. Innovation work being carried out by Rolls Royce seems important’ (Weekend 2 AM comment including a demand with an inferior justification).

There were, however, ‘superior’ justifications, where the demand and justification were linked a good proportion of the time (23.1%). For example, this demand for the use of forests to capture carbon dioxide: ‘Definitely positive. The only negative is that it won’t cover the whole taking carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere but I think the more natural approach that we do, nature first approach, the better really. As long as it’s not impacting land use too much and it’s done with consideration to the wildlife and the land and using up, as much as possible, land that isn’t good for crops. If it’s carefully managed, definitely to the max we could use this please’ (Weekend 4b AM comment including a demand with a superior justification).

Analysis in Table 6.2 shows that there is a statistically significant difference between the in-person and online formats. In-person weekends contained more AM discussion contributions with no justification: 28.7% compared to 4.4% during online weekends. Again, rather than this being a feature of online deliberation we attribute it to the fact that by the end of the process the AMs had further developed their deliberation skills. But only to a degree as, conversely, in-person weekends were more likely to have ‘superior justifications’ - 23.1% compared to 16.7% during online weekends. However, this smaller difference could be due to a dynamic of the particular

group that was analysed, rather than a more widespread difference between formats. Regardless, the difference does not appear to relate to the facilitation as facilitators were slightly less likely to ask a member to justify their demand in the online discussions (27.8%) than in in-person ones (31.4%), as shown in the ‘Argumentation’ section in Table 6.4. Moreover, Figure 6.1 below shows the inverse relationship between justifications given and facilitator requests for a justification. This could mean that the more facilitators asked for justification the less they got them or the poorer the quality of them; although, it is just as likely that the causal relationship works the other way - the less AMs justify their demands, the more likely facilitators are to request justification. The researchers’ observation diaries noted many examples of facilitators asking AMs to justify their demands. For example, at weekend 3 in the travel group, a Table Facilitator asked members to justify their suggestions. This then stimulated a heated but quality discussion on this table on whether the UK should bother decarbonising if other countries are not.

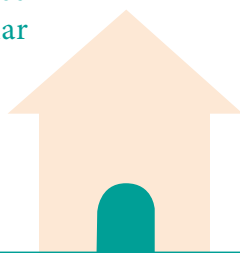
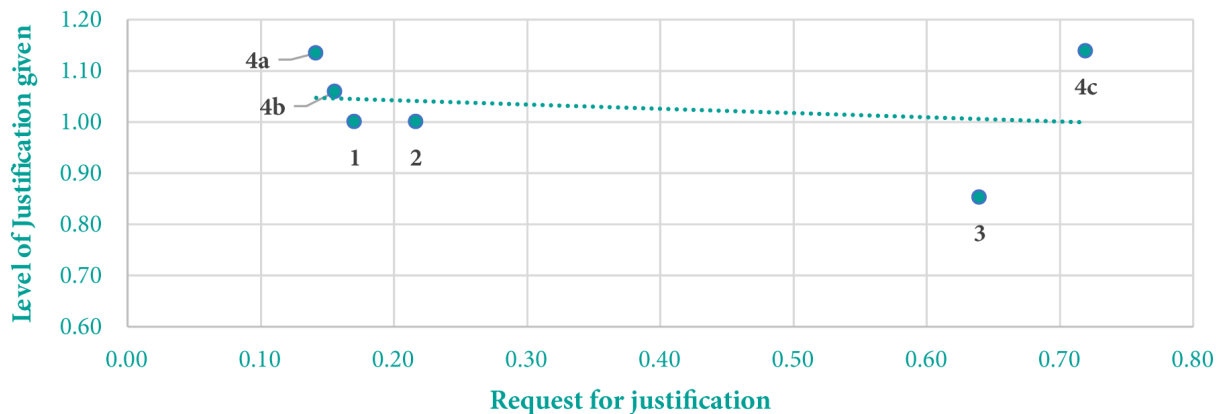




Figure 6.1: Correlation between level of justification and Facilitator request for justification



The observation data do indicate, however, that there could have been more encouragement of AMs to justify their demands through process design. There was, at times, a lack of opportunities for the AMs to provide justification for their proposals and what they voted for. For example, at weekend 3, there was no opportunity for the AMs to hear the justifications for the proposed considerations that came from other tables. At the same weekend there was a secret ballot, where each AM ranked the three future scenario options. AMs could add reasons for their vote on the ballot paper if they wanted but were not required to. Moreover, it meant there was no opportunity for these reasons to be added to the ballot paper to persuade other AMs, as they were casting their votes at the same time.

Not only does good deliberation involve justifying ones demands; the justifications should be based on the common good or the interests of marginalised groups, rather than self-interest. As can be seen from the

‘level of generality’ section in Table 6.1, when members did justify their demands the justifications were primarily focused on the common good (55%). However, the data in Table 6.2 show a significant difference between format, with 73.7% of demands being justified by appeals to the common good in the online weekends compared to 28.4% in the in-person discussions. Take, for example, this quote from one of the discussions: ‘I’m not expecting everyone to immediately get hydrogen boilers and have hybrid cars but I mean just things like making possibly clothing prices slightly more expensive so fashion is more sustainable or maybe reducing meat intake or possibly even ... a lot of these countries are going to be under water so possibly having insulation in your house and maybe paying a little bit extra so that all the houses are insulated, things like that. I’m not talking drastic changes. I’m just saying small things in your day to day life...’ (Weekend 1 AM comment including a demand justified on the common good).



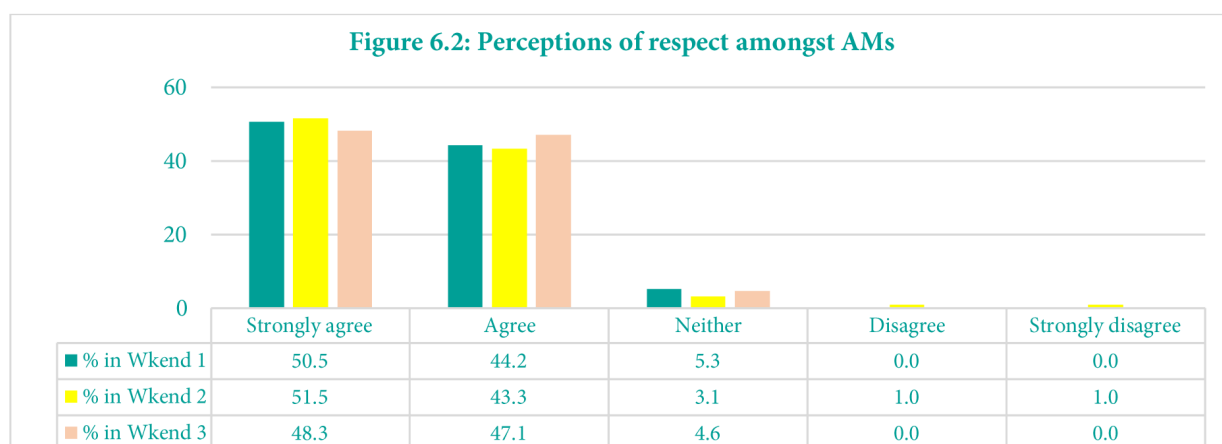
There is no reason why AMs would focus on the common good more when deliberating online rather than in-person, so it is likely to show that the members became better at deliberation as the CAUK process progressed. Overall, the demands made were justified, and the AMs became better at providing reasons as the process progressed.

Respect

Deliberation should be respectful. Table 6.1 shows that most AM discussion contributions were ‘neutral’ in terms of respect towards demands of other AMs (82%) and towards each other (Respect

Towards Persons 79.6%). This means that they contained no statements that explicitly showed respect nor that explicitly showed disrespect. However, explicit respect towards each other’s demands (18.5%) and each other (19.9%) did occur frequently. There was hardly any disrespect.

In the member survey almost all AMs agreed, or strongly agreed, that they were respected by other AMs during weekends 1, 2, and 3 as can be seen in Figure 6.2. There are no statistically significant mean differences in the responses between the weekends.



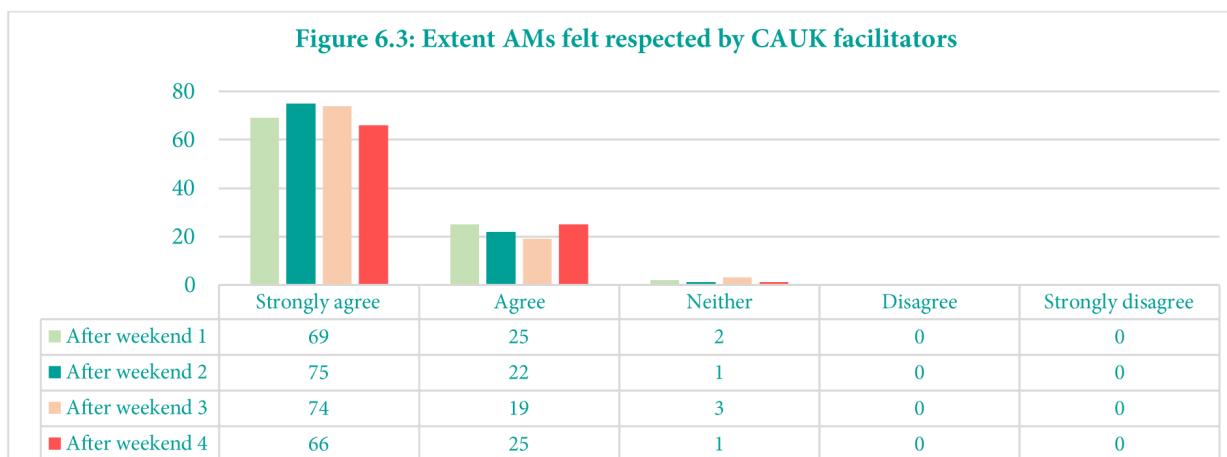
Moreover, there are no statistically significant relationships between age, gender, education, ethnicity, rural/urban residence, or group and how much the AMs felt they were respected by other AMs in weekends 1, 2, and 3.

Evidence from the member interviews indicates that facilitators were credited with ‘setting a tone’ for the discussion. A few participants noted that the creation and frequent repetition of the ground rules for discussion helped to set this tone of civility and respect. This was thought by some participants to be effective in allowing for respectful disagreement on contentious issues.



A few also noted that the opportunity for respectful engagement was distinct from much of the conversation on controversial topics that takes place outside of a facilitated environment: ‘It was a pleasant surprise actually how well it was run and actually there were people from all walks of life, someone that if you met them in the pub you might end up having a heated

discussion with or an argument. That didn’t happen. The tone by the organisers was set in such a way that I sat next to people whose opinions I disagreed with enormously and yet we didn’t fall out, we didn’t have arguments. We found a way to communicate and that was amazing.’ Almost all AMs felt respected by the facilitator in each weekend as shown in Figure 6.3.

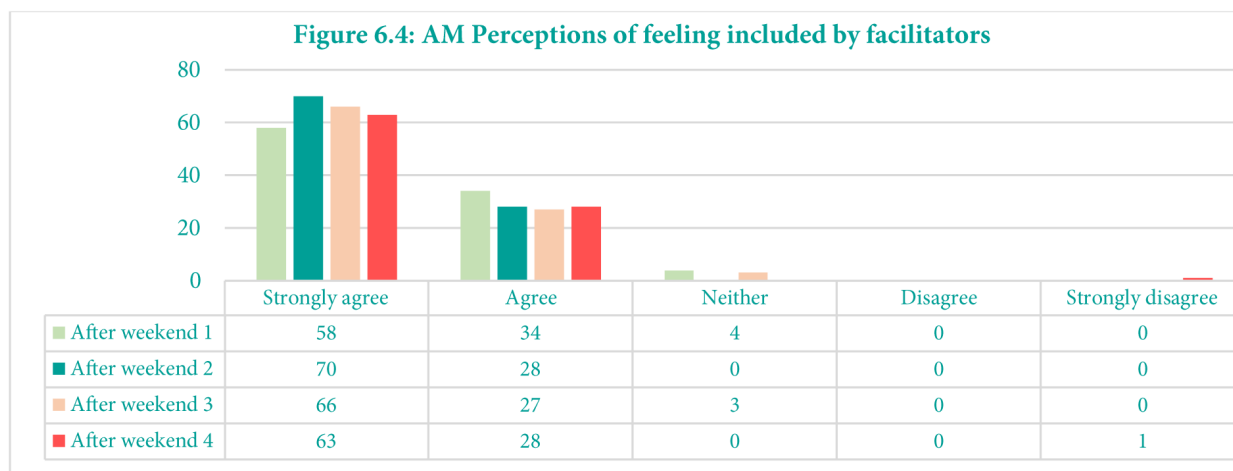
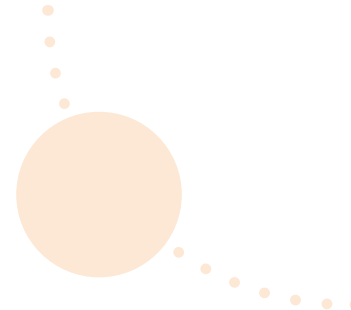


There is a statistically significant relationship between gender and how much the AMs felt they were respected by the facilitator at the end of weekend 3; more females than males strongly agreed they felt respected by the table facilitators. There is a statistically significant relationship between topic group and how much the AMs felt they were respected by the facilitator in the final survey (end of online weekends); more of the AMs in the ‘travel’ and ‘in the home’ groups (83% and 77% respectively) strongly agreed that they were respected by their table facilitators, whilst in the ‘what we buy’ group 55% strongly agreed, and the rest agreed.

Overall, it is clear a very respectful environment was created throughout CAUK.

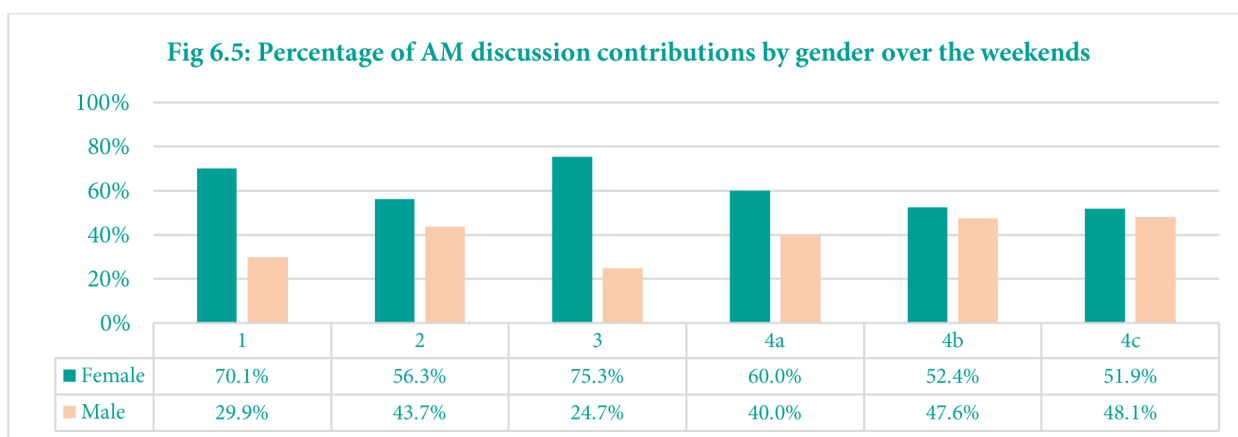
Inclusion

If a deliberative process is to be democratic then all participants must be included in the discussion. One of the key functions of facilitation in mini-publics is to remove the power inequalities that usually prevent this from happening in unfacilitated political debates (Escobar 2019). As shown in Figure 6.4, almost all AMs agreed that they felt included by the facilitators during each weekend.

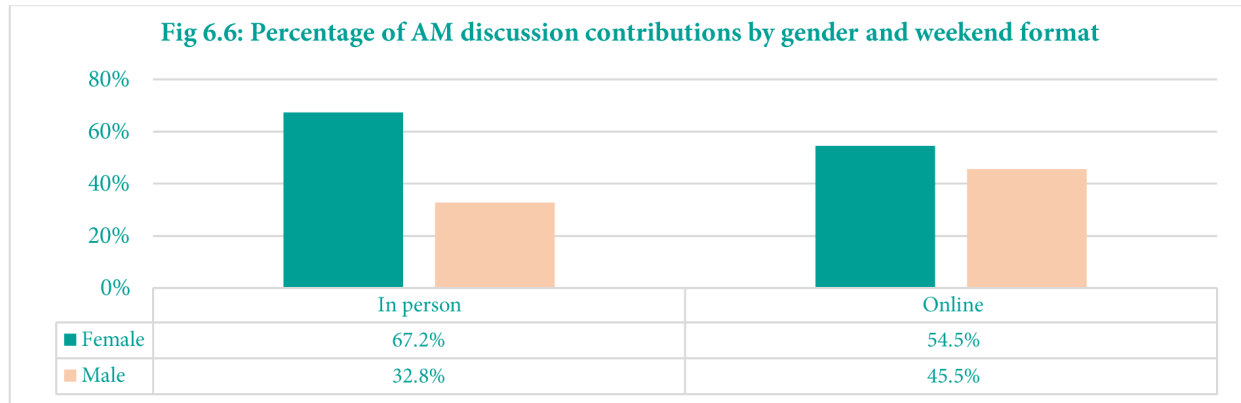


Furthermore, there are no statistically significant relationships between age, gender, education, ethnicity, rural/urban residence, or group, and how much the AMs felt they were included by the facilitator.

Previous studies of mini-publics have found that women are not always equally included in the discussions (Gerber et al. 2019). To assess if the assembly members' gender affected their inclusion, the number and length of the AM contributions to the small group discussion were analysed by gender. Figure 6.5 below shows that during each weekend, female AMs actually spoke more often (52% to 75% of the time) than male AMs (25% to 48% of the time).



However, analysis of AM gender and weekend format shows that the proportion of discussion contributions by male AMs increased from 32% during the in-person weekends (1, 2, and 3) to 46% during the online weekends (4a, 4b, and 4c), as shown in Figure 6.6.



Although female AMs spoke more often in each weekend, the data show that male AMs spoke for longer. Over the whole process, the average length of speech acts by a male AM was 211 words, compared to an average of 156 words for female AMs. Analysis indicates that there is a statistically significant (<1%) difference between the mean length of the speech act for each gender. Taken together this indicates the discussions were inclusive, at least with respect to gender.

The facilitation contributed to this as facilitators invited assembly members to speak 76% of the times that they intervened in the discussions as shown in Table 6.3. Indeed, Table 6.4 shows that facilitators were considerably more likely to invite AMs to speak in the online discussions. This might relate to different styles of the facilitators, but could also explain why we saw the gender balance improve as the process unfolded. It is also likely that many AMs were less used to online discussions than in-person ones, so perhaps needed to be encouraged to contribute more by the facilitators.

Table 6.3: Results of the content analysis of facilitator contributions to CAUK small group discussions			
Criterion	% coded	Criterion	% coded
New Idea or interpretation		Invite to speak	
Introduces a new idea	11.8	Does not invite to speak	24.1
Does not introduce a new idea	88.2	Invites to speak	75.9
Argumentation		Taking a position	
Does not ask for justification	70.9	Takes a position	6.6
Asks for justification	29.1	Does not take a position	93.4

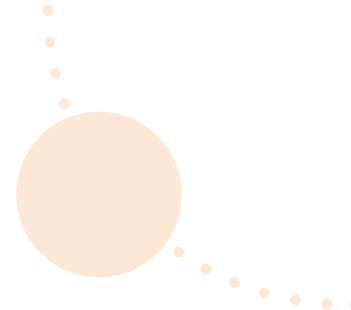
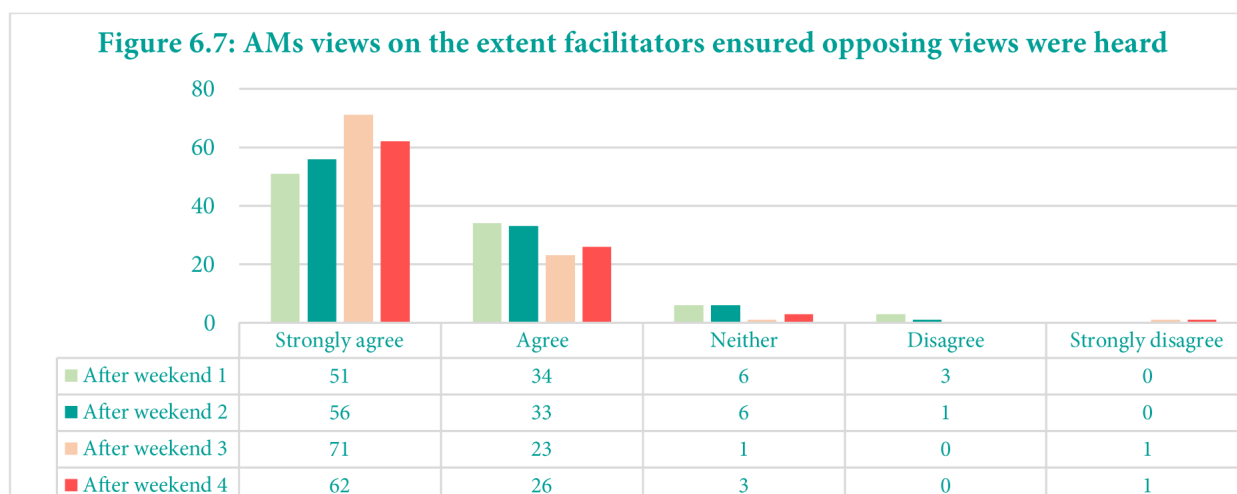


Table 6.4: Results of the content analysis of facilitator contributions to CAUK small group discussions by format

Weekends Compared	Format		Significance	
	In person	Online		
New Idea or interpretation				
Introduces a new idea	14.8%	10.1%	X ² =	2.986
Does not introduce a new idea	85.2%	89.9%	p	0.084
Argumentation				
Does not ask for justification	68.6%	72.2%	X ² =	0.866
Asks for justification	31.4%	27.8%	p	0.352
Invite to speak				
Does not invite to speak	41.3%	14.4%	X ² =	56.1
Invites to speak	58.7%	85.6%	p	<0.001
Taking a position				
Takes a position	13.0%	3.0%	X ² =	22.857
Does not take a position	87.0%	97.0%	p	<0.001

Another important aspect of inclusion in deliberation is the extent different views about climate change and decarbonisation were included. Indeed, this is part of the logic behind the approach to recruitment that mini-publics employ (Elstubb 2014; Curato et al. 2021). However, achieving this balance often requires good facilitation (Escobar 2019). Almost all AMs felt the facilitators ensured that opposed views were heard in each weekend as can be seen in Figure 6.7.



There is a statistically significant relationship with the topic groups and how much the AMs felt the facilitator ensured opposing views were heard at the end of weekend 2. More of the AMs in the 'travel' group (78%) strongly agreed that the facilitator ensured opposing views were heard than in the 'what we buy' and 'in the home' group, where 44% and 52%



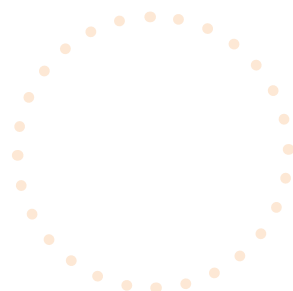
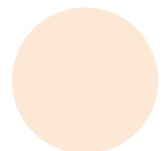
respectively strongly agreed. There are no other statistically significant relationships between age, gender, education, ethnicity, rural/urban residence, or group, and how much the AMs felt the facilitator ensured opposing views were heard.

The researchers observed lots of cases of excellent facilitation to ensure an inclusive discussion. For example, in weekend 2 the researcher noted that the facilitators actively gave everyone on their tables opportunity to speak. However, perhaps inevitably, there were times when facilitators did not intervene to manage dominant voices in their groups and where individuals in the group had side discussions and were not encouraged to participate in the group discussion. The researcher observations noted that sometimes the AMs discussed the priorities in pairs rather than with the whole group, which has mixed benefits for inclusion. This can enable quieter members to have the confidence to contribute more but can also reduce their opportunity to hear a range of views, with the risk of inequalities appearing if these discussions are not facilitated. Sometimes the researchers noted that the small table-groups were split into two sub-groups to discuss separate options, however, these subgroup discussions were not facilitated, which allowed some AMs to dominate. As one of the CAUK organisers explains 'you might tend to have to some more dominant participants or people who have hearing problems, there's different dynamics on each table and facilitators will judge the best way to do tasks for those participants to allow everyone to participate at their table and to make it a really good

experience and to get to the output' (Interview, CAUK Organiser).

Nevertheless, it is a facilitation technique that can work well. In weekend 3, AMs were asked to pick their favourite 'considerations' on a topic from a list. The researcher noted that the AMs started by discussing the list in pairs, agreeing a few considerations before opening these up to table discussion. The facilitator made sure the pairs were mixed up during the session which seemed like a good approach to ensure exposure to different views.

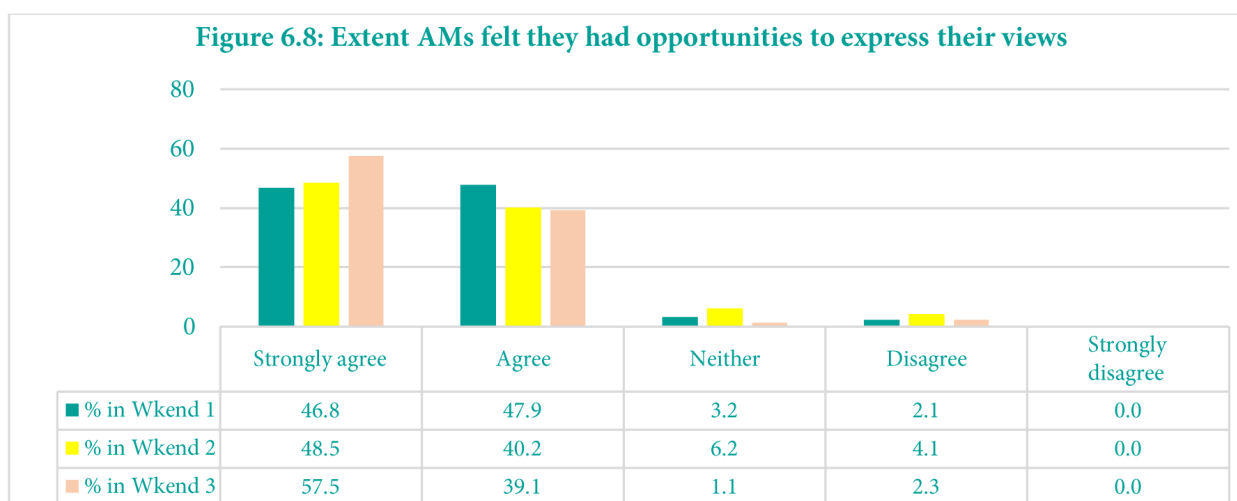
Both comments from the members in the open text part of the survey and observations from the researchers indicate that inclusion might have been affected by the length and busyness of each day, with some tasks even being completed over dinner in the evening. Example remarks from the members include: 'Saturday was a drag', 'long hours in one room', 'the constant rushing of speakers', 'intensity', 'Saturday was a long day and I got very tired and lost concentration towards the end', 'the short timescale ... I think more time was needed', and 'it felt rushed at times.' Overall though the evidence suggests that the CAUK was inclusive and well-facilitated.





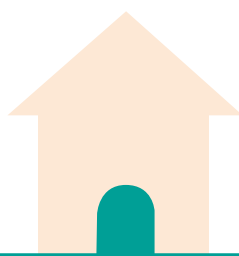
Freedom of Speech

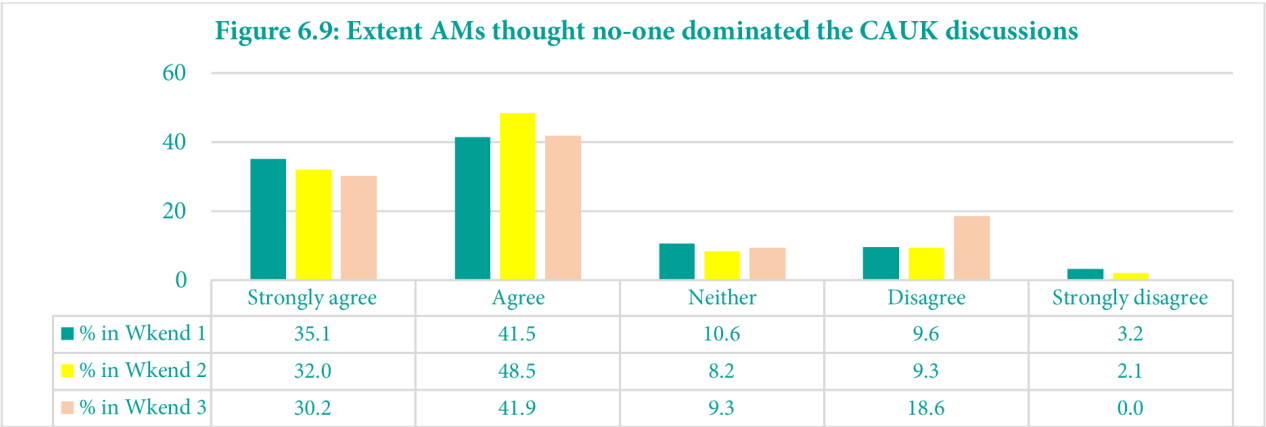
A deliberative norm strongly related to inclusion is freedom of speech. When deliberating it is important that participants feel they can express their views. After weekends 1, 2, and 3, the AMs were asked about their experiences in the group discussions. As can be seen in Figure 6.8 almost all the AMs agreed, or strongly agreed, that they were given sufficient opportunities to express their views.



There are no statistically significant relationships between age, gender, education, ethnicity, rural/urban residence, or group and how much the AMs felt they had opportunities to express their views. Neither is there a statistically significant correlation between views on climate change and how much the AMs changed how they felt about whether they had opportunity to express their views.

After weekends 1, 2, and 3, the AMs were asked if they agreed that some AMs dominated the discussions. Most AMs agreed, or strongly agreed, in both weekends that they did not, as shown in Figure 6.9.





There are no statistically significant relationships between age, gender, education, ethnicity, rural/urban residence, or group and if the AMs felt that no-one dominated the discussions in weekends 1, 2, and 3.

In the AM interviews the natural tendency for some people to speak more than others in conversations was acknowledged but the facilitation team were credited with managing these dynamics well throughout the assembly discussions by the AMs. Many noted that these typical discussion-participation patterns did not occur in the small group discussions. Interestingly, AMs who identified themselves as quiet or talkative expressed appreciation for the work of the facilitators in ensuring people had a chance to speak if they wanted to

and ensuring people were heard: ‘The facilitators are so good at moving the conversation on to other people that I never felt that my views weren’t heard, and I’m not a particularly loud person so it was, yes, for me to feel that, I think they’ve done really well.’

Neither did it seem that the facilitators had an undue influence on the discussions. Almost all AMs strongly disagreed that the facilitators tried to influence the discussion each weekend as can be seen in Figure 6.10. There are no statistically significant relationships between age, gender, education, ethnicity, rural/urban residence, or group, and how much the AMs felt the facilitator tried to influence the discussion.

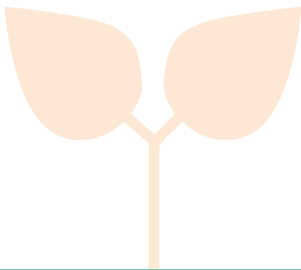
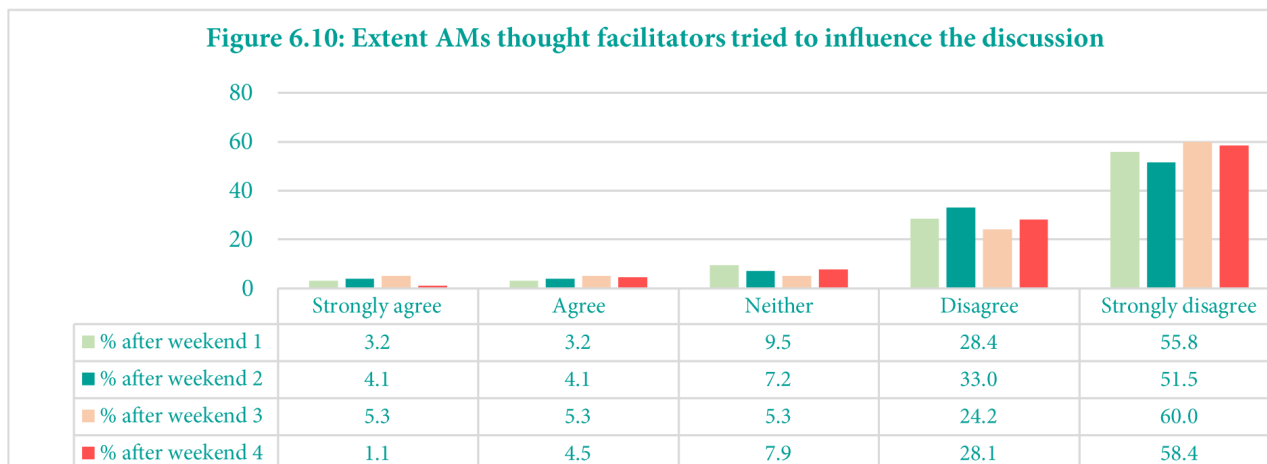




Figure 6.10: Extent AMs thought facilitators tried to influence the discussion



The views of the AMs on the facilitation is supported by the results from the content analysis of the small group discussion. The results show that the facilitators remained neutral through the process, with little attempt to lead the discussion in a particular direction. In Table 6.4 we can see that only on 6.6% of occasions did facilitators take a position and only in 11.8% of their discussion contributions did they offer a new idea or interpretation that had not been suggested by an AM.

The researchers also observed facilitators emphasising that their role was neutral and stating that they could not provide information or opinion but could raise questions with the expert speakers. For example, in weekend 4b a facilitator was observed emphasising to their group that they are not the experts and that questions about the content should not be directed at them, emphasising their neutral role.

Overall then the AMs felt freedom to speak and the facilitators remained neutral on the issues being discussed.

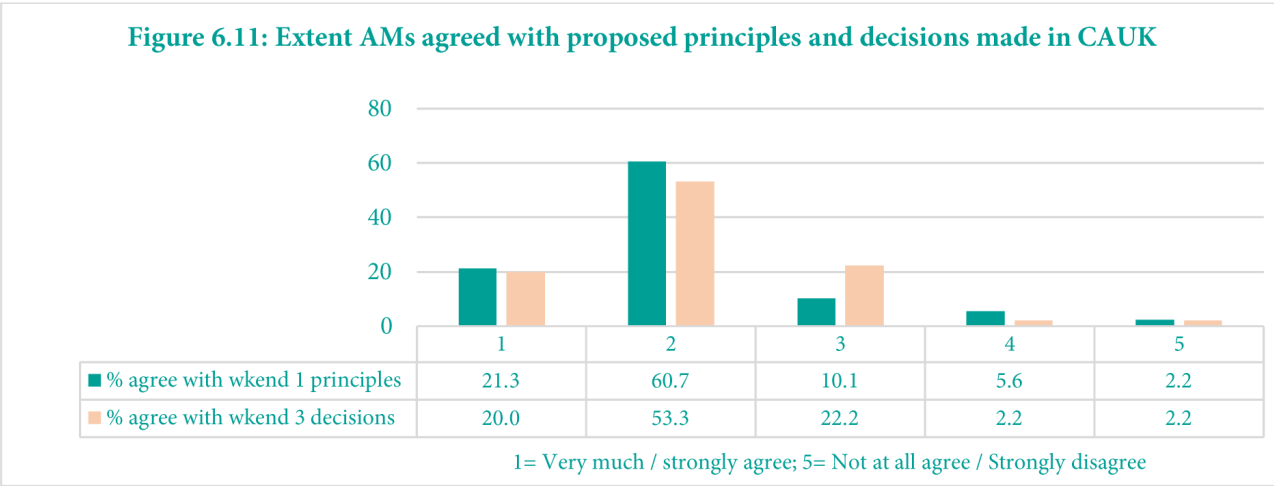
6.3. Decision-Making in CAUK

After deliberation, decisions need to be made. The AMs were required to agree on a set of principles that should guide the path to net-zero and more specific recommendations that would help the UK reach this target by 2050 at the latest. The decision-making process should allow all AMs to contribute to forming these principles and recommendations. The AMs should also agree with the decision-making process and have the opportunity to influence it.

The AMs were given some opportunities to shape the course of CAUK. In weekend 3, AMs got to discuss if there was anything else on the topic of decarbonisation that they would like to tell government and Parliament. There was also a board where members could log issues that they think should be considered but that were not on the agenda. The COVID 19 recovery and the Path to Net Zero topics that were covered in the assembly came from AM suggestions.



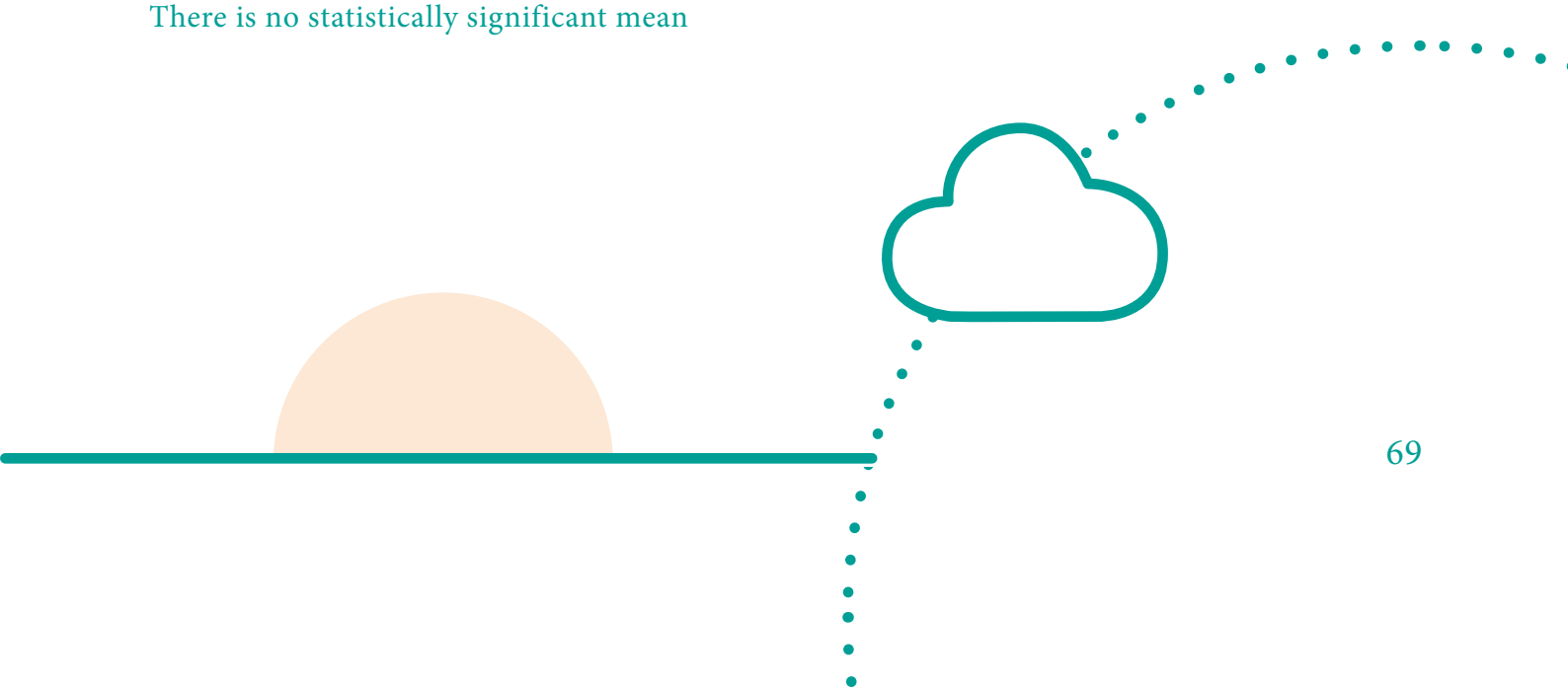
The results of the member survey suggest that most of the AMs agreed with the principles and decisions made in weekends 1 and 3, as can be seen in Figure 6.11.

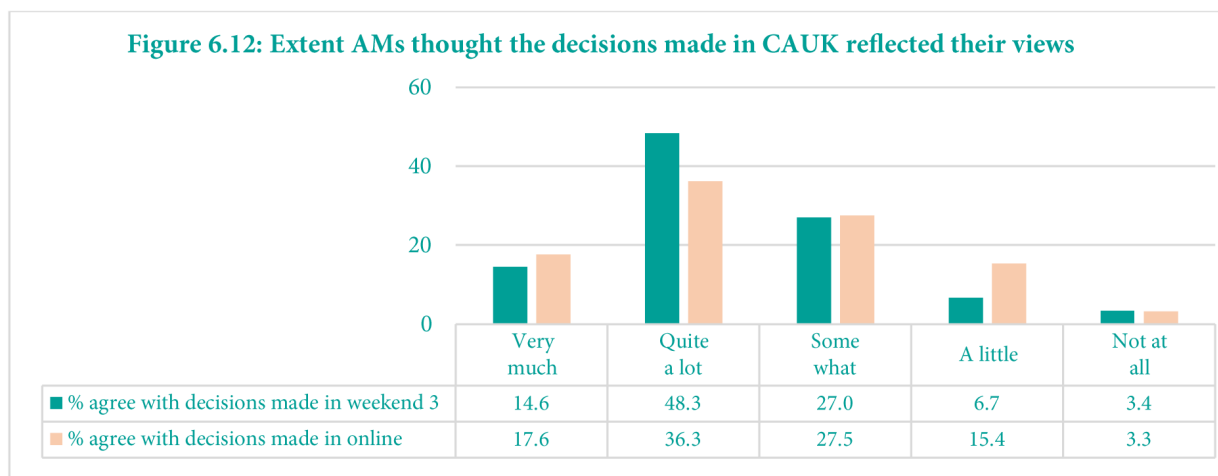


There are no statistically significant relationships between gender, age, education, ethnicity, rural/urban residence, or group, and how much the AMs agreed with the principles/decisions made in weekends 1 and 3.

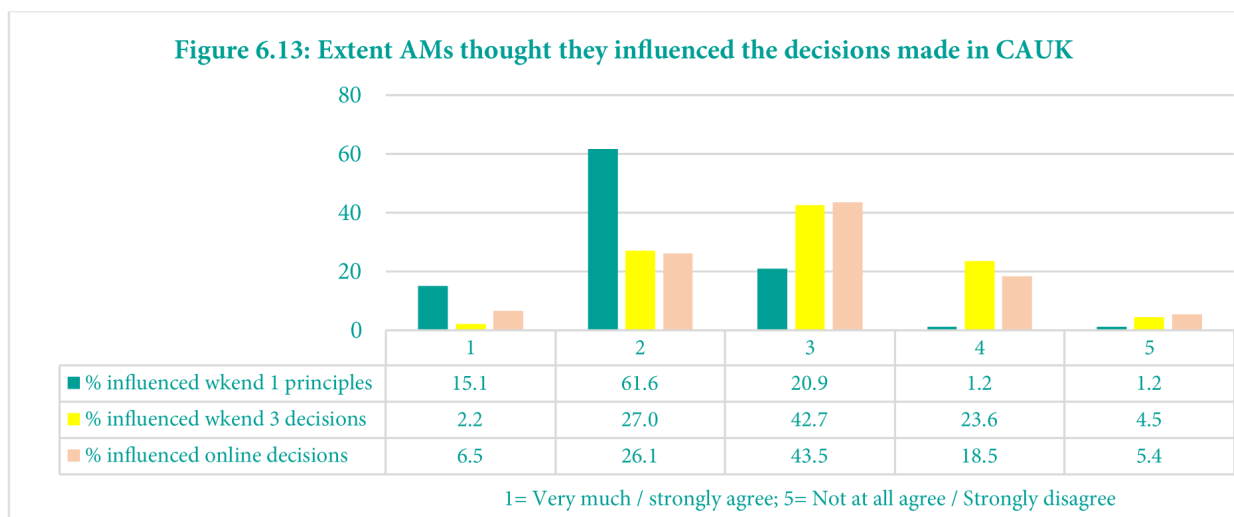
Most AMs felt that the decisions made in weekend 3 and the online weekends (4a, 4b, and 4c) reflected their views very much, or somewhat, as can be seen in Figure 6.12. There is no statistically significant mean

difference in how much AMs agreed the decisions made in weekends 3 and online reflected their views. There are no statistically significant relationships between gender, age, education, ethnicity, rural/urban residence, or group, and how much the AMs agreed that the principles/decisions made in weekends 3 and 4 reflected their views.





Most AMs agreed, or strongly agreed, that they influenced decisions made in weekend 1, and most thought they had influenced the decisions made on weekend 3 and the online weekends (4a, 4b, and 4c) quite a lot, or somewhat, as can be seen in Figure 6.13.



There are no statistically significant relationships between gender, age, ethnicity, or rural/urban residence, and how much the AMs agreed that they had influenced the principles/decisions made in weekends 1, 3 and 4 (online). There is a statistically significant relationship between education and the extent the AMs in each group felt they had influenced the principles in weekend 1. Almost all the AMs with education of level 4 and above (93%) strongly agreed or agreed they had influenced the principles, whereas a relatively high proportion of those with level 1 education (22%) and level 2 or 3 education (37%) neither agreed nor disagreed that they had influenced the principles.

Evaluation of CAUK

There is also a statistically significant relationship between the extent the AMs in each topic group felt they had influenced the decisions made in weekends 4a, b, c. Most (88%) of AMs in the ‘what we buy’ group agreed ‘quite a lot’ or ‘somewhat’ that they influenced the decisions made online, whereas in the ‘travel’ group the distribution was more even across the categories. Comparatively, a large proportion of the AMs (35%) in the ‘in the home’ group only agreed a little that they had influenced the decisions made online as shown in Figure 6.14. It is not clear why as each thematic group was engaged in a very similar process.

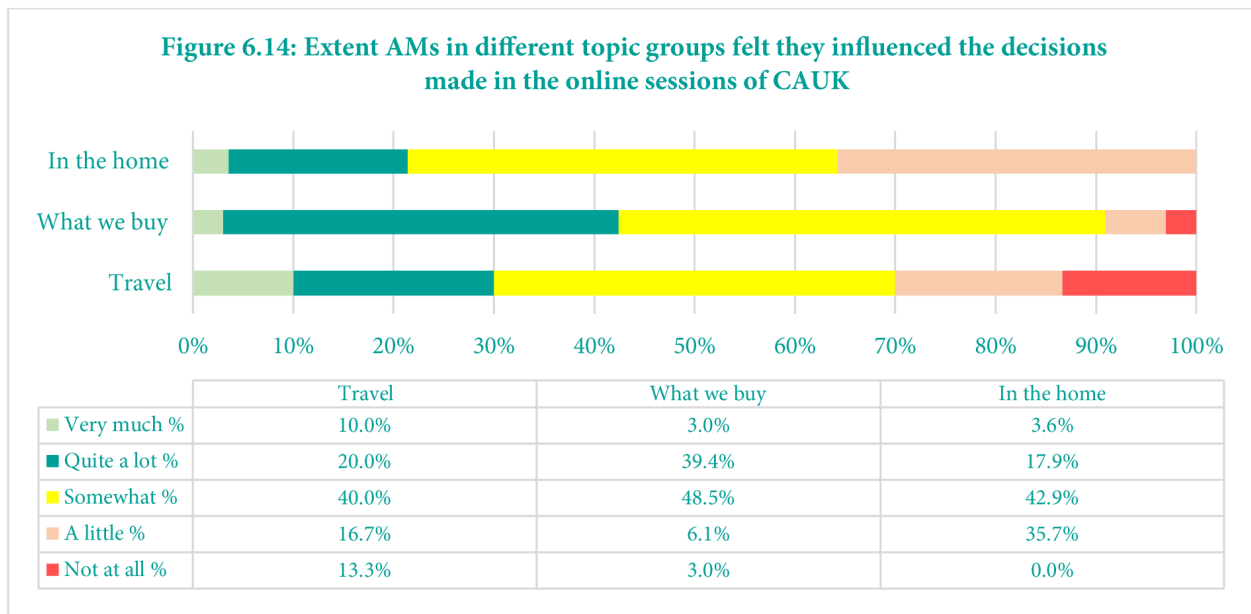
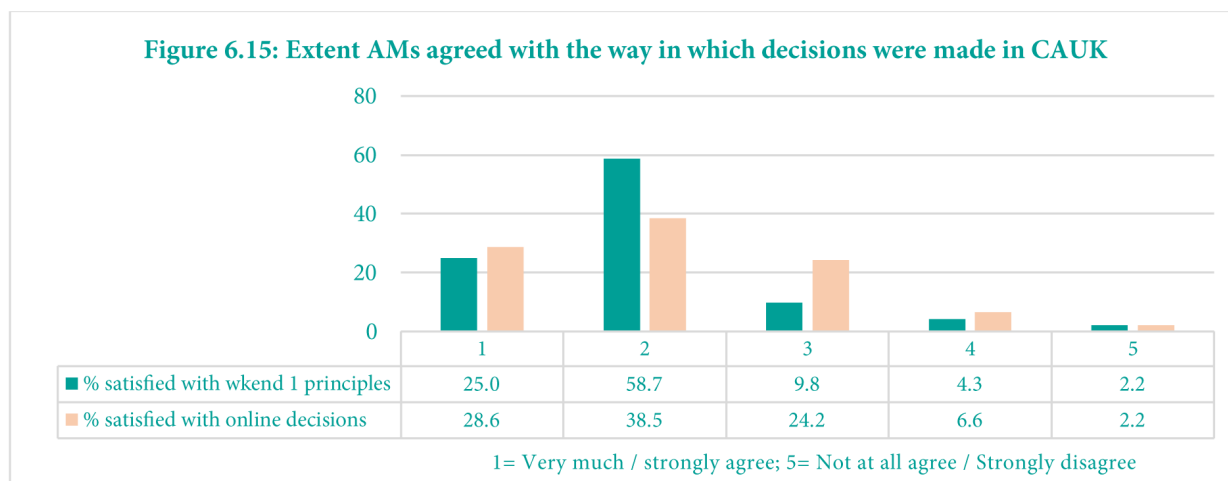


Figure 6.15 highlights that most of the AMs agreed, or strongly agreed, that they were satisfied with the way the principles in weekend 1 were agreed, and most agreed very much, or quite a lot, with the way the decisions were made online. There was no statistically significant mean difference between the two sets of responses.





There are no statistically significant relationships between gender, age, group, education, ethnicity, or rural/urban residence, and how satisfied the AMs were with the way the principles were agreed in weekend 1 and decisions were made online.

These positive findings from the member surveys are further supported by the member interviews. In the interviews AMs were asked if they were happy with the process by which the recommendations were reached during the assembly. They were also asked if they felt they had an influence over the recommendations. AMs who were satisfied with the process indicated that they felt the process was democratic and allowed members to have their voices heard. AMs expressed appreciation for the fact that their words were written down by the facilitators during the drafting process. Some also appreciated the ability to rank multiple choices when expressing their preferences. A few AMs remarked on the opportunity to offer feedback on a draft report as another aspect of the recommendation drafting process that allowed them to express their preferences. As one AM commented: 'Yes. It seemed really fair. And they wrote down literally everything that we said. So, nothing got missed and yes ... Especially when you see the interim report that was published a couple of days ago and one of my quotes is on there. So, you're like, Oh. Yes, it's cool. Bit weird but cool.'

Many AMs expressed satisfaction with the amount of influence they had over the recommendations process. Some participants noted that even in cases where their specific ideas were not reflected in the final report they felt they had an influence, both by virtue of their participation in the assembly and through the opportunity to share their perspectives while the recommendations were being drafted.

Not all the AMs were happy with the decision-making process though. AMs indicated a preference for continued discussion as opposed to voting, feeling rushed, and a concern that not everyone in the room knew what they were voting for. Another AM noted that they were confused when they returned for week 3; specifically, they reported that they were being asked to vote on items while unclear on the items' origins. Some 'scenarios' were provided by the expert leads for the AMs to vote on: e.g. for 'what we buy' AMs were presented with three possible futures, offering different emphases on efficiency, repairing and sharing, and using less stuff. Some AMs were unhappy that the expert leads had proposed the 'Future Scenarios' rather than the AMs: 'I lost my way completely between week 2 and week 3. When we came back to week 3 we were going down paths that I had not consciously or subconsciously or to my awareness of anybody I spoke to about it had actually structured where the paths in week 3 had come from. We arrived at week 3 and were suddenly presented with alternatives that I personally didn't buy into because I hadn't been party to how we got there.'



I was having a little bit off difficulty if you like accepting that I was going to roll with it from then on. I feel that that was a major, from my point of view, purely personal, a major oversight in where we left week 2 and the information that we'd concluded and generated to how the experts had achieved the conclusions of where we were going in week 3 ... to the point where on the first vote that we did, which was to be opened in the House of Commons, I refused to participate because I didn't own them, I didn't own what was being asked of me.'

In commenting on the division of the members into topic groups, some AMs raised issues with the final recommendations, noting that they were not given adequate opportunity to participate in the production of recommendations by topic groups to which they were not assigned. Some felt that the process of reporting the work of the topic groups was not sufficient for members to provide an informed vote. One participant raised the issue of the recommendations being presented to the public as reflecting his perspective when he had not participated in the deliberation and drafting of recommendations of the two other issue areas: 'Again when it says the Climate Assembly supports this decision, I've not had any information about what to do in the home. I've not had any information to do with the farming or anything like that. Even though we got that information afterwards, it was always the stuff that had already been agreed rather than the information that led to that decision, do you know what I mean?' In the open text comments on the member survey,

complaints about being split into topic groups were frequent, such as 'Not being involved in the other two discussions' and 'Missing the other topics.' Overall, many members suggested the process was too short: 'Ideally the assembly should have been more than four weekends to discuss further options and more proposals.'

The researchers observing the process noted issues with the decision-making process with a concern that splitting the assembly into topic groups would prevent sufficient co-ordination of recommendations across these topics. On the Friday evening of weekend 3, each topic group discussed what the other topic groups covering this issue should consider when agreeing recommendations, but this was perhaps an insufficient co-ordination process across topic groups. Indeed, one of the main reasons why AMs from one topic group did not vote on recommendations developed by the other topic groups was because it was thought they did not know enough about these topics: 'we just felt that the people who looked at it in detail ... would potentially have gone on quite a journey of learning and changing their opinions and learning from each other, and then if you put it back to a vote of everybody who hadn't had the same information without having a chance to bring them up to speed on the evidence, what were you gaining from that if you're looking for an informed output?' (Interview, CAUK Organiser).



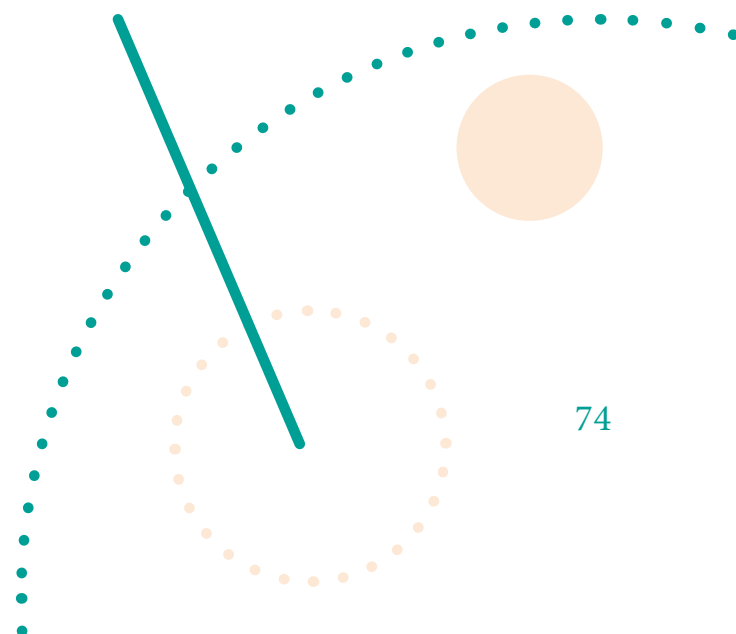
Relatedly, the results of the voting were not always revealed during the weekends in which they were cast (because of the need for parliamentary officials to supervise the counts). As a result, the AMs did not know what decisions they had made and they went on to make further decisions over that weekend, without knowing what they had already agreed to. This reduced the opportunity for co-ordinating and harmonising their recommendations. In weekend 1, AMs voted on the principles without any discussion of the principles that came from other tables. Some of the voting results were revealed as they were cast, potentially influencing later voters. For example, at weekend 3, the AMs used stickers to choose their four favourite considerations from a list of fifteen choices stuck to the wall. The AMs that voted later did so knowing what the most popular options were, as due to lack of space it was not possible for everyone to vote at the same time.

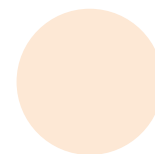
Overall, the decision-making process was fair and democratic, and most AMs were happy with the decisions made and the process used to make them. However, there were some limitations to the extent the decisions could be co-ordinated and harmonised, and the work of the different topic groups were perhaps not sufficiently integrated.

6.4 Conclusion

CAs are designed to promote deliberative norms and democratic decision-making. Members' discussions are facilitated to help ensure this. The deliberative quality of most of the CAUK discussions was very good. They were very focused on the topic. Although demands were made fairly infrequently by AMs, when they were made, they were primarily justified with reasons, and focused mainly on the common good. The discussions were also very respectful and inclusive and the AMs were free to speak. There is a good deal of evidence that the facilitation in CAUK contributed to the deliberative quality. The facilitators also remained neutral on the climate change and decarbonisation issue.

The decision-making process was also fair and democratic with AMs agreeing with the decisions made and the process for making them. However, more opportunities to co-ordinate recommendations for decarbonisation could have been provided, especially across the topic groups. This, however, would have been challenging in the time available.





7. Impact of CAUK Participation on the Assembly Members

7.1 Introduction

Members in mini-publics engage in a unique and demanding form of political participation. Previous studies of deliberative mini-publics have demonstrated that participation in mini-publics has specific impacts on participants (Nabatchi 2010). In particular, some evidence suggests that participants gain more confidence in their ability to understand and participate in politics (Gastil and Dillard 1999) and in their ability to influence political processes (Geissel and Hess 2017). Evidence from a Canadian case study suggests that AMs become more interested in politics following their participation (Fournier et al. 2011). Other studies indicate that participation in a mini-public can contribute to changes in participants' level of knowledge on the issue being discussed (Setälä et al., 2010) and the experience of participating can lead to opinion change (Fishkin 2009). Some scholars suggest the need for a more nuanced examination of these impacts that accounts for both how and why these impacts are present (Pincock et al. 2012).

This chapter examines the impacts of participation in CAUK on the AMs across three key indicators. The chapter discusses the impact of participation on members' knowledge about climate change (section 7.2), the members' opinions about their task and how these evolve throughout the assembly (section 7.3), and their perspectives on political and civic

engagement (section 7.4), examining how these have been influenced by their participation in the assembly. This assessment is based on data collected from the AM surveys, researcher observations, and interviews with AMs that took place after the assembly.

7.2 Impacts on Assembly Members' knowledge

Given the role of AMs in providing guidance on climate policy, it is important that they demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the task at hand. Norms of mini-public design require that participants be drawn from a wide cross-section of the population and this often includes members with very little knowledge on the topic. For this reason, it is important to examine the extent to which the AMs acquired knowledge about climate change throughout the process.

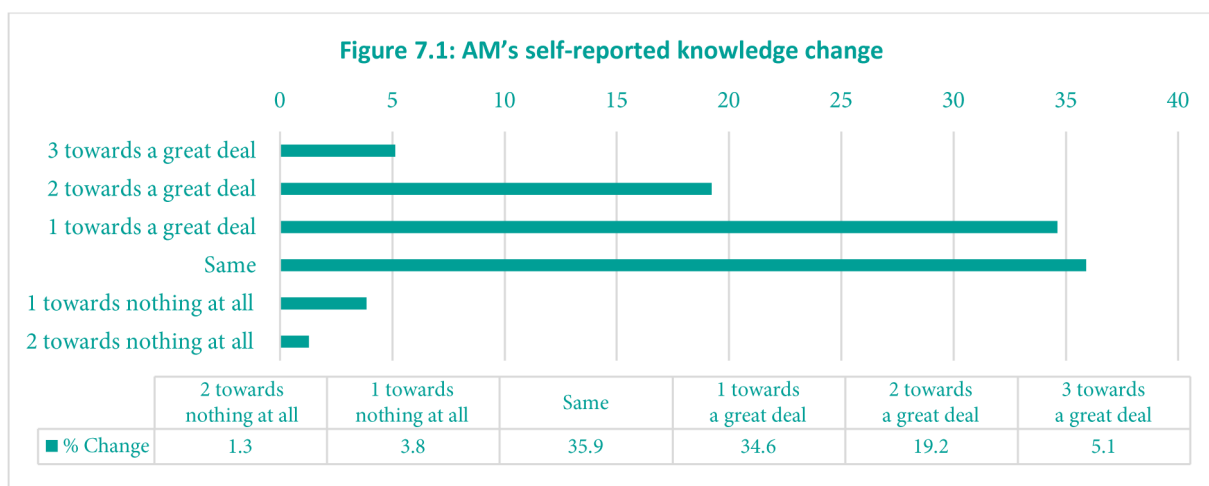
To assess the impacts of participating in the assembly on AMs' knowledge about climate change and Net Zero, the survey asked AMs to report their level of knowledge about climate change. The answers were provided on a five-point scale from 'nothing at all' (5) to 'a great deal' (1). This self-reporting was done at the beginning of the first weekend and at the end of each subsequent weekend.





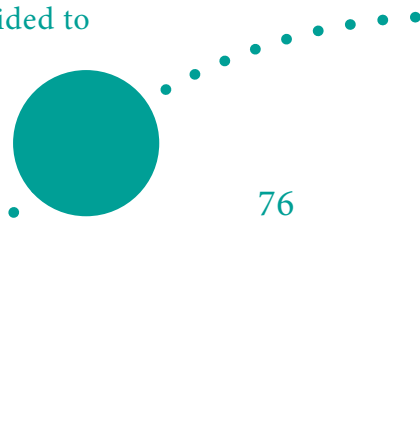
The knowledge of most AMs about climate change increased over the course of the assembly: 46 respondents (59%) indicated that they knew more about climate change on the last survey at the end of the assembly compared with their level of knowledge at the start of the assembly. Figure 7.1 shows the direction and extent of changes in AMs' self-reported knowledge over the course of the assembly. The vertical axis labels show the number of levels and direction by which members changed their self-reported knowledge.

The bars indicate the number of AMs who changed their self-reported knowledge by that many levels. To illustrate, the top bar shows that four members indicated that their knowledge increased by 3 levels. As an example, an AM who indicated that their knowledge was at a level 5 in the first survey and level 2 in the final survey would be included in the count of members who moved '3 towards a great deal.'



There is also a statistically significant difference between the mean knowledge reported on the first and final surveys; the mean on the first Friday was 3.3 on the 5-point scale (where 1 = a great deal and 5 = nothing at all), compared with 2.46 on the last survey, suggesting AMs (on average) felt that their knowledge of climate change increased over the course of the assembly.

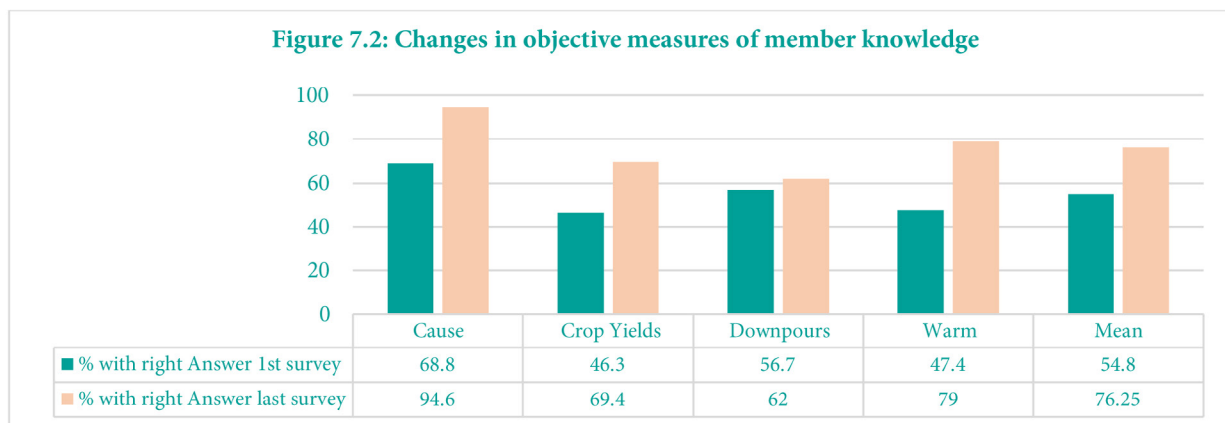
However, there are limitations to subjective assessments of knowledge gains by the AMs. Therefore, to further understand AMs knowledge about climate change and decarbonisation, AMs were asked four true or false questions related to climate change to objectively measure knowledge. The following questions were selected from information provided to AMs in the first weekend of the assembly:





- A. The main cause of increasing levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is the burning of fossil fuels
- B. Overall food crop yields will increase due to climate change
- C. Climate change reduces the frequency of heavy downpours
- D. The planet will continue to warm until we reach net zero emissions

Figure 7.2 shows that the proportion of correct answers to these questions increased between the first and last surveys, indicating that AMs knowledge increased over the course of the assembly.



Taken together, the data from the self-report and objective knowledge questions demonstrate that participating in the assembly increased the AMs' knowledge about climate change and decarbonisation. This suggests that the extensive learning opportunities built into the assembly's design were effective in fostering learning.

7.3 Impacts on Assembly Members' opinions

The task of the assembly was to make recommendations on how the UK can achieve Net Zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. This section draws on data from surveys and interviews with the AMs and examines how and why the AMs

perspectives on this task changed throughout the course of the assembly.

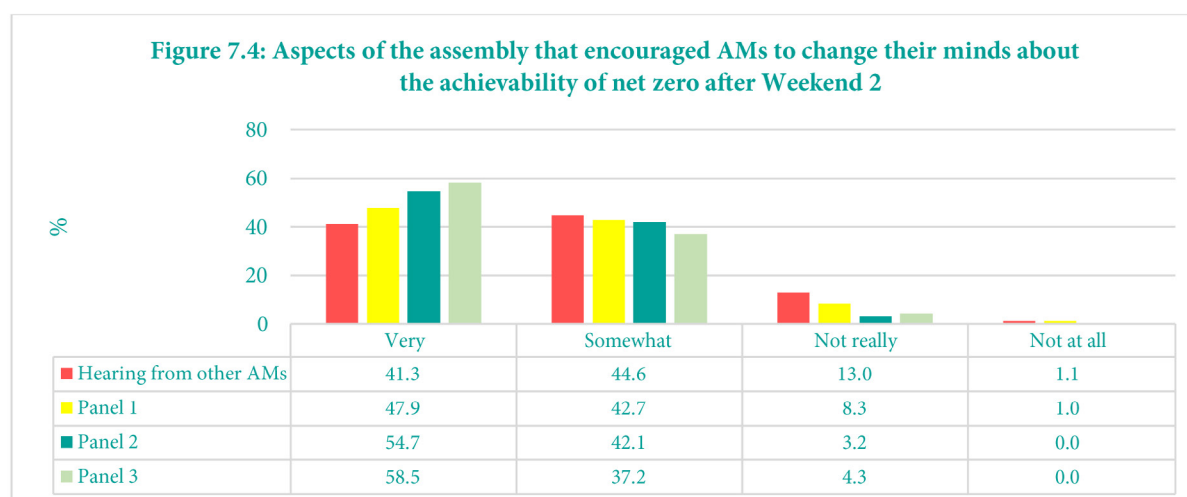
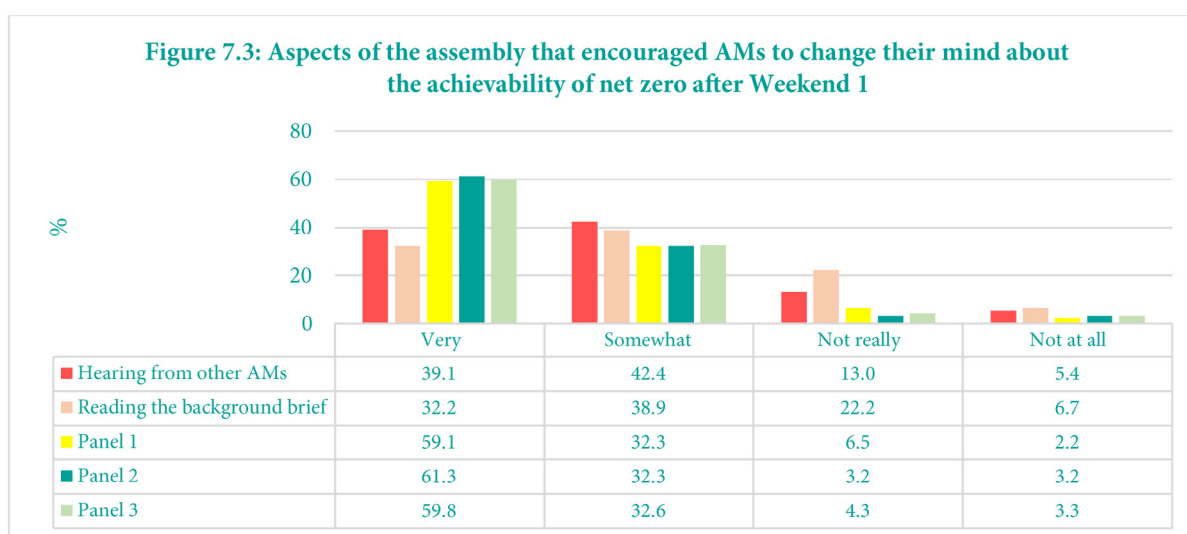
To understand how their perspectives evolved throughout the process, AMs were asked how achievable they thought the set target of reaching Net Zero emissions by 2050 was. AMs provided their assessments on a scale from 1 (easily achievable) to 7 (difficult to achieve). This question was asked at the beginning of the assembly and on all subsequent member surveys. There is a statistically significant mean difference between the first survey completed on weekend 1 and the last survey, with the mean response moving towards easily achievable (from 5.45 to 4.17).



In addition, 72% of AMs changed their ranking of the task's achievability by moving towards thinking that Net Zero is easily achievable by 2050, as opposed to moving toward thinking that Net Zero is not achievable by 2050.

To further understand the changes in AMs' perspectives, they were asked about which

aspects of the assembly process contributed to their opinion shifts. Specifically, after weekends 1 and 2, they were asked to comment on the extent to which hearing from other AMs, reading the background briefing material, and listening to the expert panels influenced their perspectives on the task at hand.



Figures 7.3 and 7.4 indicate that on both weekends the expert panels were slightly more influential in contributing to members' changes in perspective than hearing from other AMs. That said, most AMs did indicate that hearing from others influenced their thinking either 'very much' or 'somewhat.'

Taken together, these results suggest that both hearing from other AMs and the expert panels were influential in the evolution of AMs' perspectives on the set task.

In interviews, AMs referred to the value of learning from others throughout the process. Interviewees expressed appreciation for hearing other AMs' perspectives on climate change, their professional expertise, or their lived experiences. Interviewees remarked on the uniqueness of the opportunity to interact with, and learn from, different people and better understand how their perspectives, and those of the other AMs, are structured by their lived experience. One AM noted: "having heard ... and then being able to discuss with all these different people I think that helps as well. Maybe you didn't think about something because it's not directly related to your personal life, then you just wouldn't think of it, but hearing if there are people who already work in industry, it's what their concerns are and how they're different to yours."

This suggests that the AMs really valued the opportunity to hear from different types of people and those they would not normally get to discuss issues like decarbonisation with.

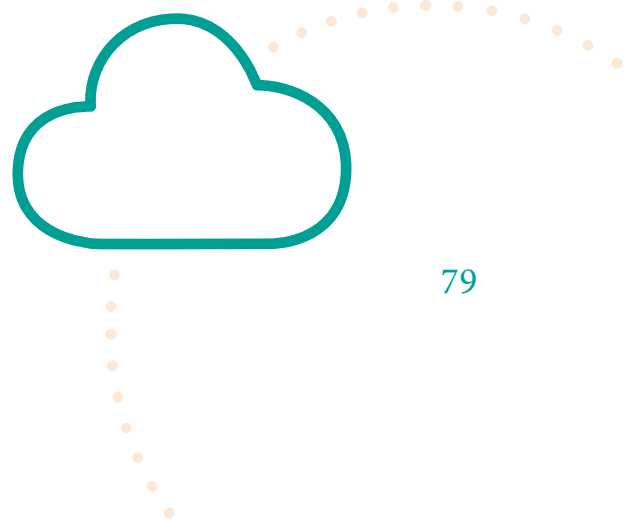
7.4 Assembly Member attitudes on civic and political participation

As noted above, mini-publics are associated with increases in internal and external political efficacy among participants. Internal efficacy is the belief that one has the capacity to engage with and understand

politics. External efficacy refers to beliefs about the responsiveness of politicians and political institutions.

To assess AMs internal efficacy and their level of comfort with deliberating, members were asked a series of questions at the beginning and end of the assembly. The questions were repeated to assess changes throughout the assembly. The questions asked AMs to indicate their level of agreement with the following statements on a five-point scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree:

- felt their views were as valid as other peoples'
- enjoyed participating in discussions and debates
- were comfortable challenging someone else's opinion
- were nervous speaking in front of a group
- knew enough to participate in politics
- think that people like them can participate in politics
- think that participants of CAUK can participate in politics



Evaluation of CAUK

There was no statistically significant mean difference found in AMs' perspectives on the validity of their views relative to others, their ability to participate in politics, and the ability of other AMs to participate in politics between the two time points. While there were some small shifts between the start and end of the assembly toward a more positive appraisal of their skills and the skills of their fellow members, none of these were statistically significant.

There was a statistically significant mean difference between the two time points for questions that asked about AMs' comfort with the skills and capacities that were central to the experience of being a member in CAUK. After CAUK, AMs were more likely to report that they enjoyed participating in discussions and debates, they were comfortable challenging someone else's opinion, and they were also less likely to report being nervous to speak in front of a group. AMs developed confidence in these specific skills and capacities throughout the course of the assembly. This supports evidence presented in Chapter 6 which suggested that the AMs got better at deliberating as the CAUK process developed.

In addition, AMs were more likely to agree that they knew enough to participate in politics at the end of the assembly. This is perhaps unsurprising given the self-report and objective knowledge gain data explored in section 7.2.

To assess members' external political efficacy, AMs were asked to what extent they:

- Have a say about what the UK parliament does
- Think the UK political system works well.

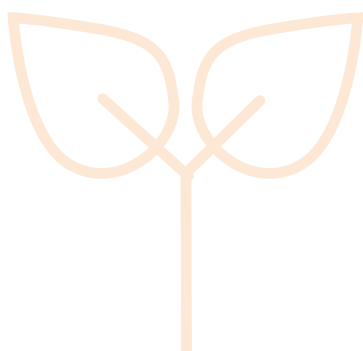
There were statistically significant mean differences between the responses to the first survey and the final survey for both external efficacy questions listed above, indicating that AMs' external political efficacy increased throughout the course of the assembly.

To further understand the development of political efficacy, in their interviews AMs were asked about their attitudes toward politics and their habits of political participation. Among those who indicated that their attitudes toward politics had changed, a few key themes emerged. Many referred to an increased understanding of how decisions are made and reported taking a more critical stance in consuming political news. Others referred to doing more research on their own political views. Some noted that the assembly experience introduced them to the options available to them to get engaged in politics. Two AMs offered concrete reasons as to why they felt their understanding of politics had changed. One noted that the opportunity to discuss the issues and be involved in group decision-making had increased their confidence in sharing their perspective.



Another noted that the presence of an MP during the assembly and the presentations about the role of the select committees also helped in the development of greater understanding of politics: ‘I’m more interested in it because now I’ve experienced ... what it’s like to sit down in a large room and have a discussion and use these big fancy words. So, it’s kind of opened my eyes a bit to how one person’s opinion can sway a group of people’s [opinions]. So, I am definitely more interested in voicing my opinion and more confident in being able to voice my opinion.’

It therefore seems that participating in CAUK made the AMs feel more comfortable with the process of deliberating, but also have a greater appetite for understanding and engaging with politics more broadly. Some members stated an important caveat to the development of their interest in further political engagement, noting that this interest would be influenced by the extent to which CAUK’s recommendations were taken seriously by the select committees.



7.5 Conclusion

Participating in CAUK had an impact on the AMs in three key ways. Firstly, they became more knowledgeable on the issues of climate change and reaching Net Zero. The acquisition of this knowledge was demonstrated in answers to both the self-report questions and the objective knowledge questions contained in the AM surveys. Secondly, their opinions on the achievability of the Net Zero target in the next 30 years evolved over the course of CAUK. AMs felt the target was more achievable by the end of CAUK than they did at the beginning, with the majority of this opinion shift occurring after the first weekend. The survey data indicate that hearing from other AMs and the expert panels were both influential in this opinion shift; the expert panels were reportedly slightly more influential. Thirdly, AMs reported increased confidence in the attitudes necessary for participation: an enjoyment of engaging in debate and discussion with others, comfort with challenging others’ opinions, and comfort with speaking in front of a group. AMs were also more likely to agree that they had the knowledge necessary to participate in politics. By the end of CAUK, more AMs indicated that they thought the UK political system works well and more indicated that they thought they had a say in what the UK Parliament does compared with the beginning of CAUK.



8. CAUK Impact on Parliament and Policy

8.1. Introduction

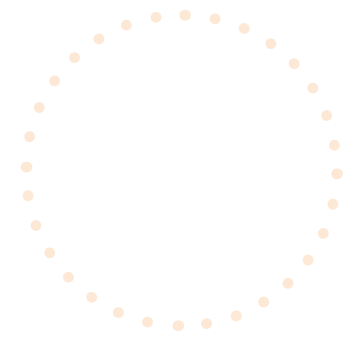
It is reasonable to expect that a CA should have impact: it costs money to run; the AMs are giving up their valuable time, as are the organisers; it attracts the attention of media, vested interests, and other outside observers. There is good reason to argue that if a CA is to have legitimacy it should be impactful (Curato et al. 2021). But measuring this is not straightforward: the commissioning body may be slow to react – kicking controversial recommendations into the long grass in the hope they may be forgotten; a slow reaction could also be due to other causes, such as the inherent time required to formulate work programmes or a lack of prior agreement on how to deal with the output of a CA. Even where it appears that the commissioning body has followed some of a CA's recommendations, it may claim (perhaps with reason) that it was already inclined in that direction.

In this instance, the fact that the commissioning body comprised six select committees of the House of Commons (rather than the UK government) adds an additional layer of complexity: it was not just the parliamentary committees that needed to be persuaded of the merits of CAUK's recommendations; government ministers needed to as well in order to influence UK climate policy. The timing of the general election, in December 2019, also complicated matters: the balance of power in Parliament (and between Parliament and Government) shifted; this was reflected in a high level of turnover in membership and

Chair positions of the parliamentary committees, which could have implications for the mood music on the Net Zero agenda, and ownership of CAUK, in at least some of the committees.

The evidence used in this chapter to assess the impact of CAUK is drawn primarily from a series of interviews with committee Chairs and Clerks and central government civil servants with portfolios relevant to CAUK agenda. The interviews were carried out between mid-September and mid-November 2020. We start, in section 8.2, by examining the views of our interview subjects about CAUK and its recommendations. We then assess how the CAUK report was received and dealt with by the select committees (section 8.3), and the degree to which it was coherently linked to Parliament (section 8.4). Section 8.5 considers lessons for further democratic innovation. We conclude in section 8.6.





8.2. The views of committee members' and staff about the CAUK and its recommendations

There were views about CAUK both as a process and in terms of its outputs. We can take each in turn. Most of the Clerks (senior committee staff members) had attended some of the sessions of CAUK (or at least had one of their colleagues attend on their behalf), but only a few of the Chairs, in part due to the disruption of plans as a result of the onset of the pandemic, but also because of the general election as the assembly had started before the new committee Chairs were in place. One Chair who had not attended regretted the lack of regular updates as the work of the CAUK proceeded, noting that 'there wasn't an information feed coming through to me in terms of what was going on'. But of those who had attended, the view was that it was a well-run 'slick' process. There were references to 'the engagement in the room', to the discussions that were 'respectful and constructive', to the inspiration of seeing 'people [who] were taking it so seriously and had a sense of duty'.

There appeared to be a general awareness of, and satisfaction with, the process, though one of the new Chairs did require some reassurance about the random-selection method used to pick the AMs. There were concerns raised about the decision to divide the AMs into three separate thematic groups for part of the deliberations. As previously mentioned, this decision was made partly for logistical reasons. There was a limited budget and limited time to address the complex and broad agenda set for CAUK. The alternative

to using separate groups would have been either to curtail the agenda or to reduce the length of time on each theme. For one of our interviewees this was 'probably the most problematic thing. Because ... you have to tell a minister that only actually 36 or 37 people voted on a certain thing. ... it's hard to ... convince them of the weight of it'. This concern was shared by another, who noted: 'Government might not do something because 17 out of 30 people said they voted for it'.

Turning to the output of CAUK, a prominent theme in the interviews was the length of the report and its breadth of coverage. Steps had been taken to provide personalised briefings to the committee Chairs and members, but even despite this it was apparent that some Chairs and Clerks were struggling to assimilate the detail of the report and its recommendations. One Chair noted that s/he still had 'to get more to grips with [it] to understand, so I know what their recommendations were and ... [the] underlying criteria ... that led them to make particular recommendations'. One Clerk noted that s/he had 'not read the whole report but look[ed] at the bits of interest to us'. Another had given that task to a colleague. It should be noted that the report did have an executive summary, and a summary report had previously been published. There were also a series of slide packs from the launch events.





The reactions to the CAUK recommendations were generally positive. A common theme in the interviews was that they were realistic and pragmatic, and that they provided useful insights into what members of the public think about Net Zero. This one comment probably sums up the general mood best: ‘I thought that they were [a] remarkably balanced and ... middle of the road ... set of recommendations’. However, there were some interviewees who felt that perhaps the recommendations were not ambitious enough. One Clerk admitted to being ‘slightly disappointed’; another expressed the view that none of the recommendations were ‘really groundbreaking’. In part, as one Chair noted, this might be a reflection of the agenda that the CAUK was set. It might also be a reflection on unrealistic expectations of what a citizens’ assembly can achieve, as they are better at reviewing policy options rather than generating new ones (Elstub and Pomatto 2018).

8.3. How the CAUK report and recommendations were received and dealt with by the Select Committees

In general, there were favourable comments on the recommendations overall, though, as noted above, in some cases laced with references to a lack of ambition. When pushed to comment on specific recommendations, there were positive reactions to some of the underlying principles, most notably the principle of fairness. As one Clerk observed: ‘I think it’s very useful to get a clear steer that the public as a whole thinks fairness is important in this transition’. Another Clerk

spoke of how the CAUK’s emphasis on local solutions (for example the principle on ‘local community engagement’) would chime well with parliamentarians, not least ‘because they will love the idea of being able to say this is a great policy, but we need to work out how to make it work best for the people in my area’.

In terms of policy areas, the recommendations on aviation attracted some attention, especially the proposed frequent flyer charge, which some interviewees judged to have been ill-judged. As one Clerk noted: ‘I think it would have been more useful if the assembly had recommended more action to target short haul flights rather than long haul’, given that for the latter there really is no other option. For one of the Clerks, the proposals on phasing out fossil fuel driven vehicles by 2030-34 were ‘a little bit vague ... You’ve got a five year margin of error there’. For another Clerk, the reluctance of the CAUK to embrace carbon capture and storage would be ‘quite interesting to government because they’ve got to work out how to sell these policies if they want to pursue them to the public’. A central government civil servant felt that this decision reflected a lack of understanding of the challenge in delivering on Net Zero: ‘I’m guessing that they didn’t want to rely on a “technology solves all” solution. But if they realized that ... even with all the stuff they voted for, we would still need it, they probably would have voted for it’.





At the time of our interviews, it was apparent that plans had yet to be drawn up on how to deal with the CAUK report, as they focused their attention on Brexit and COVID 19. As one Chair admitted: ‘We’ve not really met as a group of Chairs and discussed this. We’ve done the promotional stuff but we haven’t all sat down around a horseshoe and said, “Right, what shall we do next with it?”’. Much the same was said by some of the Clerks, as summed up by this comment: ‘we will give detailed consideration to it ... after Christmas ... Simple reason is, that we have so many ongoing enquiries which are here, now, and immediate. My guess is we’ll come to it after the Christmas recess’. This chimed with events occurring around the time of our interviews. A debate in the House of Commons in November 2020 revealed strong cross-party consensus on the need to make use of the CAUK Report.⁴ More recently the Parliamentary Director reported that ‘[f]eedback from a Whitehall survey exercise indicates that around two thirds of respondents plan to take these recommendations forward in their work, including in future policy developments or as part of their evidence base to design policies and communications’.⁵

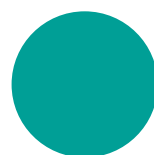
But the slowness in engaging with CAUK’s report was concerning for some of our interviewees. For at least one Chair there was a question over the shelf life of the report; as time moves on, circumstances change, questions may be raised over the ongoing relevance of the report: ‘the

information coming out is only current up to the point of when people were asked the question. ... I don’t know how much durability it has’.

The fact that it was parliamentary committees, not government, that had commissioned CAUK was always going to make matters more complicated in trying to achieve some purchase on the Assembly’s recommendations, and matters were not helped by the election that intervened mid-stream, resulting in quite a high turnover in Committee Clerks and memberships. As one Clerk noted ‘there has been a change of personnel amongst committee chairs as well ... Some are more engaged than others. Exactly how that works out across the whole of the recommendations, I’m not sure’. This change of personnel and the mood music in committees was raised by a number of our interviewees. One Clerk noted a distinct ‘change in the level of engagement amongst some of the committees who were originally participating in the process’. A Committee Chair commented that ‘the new committee is ... a bit more libertarian, particularly the Conservative members. ... [T]here are some members of the committee ... who are going to be resistant ... to this being a big focus of the committee’s work’.

⁴ <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-11-26/debates/44428DE9-A213-4CBB-9745-3F0F12F84ECB/ClimateChangeAssemblyUKThePathToNetZero>

⁵ Email from Chris Shaw, 25 January 2021.





All this leads another Clerk to reflect that CAs should probably be ‘more of an early to mid-parliament activity rather than late parliament to make sure that you’ve got a group or groups of eleven members signed up to what they’re seeking to achieve and in saying, okay yes, we’ve commissioned this research and ... we pledge to do X, Y and Z as a result’. However, the fact that the UK had three general elections in four years between 2015-19 shows how difficult it is to ensure this.

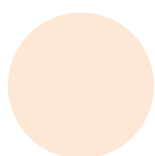
8.4. The degree to which CAUK was coherently linked to parliament

At the time of our interviews, with one exception, there were no firm plans for the establishment of inquiries specifically focused on the CAUK recommendations. The exception was the BEIS committee, which – in keeping with its leading, coordinating role throughout the CAUK process – immediately announced that it would establish an inquiry on the CAUK recommendations and the government’s progress in implementing them. By early 2021, there were a number of other inquiries ongoing that drew on the recommendations, including: a Transport Committee inquiry focused on CAUK’s recommendations on road pricing and zero emission vehicles, a Treasury Committee inquiry on Decarbonisation of the UK economy and Green finance, and an inquiry into Energy efficiency of existing homes by the Environmental Audit Committee.

Our interviews, for the most part, preceded these developments, and therefore what we were tapping were the speculations of Chairs and Committee Clerks on how they envisaged making use of the CAUK’s recommendations. The fact that they were envisaging rather than actioning prior plans is telling. As one Chair commented: ‘I think, if anything like this was to be done again, it would be important to ensure that each committee have a proper presentation about this and get it sort of approved by the Committee formally’.

A common theme in the interviews was a recognition that the CAUK recommendations must be engaged with, combined with a certain lack of clarity over how to do that. One Clerk commented: ‘Committees have got a tendency to do something, finish, park it and move on. I think the challenge for the members, but also the staff in advising the members, is to use this and to maybe think about our ways of working and processes, so how we engage with it going forward in a meaningful way’.

The general sense was that the CAUK report would be more background than foreground to committee activity. One Clerk referred to it as a ‘key background document ... it’s not going to go in the written evidence list, to get really practical, but nothing is stopping it being cited as a document that’s readily available out there to the public in public session’. For another it ‘will be useful. It will be a starting place for us’. In this respect, it might play an agenda-setting role for some of the committees.





Some interviewees were prepared to speculate on how they envisaged using this report in future inquiries. As one Chair noted: 'I think, well I hope that ... it will shape future work that the committee chooses to do. ... So, I'd hope we would use, well we won't put the report on a shelf, we'll dig it out and use it for determining the sorts of questions that we ask in those sessions and to prompt us to scrutinise ministers' decision making'. Similarly, one of the Clerks expressed the view that 'the committee is quite keen to make it clear that it has taken on board what the assembly has said ... We held a discussion ... a couple of weeks ago and it was very clear when discussing the possible options ... that for each option they were interested to hear what the assembly's thoughts had been in relation to that topic area'.

At this stage not all committees were clear about when, or how, precisely they might use the report. For one Chair this would not be at the next meeting of the committee, but perhaps the 'one in six months' time, [when] there's been a bit more mature time to reflect on it'. This sense of allowing time is somewhat at odds with the warning noted above about how the CAUK's recommendations could become dated.

When asked for more detail on how they felt the CAUK report might be used, several of the interviewees envisaged it in a confirmatory role rather than as a unique source of information, i.e. they felt that it would be of most use when the recommendations might tally with other sources of information. As one of the Chairs put it: 'it will be taken into account ... if we're looking at two different things which we've got broadly the same amount of support in the Committee, if one is significantly more interesting to the assembly than the other, that might have an influence over which one we decided to go with'. This view was shared by several of our other interviewees. One commented that s/he was 'not certain that we would give more weight to an idea just because it had come from the assembly. We would still, as a committee, go through the process of testing that idea, taking evidence and assessing the balance of ideas and practicability shall we say, that we would do in any other inquiry. I think it probably gets it on the agenda but maybe not much more than that'. Another noted that it was 'important to remember ... that ... there are so many reports and so much evidence that gets sent our way and a lot of it has a lot of weight. ... I don't know yet how much weight this will have down the line yet, compared to ... some massive report that could come out of the Tyndall Centre or LSE or something like that'.

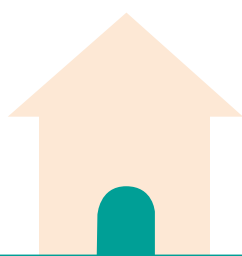




But not all interviewees concurred with this view: one Chair envisaged the CAUK report playing a more central role in a future inquiry. As s/he put it: 'I think that will be the basis for our inquiry. ... it won't be just one other piece of evidence. It will be the basis'. Similarly, one of the Clerks suggested: 'I think it would be a real shame if we've got this vast document that we don't draw on but ultimately it's for the members of the committee to decide how much they want to draw on it in the findings that they come to'.

In terms of the modalities of the inquiries, there was some speculation about how the participants in CAUK might be deployed in the process. As one Chair commented: 'The big question is will we have a group in from the assembly to actually give evidence to us? I don't think that is going to be the case but my hope and my rumination through to my Clerks is that all of the committee should actually put one person up, two people up and actually continue as a group of six committees to take the individuals that will be involved in the committee ... and actually continue to take evidence from them so it's an ongoing conversation. I very much hope that will happen, otherwise there is the danger that it is seen as a talking shop because everyone is there and then forgotten about it and not made it a continuous process'.

To date, the government's uptake of CAUK has been limited. The CAUK recommendation that the path to Net Zero should be fair and protect the most vulnerable has been picked up in energy policy though (Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy 2020). When asked to speculate on how the CAUK report might resonate with government, there were some who felt that its direct impact would be quite limited. One of the Chairs expressed the view that s/he was 'not sure that this really gives us much more leverage'. Similarly, one of the Clerks commented: 'I don't think there's necessarily going to be a direct outcome in terms of us taking each of their recommendations and then pressing government on the delivery of those recommendations'. But against that, there were other interviewees who felt the report could be very influential with government. One Clerk commented: 'We've got a lot of interest in Whitehall amongst policy officials. It's a really valuable tool for policy making to see not just the recommendations but what's underneath it. The sense I'm getting, for officials in Whitehall, it is really a valuable tool'. For another Clerk, it could be 'quite helpful to have a cross party committee say actually something really needs to happen here. In similar terms I would have thought if you were a policy maker in a government department, actually having this report to rely on might give you some leverage to make progress in some difficult areas'.





One of the central government civil servants we interviewed made the observation that the degree to which the government might pay heed to the CAUK recommendations would depend on how much attention is paid to them by the select committees (s/he referred to the ongoing BEIS inquiry on the CAUK process as ‘a very smart way of holding government to account about these recommendations’). For this interviewee, the key thing is making the public aware of the recommendations so that it becomes harder for government to ignore them.

8.5. Lessons for further democratic innovation

When it came to considering wider lessons for democracy and the potential for democratic innovation there were three main themes that emerged from our interviews with committee Chairs and Clerks, one relating to the insights that CAs provide for politicians, another concerning their potential impact on the representative process, and a third about their expense compared to other potential innovations.

A number of the interviewees referred to the valuable signal that a CA can give to policy makers about what ordinary citizens (albeit informed ones) think about given policy proposals. As one Clerk commented: ‘You can point to this as a representative group of people who [were] presented with issues, who had experts explain them to them and ask questions. This is actually what general public across this field were prepared and accept to do and then I think that gives policy makers quite a good steer’. For another ‘the option of a citizens’

assembly to give a bit of ... back-up to know that you’re not proposing something that’s going to be totally unpalatable to the country as a whole, could be quite useful’.

As several interviewees observed, this increases the prospect that a government’s policies on a certain area, such as net zero, might resonate with citizens. As one Chair observed: ‘These changes that we have to put in place to deliver commitment [on Net Zero] are going to impact everyone. Unless the citizens of this country own it, embrace it and play their part in delivering it then it’s not going to happen. ... So I think in a way this is very reflective of the fact that this is right for everyone to own’. A similar point was made by one of the Clerks: ‘where it’s really clear that things that could be quite unpopular in terms of behavioural changes or people having to accept ... this could provide something really helpful to lean back on and say, actually, this was a representative group of people and people were up for this change’.





A second theme was the sense of concern that CAs might encroach on the role of parliament. This was something that some Clerks were attuned to in this instance. One Clerk noted that '[w]e've been very careful ... to pitch ... the product of the assembly as something that informs the work of the elected House of Commons. It's not replacing it, it's not duplicating it, it's informing the work'. But whether they were successful in this is a moot point. One Chair expressed the view that some of his/her colleagues might worry about the impact on the representative process. As s/he put it: 'there is a significant body of opinion in Parliament that ... if you give [citizens' assemblies] power, then you're effectively undermining the existing political institutions and democratic process that we have'. A similar observation was made by one of the Clerks: 'There are some that will see an assembly as an undermining of that fundamental process ... I can see that being a position that might be held by some Members who are concerned about the legitimacy of parliament as a representative chamber, as it were'. For one of the Chairs the criticisms were already evident: 'there's a bit of a pushback in some places that, "Why did we need a citizens' assembly? That's what Parliament is meant to be"'. Of course, part of this might have reflected the turnover of committee memberships after the general election.

Finally, there was the question of the expense of CAs and the potential of other less costly options. As one Clerk observed: 'I don't think there are a huge number of issues that merit something as big and grand as a citizens' assembly. It's expensive, it's time consuming. It's got to be worth it in terms of your policy bang for your

buck'. This same point was made by another Clerk: 'It's actually quite an expensive thing to do so I think you have to pick your issue carefully'.

This led some to reflect on the availability of other forms of innovation that might be used as an alternative to citizens' assemblies. As one Clerk observed: 'I don't think [a citizens' assembly] should be seen as the only means to engage and I think there's a lot of digital and in-person engagement that are open to us as committees'. Another Clerk was even more forthright in his/her view that the CAUK was 'a very longwinded and complicated process ... although it's produced some interesting results it does make you wonder perhaps whether or not a smaller scale operation might be able to give you something similarly useful at a fraction of the cost and time commitment as it were ... I can see in future if there was a suggestion about doing this again you probably would get a number of people from amongst both staff and members querying whether or not we could do it better for less next time'. Going forward, this might suggest that to embed mini-publics within Parliament, inspiration could be taken from the Scottish Parliament to run in-house, and smaller scale, mini-publics (Elstub and Carrick 2020).

Indeed, the House of Commons Liaison Committee (2019) has suggested that they learn lessons from these cases. However, it should also be noted that the Houses of Parliament contributed £120,000 which is less than a quarter of is less than a quarter of the total costs of the assembly, and equivalent to two international committee visits.



8.6. Conclusion

The over-arching sense from the interviews, with a wide range of committee Chairs and Clerks and central government civil servants, was that CAUK was a well-run process that has produced important findings. In the last few months, particularly since the early new year, a number of the select committees have launched inquiries referencing the CAUK's recommendations. The key conclusion is that this deliberative process was seen to have been a success and many of the recommendations are being actively engaged with by the select committees.

There are, however, a number of issues that have emerged relating to the CAUK process and its recommendations and also relating to the follow through by the select committees. First, on the CAUK process and its recommendations, there were concerns about the length and breadth of the report (which meant that it took time for some Chairs and Clerks to engage with its details or prevented them from doing so at all). Questions were also raised over how the decision to divide the CAUK participants into separate thematic groups could impact on the weight that might be attached to some of the recommendations by government. And there were some who felt that a number of the recommendations were perhaps not ambitious enough or may have been mis-cast (e.g. on aviation, fossil fuels, and carbon capture and storage). This may have related to the initial remit given to CAUK.

On select committee follow-through there are a number of points that emerge from our interviews. Perhaps the key point was the perceived lack of pre-planning on how to deal with the CAUK report and its recommendations. The level of follow through since the start of 2021 may be impressive, but at the time of our interviews it was apparent that not all committees had worked out how to deal with the report. To a degree this was affected by the turnover of personnel as a result of the general election, and the fact that some of the new members were less sympathetic to the Net Zero agenda and felt less ownership of the assembly. It is too soon to judge how influential the CAUK report will be, but as of our interviews, the sense was that its recommendations would be more background than foreground, more confirmatory than as a unique source of evidence in any future inquiries. There was also uncertainty over how the recommendations might resonate with government, though some did feel that it might give Parliament some leverage. This was supported by government civil servants, but the increased leverage was dependent on CAUK having a high public profile.

As a form of democratic innovation, the common view was that, although expensive, CAs have an important contribution to make in supporting the policy process and Parliament should use this approach to public engagement more in the future.



9. CAUK Impact on the Public and Media

9.1. Introduction

The use of mini-publics can potentially improve the legitimacy of the work of Parliament (Commission on Parliamentary Reform 2017; Beswick and Elstub 2019), act as trusted information proxies to guide public opinion (Mackenzie and Warren 2012) and stimulate public debate (Niemeyer 2014) on policy issues. But to realise these potential benefits, there needs to be awareness and understanding of their use and function beyond parliamentary members and staff and the participants, which means they also need to receive appropriate media exposure (Maia 2018). In turn this requires appropriate resourcing for a communications budget for the mini-public. Partly due to their relative novelty, publicity of previous mini-publics has been subdued. Previous studies (Beswick and Elstub 2019; Elstub and Carrick 2020) also pointed to concerns about undermining conventional parliamentary processes and how to manage recommendations (especially if elected representatives disagree with them).

Recent use of mini-publics has tempered these concerns. Reviews of the UK's Citizens' Assembly on the funding of adult social care (Elstub and Carrick, 2019) and the Scottish Parliament's Citizens' Jury on land use and Citizens' Panels on primary care (Elstub and Carrick, 2020) considered that more publicity could, and should, have been used to optimise the opportunities to build trust in Parliamentary work and leverage greater parliamentary influence

over government. Moreover, one of the overarching objectives of the communications strategy for CAUK was to influence public debate and public understanding on climate change and decarbonisation (CAUK Communications Plan Document).

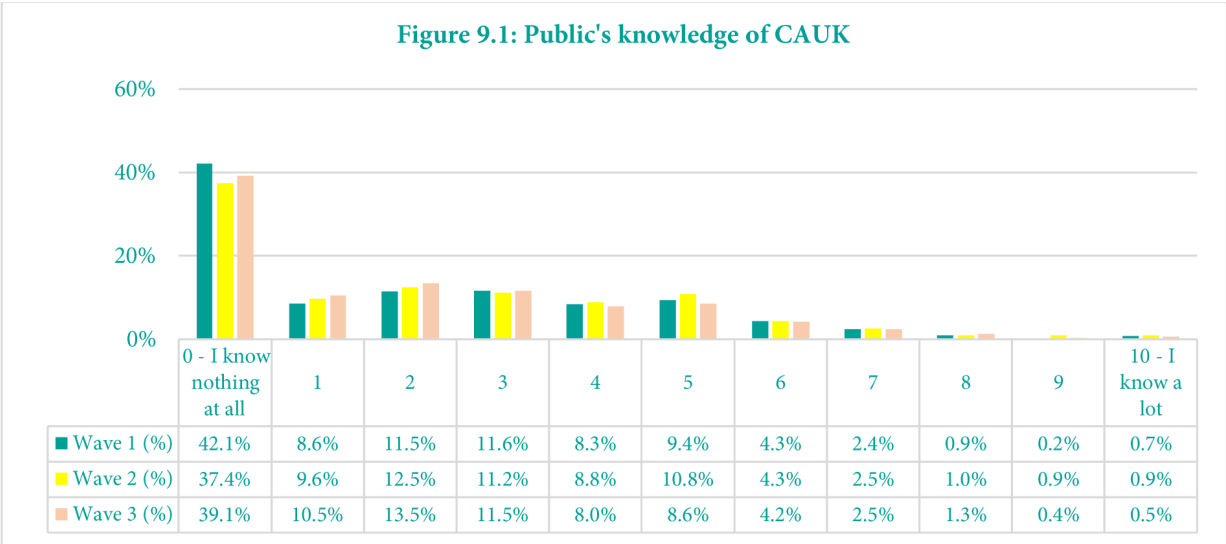
To assess if the publicity of CAUK contributed to these objectives, this chapter evaluates public awareness and approval of the process and how public awareness evolved at key publicity milestones. The assessment is based on the results of three population surveys completed at the start (wave 1, 24th January 2020) and end (wave 2, 20th May 2020) of CAUK and at the report launch (wave 3, 14th September 2020), as well as summaries of the publicity surrounding these milestones, supplied by Parliament. These data are supplemented by interviews with the members and staff of the six commissioning select committees, the communications team and CAUK organisers. First, in section 9.2, we use population survey data to assess the public awareness of the existence and function of CAUK, as well as how, if at all, the public engaged with it. In section 9.3 we assess the public's view of the legitimacy of CAUK using data from the population surveys to determine how much the public approved of CAUK undertaking a range of roles. In section 9.4 we describe the extent of the media coverage of CAUK throughout the process. Finally, in section 9.5, we analyse the nature of this media coverage.



9.2. Awareness of CAUK among the wider public

The results of the population surveys show that at each milestone, most respondents (37% to 42%) indicated that they knew nothing about CAUK (category 0⁶), as shown in Figure 9.1. Although the median response for those that did have some knowledge of CAUK increased from

category 1 in the first wave to category 2 in the second and third waves, there is no statistically significant correlation between survey wave and knowledge of CAUK. This indicates that public awareness of CAUK did not change over time between the milestones in the CAUK process.



In each population survey, respondents were asked what statements they would use to describe the function of CAUK. Figure 9.2 shows that the most popular statement in the first survey, at the start of CAUK, was ‘I don’t know’, with 37% of respondents selecting that statement. In the second survey (at the end of CAUK) and third survey (at the launch of the report) ‘finding solutions to climate change issues facing the UK’ was the most popular choice: 35% (in the second survey) to 38% (in the third survey at the launch of the report) of the respondents indicated they would use that statement to describe CAUK.

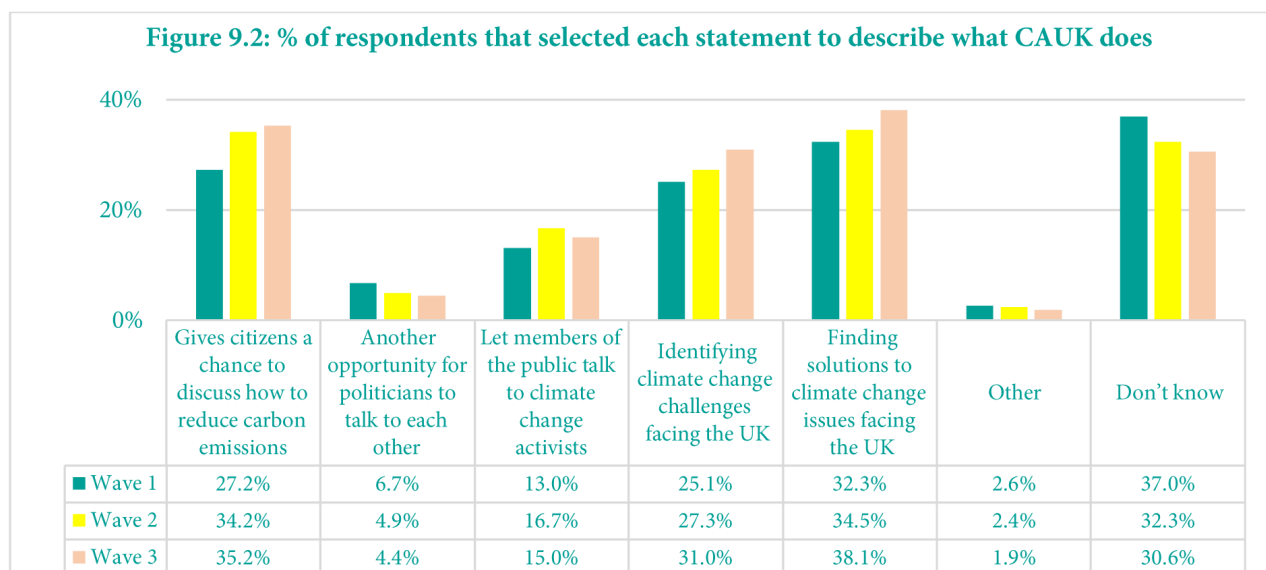
⁶The survey asked, on a scale of 0-10, how much the respondents thought they knew about CAUK: where 0 = I know nothing and 10 = I know a lot.



Analysis indicates that there is a statistically significant ($<0.01^7$) but very weak correlation between survey waves and several of the statements presented to describe CAUK. This means that the likelihood of respondents agreeing that they would use the following statements to describe the function of CAUK increased with each survey: ‘finding solutions to climate change issues facing the UK’; ‘gives citizens a chance to discuss how to reduce carbon emissions’; and ‘identifying

climate change challenges facing the UK’. The decline in respondents selecting ‘I don’t know’ and ‘CAUK is another opportunity for politicians to talk to each other’ are also (statistically significantly) correlated with survey waves; respondents were less likely to select these statements with each wave. These results indicate that the public’s understanding of what CAUK does increase with time (between the milestones in the CAUK process).

Figure 9.2: % of respondents that selected each statement to describe what CAUK does

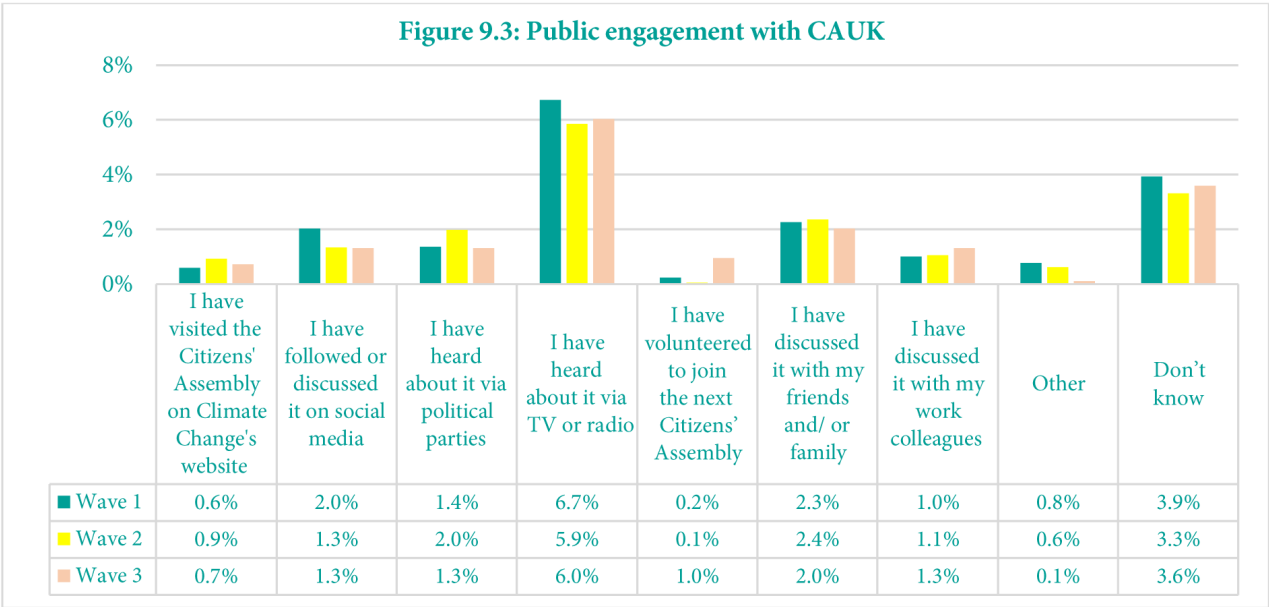


The population surveys asked if, and how, the respondents had engaged with CAUK. In each survey the vast majority (between 83.6% in the first survey and 84.3% in the second) of respondents had not engaged with CAUK. Figure 9.3 shows that if the respondents had engaged with CAUK in all three surveys, most had done so via TV or radio (5.9% to 6.7%).

There was no statistically significant correlation between the survey waves and engaging with CAUK via TV and radio, indicating this did not change over the course of the three milestones.

⁷ Less than 1% possibility that the results occurred by chance.



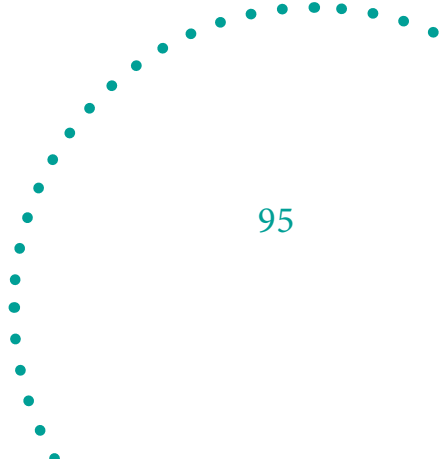


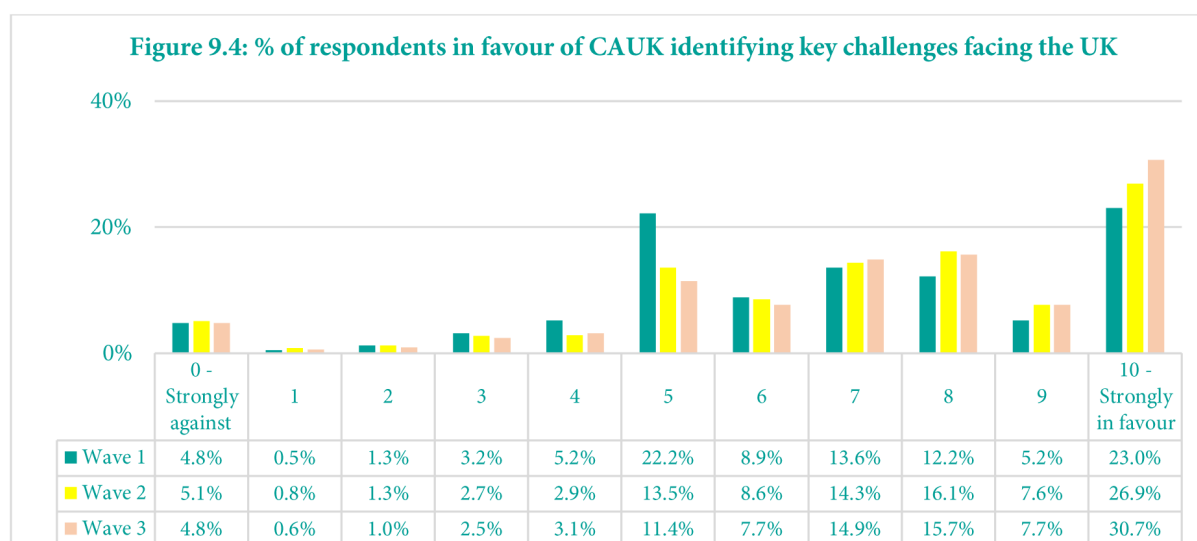
9.3. Legitimacy of CAUK in the eyes of the public

To assess the legitimacy of CAUK, the population surveys asked how in favour the respondents were of CAUK undertaking various tasks.⁸ Figure 9.4 shows that in each of the three surveys most respondents (23%-31%) were strongly in favour of CAUK identifying challenges facing the UK. There is a statistically significant (0.01) though very weak (0.98) correlation between the survey waves and how favourable the respondents were to CAUK identifying key challenges facing the UK; the respondents were more favourable with

each wave. This indicates that the public's approval of CAUK identifying key challenges facing the UK increased over time, between the milestones in the CAUK process.

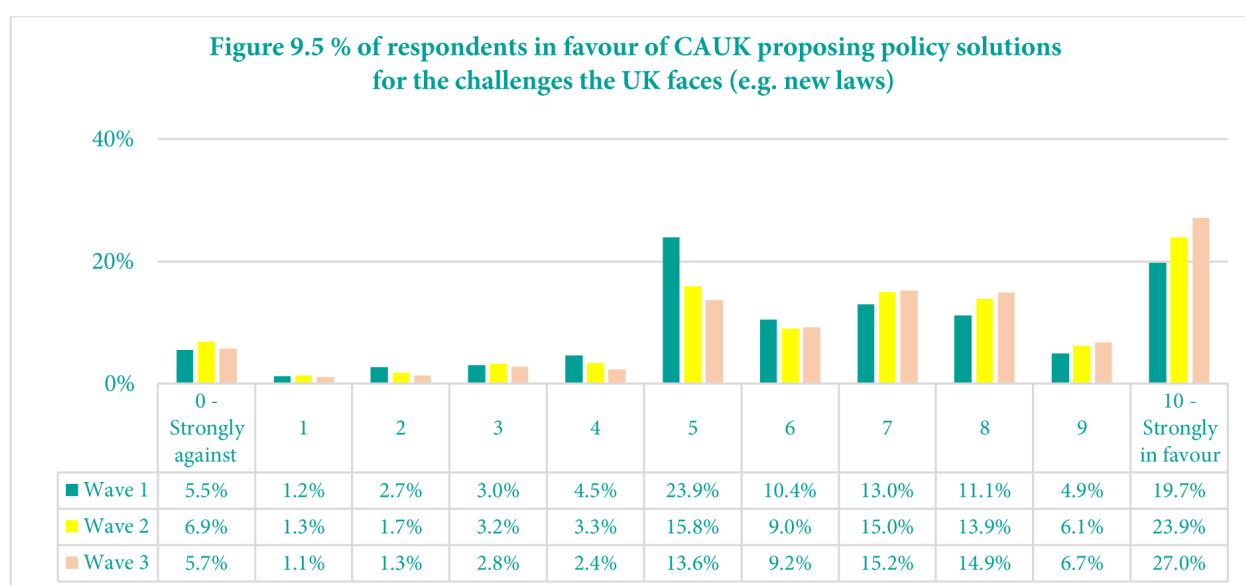
⁸ Given that most respondents had no knowledge or understanding of CAUK, they were given a short description of the process to enable them to answer this question: 'by "Citizens' Assembly", we mean a group of people who are brought together to discuss an issue or issues and reach a conclusion about what they think should happen'.





The population surveys asked how in favour the respondents were of CAUK proposing policy solutions for the challenges the UK faces (e.g., new laws). Figure 9.5 shows that in the first survey, at the start of CAUK, most respondents selected category 5 (of the 0 to 10-point scale). However, in the second and third surveys (at the end of CAUK and at the report launch, respectively), most respondents were

strongly in favour (category 10). Analysis reveals a statistically significant ($<0.01^9$), very weak correlation (0.094) between the survey waves and how favourable the respondents were to CAUK proposing policy solutions. This means that the likelihood of the public approving of CAUK proposing policy solutions increased with each survey, across the milestones in the CAUK process.

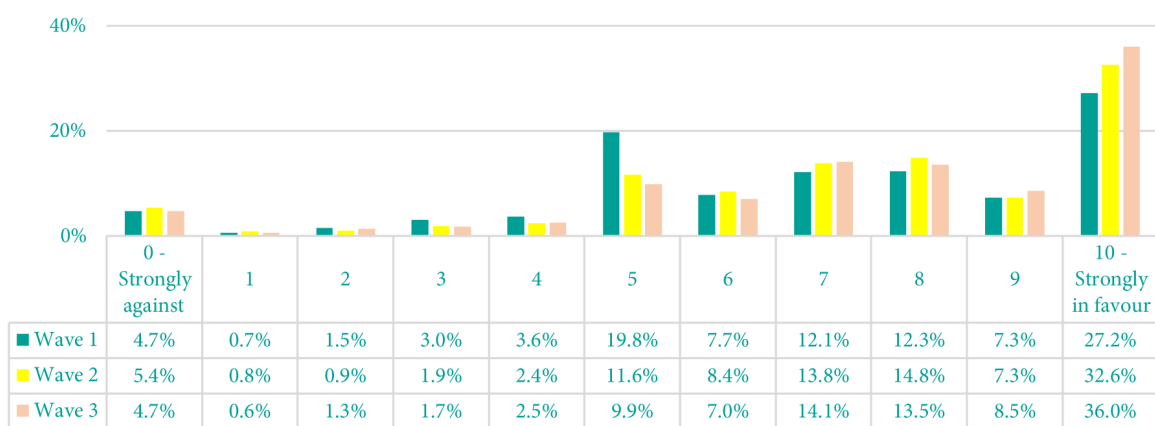


⁹ There is a less than 1% possibility of the results occurring by chance.



Finally, the population surveys asked how in favour the respondents were of CAUK identifying ways the UK can reduce carbon emissions. Figure 9.6 shows that in each survey most respondents were strongly in favour (category 10) of CAUK identifying ways to reduce carbon emissions. Again, analysis reveals a statistically significant (0.01), very weak (0.092) correlation between the survey wave and how favourable the respondents were to CAUK identifying ways the UK can reduce carbon emissions; the respondents were more favourable with each survey. This analysis indicates that the public's approval of this task increased over time.

Figure 9.6: % of respondents in favour of CAUK identifying ways the UK can reduce carbon emissions



9.4 The extent of the media coverage

In this section we describe the CAUK communication strategy and the extent and nature of CAUK media coverage. Firstly, we draw on document and interview data to give an overview of the communications approach. Secondly, we analyse the data collected by parliamentary staff (the media and communications team of the House of Commons select committees) on print, broadcast, and online articles. We then summarise the social media activity (collated by Kitsch Inc., a private digital media company engaged by Parliament).

Recognising the benefits of improving the public's awareness of democratic innovations such as mini-publics, a media strategy was devised by the Energy and Climate Intelligence Unit¹⁰ in conjunction with Parliament and Involve to publicise CAUK. According to our interviews with members of these teams the main aims were to focus on 'highlighting the ... voice of the assembly members and to emphasise that CAUK was an 'open, transparent impartial process.'

¹⁰ ECIU provided communications and engagement support throughout the assembly process. They were brought onto the CAUK project team following the awarding of the main delivery contract in summer/autumn 2019.





There were concerns that the communication budget was insufficient to achieve broad public awareness of CAUK:¹¹ ‘If we’d had more resources, do I think we could have got more coverage? ... What we could have done was support assembly members to engage with their local press and also support them to engage with their local MP’. Whilst they also acknowledged that budgets can always be increased: ‘it’s always nice to have more resources and more people ... making sure that you’ve, you’ve got enough people, enough resources, and enough time to sort of do all the bits of the communications that you want to do is very important. But then again, that’s a bit like sort of “how long’s a piece of string”, you can always sort of wish for more in some respects’. It should also be acknowledged that the task for the communications team was made extremely challenging due to the broader news context of Brexit and the pandemic that coincided with CAUK.

The data on the print, broadcast, and online articles have been analysed to evaluate the level of publicity throughout the process, focusing on the same three milestones as used for the population surveys (discussed in sections 9.2 and 9.3): the first weekend of CAUK in January 2020 (T1), the last weekend of CAUK in May 2020 (T2), and the launch of the results report in September 2020 (T3). Analysing the media coverage during the times immediately prior to the distribution of our survey questions enabled us to ascertain the opportunities the public had to become aware of CAUK.

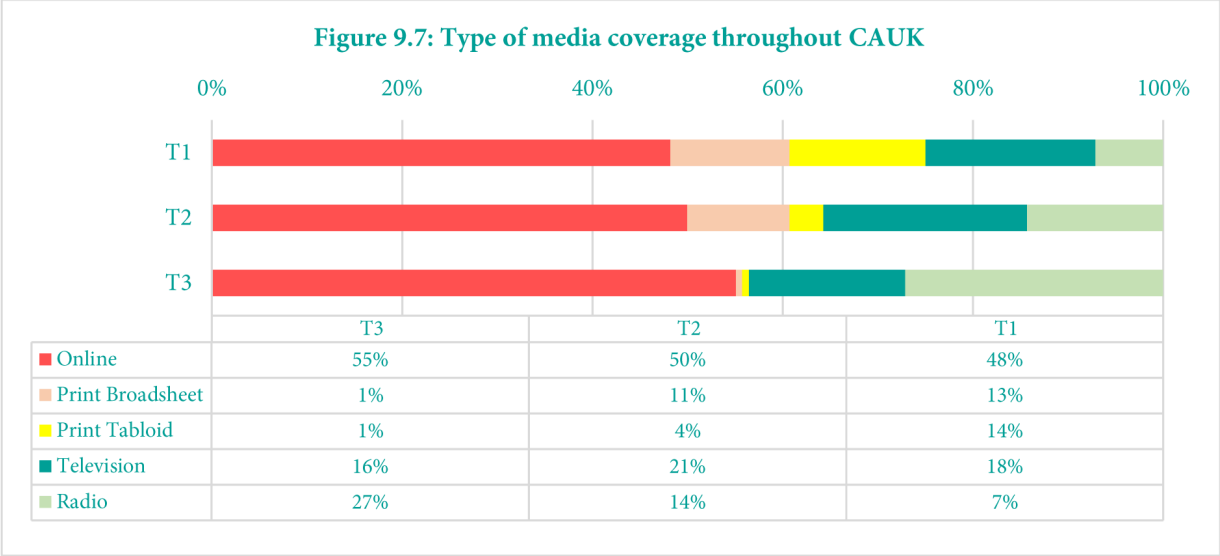
As shown in Table 9.1, most of the media coverage occurred around the launch of the results report in September 2020 (T3) with CAUK featuring in 960 pieces in seven days around that time. In comparison, CAUK featuring in 56 pieces of media in five days around the start of CAUK (T1) and in 28 pieces over one month around the end of the process (T2).

Table 9.1: Number of media pieces mentioning CAUK

	Weekend 1 (T1)	Weekend 4c (T2)	Report launch (T3)
Dates	22-27 January	24 April– 24 May	7-14 September
Online	27	14	529
Print Broadsheet	7	3	6
Print Tabloid	8	1	7
Television	10	6	158
Radio	4	4	260
Total	56	28	960

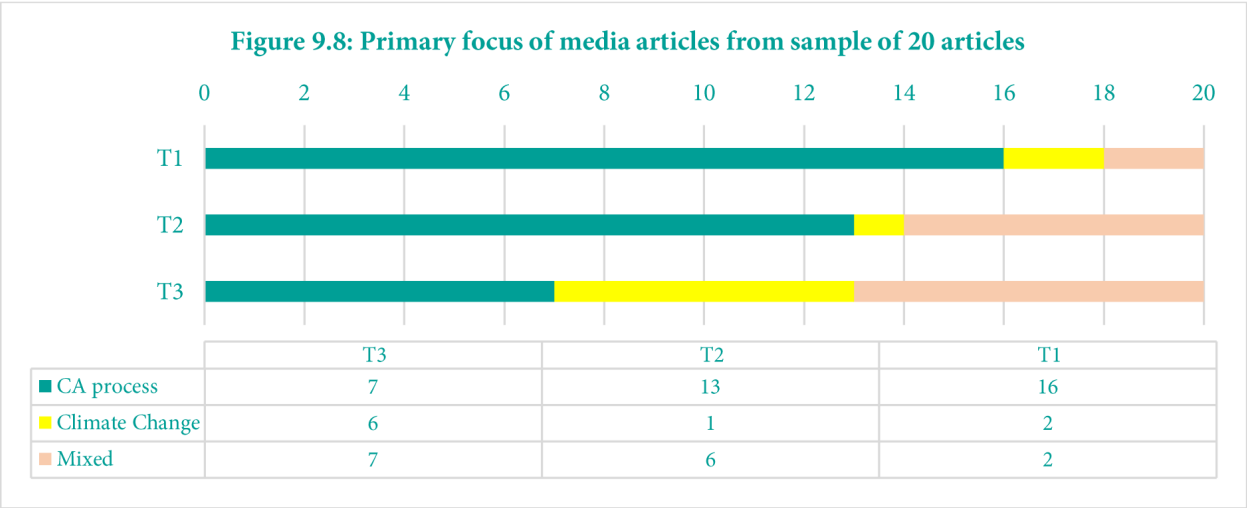
As illustrated in Figure 9.7, at each milestone most of the coverage was associated with online sources, and the proportion of coverage via online sources increased during the process. The proportion of TV and Radio coverage also increased during the process, whereas the proportion of print media sources declined.

¹¹ For example, approximately £1,300 was spent on social media advertisements at the event launch.



Taking a sample of 20 media sources at each milestone, we also assessed the length of each piece and its primary focus (in terms of the assembly process, the issue of climate change or a mix of them both). Analysis of the samples indicates that written articles were longest at the end of the process (T2), when the average length was 1,286 words, compared to 439 words (on average) at the start (T1) and 491 words (on average) around the report launch (T3). In contrast, the average length of audio articles (on TV or radio) was shortest at weekend 4c (T2), when the average length was 3 minutes 10 seconds, compared to 3 minutes 52 seconds at the start of the process (T2) and 4 minutes 2 seconds around the time of the report launch (T3).

As illustrated in Figure 9.8, the primary focus of articles changed from being mostly about the assembly process at the start of the process to being fairly balanced between focusing on the process and the issue of climate change (or a mix of them both) around the time of the launch.



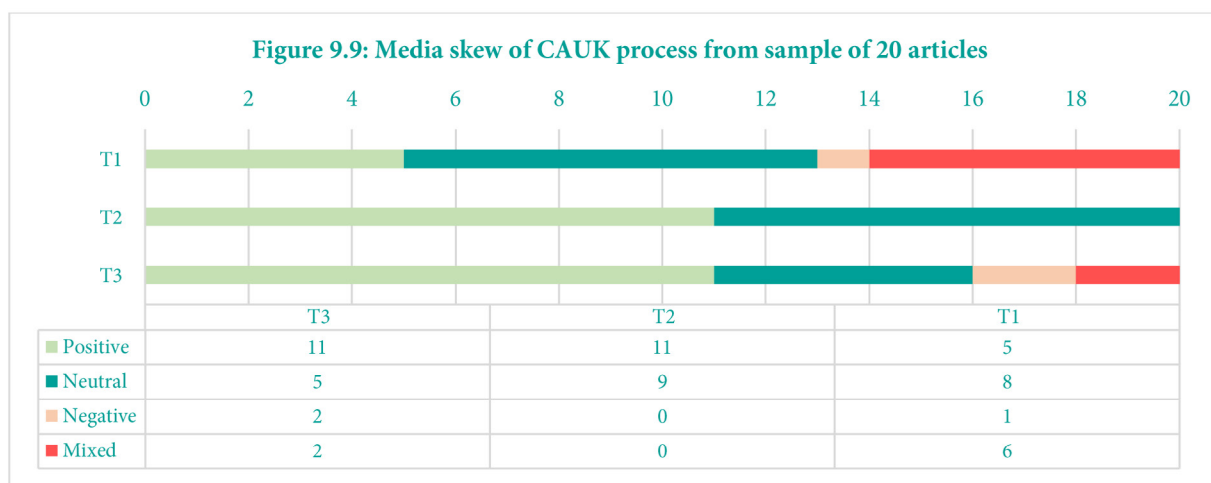


A social media campaign was operated by Kitsch Inc alongside the print, broadcast, and online coverage. The campaign centred on the account @NetZeroUK and hashtag #ClimateAssemblyUK on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. Data supplied by Kitsch Inc showed that between January and September 2020, #ClimateAssemblyUK had been tweeted 17,684 times and achieved a reach of over 22 million followers. The most popular tweets including #ClimateAssemblyUK were posted via the accounts of CAUK (@NetZero), Involve (@InvolveUK) and Caroline Lucas MP (@carolinelucas). The accounts with the most reach that posted under the hashtag #ClimateAssemblyUK were UK Parliament (@ukparliament), the National Trust (@nationaltrust) and Caroline Lucas MP (@carolinelucas).

According to Kitsch Inc, the most popular tweets including #ClimateAssemblyUK were posted at the start of CAUK by Caroline Lucas (on 25 January) and the CAUK account (on 24 January), which were retweeted 351 and 323 times respectively, and reached a total of more than 2.4 million accounts. This indicates that social media interest was highest at the start of the process, in contrast to the highest volume of print, broadsheet and online media articles, which occurred around the launch of the report in September 2020.

9.5 The nature of the media coverage

To assess the nature of the media coverage of CAUK we analysed the samples of 20 media articles at each milestone. We assessed whether each piece was generally positive, negative, or neutral about the assembly process and the issue of climate change.



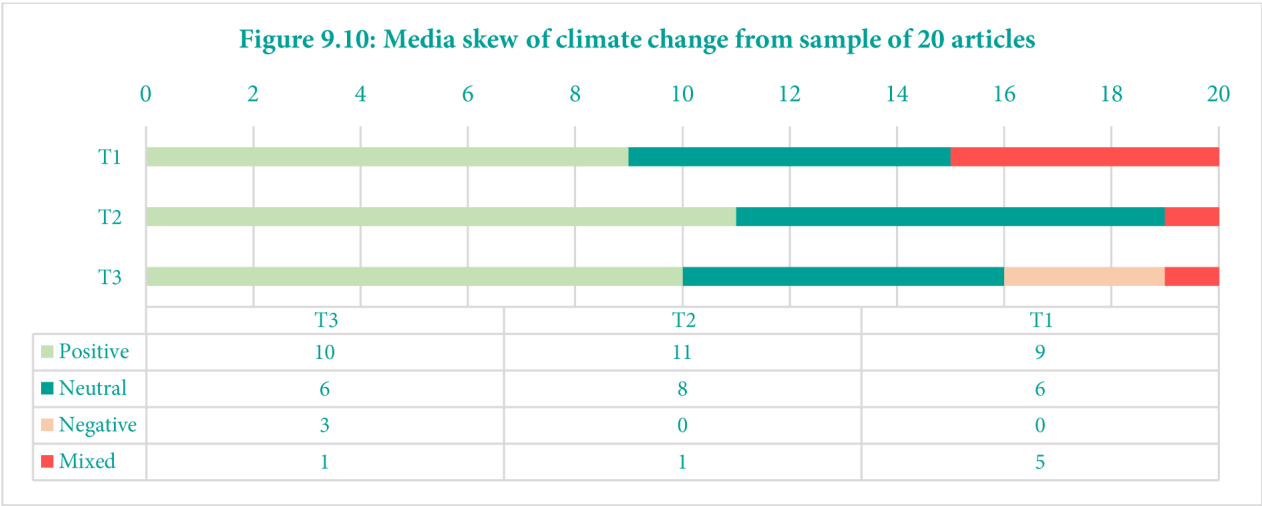


As illustrated in Figure 9.9, our analysis indicates that the media coverage of CAUK became increasingly positive between the first weekend (T1) and the report launch (T3). For example, at the start of CAUK, on 25 January, ITV News declared: ‘There has never been an event like this in the UK before; members of the public invited to help tackle the climate emergency!’ By the launch of the report, (on 10 September), BBC News was proclaiming that ‘the really exciting thing about this is that it’s not generated by a group of boffins in a room coming up with recommendations to government. This is real people dealing with real issues and coming up with practical suggestions’.

Conversely, the proportion of negative or mixed views about CAUK reduced between T1 and T3. At the start of CAUK (on 26

January), BBC News had raised concerns that ‘some people are going to find this expensive ... [and] some measures ... unpalatable’. In contrast, by the time of the launch of the report, journalists’ negative views were less about CAUK specifically, but rather in the context of calls from ‘Extinction Rebellion’ for their own Climate Assembly.

The media coverage on the issue of climate change stayed fairly consistent over the course of the process. Figure 9.10 shows that most articles were positive or neutral at all three milestones. For example, on 11 September Channel 4 News hailed that ‘people from across the whole country ... have come together giving up their time to shape the future on climate action and this is the most important issue of our time. On that I think we are all absolutely agreed’.



However, the proportion of mixed views on climate change reduced after the start of CAUK and the only negative views on climate change were identified in the sample of articles around the report launch (T3). For example, on 10 September 2020, BBC Radio 4 described CAUK’s recommendations as ‘attacks on frequent fliers, restrictions on cars in cities, and a reduction in the amount of meat and dairy’.



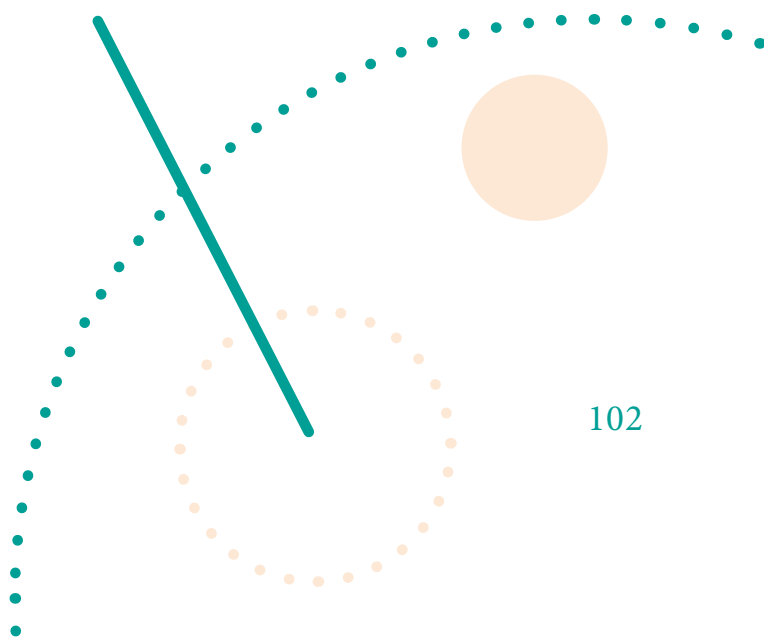
2.6 Conclusion

Public awareness of CAUK was generally low. At each milestone (start and end of CAUK and the report launch), most respondents said they knew ‘nothing at all’ about CAUK. However, analysis of data from the population survey does indicate that the public’s understanding of CAUK’s function did increase over time. Generally, the public did not engage with CAUK, but if they did, it was via TV and radio. The survey data indicate that this did not change between each milestone.

The low public awareness of CAUK contrasts with the French public’s awareness of their national Citizens’ Convention for Climate, which was reportedly over 70% (Reséau Action Climat France 2020; Maid Culture 2021). This shows climate assemblies can get the exposure required even in a busy news climate dominated by COVID and Brexit. The French climate assembly was commissioned by President Macron, and his personal association with the assembly may be the reason its profile was raised. The French climate assembly also had a significantly bigger budget (over 6 million euros). Clearly more comparative research is needed to understand this difference in public awareness, the role the media played in it, and to draw lessons for future mini-public communication strategies, as there is a dearth of research and evidence in this area. Our own research on CAUK media coverage was limited to a small sample due to research capacity. Publicity for future CAs needs to be tailored to this type of democratic innovation, but at present we know little about the most effective ways of doing this, although our

evidence indicates that broadcast media seemed to be the most effective medium to increase exposure. Nor should attempts to gain public awareness rely solely on media exposure. Broader public engagement can be built into the process. For example, British Columbia CA on electoral reform involved the AMs holding public hearings in their local area (Fournier 2011). Ultimately though, the CAUK communications budget was insufficient.

The lack of awareness of CAUK amongst the public is disappointing because our survey results also indicate that when the public are informed about CAs, they trust them to contribute to climate policy. Based on a brief description of CAUK, the population survey results indicate that the public were in favour of CAUK identifying key challenges, proposing policy solutions, and identifying ways to reduce climate emissions. Approval for CAUK undertaking these tasks increased over the course of the three surveys, indicating that public views of the legitimacy of the process also improved over the course of the process.





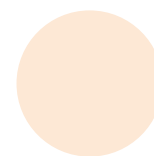
We analysed the media coverage of CAUK that preceded our survey waves to assess the chances the public had of knowing about it. It shows that the volume of coverage increased dramatically around the launch of the CAUK results report, compared to around the first and last weekends of CAUK. Generally, the proportion of coverage via online, TV and radio grew between the start of CAUK and the launch, whereas the proportion of coverage by print media reduced over that time. This might explain the slight increase in awareness that occurred over time as broadcast media seemed to be the source that was most likely to cut through and lead to CAUK knowledge.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the primary focus of media coverage was associated with the novelty of the CAUK process. However, around the time of the report launch the focus of media coverage was more balanced between the process and issue of climate change, when journalists had results to discuss.

The data also indicate that media coverage became more favourable towards the CAUK process between the first weekend and the report launch. In contrast media coverage of the climate change issue remained consistent over that time.

In sum, CAUK received more media coverage than any previous mini-public in the UK but, despite this, public awareness remained very low. However, when people are informed about the process, they trust it and see it as making a legitimate contribution to UK climate policy. The challenge for future assemblies is ensuring that the awareness is secured. Further research on how best to achieve this is required. Future processes also require larger communications budgets.





10. CAUK Evaluation Summary and Recommendations

10.1 Introduction

We have evaluated CAUK in relation to two broad themes. Firstly, what happened within the assembly: were deliberative norms generated, and did the design and organisation conform to established standards for a CA process? Secondly, how did CAUK relate to other parts of the UK political system such as Parliament, Government, climate policy, the public and the media? To produce this evaluation, we adopted a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods. These included surveys, interviews, non-participant observation, and content analysis. In this chapter we summarise our key findings (10.2) and make some recommendations for future Citizens', and Climate, Assemblies and mini-publics more generally (10.3).

Our overriding conclusion is that CAUK was a valuable process that enabled a diverse group of UK citizens to engage in parliamentary scrutiny of government on climate policy in a meaningful manner. The case demonstrates a significant step forward in the UK Parliament's public engagement strategy and, based on our evidence, they should seek to establish more CAs and mini-publics in the future, to feed into the scrutiny work of the select committee system.

10.2 Evaluation Summary

Our evaluation considered the extent to which CAUK was a deliberative process, had positive effects on the AMs, influenced

parliament and policy, and garnered the awareness, engagement, and trust of the broader public through extensive and positive media coverage. Here we summarise our key findings in relation to each of these in turn.

Deliberative Process

Assembly Member Recruitment: given that deliberation requires people to be exposed to a diversity of views, we investigated whether the recruitment process delivered a representative sample of the public. We found lots of evidence to suggest that this was the case. In particular, we thought sampling AMs based on their attitudes to climate change was a very useful innovation. It helps reduce the self-selection around the issue that inevitably occurs even when recruitment is through a civic lottery designed to ameliorate self-selection as far as possible. Most CAs (and climate assemblies) rely on demographic sampling to ensure attitudinal diversity, but this does not guarantee it (Elstub 2014). The importance of ensuring attitudinal representation of the public on the climate change issue was highlighted by the fact that, by the time CAUK commenced, many AMs had become more concerned about this issue than they were when they were recruited.





Presumably, knowing that they were going to be participants in a climate assembly, they had looked into the issue themselves. There was also an over-representation of Green Party supporters. There is therefore a logic for letting people know as little as possible about the topic to be considered when recruiting mini-public participants (Roberts and Escobar 2015), although this could lead to greater levels of drop-out once participants are informed of the issue to be addressed.

Witness Selection and Evidence Provision: as well as being exposed to a diversity of views from fellow AMs, CAs typically provide diverse and balanced information through a range of expert and advocate witnesses. Our evidence suggests that the information provided in CAUK was balanced, that the witnesses had been briefed well and understood their role, and the AMs had understood the information provided by the witnesses. Moreover, the AMs learnt about climate change and decarbonisation as the process progressed. However, there were concerns about whether sufficient time had been allocated to address such a broad and complex issue as reaching Net Zero. Some AMs wanted more information and time to consider topics included, others wanted time to cover issues that were not included. Similarly, the witnesses wanted more time to communicate with the AMs. Trade-offs along these lines are inevitable in all CAs of course. Nevertheless, climate assemblies in Scotland and France, for example, have afforded their AMs more time than in CAUK, a difference enabled by their greater budgets. Moreover, one of the main assembly design mechanisms that was employed to deal with the scope of

task/time available ratio was breaking the assembly into three topic groups. The consequence of this was that AMs only learnt extensively about 1 or 2 of the demand-side topics.

Deliberation, Facilitation and Decision-Making: CAs are designed and facilitated to promote the norms of deliberation and democratic decision-making. The evidence we collected indicated that a high quality of deliberation was achieved in CAUK, and that the AMs got better, and felt they got better, at deliberating as the process progressed. Moreover, our evidence suggests that the facilitation of CAUK contributed to this deliberative quality. Some AMs would have liked more time to deliberate on the issues. The quality of deliberation in the online sessions was superior to the in-person deliberations. We think this is because the online sessions came at the end of the process, and the AMs had already been developing their deliberative skills. Nevertheless, it confirms that CAUK organisers made the right decision in taking the process online when COVID-19 related restrictions prevented further in-person sessions. Indeed, it was a great achievement to get the remainder of CAUK online at such short notice and in a manner that did not disrupt the process. The AMs preferred the in-person sessions, but this was primarily due to the opportunities to socialise with other AMs. Social aspects of mini-publics are important though, not just for the participant experience, but also in helping reduce cognitive biases and thereby improving deliberative quality (Rosenberg 2014).



The AMs agreed with the recommendations that they reached and the process for reaching them. However, the division of the assembly into three topic groups did significantly reduce the opportunity to co-ordinate the recommendations across the groups. Some AMs would have liked the opportunity to have generated their own ‘future scenarios’ rather than having these provided by the Expert Leads. This would have taken more time though.

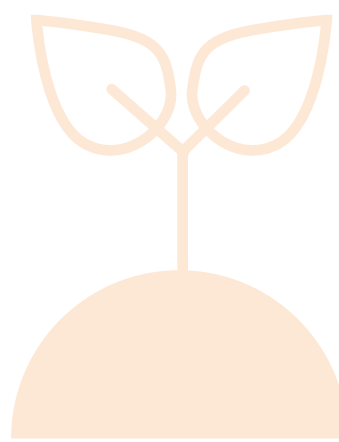
Impact on Assembly Members

In mini-publics, due to the exposure to new information and views and the novelty and integrity of the participatory and deliberative process, it is commonly found that participants learn and change their views on policy issues and their attitudes towards their own capabilities and trust in the political system. Our evidence indicates that the AMs in CAUK learnt about climate change and decarbonisation and thought reaching Net Zero greenhouse gas emissions more achievable as the process progressed. This was compromised, to an extent, by the separation of the assembly into topic groups. The AMs had greater confidence in their ability to deliberate and had more trust in the political system than they did at the start of the process.

Impact on Parliament and Policy

The Chairs and Clerks from the House of Commons select committees generally thought the CAUK process to be a valuable one that resulted in sensible recommendations. This was more so for those that had been able to attend part of the process as an observer. This confirms previous findings that the first-person experience of seeing mini-publics in progress is indispensable (Elstub and Carrick 2019; Elstub and Carrick 2020). Some of those who were unable to observe would have appreciated more regular updates than they received to compensate.

The length of the CAUK report may have been a barrier for engaging with the recommendations and, at the very least, delayed the impact of CAUK on parliament. We are now seeing CAUK influence the select committees, primarily in an agenda-setting role. The influence of CAUK on the committees has though been compromised by the agenda of the CA, which some considered lacked sufficient ambition to address the climate emergency. Moreover, it was clear that the committees had not really considered how to deal with CAUK recommendations in advance of receiving them. In some respects CAUK also clashed with elements of the parliamentary system.





The 2019 General Election led to an inevitable churn of committee Chairs and members, with some of the newcomers less supportive of CAUK as they had not commissioned it themselves, but also the Net Zero target. Indeed, some even thought CAs challenged the legitimacy of the House of Commons, which relates to previous findings on parliamentarians' attitudes to mini-publics. This is also shown by the fact that some of our interviewees were concerned about the cost of CAUK, even though the cost to parliament was equivalent to a couple of international committee visits (Beswick and Elstub 2019; Elstub and Carrick 2020). Nevertheless, it is worth the UK Parliament drawing on lessons from the Scottish Parliament which has run in-house (and smaller scale) mini-publics to support committee inquiries (Elstub and Carrick 2020).

Our evidence also indicated that CAUK could enhance the influence of the select committees over relevant government departments (Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy 2020), although this was far from guaranteed. It was dependent on widespread public awareness of the process. Moreover, the split of the assembly into topic groups reduced the potential for government influence, as it meant some of the recommendations were not considered by the whole assembly, but rather a portion of it.

We have not assessed the impact of CAUK on key stakeholders, but given their extensive engagement with CAUK, this could be the focus of further evaluation.

Impact on Public

A successful climate assembly would stimulate public debate and even influence public opinion about climate change and decarbonisation. To achieve this aim the assembly needs expansive media coverage and a communications budget sufficient to deliver this. CAUK received more media coverage than any previous mini-public in the UK. The communications strategy was a significant step forward from the CA the House of Commons previously commissioned on social care funding (Elstub and Carrick 2019). Most of the mainstream media coverage, while positive, came around the launch of the report, while social media communications were more intensive and wide-reaching at the start of the assembly. Overall, the communications strategy was under-funded. An approach specially tailored to the logic of CAs is required. Exactly what the features of this would include requires further comparative evidence. However, some climate assemblies (such as in France) have received a lot of media exposure and lessons need to be learnt from their approach, including the budget that was made available for communications. CA organisers should also not just rely on communications to connect with the public.





Processes of broader public engagement can be in-built in, such as in the British Columbia CA on electoral reform which involved the AMs holding public hearings in their local area (Fournier 2011). Indeed, the CAUK organisers would have liked to have a more ambitious crowdsourcing process to extend its reach and make it more inclusive (Interview, CAUK Organiser). Ultimately, we found low levels of awareness of CAUK amongst the UK public and this did not change much through the course of the process. This was a shame because the more people who were aware of CAUK, and the more they understood its process and remit, the more they thought it legitimate for it to influence UK climate policy. This, coupled with our finding that greater public awareness would add more pressure on government to respond to associated select committee activity, demonstrates the importance of a successful communications strategy.

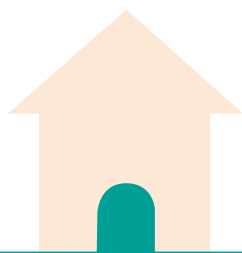
10.3 Recommendations

We conclude our report with some recommendations that draw lessons from the notable strengths of the CAUK process, but that could also help address some of its limitations that we highlighted in section 10.2. These 12 recommendations relate to: the organisation of climate assemblies, but also CAs and mini-publics more generally,

and the UK Parliament specifically, but also to other legislatures interested in mini-publics. They relate to participant recruitment, the scope and input of evidence, online assemblies, links to parliament and communication and engagement.

Participant Recruitment

13. *Attitudinal Sampling*: moving beyond sampling participants on demographic criteria to also sample on attitudes to climate change when recruiting AMs was an excellent initiative, and ensured more balance across the assembly. This should be used for CA, and mini-public recruitment more generally, providing there is a reliable proxy indicator of public opinion on the issue at hand available that can be used to guide the sampling.
14. *Topic Information*: to reduce self-selection amongst those more interested in the issue, and to prevent participants researching the issue in advance of the start of the assembly, as little information as possible should be provided during participant recruitment about the topic the CA will address. This is somewhat at odds with recommendation #1, but attitudinal sampling could still occur through hidden questions in a recruitment survey. It remains to be seen if there would be higher rates of attrition once participants learnt the topic of the assembly.





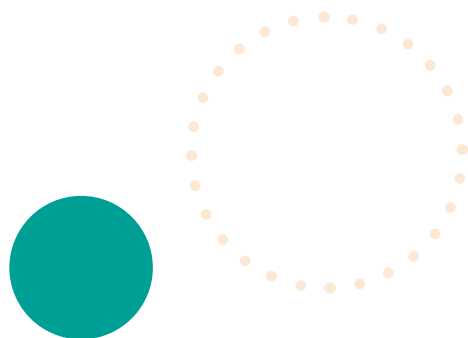
Assembly Scope and Evidence

15. *Assembly Member Input:* climate change and decarbonisation are huge issues in scope (as well as importance). Four weekends are probably an insufficient amount of time for a climate assembly. Many AMs wanted more time to consider information and deliberate the issues. Nevertheless, even with more time, trade-offs need to be made about what specific issues can be included in an assembly. There were limitations to the manner in which the topic groups were used in CAUK to achieve this aim. Some AMs were reticent about not being informed about all topics: it compromised their willingness to endorse recommendations from other groups and reduced the impact of the recommendations on those external to the assembly. Moreover, the determination of the focus of each topic group was done in a top-down manner. Although this would have taken more time, a better approach might have been to enable the AMs to refine the scope of the assembly themselves once they had become more informed about climate change and decarbonisation. Similarly, the provision of information to the AMs was overly top-down too, typified by the 'future scenarios' being determined by the expert leads. Again, the AMs could have been given some say in the types of information they needed. This would of course take more time, and increase the cost of the assembly. This is not insignificant given that some parliamentarians were already concerned about this. Nevertheless, the cost of Citizens' Assemblies to

parliament compares favourably to the costs of international committee visits (Beswick and Elstub 2019).

Online Assemblies

16. *Hybrid In-Person and Online Assemblies:* the quality of deliberation in the online sessions of CAUK was superior to the in-person sessions. We attribute this to the digital deliberation coming at the end of the process by which time the AMs had already formed bonds with each other and developed their deliberation skills. Nevertheless, it does indicate that it is perhaps not necessary for an entire assembly to be conducted in-person. There could be a combination of in-person and online sessions. This could reduce the costs of assemblies too, or enable them to be longer, thereby addressing some of the issues raised in recommendation #3.
17. *Online Social Sessions:* if CAs are held online, entirely or in part, there should be space made available for AMs to socialise together. The social side enhances the experience for the AMs, but can also improve deliberation and engagement with evidence in the formal sessions.





Links to Parliament

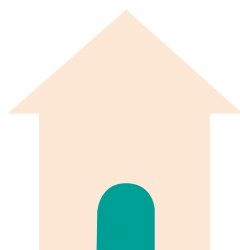
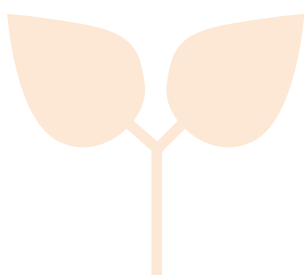
18. *MPs Attending*: if an MP is a member of a committee that commissions a mini-public then they should attend as an observer. The first-hand experience of seeing the process makes it much more likely that they will see the value of it, and this increases the chances that they will take on board the mini-public recommendations. This would be easier to achieve if the mini-publics were held in London, but this would also increase costs. It is worth the UK Parliament considering developing a suitable space to host mini-publics within the palace of Westminster itself in the forthcoming refurbishment, as they do not currently have suitable facilities for this (Interview, CAUK Organiser).
19. *Ongoing Information*: regular updates about the progress of the mini-public should be provided to the relevant parliamentary committees throughout the process to ensure committee members are kept on board and can invest more in the process.
20. *Timing of CAs in the Electoral Cycle*: to reduce the disruptions that elections can cause to parliamentary committee memberships, mini-publics commissioned by the committees should be held towards the start of a parliament where possible.
21. *Mini-Publics Review Group*: Elstub et al. (2019) and Elstub and Carrick (2019) suggest that parliaments should have 'Mini-Publics Review Groups' to oversee the use of mini-publics across the committee system. They suggest the review group could manage a parliamentary budget for this type of public engagement, ensure that the planned remit is appropriate for a mini-public and advise on the most appropriate type of mini-public given the remit. They suggest that this would ensure the committee had the commitment and cross-party support to take onboard the mini-public's recommendations. In addition, our evaluation of CAUK suggests that the Review Group could ensure the committee(s) have clear plans for how they will deal with the recommendations before they receive them.

Communication and Engagement

22. *Mini-Public Report*: we found that the length of the report on the mini-public can affect engagement with the recommendations. Whilst there is a need for full documentation of the process and outcomes, key results could still be made available in more diverse and digestible forms. For example, interactive digital content could be generated, particularly for large scale and national mini-publics like CAUK.

23. *Communications Strategy*: in order to promote broader public awareness and engagement with mini-publics there needs to be a bespoke and co-ordinated communication strategy that is sufficiently funded. It is not too late to invest more in communications for CAUK now, especially as climate change is increasingly on the agenda with COP26. In particular, broadcast media should be targeted.

24. *Public Engagement*: mini-public organisers should not solely rely on media coverage to promote the process to the public. Opportunities for engagement with members of the public, who are not recruited as mini-public participants, should be built into the design of the process, especially when it is a large-scale national process like CAUK. Therefore, timescales and budgets should be such as to allow this to happen.



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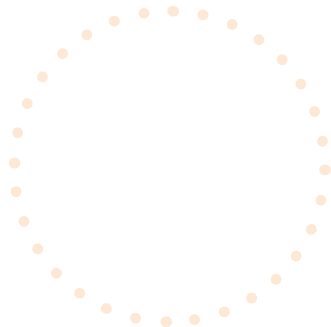
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Appendices

Appendix 1: Small Group Discussion Coding Framework		
Subject	Items	Modalities
Assembly Session	Weekend (W)	1 - 4 (a, b, c)
	Day (D)	0) Saturday; 1) Sunday
	Session number	
	Table number (TN)	
Assembly Members	Speech act format (SAF)	0) Extra speech acts (only use * codes); 1) Speech acts with a demand;
	AM gender (FG)	0)Male; 1) Female
	Pertinence (P) *	0) no; 1) yes
	Level of Justification of Demand (LJD)	0) no justification; 1) inferior justification; 2) qualified justification
	Level of generality of argument (LGA)	0) no argument in the speech act; 1) argument referring to personal interest; 2) argument referring to group interest; 3) interest of marginalised groups; 4) argument referring to general interest
	Respect Towards Demands (RTD)*	0) No respect; 1) Neutral; 2) Explicit respect; NA) there are no demands as yet
	Respect Towards Person (Civility) (RTP) *	0) No respect; 1) Neutral; 2) Explicit respect
	Request for Information (RI) *	0) no request for information in the speech act; 1) request for information about process in the speech act 2) request for information about topic in the speech act
	Expert Opinion (EO) *	0) no opinions of experts referred to in the speech act; 1) expert opinion supported by the speaking AM in the speech act; 2) expert opinion contrasted by the speaking AM in the speech act
	Length of Speech Act* (LSA)	Number of characters (no spaces)
	Facilitator number (FN)	
	Facilitator gender (FG)	0)Male; 1) Female
	New idea and interpretation (NII)	0) facilitator introduces a new idea or interpretation in the discussion; 1) facilitator does not introduce a new idea or interpretation in the discussion
	Argumentation (A)	0) facilitator does not ask for justification; 1) facilitator asks for justification
	Invite to speak (IS)	0) facilitator does not invite an AM to speak; 1) facilitator invites an AM to speak
Facilitators	Taking a position (TP)	0) facilitator takes a position on the issue under discussion; 1) facilitator does not take a position on the issue under discussion
	Length of speech act (FLSA)	Number of characters (no spaces)



Appendix 2: Small Group Discussion Intercoder Reliability			
Item	Percentage Agreement	Cohens Kappa	Level of Agreement
Speech act format (SAF)	100	1	Perfect
Pertinence (P) *	92.31	0.459	Moderate
Level of Justification of Demand (LJD)	84.62	0.726	Substantial
Level of generality of argument (LGA)	86.92	0.762	Substantial
Respect Towards Demands (RTD)*	100	1	Perfect
Respect Towards Person (Civility) (RTP) *	74.62	0.434	Moderate
Request for Information (RI) *	76.15	0.296	Fair
Expert Opinion (EO) *	72.31	0.265	Fair
New idea and interpretation (NII)	100	1	Perfect
Argumentation (A)	100	1	Perfect
Invite to speak (IS)	92.92	0.757	Substantial
Taking a position (TP)	100	1	Perfect

