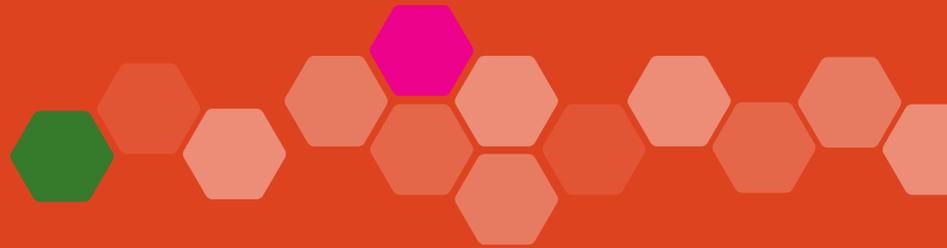




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Scotland's Climate Assembly Research Report: process, impact and Assembly member experience



PEOPLE, COMMUNITIES AND PLACES





Scotland's Climate Assembly Research Report: process, impact and Assembly member experience

March 2022

Scottish Government Social Research
in collaboration with



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Executive Summary

About this report

This report presents findings from independent research into Scotland's Climate Assembly.

The Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 required Scottish Ministers to establish a citizens' assembly on climate change, to function independently from the Scottish Government.

Citizens' assemblies bring together a group of individuals, recruited through random and stratified selection to broadly represent the wider population with respect to key demographics, and in some assemblies, views on the issue under consideration. The assembly deliberates on information provided by experts, which leads to the production of a set of recommendations with the aim to inform decision making.

Scotland's Climate Assembly was organised and delivered by a Stewarding Group, Secretariat, Design and Facilitation Team, and Evidence Group. The Assembly was conducted entirely online, due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Assembly had 106 members¹. These were individuals randomly selected to broadly represent the wider population of Scotland with respect to key demographics and climate attitudes.

The Assembly met online over seven weekends between November 2020 and March 2021 to deliberate on information provided by experts and produce a set of recommendations, addressing the question: *How should Scotland change to tackle the climate emergency in an effective and fair way?*

For three of the seven weekends, the Assembly members were split into three separate topic streams: Diet, Land Use & Lifestyle; Homes & Communities; and Travel & Work.

The Assembly Report containing the recommendations was laid in the Scottish Parliament on 23 June 2021. The Act required Scottish Ministers to publish a statement within 6 months of receiving the report setting out how they intend to respond to the recommendations. This response was published on 16 December 2021². An eighth Assembly weekend meeting was held in February 2022 to discuss the Scottish Government response. For the purposes of this research, Weekend 8 is regarded as a follow-up meeting and not part of the main Assembly.

This research report covers:

- Assembly process including organisation, remit and evidence.
- Assembly member experience including participation, learning and climate attitudes.

¹ 105 members were initially recruited. 11 withdrew in the early stages and 12 were added.

² Scottish Government response to Scotland's Climate Assembly recommendations for action <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-government-response-scotlands-climate-assembly-recommendations-action/>

- Assembly member and public support for the Assembly and its recommendations.
- impact of the Assembly on climate change debate and policy in Scotland.
- outcomes for members including climate action and civic attitudes and participation.

The report concludes with discussion of key factors affecting the quality of the Assembly, and the impact of the Assembly on government policy and public debate in Scotland. It identifies key considerations for future assemblies: citizens' assemblies in general, online assemblies, assemblies in Scotland, and climate assemblies. Finally, key areas for further research are identified, for this Assembly and more generally.

Research methodology

The research presented in this report has been conducted by Scottish Government Social Researchers working in collaboration with an academic researcher from Newcastle University.

This report addresses the following research objectives:

- a) to evaluate the success of the Assembly as a deliberative process³, identifying key factors affecting its quality.
- b) to contribute to cumulative learning in Scottish Government about the effective use of citizens' assemblies and other deliberative approaches, in the specific context of the manifesto commitment to holding citizens' assemblies.
- c) to contribute to international evidence and learning on use of deliberative approaches for engaging citizens in government policy development, particularly on climate change, and in the specific context of Scotland.

The research used a mixed methods approach to analyse and integrate a range of different types of data. Data sources analysed for this report include:

- online member surveys, conducted prior to Assembly starting and after each Weekend meeting.
- non-participant observation of Assembly small group discussions.
- audio recordings of Assembly small group discussions.
- qualitative semi-structured interviews and a qualitative survey with 18 people involved in organising and delivering the Assembly, including members of the Secretariat, Design and Facilitation Team, Stewarding Group and Evidence Group. These interviews were conducted after the Assembly ended.
- population survey by Deltapoll with representative sample of 1917 adults in Scotland, conducted 29 July-14 August 2021.
- evidence presentations from the Assembly.
- the Assembly report.

³ A 'deliberative process' is an inclusive process that considers a range of perspectives in a reasoned and respectful manner.

- secondary data on climate and civic attitudes.
- Scottish Government policy documents.
- media coverage.

The member surveys were completed by around two thirds of members⁴. Therefore, the results presented in this report should be regarded as indicative only of the views of all Assembly members.

Member quotes are included for illustrative purposes and to provide nuance. The quantitative survey findings are also supplemented with qualitative vignettes of four members' experiences, charting different types of journeys through the Assembly. Pseudonyms have been used for the vignettes, and quotes have been anonymised. Where data exists, members' views have been compared with results of the Deltapoll population survey and other secondary data.

In this report, interviewees and survey respondents from the Stewarding Group, the Secretariat, the Design and Facilitation Team and the Evidence Group are collectively referred to 'Organising members' to protect anonymity.

Throughout the report, a simple broad scale is used to describe the rough proportion of research participants giving a certain view or response:

- all = everyone in the sample
- most / a majority = more than half of the sample
- some / a minority = less than half but more than 'a few'
- a few = two to five (depending on sample size)
- one = one person
- strong support = 75% and above
- majority support = 50-75%

Further details of the methodology including limitations can be found in Appendix 1. Data tables for the quantitative data in this report are published alongside the report.

Key findings

On the whole, the research finds that the Assembly was well organised and delivered, with several innovative features including:

- involvement of Children's Parliament in a parallel process that at times interlinked with the Assembly, and the inclusion of their Calls to Action in the Assembly Report.
- presenting Assembly members with scenarios of possible futures that depicted different worldviews and routes that could be taken to address climate change, and that showed how change can happen at different levels and paces.

⁴ The final Assembly meeting, Weekend 8, held in February 2022 was attended by only 73 members, of whom 70% completed the member survey. The survey results are treated with caution in this report.

- more measures were used to integrate the work of different topic streams than in previous climate assemblies.
- creation and promotion of a Civic Charter expressing support for the Assembly and its recommendations, which has been signed by organisations and individuals.
- continuation of the Secretariat after the main Assembly period, to organise public engagement activities and engagement with government officials and ministers and members of Parliament.
- organising a further Assembly meeting to discuss the Scottish Government response to the Assembly recommendations, including a Ministerial Q&A.

The Assembly members received a range of relevant information on climate change and its mitigation, and to a lesser extent information on adaptation. Member survey data suggests that on the whole members' learning about climate change and their support for particular climate actions increased over the course of the Assembly, as did their concern about climate change as an urgent issue.

Survey data indicates there is strong support from Assembly members and majority support from the Scottish public for the Assembly goals and recommendations, and the statements of ambition. The Assembly has also featured in news media coverage of climate change.

Whilst there is evidence that the Assembly has made a contribution to climate change debate and policy in Scotland, more research is needed over the longer term to assess the extent of its impact with regards to influencing specific changes in policy and debate in the coming months and years.

However, there were also limitations to the Assembly and some aspects that worked less well. In the following sections, key lessons and considerations for future assemblies are identified. This learning can make an important contribution to improving outcomes of Scottish Government policy, both in relation to climate change and to participatory and deliberative democracy.

The Scottish Government has stated its commitment to improving outcomes and improving people's experiences in numerous policy spaces in recent years. This is rooted in a long-standing commitment to, for example, the Scottish Approach to Service Design⁵, the outcomes focus of the National Performance Framework⁶ and the principles of Public Service Reform⁷ which emphasise the need to be in constant dialogue with Scotland's people: listening, engaging and responding, and building on the principle that everyone is entitled to have the opportunity to shape Scotland's shared future.

⁵ Scottish Approach to Service Design <https://www.gov.scot/publications/the-scottish-approach-to-service-design/>

⁶ National Performance Framework <https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/>

⁷ Scottish Government's public service reform approach to improve public services <https://www.gov.scot/policies/improving-public-services/>

Assembly organisation

The organisers successfully delivered an online citizens' assembly that produced a range of recommendations to address climate change, during difficult circumstances due to the Covid-19 pandemic. A majority of Assembly members were satisfied with the organisation, communication and support they received.

Early relational work between the Secretariat and the Stewarding Group was helpful in building a good relationship, with the Stewarding Group providing a useful steer for the Secretariat. There were also positive relationships between the Secretariat and the Design Team although there were differences in views about the extent to which the Assembly had been co-designed. The Evidence Group had less time to build relationships and trust before the start of the Assembly, which likely contributed to a challenging start with their decision making process, although this improved over the course of the Assembly.

The Assembly was delivered within a short period of time due to requirements of the Climate Change Act and the Scottish Parliamentary pre-election period, further Covid-related legislation notwithstanding⁸. Whilst this tight schedule generated a sense of momentum, it created pressures for all aspects of planning and delivery, which were experienced as challenging or stressful by some, as well as pressures for members in digesting large volumes of evidence in short periods between weekends. Many other factors affecting the quality of the Assembly likely stem from this issue.

There was some uncertainty and lack of clarity regarding roles, relationships and decision making authority of the various groups involved in organising and delivering the Assembly, including the relationship between the Secretariat and the Scottish Government.

Late design decisions before many of the Assembly weekends, whilst enabling responsiveness to emerging issues, limited possibilities for oversight by the Stewarding Group and impacted on the ability of others to adequately plan and deliver. There was also a reliance on Evidence Group members voluntarily contributing more time than contracted or agreed, which not all were able to do, thereby exacerbating inequalities in contributions.

Assembly remit

The use of a deliberative process for developing the Assembly question by the Stewarding Group worked well. However, there were differences in views about how to operationalise the Assembly question, in terms of what it meant for the evidence and tasks set to members. These differences mainly related to: how closely the Assembly should align with policy needs with respect to the Climate Change Act and its targets, the extent to which the Assembly should explore the reasons why climate change is deemed an emergency, how strategic, and how radical an approach it should take or allow. These differences indicate a diversity of views amongst the various groups involved in organising and delivering the Assembly (the Stewarding Group, Secretariat, Design and Facilitation Team and Evidence Group), which is positive from a deliberative perspective, although the

⁸ See Full Report 2.3.1 Planning the Assembly (footnotes 42 & 43).

differences were not resolved. There were also differences in views about the extent to which the Assembly dealt effectively with the systemic nature of climate change.

The final remit was very broad, making it a challenge to address in the time available, despite having seven weekends. Indeed, many members felt the sessions were rushed with insufficient deliberation time to develop their recommendations.

To satisfactorily address the broad question, the Assembly was divided into topic streams for three of the seven weekends, which enabled members in each stream to go into more depth on that topic. The topics were chosen by the organisers rather than the Assembly members. The material from all of the streams was made available to all Assembly members, but as time for reviewing the material was not built in to the sessions, they would have had to review it in their own time. This introduces elements of inequality, as some members would not have time or skills to do so in isolation, and it risks perpetuating the learning inequalities that citizens' assemblies are designed to overcome. The topic stream structure meant that Assembly members did not all engage with the same evidence, and also made interconnections between topics more difficult to understand.

Measures were put in place to integrate the topic streams and to share learning and deliberation across the streams, which enabled more co-ordination of the recommendations than in other climate assemblies, for example Climate Assembly UK⁹. These measures involved mixed stream groups in Weekends 6 and 7, which helped members to understand the recommendations made in other streams and why they were proposed, although not to the same extent as the recommendations from their own stream. There was an element of members having to trust that members in other streams had followed a good process to arrive at their recommendations, with some more comfortable about relying on trust than others. The mixed stream groups were therefore not sufficient to ensure that all Assembly members had gained enough knowledge and understanding to fully endorse recommendations from the other streams. The broad remit also led to a large number of recommendations being made by the Assembly, with differences in views about whether a large number of recommendations is problematic.

As the Assembly remit did not include a critical review of all existing and planned Scottish Government climate policy, members were not necessarily aware of all that was already in process and consequently developed some recommendations that broadly matched existing or planned policy.

Online format

Running an entire Assembly online is extremely difficult, but the challenge was met effectively and the organisers were well prepared for the online digital format. There was a good level of technical support for members, both in advance and during the Assembly, although connectivity issues impacted at times on some members' ability to participate. Video presentations enabled review of the presentations in advance of them being broadcast to Assembly members, allowed for re-watching

⁹ Evaluation of Climate Assembly UK <https://www.parliament.uk/globalassets/documents/get-involved2/climate-assembly-uk/evaluation-of-climate-assembly-uk.pdf>

by members, as well as allowing the evidence to be easily made publicly available. Other advantages of the online format included availability of experts and accessibility for those members for whom attending in person would have been problematic.

However, there were disadvantages. Shorter sessions (due to concerns of online fatigue) meant less time for evidence and deliberation, it was also more difficult to cater for a range of learning styles, and more difficult to both facilitate and monitor the performance of facilitators.

Whilst a sense of community amongst the members was generated, there were different opinions about whether more social activities would have enhanced this further. Previous studies have found that sense of community and socialisation can elevate the quality of deliberation. However, as this research has found, with a topic stream structure, a strong overall assembly identity may increase the risk of insufficient critique of outputs between topic streams.

Assembly design

Most members found the small group, mixed stream and plenary sessions helpful for their learning, and were satisfied with the balance of open discussions to task-based discussions.

However, there were difficulties in completing tasks within session time, and work was often rushed and at times overran into breaks. There were also difficulties in balancing time for evidence with time for deliberation in the time available. Indeed, many members did not feel there had been enough time to develop and finalise the recommendations, even if most agreed their views were reflected in the final outputs.

Overall, there were good elements to the facilitation, particularly given the considerable challenges of facilitating online and working with multiple tools and documents. As a result, members largely felt included and respected, with ample opportunity to express their views, although there were at times issues with one or more members dominating their small group, affecting others' participation.

A key feature of deliberation is members putting forward ideas and suggestions about what should be done (referred to as 'demands'). This requires particular facilitation techniques. Within this Assembly, techniques employed were more in keeping with fostering dialogue than deliberation. This may have contributed to the low level of demands that were made in the sample of group discussions analysed. When members did make demands, they mostly included a justification. However, only around a third of justifications made an explicit link between the demand and the reason. Such a link is an indicator of quality in deliberation. Most justifications were in service of the general interest or common good, which is also an important deliberative norm.

There were instances when facilitators inaccurately recorded members' contributions, and these mistakes were not always picked up. Members were not always enabled to write down their views or ask questions to experts themselves.

Good pastoral support for members during the Assembly was provided, although more staff resource would have been helpful due to the emotional labour involved.

The process and tasks were generally explained well to members. However, it was not always clear to members how their work had been collated and consolidated between weekends. Members had some opportunity to influence the Assembly process, and most members felt their views were reflected in the various outputs over the course of the Assembly, suggesting an overall high sense of ownership of the process and outputs.

Evidence

The evidence provided was generally good quality in terms of content, with high production values. However, peer review processes could have been better and more consistent.

Survey and observational data suggests that Assembly members understood and engaged well with the evidence, although there could have been better use of resources such as evidence summaries to help members keep track of key points. Some members felt overwhelmed at times by the volume of information. Although the interactions between experts and members was limited, both groups found it useful.

There were differing views on the extent to which diversity and balance of evidence had been achieved. Climate impacts, adaptation and resilience were under-represented in the evidence relative to mitigation, with this imbalance also reflected in the Assembly recommendations. Some interviewees also thought that the severity of the climate crisis may not have been sufficiently conveyed to members, particularly in the first two weekends.

Deliberative process

The findings indicate that, on the whole, the Assembly was successful as a deliberative process:

- the Assembly brought together a diverse set of people from Scotland, with differing views on climate change.
- the members were enabled to have meaningful discussions about how Scotland should tackle the climate emergency in an effective and fair way.
- the Assembly was successfully run online with generally high levels of member engagement.
- demands made by members in a sample of small group discussions about what should be done were frequently justified with reasons relating to the common good.

Assembly impact

This section provides an overview of public support for the Assembly and its outputs, and an assessment of the impact of the assembly on climate policy and debate in Scotland, based on data available to date. Key outcomes for members are also summarised.

Public support

Survey data indicates there is majority support from the Scottish public for the Assembly goals and recommendations, and the statements of ambition.

According to Implicit Response Testing, some statements of ambition from the Assembly appear to have higher emotional resonance with the public than others. The message that everyone having a shared role in taking action is likely to have high emotional connection whereas there may be some resistance to messages that make a direct and specific demand for cultural change at various levels, including personal change. There also seems to be some doubt about Scotland's capacity to be a climate change pioneer.

Both the Citizens' Assembly of Scotland and the Deltapoll population surveys find that a majority of the public appear to support fundamentally changing Scotland's economic model to tackle climate change, and think that new ways of engaging people in decision making are needed and that citizens' assemblies are worthwhile. These are tentative findings, hence further research on these aspects is needed.

Impact on Scottish Government policy

The Scottish Government response is comprehensive, but the way it is written makes it difficult to identify exactly what impact the Assembly has had on policy, and no evidence of Assembly impact was found in other policy documents analysed. It is generally unclear in the government response how change will be implemented at the scale and urgency emphasised in the Assembly Report's Statement of Ambition.

With an overall lack of specific timescales and measureable objectives in both the Assembly recommendations and the government response, comparing recommended to existing or planned action is open to interpretation. A third of recommendations appear to broadly match existing or planned policy, with around a fifth being explored by government in some way albeit with no commitment to implementing. Over a third of recommendations include policy that will not be taken forward. Whilst 14 recommendations relate to UK Government reserved matters, the Scottish Government committed to contacting the UK Government about these, and has done so¹⁰.

Member survey results indicate that between the end of the main Assembly period and after receiving the government response, there was a decline in members' confidence in the Scottish Government taking the Assembly seriously. There also appears to be some misalignment in views and expectations, between the Scottish Government and Assembly members, as to what constitutes an appropriate government response.

There were many features of the Assembly that were designed to optimise its impact. The Secretariat remained in post beyond the end of the Assembly enabling them to promote the Assembly recommendations within the Scottish Government. The Civic Charter has mobilised some stakeholders and civil society groups to support the Assembly recommendations. Weekend 8 brought the Assembly members and Government Ministers into discussion together, via a Q&A session, over the government response to the Assembly.

¹⁰ Letter from Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport to UK Government regarding Scotland's Climate Assembly <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-climate-assembly-letter-from-cabinet-secretary-for-net-zero-energy-and-transport-to-uk-government/>

Impact on climate change debate

The analysis of online news media found that coverage was dominated by three Scottish-based outlets, which was also the case with the Citizens' Assembly of Scotland. There were higher levels of coverage when the final Assembly report was published and during COP26. The Scottish Government's response has received little media coverage to date, though it may yet increase. To date, the coverage has been primarily positive or neutral (40% and 41% of all coverage respectively). The analysis shows that the Assembly has contributed to the climate change debate in the online written news media. However, in the absence of a counterfactual, the way in which it has changed the debate is unknown.

Outcomes for members

Evidence suggests the most popular climate actions for Assembly members since taking part in the Assembly are: reducing amount of meat and dairy in diet, reducing overall consumption, and reducing domestic energy use. Other popular actions include: discussing climate change and politics with friends and family, and making consumer decisions based on associated climate impacts. Many members feel more confident to engage in political decision-making as a result of being involved with the Assembly, and agree that taking part in the Assembly has made them want to be more involved in other aspects of government decision making.

Key considerations for future assemblies

Considerations for citizens' assemblies

This Assembly has enabled valuable public deliberation over an important public policy issue. Key considerations include:

- extent to which future citizens' assemblies should give members more say on the Assembly remit, evidence, decision-making process and report drafting. In this Assembly there were some measures in place to enable the members to have some control of the process. However, they could have been afforded more opportunities to shape the agenda in accordance with the Arrangements for the Administration and Operation of Citizens' Assembly of Scotland: Scotland's Climate Assembly, which states that "within the remit of the legislation, and with expert support, members of the assembly (once in place) will be able to shape the assembly's agenda."¹¹
- how much time should be made available for building relationships between organising/delivery groups in advance of key decision making to improve communication and collaboration, and to make best use of experts' time.
- how to schedule Assembly weekends so it is (a) not overwhelming for members, (b) ensures that there is a manageable workload for organising and delivering the Assembly (including evidence provision), whilst (c) still ensuring there is momentum to the process, and (d) that information provided is not forgotten by Assembly members.

¹¹ Scotland's Climate Assembly operations and administration arrangements
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-climate-assembly-operations-administration-arrangements/>

- including pathways to impact that were adopted in this Assembly e.g. the continuation of the Secretariat beyond the duration of the Assembly to organise public engagement activities, the Civic Charter, COP26 related events, and occasions that bring Government ministers and Assembly members into discussion together.
- how governments formally respond to citizens' assemblies with clarity and precision, for example making use of a 'you said, we did' format.
- how scrutiny of government action in response to assembly recommendations should take place.
- designing a research programme that allows for assessment of impact over the longer term, and that embeds data collection from members into the Assembly programme.

Considerations for citizens' assemblies in Scotland

This research on Scotland's Climate Assembly indicates public support for more assemblies to be organised in Scotland that enable the public to contribute to policy issues and debate in a balanced and informed manner.

Consideration could be given to institutionalising the use of citizens' assemblies by establishing rules and regulations for their instigation, governance, and Government response; clarifying issues of independence and accountability; and providing an office space and a dedicated budget to fund citizens' assemblies and to fund the implementation of key recommendations. This could have a number of benefits including:

- mitigating the negative consequences of introducing legislative requirements to conduct a citizens' assembly within a limited set time period.
- enabling clear rules and resources for the governance of citizens' assemblies so there is a clear division of labour, but also sufficient resources to staff the assembly organisation and provision of evidence adequately.
- providing adequate resource within government to respond to and implement assembly recommendations.
- aligning stakeholders' expectations about the nature of the Government response, and what constitutes an appropriate response.
- supporting cumulative learning, as experience is sustained across assemblies.
- promoting scrutiny of government actions.

The institutionalisation of citizens' assemblies requires that the organisation, practice, and culture of government is open to heeding assembly recommendations and learning lessons from the Climate Assembly and other deliberative processes to support improvement¹². Additionally, for Scotland, investment and training is needed to increase the facilitation capacity for deliberative processes.

A further consideration is how to handle topics involving matters reserved to UK Government.

¹² OECD (2021).

Considerations for online assemblies

The research shows that citizens' assemblies can be successfully held entirely online. However, there are some key considerations for future online assemblies.

- how to provide evidence in a variety of formats to meet different learning style needs.
- how to ensure there are frequent opportunities for assembly members and experts to discuss the issues together.
- if shorter sessions are used for online assemblies, due to the greater intensity of digital participation, how to ensure there is still sufficient time for deliberation.
- innovation is required to enable quality control and review of the facilitation to occur in online sessions. For example, small group discussions could be recorded and reviewed at a later date.
- provision of social opportunities to enable assembly members to bond and build trust in ways that provide a bedrock to deliberation and decision-making, and that support equal participation in a manner that does not exclude some members or hinder critical exploration. With a topic stream structure, a strong assembly identity may also increase the risk of insufficient critique of outputs from other streams. Further consideration needs to be given as to whether social opportunities are an optional or required part of participation, and whether these social activities are included in the gift payments to members. Social opportunities increase the workload for members and could be a barrier to participation or create difficulties for some members e.g. those with caring responsibilities or who work unsocial hours.

Considerations for climate assemblies

The research indicates that citizens' assemblies are a good format to enable the public to engage in climate change debate. Considerations for future climate assemblies relate to the remit, evidence and Assembly member wellbeing.

Remit of Assembly

- climate change is vast and complex, and is not a 'problem' that can be 'solved'. However, Assembly members could be empowered to refine the remit and consider the areas of climate change that are of greatest importance to them or of highest societal priority in mitigating emissions and adapting to climate impacts.
- how closely the assembly question, evidence and deliberation should be aligned with policy needs (e.g. legislation and targets), or should have a more open remit.
- how to ensure the systemic nature of climate change is designed in to the process in a way that does not over-complicate the learning experience for members.
- the implications of how the assembly question is framed for the number and scope of the resulting recommendations, and whether to restrict the number of recommendations produced.

- whether to include a critical review of existing policy to avoid Assembly members spending time developing recommendations for policies that already exist or are planned, of which they were unaware.
- as climate change is a long term phenomenon with potential for fast or unexpected developments due to feedbacks and tipping points, the policy context will also change. A one-off Assembly is unlikely to be sufficient, and consideration will need to be given to the shelf-life of recommendations and whether further or ongoing assemblies are required. A more permanent arrangement would enable more responsive governance.

Evidence

- how to ensure evidence relating to climate impacts, adaptation and resilience is as effectively communicated to members as mitigation.
- how the severity, scale and urgency of the climate crisis can be adequately conveyed to assembly members.
- understanding that there are no “neutral” ways of communicating about climate change, as all communication involves framing. A perception that scientific evidence is objective, values-free and emotion-free can lead to bias in selection of evidence. Care therefore needs to be taken to understand the implications of choices.
- development of a robust and consistent peer review process for the provision of evidence, with a shared understanding of what constitutes balance and bias.
- whether and how much to include children’s views. Whilst this was welcomed by some members of this Assembly, others thought the time would have been better spent on deliberation of evidence.

Assembly member wellbeing

- how the emotional wellbeing of members is monitored and supported as they learn about the severity of the crisis, as well as deal with the nature of the Government response.

Further research

Key areas for further research on Scotland’s Climate Assembly, and for citizens’ and climate assemblies in general, include:

- analysis of impact on policy of Scotland’s Climate Assembly over the longer term.
- assess the impact of the Civic Charter on the signatories’ organisational policies and practices, or on other parties’ policies.
- analysis of broadcast and social media coverage of Scotland’s Climate Assembly for further evidence of impact on debate.
- longitudinal research on the relationship between Assembly members and Scottish Government.
- involvement of Assembly members in further political activity, including in relation to deliberative or participatory democracy.
- climate mitigation and adaptation behaviours of Assembly members.

- comparative analysis of Scotland's Climate Assembly with other climate assemblies to enhance understanding of the contribution they can make to climate governance at local and national levels.
- how the organisation, practice and culture of the Scottish Government, and governments and parliaments in general, need to be reformed to enable an empowering role for citizens' assemblies.
- comparative analysis of existing attempts to institutionalise deliberative mini-publics such as citizens' assemblies.

Information about climate assemblies including research publications can be found at the Knowledge Network on Climate Assemblies website <https://knoca.eu/>.

1. Introduction

1.1 About this report

This report presents findings from independent research into Scotland's Climate Assembly¹³. The research has been conducted by Scottish Government Social Researchers working in collaboration with an academic researcher from Newcastle University.

The research investigates:

- Assembly process including organisation, remit and evidence.
- Assembly member experience including participation, learning and climate attitudes.
- Assembly member and public support for the Assembly and its recommendations.
- impact of the Assembly on climate change debate and policy in Scotland.
- outcomes for members including climate action and civic attitudes and participation.

1.2 Scotland's Climate Assembly

Citizens' assemblies bring together a group of individuals, recruited through random and stratified selection to broadly represent the wider population with respect to key demographics, and in some assemblies, views on the issue under consideration. The assembly deliberates on information provided by experts, which leads to the production of a set of recommendations with the aim to inform decision making¹⁴.

Scotland's Climate Assembly is Scotland's first citizens' assembly concerned with climate change, and the first national climate assembly to be conducted entirely online (due to the Covid-19 pandemic).

The Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 required Scottish Ministers to establish a citizens' assembly to exercise functions including¹⁵:

- consider how to prevent or minimise, or remedy or mitigate the effects of, climate change.
- make recommendations on measures proposed to achieve the emissions reduction targets.
- make recommendations about such other matters in relation to climate change.

Under the Act, the Assembly was required to set out its recommendations in a report laid before the Scottish Parliament, with a copy sent to the Scottish Ministers.

¹³ Scotland's Climate Assembly website <https://www.climateassembly.scot/>

¹⁴ Curato et al (2021).

¹⁵ The Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2019/15/section/9/enacted>

Ministers were required, within 6 months of receiving the report, to publish a statement setting out how they intend to respond to the recommendations.

There were several groups involved in organising and delivering the Assembly: the Stewarding Group, the Secretariat, the Design Team, and the Evidence Group¹⁶. The Climate Change Act also required that there should be two Convenors independent of Scottish Ministers and the Scottish Parliament. The roles of these groups are outlined in Table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1 Groups involved in the organisation and delivery of Scotland's Climate Assembly

The **Stewarding Group** had 22 members with expertise across different sectors and includes representatives of all political parties represented in the Scottish Parliament, experts in deliberative processes including civil servants, climate activists, representatives of young people, and individuals working in key sectors including business, transport, housing, agriculture, and the oil and gas industry. The role of the Stewarding Group has focused on providing advice and guidance in all aspects of the Assembly as well as ensuring balance and legitimacy throughout.

The **Secretariat** was established to function independently of the Scottish Government and was largely staffed by civil servants on secondment. The role of the Secretariat has focused on the organisation and running of the Assembly, supporting the administrative functions and providing the framework for experts to develop the process and evidence. The Scottish Government's Domestic Climate Change Division provides a sponsorship function to the Secretariat.

The two **Convenors** were appointed by the Cabinet Secretary for the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform with a remit to amplify and support the voices of Scotland's Climate Assembly members, acting as their champion.

The **Design and Facilitation Team** was a collaboration between Involve and DemSoc, both public participation practitioner organisations with a record of organising citizens' assemblies, with Involve as the lead partner. They focused on designing the Assembly structure and programme. The lead facilitators from Involve and DemSoc managed a team who facilitated breakout sessions with small groups of members.

The **Evidence Group** comprised 9 members, covering a range of expertise and perspectives on climate change. They were tasked with ensuring that the evidence presented to Assembly members was balanced, accurate and comprehensive. Evidence Group members presented evidence and together with the Secretariat selected other speakers to present additional evidence.

¹⁶ Scotland's Climate Assembly operations and administration arrangements
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-climate-assembly-operations-administration-arrangements/>

Memorandum of Understanding between Scottish Government Climate Change Division and the Secretariat for Scotland's Climate Assembly
<https://www.climateassembly.scot/sites/default/files/inline-files/MoU.pdf>

The Assembly involved 106 members of the public¹⁷ who were selected to be broadly representative of Scotland's population with respect to demographics and attitudes about climate change.

These individuals were brought together¹⁸ over seven weekends¹⁹ between November 2020 and March 2021 to deliberate and address the question agreed by the Stewarding Group: *How should Scotland change to tackle the climate emergency in an effective and fair way?*

According to the Arrangements for the Administration and Operation of Citizens' Assembly of Scotland: Scotland's Climate Assembly²⁰, within the remit of the legislation, members of the Assembly would be able to shape the Assembly's agenda, with expert support.

Assembly members learned about climate change from the Evidence Group and a range of expert informants and advocates, selected by the Evidence Group and the Secretariat. These speakers included climate change scientists and practitioners. Informants were considered by the Secretariat and Evidence Group to be more 'neutral' speakers while advocates were encouraged to explicitly take a position. However, there is an argument that there are no "neutral" ways of communicating about climate change²¹.

For three of the seven weekends, the Assembly members split into three separate topic streams: Diet, Land Use & Lifestyle; Homes & Communities; and Travel & Work. Each stream explored four key questions, as shown in Figure 1.1. The members came back together for the last two weekends in mixed stream groups²².

Assembly members received a gift of £200 after each weekend in which they participated.

The Assembly produced an interim report, which was laid before the Scottish Parliament on 24 March 2021. This included a Statement of Ambition and 16 goals. A full Assembly report²³ was laid in the Scottish Parliament on 23 June 2021, and includes the Statement of Ambition, 16 goals and 81 associated recommendations with supporting statements.

¹⁷ 105 members were initially recruited. 11 withdrew in the early stages and 12 were added.

¹⁸ Scotland's Climate Assembly website - recruitment process
<https://www.climateassembly.scot/how-it-works/how-are-members-selected>

¹⁹ There were initially 6 weekends planned with the option for a 7th. Members voted for this option in Weekend 4.

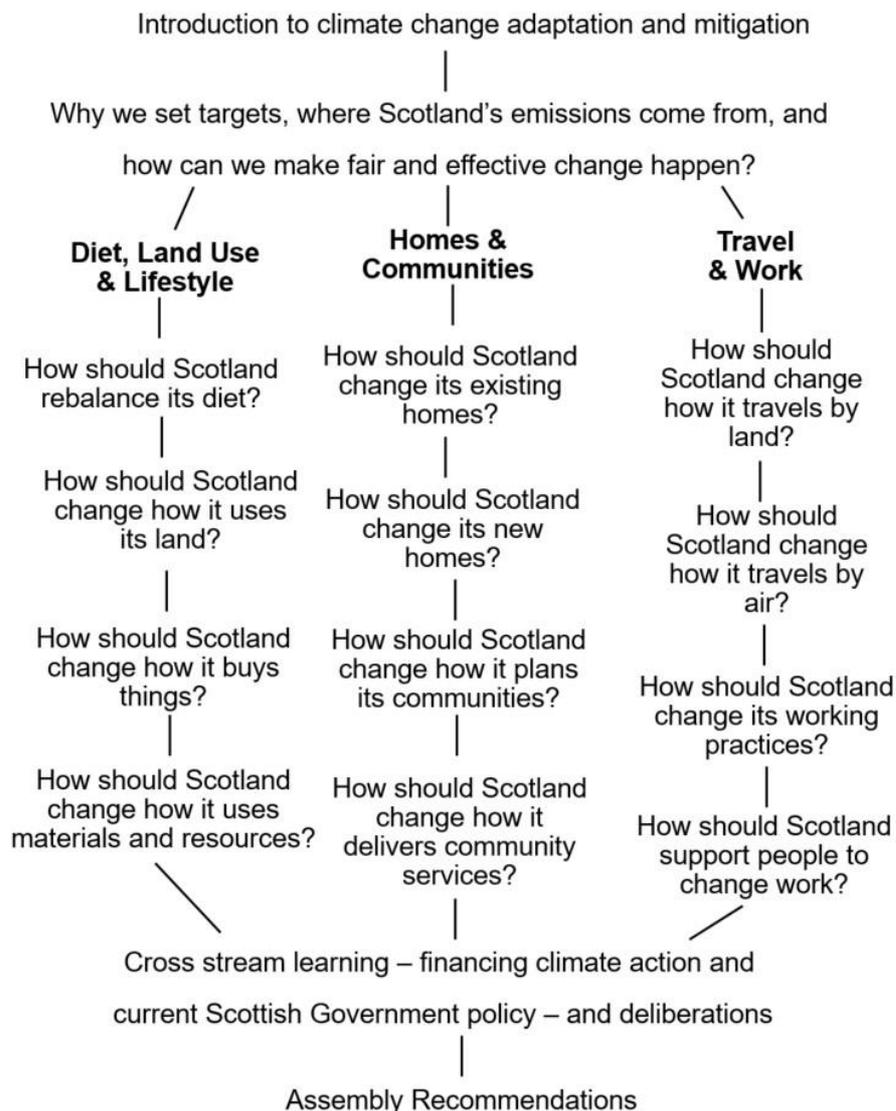
²⁰ Scotland's Climate Assembly operations and administration arrangements
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-climate-assembly-operations-administration-arrangements/>

²¹ Shaw, Wang & Latter (2021); Capstick et al (2020); Nisbet (2009).

²² Scotland's Climate Assembly website - overview of agenda for each weekend
<https://www.climateassembly.scot/meetings>

²³ The report can be downloaded here <https://www.climateassembly.scot/full-report>

Figure 1.1 Assembly members' learning journey



The full Assembly report also included 42 Calls to Action from Children's Parliament²⁴.

As per the Climate Change Act, the Scottish Government was required to respond by 23 December 2021. Their response was published on 16 December 2021²⁵.

An eighth Assembly weekend meeting was held in February 2022 to discuss the Scottish Government response.

²⁴ Children's Parliament is Scotland's centre of excellence for children's human rights, participation and engagement. Children's Parliament worked with 100 children from 10 schools to explore their views and ideas on how to tackle climate change in Scotland. 12 children were appointed as 'Investigators' to analyse the views of their peers and to further explore the themes. The Investigators created a series of Calls to Action, which the wider group voted on. For more information see Scotland's Climate Assembly website <https://www.climateassembly.scot/childrens-parliament>

²⁵ Scottish Government response to Scotland's Climate Assembly recommendations for action <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-government-response-scotlands-climate-assembly-recommendations-action/>

For the purposes of this research, Weekend 8 is regarded as a follow-up meeting and not part of the main Assembly.

1.3 About the research

Independent research was conducted into the Assembly. The research team comprised Scottish Government Social Researchers and an academic researcher from Newcastle University. Some analysis was conducted by a researcher from Edinburgh University, and some research and analytical support was also commissioned (see Appendix 1 for details).

1.3.1 Research objectives

The research had five main objectives:

- 1) to support learning and continuous improvement in the delivery of the Assembly whilst in process.
- 2) to evaluate the success of the Assembly as a deliberative process²⁶, identifying key factors affecting its quality.
- 3) to assess the impact of the Assembly on climate change debate and policy in Scotland.
- 4) to contribute to cumulative learning in Scottish Government about the effective use of citizens' assemblies and other deliberative approaches, in the specific context of the manifesto commitment to holding citizens' assemblies.
- 5) to contribute to international evidence and learning on use of deliberative approaches for engaging citizens in government policy development, particularly on climate change, and in the specific context of Scotland.

A set of research questions were developed to guide the research in meeting these objectives (see Appendix 1).

This report focusses on presenting evidence related to Objectives 2 to 5.

1.3.2 Methodology

The research used a mixed methods²⁷ approach to analyse and integrate a range of different types of data. Data sources analysed for this report include:

- online member surveys, conducted prior to Assembly starting and after each Weekend meeting.
- non-participant observation of Assembly small group discussions.
- audio recordings of Assembly small group discussions.
- qualitative semi-structured interviews and a qualitative survey with 18 people involved in organising and delivering the Assembly, including members of the Secretariat, Design and Facilitation Team, Stewarding Group and Evidence Group. These interviews were conducted after the Assembly ended.

²⁶ A 'deliberative process' is an inclusive process that considers a range of perspectives in a reasoned and respectful manner.

²⁷ Escobar & Thompson (2019).

- population survey by Deltapoll with representative sample of 1917 adults in Scotland, conducted 29 July-14 August 2021.
- evidence presentations from the Assembly.
- the Assembly report.
- secondary data on climate and civic attitudes.
- Scottish Government policy documents.
- media coverage.

To support continuous improvement as detailed in Objective 1, the research team produced data briefings after each Assembly weekend based on observational and member survey data. This feedback was used by the Assembly organisers to provide a readout of members' views and experiences, to highlight what was working well and what was working less well to inform changes and improvements in delivery.

For further details on the methodology see Appendix 1.

1.3.3 Scope and limitations

This report presents findings of research across a range of areas. However, providing an in-depth detailed evaluation of all aspects of the governance arrangements and organisational elements is outwith the scope of this research, due to reasons of capacity.

The member surveys were completed by around two thirds of members. Therefore, the results presented in this report should be regarded as indicative only of the views of all Assembly members. The final Assembly meeting, Weekend 8, held in February 2022 was attended by only 73 members, of whom 70% completed the member survey. These survey results in particular are treated with caution in this report.

Further details of research limitations are included in Appendix 1.

1.3.4 Presenting findings

The Member survey closed questions were mostly statements with five different levels of agreement and disagreement. Results have been aggregated in this report as follows:

'tend to (dis)agree' and 'strongly (dis)agree' = '(dis)agree'
 'quite helpful and 'very helpful = 'helpful'
 '(dis)satisfied' and 'very (dis)satisfied' = '(dis)satisfied'

The results are summarised in the report with data tables provided in a separate Annex to this report.

As not all respondents to the Assembly member surveys answered the open questions, quotes from members are included for illustrative purposes and to provide nuance. With each quote, information is provided on which weekend survey the comment was made (e.g. WE1 for Weekend 1 post-Assembly survey). The quantitative survey findings are also supplemented with qualitative vignettes of four members' experiences, charting different types of journeys through the Assembly. Pseudonyms have been used for the vignettes, and quotes have been anonymised.

Where data exists, members' views have been compared with results of the Deltapoll population survey and other secondary data.

In this report, interviewees and survey respondents from the Stewarding Group, the Secretariat, the Design team and the Evidence Group are collectively referred to 'Organising members' to protect anonymity, although in some instances where appropriate, Evidence Group membership is identified.

Throughout the report, a simple broad scale is used to describe the rough proportion of research participants giving a certain view or response:

all = everyone in the sample
most / a majority = more than half of the sample
some / a minority = less than half but more than 'a few'
a few = two to five (depending on sample size)
one = one person
strong support = 75% and above
majority support = 50-75%

In the figures and tables, member surveys are summarised as e.g. WE1 (Weekend 1).

1.3.4 Report structure

This report is structured into 5 subsequent chapters.

Chapter 2 presents findings relating to the organisation of the Assembly focussing on governance, the process to determine the remit and framing of the Assembly, the Assembly design, and the evidence presented to members. The implications of key findings are discussed in Chapter 6 Conclusions.

Chapter 3 explores the Assembly members' experiences of participating in the Assembly including their learning, climate attitudes and outcomes.

Chapter 4 considers Assembly member and public support for the Assembly and its outputs, and for citizens' assemblies in general.

Chapter 5 assesses the impact of the Assembly on government climate policy and public debate

Chapter 6 concludes the report with discussion of key factors affecting the quality of the Assembly, and the impact of the Assembly on government policy and public debate in Scotland. It identifies key considerations for citizens' assemblies in general, online assemblies, assemblies in Scotland, and climate assemblies. Finally, suggestions for further research, for this Assembly and more generally, are offered.

2. Organising the Assembly

This chapter presents findings relating to the organisation of the Assembly, focussing on governance, the process to determine the remit and framing of the Assembly, the Assembly design, and the evidence presented to members. The implications of key findings are discussed in Chapter 6 Conclusions.

2.1 Governance and roles

This section does not provide an in-depth evaluation of governance arrangements²⁸ but highlights key points emerging from interviews with Organising members²⁹.

Key findings

- The Assembly was successfully organised, in challenging circumstances.
- There was some uncertainty and lack of clarity regarding roles and decision making authority between the different groups involved in the organisation, especially at the start.
- There was a reliance on Evidence Group members voluntarily contributing more time than contracted or agreed, which not all were able to do.
- There were high workloads for the Secretariat at times, due to staffing levels.

The Assembly was organised successfully online in very trying circumstances during the Covid-19 pandemic. Members of the organising groups were committed and worked hard to ensure its success. Comments included:

“[Secretariat] did a really good job managing Evidence and Stewarding Groups and getting them to make decisions and move forward where there was disagreement.” (Organising member)

“I believe a huge amount of credit should be given to the rest of the Secretariat for managing to organise and deliver such a broad Assembly, whilst working in challenging circumstances and with limited staff. The Secretariat team was made up of extremely hard working individuals, all willing to put in a significant amount of time into making the Assembly the best it could be. Without their commitment I do not think the Assembly would have been as successful.” (Organising member)

²⁸ An in-depth analysis of governance arrangements would involve substantial data analysis on every aspect of governance and an evaluation of its effectiveness. This was outwith the scope of this research.

²⁹ As noted in 1.3.4, interviewees and survey respondents from the Stewarding Group, the Secretariat, the Design team and the Evidence Group are collectively referred to ‘Organising members’ to protect anonymity, although in some instances where appropriate, Evidence Group membership is identified.

“I knew it would be delivered to a good standard. Now the question is, could it be delivered better? I think it could. Of course it can always. And I think there are a number of things we need to learn. But given that this was the first digital assembly, it was quite impressive. And I think [the Secretariat] focused a lot on getting the basics right.” (Organising member)

However, some interviewees reported some uncertainty and lack of clarity about roles and responsibilities, how the organising groups should work together and who made final decisions, which affected efficiency. A few reported that the expectations and arrangements became clearer after the first few weekends, whilst for others, issues remained throughout.

Comments included:

“I would like to ... be more clear on the role of the Stewarding Group and others in co-design of the process.” (Organising member)

“Unsure about who made the final decisions - was it secretariat or design team? Both have different expertise, but final decision makers could have been clearer.” (Organising member)

Uncertainty and lack of clarity also extended to the relationship between the Assembly and the Scottish Government. For example:

“there are the official lines of accountability that go from the Secretariat, although it’s set up as an arms’ length entity but it’s not really clear.” (Organising member)

“I would recommend a different relationship or at least one that was agreed from the outset with the [Scottish Government] sponsorship team [and the Secretariat], with greater clarity on the [Secretariat’s] decision making power. We often spent time establishing where responsibility lay which at times held up the work of the Assembly.” (Organising member)

One interviewee recommended keeping the Secretariat’s location separate to that of Scottish Government staff. Another mistakenly thought the Secretariat was actually part of the Scottish Government, and that the Government should not have been leading it. When corrected in interview, they responded:

“I definitely got the impression they were representing the Government. I think that’s a really difficult line for them to tread to be honest.” (Organising member)

The pros and cons of a Secretariat staffed largely by seconded civil servants was outlined by one interviewee:

“The model of having a Secretariat that is populated by mostly civil servants but seconded ... For some people that’s a good thing because it has a direct channel to policy spaces and to potential impact. But for others it’s not too good because there are risks of co-option and there are always risks of manipulation. We always need to keep an eye on how these things are organised. So for me the key message on this is there is more work to be done on the governance of these institutions ... the governance of this Assembly I think overall was quite good.” (Organising member)

One interviewee described an initially “very chaotic” process for producing evidence, but which improved over time:

“But basically, I didn’t know at the outset what they would ask for evidence in. Whether it would be, sort of, general or in a specific area, or how many weekends I would be asked to be involved, or what form that would take. So, really, I didn’t know very much about it at the beginning. But that sort of evolved over the first few meetings, which were initially very chaotic. But then it settled down and we got a shared vision of where we were going.”
(Organising member)

Another interviewee described how their role in the Evidence Group was different than they had expected:

“So I think when I was first asked to be part of the Evidence Group in my mind it was an advisory role. I had kind of expected that the structure and the content would be largely already done. And that we would come in and provide some advice and maybe provide some resources and materials. So I was a bit surprised when in the first meeting the conversation was like how are we going to do this? That took me back a little bit. I had honestly thought that some of that stuff would have already been prepared. But that’s okay. I mean it meant that we were a bit more hands-on in terms of what went into the structure of it and the materials.” (Organising member)

Whilst their higher-than-expected levels of input into designing the structure were welcomed, the interviewee noted that such involvement reduced their time for evidence provision, and meant they were unavailable later in the Assembly process:

“So after about four or five meetings we [the interviewee and another Evidence Group member] had to say to the Scottish Government’s Secretariat you’re using up your time with us and we haven’t even produced anything for you. So we had to push them and say you need to be a bit wiser about you’re using our time, because if you use up all our time now we can’t help in the later weekends.” (Organising member)

There were different arrangements in place across the Evidence Group. Whilst some Evidence Group members volunteered their time to participate, others were contracted for a set number of days through their academic institutions. Some members were able to devote more time than agreed or expected, others were not able, or less able, to do so. Comments included:

“I think there was a big reliance on people’s passion and volunteering. I think that could’ve gone horribly wrong. If something had gone wrong and people had dropped out of the process, I think it would’ve been really tough for the Secretariat ... if you do want to do more, and I really would love to see more of these kinds of things happening, it has to be professionalised in terms of how Evidence Group members engage and how Informants engage. Because that goodwill will run out. People can’t continuously give time to these kinds of things. So I think it was a strength and a weakness.”
(Organising member)

“I would say that everybody gave us much more time than they had initially said they could give us ... the commitment from the Evidence Group was huge, but I would have liked more, certainly.” (Organising member)

“One of the difficulties of working with the Evidence Group was that some people had more time to give than others. And so even though the Evidence Group was quite balanced, that could mean a bit of imbalance in terms of the amount of time that people had available” (Organising member)

A few interviewees thought the Secretariat was insufficiently staffed, particularly at a senior level, which impacted on workload. Comments included:

“Lack of sufficient senior staff meaning that all tasks needed to be cleared by a single individual who was left with a significant workload.” (Organising member)

“there was not enough staff resource in the Secretariat, which meant individuals had to be extremely flexible and willing to work beyond their agreed hours on a regular basis. It also slightly limited the scope of what could be delivered, although I think we managed very well considering the circumstances.” (Organising member)

One interviewee reflected on the role of the convenors during the Assembly:

“I would re-design the role of the Convener(s) or not have them at all. I think ours did a great job, but we often had to create things for them to say and do and they had no authority in the process.” (Organising member)

2.2 Remit and framing

This section considers the process to determine the remit and framing of the Assembly, and how to operationalise the Assembly question.

Key findings

- The use of deliberative process for developing the Assembly question worked well.
- There were differences in views about the framing and remit of the Assembly and how to operationalise the Assembly question, which were not fully resolved. These differences mainly related to: how closely the Assembly should align with policy needs with respect to the Climate Change Act and its targets, the extent to which the Assembly should explore the reasons why climate change is deemed an emergency, how strategic, and how radical an approach it should take.
- There were also differences in views about the extent to which the Assembly dealt effectively with the systemic nature of climate change.

2.2.1 Assembly question

The Stewarding Group worked on the remit of the Assembly in a half-day deliberative process facilitated by DemSoc³⁰, which was reported by interviewees to go well.

The Arrangements for the Administration and Operation of Citizens' Assembly of Scotland: Scotland's Climate Assembly³¹ states that although the Stewarding Group agreed the question, within the remit of the legislation, and expert support, members of the Assembly would be able to shape the Assembly's agenda. It is not clear from the data what this meant in practice and whether Assembly members were given a genuine opportunity to shape the remit.

Although most of the discussion about the framing of the Assembly occurred in the months before the Assembly started, decisions regarding selection of evidence that related to issues of framing were ongoing throughout the Assembly.

In the Deltapoll population survey, people were asked whether the Assembly question, 'How should Scotland change to tackle the climate emergency in an effective and fair way?', was the right overarching question for the Assembly to address, with 65% agreeing (see 4.1 Support for outputs for more on public support).

The Assembly question presupposes that climate change is real and an emergency, that change is necessary and should be fair and effective. Some interviewees were happy with the framing of the question, for example:

"Once you arrive at a way of phrasing that question that pleases all these different interests and sectors then you know that that's going to be a relevant way of framing it. And from that, a lot was built." (Organising member)

However, there was a concern expressed about how leading the question was for the Assembly:

"My concern, about having too value-laden a question, was that when the recommendations came out, that you could say, well, of course, if you ask a question like that, that's the sort of answer you'll get." (Organising member)

A small number of Assembly members expressed similar concerns in the surveys. For example, one respondent, who considered climate change an 'immediate and urgent problem', commented:

"The whole process has been manipulated throughout. I feel that the comments that will be taken forward are those of the organisers and not of the assembly members" (Assembly member, WE6)

³⁰ This was commissioned via a separate contract.

³¹ Scotland's Climate Assembly operations and administration arrangements <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-climate-assembly-operations-administration-arrangements/>

Another Assembly member thought the Assembly remit should have included critiquing current Government policy³²:

“I feel that we could have used the assembly as a way to make recommendations on how to deal with the climate crisis, but also to comment and critique the Governments current proposals for dealing with the emergency and whether we as a representative example of the population felt that the proposals were meeting our expectations.” (Assembly member, WE4)

This issue is discussed further in 5.1 Impact on government policy.

Most Organising member interviewees discussed differences in views within, and between, the Evidence and the Stewarding Groups and the Secretariat about how to frame the Assembly and operationalise the Assembly question. Specifically, how closely the Assembly should work to the Climate Change Act and its targets and be aligned to policy needs, the extent to which the Assembly should explore the reasons why it is deemed a climate “emergency”, how strategic and how “radical” an approach it should take.

One interviewee noted that these differences in views was healthy:

“There were plenty of disagreements. And that’s a good sign, for me, that’s a sign of deliberative work, taking things seriously and exploring the options and disagreeing and offering reasons.” (Organising member)

However, another interviewee suggested that tensions within the Evidence Group were exacerbated by the lack of opportunity to meet in person and to build relationships over a longer period of time. One interviewee reflected that due to a “difficult start”, some Stewarding Group members consequently became less engaged. One interviewee praised the diplomatic, negotiation and mediation skills of the Secretariat in managing the tensions over the Assembly remit. Another observed that that once some trust in the process had been created, there was greater willingness to try different approaches and include different content. However, strong differences in views remained throughout (see also 2.4.1 Selection of evidence).

Comments relating to the differences in views with regards to framing and operationalising the Assembly question, included:

“Their [Secretariat] main worry was how is it going to work, it was a fear of failure that drove the initial parts, let’s make this safe. So ... pushing out into slightly dangerous territory, like for example opening up a whole discussion of what do we mean by emergency, it was a big part of our early debates. I [thought] let’s just get this thing on wheels and on the way rather than trying to do something too radical too early.” (Organising member)

³² The Assembly received evidence from the Climate Emergency Response Group on the Scottish Government Climate Change Plan update to help them consider current government policy. However, the Assembly Report does not include a review or critique of government policy.

“This Assembly comes [together] to complement the work that Parliament has already done. To build on it and in my view to take it further because otherwise what’s the point?” (Organising member)

“otherwise if you don't align with the policy needs then the decision makers could easily dismiss any outcome from the report. Because it doesn't actually fit with the regulations that they've got to implement” (Organising member)

“There was a bit of tension there at the beginning between those two viewpoints, those two worldviews. And I think it took a couple of meetings to shake that out. You know, sort of, like, what is our remit here? Is our remit to challenge what the Government is already doing, which it is partly? Or is it to just completely rip everything up and say that we need radical overhaul of society?” (Organising member)

“established views of climate change, which are often ... we all agree with the science and we must do things, as long as it’s not too disruptive. And we’ve also got to make sure that it aligns with our commitments that we’ve made, so like Paris for instance. The problem is that you can’t align our commitments with Paris that aren’t disruptive. So, I think the establishment continually tries to hold an impossible line ... They’re [the Secretariat] is trying to do their job, which I still think is quite heavily influenced by what they think government want, what’s acceptable to government and that sort of language was used quite repeatedly: the output has got to be things that government is going to take seriously. Well, I think the output has got to be the correct output to the question as deemed appropriate by the people you’re asking the question to. Whether the government deems that appropriate or not is almost an irrelevant issue.” (Organising member)

A perception of “closing down” and limiting the evidence and deliberation space to the Climate Change Act targets and policy needs rather than supporting a more open exploration was one of the reported reasons for the withdrawal of Extinction Rebellion members from the Stewarding Group prior to the start of the Assembly³³. However, their influence was noted by a few interviewees. For example:

“I think they were highly influential. And all of the best parts of the Assembly can be connected to all of the things that XR did in the Stewarding Group in the early stages” (Organising member)

However, it should be noted that Extinction Rebellion’s departure from the Stewarding Group pre-dates any decisions regarding the contents of the Assembly’s evidence base.

One Organising member interviewee maintained that the absence of evidence that would have allowed members to have a solid understanding of the meaning of the term ‘climate emergency’ had an adverse impact on the nature of the recommendations with regards to strategic vision and transformational change:

³³ Article about Extinction Rebellion leaving the Stewarding Group
<https://www.resilience.org/stories/2020-11-05/if-citizens-assemblies-are-the-way-forward-why-is-xr-no-longer-endorsing-the-scottish-governments-climate-citizens-assembly/>

“one of the problems (with not exploring why it is a climate emergency) is you end up with an ad hoc piecemeal set of policy suggestions, which is exactly what happened.... If it’s a stronger strategic vision it’s much, much harder for the policymakers to say we disagree with that ... You divide the challenge into numerous little pieces and then you can deal with each one individually. It’s not questioning the fundamentals, it’s not evoking new paradigms or asking more world view questions. It’s just saying, what can we do in the current framing that allows us to incrementally adjust to reduce our emissions” (Organising member)

A similar point about strategic vision was made by another interviewee (see also 2.3.3 Topic stream structure):

“Actually the Assembly could have been structured in quite a different way to look at the big picture around the climate emergency and where priorities are and things like this, rather than down to very specific policy options for how do we get people to change their diet or, you know, how we use land or insulate our houses. I would have liked to do a much more, kind of, big picture strategic focussed, really dig in to, well what are the biggest challenges, and let the people start identifying what are the biggest challenges and barriers to change rather than that being pre-identified.” (Organising member)

2.2.2 Systemic approach

The Assembly organisers took measures to incorporate a systemic approach into the design and framing, to help members understand the different drivers of climate change and the process by which change might happen to tackle climate change, and to help members explore the potential synergies and trade-offs between fair and effective climate action. As one interviewee explained:

“And so trying to bring in a systems change approach is really... helping people to ask more fundamental questions about why the climate emergency is how it is and what are the systems which are affecting that outcome... (it) wasn't bringing new evidence, it was very much bringing a framework or a framing of how the evidence might be structured, and also questioning how the process of the Assembly happened” (Organising member)

Forum for the Future³⁴ were commissioned to provide this input, which included:

- video presentation in Weekend 1 on how change happens³⁵.
- video presentation in Weekend 3 on how effective change happens³⁶.
- four scenarios of the future depicting different routes that could be taken to achieve net zero and showing how change can happen at different levels and paces. The scenarios represented a range of worldviews and assumptions including the role of profit (low or high) and type of decision making

³⁴ One member of the Evidence Group is also part of Forum for the Future.

³⁵ YouTube video of video presentation explaining how change happens
https://youtu.be/Du1Sq_baYbl

³⁶ Scotland’s Climate Assembly website with video and transcript on effective change
<https://www.climateassembly.scot/assembly-meetings/meeting-three>

(centralised or decentralised). A fictional story for each of these scenarios was created, illustrating what a day in the life of an ordinary Scottish citizen might look like at some point in the future up to 2040. The scenarios were: Techno optimism, Climate mobilisation, Community collaboration, and Civic provision and regulation³⁷. The scenarios were presented to and discussed by members in Weekend 3, with guidance provided to facilitators. See Appendix 2 for the scenario framework. This framework was used to guide the selection of speakers and evidence (see 2.4.1 Selection of evidence).

- a diagram mapping different levels where action can be taken: Society, norms, values, beliefs; Public policy, regulation, taxes, incentives; Organisations, businesses, public services; Households, communities, neighbourhoods; Individual. The diagrams were used in the facilitated small group sessions to structure ideas and discussion. See Appendix 2 for the diagram.
- the Assembly's goals were developed into a scenario that was presented to members in Weekend 7, and again in Weekend 8 as part of the recap on their work.

There were differences in views expressed in interview about the extent to which the Assembly dealt effectively with the systemic nature of climate change, and how members were supported in grasping the vast interconnectedness of it all (see also 2.3.3 Topic stream structure).

An interviewee who thought that this was done well commented:

"the rainbow thing that we had, so what is my role in this, what's the organisation's, what's government, I think that really helped in bringing that interconnectedness. ... the fact that they got it was amazing ... I think that was really, really cleverly done, now looking back." (Organising member)

One considered how it could have been done better:

"it's more what we didn't discuss that I have questions around, or didn't give space for discussion. So, for example, digging a bit deeper into some of the systems stuff. I think it was a conscious choice not to go any further with some of that even though I think some people would have liked to" (Organising member)

Others reflected that there had not been enough time to embed a holistic understanding:

"well the process, or the way in which it was designed, had already been set and actually when you bring systems change to a process it starts questioning not just what evidence you might put into the Assembly but also the way you might structure an Assembly, or structure how the evidence comes together, and that was one of the biggest challenges (that the design had already been set)" (Organising member)

³⁷ Scotland's Climate Assembly website with videos and transcripts of the 4 scenarios <https://www.climateassembly.scot/assembly-meetings/meeting-three>. See also Assembly Report p29.

“So, we tried to have our cake and eat it ... we tried to set up the idea everything being interconnected deep down, there were these roots that were all entangled, and that change is complex and happens at different levels. I think that’s a big thought for most people. ...But the idea was that underpinned by that notion they would then be able to go in and look at the individual streams and be thinking, oh what’s happened in that stream and things like that. But the reality was that I think the process just didn’t give us enough time to really embed that.” (Organising member)

Another thought that the Assembly question was too broad to do the systemic dimensions of climate change justice in the time available:

“I would introduce more interactive methods of learning so members could understand the systemic nature of climate change better. I would also try and reduce the scope of the assembly or split it into multiple assemblies. Issues could then be explored in greater detail and understanding of the systemic nature of climate change could be explored more thoroughly” (Organising member)

One interviewee reflected that the systemic approach could have been improved by having more time in advance to design the scenario framework into the whole process, and by building the capacity of the facilitators to understand the framework and use it as model to support the members.

2.2.3 Assembly recommendations and systems change

The extent to which members considered systems change in their recommendations was discussed by some interviewees. There were a mix of views about the recommendations that members developed. For example, one interviewee noted that while some recommendations included transformational changes, as a whole they lacked strategic vision. Another interviewee was surprised at the “really quite radical” nature of the recommendations and the level of support for these measures by members. One interviewee considered some of the recommendations as very difficult to implement “on the ground” as they were considered to require significant systems change and behaviour change.

In the Assembly report, the Statement of Ambition contains language indicating the need for transformational change with references to “eradicating” the use of fossil fuels, “radical shifts” by business and government, and “drawing on the science and evidence to drive rapid and fundamental behaviour change across society”³⁸. Around a quarter of the recommendations were analysed as involving transformational change³⁹.

For example: Extended Producer Responsibility Legislation (Goal 1 Recommendation 5), Passivhaus standard for new build homes (Goal 2 Recommendation 1), and Business and government to adopt a measurement framework for success that incorporates sustainability, wellbeing and happiness

³⁸ See page 8-11 of the report <https://www.climateassembly.scot/full-report>

³⁹ Transformational change is defined in this research as fundamental changes to the attributes of existing systems or that create new systems, likely to involve reassessing values, identities, beliefs and assumptions; and challenging or disrupting existing structures including power structures.

alongside profit (Goal 16 Recommendation 1). Just under a quarter of recommendations have the potential to be transformational depending on how they are implemented including the scale and speed of change. These include recommendations relating to taxation, circular economy and education. The remaining half of the recommendations were coded as involving incremental change⁴⁰.

2.3 Design

This section covers findings related to the design of the Assembly including planning, structuring and programming, facilitation, and support given to Assembly members by the Design Team. The online nature of the Assembly is also considered.

2.3.1 Planning the Assembly

Key findings

- Early relational work between the Secretariat and the Stewarding Group was helpful in building a good relationship, with the Stewarding Group providing a useful steer for the Secretariat.
- There was a positive relationship between the Secretariat and the Design Team, although there were differences in views about extent to which the Assembly had been co-designed.
- A tight Assembly schedule generated momentum but also created pressures for all aspects of planning and delivery, which were experienced as challenging or stressful by some.
- Late design decisions enabled responsiveness to emerging issues but also impacted on ability of others to adequately plan and deliver and also limited opportunities for oversight and feedback.
- A majority of respondents to the Assembly member survey reported being satisfied with the organisation, communication and support received, and understood what they were expected to do. Process and tasks were mostly well explained to Assembly members.
- Assembly members were asked to spend time between weekends doing 'homework'. Whilst this can help members with their learning, it could also create or exacerbate inequalities between members due to variation in the amount of opportunities and skills to engage with material on their own.

A few interviewees commented on the early work that was done to build a good relationship between the Secretariat and the Stewarding Group, the good

⁴⁰ Incremental change is defined as relating to small steps to improve an existing structure, slow advances or small impacts. The change maintains the essence and integrity of a system or process at a given scale.

communication from the Secretariat, and the Stewarding Group providing a useful steer.

There were some differences in views about the extent to which the Assembly had been co-designed⁴¹ between the Secretariat and the Design Team. One interviewee highlighted the collaborative, trusting and collegial relationship with a commitment to co-design. However, another noted the absence of a dedicated session on a co-design approach with reliance instead upon a conversation that “didn’t feel as full as it could have been”, which had impeded developing a shared understanding of how things would progress. They further reflected:

“I think the Design Team probably could have done a better job at times of explaining some of the decisions and the choices that we were making at an earlier stage” (Organising member)

Another reflected that a lack of time, especially during the Assembly weekends affected the collaborative relationship:

“I would say that the co-design wasn’t quite as good as I would have liked it to be ... It was partly driven by circumstance of not being physically together, and partly it was driven by the time ... it would have been good to have had more input. Perhaps not so much in the preparation phases, where I think it’s quite good, but there’s quite a lot of work is done behind the scenes over the weekend where outputs from the discussion groups were taken and pulled together and that sort of thing ... I think some of the decisions that were made had impacts and it would have been good to have had a bit more of a discussion about: if we do this this way, it will have this impact.” (Organising member)

A few Organising member interviewees mentioned challenges in the collaboration, including poor communication. One interviewee reflected that the Secretariat was not always aware of information provided to members by the Design Team, and it was also noted that there were delays in delivery of the Design Team’s work.

With regards to the relationship between design and evidence, one interviewee reflected that the Design Team and Evidence Group generally worked in isolation. Another interviewee noted that they may have “missed bits and connections” as they were not able to attend all the meetings with the Evidence Group due to not having enough time within their contract.

The original requirements of the Climate Change Act⁴² and the Scottish Parliamentary pre-election period⁴³ created a pressure to compress the Assembly into a short time period with some weekends only two weeks apart. Whilst this

⁴¹ A co-designed process would involve iterative design between organisers with the various groups involved shaping the Assembly process and agreeing on key design decisions.

⁴² According to the Climate Change Act, the Assembly was expected to lay its report before Parliament by 28 February 2021. However, the Coronavirus (Scotland) (No.2) Act of 2020 amended the Climate Change Act to allow that if the Assembly was delayed for a reason relating to Coronavirus, it should lay its report as soon as reasonably practicable after that date.

⁴³ Under normal circumstances the pre-election period would have started on 25 March 2021. The Scottish General Election (Coronavirus) Act 2021 delayed dissolution of Parliament until May 5, the day before the election.

generated momentum, it adversely affected preparation and had implications for all aspects of the Assembly including organisation, design, production and delivery, and also communications with members. The time pressures contributed to a high workload, which some interviewees found challenging or stressful.

A recurring theme in interview and observational data is late design decisions and last minute changes to the Assembly schedule. Whilst this enabled responsiveness to emerging issues, it was also seen by a few interviewees to limit opportunities for oversight by the Stewarding Group, as well as increasing pressures on production and delivery.

The short time for producing evidence presentations, and for feedback and revision, was regarded as demanding, or stressful, by most of the Evidence Group interviewees.

One interviewee reflected:

“I thought they overall did a brilliant job of that [taking the Assembly online]. And so very quickly people’s presentations had to be developed. And I think given more time it could have been made a bit easier for the members to glean the information that was necessary and perhaps we could have more peer review of what was going to go out as well.” (Organising member)

Other interviewees highlighted there was insufficient time for the Secretariat to edit and produce the evidence videos, which resulted in some staff working very long hours.

The compressed Assembly schedule also had consequences for members in digesting large volumes of evidence, in short periods, between weekends. The programming of the weekends did not allow much time for members to “digest” the information. Comments in the member survey included:

“There is a lot of information presented and whilst I do not have a problem understanding the majority of the information I do feel I am being asked to make decisions without the time for digesting the information fully and I feel that this then may lead to decisions being made that are not necessarily the best ones.” (Assembly member, WE3)

“If there is any information it would be good to have it in more time, I appreciate there was only the two weeks this time but with the time I had and work commitments I was only able to read through and not digest properly.” (Assembly member, WE4)

“I was overwhelmed with all the information I had to take in” (Assembly member, WE7)

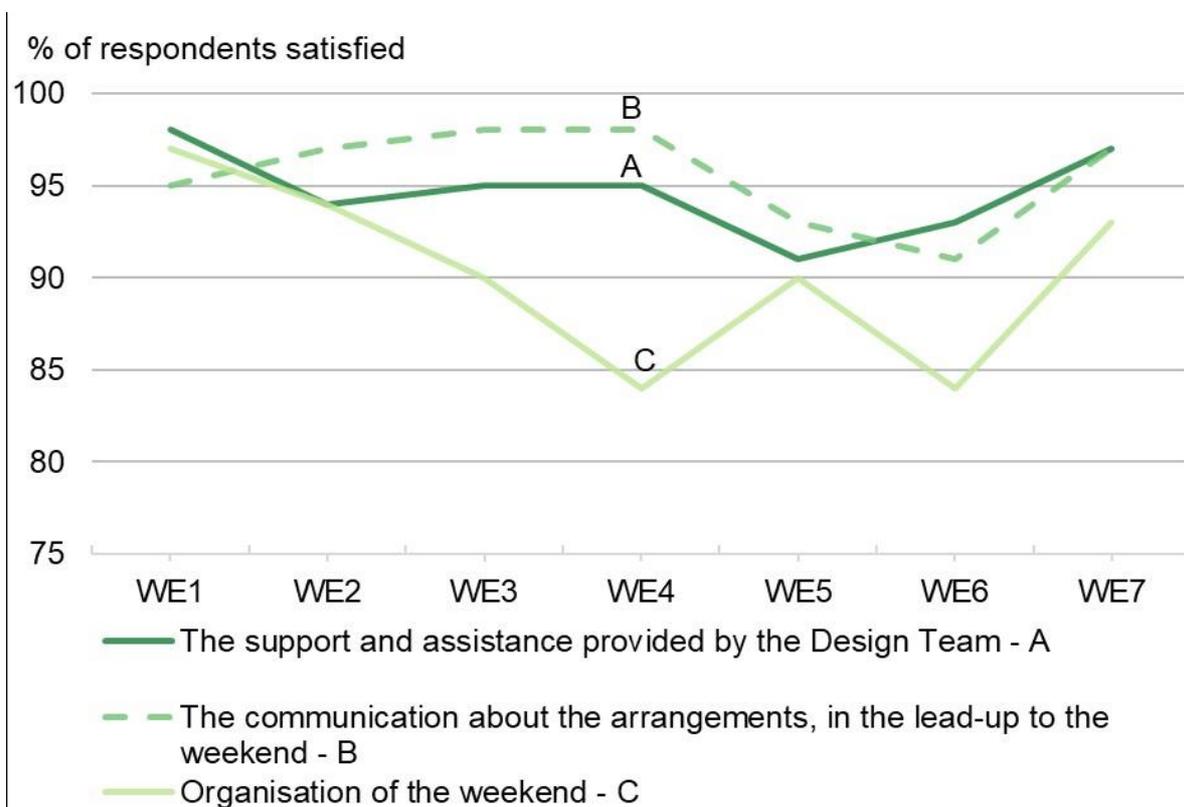
The survey and observational data suggests that members had a strong sense of responsibility and wanted to perform their task well. The quotes regarding “digesting” the information indicate a need to feel competent⁴⁴ and some members reported re-watching evidence presentations or reading transcripts and summaries in their own time. However, not all members were able to do so due to other

⁴⁴ According to Self-Determination Theory, competency is a basic psychological need. Deci & Ryan (2000).

commitments such as work or family. In addition to information relating to evidence, members were also sent documents that collated and consolidated their outputs from particular weekends. Again, not all members would have had time to fully read and check these⁴⁵. Members were also asked on occasion to vote on particular aspects in between Assembly weekends. The email sent to all confirmed participants in the month before the first weekend states: “We will also ask you to spend a little of your own time between meetings on things such as watching videos we send you.” Assembly ‘homework’ was then either explicitly requested or implicitly encouraged (by virtue of sending materials to members and making them available on the members online portal). Even if members were also made aware that engaging with information and other materials outwith the weekends was not compulsory, it is possible that many felt a need to do so for their own sense of competency.

Assembly members were asked for their views on the organisation of the Assembly. As shown in Figure 2.1, across the seven weekends almost all respondents were satisfied with the organisation and support provided by the Design Team, communication about the arrangements in the lead-up to the weekend, and organisation of the weekend. For all of these aspects, the proportion of respondents rating their experience as ‘very satisfied’ was highest in Weekend 1.

Figure 2.1 Assembly members’ views on organisation and support across weekends



Source: Member survey

Base: WE1: 64, WE2: 65, WE3: 61, WE4: 63, WE5: 70, WE6: 67, WE7: 69

⁴⁵ See section 3.1.4 Developing the outputs for more on members’ experience and sense of ownership of developing the outputs.

Across the weekends, most respondents agreed that the purpose of the weekend was well explained (90% average across weekends). The proportion of respondents who 'strongly agreed' was lowest after Weekend 6 (43% strongly agreed, 46% tended to agree), compared to Weekend 1 (64% strongly agree, 23% tend to agree). In Weekend 6, members joined mixed stream topic groups to discuss the recommendations proposed by each topic stream, the purpose of which may not have been as clear to the Assembly members as activities in the other weekends. Reflecting back on their experience of the Assembly as a whole after Weekend 7, 91% agreed that they understood what they were expected to do over the following Assembly weekends.

However, one interviewee identified issues with the provision of materials to members:

“Provision of materials to members - formal deadlines for this would have pushed decision-making backwards to more in advance of the weekend. A routine for the provision of materials wasn't developed early on - it would have useful to help guide members through the process, and make it clear at each stage where they were in the process and the aims of their activities. I think they should have been provided physically - online resources, given not everyone equally at ease with this, had limited reach.” (Organising member)

Observational data shows that members were provided with an explanation of various groups involved in the Assembly in Weekend 1 and reminded in Weekend 2. However, in Weekend 3 the distinction between informants and advocates was not explained⁴⁶. This was addressed the following weekend.

An extra (seventh) weekend was scheduled for the end of the Assembly. This was offered to members and they voted for it in Weekend 4, as they recognised more time was needed for deliberation and developing supporting information and prioritising their proposed recommendations.

⁴⁶ Informants were considered to be more 'neutral' speakers, while advocates were encouraged to explicitly take a position. However, there is an argument that there are no "neutral" ways of communicating about climate change. See Shaw, Wang, & Latter (2021); Capstick et al (2020); Nisbet (2009).

2.3.2 Online format

Key findings

- The organisers were well prepared for online delivery with good technical support for members in advance and during the Assembly.
- Advantages of online format included: accessibility for some members and availability of experts; video presentations allowed for review and editing, and for re-watching by members.
- Disadvantages in comparison to in-person assemblies included: shorter sessions, harder to facilitate, harder to foster sense of community between members, more difficult to cater for range of learning styles and provide more interactive ways of engaging with evidence. Connectivity issues impacted on some members' ability to participate.
- There were differences in views about whether more could have been done to create a stronger sense of community, and whether such activities would have been effective.

Scotland's Climate Assembly was conducted entirely online (on Zoom) due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the first time an entire national assembly had been held in this way. The decision to hold the Assembly online (with the option for in-person meetings retained) was made over a period of time, with discussions starting in May 2020.

The online format meant members could participate from home. Experts who might otherwise have not been available for an in-person event could also participate.

The online format impacted on the design choices of the Assembly, with shorter sessions scheduled than if the Assembly had been in person to account for 'Zoom fatigue', as digital engagement is considered to be more demanding than in-person participation. This had implications for facilitation, presentation of evidence, deliberation, and for creating a sense of community amongst the Assembly members.

On the whole, the online format worked very well, due in large part to careful planning, with learning shared with the Citizens' Assembly of Scotland which started in-person but moved online due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Improvements were also made while the Assembly was in process. One interviewee commented:

"we felt really prepared for the online delivery and quite confident I think going into it that it was workable and it would work in a way that we thought it would" (Organising member)

Observational and interview data suggests that facilitation was more difficult online than in-person. For example, some interviewees, and in facilitator debriefs with the Design and Facilitation Team, it was noted that it was harder for facilitators to read body language, to reach out to members to check how they are doing, to include disengaged or struggling members, and also to appear neutral because of needing

to use different techniques such as nodding, to demonstrate they are listening to members.

With regards to presentation of evidence, the online format meant that Assembly members could re-watch the videos as desired and the videos could be easily shared online with a larger audience. It also meant the organisers could review the videos the expert presenters had recorded and provide feedback on accessibility of the information being presented and the style it was presented in. However, one interviewee explained that the online format also constrained what was feasible. For example, not being able to include more interactive and engaging formats, such as a debate, where the complexity of issues could also have been explored further as different positions can be compared side-by-side⁴⁷.

Technical support was provided to Assembly members and, where needed Evidence Group members, between and during the weekends. Members without suitable devices were loaned a Chromebook. Other devices provided included headsets, webcams, keyboards and mice, as well as pre-paid and back-up dongles for internet connection. Around eight in ten survey respondents used a computer or laptop with video camera each weekend, with the remainder mostly using a tablet or iPad. Using Zoom on a tablet and typing at the same time proved difficult. One interviewee noted that the situation of lockdown also meant that some members were not able to get technical support from family or friends in other households that they may otherwise have received.

Before the Assembly started, members were split into learner groups depending on their self-assessed IT competency: those with high confidence, those requiring some support, and those who had never used or rarely used the internet. The first two learner groups were invited to a Zoom meeting, whilst those from the latter group had a one-on-one phone call before getting them to use Zoom. These meetings were designed to introduce members to the concept of a group call, explore the functions of Zoom, as well as introduce them to other platforms they would use, such as Mentimeter⁴⁸. The meetings also allowed the Design Team to see if members had under-reported, or over-reported their technical competency.

One interviewee stated that there was a logistical challenge in running three Zoom meetings for the different topic streams at the same time. Facilitators and Assembly members were observed at times to have technical issues over the course of the Assembly, including connection problems, microphones left on during evidence presentations creating background noise, and for facilitators specifically, problems with screen sharing. Online tools such as Jamboard⁴⁹ appeared to be generally accessible to most members most of the time, although their levels of confidence and ability to use this online tool differed widely, affecting the nature of their contribution.

⁴⁷ Roberts et al (2020).

⁴⁸ Mentimeter is an interactive digital platform which uses live polls, quizzes and Q&As to involve an audience in real time.

⁴⁹ Jamboard is a digital whiteboard which allows users to collaborate in real time. It was used by facilitators in small group discussions. Assembly Members posted their ideas onto the board.

Across the weekends, 8% - 16% of member survey respondents reported that connection issues had reduced their ability to participate. One respondent commented:

“The device I was using is an old device which works fine with zoom but it doesn’t have the capabilities to download software such as the jam board. My participation was limited during the time we were using them because I couldn’t follow with the document we were working on” (Assembly Member, WE6)

Members were provided with an online hub which was a repository for the learning resources, namely the evidence video and written documents arranged by weekend, and a discussion board. Across the Assembly, most respondents to the member survey were satisfied with using the online members’ hub (average of 83% across the weekends), although one interviewee estimates that the hub was used by only around a third of members.

According to one interviewee, for a few members the Assembly was the only social activity they participated in during lockdown. However, a sense of community was regarded by interviewees as more difficult to create in comparison to in-person processes. One interviewee explained why sense of community is important:

“[it] holds a diverse community together despite their differences. And that makes deliberation a little bit more likely to happen because people will give other people the benefit of the doubt, they will see the full human dimension of others in the room and not just the deliberative position or the position they are trying to put forward... social space in the deliberative process is not an add-on, it’s a fundamental part of ensuring good deliberative quality in my view” (Organising member)

Research also suggests that social bonds are conducive to good deliberation⁵⁰. Members could talk to each other in their Zoom break-out rooms in the breaks between sessions. In the member survey, there is evidence that some sense of community developed between members:

“the process was quite draining, but towards the end there was a feeling of togetherness and accomplishment that was emotionally positive.” (Assembly member, WE7)

“I’m also quite proud of what we’ve achieved (yes, I think of the Assembly as a ‘we’ now :-))” (Assembly member, WE7)

There were differences in views amongst interviewees about the extent to which more could have been done to help members form connection and whether additional activities would have been effective.

⁵⁰ Rosenberg (2014).

2.3.3 Topic stream structure

Key findings

- Separating into topic streams was generally considered a necessary approach to address the broad Assembly question.
- Advantages of topic stream structure: allows for more in-depth exploration of a wider range of topics.
- Disadvantages of topic stream structure: interconnections between topics more difficult to understand, members do not all engage with the same evidence.
- Mixed stream sessions in the final two weekends helped members understand the work of the other streams, although not to the same extent as the recommendations from their own stream. There was an element of having to trust that others had followed a good process to arrive at their recommendations.
- There were differences in how comfortable members felt at using trust as the basis for voting for recommendations made by other topic streams.

Members were divided into three topic streams for Weekends 3, 4 and 5. The topics were reported by interviewees as chosen to reflect the sectors that make the largest climate change contributions. One interviewee noted that the topics were consciously chosen as areas that Assembly members could relate to: most would have strong personal experiences of, for example, working, travelling, living in a home and in a community.

Not all interviewees were involved in decisions about dividing the members into topic streams but most agreed it was a good, or necessary, approach to addressing the Assembly question. There was a view that the streams allowed for more in-depth evidence and deliberation, and enabled members to develop meaningful recommendations. One commented:

“I think it was essential because there was otherwise just too much material for members to be expected to engage with” (Organising member)

However, interviewees also noted that this structure necessarily meant members could not take part in other topic stream deliberations, with a few reflecting that it might have made it more difficult for members to explore and understand the interconnected nature of the issues. For example:

“[the topic stream structure] separated them out which I (think) it’s important to do that because it’s more helpful, but it’s also a problem separating things out, you don’t see them as a combined thing, so you end up breaking things down into more and more piecemeal ad-hoc responses.” (Organising member)

“I think that decision set the course for a whole lot of other stuff. So by doing that, it almost certainly influenced hugely that it was going to be an Assembly that produced lots of quite small recommendations that weren’t necessarily all attached to a big picture” (Organising member)

One interviewee thought there was insufficient time to embed the notion of interconnectedness in the streams. See also 2.2.2 Systemic approach, for more on this issue.

Respondents to the member surveys also expressed a mix of views. For example:

“I did think splitting into three streams was a good way to cover the different topics. There was still a range of opinions but otherwise there would have been too much material to take on board in the time available. It was quite an accomplishment to consolidate everything at the end.” (Assembly Member, WE7)

“I would really have preferred to be in another workstream. There's been a lot of discussions around technology for Homes both new builds and retrofit, and sometimes I feel pretty helpless and am cautious about making the wrong recommendations due to the several conflicting evidences we have heard from different experts. My expertise and experience as a person would have been of much better value in the work & travel stream.” (Assembly Member, WE5)

Following a briefing to the Stewarding Group on emerging research findings from Climate Assembly UK⁵¹ regarding negative perceptions of policy-makers to recommendations produced by only a small proportion of Assembly members, the issue of ownership of topic stream outputs became an important consideration in the design of the final two weekends. One interviewee explained:

“I think this was a learning...from research from Climate Assembly UK, that the credibility of the recommendations in large part depends on the whole Assembly having agreed them. And so the process of the stream coming back and reporting to their fellow Assembly members about the recommendation in draft form, I thought it was important. And then engaging in small groups with that recommendation and further refining it and seeing where there were overlaps, I think was really important and I think gives it a lot of strength. And so, we have the depth, but we also have that cross-Assembly approval, which I think is really important.” (Organising Member)

Consequently, in a Weekend 6 plenary session, topic stream groups presented their proposed goals and recommendations together with a rationale. Members then met in mixed-stream groups to discuss and reflect on a number of recommendations, to identify points of tension and commonality, and to propose redrafts and mergers.

However, one interviewee questioned the extent to which there was sufficient time for members to deeply understand the content coming from other topic streams,

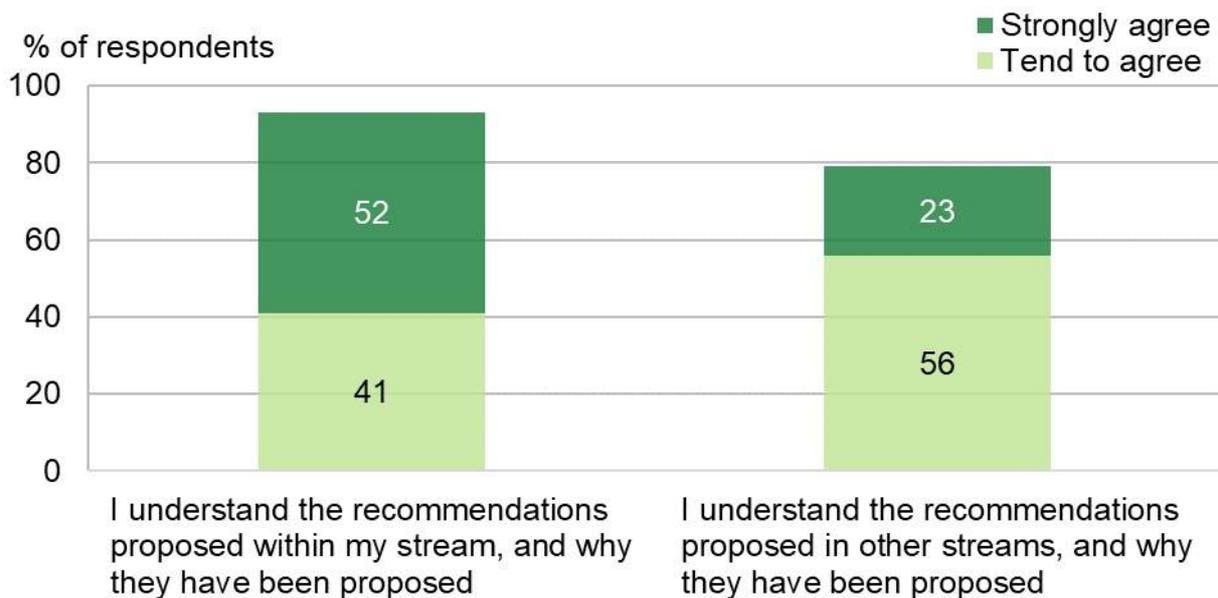
⁵¹ Evaluation of Climate Assembly UK <https://www.parliament.uk/globalassets/documents/get-involved2/climate-assembly-uk/evaluation-of-climate-assembly-uk.pdf>

and highlighted the possibility that members misrepresented their own topic stream to other members:

“But then one thing I was quite conscious of is the possible misrepresentation maybe of some members in some groups about the reasons behind particular recommendations and why they’ve come out. Because when we came back together in a situation where you had your groups and maybe two, three people in that group were from one of the work streams and then there was a bit of a burden on them to explain what things were.” (Organising member)

Member survey results indicate that the mixed stream structure in Weekends 6 and 7 helped members gain an understanding about the content from other topic streams, although not to the same extent as the recommendations from their own stream. As shown in Figure 2.2, almost all respondents (93%) in the Weekend 7 (WE7) survey agreed that they understood the recommendations proposed in their topic stream and why they were proposed. A lower, but still high, proportion (79%) agreed that they understood the recommendations proposed in other topic streams and why they were proposed.

Figure 2.2 Assembly members’ understanding of recommendations (WE7 survey)



Source: Member survey
Base: WE7: 69

Further analysis was conducted on the profile of the 21% who did not agree that they understood the recommendations proposed in other topic streams and why they were proposed (15% neither agreed nor disagreed, 6% disagreed). There was a fairly even mix of those who agreed their views had been reflected in the finalised goals and recommendations and those who disagreed or selected neither agree nor disagree. Most of this group supported all, or most, of the recommendations (apparently despite not fully understanding them) and almost all thought climate change was an ‘immediate and urgent’ problem.

The survey did not ask members whether they trusted the outputs from other streams, but comments show that some were more comfortable with this than others. For example:

“I feel confident that the members in the other groups from myself have made an informed decision with all the information provided to them . Like our group I trust they have discussed this in length before setting their recommendations so I am satisfied that they have chosen well.” (Assembly Member, WE6)

“To be able to vote for the other streams goals/recommendations either we trust our common sense and the work done by the members of these stream, or we have to spend time going through all the evidences ... I wish we would have had more time to discuss the recommendations with members of the different streams in work group and maybe ask some questions to the evidence team when a point is unclear. I would have preferred to spend the whole weekend on that and not just one day.” (Assembly Member, WE6)

“I am starting to find it quite confusing now as being asked to vote on recommendations from other streams when we haven't had the benefit of hearing all the evidence presented to those streams.” (Assembly Member, WE6)

One respondent described feeling discomfort at voting against recommendations made by other streams:

“When discussing the gaps we also had 2 of the contributors in the same team so it was rather uncomfortable voting against them and then having them trying to explain their points, kinda putting us in the spot.” (Assembly member, WE7)

One interviewee wondered how “discriminating” members had been when casting their votes:

“I think the solidarity that had been built up meant that people were actually not very critical about this and just accepted what had come from the group. And so you get these really high figures of people like 70, 75 per cent of people⁵², because they had been tossed around by the group, they had come to this decision, they said to everyone else, everyone else went, well that sounds fine, I don't have anything to go against that, I don't have any knowledge. So, I think it's probably overinflated the percentages of acceptance at the end ... I think it wasn't very discriminating” (Organising member)

This reference to the effect of ‘solidarity’ can be interpreted through the lens of social identity theory⁵³, which predicts that people tend to show favouritism towards those they perceive as being part of their in-group, and that there are pressures to conform to in-group norms.

52 See 4.1.3 Recommendations for results of members votes for recommendations.

53 Tajfel & Turner (1986).

Members' sense of ownership over the process and outputs is explored further in other sections of this report (see 3.1.3 Influencing the process and 3.1.4 Developing the outputs).

2.3.4 Programming the sessions

Key findings

- There were challenges in balancing time for evidence with time for deliberation and completing small group tasks, and in completing small group tasks within session time. Work was often rushed and at times overran into breaks.
- Many members did not feel there was enough time to develop and finalise the recommendations.
- Most members found the small group, mixed stream and plenary sessions helpful for their learning, and were satisfied with the balance of open discussions to task-based discussions.

Observational and interview data shows that there were issues most weekends with regards to having sufficient time for the work. Sessions were often observed to over-run with members rushing to complete tasks.

Difficulties were observed in balancing time between evidence provision, deliberation and completion of tasks. One interviewee noted:

"I would have given less evidence ...I think I would have slightly changed the balance between evidence and deliberation and given a bit more time to deliberation" (Organising Member)

A few other interviewees also thought that perhaps too much time had been given to presenting evidence, and one interviewee reflected that members had been given insufficient time to consider policy options.

One interviewee reflected on the necessity of the extra weekend (Weekend 7):

"I was absolutely delighted to see that extra weekend because my fear – and it still felt a bit rushed at the end – is that it would have felt really really rushed. I mean, we needed it. So glad the members decided to vote for it. But the reason I think we needed it was because when people were coming towards the end of their groups they were taking more time than we had expected I think to develop some of the supporting information around those statements and to grapple with what was really important to them."
(Organising member)

Assembly members did not always feel that they had enough time to develop and finalise the recommendations. Only around four in ten respondents (average 42%) to Weekends 4 and 5 member surveys agreed that there had been enough time in their small group to develop recommendations. The following quotes illustrate the range of views:

“I think it's probably an unavoidable consequence of having to carry out the assembly online, but everything feels very rushed. We are being presented with a lot of information and then being asked to comment on it with very little time to digest it - and then running short of time to discuss and get our recommendations down on paper while in groups.” (Assembly Member, WE4)

“The time allocated to review the goals/recommendations from the previous week wasn't enough and we had to rush which was frustrating and I don't think it serves its purpose.” (Assembly Member, WE4)

“A few members in our group were complaining about lack of information to make recommendations. I am happy enough - the level of information needed to properly enact our recommendations is several degrees and PhDs worth, I think we are getting enough to point us in a direction without becoming overwhelmed with information.” (Assembly member, WE4)

In the Weekend 6 and 7 members' surveys, a higher proportion of respondents felt there had been enough time in their mixed stream small groups to discuss recommendations (59% WE6), and to satisfactorily finalise the statements of ambition (55% WE7) and the recommendations (57% WE7). Despite this perceived lack of time, as shown in Chapter 4, a large majority still thought the final recommendations reflected their views.

Assembly members were also asked for their views on particular elements of the programme, in terms of their satisfaction, or how helpful they were for learning about climate change and how to tackle it. Reflecting on their experience of the Assembly after Weekends 6 and 7, most respondents reported finding the small group discussions (87%) and the mixed stream discussions (86%) helpful, with 75% finding the plenary sessions with all Assembly members helpful. 79% of respondents were satisfied with the balance between task-based discussions and open discussions in their small groups across the Assembly weekends as a whole.

In Weekend 7, representatives from political parties gave short speeches to the Assembly. 59% of respondents to the member survey agreed that it was good to hear from members of political parties.

2.3.5 Facilitation

Key findings

- Overall there were good elements to the facilitation, particularly given the considerable challenges of facilitating online and working with multiple tools and documents.
- Members largely felt included and respected, with ample opportunity to express their views.
- There was ongoing issue with one or more members dominating their small group, affecting other members' participation.
- There were instances when facilitators inaccurately recorded members' contributions, which were not always picked up.
- There were differences in the extent to which members were facilitated to fulfil tasks for themselves.
- Performance monitoring and management of facilitators more difficult online.

On the whole, the quality of facilitation was observed to be good, with a friendly and supportive approach including encouraging members to be respectful and supportive of each other.

Members mostly had different small group facilitators for the Saturday and Sunday of each weekend, and occasionally for different sessions in the day. Across all sessions and weekends, almost all respondents felt included (average 92%) and respected by their facilitator (average 93%). Most respondents (average 85%) agreed that their facilitator considered opposing arguments and agreed that they had ample opportunity in the small group discussions to express their views (average 85%). The members who disagreed varied across the weekends, but there were some members who gave this response for more than one weekend.

The following quotes illustrate the range of positive and negative views:

“They included every member within the group making sure everyone had their say and ensured all comments/opinions were noted. No one was made [to] feel that their opinion didn't matter and encouraged quieter members to voice opinions, it was very enjoyable” (Assembly Member, WE2)

“I thought our facilitator for this weekend was excellent and it made me realise how important that role is in achieving enjoyable and useful discussions.” (Assembly member, WE4)

“I felt that some of my comments weren't being considered [s/he] wasn't even typing when I spoke and was pretty disappointed that [s/he] constantly disregarded some of my comments in place of more active speakers' feedback ... this weekend had really dampened my mood to participate further” (Assembly member, WE4)

“I was very frustrated by the difficulties caused by the narrow broadband width available to me. However, the facilitator took enormous efforts to include me in the process.” (Assembly Member, WE3)

There was a view that managing the performance of facilitators in online breakout rooms is more challenging than in in-person assemblies, as joining groups could have been perceived as “spying” as well as influencing how the facilitator behaved when watched. One Organising member interviewee reflected on this problem:

*“For me it was absolutely not being able to go in and observe the facilitators as they were working to be able to pick up on any issues or things that needed to be addressed ... I do feel a bit uncomfortable that I couldn’t keep an eye on things in the same way as I might be able to in a room.”
(Organising member)*

Lead facilitators mainly relied upon briefing and debriefing sessions, that all facilitators participated in, for facilitation quality control. Information about performance was also gained from the nature and content of session outputs, and from the data briefings produced by the research team based on member survey and non-participant observational data.

In general, facilitators were observed to do well in managing the facilitation alongside juggling multiple complicated documents and templates, screen sharing and note-taking. In light of these challenges, facilitators later were offered additional technical support and a note taker, which were at times taken up.

As noted in 2.3.2 Online format, facilitating online was considered to be more challenging than facilitating in-person. Some facilitators were observed to have stronger skills than others with regards to involving all members, and directly encouraged quieter members to contribute, or intervening to bring the discussion back on topic.

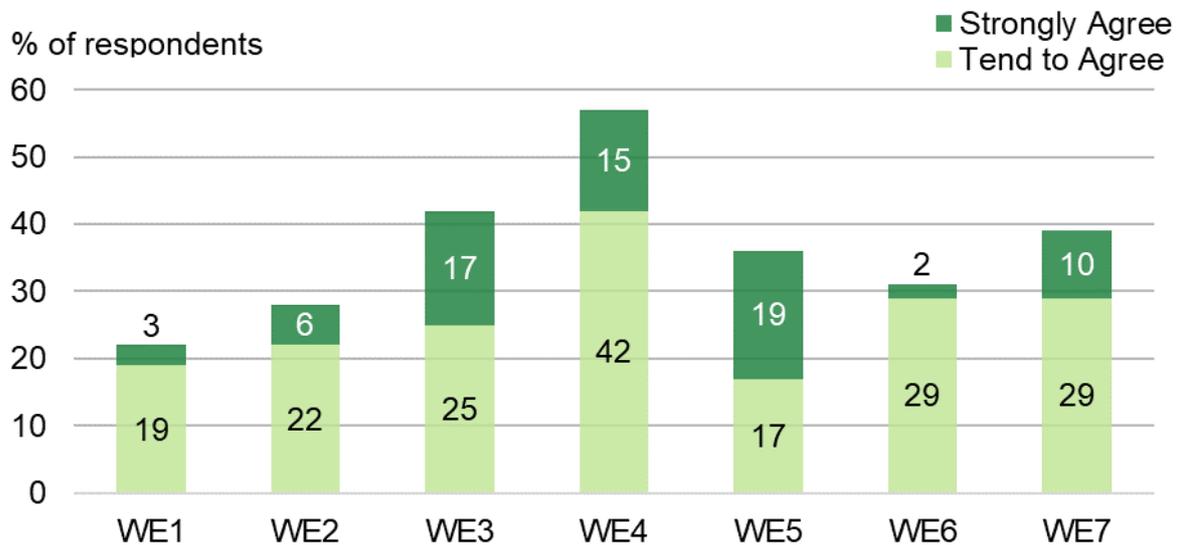
However, the observational data shows instances when facilitators allowed dominant speakers too much time. This is reflected in the member survey data. Figure 2.3 shows how experiences varied across the weekends. In the Weekend 4 survey, respondents agreeing that others in their group tended to dominate the discussions were spread across thirteen of the fifteen small groups, illustrating that this was a common problem. The drop in Weekends 5 and 6 is likely a consequence of intervention by the Design Team following the Weekend 4 data briefing by the research team. Members’ comments included:

“Our facilitator did try various ways to stop this happening so I don’t think [s/he] could have done anymore, sometimes no matter how many times you tell people they don’t listen. I felt this the most uninteresting weekend so far because of this reason. I actually felt like I wanted to stop sooner - sorry I’m just being honest. It was distracting.” (Assembly Member, WE3)

“Dominant participant in the team and facilitator relied a lot on them to get input. Quite a bit of time spent with just the two of them discussing. Fair enough because [name deleted] is an expert in the field we are discussing, but because the rest of us aren’t, the discussions then become circled around information coming from [name deleted] and their viewpoints.” (Assembly member, WE4)

“My group this weekend had 2 individuals who seemed to control the conversation and at times I felt it pointless trying to speak.” (Assembly Member, WE3)

Figure 2.3 Changes in Assembly members’ agreement that other members dominated discussions in their small groups across weekends



Source: Member survey. Question: "One or more of the people in my small group tended to dominate the discussions"

Base: WE1: 64, WE2: 65, WE3: 61, WE4: 63, WE5: 70, WE6: 67, WE7: 69

There were a small number of instances of unhelpful behaviour observed, for example when a facilitator appeared to dismiss a member’s comments. Acronyms and jargon were not always fully explained either.

Facilitators were mostly impartial but on a small number of occasions were observed to have introduced their own ideas to the group. This is reflected in member survey data, where up to 16% agreed that their facilitator ‘sometimes tried to influence the group with their own ideas’. Analysis of the survey data shows that those agreeing with the statement were not all in the same breakout group. One respondent commented:

“[Facilitator] seemed to have a poor understanding of some of the tasks [s/he] was leading us through, and sometimes was eager to add [her/his] own suggestions to our discussions, only to get half way through them before holding [herself/himself] back and resuming [her/his] role as a facilitator (rather than a contributing assembly member).” (Assembly Member, WE4)

Observational data shows that facilitators did not always challenge members about the rationale or evidence for their claims. One interviewee explained the important role of the facilitator in supporting deliberation:

“So the deliberative work is to be done by the group and the facilitator needs to help the group to develop those skills, to do deliberative work. It’s not the role of the facilitator to necessarily pick up on misinformation, it’s the role of fellow deliberators to effectively monitor and make claims as transparent as they can be. And ask people to justify what they are saying.” (Organising member)

There were some instances observed of inaccurate recording by facilitators of members’ contributions (not always noticed or challenged by members) and in one case inaccurate recording of votes (which members did correct).

A few members commented on this in the surveys. For example:

“Facilitator was also seemingly struggling to understand some of the feedback that other members were speaking about and alot of time spent trying to "paraphrase" what had been said.” (Assembly member, WE4)

“The facilitators in general, across the whole Assembly, have struggled to capture and record the views of the groups adequately. Things which have been said and apparently noted have failed to appear in draft goals and recommendations.” (Assembly member, WE6)

Differences in approach were observed such as whether the facilitator asked experts questions on behalf of members or invited members to ask the questions themselves. In a few instances, members were observed to take control of asking the questions from facilitators. A few members commented about this issue of their agency:

“I would suggest that if tools like Jamboard are being used that the members are always allowed to contribute themselves - our facilitator wrote our answers for us but I feel that it may have saved a lot of time and encouraged more engagement (especially from those who wanted to keep quiet) if we were allowed to write our own answers.” (Assembly member, WE3)

“It was good to have a facilitator that actually wrote what we said and gave us access to jamboard so we could use our own words unlike previous facilitators” (Assembly member, WE4)

Whilst over-running of sessions was mostly due to workload, there were some instances observed where it was due to ineffective time management by the facilitator. Some members commented on this in the surveys. For example:

“The facilitators nearly always allowed tasks to overrun into the 10-minute "comfort breaks" that were supposed to be time to let assembly members turn off their cameras and stretch their legs” (Assembly member, WE6)

2.3.6 Assembly member support

Key findings

- Good pastoral support provided to members, although more staff resource would have been helpful due to the emotional labour involved.
- Resources to support members' learning could have been better planned, structured and delivered, to ensure different learning styles were accommodated, and that materials provided by post arrived in time.

Members were supported by a member of the Design team with dedicated responsibility for this task⁵⁴. Most of the support provided was technical (see 2.3.2 Online format). Other support given related to providing reassurance to members that appeared to lack self-confidence, that they were capable of contributing and that their opinion was valuable. There was a view that it would have been helpful to have two support staff to share the “exhausting” workload. The interviewee elaborated:

“I mean there was certainly a lot of emotional labour⁵⁵ that goes into it. I mean my colleagues have had people, you know, saying their dog just died, and it's you become part of someone's life for the period of the process and they trust you with information” (Organising member)

Members were also offered support from the two conveners who had a pastoral role. It was not recorded how many members took advantage of this service. Interviewees mention one instance when a convenor provided support to a member by telephone after they became upset in a session.

In Weekend 2 there was a presentation on climate anxiety, which 46% of respondents found helpful. Following this, the member surveys included questions about how members were feeling (see 3.2 on members' emotional experience) and the findings informed the development of a wellbeing resource for members, produced by the research team.

With regards to supporting members with their learning, some interviewees thought that more could have been done to take into account different learning styles, to explain what evidence is and where it comes from, or to coach members in how to take notes. One interviewee suggested that a resource pack could have been posted to members for each weekend. They thought this type of support was constrained by budget and time.

Some members were provided with printed materials, but these did not always arrive in time. A difficulty was reported in providing printed materials to members during lockdown, which was exacerbated by materials being finalised only a short time in advance of the weekends. As noted earlier (see 2.3.1 Planning the

⁵⁴ Onboarding was initially meant to be delivered by the team who delivered the Citizens' Assembly of Scotland but due to Covid-19, this was no longer possible.

⁵⁵ 'Emotional labour' refers to the process of managing and expressing feelings in the workplace to fulfil the emotional requirements of a job.

Assembly) Assembly members had differing levels of capacity to engage with materials outside of the Assembly weekends.

As described earlier (see 2.3.1 Planning the Assembly), most respondents to the member survey were satisfied with the support and assistance they received.

2.4 Evidence

This section presents findings relating to the process of selecting evidence including issues of balance and diversity, the quality of evidence presented and communication of evidence. Interactions between the Evidence Group and the Assembly members, and members' engagement with the evidence, are also covered.

Key findings

- There was a challenging start to the decision making process in the Evidence Group, with not much time to build relationships and trust before the start of the Assembly. The process improved over time as relationships developed. Not all Evidence Group members were involved in decision making as much as they would have liked.
- The evidence provided was generally good quality (content, style) although peer review processes could have been better and more consistent.
- Different views on the extent to which balance and diversity of evidence was achieved.
- The severity of the climate emergency may not have been sufficiently conveyed to Assembly members, particularly at the outset.
- Climate impacts, adaptation and resilience were under-represented in the evidence relative to mitigation, with this imbalance reflected in the Assembly Report recommendations.
- Although limited, the interactions between experts and Assembly members were useful.
- Assembly members understood and engaged well with the evidence, although there could have been better use of resources, and some felt overwhelmed by the volume of information.
- In the cross-weekend sample of small group discussions analysed, only 16% of contributions by members involved demands about what should be done. Of these, most were accompanied with a justification. However, only a third of these justifications were qualified (explicit links between demand and reason). Two thirds of justifications were in service of the general interest or common good.

2.4.1 Selection of evidence

Evidence Groups members, informants and advocates created video presentations of evidence that were shown to the members⁵⁶.

The amount of evidence that could be presented each weekend was largely determined by the schedule produced by the Design Team, who informed the Evidence Group of the length of the timeslots. Consideration was given to people's attention span online, and time needed for deliberation. The time allocated for evidence influenced the content and the degree of complexity and nuance in the presentations.

A framework was created by the Secretariat and some members of the Evidence Group based on the three topic streams and the scenario framework developed by Forum for the Future (see 2.2.2 Systemic approach, and Appendix 2). One interviewee reflected that whilst the framework generally worked, it was challenging to identify speakers who neatly fit the scenarios.

The Secretariat played a key role in deciding on the evidence, which had advantages and disadvantages. As one said:

“quite a few of the decisions as to what evidence the Assembly members should hear was taken by the Secretariat ... I completely understand why the Secretariat had to adopt that model because otherwise ... everybody would have got incredibly frustrated because no decisions would ever have been made. There was an efficient decision-making process. I think it was then a little bit frustrating for me as an evidence lead because ... I wanted to make that decision ... and it was actually made by others” (Organising Member)

Most Evidence Group interviewees agreed that the first few weeks of working together were the most challenging. A few found it “frustrating” and “tense” as they sought to reconcile different perspectives, although it was noted that discussions remained respectful. One commented:

“And I think what was really useful from both sides is they would make the point and then leave it, step back, and they might make it again in a slightly different way later on but no one banged the table, no one stormed out. There were people that made it absolutely clear that they didn't think this was the right way ... the actual discussions we had were really quite honest and – what's the phrase that politicians use? Robust” (Organising Member)

Another reflected that rationales for views were not always provided:

“I expect people to respond in an academic fashion, detailed point by point so that we can come to a final understanding of our differences or we can come to an agreement because we frame things differently. But that wasn't how it was ... you'd get some slight dismissal back, I just don't agree. That's nothing - that's not a statement of anything. Why don't you agree? And when people say that what they mean is I don't like. And that's irrelevant to academics whether you like it or not; it's whether people agree or not and why you disagree and why you agree” (Organising Member)

⁵⁶ These presentations can be viewed on the Assembly website and YouTube channel.

One interviewee reflected on the lack of time to build relationships and trust between the people involved in deciding the evidence, particularly in relation to fears about how 'academic' the evidence presentations would be:

“some of the meetings got a little bit tense. And I think the problem was that maybe under normal circumstances, when you've got a bit more time to unpack some of these concerns and frustrations, that's fine. But these concerns and frustrations were being raised the week before the weekends.”
(Organising Member)

As relationships and trust developed over the course of the Assembly, this interviewee, and others, noted that the nature of their discussions improved and differences became less marked.

Evidence leads in the topic streams played a key role in selecting evidence for their topic stream, but the wider Evidence Group were not always involved in the decision making process. One interviewee reflected that the group who made decisions about the evidence became smaller over time due to illness, end of contracted or agreed time of Evidence Group members, and possibly because of disengagement by some members. The interviewee reflected that this group had worked well together. It is possible that the decrease in size of this group contributed to a “narrowness of perspectives” described by this interviewee (see below on Balance and diversity).

As noted earlier (see 2.2 Remit and framing) the question that the Assembly was asked to address presupposes that climate change is real and an emergency.

Some interviewees wondered whether the evidence, particularly in the first two weekends, had sufficiently conveyed the severity and 'emergency' of climate change. Comments included:

“did it come across how urgent and pressing the climate emergency was and, you know, would that have changed some of the recommendation? Should we've gone deeper into certain things?” (Organising Member)

“you get some sort of feel of how rapidly things have got to change if you're going to avoid whatever it is you may define as climate emergency ... And I think that was a problem ... because no attendees [experts] really described what does a climate emergency mean, what are the severe impacts of climate change ... I felt there was no flavour of this is an existential threat to many, many communities around the world and to ecosystems as well.”
(Organising Member)

Whilst others highlighted the severe impacts already being experienced:

“The Assembly as a whole had this feeling of this thing that was coming down the line and how would Scotland react to it; whereas another narrative was, this is something that is already here for a large part of the population of the planet, and giving that impetus for real urgency” (Organising Member)

“I think maybe a bit more time on the impacts and consequences would've been useful. But with the caveat that this was all very difficult to do anyway ... I think it would've reiterated that element of urgency ... to talk a bit more about the impacts also on Scotland a bit more. Because otherwise they're going into the next phase, without that understanding. And therefore it is possible that that is also why they [the members] didn't come back to flood risk management or drought management or any of those really important aspects. Because they didn't really fully understand, the consequences are still a bit nebulous maybe for them” (Organising Member)

“we didn't do a lot of talking to people elsewhere in the world that were impacted by climate change and saying what a significant impact it was. We didn't do that kind of emotive thing very much. And I think that was okay, but there were some members of the Stewarding Group who would have liked to have done more of that.” (Organising Member)

The interviewees reflected on how this had influenced the members' deliberations and recommendations. One suggested that there was a desire to “give an optimistic story to the members”.

There were also some differences in views within the Evidence Group about including topics that related to wider societal issues or systems change, such as 4-day working week and universal basic income. One interviewee explained:

“my preferences or my biases would have meant that we should have focused on other areas which I feel can be more closely linked into issues around climate change ... other members of the evidence group had very strong views and very well argued views that actually it was really important that we used this process to allow these bigger societal issues to also be addressed and that they perceived it as being a really important part of the overall way in which Scotland should think about the climate crisis.” (Organising member)

One interviewee thought that some difficult trade-offs, such as the complexities of investment in rail and taxation issues, were not explored in the presentations, due to insufficient time. Where evidence was more nuanced in considering advantages and disadvantages of different options, another interviewee reflected that this nuance may not have been picked up by members as they developed their recommendations due to time pressures. However, there were instances when members were observed to discuss trade-offs in their small group sessions (see also 2.4.5 Quality of deliberation).

It was also suggested by one interviewee that members had not been given sufficiently coordinated evidence to work from.

Balance and diversity

As noted above, the scenario framework was used to help ensure balance between different perspectives.

Organising member interviewees held different views about the degree of balance and diversity achieved in the evidence presented to members. There did not appear to have been discussions or consensus about what constitutes balance or biased

views. A few Evidence Group interviewees referred to their own “reflexive practice” in selecting evidence to help counteract their biases and preferences.

One interviewee suggested that the use of existing networks in the selection of evidence resulted in a “narrowness of perspectives”. The risk of a lack of diversity in the evidence was explained by this interviewee:

“I think the danger in some of the cases was, and someone actually said this, it sounds like you actually just want us to endorse what these people have said because you’ve not really given us anything else” (Organising Member)

Most Assembly members (75%) in the Weekend 7 survey agreed that the information they received during the Assembly weekends has been fair and balanced between different viewpoints. A similar proportion agreed that overall they were happy with the choice of speakers (81%), and that overall they trusted the information that was presented by the speakers (82%). A few members expressed concerns in their comments in the survey. For example:

“It feels a bit like we are being steered to support a certain action/agenda which raises questions about the integrity of the assembly” (Assembly member, WE4)

“the subject is so vast that the topic was only covered very superficially. There should have been a more balanced expert panel with differing views” (Assembly member, WE7)

One interviewee also thought a panel with different views on a climate change topic would have been helpful for members. Weekend 3 included a 15-minute expert panel which offered members different perspectives on how effective change can happen.

The distinction between informants and advocates was not well explained to members in Weekend 3. As advocates were encouraged to explicitly take a position and propose specific changes that Scotland should make, they held a different role to informants who were asked to present a more ‘objective’ perspective. Advocates were observed to respond to members’ questions about evidence. It is possible that members did not understand the different basis from which the advocates answered, although no data was collected on this point.

The balance of mitigation to adaptation is widely recognised by all interviewees as an issue, with relatively little evidence on impacts, adaptation and resilience after Weekends 1 and 2. Of the 63 Evidence presentations analysed as part of this research, 19% were coded as having content relating to adaptation. This imbalance is reflected in the Assembly report where, according to our analysis, only eighteen of the recommendations (10%) relate (or could relate depending on how they are implemented) to adaptation. 71% of respondents in the Weekend 7 member survey agreed that the goals and recommendations covered both mitigation and adaptation, but there was a sense from a few interviewees that adaptation seemed to resonate less with members. For example, one interviewee observed that the fact that Scotland currently experiences relatively little effects of climate change may have made it more difficult for members to engage with evidence on adaptation. Other comments included:

“that imbalance reflects the imbalance that is everywhere on climate change, particularly everywhere amongst the high emitting countries. We never deal with adaptation” (Organising Member)

“I think maybe on reflection that [climate impacts on communities] could have been visited in a deeper way, and it wasn’t, and I think you can see by looking at the outcomes of the assembly and the recommendations that were made that that lack of reinforcement perhaps led to there being barely any recommendations around adaptation.” (Organising Member)

Interviewees identified a range of other topics that were under-covered, whilst also appreciating that limited time necessitated prioritisation. These included:

- barriers for marginalised groups
- inequalities in production of carbon emissions, high emitters
- demand-side dimensions
- regulations and standards
- security dimensions
- marine environment
- industrial renaissance for retrofit
- viability of carbon capture and storage
- sea travel, rail and electric vehicles
- role of Scotland’s oil and gas industry

There were also questions about the balance between evidence relating to Scotland and local communities, and evidence relating to other countries across the world.

One Evidence Group interviewee reflected that there had been too much focus on aviation and cycling given most travel emissions in Scotland come from mid-length journeys. There was a further reflection that the focus on aviation for island communities was misplaced and indicated insufficient consideration of equity as this mode of travel is primarily used by the wealthy, whereas the majority of the community use ferries.

2.4.2 Quality, communication and presentation

The quality of the evidence was considered by interviewees on the whole to be high, with one stating:

“I wouldn’t doubt the accuracy of what was being presented by the experts at all.” (Organising Member)

However, some noted there were poorer quality presentations. For example, one presentation was highlighted by a few interviewees for its lack of substance and engagement with the complexities with the topic. Assembly members were also observed complaining that this particular presentation felt like “marketing”.

There was no structured peer review process, and according to one Evidence Group interviewee, the Evidence Group did not evaluate their process during the Assembly. The provision of evidence was described by one Evidence Group interviewee as “trust based”, explaining that:

*“We were trusting people to be professional and bring their expertise”
(Organising Member)*

Although some Evidence Group interviewees reported receiving feedback from other Evidence Group members, one noted they had not received any response to feedback they had given and that the issue they raised had not been addressed.

The Secretariat produced content guidelines to assist with the style of presentations and ensure accessibility. Speakers were asked to provide the Secretariat with a presentation outline, slides and any material which was checked by Secretariat members to avoid excessive overlap between presentations and ensure that presentations were visually appealing and used accessible language. The Secretariat reviewed and edited presentations, and added images, video and captions. Where needed, statistics were sourced to back up the information. Consideration was given to diversity of people represented in images and videos. However, it was noted that materials were sometimes provided too late for substantial changes to be made.

According to observational data and interviewees, the evidence presentations had generally high production values, were well edited and easy to follow. At times, some issues were observed with poor audio, captions obscuring text on slides, too much text on slides, or slides moving too fast. There were a few instances where some members remarked that certain evidence was not well presented, or was presented too fast. In the latter case, it was observed that some members latched onto only some of the ideas as a result. Presentation issues appeared to improve as the Assembly progressed, and the Secretariat also started to produce transcripts and summaries for members, and added captions to the videos.

Pre-recording the videos meant they could be played if speakers were not available on the day or if there were connectivity issues. There were some concerns that the video presentations may not have been as engaging for members as ‘live’ presentations. This was counteracted by speakers attending the session and being available to answer questions in the small groups after their presentation.

The evidence presentations were well received by most members. Reflecting on their experience of the Assembly as a whole, 88% of respondents to the Weekend 7 member survey reported finding the evidence presentations helpful in learning about climate change and how to tackle it. 87% found the visual graphics of evidence helpful, and 70% found the written summaries and transcripts helpful.

However, around one in five members felt overwhelmed by the information presented to them, and some commented about this in the survey (see 3.2 Emotional experience). For example:

“There was also so much information that I worried about getting the facts wrong when finalising the recommendations. This made me quite anxious for the last few meetings” (Assembly member, WE7)

The schedule for the weekends included 5 minutes after the evidence presentations for members to digest the information and make notes. Just over half of respondents reported finding this reflection time to be helpful (average of 54% across Weekend 3 & 4 surveys).

2.4.3 Interaction between experts and Assembly members

The speakers (Evidence Group, informants and advocates) had some direct interaction with members by visiting small groups after their pre-recorded presentations were played, and answering questions.

In a session in Weekend 1 on climate science, members posted questions which were answered live by the Evidence Group lead, and questions not covered in the session were subsequently answered in the online members' hub.

There were also two live Q&A sessions in Weekend 5, one held in full plenary with Committee on Climate Change, and one in the topic stream groups following a recorded presentation on the Climate Change Plan.

Also in Weekend 5, there were two carousel sessions covering from topics from Weekends 3 and 4. In the carousel, four or five speakers rotated round the small groups in their topics streams, spending 10 minutes in each to answer questions or provide clarifications.

The Evidence Group also provided answers to questions that members posted in the online members' hub. 83% of respondents to the member survey reported finding time with speakers in small groups helpful. Evidence Group members also provided some feedback on draft recommendations (the Weekend 3 and 4 outputs by topic stream, and the consolidated goals and recommendations for use in Weekend 7). However, one interviewee suggested with more time, this could have been done more.

Observational data shows that members were reminded throughout that they could call experts into their small groups. Several facilitators referred to the value of expert input and one noted that cynical members were less sceptical when talking directly to an expert. There were instances when experts were observed to bring energy to groups that were otherwise a bit flat. However, some small groups either did not have enough time to invite experts in to their sessions, or did not want to interrupt the flow of discussion. In some cases, the experts were in use by other groups, were no longer present in the Assembly, or joined a group before the members had discussed evidence relating to that expert.

A few interviewees noted a relative lack of interaction between experts and Assembly members. One interviewee commented:

"I had anticipated that there would be more opportunity to engage directly with the Assembly members and that that would allow me, of course in conjunction with others, to contribute more fully to discussions about where the evidence should go next or what the next piece of evidence should be"
(Organising Member)

Another interviewee reflected that the evidence provision was "more like knowledge transfer than knowledge exchange", meaning that the relationship was more one-way rather than interactive, which they thought was due to using pre-recorded video presentations.

A few interviewees mentioned they would have liked to provide members with additional resources such as factsheets or advance reading (see 2.3.1 Planning the Assembly for more on 'homework').

In Weekend 5, a live Q&A session with all members was held. Although enjoyed by Evidence Group members, one interviewee explained that given the amount of time that live Q&A sessions take up, it was decided not to hold more of them. Another explained that they were not repeated as in their view members did not seem keen to have more. However, in the Weekend 7 survey when members were asked about their experience of the Assembly as a whole, 80% reported finding live Q&A sessions helpful for their learning.

The information carousel in Weekend 5 was also mentioned by one Evidence Group interviewee as particularly positive:

“I always found engaging with the members was really good when you are beamed in – and actually I must say I loved the virtual approach, I really enjoyed the virtual side of it – beamed into a session and they ask you these questions and you do your best to answer them and then you’re pulled out of it until another one. I loved it. And I liked the idea that you couldn’t dominate, because sometimes I probably end up dominating, like typical white men, and the nice thing is that you were then kicked back out again by someone. I loved that, I thought it was brilliant. You’ve said your bit.” (Organising Member)

Observational data shows that the carousel time appeared to be too short, with experts often pulled out of groups mid-sentence. One interviewee felt that the Q&A sessions were too short for members to engage with the evidence in-depth. An Assembly member commented:

“I felt that the availability of experts was too limited in the group discussions. I felt that I was being pushed to make it quick when speaking to them as they were required elsewhere. I have not felt that the facilitators were very well-equipped to focus the discussions or collate our views afterwards.” (Assembly member, WE4)

A few Evidence Group interviewees expressed frustration at the time they spent “waiting around” in the plenary room during an Assembly weekend when the members were in their small groups. Although members could request for an Evidence Group member who was present to join their group to answer questions, this did not always happen. The frustration reported may relate to whether the Evidence Group member was giving their time voluntarily or if the “waiting around” was perceived as a waste of the limited time they were able to contribute (see 2.1 Governance and roles).

2.4.4 Assembly members’ engagement with evidence

Assembly members engaged with evidence via the presentations. From Weekend 4, in response to a research data briefing, members were also provided with summaries of key points. However, it was observed that facilitators tended not to remind members about the summaries during the small group sessions, when they might have helped the members remember what had been presented and address factual inaccuracies, which were at times observed by researchers. Many members did appear to make use of note taking templates.

Interviewees noted that members appeared to actively engage with the evidence, asked probing questions, and that their understanding appeared to increase over

the course of the Assembly. Members were observed by researchers and Evidence Group members to consider trade-offs as they developed their recommendations. For example, one interviewee noted:

“They were trying to consider the downsides of any proto-recommendations that they were making. You know, well, we think it would be good to support local farming, but what impact will this have on dietary choices and things like that. There was quite a nuance, sort of, discussion about how all those things fitted together.” (Organising Member)

Almost all survey respondents reported understanding everything that was said by all or most of the speakers (WE2-5 average 95%), and most thought they had learnt something new from all or most of the speakers (WE2-5 average 76%).

Additionally, around eight in ten respondents agreed that the input from experts in their small group helped them to refine the recommendations (WE5 81%) and that recommendations drafted in their small group was informed by evidence heard during the Assembly (WE6 79%). A similar proportion (WE6 80%) were satisfied with the way in which members' questions had been handled or answered over the Assembly weekends as a whole.

In Weekend 3, the four scenarios of possible futures were presented to members (see 2.2.2 Systemic approach and Appendix 2). The scenarios were observed to provoke strong emotional reactions in some members. Some members worked well with the material (61% reported finding the scenarios helpful). One survey respondent commented:

“as before I really enjoyed this weekend, the topics were totally unexpected and I did not particularly like 3 of the dystopian scenarios for the future, there was one however, that with a few tweaks was quite promising. This assembly has had a profound effect on the way I look at things” (Assembly Member, WE3)

However, observational data shows that other members appeared to find it hard to move beyond their emotional reactions and engage in the task.

Whilst many Assembly members thought there was a lot of information and not enough time to digest it (see 2.3.4 Programming the sessions), at the same time member survey data suggests some members would also have welcomed more evidence. For example:

“I've been reflecting a lot on the pace at which the assembly has been going and whilst on some levels I'd say it was right, I'm a bit concerned that we're having to come up with recommendations based on fairly scant amounts of evidence. Short 4/5 min video clips covering very complex areas I don't think is sufficient information for us to make any meaningful recommendations” (Assembly member, WE3)

One Organising Member interviewee made a similar point:

“So I think even once we'd split into the groups, into those three subsections, it still sometimes felt like we were only able to scratch the surface of some of the issues which were involved.” (Organising Member)

A few respondents commented that they were at times discussing policy recommendations that were already being considered. For example:

“I feel there is a conflict between what we are doing in the assembly and what is currently happening to deal with the climate problem already. We are discussing potential recommendations for instance 20 min neighbourhoods, fuel poverty, planning reform. When you look online you find that these things are already being considered or implemented by the Government in policy ...The fact these are being implemented has not been mentioned by the speakers.” (Assembly member, WE4)

“The speakers this weekend were amazing and very interesting ..However compared to the previous weekends the group discussions felt muddled, chaotic and with not enough information given on some of the topics. Also, it often feels like we are discussing things that are already being considered or implemented as we speak, so feels a bit pointless at times.” (Assembly member, WE4)

2.4.5 Quality of deliberation

A central element of good deliberation in citizens' assemblies is the provision of reasons, aimed at the common good, to justify demands about what should be done.

Transcripts from a sample of nine small group discussion sessions (across Weekends 1 to 7) were analysed to assess the extent to which Assembly members made demands, whether demands were pertinent to the topic of discussion and were justified, and at which level of interest justifications were made. The sessions were also analysed for instances when members asked others for justifications, and for instances when facilitators asked members for justifications. A total of 1490 speech acts were identified.

As shown in Table 2.1, almost all the contributions by Assembly members (speech acts) in this sample were pertinent to the session topic and Assembly remit. Those that were not, often related to what was happening in the member's home at that time, which is likely a feature of participating in the Assembly online from home.

Despite the relevance of member conversations, less than a sixth (16%) of their speech acts contained demands. This is similar to findings from Climate Assembly UK research (20%) but considerably lower than the Citizens' Assembly of Scotland research findings (78%). The difference could be due to the nature of climate change as an Assembly topic, which requires engaging with and understanding complex information. Differences in facilitation technique and design of small group sessions between the Citizens' Assembly of Scotland and this Scotland's Climate Assembly could also be a factor in Scotland's Climate Assembly, the analysis indicates that overall, sessions involved dialogue more than deliberation. Dialogue is more exploratory and aims at understanding, whereas deliberation requires members to make demands in order to reach collective decisions. Fostering these different types of communication requires different facilitation techniques⁵⁷. As could be expected, Weekends 1 and 7 involved fewer demands. Weekend 1

⁵⁷ Escobar (2011).

introduced the topic of climate change, and Weekend 7 focussed on finalising the phrasing of the outputs.

Although demands were not often made in the sample analysed, most (four out of five) were accompanied with some level of justification. Previous research finds that justification is an aspect of deliberation that assembly members tend to find particularly difficult⁵⁸. Indeed, only a third of the justifications were ‘qualified’, which is where an explicit link is made between the demand and the reason. For example:

“So I would want to propose a recommendation. I want to say deforestation should be avoided at all costs. Because I know it's one of the causes of climate, global warming. For example, like the Amazon, or what happened in Australia last year, the whole bushfire. I think, if there's a way we can avoid that, too, I would recommend that.” (Assembly member, WE3 small group discussion)

The remainder were ‘inferior’ justifications where no such link was made. For example:

“What there needs to be. For example, when consultations, you know, there needs to be...I think what we were talking about is, getting communities involved in things, not just leaving it up to councils to decide. Allowing communities to be involved in what happens, decisions that are made in the area they are resident in.” (Assembly member, WE4 small group discussion)

Across the sample, facilitators asked members to provide justifications in only 8% of their interventions. This suggests that facilitation technique contributed to low levels of qualified justifications, which could have been exacerbated by the online format.

Nevertheless, there was a higher proportion of demands with qualified justification (25%) in the sample from this Assembly compared to Climate Assembly UK (18%) and the Citizens’ Assembly of Scotland (6%) samples. This is despite the Citizens’ Assembly, as noted earlier, having a much higher level of demands.

Justifications made (inferior and qualified) were primarily orientated to the common good or general interest (83%), with no instances of personal interest justifications in the sample. The Citizens’ Assembly of Scotland research found a much smaller proportion of justifications were related to general interest (31%).

There were some small gender differences in deliberative styles of Assembly members in the sample analysed, as shown in Table 2.1. A slightly higher proportion of men offered a qualified justification. and gave reasons relating to general interest. A slightly higher proportion of women made speech acts without demands, gave no justifications, and gave reasons relating to the interest of a particular group.

⁵⁸ Elstub et al (2021); Elstub et al (2022).

Table 2.1 Levels of demand and justification in small group discussions

Criterion	% of total speech acts - all members	% of total speech acts - women	% of total speech acts - men
Speech acts			
- speech acts without demands	84%	87%	82%
- speech acts with demands	16%	13%	18%
Pertinence of all speech acts			
- speech acts not relevant	6%	5%	7%
- speech acts relevant	94%	95%	93%
Level of justification in speech acts with demands			
- no justification	21%	24%	19%
- inferior justification ⁵⁹	54%	55%	53%
- qualified justification ⁶⁰	25%	20%	29%
Level of generality in justification in speech acts with justifications			
- justification relates to personal interest	0%	-	-
- justification relates to a group interest	15%	18%	13%
- justification relates to marginalised group	3%	4%	2%
- justification relates to general interest	83%	78%	85%

⁵⁹ Inferior justification: where a reason is given but no explicit link between the reason and the demand.

⁶⁰ Qualified justification: where an explicit link is made between reason and demand.

3. Assembly member experience

This chapter explores the Assembly members' experience with regards to participation, emotional experience, climate attitudes, learning and knowledge, and outcomes. It begins with vignettes of the experience of four members, selected to illustrate different types of journey through the Assembly.

“Gael”

Gael is aged 45-64 and lives in the south of Scotland, successfully accessing the Assembly using her tablet from her rural home. She was immediately struck by the quality of the process and the support provided.

Gael reports having a fantastic relationship with her fellow members, and would welcome meeting up in person in future to catch up with one another. She also had a good relationship with the facilitators, feeling consistently included, respected and listened to by them. This environment made her very comfortable to raise her own views and learn from other members, despite thinking certain individuals tended to dominate the conversations. The Assembly process allowed Gael to feel empowered and she strongly supports the outputs, thinking that climate change needs to be addressed with an extremely high level of urgency.

After Weekend 7, Gael feels hopeful and optimistic but also worried about climate change and upset at the level of devastation inflicted on the planet. Reflecting on her experience, Gael says:

“I have loved and loathed the process. I have felt challenged both mentally and emotionally. I have learnt so much about myself in the process. I have a valid point of view. I have life experience that has given me perspective on all the challenges we face. I feel shattered and exhilarated at the same time that I have been a part of this journey. I have met and shared ideas with the most diverse group of people. And I have loved the fact that I still have the capacity to learn. And I am grateful that I was chosen”

“Cliff”

Cliff is aged 45 - 64 and lives in central Scotland. Despite thinking that citizens' assemblies are just an opportunity for governments to defend choices they have already made, he joined Scotland's Climate Assembly as he also believes that assemblies are a good way of involving people in making recommendations on important issues. Cliff believes his opinions are as valid as anyone else's and is comfortable challenging other people's opinions.

Before the Assembly started, Cliff had learned about the topic of climate change through books and internet searches of blogs and government reports, and considered himself to have a medium level of knowledge. He thinks there is no such thing as climate change. Instead, he believes climate change is based on pseudo-science and myths.

Cliff reflected that while he had learned something new from a few of the speakers and found their involvement in breakout rooms quite helpful, overall he did not trust them. He critiqued the evidence presented, highlighting the absence of scientists who deny climate change and suggested the evidence resembled propaganda which promotes a communist global government. Throughout the Assembly, Cliff maintains the view that anthropogenic climate change is not real. He felt the small group sessions were unhelpful and that the outputs from these discussions, and indeed the Assembly's final goals, recommendations and statements of ambition, did not reflect his views.

At the end of Weekend 7, Cliff was less certain that his opinion is as valid as anyone else's. Reflecting on his experience, he praises the Assembly's organisation. However, he reports his knowledge on climate change has barely increased and says that whilst he enjoyed taking part, it has not affected his original views.

At the end of Weekend 8, Cliff reflects that he is very dissatisfied with the Scottish Government response and felt his views were not reflected in the finalised Assembly Statement of Response.

If someone is interested in knowing more about climate change, Cliff would tell them that there is no climate emergency and encourages them to avoid being brainwashed by “*woke Snowflake nonsense*”.

“Rayne”

Rayne is aged between 30-44 and lives in North East Scotland. She joined the Assembly knowing little about climate change, remarking that she was “not sure what it really is”. However, she found her understanding of climate change increased sharply, particularly over the first three weekends.

Before the Assembly started, Rayne thought that climate change would not happen “in [her] lifetime” and she expressed little urgency about climate change. At the end of the Assembly, she came to the realisation that climate change is an immediate and urgent problem, saying

“It's real. It's happening now. It's not affected me personally in a life-changing manner, but it is to someone else on this planet.”

Rayne now also thinks that action to tackle the climate emergency is needed at all levels, including individuals, communities, businesses and governments. She is particularly excited about carbon labelling and interested in the concept of 20 minute communities. A key learning for her was that we cannot rely on technology alone to solve the climate emergency and that it will require reducing actual usage and demand.

Rayne trusted the information that was presented by the speakers, and found the transcripts and written summaries of the presentations helpful in her learning about climate change. She also found the live Q&A sessions with experts and the time with speakers in breakout rooms helpful, although she struggled at times in assessing conflicting evidence. As a visual learner, Rayne would have liked more time to make use of the materials on the platform ahead of weekends.

Rayne found the small group discussions less helpful for her learning. Nevertheless, she felt her contributions were listened to by the other Assembly members, and that her views are reflected in the finalised goals and recommendations.

In Weekend 8, Rayne reflects that she struggled to provide a “substantial evidential response to the Government’s response”, as she “did not manage to pre-read” it.

She later agrees that there was not enough time to satisfactorily finalise the Statement of Response, explaining that she has:

“No true confidence in our responses produced in quite a rush and I'm not sure how many people actually managed to completely read the Government's responses. I feel like we are slightly disrespecting the amount of time that the Government had put in to respond to us, with the pretty shabby amount of work we have put in to respond to them.”

Despite this, Rayne tends to agree that her views are reflected in the Statement of Response, but lacks confidence that Parliament and political parties will take the Assembly Response seriously.

“Pete”

Pete is aged 22-29 and lives in Central Scotland. He was happy to take part in the Assembly as he strongly believes that citizens' assemblies should be used more by government - they can be used as a tool for governments to take on board opinions from a variety of different people. Looking back on the Assembly as a whole, Pete is confident the Assembly achieved this, as he thinks that the Assembly was diverse enough to ensure a broad range of perspectives were considered.

In Weekend 3, Pete joined the Diet and Lifestyle topic stream. Before the Assembly began, Pete felt that individuals may not have to cut down on their consumption of meat to tackle climate change. However, by the end of Weekend 7, Pete included reducing meat consumption in his top five things he would tell someone who wanted to know more about climate change, and also committed to reducing his personal meat consumption.

However, despite this change in opinion, Pete claims that his knowledge about climate change has only increased marginally. Before the Assembly began Pete rated his knowledge about climate change at 6 out of 10 (where 0 is nothing at all, and 10 is a great deal), and at 7 after Weekend 7.

At the start of the Assembly, Pete had confidence that the Assembly report will be taken seriously by Parliament and political parties. However, reflecting on the Scottish Government response to the Assembly report, Pete thought:

“There was some good responses but a lot of it was what they are already doing and some of it was quite waffly. Felt like they were afraid of the changes needed”

Despite this, Pete has some confidence that Parliament and political parties will take the Assembly Statement of Response seriously.

Reflecting on his experience, Pete feels a sense of privilege for taking part in the Assembly, and overall he really enjoyed the process, highlighting how he felt the Assembly was run smoothly. Thinking of the emotional impact that participating in the Assembly has had on him, Pete explains:

“It's had a bit impact psychologically as I am more aware the impact of day to day activities had on the environment. It's hard to know that if we don't make changes then we may struggle to survive. It's also positive though that a lot of people are becoming more aware of the issue and that the reason the assembly was put together was to try to contact this. I'm hopeful that things change.”

3.1 Assembly member participation

This section covers Assembly members' engagement and ability to participate, their interactions with other members, influence over the process, their experience of developing the outputs, and their interaction with Children's Parliament.

Key findings

- Generally high levels of engagement, with connectivity issues affecting some members' ability to participate.
- Most felt listened to and respected by other members.
- Members had some opportunity to influence the Assembly process.
- Some lack of clarity about how members' work was collated and consolidated between weekends.
- Most felt their views were reflected in the various outputs over the course of the Assembly, suggesting overall sense of ownership of the process and outputs was high.

Almost all members attended each weekend (see Appendix 1 for details). Most were observed to participate with videos on, although technical problems meant this was not possible for some. Levels of engagement were generally high, with commitment and enthusiasm evident. Group dynamics were observed to be generally positive, with a minority of members who were relatively quiet.

On the whole there was a visibly diverse mix by age and gender of members reporting in plenary sessions on behalf of their small groups to the whole Assembly.

3.1.1 Ability to participate

Members were asked about factors reducing their ability to participate in each weekend including: connection difficulties, difficulties with online members hub, distractions in the home, device use, and length of sessions. The extent of problems varied across the weekends, with connection difficulties the most common issue affecting up to one in six respondents to some extent (see also 2.3.2 Online format). The other factors affected less than one in ten. Data was not collected on the extent to which these factors affected participation. A few members' participation was affected by illness due to Covid-19 or vaccine side-effects.

3.1.2 Interactions with other Assembly members

Across the weekends, a large majority of respondents agreed that they felt respected by their fellow participants even when they didn't agree with what they had to say (83% average across all weekends). Reflecting back on their experience of the Assembly as a whole after Weekend 7, over eight in ten respondents (86%) agreed that their contributions had been listened to by the other Assembly members. For example, one commented:

“I really enjoyed this whole experience. I found it really interesting and especially enjoyed the break out rooms where I feel I learned a lot talking things through with fellow assembly members, some of whom were very knowledgeable in different areas.” (Assembly Member, WE7)

Across the weekends, between four and six in ten respondents (average 47%) agreed that ‘one or more people in my small group were particularly influential in helping me to think through the issues we were discussing’, and also thought the Assembly is diverse enough to ensure a broad range of perspectives are considered (average 84%).

However, there were a few who agreed that ‘I didn’t always feel free to raise my views and ideas for fear of others’ reactions’ (average 11%). A few (average 6%) agreed that ‘I had already formed my opinion and the discussion had little effect on me’, this rose to around one in ten respondents (12%) in the Weekend 7 survey.

As discussed in Section 2.3.5 Facilitation, some members reported that others in their group dominated the conversation, affecting their ability and motivation to contribute.

3.1.3 Influencing the process

The Arrangements for the Administration and Operation of Citizens’ Assembly of Scotland: Scotland’s Climate Assembly states that “within the remit of the legislation, and with expert support, members of the assembly (once in place) will be able to shape the assembly’s agenda⁶¹.”

Reflecting back on their experience of the Assembly as a whole after Weekend 7, 68% respondents agreed that they had ‘the opportunity to influence decisions about the content of the information presented to them’. Members had been offered an opportunity to suggest speakers or areas to cover. However, it is not known how many suggestions were offered and whether they were taken up, or whether members were supported to identify speakers and areas to cover, in accordance with the Arrangements. Members were also asked if they wanted an additional (seventh) weekend. Members prioritised their draft goals and recommendations. Members voted on options for structuring the report, and although were not directly involved in writing the report they contributed quotes that were included.

A few interviewees reflected that they would have liked Assembly members to have been more involved in process decision making. Despite being promised opportunities to shape the agenda of the Assembly, it was not clear that Assembly members had a meaningful opportunity to do this. For example, the Assembly did not have a sub-group of members to use as a sounding board as was employed in the Citizens’ Assembly of Scotland. One interviewee noted there was a risk that a sub-group would not have been representative of members’ views.

⁶¹ Scotland’s Climate Assembly operations and administration arrangements
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-climate-assembly-operations-administration-arrangements/>

3.1.4 Developing the outputs

As described in 2.2.1 Assembly question, Assembly members were tasked with answering a question⁶² determined by the Stewarding Group, within the frame of the Climate Change Act and its targets. Members were not given a set of recommendations to discuss or approve, as with the Climate Assembly UK. However, many evidence presentations proposed ways for tackling climate change in an effective and fair way. Over the course of the Assembly, members worked on developing and finalising their response to the question they were set.

Between weekends, the Design Team collated and consolidated information that had been generated by members in their small group sessions. This involved grouping draft overarching statements (also referred to as statements of ambition), goals and recommendations by theme. It was suggested by one interviewee that the Secretariat could have been more involved in that process, bringing their knowledge on climate change. Due to the quick turnaround between weekends, and the amount of information, there were occasional duplications or omissions. A coding system was developed to show how information had been merged. However, one interviewee reflected that members found the coding system difficult to follow and that using diagrams or visuals may have worked better. Some difficulties in tracking the changes made by the Design Team were also observed in the small groups. This may have affected members' sense of ownership over the outputs. There were a few comments in the member surveys related to this:

“It was a difficult weekend at some points. Some members in my groups felt discussions which had been had or points raised fell by the wayside in the presented texts“ (Assembly member, WE6)

“Over the previous weeks, we have been presented with drafts of the goals and recommendations and asked for our feedback and comments and to identify gaps. On several occasions, I have spent time to feedback conscientiously and identify points which were discussed but somehow not captured” (Assembly member, WE6)

The process of formulating goals and recommendations took place within the topic streams. In Weekend 6 when members came back together as a full Assembly, representatives from each stream presented their proposed goals and recommendations with a rationale. This was followed by mixed-stream small group discussions to reflect upon and refine the goals and recommendations, identify tensions between different goals and recommendations, identify and agree mergers. Groups could call in Evidence Group members to answer questions as needed (see 2.4.3 Interaction between experts and Assembly members).

For Weekend 7, the Evidence Group provided some feedback on some of the draft recommendations, suggesting rephrasing, issues or measures for members to consider⁶³. This feedback was advisory, and members were not required to accept their advice. Further factual clarifications were also provided as requested.

⁶² How should Scotland change to tackle the climate emergency in an effective and fair way?

⁶³ As noted in 2.4.3 Interaction between experts and Assembly members, Evidence Group members also provided some feedback on Weekend 3 and 4 outputs.

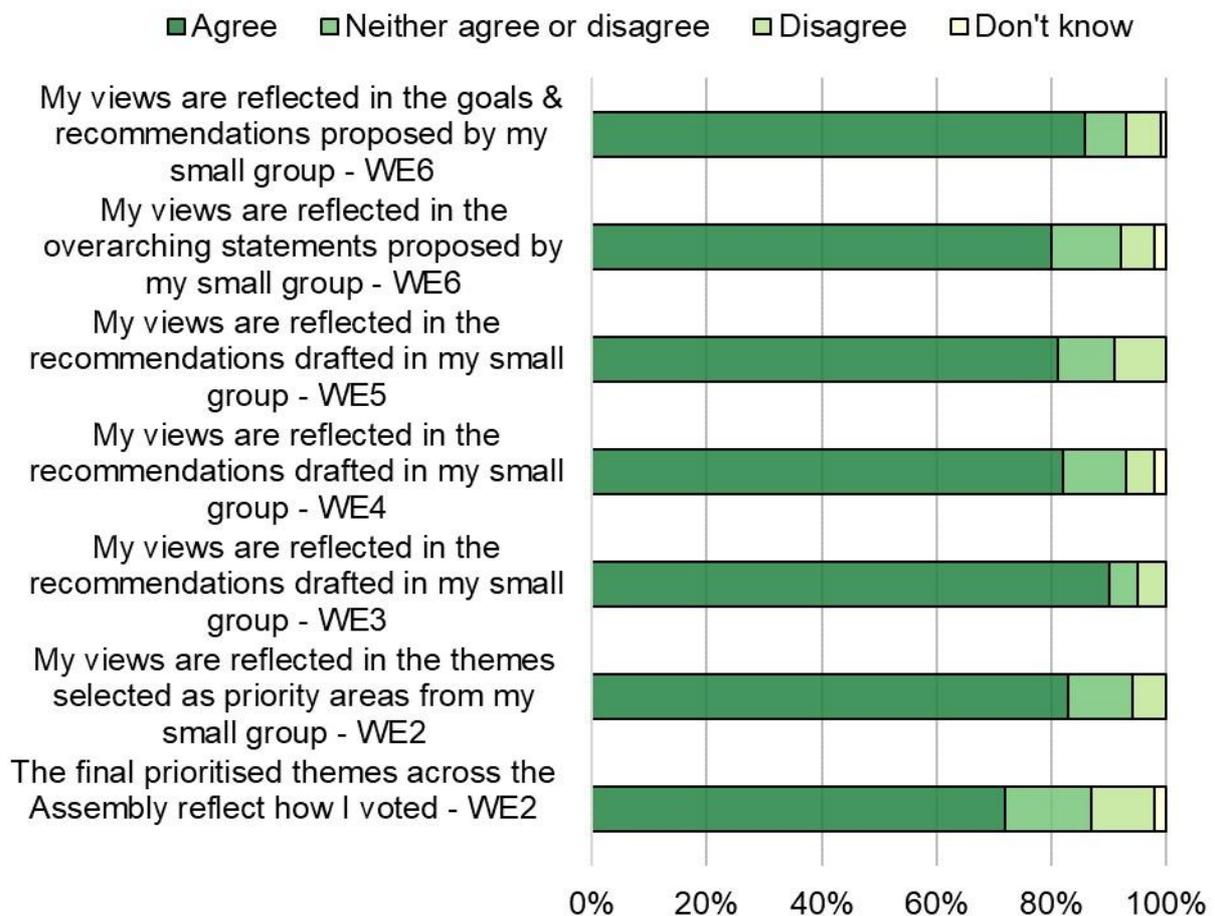
Members voted on their support for the goals between Weekends 6 and 7. The recommendations were finalised in the Weekend 7, and voted upon by the members after Weekend 7.

A large number of recommendations (81) were included. This was considered by interviewees variously as a consequence of having: a broad Assembly question, a process which involved prioritisation but not within a set limit, and insufficient time to allow for further consolidation. Ultimately a decision was made by the Secretariat (in consultation with the Stewarding Group) to keep the number of recommendations open. One interviewee suggested that in future, topic streams should be limited in the number or recommendations they could make, whilst another interviewee reflected that these were the recommendations that the members wanted.

The member surveys included questions relating to sense of ownership of the process and outputs. In general, around eight in ten respondents agreed that their views were reflected in the various outputs over the course of the Assembly.

Figure 3.1 shows the results for Weekends 2 to 6, for the prioritised themes, overarching statements, goals and recommendations.

Figure 3.1 Assembly members' ownership of developing outputs (WE2 to 6 surveys)

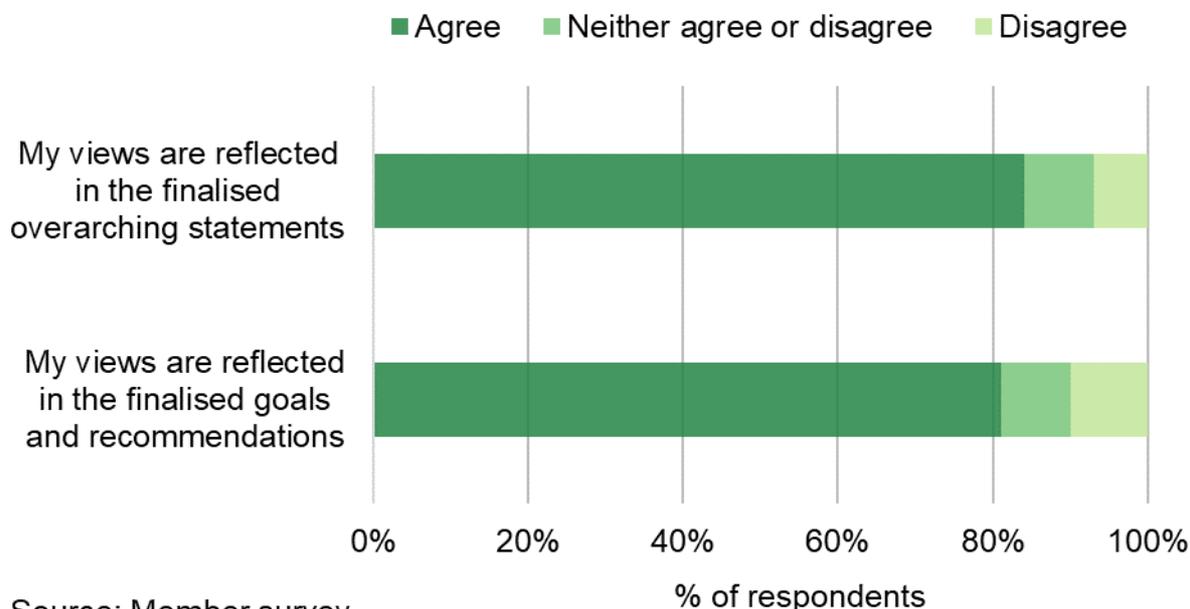


Source: Member survey

Base: WE2: 65, WE3: 61, WE4: 63, WE5: 70, WE6: 67

Figure 3.2 shows the results for the finalised overarching statements, goals and recommendations.

Figure. 3.2 Assembly members' ownership of finalised outputs (WE7 survey)



Source: Member survey
Base: WE7: 69

A large majority of respondents agreed that the overarching statements, goals and recommendations were developed in an effective and in a fair way, with 80-85% agreement across these three outputs.

However, as noted earlier, many respondents did not feel there had been enough time to engage with the evidence (see 2.4.4 Assembly members' engagement with evidence) and develop and finalise the recommendations (see 2.3.4 Programming the sessions), including in a more strategic way. A few members raised concerns in the member surveys. For example:

“Far more time was spent fixated on wording than on thinking about the bigger picture- whether our recommendations made sense as a whole, whether we were prioritising the right things, whether it was affordable to spread resources over all these recommendations. We were seriously constrained in what we allowed to discuss, and often spent hours on petty arbitrary tasks that served the interests of the facilitators in making it easier to compile the report. The Assembly should have had more control over the agenda ... That said there are lots of good things in the report and it is ultimately a positive contribution” (Assembly member, WE7)

“The process of collating the goals and recommendations has been rushed and muddled, with successive drafts failing to capture important points raised. There has been insufficient evidence provided in some areas, in others there have been clear efforts to steer the Assembly members to focus on particular issues. Communications have been poor. These factors have resulted in a set of recommendations which fail to address some important areas and overemphasise others.” (Assembly member, WE6)

“Overall I have a personal mix feeling about my participation: I am proud to be part of the assembly, to be helping in shaping a new vision for Scotland and I feel we are having an important responsibility here as citizen to ensure our views are written and heard. But I am also concerned that our recommendations are not enough and that we have maybe not covered everything, missing out some important opportunity. I wonder if an external and independent third party view on our work at some point could not have ensured that we are not missing out something.” (Assembly Member, WE6)

3.1.5 Children’s Parliament

Children’s Parliament⁶⁴ conducted a parallel process to the Climate Assembly.

In Weekends 1 and 2, Assembly members viewed a video featuring children participating in the climate change project talking about their views and experience⁶⁵. Around six in ten respondents to the Weekend 2 survey reported finding this video ‘quite helpful’ or ‘very helpful’ for their own learning about climate change. A quarter found it ‘a little’ or ‘not at all’ helpful.

In Weekend 6, members watched the final Children’s Parliament video containing their 42 Calls to Action⁶⁶. Between Weekends 6 and 7, a few members met with Children’s Parliament investigators and reported back in Weekend 7 to the plenary. This stimulated some further refinement of a few of the recommendations, such as tightening up language.

The Weekend 8 survey asked members about extent to which the children’s contribution had shaped or informed their deliberations and recommendations. Only 73 members attended Weekend 8, of whom 70% completed the survey, so the results should be treated with caution and may not be representative of all Assembly members. Around four in ten said ‘very much’ or ‘quite a lot’, just under a third said ‘somewhat’ and a just over a quarter said a ‘little’ or ‘not at all’.

These mixed results are reflected in the survey comments. For example:

⁶⁴ Children’s Parliament is Scotland’s centre of excellence for children’s human rights, participation and engagement. Children’s Parliament worked with 100 children from 10 schools to explore their views and ideas on how to tackle climate change in Scotland. 12 children were appointed as ‘Investigators’ to analyse the views of their peers and to further explore the themes. The Investigators created a series of Calls to Action, which the wider group voted on. For more information see Scotland’s Climate Assembly website <https://www.climateassembly.scot/childrens-parliament>

⁶⁵ View Weekend 1 here <https://www.climateassembly.scot/node/157>; view Weekend 2 here <https://www.climateassembly.scot/node/126>

⁶⁶ View Weekend 6 here <https://www.climateassembly.scot/node/244>

“Think it's great they were involved and it's fab to get kids involved in things like this - to encourage their democratic rights and critical thinking. However, I felt their inclusion in the weekends perhaps took a bit away from the time we had to deliberate and hear evidence. I'm sad to say it felt like a 'puff piece'.” (Assembly member, WE8)

“I felt that their contribution was vital - it was energising! Their comments and ideas were clear and cut through to the heart of many of the issues.” (Assembly member, WE8)

“I have loved watching the children's parliament video, it was very informative, straight to the point and very hopeful that the future is in good hands.” (Assembly member, WE6)

“Time was wasted on child propaganda from the children' parliament making the lack of time worse. You can't have a (literature review or cost benefit analyses but here's the opinion of a 6 yr old and the propaganda their teacher has told them” (Assembly member, WE7)

3.2 Emotional experience

This section covers member's emotional experience of participating in the Assembly.

Key findings

- Members were less worried and more hopeful than the population as a whole about what Scotland can do to tackle climate, and became increasingly more optimistic that 'things will work out fine' over the course of the main Assembly period.
- Many experienced mixed emotions about what they were learning about climate change.
- Eleven members reported their feelings about climate change were having a negative impact on their mental health.

Assembly members were asked closed questions about their emotional experience during the main Assembly period in the Weekend 2 to Weekend 7 surveys, and again after the follow-up Weekend 8 meeting⁶⁷. Weekend 8 was held 11 months after Weekend 7, and followed publication of the Scottish Government response, which members discussed⁶⁸. Some respondents also provided comments about their emotional experience, which provides further insight.

⁶⁷ Weekend 8 was attended by 73 members, of whom 70% completed the member survey.

⁶⁸ The Scottish Government response was published 16 December 2021.

Around eight in ten respondents agreed each weekend (WE2 - WE7) that they felt 'excited or hopeful about what we can do to tackle climate change'. The proportion that agreed dropped in the Weekend 8 survey to around six in ten respondents. For comparison, in the Deltapoll population survey, 52% agreed with the statement.

Feeling 'optimistic that things will work out fine in relation to climate change' fluctuated across the weekends. The lowest proportion was after Weekend 3⁶⁹ (31% agreement) and the highest after Weekend 7 (62%). This compares with 39% agreement in the Deltapoll population survey. This indicates that whilst the Assembly members had similar levels of optimism about tackling climate change as the Scottish public at the outset, they became considerably more optimistic as the Assembly progressed. However, after Weekend 8, levels of optimism dropped back down to 31%.

During the main Assembly period, there was a decrease in the proportion of respondents feeling 'worried or upset by what I am learning about climate change', from 48% after Weekend 2 to 28% after Weekend 7. This compares with 68% agreement in the Deltapoll population survey⁷⁰. The Assembly respondents started off less worried or upset about climate change than the public, and became increasingly less worried than the public as the Assembly progressed.

Comments in the member surveys indicate that decreasing levels of worry and increasing levels of optimism coincided with a growing sense of personal and collective responsibility, and for some also a sense of pride as Assembly members tasked with producing recommendations for the Scottish Government. References were also made relating to a sense of agency in changing their behaviour and taking urgent climate action. One respondent commented:

"It has been a privilege to be a part of the Assembly. Very challenging and a big responsibility to produce these recommendations for the Scottish Government. I have looked at the Interim Report today and it is impressive and I am proud to have contributed to it in even a small way. I know that all I have learned about climate change will affect my lifestyle in the future."(Assembly member, WE7)

However, after Weekend 8, levels of worry increased to 38%. One respondent commented:

"I feel like there was a good intention and the process was very thorough but I'm not convinced that the results will be used effectively by SG (Scottish Government), I have been left with a feeling of deep disappointment and despair with all the knowledge I have gained and the lack of urgency taken on board by our leaders." (Assembly member, WE8)

⁶⁹ Weekend 3 was the first weekend when members were in topic streams. They were presented with the 4 scenarios (see 2.2.2 Systemic approach) and explored challenges and began to draft provisional recommendations.

⁷⁰ YouGov survey 2021 also finds 68% of the UK population 'very' or 'fairly worried' about climate change, rising to 72% for Scotland sample. The One Pulse (The Scotsman) survey 2020 found 72% were worried about how climate change would affect their children and grandchildren. See Appendix 1 for details on these surveys.

Around one in five respondents agreed that they felt 'overwhelmed by the information on climate change that is being presented'. This proportion remained fairly constant throughout – including in Weekend 8, with many of the same respondents giving this response across the weekends. In the Deltapoll population survey, 53% agreed that they felt 'overwhelmed by what I am finding out about climate change'. Several respondents commented on feeling overwhelmed by the volume of evidence and the limited amount of time to digest it and to discuss it in their small groups. Comments included:

“The only negatives I can think of are that I did at times feel overwhelmed and lost with the sheer amount of information / tasks and that being terrified of speaking in front of groups I did not participate as much as I would have liked to.” (Assembly member, WE7)

“We've been given such a lot of information, in a very short space of time ... The amount that has been presented to us has been quite overwhelming. I like to take a step back, I don't like to feel rushed.” (Assembly member, WE6)

Many respondents experienced mixed emotions. For example, in the Weekend 2 survey, around three quarters of those who were worried or upset also felt excited or hopeful. Comments from survey respondents also show this. For example:

“I did find some of the information worrying, we all live on this planet but there are so many people who do not accept that climate change is happening. I did worry how people could be brought round without methods of force which I strongly oppose. But as I continued with the assembly I believe it can be brought about in a fair way leaving no one behind. If we do what we can and the government and all political parties are compelled to meet deadlines it's achievable. I came away from the assembly feeling optimistic that everything we have suggested would greatly benefit the have nots encouraging everyone to get on board.” (Assembly Member, WE7)

“I have loved and loathed the process. I have felt challenged both mentally and emotionally. I have learnt so much about myself in the process. I have a valid point of view. I have life experience that has given me perspective on all the challenges we face. I feel shattered and exhilarated at the same time that I have been a part of this journey. I have met and shared ideas with the most diverse group of people. And I have loved the fact that I still have the capacity to learn. And I am grateful that I was chosen. Thank you” (Assembly member, WE7)

“At times, stressful, at times confusing and at times frustrating. However also informative, participatory, well run over all, developmental and at times fun. A worthy assembly to be a part of, both for the future of Scotland, and for my own education on urgent matters.” (Assembly Member, WE7)

A few other members also expressed frustration in the surveys, about the Assembly itself, factors affecting their participation, or about inadequate climate action. For example:

“The time allocated to review the goals/recommendations from the previous week wasn't enough and we had to rush which was frustrating and I don't think it serves its purpose.” (Assembly member, WE4)

“I’ve struggled at times during this process. As a victim of technological obsolescence I found my inability to download anything due to not having the latest version of software greatly impacted my ability to participate in the proceedings. The level of frustration this caused me was unlike anything I’ve experienced before. Perhaps 3 months of isolation compounded this emotional response” (Assembly member, WE7)

During the main Assembly period, between three and five respondents each weekend (average of 7%) agreed that ‘my feelings about climate change are having a negative impact on my mental health’. Six respondents reported this experience in one survey and five respondents in more than one survey. This compares with 25% agreement in the Deltapoll population survey. In a survey conducted by YouGov in 2020, 55% said climate change affected their mental health in some way⁷¹.

The surveys included two questions about emotion regulation in relation to awareness and suppression of difficult emotions.

Across the Assembly weekends, an average of 34% of respondents agree that they ‘push emotions away so I do not feel distressed about climate change’, with an average of 42% disagreeing. In the Deltapoll population survey, a similar proportion (35%) agreed with the statement.

An average of 50% of respondents agreed that they were ‘not aware of feeling any negative or distressing emotions about climate change’, with an average of 24% disagreeing. In the Deltapoll population survey, 38% agreed with the statement.

Comparing the member survey results with the Deltapoll population survey indicates that Assembly members felt much lower levels of worry and overwhelm than the population as a whole, and higher levels of hopefulness and optimism. A forthcoming study looking at this aspect of member experience in detail, suggests that these differences may in part be due to a focussed sense of purpose and agency that being an Assembly member brings, along with exposure to evidence that may have underplayed the severity of the climate crisis and that was framed in ways that reassured members that climate change can be tackled in an effective and fair way⁷².

Impact on mental health also appears to be much lower than is indicated for the population as whole. The emotion regulation results suggest that many members used emotional avoidance or suppression coping strategies.

⁷¹ 8% affected to ‘a great extent’, 18% affected ‘somewhat’, 29% affected ‘a little’. Base: 5527 adults.

⁷² Andrews (2022).

3.3 Knowledge and learning

This section presents findings related to Assembly member’s learning and knowledge gained. It also includes information about members’ sources of information about climate change.

Key findings

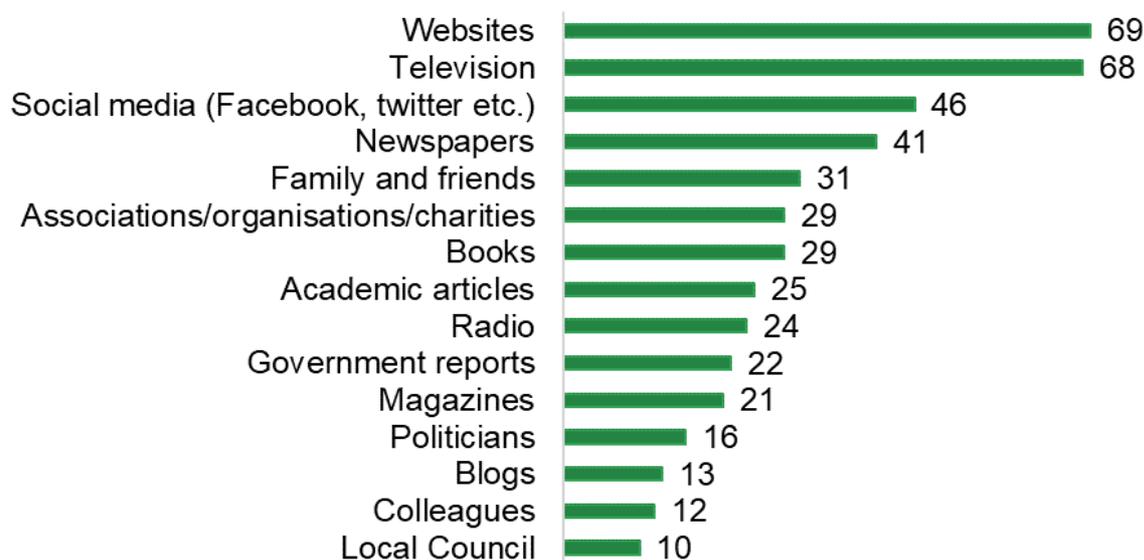
- There was an increase in members’ self-rated knowledge about climate change.
- There was an increase in confidence that the Assembly had the information to answer the question.

3.3.1 Sources of information

Prior to the Assembly, respondents were asked where they got most of their information about climate change.

TV and websites were the most popular sources, followed by social media and newspapers, as shown in Figure 3.3.

Figure. 3.3 Assembly members’ sources of information about climate change (pre-Assembly survey)



Source: Member survey
Base: pre-Assembly: 68

% of respondents that used source of information

3.3.2 Learning journeys

Across Weekends 2 to 5, an average of 76% of respondents reporting learning something new by listening to all or most of the speakers.

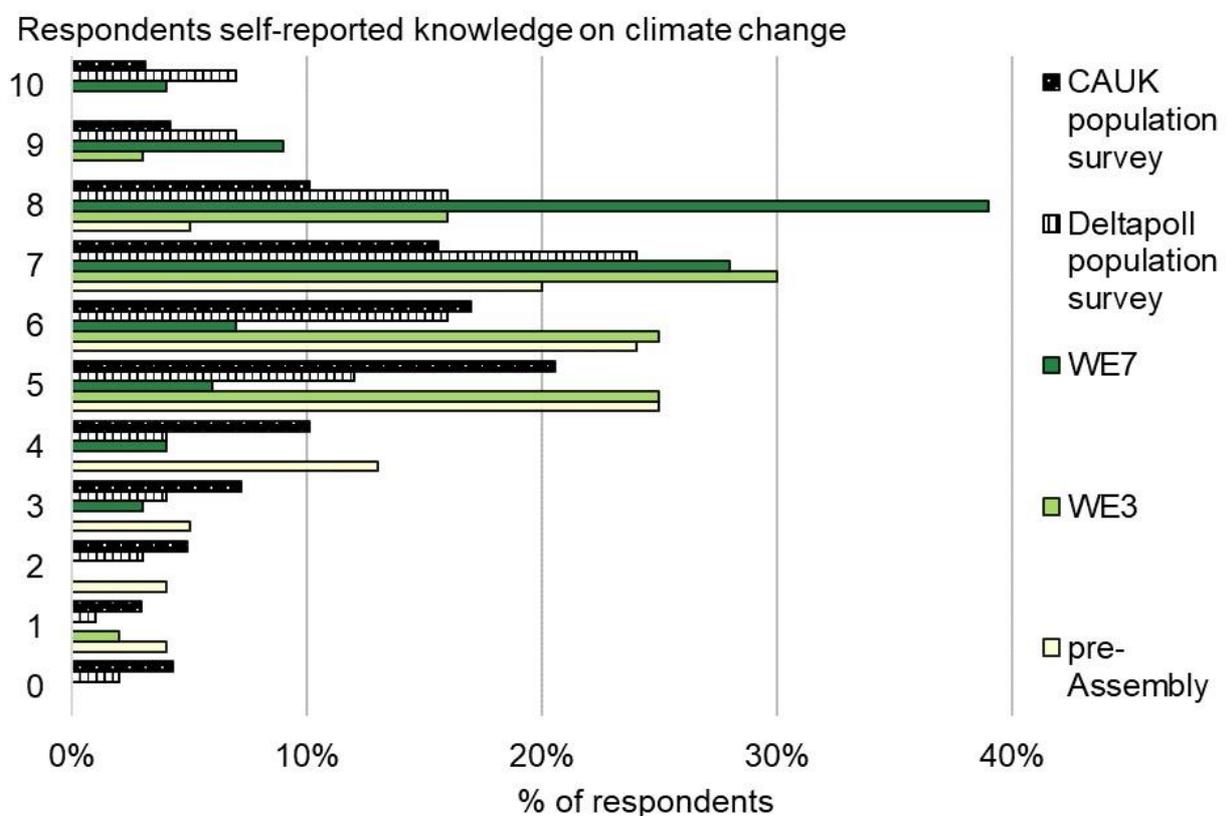
Members were also asked to rate their knowledge of climate change on a scale from 0 (nothing at all) to 10 (a great deal). As shown in Figure 3.4, there is a slight

increase in the percentage of respondents reporting higher levels of knowledge over the course of the Assembly.

Figure 3.4 shows that after Weekend 7, 80% of respondents reported their knowledge at 7 or higher compared to 49% in after Weekend 3 and 25% in the pre-Assembly survey.

The CAUK population survey (conducted Sept 2020) and the Deltapoll population survey (conducted July-August 2021) show lower levels of self-rated knowledge of 7 or higher⁷³, at 33% and 54% respectively, which suggests an increase in knowledge in the UK population over that period⁷⁴, reaching a level similar to the members of Scotland’s Climate Assembly after Weekend 3.

Figure 3.4 Assembly members’ and wider populations self-reported knowledge of climate change



Source: Member survey, Deltapoll population survey and CAUK population survey
 Base: pre-Assembly: 68, WE3: 61, WE7: 69, Deltapoll: 1917, CAUK: 1671

⁷³ Deltapoll population survey also included a ‘don’t know’ option as an answer which received 3% of the responses.

⁷⁴ The Scotland sample of the CAUK population survey: 34% self-rated their knowledge at 7 or higher (base: 149). This indicates Scotland and UK populations are similar.

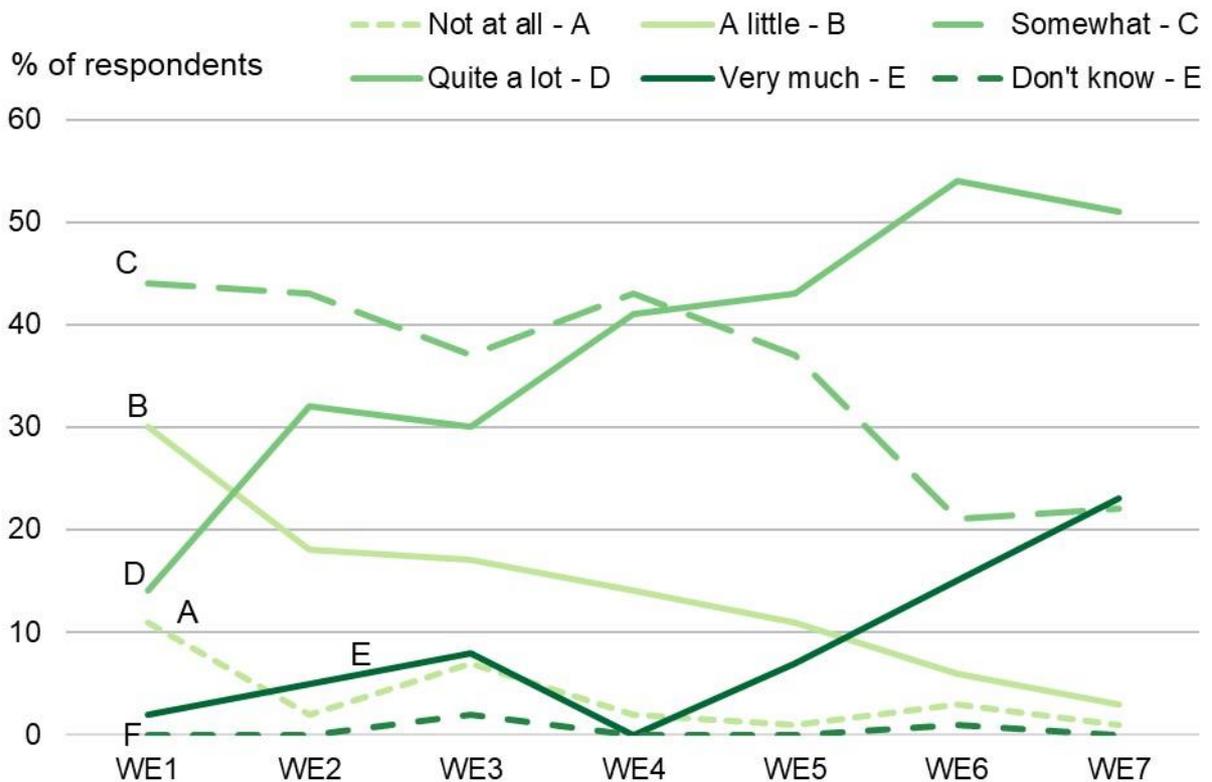
One respondent commented:

“Before participating in the Assembly, I was aware of climate change and that urgent action was required. However, I really only thought of climate change as it related to burning fossil fuels, e.g. driving cars, flying, domestic heating. Over the past seven weekends I have learned that carbon is everywhere. I had no concept of ‘embedded’ carbon. I had never really thought about food waste or what happens to my recycling. What I eat, buy, and throw away, all contributes to my carbon footprint. It was a real eye-opener.” (Assembly Member, WE7)

Figures 3.5 and 3.6 show perceptions of having the information required to answer the Assembly question themselves and by the Assembly as a whole. Although there is some fluctuation, there is a growth in confidence about having the information required in the last two weekends, particularly for the Assembly as a whole indicating trust in collective intelligence.

Figure 3.5 illustrates that as the Assembly progressed, a higher proportion of respondents answering “quite a lot” and “very much”. Similarly, Figure 3.6 shows that the response “very much” became the most common answer by the final weekend.

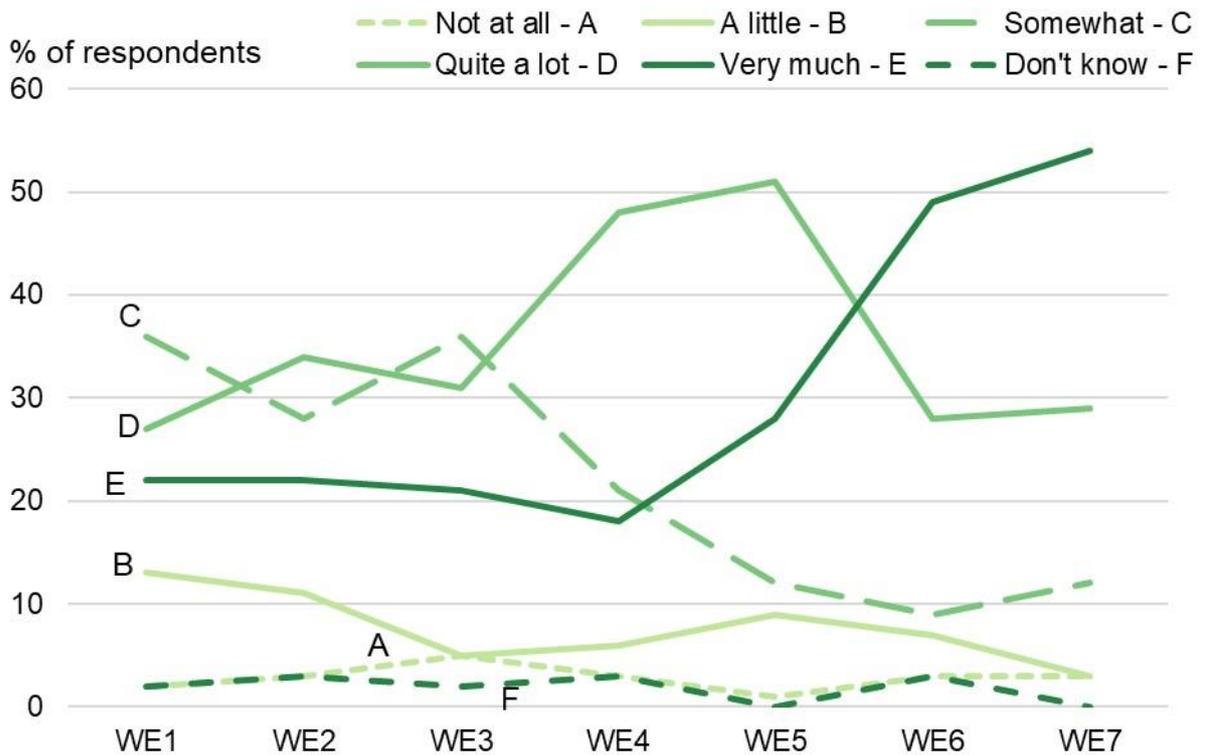
Figure 3.5 Changes across weekends in how much Assembly members’ felt they had the information required to answer the Assembly questions themselves



Source: Member survey. Question: 'How much do you feel you have the information required to answer the Assembly question yourself?'

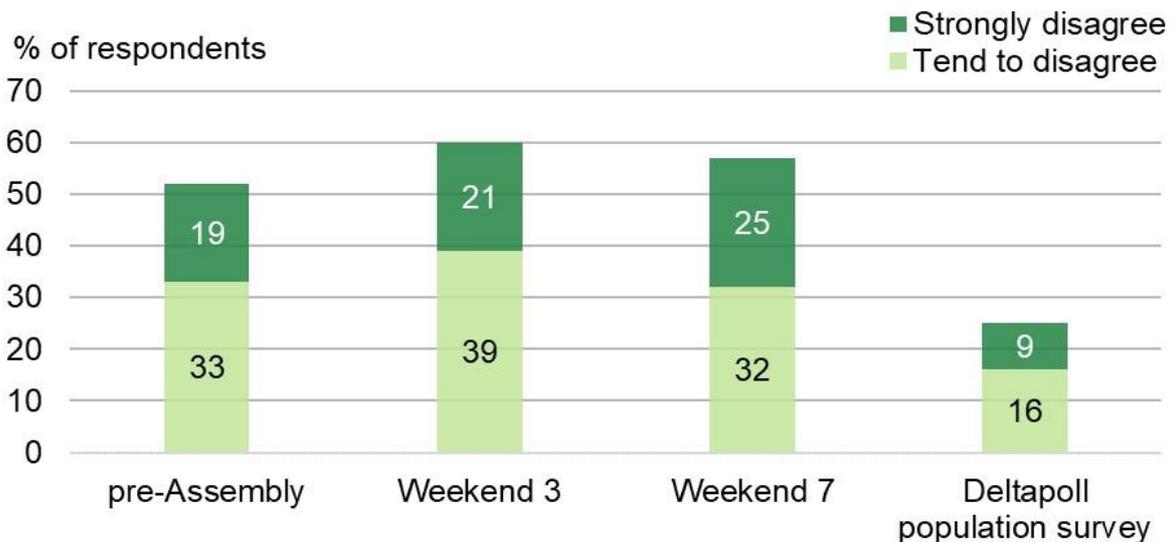
Base: WE1: 64, WE2: 65, WE3: 61, WE4: 63, WE5: 70, WE6: 67, WE7: 69

Figure 3.6 Changes across weekends in how much Assembly members' felt the Assembly as a whole had the information required to answer the Assembly questions



Source: Member survey. Question: 'How much do you feel the Assembly as a whole has the information required to answer the Assembly questions?'
 Base: WE1: 64, WE2: 65, WE3: 61, WE4: 63, WE5: 70, WE6: 67, WE7: 69

Figure 3.7 Assembly members' and the wider populations disagreement that the effects of climate change are felt equally by all groups in society



Source: Member survey and Deltapoll population survey. Question: 'The effects of climate change are felt equally by all groups in society'
 Base: pre-Assembly: 68, WE3: 61, WE7: 69, Deltapoll: 1917

Figures 3.7 and 3.8 show very slight increases in climate literacy amongst respondents, with respect to questions about climate impact⁷⁵, with higher levels of agreement than for the population as a whole.

Figure 3.8 Assembly members' and the wider population agreement that climate change is likely to have a big impact on people like them



Source: Member survey and Deltapoll population survey. Question: 'Climate change is likely to have a big impact on people like me'

Base: pre-Assembly: 68, WE3: 61, WE7: 69, Deltapoll: 1917

Knowledge questions in surveys

As subjective assessments of learning are notoriously unreliable, due to social desirability bias some objective knowledge questions were included in the member survey to gain some insight into the extent to which they were learning key facts about climate change and decarbonisation in the evidence presentations.

After Weekend 1, around eight in ten respondents were aware that temperatures since 1880 had risen by an average of 1 degree.

The Weekend 3 survey knowledge questions were based on evidence presented in Weekend 2. Three quarters of respondents thought that vegan diets had the lowest negative impact on the climate. Just under half were correct in thinking that Scotland has a higher average of CO2 emissions per person than the UK. Just over half were also correct in thinking that Scotland is already experiencing sea level rise, with eight in ten recognising that Scotland is already experiencing warmer temperatures.

The Weekend 7 survey included statements which reflected key messages in the evidence presentations across the topic streams. As shown in Table 3.1, agreement with the statements was high, ranging from 74% to 100%.

⁷⁵ These changes have not been tested for statistical significance.

Table 3.1 Member agreement with evidence statements

Evidence Statements	Agree ('strongly agree' + 'tend to agree')
Shifting to a more plant-based diet across the population will make a considerable contribution to reducing Scotland's carbon emissions to net zero	79%
A post-EU subsidy scheme for farmers and land managers should encourage farmers to transition to more sustainable land management practices and should include training, support and funding at a regional level, giving farmers the support they need to help themselves	90%
Reducing overall consumption is an important part of the mix, along with using and consuming things more efficiently	91%
Bringing both existing and new homes to very high levels of energy efficiency will make a considerable contribution to reducing Scotland's carbon emissions to net zero	100%
Developing a place-based approach to how services are delivered in communities across Scotland will help ensure a fair and equitable response to climate change.	74%
Responding to the huge challenges posed by climate change offers real opportunity for the Scottish Government to initiate a high-quality and secure jobs agenda across Scotland, within both the public and private sectors.	84%
Reducing emissions from transport in line with existing targets will require a reduction in the amount of travel as well as a shift in modes of travel (e.g. shifting to electric vehicles, public transport)	90%
Scotland is already experiencing the impacts of climate change e.g. through warmer temperatures, increased rainfall and sea level rise. These impacts will continue, even if greenhouse gas emissions were to stop today, due to historic emissions. There is therefore a need for actions that help Scotland adapt to current and future impacts.	90%
Decarbonisation of our economy is considered a priority with negative emissions technologies generally regarded as a last resort	81%

3.4 Climate attitudes

This section presents findings relating to Assembly members' attitudes about climate change and how to tackle it. Population survey data and other secondary data is included for comparison where relevant.

Key findings

- There was an increase in concern about climate change as an urgent issue, increase in support for certain climate actions, and increase in importance of climate change in political views amongst the Assembly members.
- There was a shift away from seeing the national government as having the main responsibility for tackling climate change.
- A few members denied the reality of human-caused climate change, of whom all but one maintained these views throughout the Assembly.

Assembly members were asked about their views on climate change in the pre-Assembly, Weekend 3, and Weekend 7 surveys. 46 members completed all three surveys. Where comparable data exists, the Deltapoll population survey and results from other secondary sources are included for comparison⁷⁶.

A higher proportion of the respondents to the pre-Assembly survey thought that climate change was an 'immediate and urgent problem' (76%) than all Assembly members at recruitment⁷⁷ (68%). However, as shown in Table 3.2, respondents to the pre-Assembly survey held similar views on this question to the Scottish population as a whole⁷⁸. Respondents' levels of concern about climate change as an urgent issue increased over the course of the Assembly.

⁷⁶ See Appendix 1 Methodology, for secondary data survey details including sample size.

⁷⁷ 105 members were recruited in September/October 2020, the pre-Assembly survey was conducted end October to early November 2020 and completed by 68 members.

⁷⁸ Table 3.2 shows only some response options. For the full results see accompanying data tables.

Table 3.2 Climate attitudes across surveys

	'Climate change is an immediate and urgent problem'	'Addressing climate change requires an extremely high level of urgency'	'Very concerned about climate change'
pre-Assembly survey Base: 68	76%	41%	47%
WE3 survey Base: 61	89%	61%	62%
WE7 survey Base: 69	88%	-	-
Deltapoll population survey Base: 1917	75%	-	41%
Scottish Household Survey 2019	68%	-	-
Scottish Household Survey 2020 (telephone) ⁷⁹	80%	-	-
Ipsos MORI Scotland 2020	79%	-	-
RESiL RISK survey 2019	-	34%	-
Climate Assembly UK population survey 2021 ⁸⁰	-	-	35%
BEIS/Defra population survey 2020	-	-	38%

Across all the Assembly surveys, there were very few respondents who thought that there is 'no such thing as climate change' or thought that it is caused 'entirely' or 'mainly by natural causes' (4-5%), In the Deltapoll population survey, 12% held these views, which is similar to other secondary data⁸¹.

Similarly, only a few thought climate change is 'not really a problem' or were 'not convinced that climate change is happening' (4-6%). This compares with 7% in the

⁷⁹ A different methodology was used for the Scottish Household Survey 2020 due to Covid restrictions, and results are therefore not directly comparable to previous years.

⁸⁰ Scottish sample only (base: 165).

⁸¹ The RESiL RISK survey 2019 found 14% thought there was no such thing, or that climate change is entirely or mainly natural processes.

Deltapoll population survey, which is similar to other surveys⁸². One respondent with this view in the pre-Assembly survey changed their view in the Weekend 7 survey to thinking that ‘climate change is an immediate and urgent problem’.

Assembly members were also asked for their views on responsibility for tackling climate change. As shown in Table 3.3, the results indicate an increase in views that responsibility should be shared across society.

Table 3.3 Climate attitudes regarding responsibility across surveys

	‘Private companies, national government and individuals should equally take main responsibility for finding a way to better tackle climate change’	‘National government should take main responsibility for finding a way to better tackle climate change’
pre-Assembly survey Base: 68	66%	25%
WE3 survey Base: 61	67%	28%
WE7 survey Base: 69	80%	16%
Deltapoll population survey Base: 1917	63% ⁸³	20%

Respondents were asked to what extent ‘we’⁸⁴ should do particular actions to tackle climate change. As shown in Figures 3.9 to 3.12, there was an increase in the proportion who thought ‘we should definitely do’ all the actions, from the pre-Assembly survey to Weekend 3 and Weekend 7 surveys.

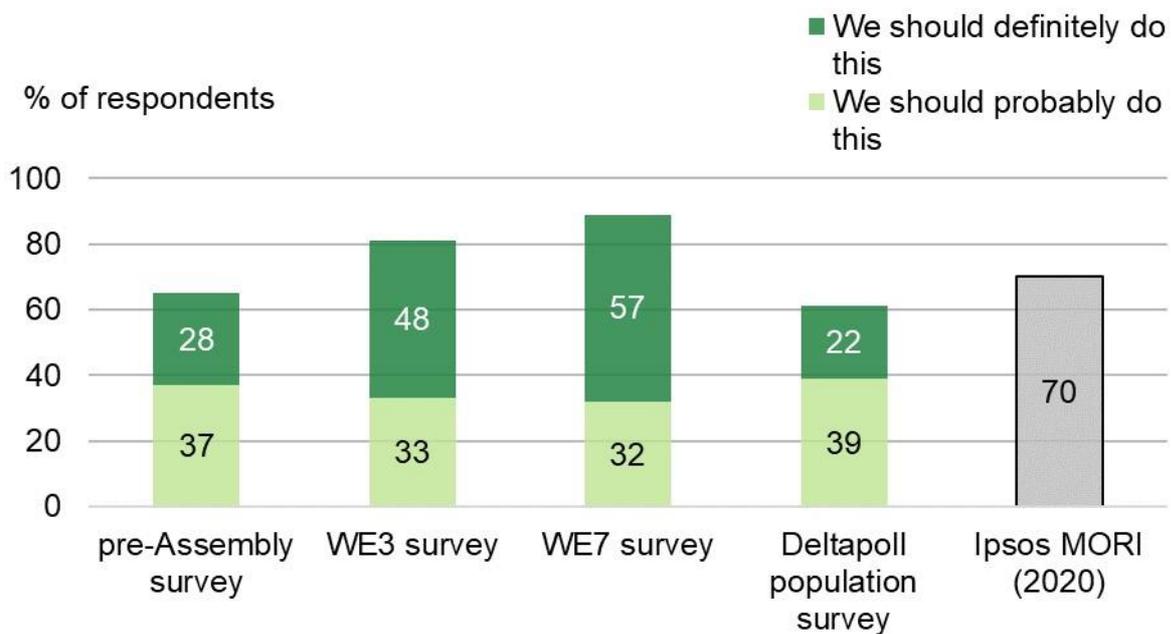
For each measure, Assembly respondents support at pre-Assembly is broadly similar to that of the Scottish public, but the level of support increases as the Assembly progresses. After Weekend 7, members’ views are markedly different to the Scottish public.

⁸² In the Deltapoll survey 4% were ‘not convinced’. Scottish Household Survey 2019 found 6% ‘not convinced’, Ipsos MORI Scotland 2020 found 5% ‘not convinced’.

⁸³ The Deltapoll population survey also included ‘local government’ in the question.

⁸⁴ The pronoun ‘we’ is likely to be interpreted by respondents as ‘us in Scotland’.

Figure 3.9 Assembly members' and the wider populations views on if people should reduce the amount of meat in our diets.



Source: Member survey, Deltapoll population survey and Ipsos MORI (2020).
 Question: 'Reduce the amount of red meat in our diets'
 Base: pre-Assembly: 68, WE3: 61, WE7: 69, Deltapoll: 1917, Ipsos MORI 1045

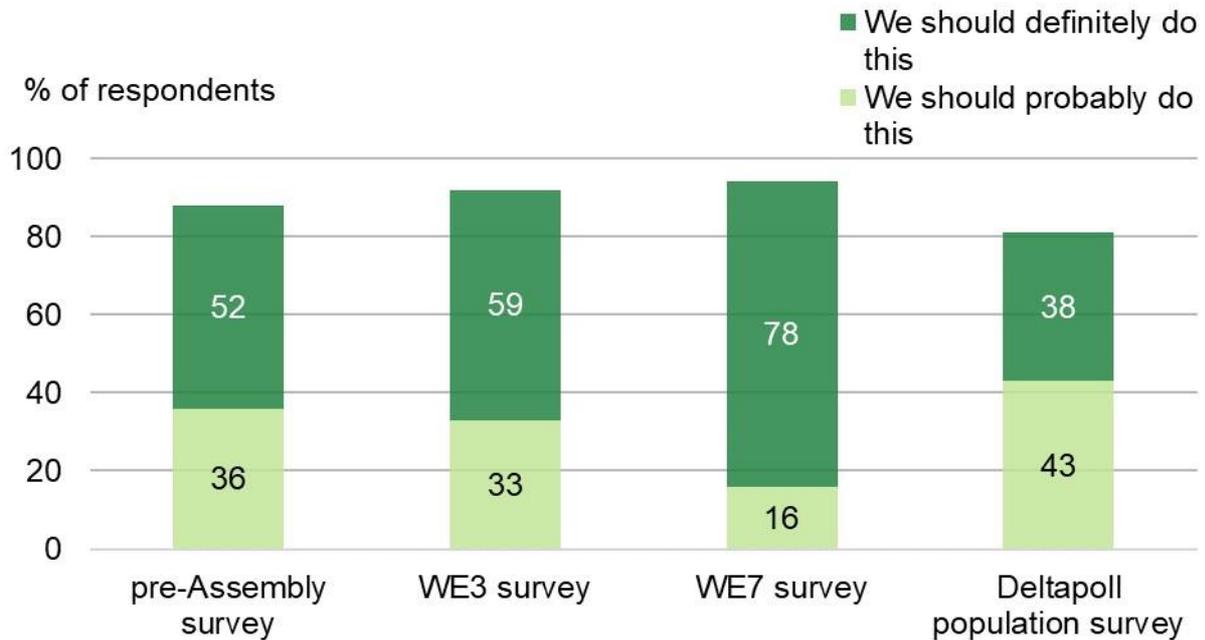
Figure 3.9 above includes results from the Ipsos MORI Scotland 2020 survey, which asked a related question: 'to help reduce carbon emissions from farming, would you be willing to eat less red meat?'. 70% of respondents who currently eat red meat said they would be willing to eat less of it in order to reduce emissions from farming⁸⁵. This result is consistent with the Deltapoll population survey result.

Figure 3.10 shows an increase in the proportion of respondents who thought 'we should definitely' limit the amount of air travel, from pre-Assembly to Weekend 7.

There was also an increase in proportion of those who thought 'we should definitely' reduce our overall levels of consumption, as shown in Figure 3.11.

⁸⁵ Ipsos MORI Scotland research into public attitudes to climate change policy and a green recovery [Research into public attitudes to climate change policy and a green recovery](https://www.gov.scot/research/publications/2020/04/research-into-public-attitudes-to-climate-change-policy-and-a-green-recovery/) (www.gov.scot)

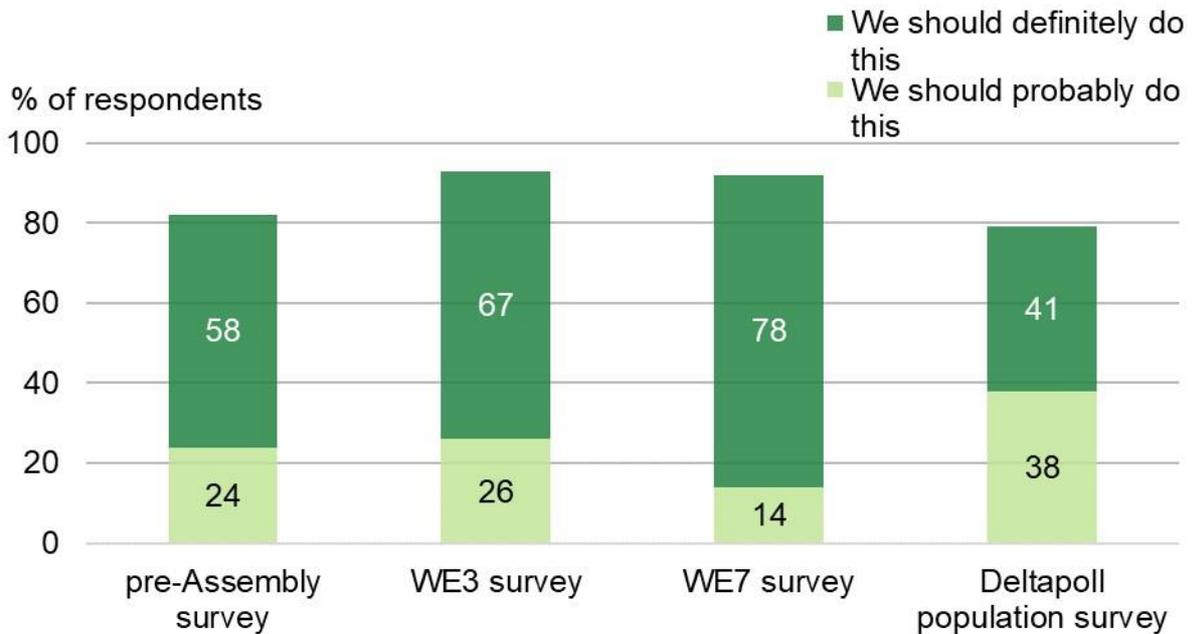
Figure 3.10 Assembly members' and the wider populations views on if people should limit the amount of air travel (flying) they do



Source: Member survey and Deltapoll population survey. Question: 'Limit the amount of air travel (flying) we do'

Base: pre-Assembly: 68, WE3: 61, WE7: 69, Deltapoll: 1917

Figure 3.11 Assembly members' and the wider populations views on if people should reduce our overall levels of consumption

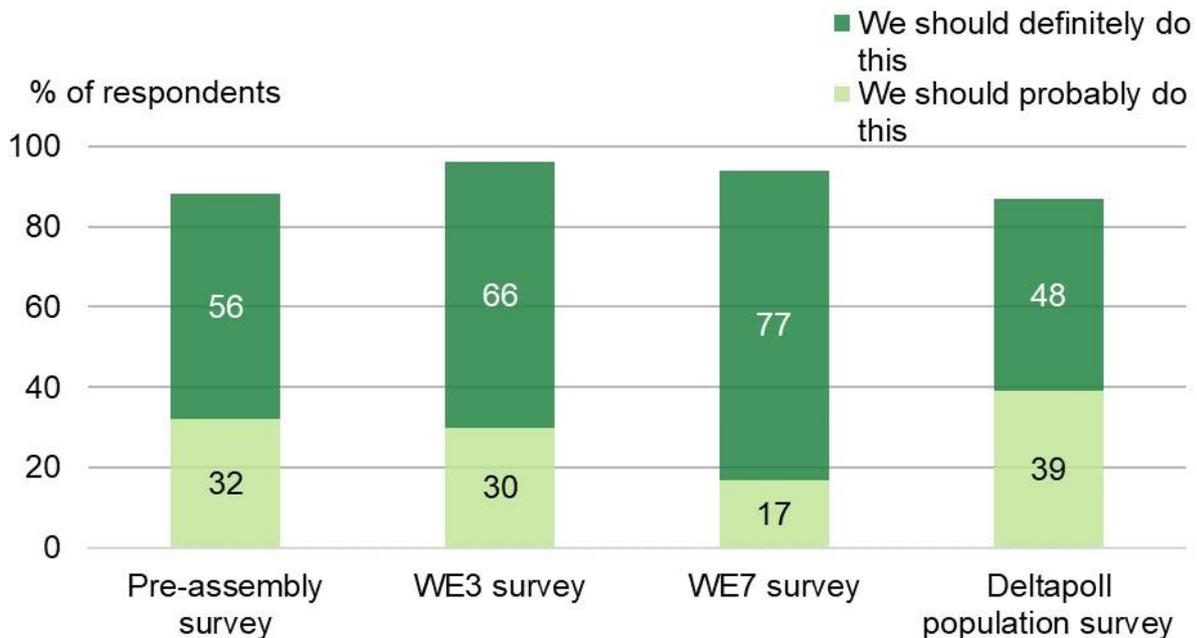


Source: Member survey and Deltapoll population survey. Question: 'Reduce our overall levels of consumption (the amount of things we buy)'

Base: pre-Assembly: 68, WE3: 61, WE7: 69, Deltapoll: 1917

Again, there is an increase in the proportion of respondents who thought ‘we should definitely’ reduce the amount of domestic energy used.

Figure 3.12 Assembly members’ and the wider populations views on if people should reduce the amount of energy they use in our homes



Source: Member survey and Deltapoll population survey. Question: 'Reduce the amount of energy we use in our homes.'

Base: pre-Assembly: 68, WE3: 61, WE7: 69, Deltapoll: 1917

Respondents were also asked for their views on statements relating to politics and climate change.

As shown in Table 3.4, a higher proportion of respondents considered climate change in their political thinking at the end of the main Assembly period compared to the start, and compared to the general Scottish public. The Weekend 8 survey results have been included, although these should be treated with caution due to the smaller sample size⁸⁶. Around half the respondents at Weekend 8 reported taking climate change into account when voting in the May 2021 Scottish elections, compared with almost a third of the public.

Whilst 84% of respondents to the Weekends 3 and 7 surveys thought it important that economic recovery after Covid-19 prioritises climate change, a lower proportion of the public (67%) agreed with this statement.

⁸⁶ Only 73 Assembly members attended Weekend 8. Of these, 51 completed the survey (70% response rate).

Table 3.4 Climate politics attitudes

Agreement (‘strongly agree’ + ‘tend to agree’)	‘If a political party’s policies don’t deal seriously with climate change, this would put me off voting for them’	‘Climate change was a consideration in my constituency vote in the May 2021 elections’	‘In the economic recovery after Covid-19, it’s important that government actions prioritise climate change’
pre-Assembly survey Base: 68	65%	-	73%
Weekend 3 survey Base: 61	80%	-	84%
Weekend 7 survey Base: 69	84%	-	84%
Weekend 8 survey Base: 51	78%	55%	-
Deltapoll population survey Base: 1917	-	31%	67%

3.5 Outcomes for Assembly members

This section presents findings relating to Assembly members' views on participating in group discussions and political decision making processes, as well as about their participation in various climate and civic actions.

Key findings

- Evidence suggests some members became less nervous speaking in a group over the course of the Assembly.
- Most popular mitigation actions since taking part in the Assembly are: reducing amount of meat and dairy in diet, reducing overall consumption, and reducing domestic energy use. This is consistent with the increase in support for these as actions that “we should definitely do”.
- Other popular actions include: discussing climate change and politics with friends and family, and making consumer decisions based on associated climate impacts.
- Least frequent actions include: contacting elected officials, attending political party events or a sitting of Parliament or local government, and attending a demonstration or protest.
- Around two thirds of respondents to the Weekend 8 survey agree that they feel more confident to engage in political decision-making as a result of being involved with the Assembly. Around half agreed that taking part in the Assembly made them want to be more involved in other aspects of government decision making. Two respondents reported running for an elected position to influence decisions about climate change.

As shown in Table 3.5, across the Assembly the proportion of respondents agreeing with the statements remains fairly constant, with the exception of ‘I feel nervous speaking in front of a group’ which reduces over the course of the main Assembly period. For example, one Assembly member commented:

“It was such an interesting,, informative & enjoyable learning experience. At the beginning of the assembly, it was a bit nerve-racking but with the huge support from the secretariat and everyone I became more confident.”
(Assembly member, WE7)

Table 3.5 Members views relating to their participation

Agreement (‘strongly agree’ + ‘tend to agree’)	pre- Assembly survey Base: 68	Weekend 3 survey Base: 61	Weekend 7 survey Base: 69	Weekend 8 survey Base: 51
I think my opinion is as valid as anyone else’s	87%	87%	94%	92%
I enjoy participating in discussions and debates	73%	78%	75%	82%
I feel comfortable challenging someone else’s opinion during a conversation	70%	70%	65%	73%
I feel nervous speaking in front of a group	46%	41%	31%	31%
I feel more confident to engage in political decision-making as a result of being involved in this citizens’ assembly	-	-	-	63%
Taking part in this citizens’ assembly has made me want to be more involved in other aspects of Government decision making	-	-	-	54%

Members were also asked about their participation in various climate and civic actions. The Climate Assembly UK research also included these questions, and would provide comparison if/when these results are published.

Table 3.6 shows the number of respondents after Weekend 8 who said they were doing particular climate actions, either from before taking part in the Assembly or since.

The three most popular climate actions overall (sum of before and after taking part) and the most popular actions since taking part are: reducing the amount of meat in diet, reducing overall consumption, and reducing amount of energy used in the home. This is consistent with the increase in support for these actions as things that ‘we should definitely do’ discussed earlier in this chapter (see 3.4 Climate attitudes). Some Assembly members reflected on what they have been doing with the experience and learning they have gained about climate change and how to tackle it since Weekend 7:

“Less meat eating, change of heating to a lower carbon set up in my home, am more informed in discussions on green issues outside of the assembly and am more aware of waste and support a circular economy.” (Assembly member, WE8)

“I have participated in a podcast and attended three Parliamentary events to discuss aspects of the Assembly process and some of the recommendations. I have also made changes to my lifestyle such as eating less meat, and using active and public transport where possible, and reducing my overall level of consumption. I am much more politically aware than prior to becoming an Assembly member both at a national and local level. I closely follow climate related news in Scotland and globally.” (Assembly member, WE8)

Table 3.6 Weekend 8 member outcomes - climate actions

Scotland's Climate Assembly wasn't about asking you to make changes in your own life. However, we would be interested to know whether or not you have done any of the following? Base: 51	'I did this <i>before</i> taking part in Scotland's Climate Assembly'	'I have done this <i>since</i> taking part in Scotland's Climate Assembly'
Improved my home insulation	20	5
Reduced the amount of meat in my diet	19	19
Reduced the amount of dairy in my diet	11	14
Switched to a renewable energy provider	15	6
Switched to an electric car instead of a petrol / diesel car	2	5
Signed a petition about climate change	12	7
Contacted a politician about climate change	4	5
Carbon offset my flights	2	4
Became a member of a climate or nature organisation (e.g. Greenpeace, RSPB, Extinction Rebellion, or a local campaign group)	6	2
Attended a demonstration or protest about climate change	3	3
Ran for an elected position to influence decisions about climate change	0	2
Limited my amount of air travel (flying) ⁸⁷	8	10
Reduced my overall levels of consumption (the amount of things we buy)	17	20
Reduced the amount of energy I use in my home	19	18

⁸⁷ Levels of flying reduced over the Assembly period due to Covid restrictions, so this result should be treated with caution.

The least popular actions are: running for an elected position, attending a demonstration or protest about climate change, carbon offsetting flights (less relevant during Covid-19 restrictions), and switching to an electric car. Although, one Assembly member reflects on their recent climate actions, and political commitment:

“I have been hosting fireside conversations with my local community to discuss local climate action. I have put my name forward as a local Green Party Councillor candidate.” (Assembly member, WE8)

With regards to civic actions, Table 3.7 shows the number of respondents by frequency of actions. Five actions are related to climate change whilst seven actions relate to civic engagement with politics.

The most common (sum of somewhat and very often) climate related actions are: discussed climate change with friends and family, and made consumer decisions based on associated climate impacts. The most common civic action was to discuss politics with friends and family. A few Assembly members commented:

“I’ve been having casual conversations about climate change with my boss, friends and family. I can’t make others do what I’m doing but I can share the things that work for me to show others how a sustainable lifestyle can work for a person. Some people find that hard to visualise.” (Assembly member, WE8)

“I think people are sick of the sound of my voice challenging attitudes on climate emergency” (Assembly member, WE8)

The least popular actions are: to contact an elected official, attend a political party meeting/event or a sitting of parliament or local government, and attend a demonstration or protest. Covid-19 restrictions could have affected motivation or ability to attend in-person events. Respondents were also less likely to share or comment on climate or political stories online.

Table 3.7 Weekend 8 member outcomes - civic actions

How often would you say you have done the following since the last Assembly weekend in March 2021? ⁸⁸ Base: 51	Never	Almost never	Not very often	Somewhat often	Very often	Unsure / Don't Know
Discussed climate change with family & friends	1	2	12	23	12	1
Talked to friends and family about what you did as an Assembly member	1	4	18	17	9	1
Shared or commented on a story relating to climate change online	17	6	10	13	4	1
Made decisions about items you've bought based on associated climate impacts	9	1	6	17	17	1
Tried to gather more information about any of the topics that were discussed during Scotland's Climate Assembly	5	5	11	21	8	1
Discussed politics with family and friends	2	4	9	19	16	1
Shared or commented on a story relating to politics online	21	7	8	9	4	2
Contacted an elected official	26	11	11	1	1	1
Attended a meeting or event for a political party (virtually or in-person)	37	7	3	1	2	1
Signed a petition	13	7	25	4	2	-
Attended a sitting of parliament or local government (virtually or in-person)	39	5	4	-	1	-
Attended a demonstration or protest	32	11	5	-	1	2

⁸⁸ Almost never: once or twice; Not very often: every month or so; Somewhat often: every week or so; Very often: every few days or every day.

4. Support for the Assembly

This chapter considers Assembly member and public support for the Assembly, including its remit and outputs, and includes findings relating to support for citizens' assemblies in general.

Key findings

- A large majority of Assembly members and public support the Assembly Statement of Ambition, goals and recommendations.
- For Assembly members and public who express low level of support, this is cannot be solely attributed to climate denial, low self-rated climate knowledge or lack of understanding about the recommendations. For some of these members, it appears to be associated with their dissatisfaction with some aspects of the Assembly process.
- The majority of the public appear to support fundamentally changing economic model in Scotland in order to tackle climate change, however further research is needed.
- According to Implicit Response Testing, some statements of ambition appear to have higher emotional resonance with the public than others. The abstract message that everyone has a shared role in taking action is likely to have high emotional connection, whereas messages that make a direct and specific demand for cultural change at various levels, including personal change, could meet with resistance. There also seems to be some doubt about Scotland's capacity to be a climate change pioneer.
- Majority of people in Scotland think assemblies are worthwhile and that new ways of engaging people in decision making are needed in politics.

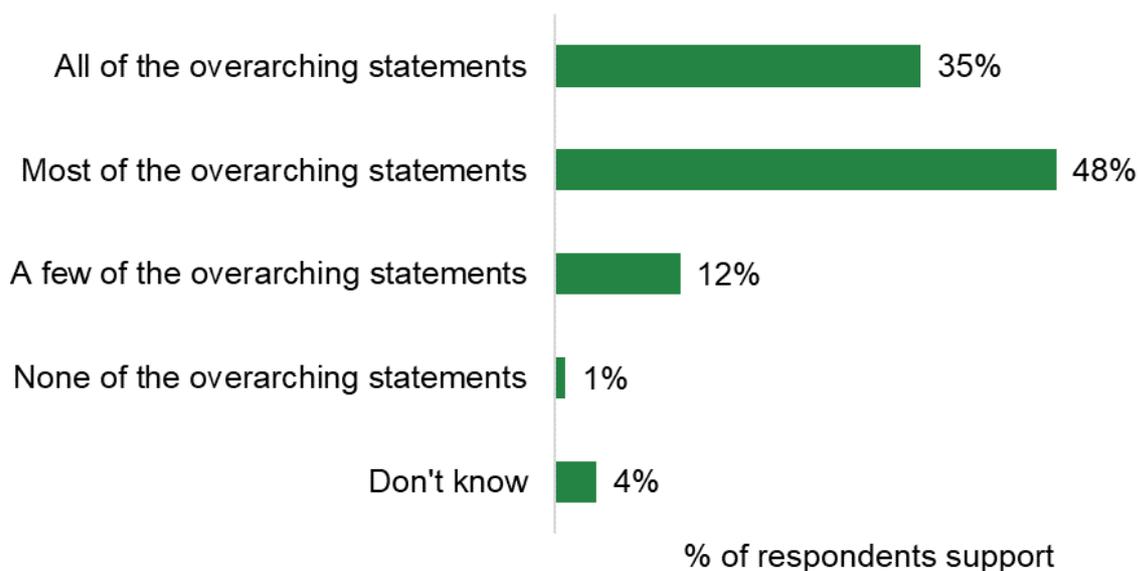
4.1 Support for outputs

65% of the public in the Deltapoll population survey agree that the Assembly question was the right overarching question for the Assembly to address. 9% disagreed and the remainder didn't know.

4.1.1 Statement of Ambition

83% of Assembly members responding in the Weekend 7 survey support all (35%) or most (48%) of the overarching statements, as shown in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 Assembly members' support for overarching statements (WE7 survey)



Source: Member survey
Base: WE7: 69

The Deltapoll population survey included sentences, adapted from the Statement of Ambition produced by the Assembly, to ascertain levels of public agreement and disagreement. The statements, as shown in Table 4.1 in order presented in the survey, received high levels of agreement.

Table 4.1 Public agreement and emotional resonance with statements of ambition

Deltapoll population survey Base: all online respondents (1,660)	Agree	Disagree	ERS / 100
To tackle climate change, the culture of individuals, businesses etc must all change	92%	8%	36
Living sustainable lives now will empower future generations	90%	10%	52
All levels of Scottish society need to take action	92%	8%	88
If we don't act now, we will fail current and future generations of Scots	88%	12%	53
Scotland can be a climate change pioneer	83%	17%	54
Climate change is a real and urgent issue that cannot be ignored	90%	10%	67
If we don't act now, Scotland will be failing the world	77%	23%	57

Emotional Resonance

Responses to these statements were subjected to Implicit Response Testing (IRT). Whilst reaction testing has been used in psychology research for over 40 years, IRT is increasingly being used in online market research to gain insight into survey respondents' gut instinct or subconscious responses. IRT measures relative speed of response, calibrated against a personal baseline established for each respondent. Deltapoll analysed this data together with incidence of agreement to create an emotional resonance score (ERS). See Appendix 1 for more details on the IRT and ERS methodology.

High levels of agreement with a high ERS indicates that people believe or agree with a statement with high emotional certainty, and are therefore more likely to be receptive to being persuaded by that idea or message. A discrepancy between a higher agreement score and lower emotional resonance score suggests some doubt or uncertainty about the truth of the statement, and that the belief is not fully internalised. According to Self-Determination Theory, the more internalised the motivation, the more autonomous a person will feel enacting the behaviour. Studies show that enduring pro-environmental behaviour is associated with higher levels of autonomous motivation⁸⁹.

As shown in Table 4.1, the statement emphasising a shared role 'All levels of Scottish society need to take action' had a very high ERS indicating very strong emotional connection. The statement 'Climate change is a real and urgent issue that cannot be ignored' also had a high ERS. Both of these are fairly abstract statements of change.

The other statements had medium ERS, with the lowest score for 'To tackle climate change, the culture of individuals, businesses etc must all change'. This statement, which makes a direct and specific demand for cultural change at various levels, including personal change, meets with some unconscious resistance.

Respondents also appear to be unconvinced about Scotland's potential to be a climate change pioneer, about the effect that changes now will have on 'empowering' future generations, and about Scotland's moral responsibility to the world and to current and future generations. With regards to the latter statements (If we don't act now, we will fail current and future generations of Scots' and 'If we don't act now, Scotland will be failing the world') the term 'failing' is used, which may induce a feeling of guilt. Further research is required to find out if this is a factor in lower emotional resonance scores. These findings, whilst indicative, can be used to inform policy communications.

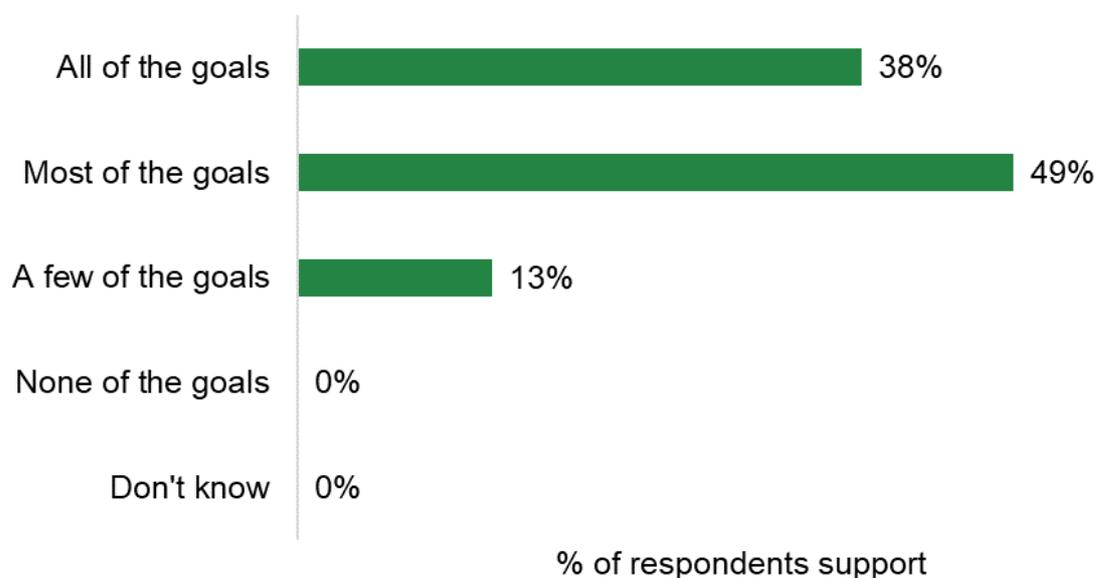
4.1.2 Goals

87% of respondents to the Weekend 7 member survey support all (38%) or most (49%) of the goals proposed by the Assembly, as shown in Figure 4.2.

A similar proportion of respondents to the Weekend 8 survey supported all or most of the goals (88%).

⁸⁹ For example see Osbaldiston & Sheldon (2003); Pelletier (2002).

Figure 4.2 Assembly members' support for goals (WE7 survey)



Source: Member survey

Base: WE7: 69

In the Deltapoll survey, respondents were asked whether they supported or opposed the goals (options: strongly support/oppose, tend to support/oppose, neither support not oppose, don't know). The wording of the goals was simplified for the purposes of the survey. As shown in Table 4.2, on average, around seven in ten respondents support (strongly and tend to support) the goals⁹⁰.

Table 4.2 shows the Assembly member voting results for comparison. Members voted between Weekends 6 and 7.

Table 4.2 Public and member support for the goals

Simplified Assembly goals for Deltapoll population survey Base: 1917	Deltapoll population survey	Assembly members voting results on goals
	support	agree
Strive for Scotland to be as self-sufficient as possible in terms of food production, low carbon manufacturing, and re-use and reprocessing of materials	77%	91%
Reduce consumption and waste by managing resources better and re-using rather than recycling	77%	97%
Adopt future-proofed quality standards to ensure the all-round sustainability of all buildings	76%	97%

⁹⁰ The full Deltapoll results are available in the Data Tables accompanying this research report.

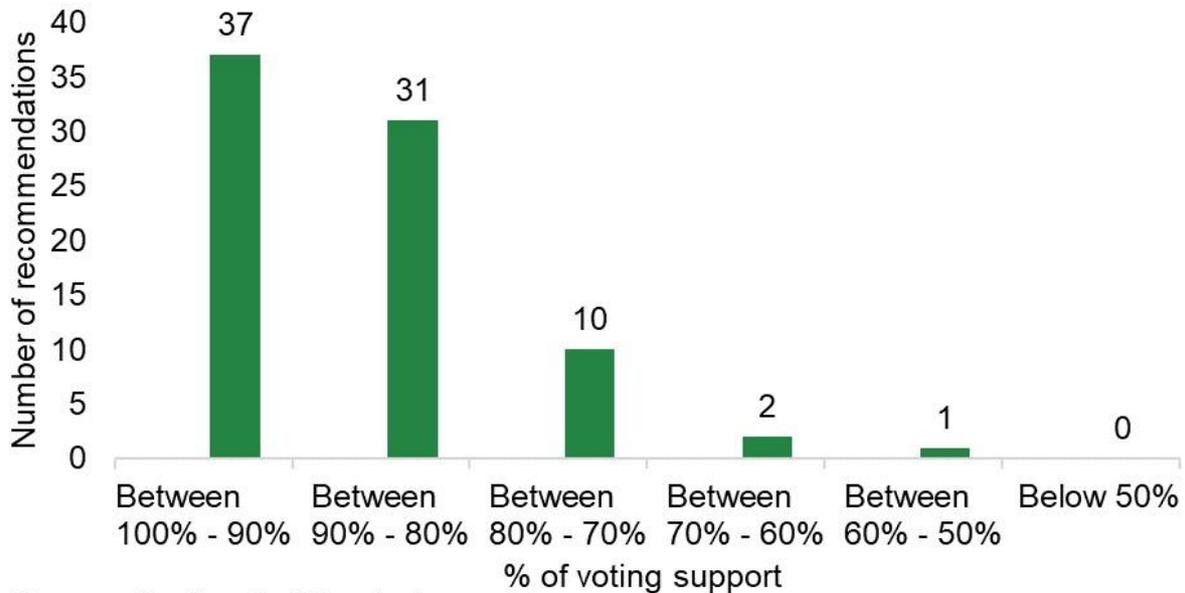
Provide everyone in Scotland with information, education and, lifelong learning so that everyone understands the environmental impact of different actions and choices	76%	92%
Develop work, training and volunteering opportunities to support net zero targets, connect people with nature and rebuild depleted natural resources	75%	91%
Scottish public sector organisations to lead by example by implementing changes of the urgency and scale needed	75%	94%
Create an integrated, accessible and affordable public transport system throughout Scotland to reduce the need for car journeys	75%	93%
Support long term, sustainable business models where people and the environment are considered before profit	74%	91%
Invest in the exploration and early adoption of alternative fuel sources, like electric vehicles, across all modes of travel	73%	93%
Balance the needs of the environment, landowners and communities for sustainable land use that achieves emission reductions	73%	91%
Support localised living in communities by reducing the need to travel far for work, shopping, services and recreation	72%	88%
Develop a fair and transparent tax system that drives carbon emission reductions	70%	85%
Make the majority of existing Scottish homes net zero by 2030 (a net-zero home is one that is able to produce at least as much energy as it uses).	69%	94%
Provide clear and consistent carbon content labelling on all produce, products and services to help people to make informed choices	69%	92%
Give people power and finance to develop local solutions to tackle climate change	67%	91%
Move Scotland's focus away from economic growth and towards measuring success in terms of thriving people, communities, and nature	60%	83%

4.1.3 Recommendations

After Weekend 7, members were asked to vote on whether they agreed or disagreed that a proposed recommendation should be supported by the Assembly and included in the final report. Members were also encouraged to agree to a recommendation if they supported what is was trying to achieve even if they did not fully agree with the supporting statement. Voting options were: agree, disagree or abstain.

The percentages of those who agreed with each recommendation (out of those who agreed or disagreed) is included in the Assembly report⁹¹. Figure 4.3 shows the number of recommendations per percentage band⁹². 68 of the 81 recommendations (84%) received agreement from at least 80% of members. The recommendations with most disagreement relate to taxation.

Figure 4.3 Assembly members' voting results for recommendations



Source: Scotland's Climate Assembly
Base: 101

Members were also asked about their support for the recommendations in the Weekend 7 member survey, which was issued after Weekend 7 ended, and was completed by members around the same time as they submitted their votes.

As shown in Figure 4.4, 22% of respondents to the Weekend 7 member survey supported all the recommendations with 65% supporting most of the recommendations, and 13% supporting a few. The Weekend 8 survey received similar responses.

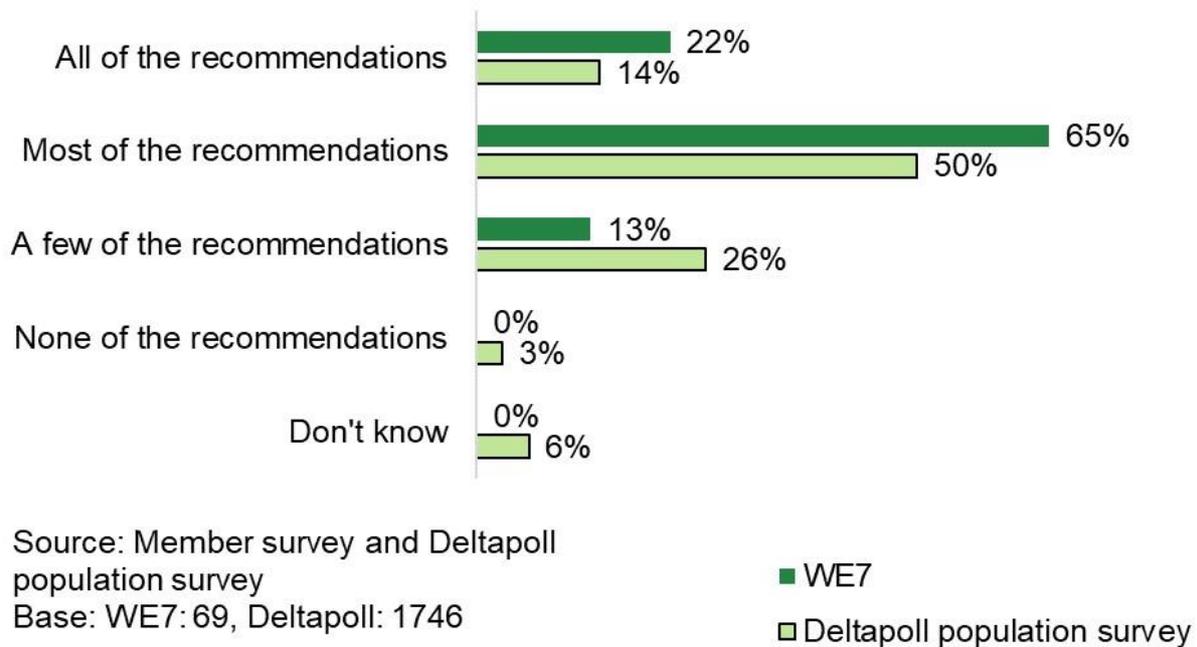
Whilst these are two different questions and not all members completed the survey, these results suggest some members responded differently in the voting than in the survey, with a higher level of support for the recommendations in the voting. The trust and social identity factors discussed earlier (see 2.3.3 on topic stream structure) may explain any difference in response. There was an element of trusting that members in other topic streams had followed a rigorous process to develop their recommendations, and there may have been a reluctance to vote against the

⁹¹ Scotland's Climate Assembly full report <https://www.climateassembly.scot/full-report>

⁹² The percentage of those who agreed (out of all those who agreed or disagreed) for each recommendation is included in the Assembly Report. The percentage included here are based on all responses including abstain. It is not possible to show the percentage of members who voted for all, most, some, a few or none of the recommendations due to the nature of the dataset provided to the researchers.

inclusion of recommendations that others had worked on. So a member may have agreed that a recommendation should be supported by the Assembly as a whole and included in the report, but they did not necessarily support it themselves.

Figure 4.4 Assembly members' and the wider populations support for recommendations



As shown in Figure 4.4, almost two thirds of people in the Deltapoll survey support all (14%) or most (50%) of the recommendations, compared with almost nine in ten respondents to the Weekend 7 member survey.

Of those who support all or most of the recommendations, 84% report feeling worried about climate change and 72% feel excited or hopeful about what Scotland can do to tackle climate change.

The Deltapoll survey asked people to select one recommendation that they regarded as most important in helping to achieve the associated goal. The highest scoring recommendations are shown in Table 4.3⁹³.

⁹³ For full results including percentages see Data tables published alongside this report.

Table 4.3 Public views on most important recommendations per goal

	Most important recommendation in helping achieve goal (Base: 1786)
Goal 1	Ban single use plastics, non-recyclable packaging and stop retailers providing plastic
Goal 2	Update building standards so that within five years all new homes are built to be highly energy efficient and take account of whole life carbon costs and environmental impact
Goal 3	Make a grant available to all homeowners by 2025 to bring their house to zero carbon emissions by 2030, prioritising those in fuel poverty
Goal 4	Introduce a Climate Change Business Bill within the next five years which sets climate impact standards and requires all businesses to assess their carbon emissions, with a new organisation to inspect and ensure compliance with the new standards Require all public sector buildings, vehicles and supply chains to be net zero by 2030 with an interim target of 75% by 2027
Goal 5	Make public transport cheaper, or free
Goal 6	Create convenient electric vehicle charging infrastructure by 2025 Reduce the number of petrol and diesel vehicles by investing in green fuels and give incentives to support the transition to zero tailpipe emission vehicles
Goal 7	Require businesses to label products to show the carbon footprint of the production process
Goal 8	Educate everyone about sustainable transport so people understand why they need to shift from private car use to public transport and active travel, and are willing to do so
Goal 9	Restore peatlands and native woodlands for carbon capture and improving biodiversity
Goal 10	Make it easier for communities to buy underused local land for climate action, along with guidance on how community owned land should be managed
Goal 11	Set targets for shops and supermarkets to buy and sell local products at a fair price to farmers and consumers, and consider giving grants to support more localised markets
Goal 12	Introduce a national training and apprenticeship scheme for new green jobs, accessible to all
Goal 13	Introduce a 4-day week as standard in sectors where will work best, with compensation for cost of employing more people
Goal 14	Create thriving town centres by converting existing properties into housing and community spaces rather than building more developments on the edge of towns
Goal 15	Introduce a carbon tax and dividend scheme, so that for every tonne of CO2 emitted the polluter pays a tax

Whilst Goal 16 about moving the focus away from economic growth has the lowest public support at 60%, 79% rate its single associated recommendation⁹⁴ as very (34%) or quite important (45%) in helping to achieve the goal.

A similar proportion of the public (74%) agreed with the statement ‘We need to fundamentally change our economic model to tackle climate change’. Agreement is across all demographic groups with slightly lower levels of agreement from Scottish Conservative voters (66%) and the highest earners (65%). This statement was included in the Weekend 8 survey, receiving 86% agreement⁹⁵.

However, a lower proportion of respondents (63%) to the Citizens’ Assembly of Scotland population survey (conducted in March 2021) agreed with this statement, and 55% agreed that ‘it is right to keep growing our economy indefinitely’. These results are contradictory and suggest further research about economic models is needed. It is not known the extent to which the Deltapoll and Citizens’ Assembly respondents had thought about these issues previously and are firmly held views.

4.1.4 Profile of less or non-supportive Assembly members and public

There were nine Assembly members who reported supporting only ‘a few’ recommendations in the Weekend 7 survey. There was an almost equal split between those who considered climate change to be an ‘immediate and urgent problem’, and those who thought it ‘not really a problem’ or were ‘not convinced climate change is happening’. Six of these members self-rated their knowledge of climate change at 7 or higher. Six agreed they understood the recommendations in their own topic stream and why they had been proposed, with four agreeing with regards to other topic streams.

Five members disagreed there was enough time to satisfactorily finalise the recommendations, six members disagreed the recommendations had been developed in a fair way, six disagreed their views were reflected in the finalised goals and recommendations, and seven disagreed that information received had been fair and balanced between different viewpoints. Comments in the Weekend 7 survey from members who supported ‘a few’ recommendations included:

“People that are vulnerable and have difficulties are always the first to be overlooked and pushed to the side at the first obstacle, with excuses like, we don't have enough time, or it is too complex, or it is just getting in the way of the big ambition. By not taking enough time to consider the impact of our goals and recommendation on them. I feel that we have let these people down.” (Assembly Member, WE7)

⁹⁴ ‘Businesses and government to adopt a measurement framework for success that incorporates sustainability, well-being and happiness alongside profit’.

⁹⁵ As stated earlier, due to lower numbers of attendees at Weekend 8 and a smaller survey sample size, this result should be treated with caution.

“That the process was rigged from the start with selective questions and evidence. That the views of the assembly were not respected and we were not presented with the evidence that we requested. We were often given insufficient time to properly discuss and consider options. A number of the recommendations we agreed had their wording substantially altered changing their meaning before the final vote” (Assembly Member, WE7)

The public who supported ‘a few’ or none of the recommendations tended to vote Conservative, live in a household with monthly take-home income⁹⁶ of less than £3000, and tended to be aged either 65+ or 16-24. They tended to consider that climate change was an immediate and urgent problem (as do most of the population), and also tended to self-rated their knowledge of climate change as between 5 and 7 out of 10. Almost three quarters of those who supported ‘a few’ recommendations were very or fairly concerned about climate change.

These results indicate that low levels of support for the recommendations cannot be solely attributed to climate denial, low self-rated climate knowledge or lack of understanding about the recommendations. For some of these members, it appears to be associated with their dissatisfaction with aspects of the Assembly process. Further research is needed to understand the reasons why some of the Scottish public supported only a few or none of the recommendations in the Deltapoll survey.

4.1.5 Public awareness and engagement with the Climate Assembly

The Deltapoll population survey was conducted just over a month after publication of the Assembly report. 21% of respondents said they had heard of Scotland’s Climate Assembly. To test the reliability of this result, the survey also included made-up initiatives, and a similar proportion also claimed to have heard of these, which suggests the public awareness results are unreliable.

A separate question was also asked about how much people knew, if anything, about the Assembly. 13% stated they knew ‘a lot’ or ‘a fair amount’ with 14% knowing ‘a little’. Half reported knowing nothing about it.

With regards to type of engagement, four in ten reported no engagement but one in ten had read news articles or heard about it via TV or radio. Media coverage analysis is included in section 5.2 impact on debate.

4.2 Support for Citizens’ Assemblies

Members and the public were asked about their views on civic life and citizens’ assemblies. The results are shown in Table 4.4.

The Deltapoll population survey results show higher levels of public support for citizens’ assemblies than the population survey conducted as part of the Citizens’ Assembly of Scotland research. Taken together, it would seem around six in ten people in Scotland think assemblies are worthwhile and that new ways of engaging people in decision making are needed. It may also be the case that support is increasing over time, but further research on this is required.

⁹⁶ based on 2020 income.

Fewer people are supportive of public investment and even less of giving assemblies decision making power. As the latter question does not specify what type of decisions assemblies should be given power to make, this would also benefit from further research.

The Weekend 8 survey results should be treated with caution due to smaller sample size and lower number of Assembly members' who attended that weekend. However, it is notable that after reflecting on the Scottish Government Response, there was an increase in the proportion of respondents who agreed with the statement 'Initiatives like Citizens' Assemblies are just an opportunity for governments to defend choices they've already made' to one in four (see 5.1.3 for more on members views of the Scottish Government Response).

Table 4.4 Member and public civic attitudes

Agreement ('Strongly agree + Tend to agree')	pre-Assembly survey Base: 68	WE3 survey Base: 61	WE7 survey Base: 69	WE8 survey Base: 51	Deltapoll population survey Base: 1917	CAoS population survey Base: 1539
Citizens' Assemblies are a good way of finding out what citizens think about issues.	-	-	-	-	69%	64%
We need to fundamentally change how citizens are involved in decision making	-	-	-	-	67%	58%
Citizens' Assemblies are a good way of involving people in making recommendations on important issues.	82%	89%	91%	84%	63%	59%
The Scottish Government should invest more in events such as Citizens' Assemblies.	72%	80%	83%	84%	61%	52%
Citizens' Assemblies should be given the power to make decisions	-	-	-	-	45%	27%
Initiatives like Citizens' Assemblies are just an opportunity for governments to defend choices they've already made.	18%	20%	16%	25%	41%	30%

5. Impact on climate policy and debate

This chapter presents an assessment of the impact of the Assembly on climate change debate and government policy in Scotland, based on data collected within the scope of this research (to 11 February 2022). It does not assess the viability of the recommendations with regards to implementation.

The analysis considers what, if any, changes in existing or planned policy can be directly attributed to the Assembly recommendations. Whilst not evidence of impact on policy, an overview of Assembly members' views of the government response is also provided.

As the Scottish Government only published its response in December 2021, further research is required over a longer time period to assess impact on Scottish climate policy, and impact on debate, more comprehensively.

5.1. Impact on government policy

This section considers what impact the Assembly recommendations have had on Scottish Government policy to date, based on our analysis of the Scottish Government response to the Assembly recommendations⁹⁷, and on an assessment of the response by the Evidence Group presented to members in Weekend 8⁹⁸. This includes the level and nature of Scottish Government support for the recommendations; and whether the recommendations broadly match or extend existing or planned policy, or whether they require new policy. The Evidence Group assessment considers the extent to which policy actions are likely to achieve the Assembly's intentions. A review of other relevant government policy documents is also included.

Specific aspects of impact on government policy outwith the scope of this research report include:

- the impact of the Assembly within government.
- the longer term impact on policy development.
- outcomes of conversations between Scottish Government and UK Government on recommendations relating to reserved matters.

The Scottish Government response states that the Assembly has had a "profound impact" within government, giving the government a "mandate to act in some of the most challenging areas, and opening the door for new conversations now taking place across Government", and that this will have a "fundamental, enduring impact on future policy development" (p159). The response also states that "where Scottish Government action is not possible due to a lack of necessary powers, we

⁹⁷ Scottish Government response to Scotland's Climate Assembly recommendations for actions <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-government-response-scotlands-climate-assembly-recommendations-action/> published 16 Dec 2021. See section 1.2 for background information.

⁹⁸ Scotland's Climate Assembly website - Weekend 8 agenda <https://www.climateassembly.scot/assembly-meetings/meeting-eight>

will contact our counterparts in the UK Government directly to raise the Assembly's recommendations" (p159). A letter was sent on 1 March 2022⁹⁹.

In considering the impact of the Assembly there are several points to take into account:

- Assembly recommendations often include multiple ideas (as a consequence of the design process of clustering and consolidating outputs from the fifteen small groups – see 3.1.4 Developing the outputs). The Scottish Government response often expresses support for only part of the recommendation, or for the principle behind the recommendation.
- although the Assembly Report's Statement of Ambition emphasises urgency, almost three quarters of recommendations do not have a specific timescale attached, nor do most recommendations contain targets or detail the scale of action.
- In Weekend 5, members heard evidence about the Climate Change Plan update and participated in a Q&A session. However, detailed scrutiny of all relevant policy was not part of the Assembly programme in the early stages (see 2.2.1 Assembly question), and members were therefore not necessarily aware of all existing and planned Scottish Government climate policy as they were developing their recommendations over the course of the Assembly.

⁹⁹ Letter from Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport to UK Government on Scotland's Climate Assembly <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-climate-assembly-letter-from-cabinet-secretary-for-net-zero-energy-and-transport-to-uk-government/>

Key findings

- The Scottish Government response is comprehensive, but the way it is written makes it difficult to identify exactly what the Assembly impact is on policy. No evidence of impact was found in other policy documents analysed.
- A third of recommendations appear to broadly match policy, with around a fifth being explored in some way albeit with no commitment to implementation.
- Over a third of recommendations include policies that will not be taken forward by the Scottish Government.
- 14 recommendations relate to UK Government reserved matters. However, the Scottish Government committed to contacting the UK Government about these, and has done so. There is one recommendation where an international convention prevents action.
- It is generally unclear in the government response how change will be implemented at the scale and urgency emphasised in the Assembly Report's Statement of Ambition.
- Member survey results indicate that between the end of the main Assembly period and after receiving the government response, there is a decline confidence in the Scottish Government taking the Assembly seriously.
- There appears to be a mismatch in views and expectations, between the Scottish Government and the Assembly members, as to what constitutes an appropriate government response.

5.1.1 Scottish Government response

At 162 pages long, the Scottish Government response is comprehensive with cross-government contributions from all relevant policy areas. The response refers to 230 different strategies, plans, policies, schemes and initiatives.

The First Minister's Foreword states that:

"These recommendations have challenged us, in government, to do more, setting out a vision for our shared future. The response sets out actions we are taking to meet those recommendations, and where we will go further in those areas where the Assembly has encouraged us to be bold." (p4)

In the Next Steps section, it states:

"This response describes the actions that the Scottish Government is taking as a result of the ambitious recommendations". (p159)

However, whilst there is a lot of information about existing and planned policy, the way in which the response is written makes it difficult to identify the precise impact of the Assembly on policy. It is not always clear in the response exactly what, if anything, is new or additional or changed as a result of the recommendations.

In the Weekend 8 meeting Ministerial Q&A session, one Assembly member declared:

"We struggled to find a single example within the Scottish Government's response of a significant change that you have brought about as a result of our recommendations. The response document read basically as a catalogue of policies that were already in train or reasons as to why you couldn't do what we asked or couldn't do things within the timescale. The Assembly's work as you know represents thousands of man hours committed by people who want to see changes, and we felt that the document in response should have been framed differently. We didn't want a list of what we were already doing, we wanted a list of what you are now going to do differently because of what we said." (Assembly member, WE8)

A government Minister participating in the Q&A session replied:

"We're all frustrated by progress... your work and recommendations do make a difference"¹⁰⁰

The First Minister's Foreword highlights actions relating to three recommendations:

- support for a new network of sharing libraries (G1R6)
- increasing woodland creation and peatland restoration (G9R45)
- integration of emissions and emission reduction topics into education programmes (G8R40)

These recommendations are the clearest impacts of the Assembly in terms of influencing changes in policy, although peatland restoration was already a priority.

For each recommendation, the Scottish Government states its level of support or agreement. As shown in Table 5.1, just under half the recommendations are fully supported, with a similar proportion supported in part or in principle or with agreement with the aim or ambition.

Table 5.1 Scottish Government support for recommendations

	number of recommendations
Supports recommendation	37
Supports part of recommendation	11
Supports or agrees with principle, aim or ambition of all or part of recommendation	25
Recognises ambition, need, benefit, importance of an aspect of recommendation	7
No statement	1

In keeping with its statements of support or agreement, the Scottish Government regards its climate actions and ambitions as "strongly aligned" with the recommendations.

¹⁰⁰ Scotland's Climate Assembly website - Weekend 8 agenda
<https://www.climateassembly.scot/assembly-meetings/meeting-eight>

Given the general absence of specific, measureable and time-bound objectives in both the Assembly recommendations and in the government response, it could indeed be argued that some recommendations are fairly well covered by existing or planned policy. Table 5.2 shows the results based on the phrasing of the recommendations. A third of recommendations broadly match policy, with around a fifth being explored in some way albeit with no commitment to implementing.

Over a third of recommendations include policy that will not be taken forward, including eight recommendations relating to taxation.

Table 5.2 Analysis of Scottish Government Response

	number of recommendations
Recommendation broadly matches existing or planned policy	27
Recommendation extends existing or planned policy	41
- commit to increased action	(3)
- not doing extensions	(19)
- already explored extensions and not doing	(1)
- exploring or will explore, with no commitment to doing	(18)
Recommendation requires new policy	16
- exploring or will explore, with no commitment to doing	(6)
- not doing	(5)
- unable to do, doing something else	(5)

It is generally unclear in the response how change will be implemented at the scale and urgency emphasised in the Assembly Report's Statement of Ambition.

The Evidence Group assessment finds a lower degree of alignment, having taken the messages in the Statement of Ambition into account along with the content of each recommendation. As shown in Table 5.3, two thirds of recommendations were judged to have been met with positive change but inadequate timing or ambition.

Table 5.3 Evidence Group assessment of Scottish Government Response

	number of recommendations
Actions broadly likely to achieve Assembly intention	7
Actions don't meet Assembly timing or ambition but positive change	53
Actions insufficient to meet Assembly ambition, little or no change	16
Recommendation and intention rejected or ignored	5

The Scottish Government response states "where we have committed to taking action in future, we will provide updates to Assembly members to ensure we remain accountable for the steps we have set out in this response" (p159). Table 5.4 shows the number of recommendations where some kind of commitment is stated.

As noted earlier, on reserved matters, the Scottish Government also commits to contacting the UK Government, which it has done. There are 14 recommendations that relate to UK Government reserved matters, and one where an international convention prevents action.

Table 5.4 Scottish Government Response commitments

	number of recommendations
Will provide updates before end of 2022 (Goal 2 Building Quality)	3
Will consider recommendation in future policy development or has already done so (explicit or implied)	16
Welcome comments to National Planning Framework (NPF4) consultation	5
Commit to feasibility study or review	3

5.1.2 Other government documents

There are a number of other Scottish Government documents that refer to climate policies and actions with some relation to Assembly recommendations. These include:

- Just Transition Commission (headline recommendations, published 23 March 2021)¹⁰¹.
- Bute House Agreement (shared policy agreement between SNP and Scottish Green Party, published 31 August 2021)¹⁰².
- Programme for Government 2021-22 (published 7 September 2021)¹⁰³.
- Covid Recovery Strategy: for a fairer future (published 5 October 2021)¹⁰⁴.
- Heat in Buildings Strategy (published 7 October 2021)¹⁰⁵.

¹⁰¹ Scottish Government Just Transition Commission <https://www.gov.scot/publications/transition-commission-national-mission-fairer-greener-scotland/>

¹⁰² Cooperation Agreement between the Scottish Government and the Scottish Green Party Parliamentary Group <https://www.gov.scot/publications/cooperation-agreement-between-scottish-government-scottish-green-party-parliamentary-group/>

¹⁰³ Scottish Government Programme for Government 2021-2022 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/fairer-greener-scotland-programme-government-2021-22/>

¹⁰⁴ Scottish Government Covid Recovery Strategy <https://www.gov.scot/publications/covid-recovery-strategy-fairer-future/>

¹⁰⁵ Scottish Government Heat in Buildings Strategy <https://www.gov.scot/publications/heat-buildings-strategy-achieving-net-zero-emissions-scotlands-buildings/>

- Public sector leadership on the global climate emergency (Scottish Government guidance, published 29 October 2021)¹⁰⁶.
- Single-use plastics regulations (Scottish Government draft guidance, published 11 November 2021)¹⁰⁷.
- Scottish Budget for 2022-23 (published 9 December 2021)¹⁰⁸.
- Transport Scotland route map to achieve a 20% reduction in car kilometres by 2030 (published January 2022)¹⁰⁹.

Four of these documents mention the Assembly, but none provide evidence of impact on policy in terms of influencing change. The references to the Assembly in these four documents are discussed below.

Just Transition Commission (JTC)

The JTC recommendations document was published before the Assembly report. Under key message 3: empower and invigorate our communities and strengthen local economies, is Recommendation 15: Apply the lessons learned from Scotland's Climate Assembly across the development of all policies for tackling climate change (p40). This is in regards to two actions (p58):

- a) consider opportunities to run similar or other participatory approaches as part of an overall strategy to broaden and deepen opportunities for people to participate in shaping climate policy.
- b) use the Assembly report as a tool for understanding the essential principles that need to underpin fair and just climate action, and once these principles are developed, to embed these across policy development to drive just transition, particularly leading up to the next full statutory Climate Change Plan (due for publication in 2023).

Lessons on running participatory approaches can be gained from this research report.

However, it is unclear how the Assembly report would be used to help the Scottish Government to develop a set of principles to underpin fair and just climate action.

Programme for Government

This document provides an initial response to the JTC recommendation as follows:

"We will continue to consider the range of mechanisms such as citizens' assemblies, climate conversations and other community climate initiatives, to help inform and support the development of Just Transition plans and build on the legacy of Scotland's Climate Assembly." (p55)

¹⁰⁶ Scottish Government public sector guidance on leadership on the global climate emergency <https://www.gov.scot/publications/public-sector-leadership-global-climate-emergency/>

¹⁰⁷ Scottish Government draft guidance on Single-Use Plastic Regulations <https://www.gov.scot/publications/single-use-plastics-regulations-draft-guidance-document/pages/2>

¹⁰⁸ Scottish Government Budget Statement 2022-23 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/budget-statement-2022-23/>

¹⁰⁹ Transport Scotland's route map for reducing car use <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/50872/a-route-map-to-achieve-a-20-per-cent-reduction-in-car-kms-by-2030.pdf>

Again, this research report would be more useful in this regard than the Assembly report.

Heat in Buildings Strategy

This document states: “we... welcome the common direction of travel between the Assembly’s recommendations, published in June 2021, and this Strategy.” (p28)

This reinforces the point made earlier about the perception of alignment between the recommendations and government policy rather than influencing change.

Transport Scotland route map

Under Opportunities for Change, the document refers to the percentage of members who voted in agreement with two Assembly recommendations, as evidence of public support for change (p5). As such, this does not demonstrate that the recommendations influenced the policy itself.

5.1.3 Assembly members’ views of Scottish Government response

Member’s views about the government response are not evidence of impact on policy, but the findings are useful to consider in this context.

After Weekend 7, just over half (54%) of respondents to the member survey agreed with the statement ‘I am confident that the Assembly report will be taken seriously by Parliament and political parties’.

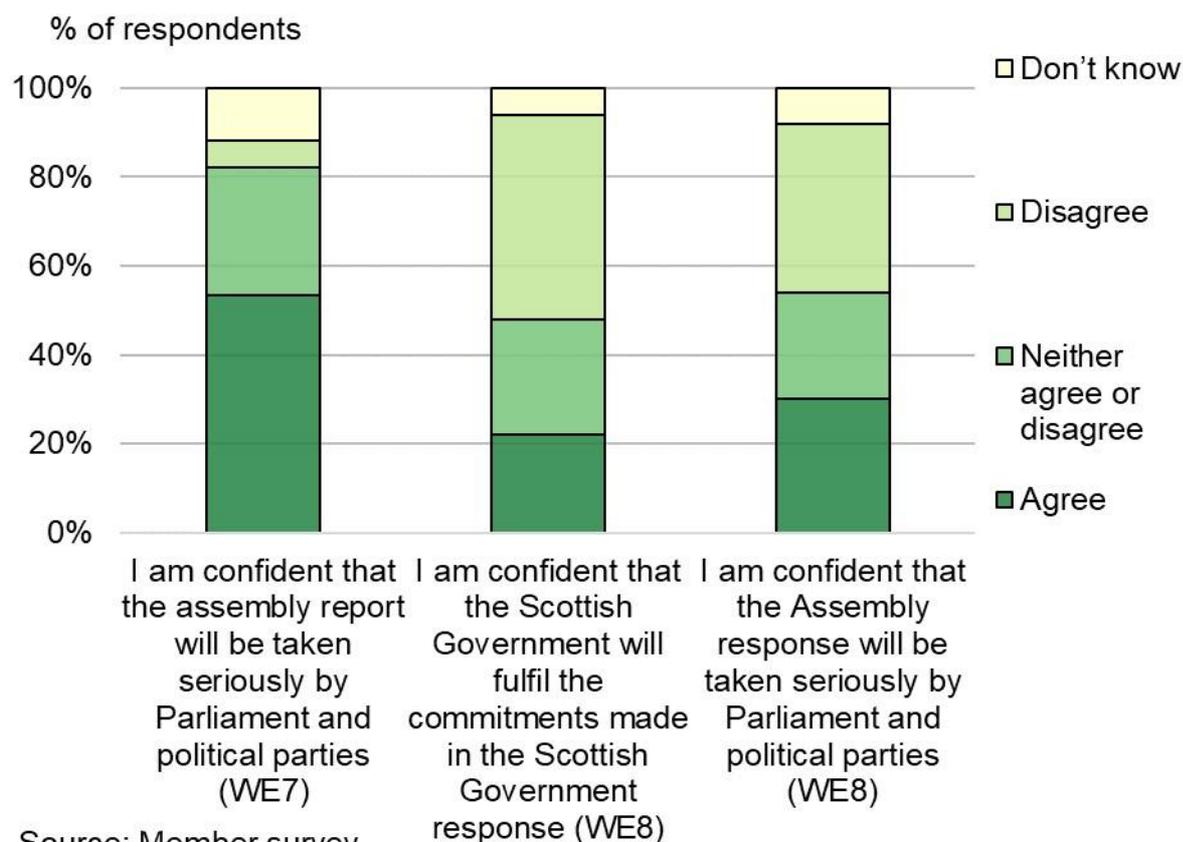
In Weekend 8, members considered the Scottish Government response and heard from two Ministers¹¹⁰. As shown in Figure 5.1, only around a fifth of respondents to the Weekend 8 survey (22%) agreed ‘I am confident that the Scottish Government will fulfil the commitments made in the Scottish Government response’.

Assembly members produced a statement in reply to the Scottish Government Response. Just under a third of respondents (30%) agreed ‘I am confident that the Assembly Response will be taken seriously by Parliament and political parties’. Whilst these results should be treated with caution due to the lower numbers of members both attending Weekend 8 and completing the survey, the results indicate some loss in confidence in the Scottish Government taking the Assembly seriously. One Assembly member who lacked confidence in the Scottish Government to fulfil their commitments said:

“I’d say the main reason for this rating is that there are too many areas where the Scottish Government has indicated they are supportive but have made no real commitment to making changes, no actions specified other than vague promises to look into things / consider things” (Assembly member, WE8)

¹¹⁰ Weekend 8 was attended by 73 (out of 106) members, of whom 51 (70%) completed the survey.

Figure 5.1 Assembly members' confidence in the Scottish Government and Parliament responding to Assembly outputs



Source: Member survey
Base: WE7:69, WE8: 51

Members were asked about their satisfaction with the government response overall. As shown in Figure 5.2, over a third of respondents (38%) were dissatisfied, around a third neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (35%), and a quarter satisfied (25%). However, many members did not have much time to read and digest the long document. Some members noted during Weekend 8 that they had only just received a copy in the post or had not received it at all. Members were informed when the response had been published and were sent a link, but as discussed earlier (see 2.3.1 Planning the Assembly), such 'homework' cannot be expected to be done by all members. There was no time allocated during Weekend 8 for members to read the response. In the survey, only 10% said they had read all of the document before the weekend, with a third (34%) reporting reading more than half and 44% reading less than half. This could explain the large proportion who reported being neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. For example, one member commented:

“Due to change of address I only received the digital response on Friday afternoon so can't comment on my satisfaction over the government's response until I have more time to look through it” (Assembly member, WE8)

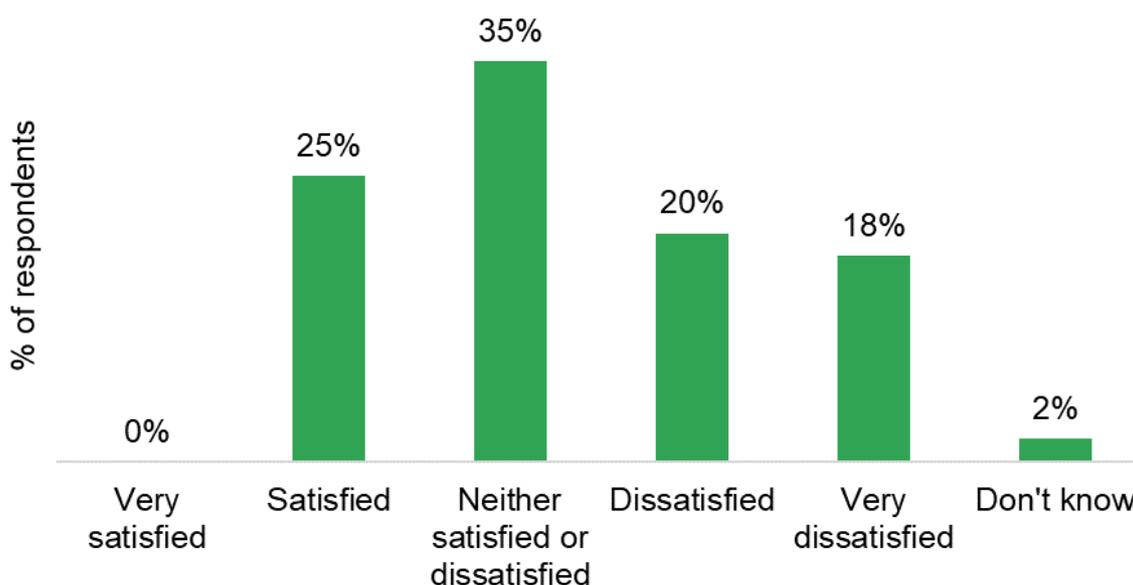
Nevertheless, around half of respondents found the response easy to understand. Around two thirds agreed that the Evidence Group's assessment of the Scottish Government Response reflected their views, with a similar proportion finding the assessment useful in shaping their views.

A third of respondents reporting being neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the Ministers' answers to the members questions as part of the Ministerial Q&A session.

There was no clear instruction in the Climate Change Act as to the precise nature of the response that should be produced. But feelings of satisfaction or dissatisfaction indicate that members held some kind of expectation, even if these were not fully conscious or explicitly expressed. The statement produced by members during Weekend 8 calls for a "clearer roadmap". Most of the Scottish Government Responses to the recommendations do lack detail about actions and timescales for delivery, although some do provide information about budgets. However, producing an action plan was not a specification of the Climate Change Act. The requirement was to "publish a statement setting out how they intend to respond to the recommendations".

There appears to be a mismatch in views and expectations, between the Scottish Government and the Assembly members, as to what constitutes an appropriate response.

Figure 5.2 Assembly members' satisfaction with Scottish Government Response (WE8 survey)



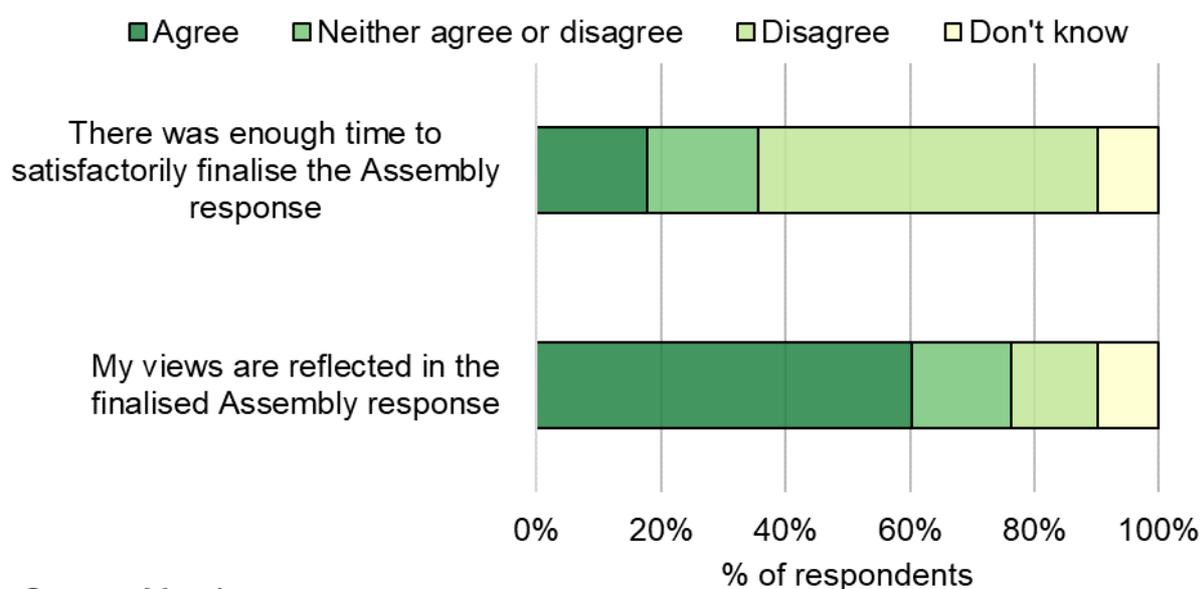
Source: Member survey. Question: 'How satisfied are you with the Scottish Government response overall?'
Base: WE8: 51

With regards to the Assembly's Statement of Response produced in Weekend 8, members were asked about their ownership of it. As shown in Figure 5.3, six in ten respondents (61%) agreed that their views were reflected in the statement, yet more than half the respondents (55%) disagreed that there had been enough time to satisfactorily finalise the statement. Perceptions of insufficient time is a recurring theme in member experience, as discussed earlier in the report (see 2.3.4 Programming the sessions).

One Assembly member explained:

“It is always difficult to take on board the varied opinions of so many people in such a short space of time. In our group we tried to incorporate the feedback and suggestions made to us by other groups but I did not feel that other groups took on board the suggestions made to them and the views of our group were echoed in the comments by other groups too and for this reason I am not sure that the Assembly response will reflect a true reflection of member’s views.” (Assembly member, WE8)

Figure 5.3 Assembly members’ ownership of developing outputs (WE8 survey)



Source: Member survey
Base: WE8: 51

5.2. Impact on debate

This section considers the impact of the Assembly on climate change debate in Scotland through an analysis of media coverage. Citizens’ assemblies include only a small number of participants, and media coverage is one way to bring more members of the public into the conversation. Analysing media coverage provides some insight, albeit limited, into the presence and influence of the Assembly in public discourse. Furthermore, media coverage may increase the salience of climate change generally, or particular topics and themes, in the minds of policymakers as well as the public.

The analysis in this report focussed on online written news media coverage. Broadcast news and social media analysis are outwith the scope of this report. The impact of the Assembly’s Civic Charter¹¹¹ is also outwith the scope of this report, although media coverage of the Charter is included as part of the media analysis.

¹¹¹ The Civic Charter was conceived by the Assembly Secretariat and launched in October 2021. The Charter expresses support for the Assembly and its recommendations and calls for immediate action from all sectors of society. To date it has been signed by 82 organisations and 50 individuals

The media analysis findings presented in this section include the amount, location and nature of the coverage, and how it changed over the course of the Assembly.

The analysis spanned 16 months, from the first article published 2 November 2020 until 11 February 2022¹¹². The analysis was structured into four phases¹¹³:

Table 5.5 Media analysis coverage by phases

Phase 1	1 Nov 2020 – 31 March 2021	covers the beginning of the Assembly and the publication of the Interim Report
Phase 2	1 April – 30 Sept 2021	covers the publication of the full Assembly report and associated public engagement activity
Phase 3	1 Oct – 30 Nov 2021	covers the period of COP26 ¹¹⁴
Phase 4	1 Dec 2021 - 11 Feb 2022	covers the publication of the Scottish Government’s Response to the Assembly recommendations and Weekend 8 of the Assembly

Key findings

- The media coverage of the Assembly was dominated by three Scottish based news outlets (as per Citizens’ Assembly of Scotland).
- Higher levels of coverage occurred when the Assembly published its final report and during COP26.
- The coverage was primarily neutral or positive (41% and 40% of all coverage respectively).
- The analysis shows that the Assembly has contributed to climate change debate in online news media. However, in the absence of a counterfactual, the way in which it has changed the debate is unknown.
- The Scottish Government’s Response has received little media coverage to date.

5.2.1 Amount and type of media coverage

A total of 151 articles were identified and analysed across the four phases, from 52 online news media outlets. This is less coverage than the Citizens’ Assembly of

including Evidence Group and Stewarding Group members and Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs). See <https://www.climateassembly.scot/civiccharter>

¹¹² Media coverage after this date is outwith the scope of this report.

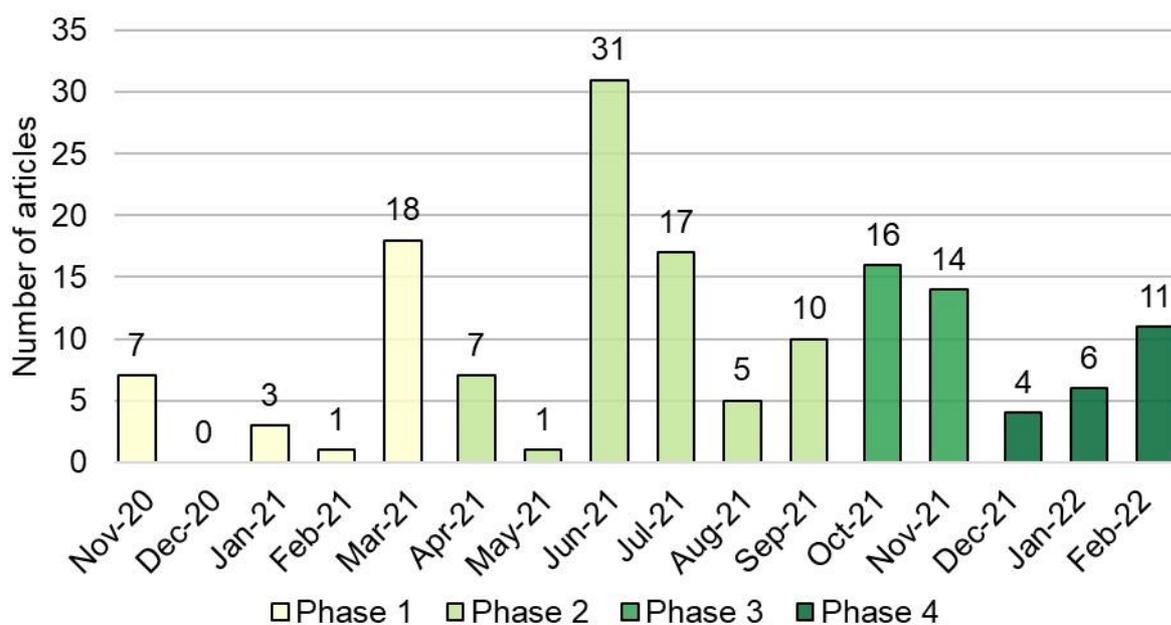
¹¹³ For details of methodology see Appendix 1.

¹¹⁴ COP26: the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties , held in Glasgow 31 October – 13 November 2021.

Scotland received (206 articles)¹¹⁵, which could be because that was the first citizens’ assembly in Scotland and therefore more newsworthy. It should be noted that the Climate Assembly may yet receive further coverage following discussion of the Scottish Government response in Parliament¹¹⁶, and with further policy responses and developments.

Figure 5.4 shows the extent of media coverage for each phase by month. In keeping with other citizens’ assemblies¹¹⁷, the media coverage was greatest around the launch of the full Assembly report (in Phase 2) when journalists have tangible outputs to report and discuss. There are also spikes in coverage at the end of Phase 1 when the Interim Report was published¹¹⁸, and also during COP26 (Phase 3). Despite Phase 3 lasting only two months (the shortest of the phases), the Assembly received 20% of its coverage during this period. This is likely due to public engagement activities such as the launch of the Civic Charter (a third of Phase 3 coverage referenced the Charter), and Assembly-related COP26 activities, and because climate change was higher on the news agenda at that time.

Figure 5.4 Media article coverage of Scotland’s Climate Assembly, per month



Source: Across all 151 articles

Phase 4 coverage is lower than might be expected given the Scottish Government response was published 16 December 2021. This could be due to resurgent media

¹¹⁵ See Elstub et al (2022). Unlike the Climate Assembly media analysis, the Citizens’ Assembly of Scotland media analysis covered the period after the assembly report was discussed in Parliament. However, this accounted for only 3% of the total coverage.

¹¹⁶ The response was discussed on 1 March 2022 in Parliament and by the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee. This date is outside the timescale of this media analysis.

¹¹⁷ Elstub et al (2021).

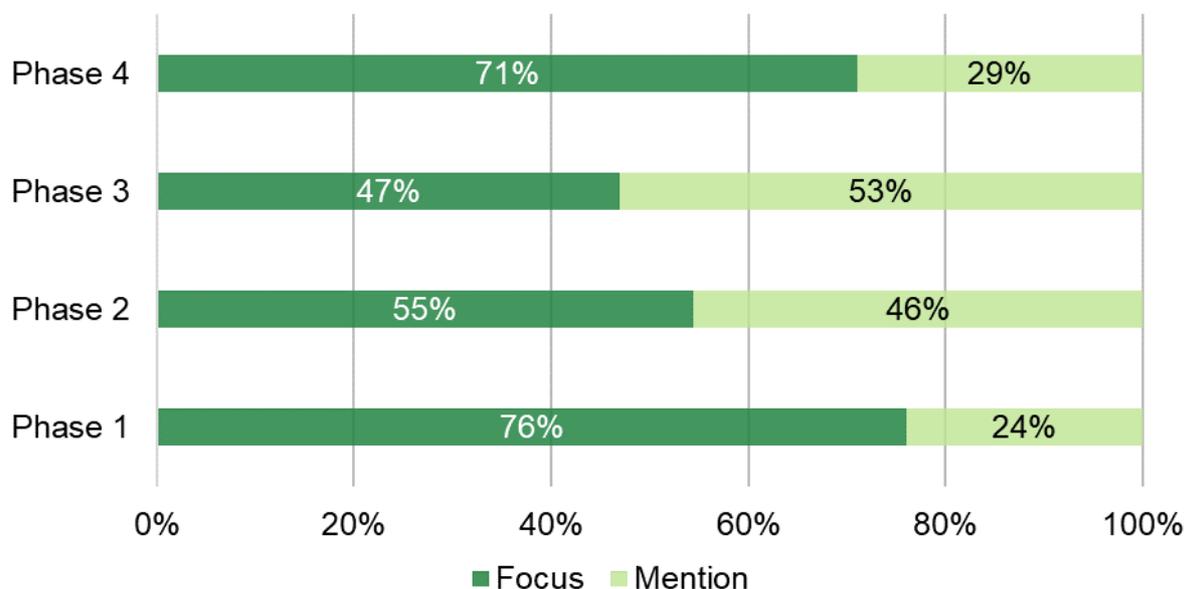
¹¹⁸ Scotland’s Climate Assembly Interim Report <https://www.climateassembly.scot/interim-report>

focus on the Covid-19 pandemic¹¹⁹, media scrutiny of the UK Prime Minister over reported lockdown social activities, and the proximity to Christmas, all of which could have overshadowed the publication of the Scottish Government’s response. However, it is also possible the Scottish Government’s response to the Assembly was not deemed newsworthy. Previous research indicates that citizens’ assemblies get more media coverage the greater the perceived impact of the assembly on policy¹²⁰. Indeed, as shown in Figure 5.4, coverage increases in February 2022 coinciding with Weekend 8 of the Assembly, when two Ministers participated in a panel Q&A with members.

Focused coverage

Of the 151 articles, 60% (90 articles) focused on the Assembly whilst 40% (61 articles) only mentioned it. As shown in Figure 5.5, in Phases 1 (during the Assembly) and 4 (Government response) the Assembly tended to be the main focus of the coverage.

Figure 5.5 Percentage of articles with Assembly focus or mention, by phase



Source: Across all 151 articles

Mentioned coverage

Just over a third of the 61 articles that mentioned the Assembly used the Assembly and/or its recommendations as evidence to support a claim or argument (23 articles). Over half of these (13 articles) supported a climate change related topic (e.g. on transport, housing or the economy). Of these, 11 articles used the Assembly outputs as evidence. For example, one article cited the Assembly’s

¹¹⁹ Due to the new variant Omicron.

¹²⁰ Elstub et al (2021).

Recommendation for a ‘Frequent Flyer Tax or Levy’ as evidence for tougher governmental commitments on taxing frequent fliers:

“In the Government’s upcoming Aviation Strategy, we’d like to see ministers robustly explore taxing frequent fliers who are making the climate crisis worse, as suggested late last year by a majority of the 100 members of the public who took part in Scotland’s landmark Climate Assembly. At best, this could cut aviation demand and therefore emissions, at worst it would generate money for wider climate action.” (Jamie Livingstone, Head of Oxfam Scotland, The Scotsman, 18 January 2022)

The other 10 articles used the Assembly and/or its recommendations to support a claim or argument about democracy e.g. citing the Assembly as evidence for further investment in similar deliberative processes. For example:

“The assembly process confirmed to us that (1) putting democracy back in the hands of ordinary people is the way forward, and (2) that the new democracy has to emerge from the people and not be controlled by the government.” (Justin Kenrick and Eva Schonveld, Good Men Project, 31 January 2022)

Distribution

The distribution of articles amongst outlets was varied. In total, there were 52 outlets that covered the Assembly¹²¹. Figure 5.6 shows the outlets with 3 or more articles. The ‘Other’ category contains 38 outlets publishing 46 articles (each outlet had one or two articles on the Assembly). The chart shows that media attention was concentrated in only a few outlets. Most of these outlets were Scotland-wide (74%), followed by UK-wide (15%), local or regional in Scotland (7%) and international (4%).

Three outlets produced 40% of the media coverage (The Herald, The National, and The Scotsman), and are Scotland-wide. These outlets also produced most of the media coverage for the Citizens’ Assembly of Scotland¹²². Topics in the articles across these three outlets were similar to the remaining 49 outlets: around two thirds of articles in both sets of outlets discussed climate change, just under half of articles discussed at least one Assembly output, and a just under a third of articles commented on the Assembly process.

Skew

The skew of coverage refers to how the Assembly was portrayed in the media: neutral skew (where the media primarily described the Assembly and/or its outputs without evaluation); positive skew (where the article provides positive comments on the Assembly); negative skew (where the media provides a critique of the Assembly); or balanced skew (where the article provides both positive and negative perspectives of the Assembly, providing a balanced argument).

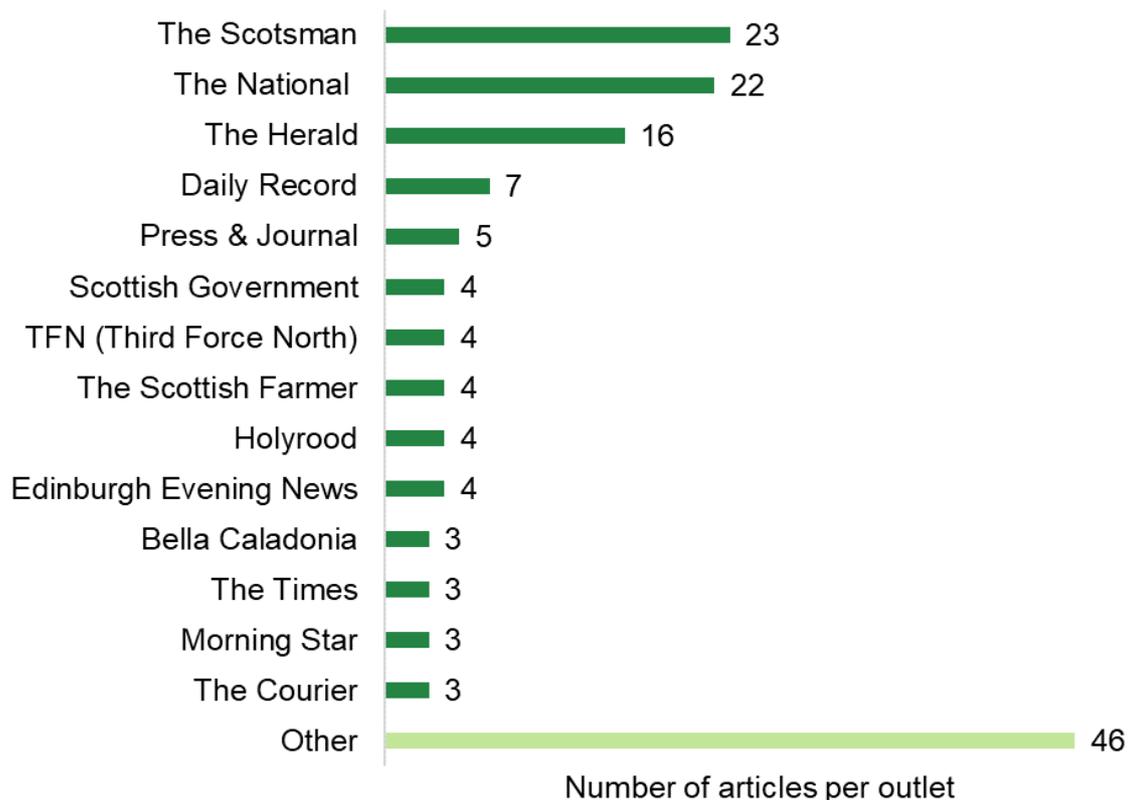
¹²¹ See accompanying Data Tables and Appendix 1 for a list of all outlets.

¹²² Elstub et al (2022).

40% of the articles were positive, 41% neutral¹²³ and 11% were balanced. 8% of articles were negative skew (8%, or 12 articles).

Almost all of the negative skew articles (11 out of 12 articles) critiqued the evidence presented at the Assembly. Most of these were written by climate activists (8 articles), seven of which by former Stewarding Group members who represented Extinction Rebellion (XR). This is discussed in more detail in section 5.2.3 Coverage of Assembly process.

Figure 5.6 Distribution of articles by outlet



Source: Across all 151 articles

Author and perspective

63% of all articles were written by a journalist or editor. The remaining were spread fairly evenly between: academics, climate activists, members of the public, Climate Assembly Organising members, and the Scottish Government.

The media analysis also captured the voice or perspective featured in the articles, such as through use of quotes. In total, 13 different perspectives were categorised. The most common perspectives were from politicians, Organising members, and informants or advocates who presented evidence to the Assembly. Of the 19 articles that included the voice of an Organising member, 14 included the voice of a Co-convener.

¹²³ This is similar to the media coverage of the Citizens Assembly of Scotland, where 51% were generally positive and 35% were generally neutral. See Elstub et al (2022).

Of these, 12 were positive and the remaining two were neutral. This shows how conveners could fulfil their role as advocates for Assembly members through the media.

5.2.2 Contribution to climate change debate

The Assembly featured strongly in 94 articles that discussed climate change (62% of all coverage).

Articles that focused solely on the Assembly outputs with no wider discussion of climate change, for example, articles that only contained the Statement of Ambition, were not considered as contributing to the climate change debate.

The proportion of articles discussing climate change was relatively consistent across the lifecycle of the Assembly, with 62% of all articles in Phase 1 and Phase 2, 63% in Phase 3, and 62% in Phase 4 discussing climate change.

As can be seen in Figure 5.7, 'urgency in response to the climate emergency' is the most frequent topic (57 out of 94 articles), covering the speed at which climate impacts are occurring, and/or the urgency of actions required in response. For example:

“For anyone who was still wondering what needs done on climate change, it’s writ large here: much more, and much faster” (Professor Dave Reay of Edinburgh University’s Climate Change Institute, speaking about the Assembly report, The National, 24 June 2021)

The second most frequent topic is 'climate justice' (47 articles). Both topics were covered in all phases to some degree. The popularity of these topics could be due to framing of the Assembly question: How should Scotland change to tackle the climate emergency in an effective and fair way?

“The climate crisis is a threat to everyone, but it falls hardest and fastest on the shoulders of the most vulnerable among us.” (Josh Littlejohn, Social Bite founder and co-convenor of the Assembly, The Daily Record, 25 October 2021)

Figure 5.7 also shows that of the articles discussing climate change, there is a greater focus on mitigation (42/94) compared to adaptation (4/94). Adaptation only featured in Phase 2 (Assembly report). This imbalance mirrors the lower level of attention given to adaptation in the Assembly (see 2.4.1 Selection of evidence).

The theme of 'Scotland as a pioneer' also emerged, with 28 articles discussing Scotland's role at the forefront of climate action. This was a theme in the Assembly's Statement of Ambition, and featured in the goals and recommendations.

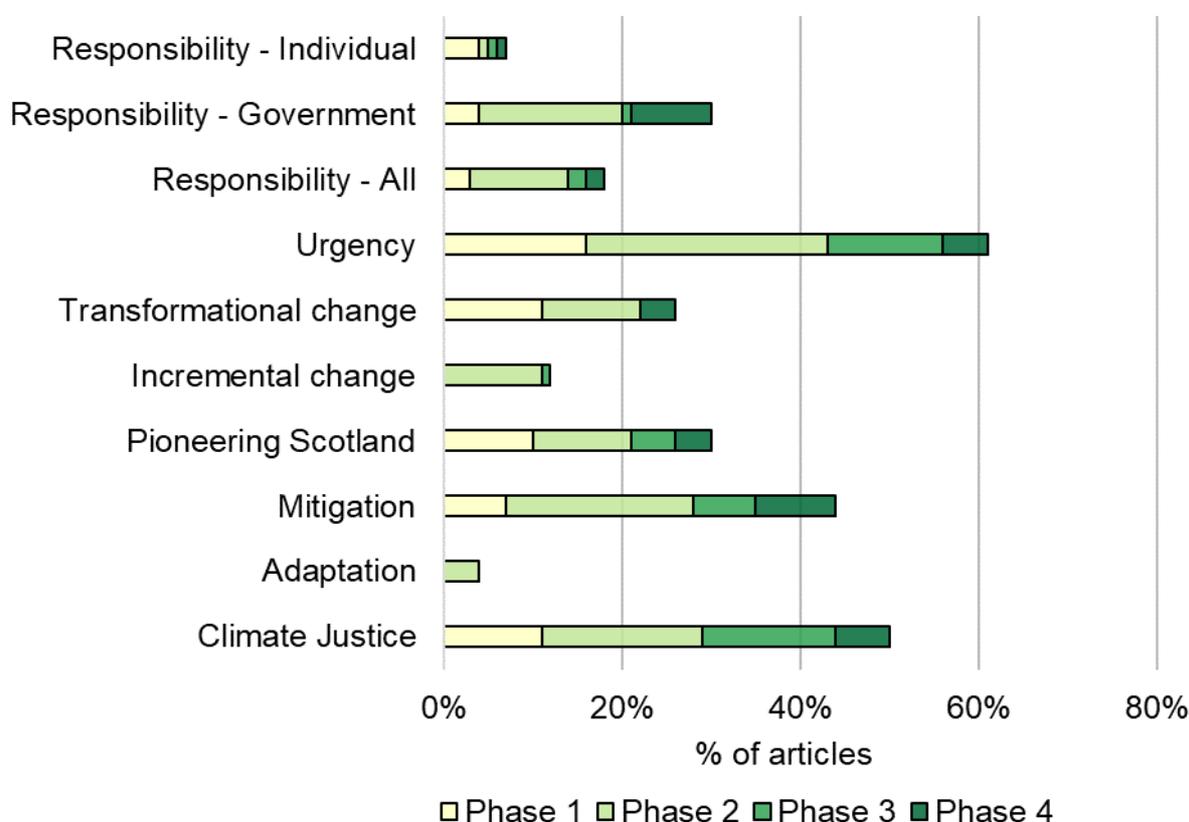
With regards to changes required to tackle climate change, transformational change (24/94) was discussed twice as much as incremental change (11/94). These findings are the reverse of the Assembly recommendations where incremental change was promoted twice as much as transformational change (see 2.2.3 Assembly recommendations and systems change).

There were 43 articles that attributed a responsibility to tackling climate change. As articles often included quotes from different people, they sometimes attributed

responsibility to multiple levels, for example, both Government and individual responsibility. Of the 43 articles, most (28) attributed responsibility to Government, 17 articles to all of society and 7 articles to the individual. As discussed earlier see (3.4 Climate attitudes), a lower proportion of Assembly members responding to the Weekend 7 survey and the Scottish public think that tackling climate change is primarily the Government’s responsibility (16% and 20% respectively).

These results demonstrate that media coverage can, but does not always, follow patterns in the Assembly itself.

Figure 5.7 Climate change topics in media coverage, per phase



Source: 94 articles that discuss climate change

5.2.3 Coverage of Assembly process

The Assembly process, specifically governance and design, was discussed in 26 articles. As shown in Figure 5.8, most were published during Phase 1 on topics including the approach taken by Organising members, the type of evidence presented to members, and the role of Extinction Rebellion (XR) in the Stewarding Group. This concentration on process in Phase 1 is understandable as during the Assembly the media do not have outputs to discuss. This finding is in keeping with research on the Citizens’ Assembly of Scotland and the Climate Assembly UK¹²⁴.

¹²⁴ Elstub et al (2022); Elstub et al (2021).

Governance and design

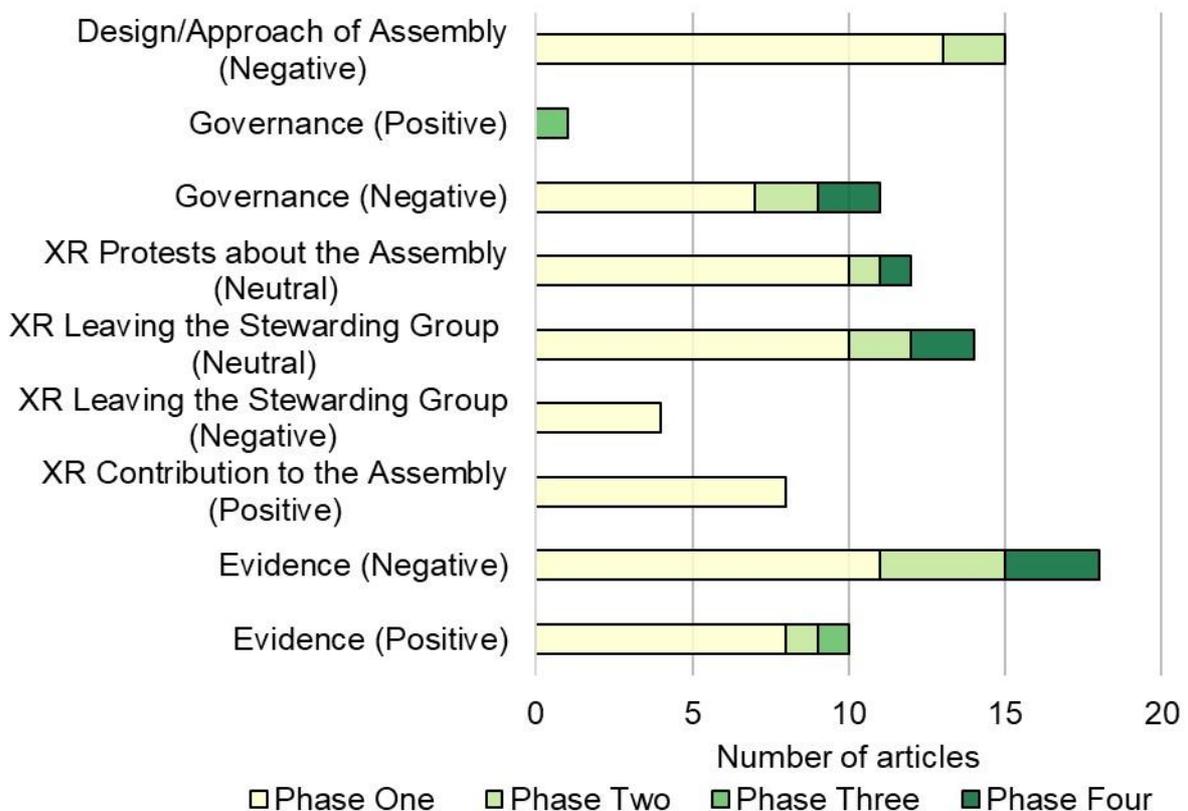
Figure 5.8 shows the number of articles by topic. The most common topics relate to: critiques of the evidence presented to Assembly members (18 articles), critiques of the approach that the Assembly took (i.e. that it was not radical enough to tackle the climate emergency) (17 articles), and neutral descriptions of XR leaving the Stewarding Group (14 articles). 12 articles discussed all three topics, and a further 3 articles discussed two of these topics. For example:

“Extinction Rebellion Scotland was originally part of the Stewarding Group, but pulled out because they felt that those with an interest in maintaining the status quo were frightened of rocking the boat, and were not allowing the Assembly to hear a wide enough range of evidence. XR wanted assembly members to be supported to decide how serious the emergency is, assess the systematic drivers of the crisis, and decide the level of transformation required.” (Edinburgh Reporter, 4 March 2021)

XRs voice featured in almost half of the articles which covered the governance and design of the Assembly.

Some articles were supportive of the evidence Assembly members received (9 articles). Most of these had a balanced skew on the Assembly as a whole (7 articles).

Figure 5.8 Distribution of Governance & Design topics, by skew and by phase



Source: 26 articles that discuss Assembly process

Democracy

Two thirds of articles on Assembly governance and design framed the discussion within a wider narrative about democracy¹²⁵ (16 articles). For example:

“In a world where democracy can often feel like little more than an X in a box every four years, this climate assembly is a chance for 105 citizens of Scotland to do what politicians are too afraid to do: save us from a future of drowned cities, scorched earth and millions forced to flee their homes, by refusing business as usual. Instead let’s hope they call on us to embark on the transformations needed to stop the destruction of our only home and ensure a bright future for all.” (Bella Caledonia, 4 March 2021)

Children’s Parliament

In addition to the articles on Assembly process, a further 22 articles discussed the involvement of Children’s Parliament in the Assembly. Of these, 18 had a positive skew and the remaining were neutral. For example:

“Some of the strongest and most coherent thinking came from the youngest in our community, that is the children’s parliament” (Kairin van Sweeden, climate justice activist, The National, 11 September 2021)

Half of these articles were published in Phase 2 when the full Assembly Report was published which included the Children’s Parliament ‘Calls to Action’ (see section 1.2 footnote 16).

5.2.4 Coverage of Assembly outputs

79 articles discussed the Assembly outputs including the Statement of Ambition, goals, recommendations and the Assembly members’ Statement of Response to the Scottish Government. Of these, around half of the articles (42) had a positive skew on the Assembly and about a third had a neutral skew. The articles that had a positive skew were dominated by the voice and perspective of organising members, politicians and experts/speakers from the Assembly who accounted for around two thirds of these articles.

Statement of Ambition

The Statement of Ambition was covered in 17 articles. 13 of these articles had a positive skew on the Assembly, with the remainder neutral. However, much of this positivity came from content that included the voice of someone involved in the Assembly rather than journalists (i.e. Organising members, experts/speakers, or organisers/members of Children’s Parliament). This shows that self-generated media coverage is a good way for organisers to get positive messages about the Assembly into the public domain¹²⁶.

¹²⁵ Discussions of democracy included: critiques of traditional politics; discussions of the potential benefits of participatory democracy; and specific references to processes of deliberative democracy such as citizens assemblies.

¹²⁶ See the Assembly Report for more details on the content of the Statement of Ambition <https://www.climateassembly.scot/full-report>

Goals

32 articles covered the Assembly goals. Almost all goals were mentioned at least once. There was no specific mention of Goal 7 Carbon Labelling, Goal 11 Circular Economy, Goal 12 Work & Volunteering, and Goal 13 Business¹²⁷. However, the recommendations accompanying these goals did receive attention.

Across the 52 outlets, 22 of them covered the Assembly goals, with the main three outlets (The Herald, The National and The Scotsman) accounting for just over a quarter of the articles.

The goals that received the most coverage were: G15 Taxation (24 articles), G9 Land Use (19 articles) and G8 Education (8 articles). Five of the 16 goals received explicit support in the media¹²⁸: G8 Education, G9 Land Use, G14 20 Minute Communities, G15 Taxation, and G16 Measuring Success. Taxation was the only goal to be critiqued (once in The Herald and once in Scottish Land and Estates). The Assembly goals received relatively low coverage compared to the recommendations¹²⁹.

Recommendations

The Assembly produced 81 recommendations¹³⁰, and 50 of these were captured in the media coverage. Two thirds of outlets covered the recommendations across a total of 73 articles. However again, the coverage was heavily dominated by the three main outlets (The Herald, The National and The Scotsman) who together accounted for just over a third of the articles. Of the articles that covered the recommendations, just over three quarters (57) were focused on the Assembly (as opposed to only mentioned) and the same proportion (57) were focussed on the topic of climate change. Indeed, almost all (53/57) of those articles focussed on both the Assembly and the topic of climate change.

Some recommendations were discussed more than others. Those receiving the most coverage were: G3R14 Decarbonising Heating by 2030 (19 articles), G5R28 an Oyster Card for Scotland (16 articles) and G12R57 National Nature Service (15 articles).

Around two thirds of articles discuss more than one recommendation.

Twenty recommendations received positive coverage, in 21 articles. Around half of these articles were opinion pieces. Politicians (7 articles) and Assembly members (5 articles) were the most prominent perspectives that were highlighted in these articles. The recommendations were from almost all the different goals (14 out of 16 goals).

There was also some negative coverage, with 8 recommendations critiqued in 8 articles. These recommendations mirror the recommendations receiving lowest

¹²⁷ Although there was one article written by an Assembly organiser that covered all goals.

¹²⁸ Not including the article from an Assembly organiser that praised all the goals.

¹²⁹ See the Assembly Report for more details on the content of these goals
<https://www.climateassembly.scot/full-report>

¹³⁰ See the Assembly Report for more details on the content of the recommendations
<https://www.climateassembly.scot/full-report>

percentage of votes from Assembly members (see 4.1.3 Support for recommendations). Five of the recommendations are from Goal 15 Taxation, which received the lowest voting agreement from the members (see 4.1.2 Goals). However, the most criticised recommendation (in 4 articles), was Food Carbon Labelling, which was voted for by 95% of members.

Most of the articles that covered a recommendation neutrally were informative (49 out of 60 articles) with the rest as opinion pieces.

Assembly members' Statement of Response

After Weekend 8 (to the cut off date for Phase 4 analysis) there were 5 articles that covered the Assembly members' Statement of Response. As previously stated, this response was produced by the members following a weekend where they considered and reflected on the Scottish Government's response to the Assembly's goals and recommendations.

To date, the Scottish Government's response has received a relatively small amount of media coverage – just 13 articles contained references to the Scottish Government response to the Assembly Report. Inevitably, all of these were in Phase 4. Of these references, just over half were unsupportive of the Scottish Government response (7 articles). Just under a third (4 articles) were neutral; and 2 articles praised the response. The Scottish Government's response to the Assembly, and the Assembly report itself, may receive more media coverage following discussion in Parliament¹³¹ and further policy responses and development.

¹³¹ Discussed on 1 March 2022 in Parliament and by the Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee.

6. Conclusions

This chapter discusses key factors affecting the quality of the Assembly, and the impact of the Assembly on government policy and public debate in Scotland. It identifies key considerations for citizens' assemblies in general, online assemblies, assemblies in Scotland, and climate assemblies. The chapter concludes with suggestions for further research – for this Assembly and more generally.

On the whole, the research finds that the Assembly was well organised and delivered, with several innovative features including:

- involvement of Children's Parliament in a parallel process that at times interlinked with the Assembly, and the inclusion of their Calls to Action in the Assembly Report.
- presenting Assembly members with scenarios of possible futures that depicted different worldviews and routes that could be taken to address climate change, and that showed how change can happen at different levels and paces.
- more measures were used to integrate the work of the different topic streams than in previous climate assemblies.
- creation and promotion of a Civic Charter expressing support for the Assembly and its recommendations, which has been signed by organisations and individuals.
- continuation of the Secretariat after the main Assembly period, to organise public engagement activities and engagement with government officials and ministers and members of Parliament.
- organising a further Assembly meeting to discuss the Scottish Government response to the Assembly recommendations, including a Ministerial Q&A.

The Assembly members received a range of relevant information on climate change and its mitigation, and to a lesser extent information on adaptation. Member survey data suggests that on the whole members' learning about climate change and their support for particular climate actions increased over the course of the Assembly, as did their concern about climate change as an urgent issue.

Survey data indicates there is strong support from Assembly members and majority support from the Scottish public for the Assembly goals and recommendations, and the statements of ambition. The Assembly has also featured in news media coverage of climate change.

Whilst there is evidence that the Assembly has made a contribution to climate change debate and policy in Scotland, more research is needed over the longer term to assess the extent of its impact with regards to influencing specific changes in policy and debate in the coming months and years.

However, there were also limitations to the Assembly and some aspects that worked less well. In the following sections of this chapter, key lessons and considerations for future assemblies are identified. This learning can make an important contribution to improving outcomes of Scottish Government policy, both in relation to climate change and to participatory and deliberative democracy.

The Scottish Government has stated its commitment to improving outcomes and improving people's experiences in numerous policy spaces in recent years. This is rooted in a long-standing commitment to, for example, the Scottish Approach to Service Design¹³², the outcomes focus of the National Performance Framework¹³³ and the principles of Public Service Reform¹³⁴ which emphasise the need to be in constant dialogue with Scotland's people: listening, engaging and responding, and building on the principle that everyone is entitled to have the opportunity to shape Scotland's shared future.

6.1 Key factors affecting the quality of the Assembly

This section discusses factors relating to organisation, remit, online format, Assembly member support, evidence provision and deliberative process.

6.1.1 Assembly organisation

The organisers successfully delivered an online citizens' assembly that produced a range of recommendations to address climate change, during difficult circumstances due to the Covid-19 pandemic. A majority of Assembly members were satisfied with the organisation, communication and support they received.

Early relational work between the Secretariat and the Stewarding Group was helpful in building a good relationship, with the Stewarding Group providing a useful steer for the Secretariat. There were also positive relationships between the Secretariat and the Design Team although there were differences in views about the extent to which the Assembly had been co-designed. The Evidence Group had less time to build relationships and trust before the start of the Assembly, which likely contributed to a challenging start with their decision making process, although this improved over the course of the Assembly.

The Assembly was delivered within a short period of time due to requirements of the Climate Change Act and the Scottish Parliamentary pre-election period, further Covid-related legislation notwithstanding¹³⁵. Whilst this tight schedule generated a sense of momentum, it created pressures for all aspects of planning and delivery, which were experienced as challenging or stressful by some, as well as pressures for members in digesting large volumes of evidence in short periods between weekends. Many other factors affecting the quality of the Assembly likely stem from this issue.

There was some uncertainty and lack of clarity regarding roles, relationships and decision making authority of the various groups involved in organising and delivering the Assembly, including the relationship between the Secretariat and the Scottish Government.

¹³² Scottish Approach to Service Design <https://www.gov.scot/publications/the-scottish-approach-to-service-design/>

¹³³ National Performance Framework <https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/>

¹³⁴ Scottish Government's public service reform approach to improving public services <https://www.gov.scot/policies/improving-public-services/>

¹³⁵ See 2.3.1 Planning the Assembly (footnotes 42 & 43).

Late design decisions before many of the Assembly weekends, whilst enabling responsiveness to emerging issues, limited possibilities for oversight by the Stewarding Group and impacted on the ability of others to adequately plan and deliver. There was also a reliance on Evidence Group members voluntarily contributing more time than contracted or agreed, which not all were able to do, thereby exacerbating inequalities in contributions.

6.1.2 Assembly remit

The use of a deliberative process for developing the Assembly question by the Stewarding Group worked well. However, there were differences in views about how to operationalise the Assembly question, in terms of what it meant for the evidence and tasks set to members. These differences mainly related to: how closely the Assembly should align with policy needs with respect to the Climate Change Act and its targets, the extent to which the Assembly should explore the reasons why climate change is deemed an emergency, how strategic, and how radical an approach it should take or allow. These differences indicate a diversity of views amongst the various groups involved in organising and delivering the Assembly (the Stewarding Group, Secretariat, Design and Facilitation Team and Evidence Group), which is positive from a deliberative perspective, although the differences were not resolved. There were also differences in views about the extent to which the Assembly dealt effectively with the systemic nature of climate change.

The final remit was very broad, making it a challenge to address in the time available, despite having seven weekends. Indeed, many members felt the sessions were rushed with insufficient deliberation time to develop their recommendations.

To satisfactorily address the broad question, the Assembly was divided into topic streams for three of the seven weekends, which enabled members in each stream to go into more depth on that topic. The topics were chosen by the organisers rather than the Assembly members. The material from all of the streams was made available to all Assembly members, but as time for reviewing the material was not built in to the sessions, they would have had to review it in their own time. This introduces elements of inequality, as some members would not have time or skills to do so in isolation, and it risks perpetuating the learning inequalities that citizens' assemblies are designed to overcome. The topic stream structure meant that Assembly members did not all engage with the same evidence, and also made interconnections between topics more difficult to understand.

Measures were put in place to integrate the topic streams and to share learning and deliberation across the streams, which enabled more co-ordination of the recommendations than in other climate assemblies, for example Climate Assembly UK¹³⁶. These measures involved mixed stream groups in Weekends 6 and 7, which helped members to understand the recommendations made in other streams and why they were proposed, although not to the same extent as the recommendations from their own stream. There was an element of members having to trust that

¹³⁶ Evaluation of Climate Assembly UK <https://www.parliament.uk/globalassets/documents/get-involved2/climate-assembly-uk/evaluation-of-climate-assembly-uk.pdf>

members in other streams had followed a good process to arrive at their recommendations, with some more comfortable about relying on trust than others. The mixed stream groups were therefore not sufficient to ensure that all Assembly members had gained enough knowledge and understanding to fully endorse recommendations from the other streams. The broad remit also led to a large number of recommendations being made by the Assembly, with differences in views about whether a large number of recommendations is problematic.

As the Assembly remit did not include a critical review of all existing and planned Scottish Government climate policy, members were not necessarily aware of all that was already in process and consequently developed some recommendations that broadly matched existing or planned policy.

6.1.3 Online format

Running an entire Assembly online is extremely difficult, but the challenge was met effectively and the organisers were well prepared for the online digital format. There was a good level of technical support for members, both in advance and during the Assembly, although connectivity issues impacted at times on some members' ability to participate. Video presentations enabled review of the presentations in advance of them being broadcast to Assembly members, allowed for re-watching by members, as well as allowing the evidence to be easily made publicly available. Other advantages of the online format included availability of experts and accessibility for those members for whom attending in person would have been problematic.

However, there were disadvantages. Shorter sessions (due to concerns of online fatigue) meant less time for evidence and deliberation, it was also more difficult to cater for a range of learning styles, and more difficult to both facilitate and monitor the performance of facilitators.

Whilst a sense of community amongst the members was generated, there were different opinions about whether more social activities would have enhanced this further. Previous studies have found that sense of community and socialisation can elevate the quality of deliberation. However, as this research has found, with a topic stream structure, a strong overall assembly identity may increase the risk of insufficient critique of outputs between topic streams.

6.1.4 Assembly design

Most members found the small group, mixed stream and plenary sessions helpful for their learning, and were satisfied with the balance of open discussions to task-based discussions.

However, there were difficulties in completing tasks within session time, and work was often rushed and at times overran into breaks. There were also difficulties in balancing time for evidence with time for deliberation in the time available. Indeed, many members did not feel there had been enough time to develop and finalise the recommendations, even if most agreed their views were reflected in the final outputs.

Overall, there were good elements to the facilitation, particularly given the considerable challenges of facilitating online and working with multiple tools and

documents. As a result, members largely felt included and respected, with ample opportunity to express their views, although there were at times issues with one or more members dominating their small group, affecting others' participation.

A key feature of deliberation is members putting forward ideas and suggestions about what should be done (referred to as 'demands'). This requires particular facilitation techniques. Within this Assembly, techniques employed were more in keeping with fostering dialogue than deliberation. This may have contributed to the low level of demands that were made in the sample of group discussions analysed. When members did make demands, they mostly included a justification. However, only around a third of justifications made an explicit link between the demand and the reason. Such a link is an indicator of quality in deliberation. Most justifications were in service of the general interest or common good, which is also an important deliberative norm.

There were instances when facilitators inaccurately recorded members' contributions, and these mistakes were not always picked up. Members were not always enabled to write down their views or ask questions to experts themselves.

Good pastoral support for members during the Assembly was provided, although more staff resource would have been helpful due to the emotional labour involved. The process and tasks were generally explained well to members. However, it was not always clear to members how their work had been collated and consolidated between weekends. Members had some opportunity to influence the Assembly process, and most members felt their views were reflected in the various outputs over the course of the Assembly, suggesting an overall high sense of ownership of the process and outputs.

6.1.5 Evidence

The evidence provided was generally good quality in terms of content, with high production values. However, peer review processes could have been better and more consistent.

Survey and observational data suggests that Assembly members understood and engaged well with the evidence, although there could have been better use of resources such as evidence summaries to help members keep track of key points. Some members felt overwhelmed at times by the volume of information. Although the interactions between experts and members was limited, both groups found it useful.

There were differing views on the extent to which diversity and balance of evidence had been achieved. Climate impacts, adaptation and resilience were under-represented in the evidence relative to mitigation, with this imbalance also reflected in the Assembly recommendations. Some interviewees also thought that the severity of the climate crisis may not have been sufficiently conveyed to members, particularly in the first two weekends.

6.1.6 Deliberative process

The findings indicate that, on the whole, the Assembly was successful as a deliberative process:

- the Assembly brought together a diverse set of people from Scotland, with differing views on climate change.
- the members were enabled to have meaningful discussions about how Scotland should tackle the climate emergency in an effective and fair way.
- the Assembly was successfully run online with generally high levels of member engagement.
- demands made by members in a sample of small group discussions about what should be done were frequently justified with reasons relating to the common good.

6.2 Assembly impact

This section provides an overview of public support for the Assembly and its outputs, and an assessment of the impact of the assembly on climate policy and debate in Scotland, based on data available to date. Key outcomes for members are also summarised.

6.2.1 Public support

Survey data indicates there is majority support from the Scottish public for the Assembly goals and recommendations, and the statements of ambition.

According to Implicit Response Testing, some statements of ambition from the Assembly appear to have higher emotional resonance with the public than others. The message that everyone having a shared role in taking action is likely to have high emotional connection whereas there may be some resistance to messages that make a direct and specific demand for cultural change at various levels, including personal change. There also seems to be some doubt about Scotland's capacity to be a climate change pioneer.

Both the Citizens' Assembly of Scotland and the Deltapoll population surveys find that a majority of the public appear to support fundamentally changing Scotland's economic model to tackle climate change, and think that new ways of engaging people in decision making are needed and that citizens' assemblies are worthwhile. These are tentative findings, hence further research on these aspects is needed.

6.2.2 Impact on Scottish Government policy

The Scottish Government response is comprehensive, but the way it is written makes it difficult to identify exactly what impact the Assembly has had on policy, and no evidence of Assembly impact was found in other policy documents analysed. It is generally unclear in the government response how change will be implemented at the scale and urgency emphasised in the Assembly Report's Statement of Ambition.

With an overall lack of specific timescales and measureable objectives in both the Assembly recommendations and the government response, comparing recommended to existing or planned action is open to interpretation. A third of recommendations appear to broadly match existing or planned policy, with around a fifth being explored by government in some way albeit with no commitment to implementing. Over a third of recommendations include policy that will not be taken forward. Whilst 14 recommendations relate to UK Government reserved matters,

the Scottish Government committed to contacting the UK Government about these, and has done so¹³⁷.

Member survey results indicate that between the end of the main Assembly period and after receiving the government response, there was a decline in members' confidence in the Scottish Government taking the Assembly seriously. There also appears to be some misalignment in views and expectations, between the Scottish Government and Assembly members, as to what constitutes an appropriate government response.

There were many features of the Assembly that were designed to optimise its impact. The Secretariat remained in post beyond the end of the Assembly enabling them to promote the Assembly recommendations within the Scottish Government. The Civic Charter has mobilised some stakeholders and civil society groups to support the Assembly recommendations. Weekend 8 brought the Assembly members and Government Ministers into discussion together, via a Q&A session, over the government response to the Assembly.

6.2.3 Impact on climate change debate

The analysis of online news media found that coverage was dominated by three Scottish-based outlets, which was also the case with the Citizens' Assembly of Scotland. There were higher levels of coverage when the final Assembly report was published and during COP26. The Scottish Government's response has received little media coverage to date, though it may yet increase. To date, the coverage has been primarily positive or neutral (40% and 41% of all coverage respectively). The analysis shows that the Assembly has contributed to the climate change debate in the online written news media. However, in the absence of a counterfactual, the way in which it has changed the debate is unknown.

6.2.4 Outcomes for Assembly members

Evidence suggests the most popular climate actions for Assembly members since taking part in the Assembly are: reducing amount of meat and dairy in diet, reducing overall consumption, and reducing domestic energy use. Other popular actions include: discussing climate change and politics with friends and family, and making consumer decisions based on associated climate impacts. Many members feel more confident to engage in political decision-making as a result of being involved with the Assembly, and agree that taking part in the Assembly has made them want to be more involved in other aspects of government decision making.

6.3 Considerations for future assemblies

This section identifies key points to consider for future citizens' assemblies generally, citizens' assemblies in Scotland, online assemblies, and climate assemblies specifically.

¹³⁷ Letter from Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport to UK Government regarding Scotland's Climate Assembly <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-climate-assembly-letter-from-cabinet-secretary-for-net-zero-energy-and-transport-to-uk-government/>

6.3.1 Considerations for citizens' assemblies

This Assembly has enabled valuable public deliberation over an important public policy issue. Key considerations include:

- extent to which future citizens' assemblies should give members more say on the Assembly remit, evidence, decision-making process and report drafting. In this Assembly there were some measures in place to enable the members to have some control of the process. However, they could have been afforded more opportunities to shape the agenda in accordance with the Arrangements for the Administration and Operation of Citizens' Assembly of Scotland: Scotland's Climate Assembly, which states that "within the remit of the legislation, and with expert support, members of the assembly (once in place) will be able to shape the assembly's agenda."¹³⁸
- how much time should be made available for building relationships between organising/delivery groups in advance of key decision making to improve communication and collaboration, and to make best use of experts' time.
- how to schedule Assembly weekends so it is (a) not overwhelming for members, (b) ensures that there is a manageable workload for organising and delivering the Assembly (including evidence provision), whilst (c) still ensuring there is momentum to the process, and (d) that information provided is not forgotten by Assembly members.
- including pathways to impact that were adopted in this Assembly e.g. the continuation of the Secretariat beyond the duration of the Assembly to organise public engagement activities, the Civic Charter, COP26 related events, and occasions that bring Government ministers and Assembly members into discussion together.
- how governments formally respond to citizens' assemblies with clarity and precision, for example making use of a 'you said, we did' format.
- how scrutiny of government action in response to assembly recommendations should take place.
- designing a research programme that allows for assessment of impact over the longer term, and that embeds data collection from members into the Assembly programme.

6.3.2 Considerations for citizens' assemblies in Scotland

This research on Scotland's Climate Assembly indicates public support for more assemblies to be organised in Scotland that enable the public to contribute to policy issues and debate in a balanced and informed manner.

Consideration could be given to institutionalising the use of citizens' assemblies by establishing rules and regulations for their instigation, governance, and Government response; clarifying issues of independence and accountability; and providing a office space and a dedicated budget to fund citizens' assemblies and to

¹³⁸ Scotland's Climate Assembly operations and administration arrangements
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-climate-assembly-operations-administration-arrangements/>

fund the implementation of key recommendations. This could have a number of benefits including:

- mitigating the negative consequences of introducing legislative requirements to conduct a citizens' assembly within a limited set time period.
- enabling clear rules and resources for the governance of citizens' assemblies so there is a clear division of labour, but also sufficient resources to staff the assembly organisation and provision of evidence adequately.
- providing adequate resource within government to respond to and implement assembly recommendations.
- aligning stakeholders' expectations about the nature of the Government response, and what constitutes an appropriate response.
- supporting cumulative learning, as experience is sustained across assemblies.
- promoting scrutiny of government actions.

The institutionalisation of citizens' assemblies requires that the organisation, practice, and culture of government is open to heeding assembly recommendations and learning lessons from the Climate Assembly and other deliberative processes to support improvement¹³⁹. Additionally, for Scotland, investment and training is needed to increase the facilitation capacity for deliberative processes.

A further consideration is how to handle topics involving matters reserved to UK Government.

6.3.3 Considerations for online assemblies

The research shows that citizens' assemblies can be successfully held entirely online. However, there are some key considerations for future online assemblies.

- how to provide evidence in a variety of formats to meet different learning style needs.
- how to ensure there are frequent opportunities for assembly members and experts to discuss the issues together.
- if shorter sessions are used for online assemblies, due to the greater intensity of digital participation, how to ensure there is still sufficient time for deliberation.
- innovation is required to enable quality control and review of the facilitation to occur in online sessions. For example, small group discussions could be recorded and reviewed at a later date.
- provision of social opportunities to enable assembly members to bond and build trust in ways that provide a bedrock to deliberation and decision-making, and that support equal participation in a manner that does not exclude some members or hinder critical exploration. With a topic stream structure, a strong assembly identity may also increase the risk of insufficient critique of outputs from other streams. Further consideration needs to be given as to whether social opportunities are an optional or required part of participation, and whether these social activities are included in the gift

¹³⁹ OECD (2021).

payments to members. Social opportunities increase the workload for members and could be a barrier to participation or create difficulties for some members e.g. those with caring responsibilities or who work unsocial hours.

6.3.4 Considerations for climate assemblies

The research indicates that citizens' assemblies are a good format to enable the public to engage in climate change debate. Considerations for future climate assemblies relate to the remit, evidence and Assembly member wellbeing.

Remit of Assembly

- climate change is vast and complex, and is not a 'problem' that can be 'solved'. However, Assembly members could be empowered to refine the remit and consider the areas of climate change that are of greatest importance to them or of highest societal priority in mitigating emissions and adapting to climate impacts.
- how closely the assembly question, evidence and deliberation should be aligned with policy needs (e.g. legislation and targets), or should have a more open remit.
- how to ensure the systemic nature of climate change is designed in to the process in a way that does not over-complicate the learning experience for members.
- the implications of how the assembly question is framed for the number and scope of the resulting recommendations, and whether to restrict the number of recommendations produced.
- whether to include a critical review of existing policy to avoid Assembly members spending time developing recommendations for policies that already exist or are planned, of which they were unaware.
- as climate change is a long term phenomenon with potential for fast or unexpected developments due to feedbacks and tipping points, the policy context will also change. A one-off Assembly is unlikely to be sufficient, and consideration will need to be given to the shelf-life of recommendations and whether further or ongoing assemblies are required. A more permanent arrangement would enable more responsive governance.

Evidence

- how to ensure evidence relating to climate impacts, adaptation and resilience is as effectively communicated to members as mitigation.
- how the severity, scale and urgency of the climate crisis can be adequately conveyed to assembly members.
- understanding that there are no "neutral" ways of communicating about climate change, as all communication involves framing. A perception that scientific evidence is objective, values-free and emotion-free can lead to bias in selection of evidence. Care therefore needs to be taken to understand the implications of choices.
- development of a robust and consistent peer review process for the provision of evidence, with a shared understanding of what constitutes balance and bias.

- whether and how much to include children's views. Whilst this was welcomed by some members of this Assembly, others thought the time would have been better spent on deliberation of evidence.

Assembly member wellbeing

- how the emotional wellbeing of members is monitored and supported as they learn about the severity of the crisis, as well as deal with the nature of the Government response.

6.4 Further research

This section identifies some key areas for further research on Scotland's Climate Assembly, and for citizens' and climate assemblies in general:

- analysis of impact on policy of Scotland's Climate Assembly over the longer term.
- assess the impact of the Civic Charter on the signatories' organisational policies and practices, or on other parties' policies.
- analysis of broadcast and social media coverage of Scotland's Climate Assembly for further evidence of impact on debate.
- longitudinal research on the relationship between Assembly members and Scottish Government.
- involvement of Assembly members in further political activity, including in relation to deliberative or participatory democracy.
- climate mitigation and adaptation behaviours of Assembly members.
- comparative analysis of Scotland's Climate Assembly with other climate assemblies to enhance understanding of the contribution they can make to climate governance at local and national levels.
- how the organisation, practice and culture of the Scottish Government, and governments and parliaments in general, need to be reformed to enable an empowering role for citizens' assemblies.
- comparative analysis of existing attempts to institutionalise deliberative mini-publics such as citizens' assemblies.

Information about climate assemblies including research publications can be found at the Knowledge Network on Climate Assemblies website <https://knoca.eu/>.

Appendix 1 - Methodology

The research team

The main team comprised Scottish Government social researchers: Dr Nadine Andrews (team leader), Gemma Sandie and Scott McVean. This team worked in collaboration with Dr Stephen Elstub from Newcastle University and also with Alexa Green from Edinburgh University/Scotland's Rural College, who provided their services for free. For early part of the research programme, strategic support was provided by Scottish Government official Nick Bland, and research support by Dr Evelyn Bower. Further research support was also provided by PhD interns Hannah Gracher and Julia Chan.

Deltapoll was commissioned to conduct a population survey in Scotland and analyse the data.

Blake Stevenson was commissioned to provide analytical support. In this report, their analysis of the non-participant observational notes and transcripts of small group discussions have been drawn upon.

A Research Advisory Group was formed in January 2021. Members external to Scottish Government: Pamela Candea (Scottish Communities Climate Action Network), Stuart Capstick (CAST), Chris Shaw (Climate Outreach), Graham Smith (University of Westminster) and Rebecca Willis (Lancaster University).

Research questions

1	How do the following factors affect the quality of the Assembly? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• organisation• quality of facilitation• evidence (what & how presented)• member participation• quality of deliberation• members' views of Assembly
2	To what extent do members feel ownership of the goals & recommendations in the Assembly report?
3	How do members' views on climate change and how to tackle it, before and after the Assembly, compare with the wider population of Scotland?
4	What do people in Scotland think of the Assembly and its recommendations? awareness & understanding views
5	What impact has the Assembly had on climate change debate and policy in Scotland?
6	a) How has climate change been explained to members? b) To what extent, and how, has evidence been used in members' deliberations? c) What are the implications of how climate change has been explained and how evidence has been used for the members' recommendations?
7	What are the outcomes for members of taking part in the Assembly?
8	What do members think of the Scottish Government response to the Assembly report?

Member survey

An online survey was completed by Assembly members prior to the Assembly starting and after each weekend, comprising mainly closed questions with a few open questions. Table A shows the response rate for each survey. Quantitative data was cleaned, anonymised and analysed in Excel and SPSS. Qualitative data was analysed thematically in NVivo. The results were combined with non-participant observation notes to produce data briefings of each weekend for the Secretariat and Design Team¹⁴⁰.

The demographic and climate attitude profile of respondents by weekend, alongside the profile of all members is included in the data table published with this report.

Limitations: as not all members completed the survey, the results presented in this report should be regarded as indicative only of the views of all Assembly members.

Table A. Member survey response rate

	Number of survey respondents	Number of members attending all or part of Weekend	response rate as % of total attendees
pre-Assembly survey	68	102 recruited at this time	67%
Weekend 1	64	99	65%
Weekend 2	65	102	64%
Weekend 3	61	100	61%
Weekend 4	63	101	62%
Weekend 5	70	101	69%
Weekend 6	67	102	66%
Weekend 7	69	100	69%
Weekend 8	51	73	70%

Table B shows the response rate by topic streams for the relevant weekends.

¹⁴⁰ Data Briefings for Weekends 1, 4 and 7 are published on Scotland's Climate Assembly website <https://www.climateassembly.scot/how-it-works/independent-research>

Table B. Member survey response rate by topic stream

	Diet, Lifestyle & Land Use		Homes & Communities		Work & Travel		Total respondents
Weekend 3	18	30%	22	36%	21	34%	61
Weekend 4	21	33%	23	37%	19	30%	63
Weekend 5	22	31%	22	31%	26	37%	70
Weekend 6	20	30%	20	30%	27	40%	67
Weekend 7	21	30%	25	36%	23	33%	69

Non-participant observation: each Assembly weekend (apart from Weekend 1) three members of the Research Team observed the whole weekend including plenary sessions, evidence presentations and small group sessions as non-participants. For Weekends 3, 4 and 5 when the members were split into three topic streams, the researchers also divided into the three streams. Researchers took notes of 56 sessions, which were analysed thematically by Blake Stevenson in NVivo. 978 pages of notes were analysed, with a total word count of 430,242. The research team meeting minutes and data briefings were also analysed for observational content.

Limitations: There were 15 small groups of whom 2 or 3 it was not possible to observe due to lack of consent. The researchers each observed 3 – 4 different groups each weekend. Not all groups in every session were observed.

Qualitative semi-structured interviews and a qualitative survey: with 18 people involved in organising and delivering the Assembly (members of the Secretariat, the Design Team, the Stewarding Group and Evidence Group) were conducted in May-June 2021. The interviews, which were mostly around an hour long, were audio recorded, transcribed with intelligent verbatim style and anonymised. The transcripts analysed thematically in NVivo.

Limitations: for research capacity reasons, six Organising group members completed a qualitative survey rather than took part in an interview. As the interviews were semi-structured, follow up questions could be asked, but this was not possible with the survey. Due to time and resource limitations, interviews with more Stewarding Group members were not conducted.

Small group discussions: 48 small group discussion sessions across all the main Assembly weekends (WE1 to WE7) were audio recorded and transcribed. Transcripts from a sample of 9 sessions were analysed in Excel for quality of deliberation. Sessions were selected across weekends and with a range of different small group facilitators. The sample covered both mitigation and adaptation topics, and included the three topic streams as well as mixed stream groups.

A total of 1490 contributions (referred to as speech acts) by Assembly members were analysed. The content analysis framework is based on the Discourse Analysis Index¹⁴¹:

- relevance of speech act to the topic under discussion.
- presence or absence of a 'demand' in speech act (a 'demand' is an idea, suggestion or proposal about what should be done).
- whether a demand was accompanied by a justification, and if so whether the justification was 'inferior' or 'qualified' ('inferior' is where there is no explicit link between demand and justification; 'qualified' is where there is such a link).
- whether the justification was oriented towards personal interest, group interest, marginalised group interest, or general interests (also referred to as 'common good').
- whether facilitator requests justification of demand from Assembly member.

The gender of the Assembly members was recorded in the transcript (based on voice), which enabled analysis by gender.

Evidence presentations: Scotland's Climate Assembly website provides transcripts of almost all the evidence presentations. A sample of 63 presentations were selected for analysis out of a total of 102 presentations that directly related to climate change. A stratified random sampling method was used to ensure a mix across weekends, topic stream, presenter gender and presenter type (Evidence Group, informant or advocate). The transcripts of these presentations were analysed thematically in NVivo.

Limitations: the sample of presentations analysed is close but not exactly representative of all presentations by weekend, topic stream and presenter type.

Assembly report: the Statement of Ambition, goals, and recommendations with their supporting statements were analysed thematically in NVivo.

Media Analysis: 151 media articles were analysed across 16 months, from November 2020 until 11th of February 2022. Data was collected using the following data sources: NewsBank, NewsLookUp, NewsNow, Google UK News and Factiva News database. The Assembly website which uploads a range of media relating to the Assembly was also used. The following search terms were used:

- Scots OR Scottish OR Scotland OR Scotlands OR Scotland's AND "Citizens Assembly" OR "Citizens' Assembly" OR "Citizen's Assembly"
- Scots OR Scottish OR Scotland OR Scotlands OR Scotland's AND "Climate Assembly"

When collecting data, the following criteria was used:

- the media must be within the aforementioned date range.
- it should include online news media only (excluding blogs, social media posts and print – see Table C below for a list of what media were included).

¹⁴¹ Steenbergen et al (2003).

- all mentions of Scotland’s Climate Assembly spanning any geographic area (Local, National (Scotland and UK), International) should be included.

Table C. List of media outlets analysed

Overarching type of media	Sub type of media and explanation	Outlets
Newspaper (31 outlets, accounting for 121 articles)	Traditional (tabloid or broadsheet) - Newspapers with a print equivalent (22 outlets, accounting for 106 articles)	The Herald; The Scotsman; The National; The Telegraph; Financial Times; The Guardian; The Scottish Farmer; The Express; Edinburgh Evening News; The Press and Journal; The Scottish Sun; The Daily Record; The Sunday Post; Edinburgh Reporter; Independent; The Times; Plainsmen Post; Morning Star; The Courier; Express & Star; The Northern Echo; The Daily Mail
	Online only - News sources which do not have a print equivalent (9 outlets, accounting for 15 articles)	BBC; Scottish Construction Now; Scottish Housing News; Third Force News (TFN); STV; FE News; Environment Journal; Resilience; Open Democracy
Magazine (5 outlets, accounting for 10 articles)	An online magazine which may or may not have a print equivalent, which relates to a particular topic, readership or location	Holyrood; Bella Caledonia; Greater Govanhill; The Good Men Project; Farmers Weekly
Other (16 outlets, accounting for 20 articles)	Where the source provides news, but does not fit into one of the above categories	Scottish Government; University of Edinburgh; University of Aberdeen; Scottish Land and Estates; Scottish Parliament Informational Centre (SPICe); Buergerat; Circular Communities Scotland; The City of Edinburgh Council; Common Weal; The Scottish Greens; Knowledge Network on Climate Assemblies (KNOCA); Soil Association; Scottish Communities Climate Action Network (SCCAN); Airport Watch; Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons; Scottish Wildlife Trust

The articles were analysed thematically in NVivo. A quality assurance process was conducted, following Braun and Clarke (2006) six-step approach to coding and thematic development¹⁴². The data was quantitatively analysed in Excel.

Deltapoll population survey: Deltapoll used both online and telephone (CATI) surveys. The online surveys were completed by a representative sample of 1667 adults (aged 16+) in Scotland with internet access. This was premised on a representative base sample of 1,250 Scottish adults aged 16+, boosted with 200

¹⁴² Clarke, Braun, & Hayfield (2015).

online surveys with Scottish adults living in rural locations, and a further 200 with those aged 16-24 years of age. This was to ensure that the views of these harder-to-reach samples were fully represented. The online survey was supplemented by a telephone survey with 250 non-internet users. The total fused sample was 1917. The survey was completed 29 July – 14 August 2021.

Recruitment

For both the online and telephone surveys, an active sampling technique was used to draw a targeted sample from a panel of registered target respondents. For the online surveys, Deltapoll worked with Dynata who have a panel of over 750,000 adults in the UK including 75,000 in Scotland. Panellists were placed into specific groupings based on a combination of factors including age, gender and region. Potential participants were selected using random start, fixed interval techniques to generate enough invites (combined with expected response rates) to meet the desired sample size. Respondents were invited via an email invitation. Typically, around 50% of the panel members invited to a given survey take part. Online participants received points for taking the survey which could be converted into a financial incentive.

The telephone survey used random digit dial techniques to seek Scots who don't access the Internet. No incentives were used for the telephone interviews. Profiling data on these eligible targets was limited, but indicated that just 7% of Scots fulfilled this criteria, and that nearly all of them were over the age of 55 years. In the event, all telephone interviews were indeed with Scots aged over 55.

Quotas and weighting

Under the quasi-random quota sampling method, Deltapoll used a two-stage process to ensure a representative sample. The first involved setting quotas, in this case by age, gender, ethnicity and region. The second was data weighting, which corrects for any quotas being under or over-achieved during fieldwork. Table D shows the target and achieved percentages by selection criteria for online and telephone surveys.

Analysis

The data was analysed in SPSS and weighted to Census 2011 data. The data is correct to within +/-2.2% at the 95% confidence interval.

Table D. Profile of Deltapoll population survey sample

Category	Variable	Online N = 1,667			Telephone N = 250		
		% target online	N achieved online	% achieved online	% target phone	N achieved phone	% achieved phone
Gender	Male	48%	785	47%	48%	117	47%
	Female	52%	859	52%	52%	132	53%

Age	16-24	15%	394	24%	4%	0	0%
	25-34	15%	206	12%			
	35-44	17%	236	14%			
	45-54	18%	260	16%			
	55+	35%	571	34%	96%	245	100%
Region	Central Scotland	12%	262	16%	12%	44	18%
	West Scotland	13%	235	14%	13%	32	13%
	South Scotland	13%	160	10%	13%	33	13%
	Glasgow	13%	240	14%	13%	31	12%
	North East Scotland	14%	260	16%	14%	29	12%
	Mid Scotland and Fife	12%	173	10%	12%	29	12%
	Highlands and Islands	8%	102	6%	8%	21	8%
	Lothian	14%	235	14%	14%	31	12%
Location setting	Urban setting in main Scottish city	35%	380	23%	-	30	12%
	Suburban setting	36%	284	17%	-	31	13%

	Smaller city or sizeable town	9%	245	15%	-	24	10%
	Town, fringe & rural	29%	735	45%	-	159	65%
Ethnic group	White Scottish/British	84%	1454	89%	-	246	100%
	White, other	12%	62	4%	-	-	*%
	Asian, Asian Scottish/British	3%	52	3%	-	-	
	Black/Black Scottish/Black other	1%	30	2%	-	-	
	Mixed or multiple groups	*%	30	2%	-	-	
	Other	*%	14	1%	-	1	
Income	Less than £1800	-	443	31%	-	105	77%
	Between £1800 and £3000	-	544	38%	-	24	18%
	Between £3000 and £5200	-	327	23%	-	7	5%

	More than £5200	-	105	7%	-	0	0%
Health condition	Long term condition	18%	406	25%	-	68	29%
	No long term condition	82%	1202	75%	-	170	71%

Implicit Response Testing and Emotional Resonance Score

Reaction testing has been used in psychology research for over 40 years. Implicit Response Testing (IRT) is an online method that measures the speed with which individuals respond to a stimulus - in this study, research participants were asked to agree or disagree with particular statements.

Drawing on neuroscience and cognitive psychology¹⁴³, specifically the research on System 1 (implicit/subconscious – fast) and System 2 (explicit/conscious - slow) decision making routes¹⁴⁴, IRT is a neuromarketing tool increasingly used in market research to gain insight into people’s gut instincts or subconscious responses. Faster speeds of response imply greater emotional certainty, delays imply lack of understanding or disbelief in answers given.

IRT is used to minimise potential confounds common in quantitative survey research such as people giving an answer when they don’t know what they think, or saying what they think is the ‘right’ answer, which lead to inaccuracies in predicting behaviour.

Several factors are considered in using IRT to limit other factors affecting response time notably length of statement and ease of understanding. In order for IRT response to be as efficient as possible, Deltapoll equalised the length of statements offered to respondents as far as possible in order to ensure that reading times did not themselves introduce unintended skews in response. Statements were also written to be as concise as possible while delivering unambiguous meaning. All statements were required to fit in the i-code 80-character limit for any one statement. Deltapoll also took respondents to a different platform to complete the IRT questions, which may help to focus the respondents’ minds. As a general rule, outliers are removed from the data.

Deltapoll measured delays in response in micro-seconds compared to benchmarks – the demographics questions asked at the start of the survey. The Implicit Response Testing was conducted on the i-code software platform created by Neuhome. Deltapoll then used an algorithm that takes speed of response with incidence of viewpoint (the proportion of respondents who agree or disagree with a

¹⁴³ A full explanation of the scientific basis for IRT can be found at <https://icodert.com>, For an overview of the science and published academic literature see <http://gemmacalvert.com/everything-you-need-to-know-about-implicit-reaction-time/>

¹⁴⁴ See Kahneman (2011).

statement), producing an Emotional Resonance Score (ERS) benchmarked out of 100.

Table E. Speed of Response scores

Scale: Level Speed Score 0 -9								
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Weak / Slow			Medium speed of response			Strong / fast		

Table F. Emotional Resonance Scores

Scale: Emotional Resonance Score / 100 Potential for Persuasion							
0-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80+
Likely to completely fail to connect	Medium emotional connection				Strong emotional connection		

A maximum ERS score implies that ‘everyone’ believes/agrees with the statement and do so with complete emotional certainty; a score of zero implies nobody believes the statement and that no emotional belief in it exists. Medium scores indicate doubt or uncertainty about the truth of the statement, and that the belief is not fully internalised. According to Self-Determination Theory, the more internalised the motivation, the more autonomous a person will feel enacting the behaviour.

The higher the ERS, the greater the chance that the public will be receptive to being persuaded by that idea or message.

Limitations

The online and telephone questionnaires followed similar scripts, with technical adaptations and some scripting changes for the telephone version. In addition, some questions were unsuitable for telephone scripts and were not included. For example, the online questionnaire listed all 81 recommendations – this question was deleted for the telephone survey.

The telephone sample of non-internet users reflected an older demographic and comparisons between online and phone samples should not be made. However, the surveys do fuse well into a fully representative Scottish population-level sample.

Online methods depend on panellists signing up to receive surveys, and this might mean that such people differ from non-signed up people in the way they approach subjects, the way they behave or the answers they give.

While all efforts were made to design and draw a representative sample, geo-demographic profiles have been based on available Census 2011 and other official statistics. Profiling data might not exactly match that of people living in Scotland today.

Thematic analysis of qualitative data

The following process was followed:

- several close readings of the text.
- coding framework developed from initial analysis, with focus on themes relevant to research questions and operational definitions included.
- data inputted to NVivo and coded following the coding framework, with codes revised or new codes created as necessary.
- coding framework updated to match NVivo coding, this framework was used with all data sources to ensure consistency.
- coding checked in a minimum of two quality assurance review processes by two separate researchers.
- write-up of findings by theme.
- check of write-up against NVivo codes to ensure no important omissions.

Secondary data

<p>BEIS/Defra Climate Change and Net Zero: Public Awareness and Perceptions. Online population survey conducted September - October 2020 Base: 6,947</p>
<p>British Public Perceptions of Climate Risk, Adaptation Options and Resilience (RESiL RISK). Online survey conducted October 2019 Base: 1401 adults.</p>
<p>Climate Assembly UK population survey (Wave 3) Conducted online 14 September 2020 Base: 1,671 adults in the UK. Scotland sample: 149.</p>
<p>Climate Assembly UK population survey (Wave 4) Conducted online 14 September 2021 Base: Scotland sample: 165</p>
<p>Citizens Assembly of Scotland population survey Conducted online 11 - 22 March 2021 Base: 1,539 adults in Scotland</p>
<p>Ipsos MORI Scotland 2020. Research into public attitudes to climate change policy and a green recovery. Telephone survey conducted October – December 2020 Base: 1045 adults in Scotland</p>
<p>One Pulse poll, commissioned by The Scotsman. Online survey via the One Pulse app Conducted across three waves in October 2020 Base: c.300 respondents per wave.</p>
<p>Scottish Household Survey 2019. Conducted face-to-face survey Base: 10,577 householders in Scotland.</p>
<p>Scottish Household Survey 2020. Telephone survey, piloted field work in October 2020, main stage fieldwork January - April 2021 Base: 3000 households in Scotland</p>
<p>YouGov 2020. Mental health impact of climate change. Online survey conducted 19-28 February 2020. Commissioned by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP). Base: 5527 adults in the UK (aged 16+)</p>
<p>YouGov 2021. Environment Tracker. Survey conducted 27-29th August 2021 Base: 1667 adults in GB.</p>

Appendix 2 – Systemic approach

Figure A. Scenario framework

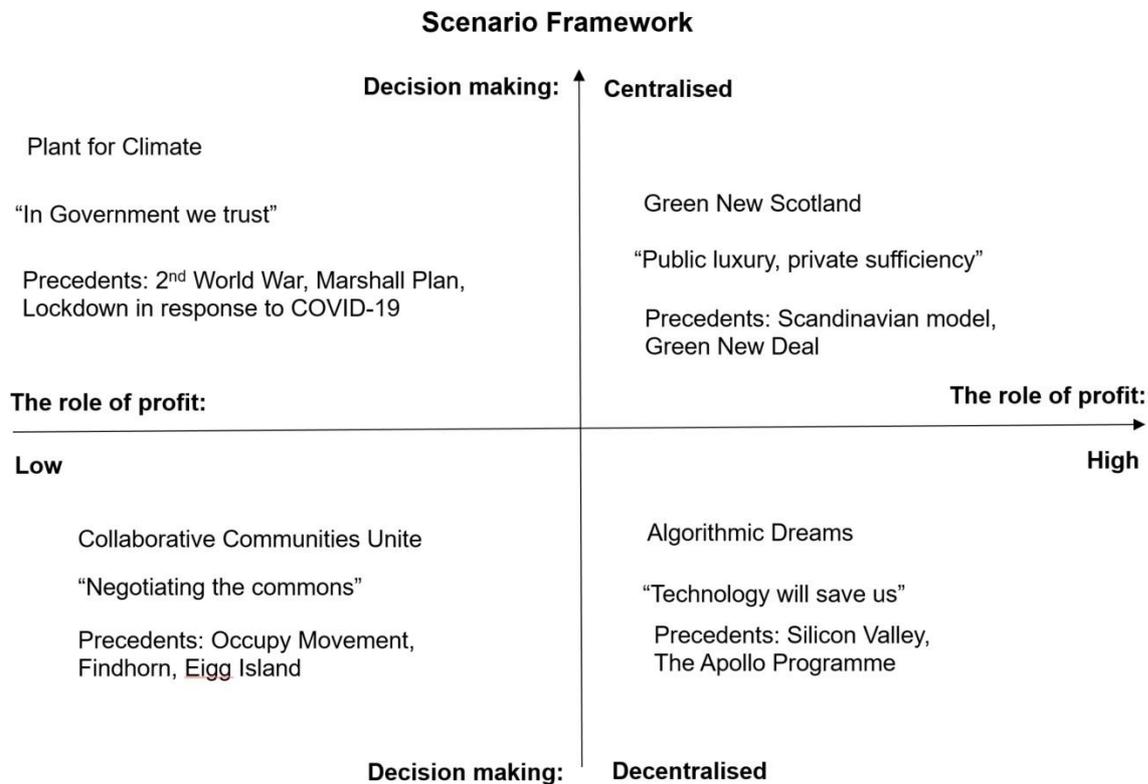


Figure B. Scenario characteristics

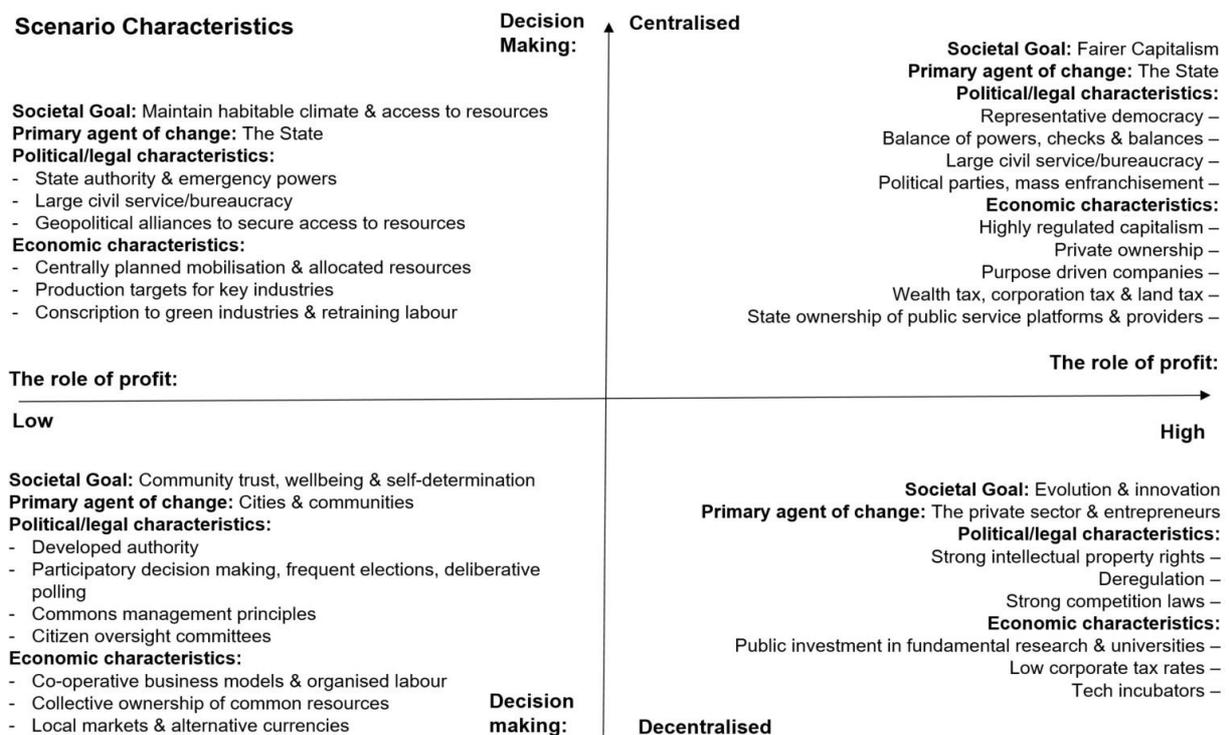
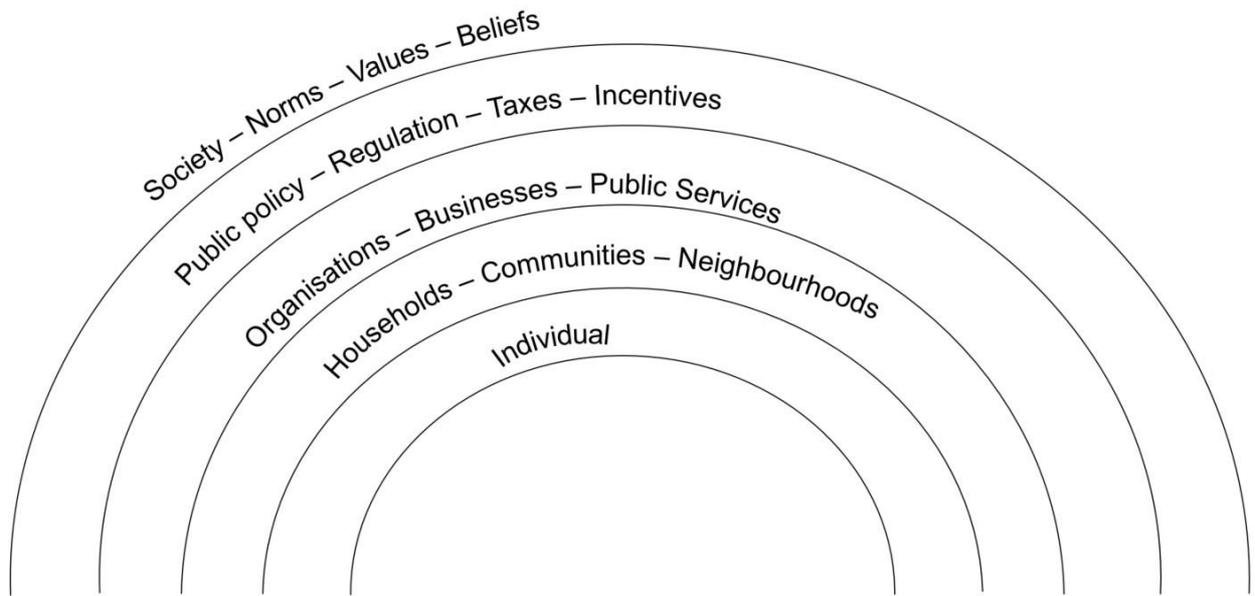


Figure C. Levels of action

What are the levels where action can be taken?



Appendix 3 – Acronyms and References

Acronyms

BEIS	Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
CAoS	Citizens Assembly of Scotland
CAST	Centre for Climate Change and Social Transformations
CATI	Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing
CAUK	Climate Assembly UK
COP26	UN Climate Change Conference
Defra	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
ERS	Emotional Resonance Score
EU	European Union
FE news	Further Education news
IRT	Implicit Response Testing
JTC	Just Transition Commission
NPF4	Draft National Planning Framework 4
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
SCA	Scotland's Climate Assembly
SG	Scottish Government
SMART	Specific, measureable, achievable, relevant, time-bound
SNP	Scottish National Party
SPICe	Scottish Parliament Information Centre
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
STV	Scottish Television

TFN	Third Force News
WE1	Weekend 1
WE2	Weekend 2
WE3	Weekend 3
WE4	Weekend 4
WE5	Weekend 5
WE6	Weekend 6
WE7	Weekend 7
WE8	Weekend 8
XR	Extinction Rebellion

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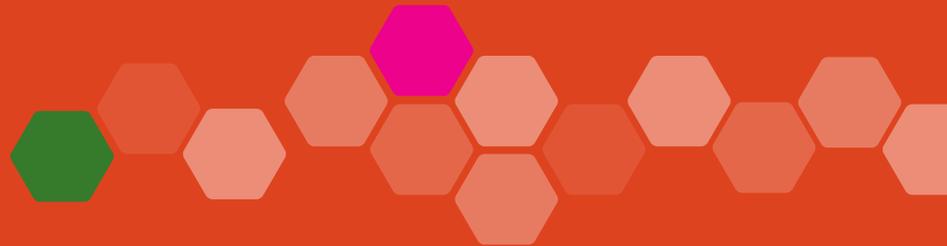
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