

Climate & Nature Survey Report

Bath & North East Somerset Council

Summer 2025

Bath & North East
Somerset Council

Improving People's Lives

Executive Summary

The Climate & Environment Team at B&NES council conducted a survey to understand residents' views on climate and nature. Here's what residents told us:

- ▶ **Top Priorities:** Water and rivers, restoring nature, the way we travel and the energy we use.
- ▶ **Most common actions taken:** Carrying reusable items, planting pollinator-friendly plants, and repairing broken goods.
- ▶ **Strongest motivation:** To help nature.
- ▶ **Actions residents want to take but can't or don't:** Making energy efficiency improvements at home, installing water-saving measures, and taking no action
- ▶ **Biggest barrier:** It's too expensive
- ▶ **Most common perception of the council's climate and nature efforts:** Residents don't know what B&NES council is doing or think B&NES council is doing too little.
- ▶ **Top suggestions for council action:** Improving public transport, protecting and enhancing green spaces, and supporting renewable energy and energy efficiency.
- ▶ **Observed local changes:** Experiencing hotter, drier days and fewer insects.
- ▶ **Trusted sources of information:** Environmental charities and groups were most trusted, while social media influencers were the least trusted.
- ▶ **Key themes from free text comments at the end of the survey:** The way we travel, how the council works, and how we restore nature.
- ▶ **Next steps:** The council needs to engage those not represented in the survey responses. There is also a need to improve communication around existing council work relating to climate and nature and to help our communities take action.

Introduction

Background and objectives

Tackling the Climate and Ecological Emergencies is a core priority for Bath & North East Somerset (B&NES) Council. We are at the mid-point of our 10-year plans for climate and nature and are currently reviewing them to bring them together into a single strategy and action plan.

From May to June 2025, B&NES council ran a survey open to all residents in Bath and North East Somerset (BANES). The purpose of the survey was to better understand public views on climate change and nature-related issues, and to use these insights to help inform current work.

Approach

The survey was made available online via the council's consultation webpage. Paper copies were also distributed at all three B&NES libraries and the Climate Hub.

To ensure broad participation, the survey was promoted through multiple channels:

- ▶ The council's social media platforms
- ▶ The e-connect newsletter
- ▶ Direct outreach to community groups for wider dissemination
- ▶ Email communications
- ▶ Promoted within Libraries with paper copies available to complete
- ▶ Flyers at events and various locations

As an incentive, all participants were offered the opportunity to enter a prize draw for a £50 voucher, for a supermarket or local vendor of their choice. The draw took place on 18 June 2025, and winners were contacted via email to arrange their prize.

Survey Design

This survey was designed and run by members of the Climate & Environment team at B&NES council. Input and guidance were provided by several other teams, including Equalities, Communications, Web, Community Engagement, and Business Intelligence.

The survey used simple language and kept the responses broad to be accessible for all. We are not calculating emissions based on these responses.

As the survey aims to help shape the new climate & nature strategy many of the questions were based off the emerging themes of the strategy. The aim of the 'individual action' questions were to understand what actions people are taking, what motivates them and what the barriers are to individual action.

In addition to questions focused on individual action, the survey asks for residents' views on what the council is or should be doing to address climate change & nature loss. The aim of these questions is to gauge public perception of the work the council is doing and identify gaps where the public would like to see more action.

Who We Heard From: Age

- ▶ Overall, we heard from 833 respondents.
- ▶ Over half of respondents (56%) were aged 55 and over (see Figure 1). In contrast, we heard relatively little from residents aged under 25, despite this being the largest age group in B&NES¹.

¹ [ONS Estimates of the population for England and Wales](#)

[Strategic Evidence Base for Bath and North East Somerset](#): The large population of residents under 25 is largely driven by the high number of university students attending the two campus-based universities in the area.

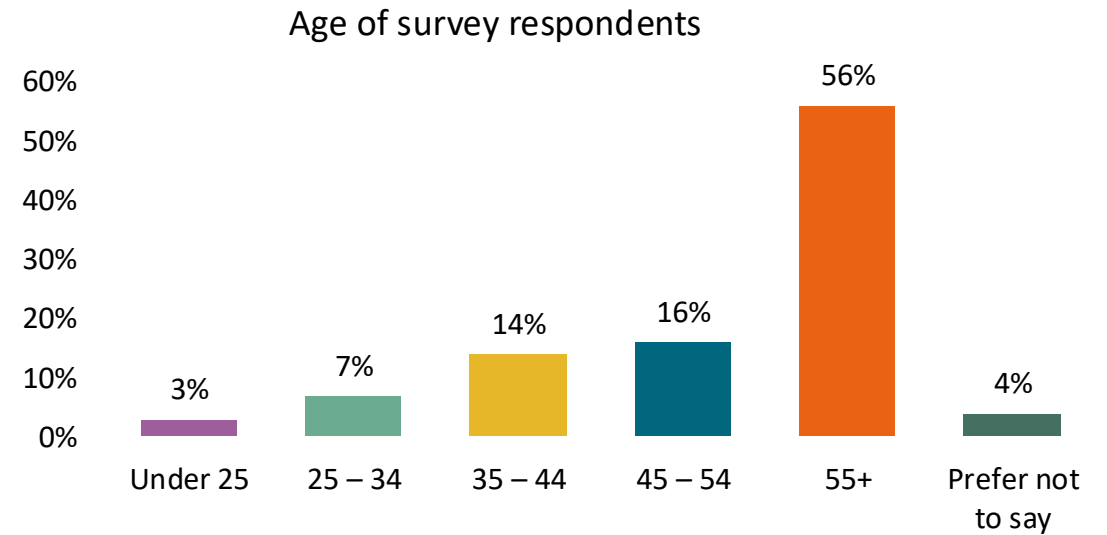


Figure 1 – Table showing the age of respondents to the Climate and Nature survey 2025

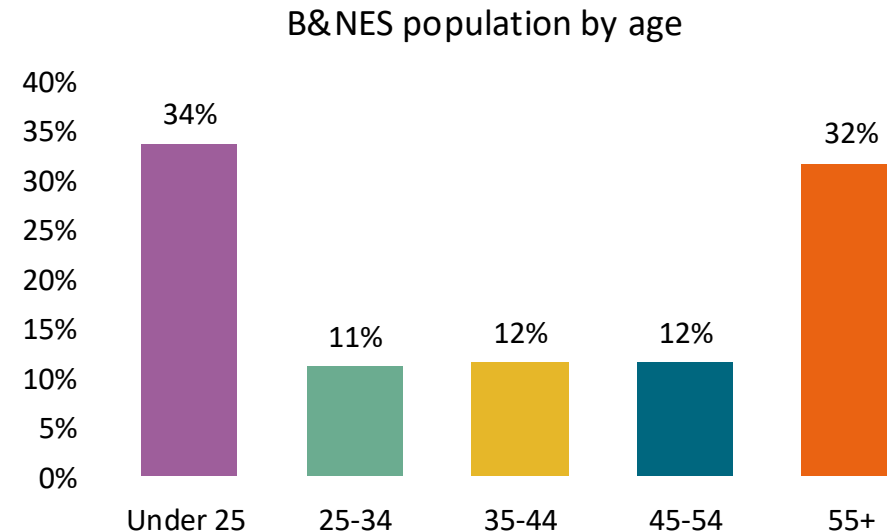


Figure 2 – Bar chart of BANES population by age from 2019 census data

Who we heard from: Living Situation

- ▶ A significant majority of respondents (86%) identified as homeowners (see Figure 2). ONS data shows that 65% of households in BANES own their house meaning that while they make up a large proportion of the population, they are overrepresented in this survey ².
- ▶ In contrast, private and student renters accounted for just 7% of responses, despite making up 19.3% of B&NES households². Social housing tenants were similarly underrepresented, comprising only 2% of survey participants compared to 14.3% of the population².
- ▶ These differences will guide our next steps to speak to groups underrepresented in responses.

² [ONS Data. Household characteristics by tenure, England and Wales: Census 2021.](#)

Which of these best describes your living situation?

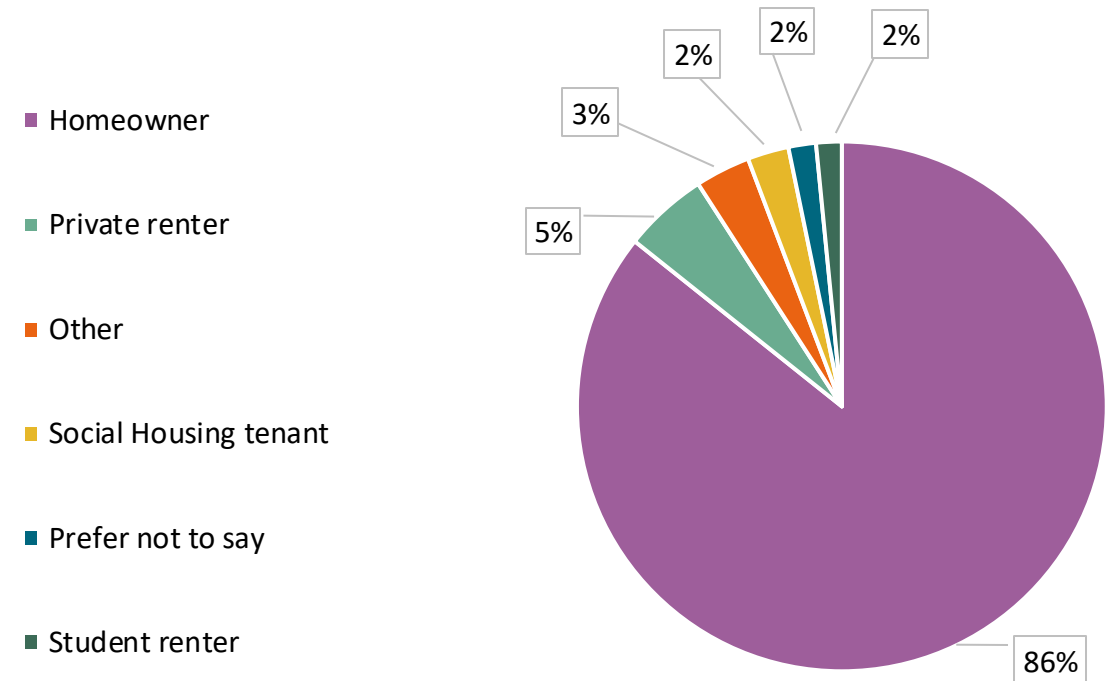
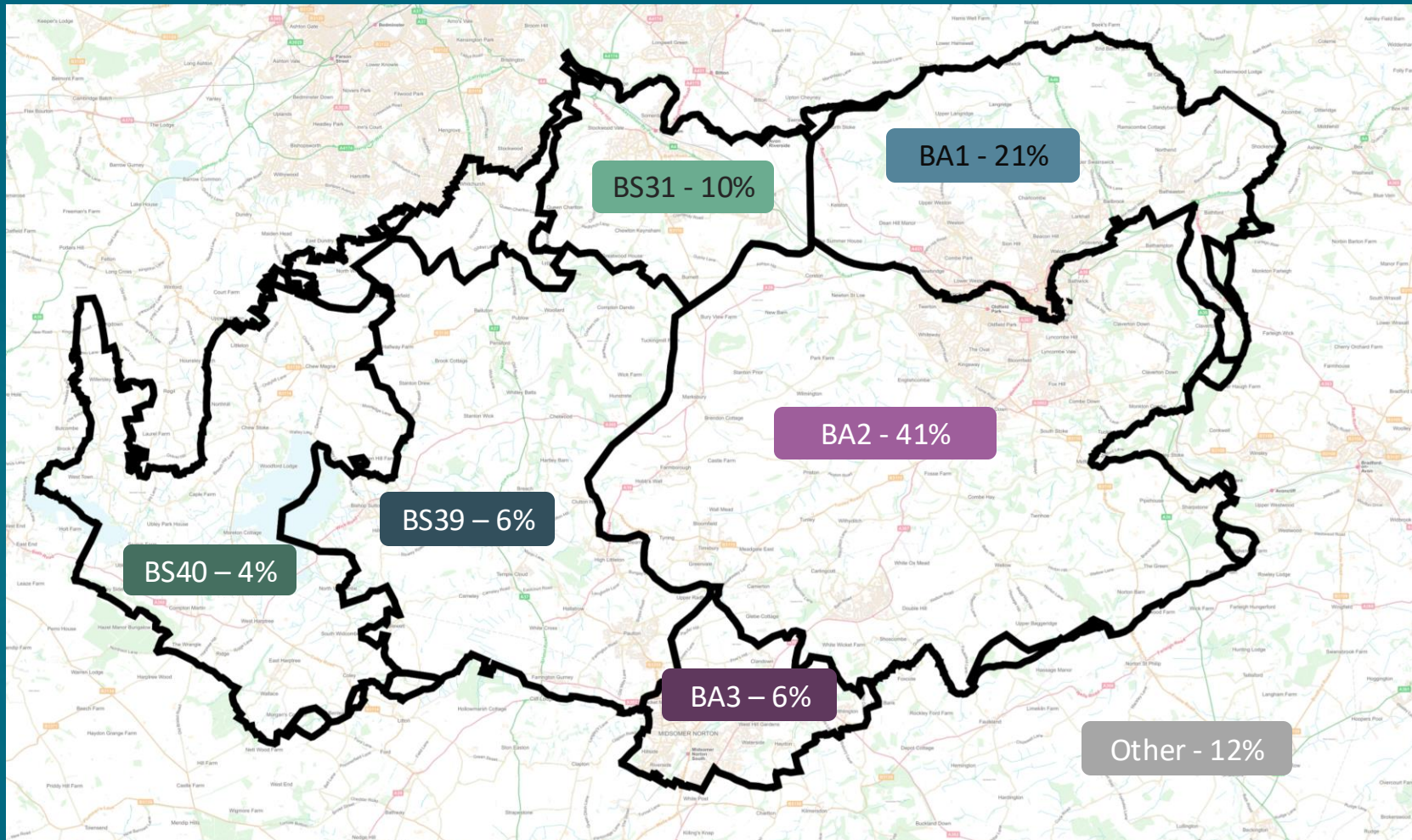


Figure 3 – Pie chart of living situations for respondents to the Climate and Nature survey 2025

Map of Respondents by Postcode



- ▶ Geographic Spread: While responses were received from across B&NES, the majority (62%) came from the BA1 and BA2 postcodes, which cover Bath and its surrounding areas. This is expected given that 56% of residents live in Bath and Bathavon ³.
- ▶ 12% of responses consist of those who selected 'prefer not to say', responses with typographical errors and postcodes outside the B&NES area. While these responses are excluded from the map, all answers to other questions have been included in the overall analysis.

³ B&NES Strategic Evidence Base

Figure 4 – Map of B&NES postcodes and percentages of respondents to the survey

Key Priorities

- ▶ The first question of the survey asked respondents to select up to three themes they considered most important from a list aligned with the key areas of the Climate and Nature Strategy. Figure 5 shows the percentage of respondents who selected each option [\[Footnote 1\]](#).
- ▶ 'Water and rivers' and 'how we restore nature' were the most popular responses demonstrating the importance of nature to people in B&NES. This was followed by 'the way we travel' and 'the energy we use' which are two of the highest sources of carbon in B&NES. 'The right jobs and skills' was the lowest scoring.
- ▶ Respondents had the opportunity to answer 'Other' to this question. Themes emerging from this included transport, specifying the need for low carbon alternatives and more access for cycling, local planning, and biodiversity.
- ▶ Several responses in 'Other' also highlighted the interconnectedness of all these options, while others shared frustration at the council spending time on Climate Change.

Thinking about climate change and nature loss, which of the following are most important. Select up to 3.

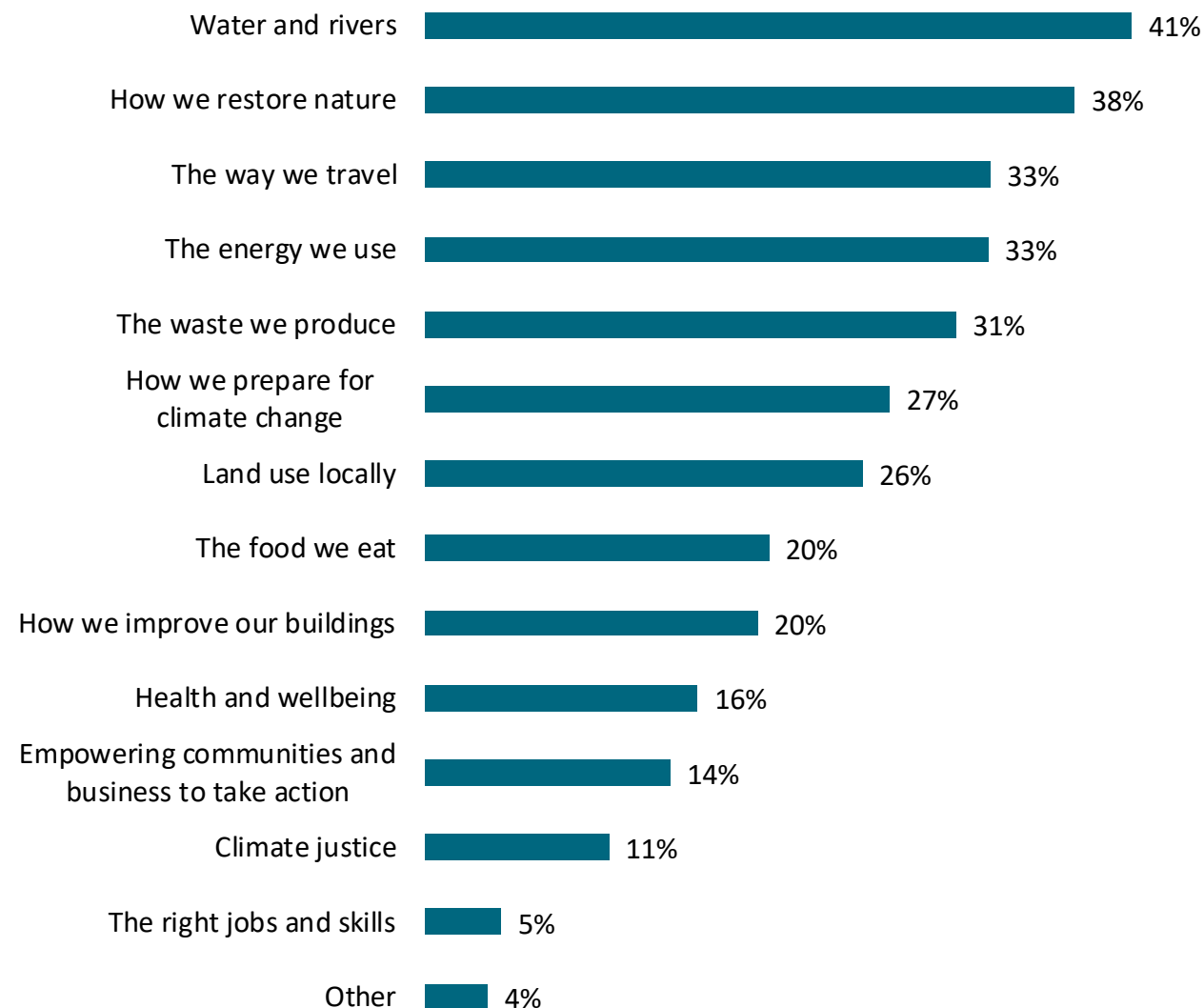


Figure 5 – Bar chart showing respondents priorities relating to key themes

Resident Actions by Theme

- ▶ The survey asked residents about actions they have taken in the past 5 years, their motivations and barriers. The next five slides set out these responses.
- ▶ Figure 6 on this slide shows the actions grouped into themes.
- ▶ The data shows that residents are most engaged in actions related to nature and waste & resource management. In contrast, there is less activity around water use, personal finance and resilience.

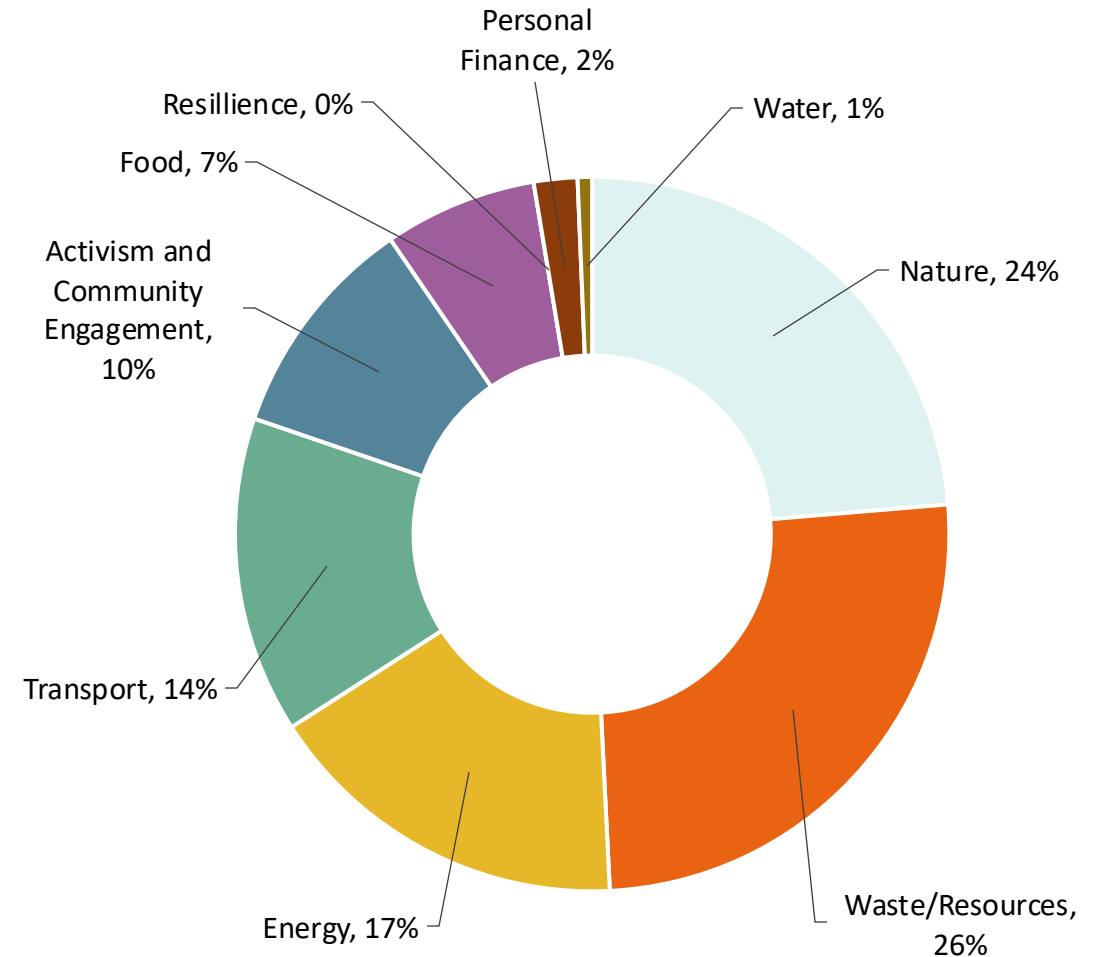


Figure 6 – Pie Chart showing residents actions that have been done in the last 5 years by theme in percentages

Actions Residents Have Taken

- ▶ The survey asked BANES residents to select from a list the actions they had taken over the last 5 years. The most popular responses were linked to reducing waste, for example carrying reusables, repairing broken items and shopping second hand as well as nature-related such as planting pollinator friendly plants and making space for nature (see figure 7).
- ▶ Of the 8% of responses under “Other” the most common themes were practical sustainability actions such as switching to an EV, community engagement, and advocacy.

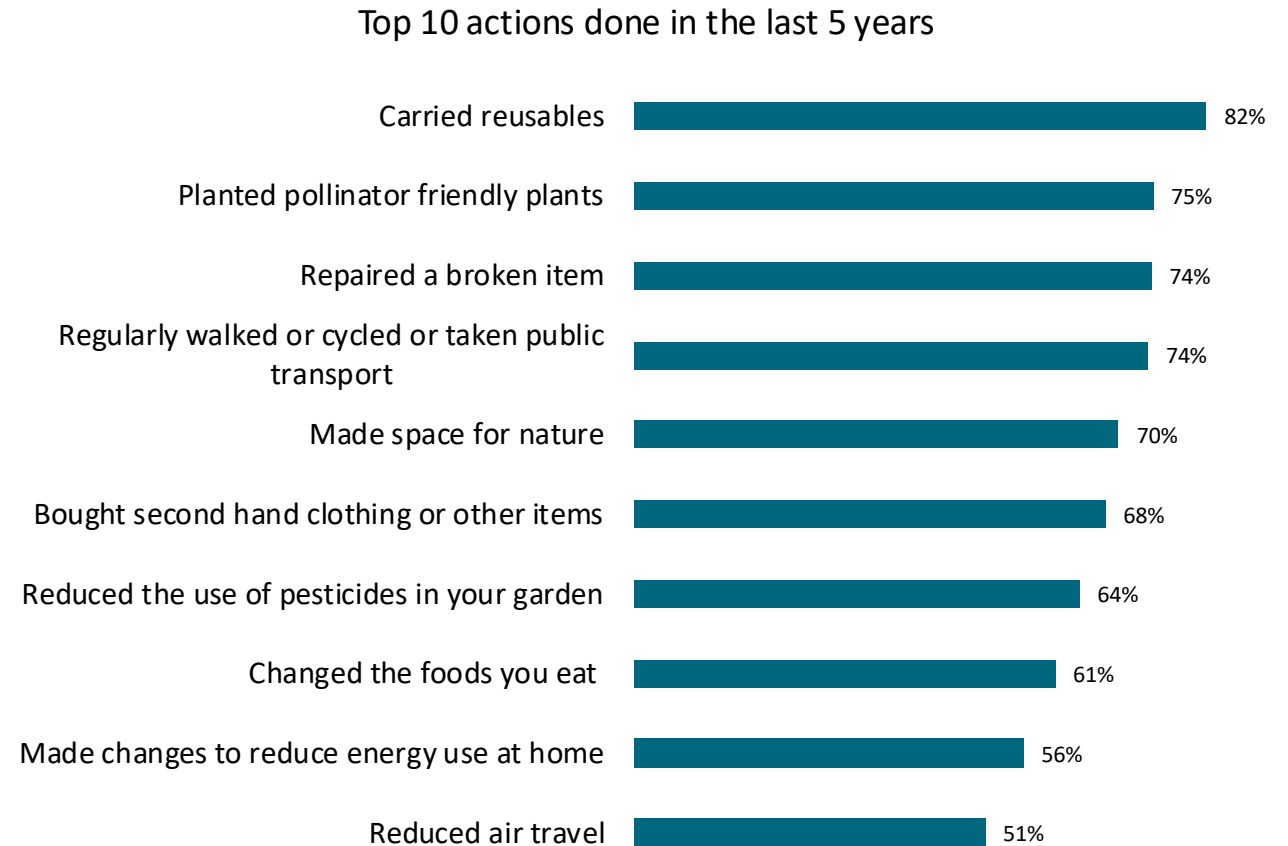


Figure 7 – Graph showing top 10 actions residents have taken relating to climate and nature in the last 5 years

Motivations for Action

- ▶ We analysed the links between actions taken and motivations selected. The most common motivation across many actions is to help nature, with actions like planting pollinator-friendly plants, reducing pesticide use, and making space for nature identified.
- ▶ Health and wellbeing is a strong motivator, especially for actions like walking or cycling and changing food habits.
- ▶ Actions like making energy efficiency improvements and switching to renewable electricity are frequently linked to saving money and reducing emissions.
- ▶ Many actions are driven by both concern ('I am worried about climate change and nature loss') and optimism ('I am hopeful and want to contribute to positive change'). Air quality is a less common but still notable motivator in relation to reducing air travel and walking/cycling.
- ▶ Responses under 'other' highlight personal values, habit, or a sense of responsibility as a motivation to take action. Several participants also mentioned a desire to act in the interest of future generations.

What motivated you to take the actions in the previous question?

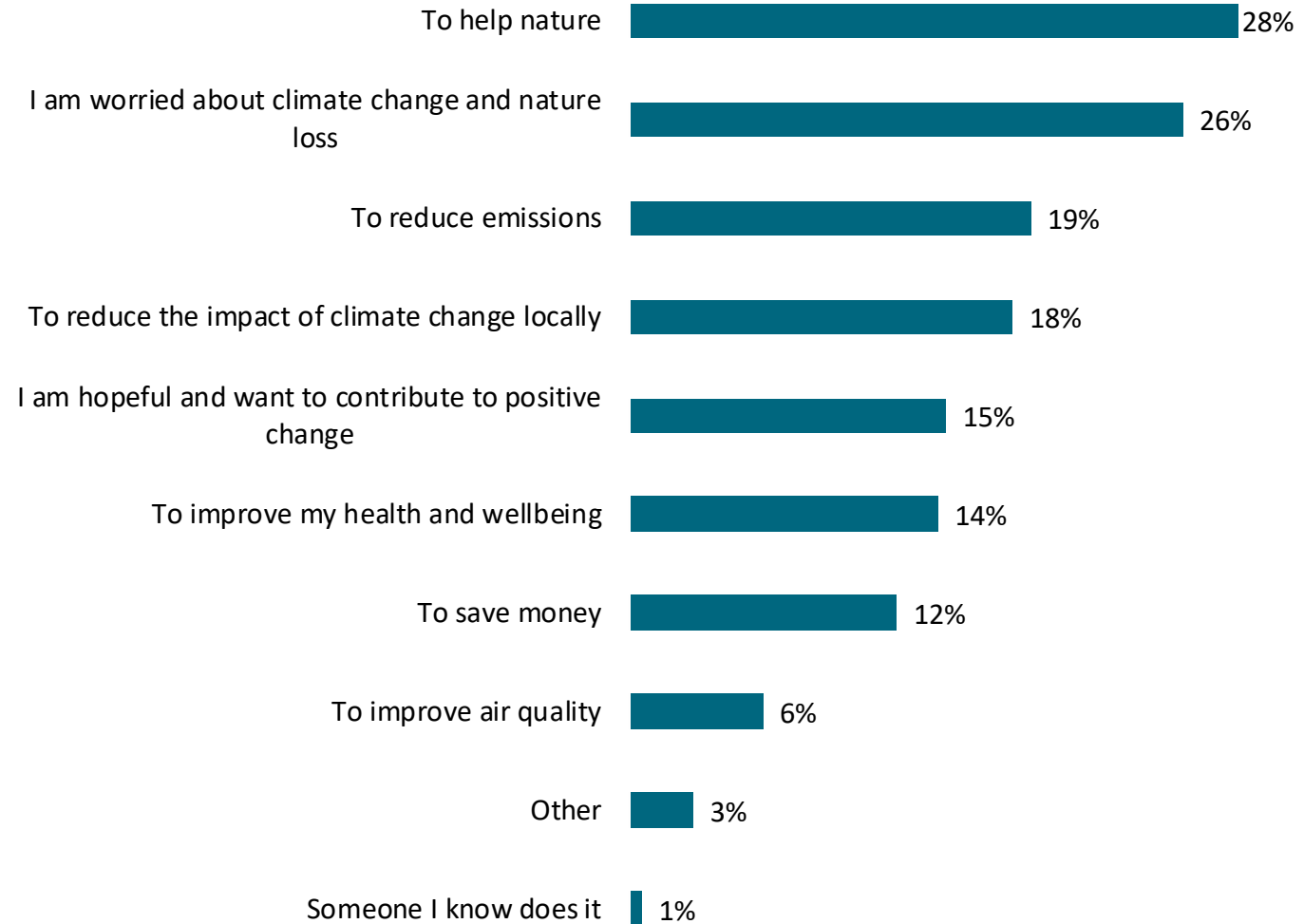


Figure 8 – Graph showing which motivations were the main drivers for actions taken relating to climate and nature in the last 5 years

Actions Residents Would Like To Do

- ▶ The survey then asked residents whether there were any actions they would like to take but currently cannot or do not. The most common responses related to making improvements around the home, such as installing energy and water efficiency measures, fitting shutters or reflective blinds, and making changes to reduce energy consumption. A significant number of respondents responded 'none' to this question.
- ▶ Of the 6% of respondents who answered 'other', the most frequent responses focused on specific energy-related actions, such as installing solar panels and heat pumps.

Top 10 actions residents would like to take but currently cannot or do not

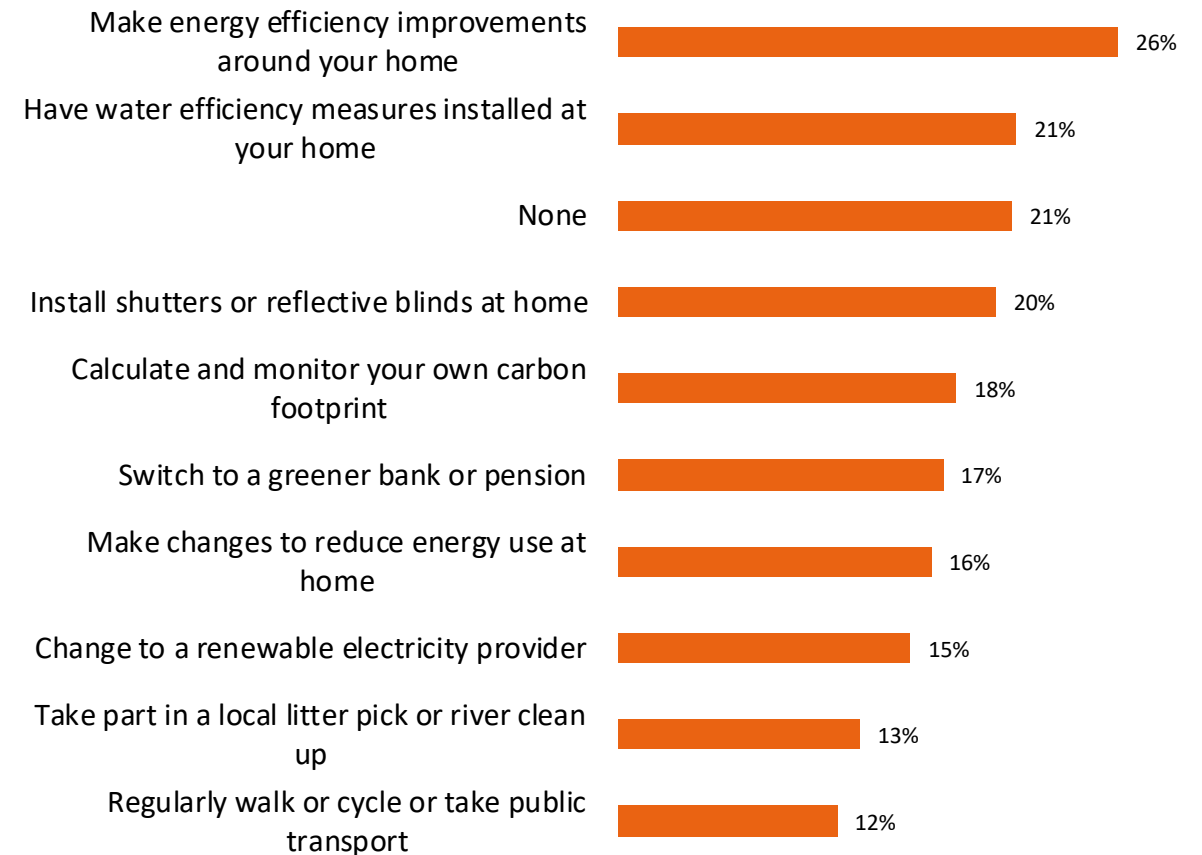


Figure 9 – Bar chart showing top 10 actions residents would like to take but currently can't do

Barriers to Action

- ▶ The most common barriers to all actions were 'It's too expensive' followed by, 'I don't have the right information'. These barriers were most strongly associated with making changes at home such and improving energy and water efficiency, and installing shutters or reflective blinds. This highlights an opportunity for the council to better communicate relevant information and to better promote available funding.
- ▶ Responses under 'Other' frequently highlighted planning restrictions, especially in relation to listed buildings, as a significant barrier.
- ▶ Another recurring theme was the lack of adequate public transport and active travel infrastructure, which make sustainable travel options unsafe, time-consuming, or not possible. A smaller number of respondents cited health conditions and disabilities as limiting factors, while a few indicated a lack of interest or willingness to take action.

What has stopped you taking the actions that you would like to?

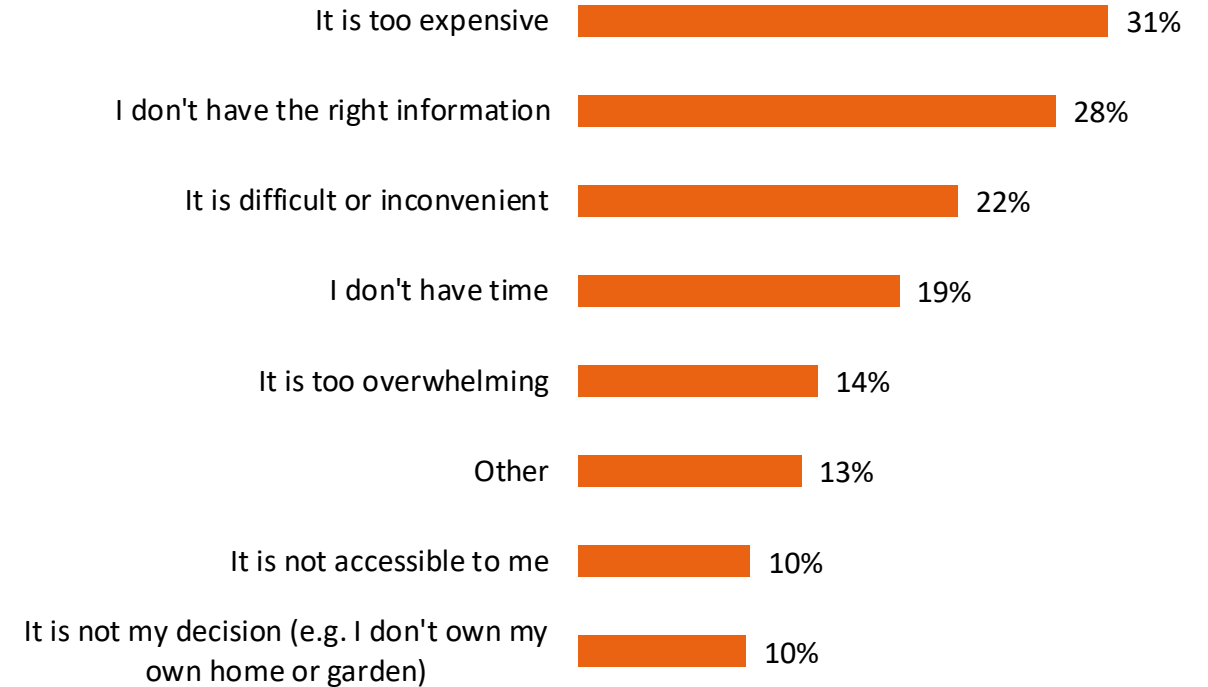


Figure 10 – Bar chart showing which barriers stopped respondents from taking the actions that they would like to take for climate and nature

Comparison of Actions

- ▶ Figure 11 shows a comparison of the percentage of respondents who have taken specific actions in the past five years, alongside those they have not taken but would like to.
- ▶ There is a link between some of the actions least done in the past 5 years and ones that people would like to do such as installing shutters. Understanding and addressing gaps and barriers is essential for the council to enable more residents to take action.

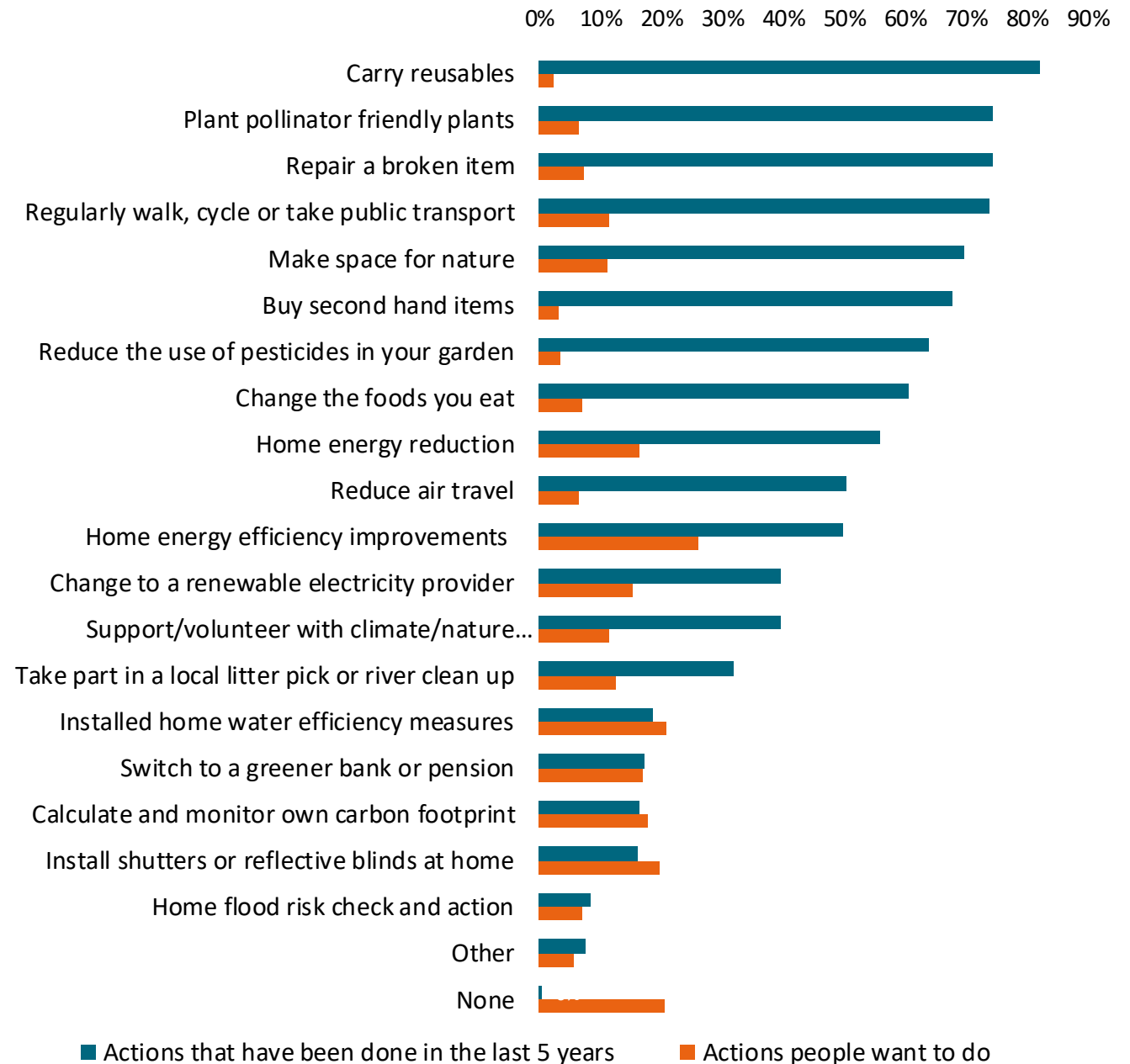


Figure 11 – Bar chart comparing actions taken in the last 5 years and the actions people would like to do.

Local Changes

- ▶ When asked about changes in their local area related to climate change or nature loss, 73% of residents reported experiencing 'Hotter, drier days', while 65% reported seeing 'Fewer insects'. These responses highlight the visible local impacts of climate change on both weather patterns and biodiversity.
- ▶ Common themes emerging from the text responses provided under 'Other' included concerns about environmental degradation due to property development, a decline in local wildlife and biodiversity, deteriorating river health caused by pollution and sewage, unpredictable weather patterns, and the emotional impact of these changes, such as increased stress and anxiety among residents.

What changes, if any, have you seen in your local area relating to climate change or nature loss

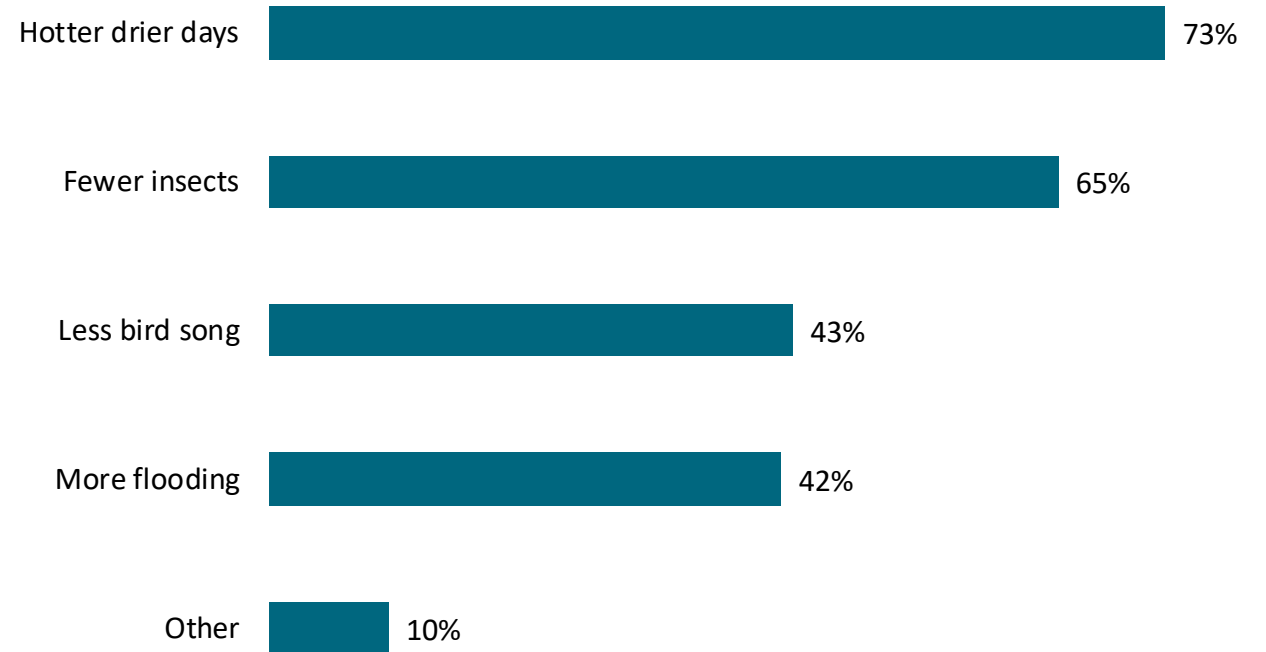


Figure 12 – Graph showing responses to what local changes to nature and climate they had noticed locally.

Views on B&NES Council's Action

- ▶ When asked their views on how much B&NES council is doing to combat climate change and nature loss the most common response was 'I don't know what B&NES is doing' (41%), followed by 'Too little' (38%). This presents an opportunity for the council to promote its work on climate and nature and engage more with residents on this topic to deliver and enable action.

In your opinion, how much is B&NES Council doing to combat climate change and nature loss?

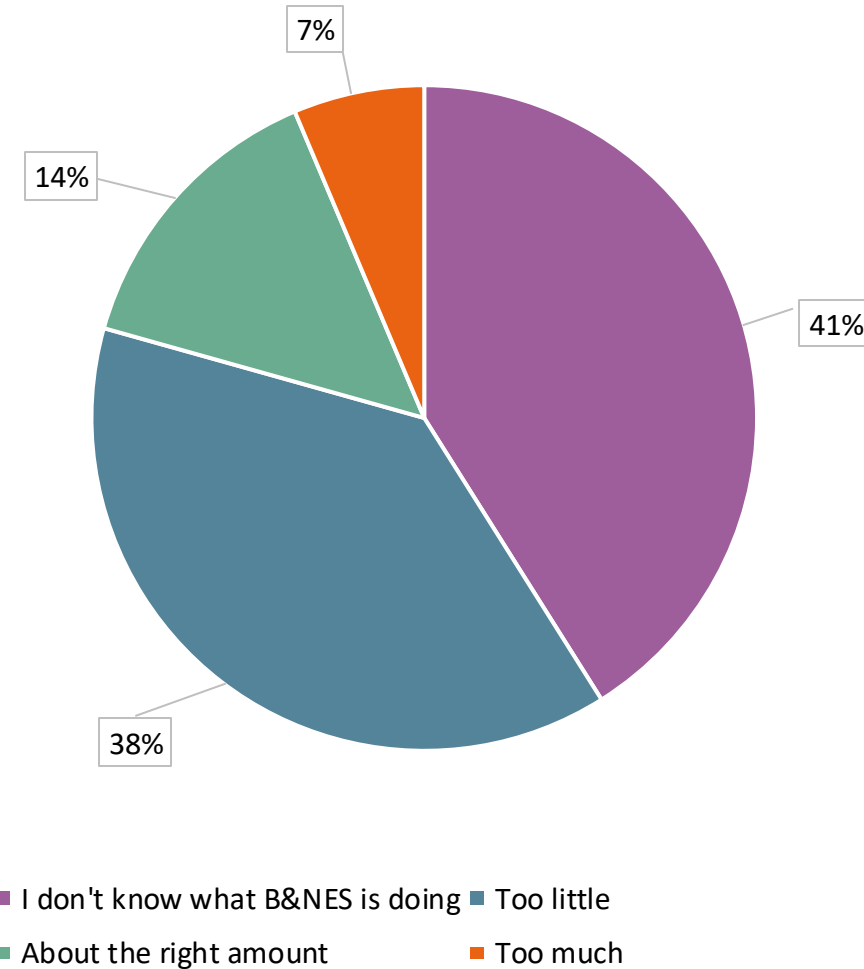


Figure 13 – Pie chart showing respondents views on B&NES council's actions on climate change and nature loss

What More Could B&NES Council Do?

When asked what more B&NES Council should do overall respondents want the council to be more ambitious, visible, and practical in its actions. In order of most frequently mentioned, key themes highlighted were :

- ▶ **The way we travel** - requests for better public transport, promoting more active travel including safer walking and cycling routes as well as measures to reduce car use and congestion.
- ▶ **How to improve our buildings** - Requests for sustainable housing, restrictions on building on greenfield/greenbelt, better planning policies including faster decision making, and energy-efficient homes.
- ▶ **How we restore nature** - Emphasis on protecting and increasing green spaces, tree planting, restoring habitats, and wildlife corridors.
- ▶ **Policy and governance** - Suggestions for stronger policies, enforcement, leadership, and lobbying higher government.
- ▶ **The energy we use** - Support for solar panels in particular on public buildings, heat pumps, energy efficiency, and local renewable projects.
- ▶ **Water and rivers** - Concerns about river pollution, flood prevention, and water management.
- ▶ **Empowering Communities** - More public education, awareness campaigns, engagement with residents and support for local initiatives
- ▶ **The waste we produce** - Improvements to recycling, composting, and reducing waste.

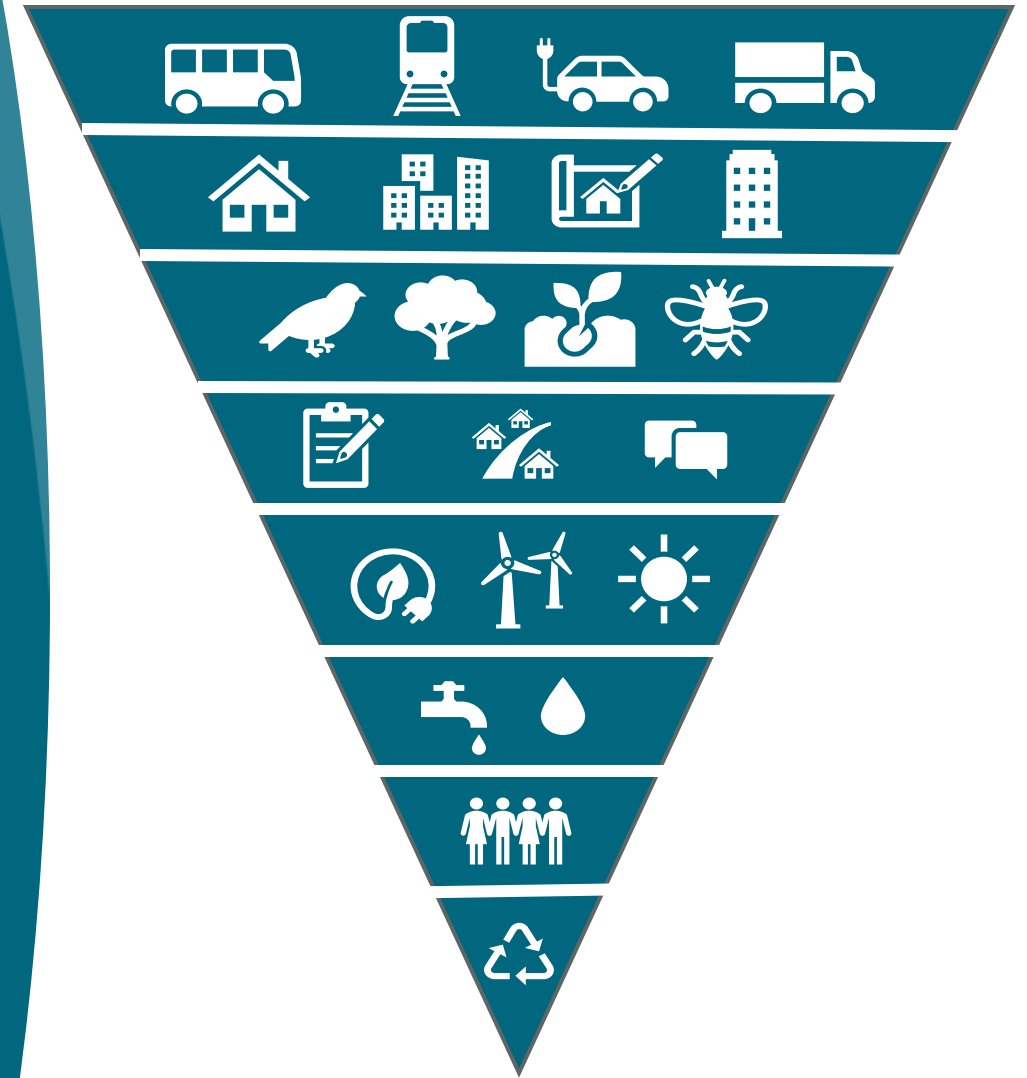


Figure 14 – Infographic showing the frequency of which different themes were mentioned in the responses to 'what more could the council do?'

[illegible]

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Trusted Sources

- ▶ The most trusted sources that were noted were 'Environmental charities' at 66% and 'Environmental groups' at 64%, followed by 'Universities or colleges' at 53%. This suggests that the council could explore opportunities to collaborate with the most trusted sources when communicating with residents on climate & nature.
- ▶ Social Media Influencers' are the least trusted at 4%, which in part could be due to the age range of respondents. A next step for the council is to engage further with younger audiences.
- ▶ For those who responded 'Other' themes included academic journals, personal and professional networks.
- ▶ Several responses in 'Other' also demonstrated scepticism or mistrust of many sources for example "I use all sources - carefully" and "I don't trust any, they all just give facts that suit their agendas."

Which of these sources do you trust to provide information and advice about climate change & nature loss?

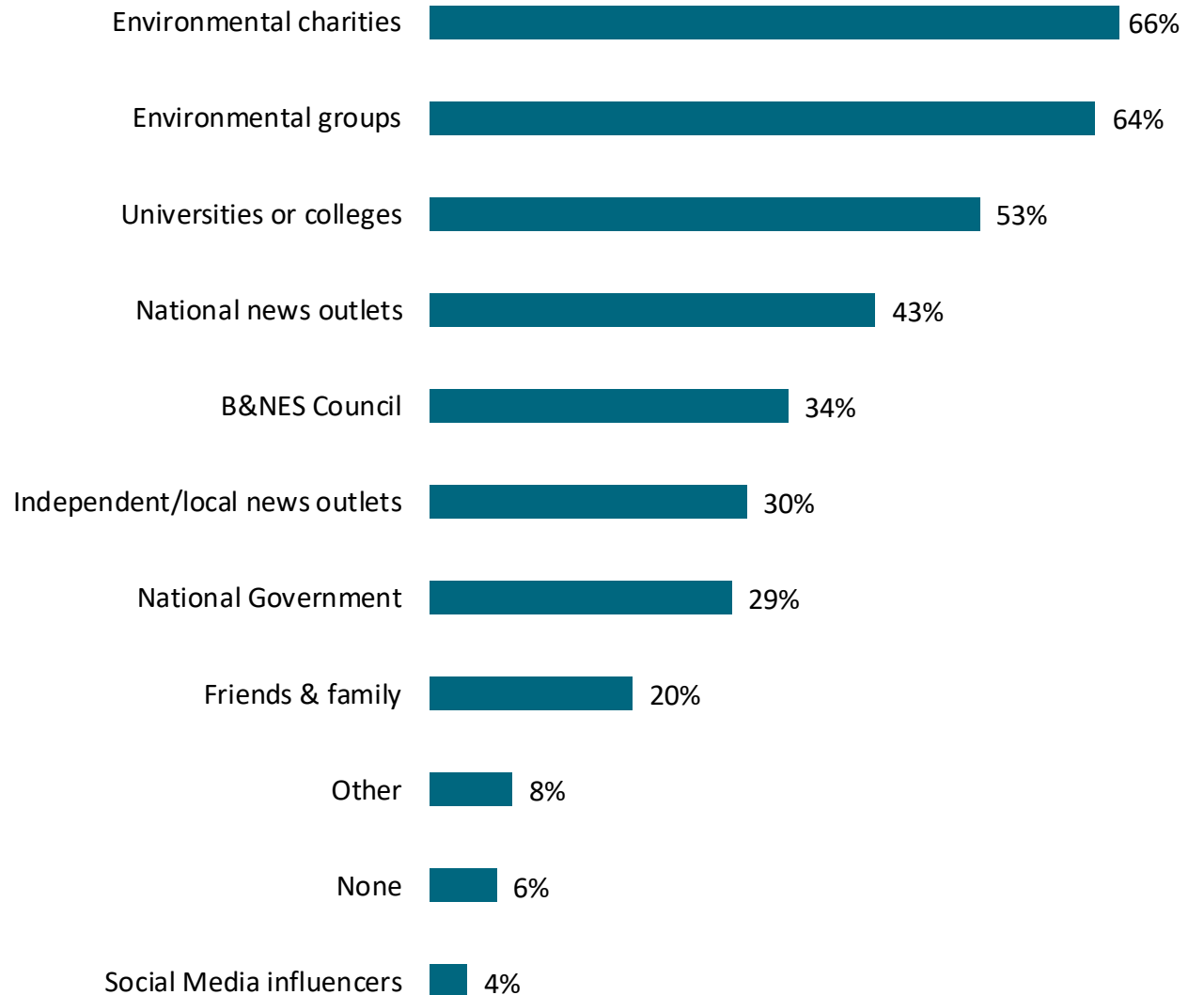


Figure 16 – Bar chart to show which were respondents preferred trusted sources

Additional Comments Provided by Respondents: Key Themes

The final survey question gave the opportunity to provide any additional feedback or comments. Here is a summary of the key themes which emerged from the 343 responses we received, listed in order based on how frequently they were mentioned:

The way we travel - Many respondents highlight the need for better public transport, safer cycling and walking routes, reduced car use, and concerns about congestion and road safety.

How the council works - Calls for stronger leadership, clearer policies, more effective consultation, and greater transparency from the council. Some express frustration with perceived lack of action or follow-through.

How we restore nature - Emphasis on protecting and enhancing green spaces, planting more trees, supporting wildlife, and maintaining biodiversity. Concerns about loss of green areas due to development.

How to improve our buildings - Requests for sustainable housing, better planning to avoid building on greenbelt land, and more support for energy-efficient homes. Some mention issues with listed buildings and planning restrictions.

The waste we produce - Suggestions for improving recycling, reducing litter, and providing better waste services. Some want more education on waste reduction and tackling consumerism.

Water and rivers - Concerns about river pollution, sewage, and the need for better flood prevention and water management.

Empowering Communities - There's a desire for the council to enable and support local groups and residents to take action themselves. Calls for more public education, awareness campaigns, and community involvement, especially in schools and local groups.

The energy we use - Support for solar panels, heat pumps, insulation, and other renewable energy initiatives. Some want more council support for home energy improvements.

Additional Comments Provided by Respondents: Feedback to the Council

Many respondents want to see more tangible action and less consultation. There are also calls for more integrated approaches across departments. Several responses also expressed that local action is limited without stronger national policy, but still want the council to lead by example.

Some respondents express distrust in the council or call for more openness about decisions and actions, while some show pride in local leadership but warn against complacency.

In addition to comments relating to recommendations or suggestions for the Council, a significant portion are personal reflections or responses or general views on the topics of climate and nature, in particular comments reflecting broader anxieties or existential concerns (e.g., about global threats).

There were also positive mentions of specific services and community groups and action including:

- ▶ “Just to give praise where due—I think B&NES does a brilliant job with its kerb side recycling collections.”
- ▶ “I think Somer valley rediscovered is doing a good job.”
- ▶ “I think the Climate Hub is great and hope it thrives.”

Final Note and Next Steps

Thank you to everyone who responded to our Climate & Nature Survey. The purpose of the survey was to better understand residents' views on climate change and nature-related issues, and to use these insights to inform our current work. We are grateful to the 833 people who took part.

The survey has provided valuable insights that will help shape the upcoming refresh of our Climate and Nature Strategy and Action Plan. Residents identified travel, buildings, and nature as key areas where they would like to see more action from the Council and these priorities will be built in.

The results also highlighted a need for clearer communication from the council, both about what we're doing, and about the actions residents can take themselves, along with the support available to help make those changes easier. One example is planning restrictions, especially for listed buildings, which were frequently mentioned as a barrier to action. This underlines the importance of promoting our Green Heritage Homes project, which supports the retrofit of listed buildings.

A next step is the need to engage those we did not hear from in this survey. In

particular, young adults and non-homeowners.

Finally thank you to those who have taken action to tackle climate change & nature loss, however big or small that may be. The council has a big role to play but our collective response alongside communities and businesses will have greater impact when tackling these issues. There's so much great work happening already across the district which we hope continues to grow. If you have anything you would like to share with us, please do get in touch.

Thank You and Contact Information

- ▶ If you would like to keep in touch about our Climate and Nature work you can get in touch via email at Sustainability@bathnes.gov.uk and follow us on social media via:
 - ▶ Instagram: [@Greenbathnes](https://www.instagram.com/Greenbathnes)
 - ▶ Twitter [@Greenbathnes](https://twitter.com/Greenbathnes)
- ▶ If you would like to stay up to date with weekly news & information from B&NES Council, sign up to the newsletter here: [B&NES Council E-Connect](#)

References & Footnotes

References

¹ ONS Data. Estimates of the population for England and Wales:
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/estimatesofthepopulationforenglandandwales>

² ONS Data. Household characteristics by tenure, England and Wales: Census 2021:
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/householdcharacteristicsbytenureenglandandwalescensus2021>

³ B&NES Strategic Evidence Base: <https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/strategic-evidence/document-library/population>

Footnotes

[1] The first 85 responses for this question were removed in order to account for the fact that 'The way we travel' and 'How we restore nature' were added after the launch of the survey due to them being missed off the list due to human error.

These were added as they are important themes, that had not been intended to be missed off.

Note on branding guidelines

Within corporate guidelines, BANES is used to refer to the district and B&NES council is used for the council as an organisation.