



**TACKLING  
THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY  
TOGETHER IN SOUTHWARK**



**Climate Emergency Engagement**

Phase One engagement

09/07/2020



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# 1. Introduction

The London Borough of Southwark declared a Climate Change Emergency in 2019. In March 2020 Traverse was appointed by the Council to design and deliver a programme of public and stakeholder engagement. The aim was to generate input from local people that would help to shape the borough-wide response and 'get the borough talking' about the issues that climate change raises – and how they relate to bigger questions about the sort of place citizens want Southwark to be in a 'climate-proofed' future.

The initial phase of work includes a set of **workshops with specialists**, an **online portal**, **on-street pop up events** and **community workshops**. It is intended that this first phase will be followed by a programme of more in-depth deliberative public engagement later in the year. As a result of COVID-19 we have adapted our delivery plan and so that all phase one activity will be delivered online or under strict social distancing measures (e.g. running online workshops and holding pop-up events in parks).

The online portal has been the first element of the engagement process and was launched on 27<sup>th</sup> May. It will remain live and inviting responses until the Autumn. This report, therefore, is an interim report and draws on the first 100 responses only.

## 1.1. Methodology

The online portal, hosted by Commonplace, provides background information both on climate change and Southwark more widely, to act as a prompt and stimulus for contributors.

This portal aims to be accessible to a wide range of local stakeholders including community groups, businesses and individual residents, and uses a combination of qualitative and quantitative questions to encourage respondents to give their views on climate change and across five topic areas:

- Buildings, construction and regeneration
- The energy we use
- Travel and transport
- Biodiversity, trees and green spaces
- What we consume

This snapshot report reflects an analysis of the first 100 responses to the website. Not all respondents answered all questions and no sections of the survey were compulsory.

A future detailed report will be delivered in Autumn this year, covering all responses to the online portal and incorporating findings from the remaining engagement outlined above.

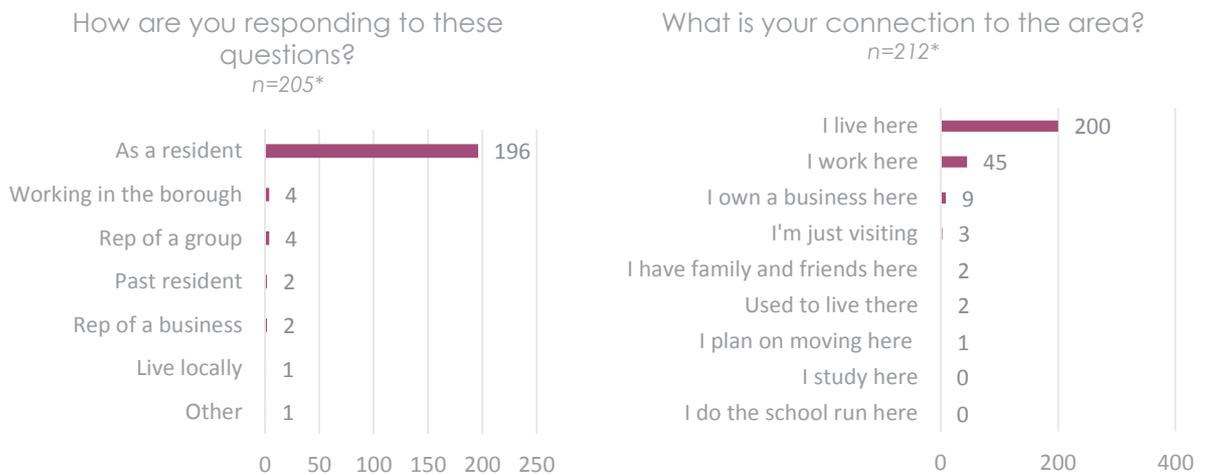


## 2. Demographics of respondents

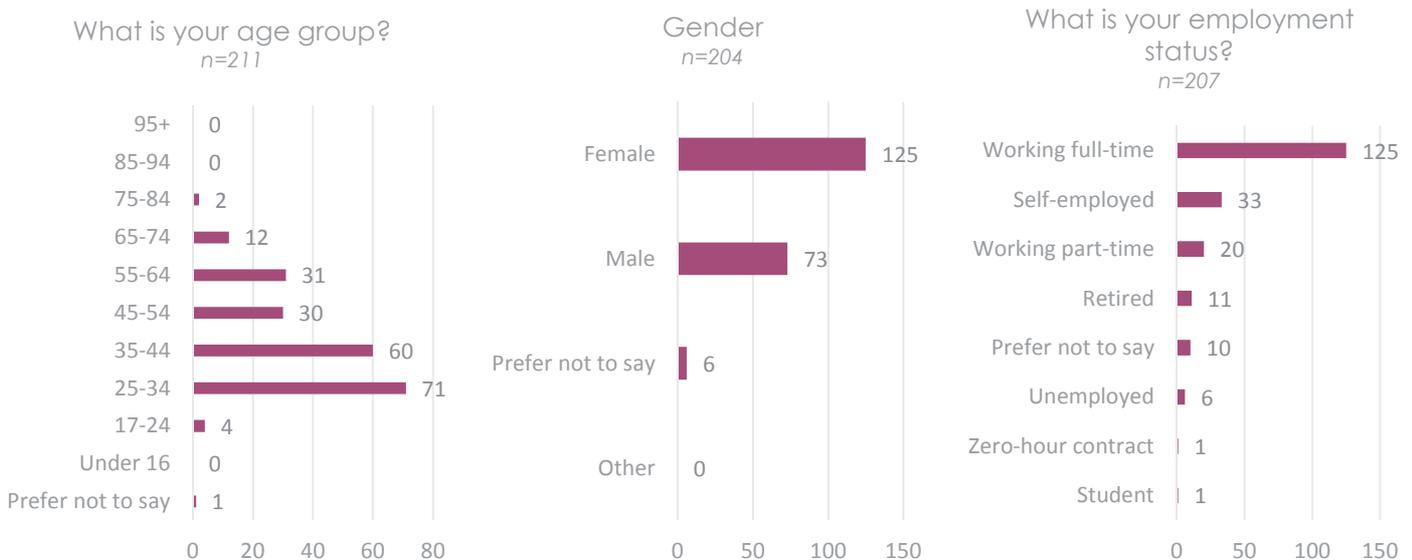
To ensure our approach remains GDPR compliant, it is not possible to identify the first 100 responses of 'special category' data – sensitive data which could be used to identify a respondent. As a result, this and all other general demographic data refers to 339 responses – the total number of responses as of 2nd July. This information was not compulsory and therefore not all respondents decided to submit information.

### 2.1. General demographic data

In the full report we will show the profile of website respondents alongside profiles for the borough population to enable comparison.

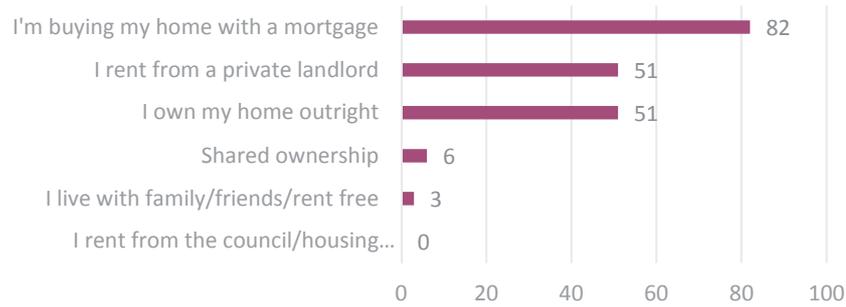


\* Respondents were able to select more than one option, so the total number of responses is higher than 'n'.



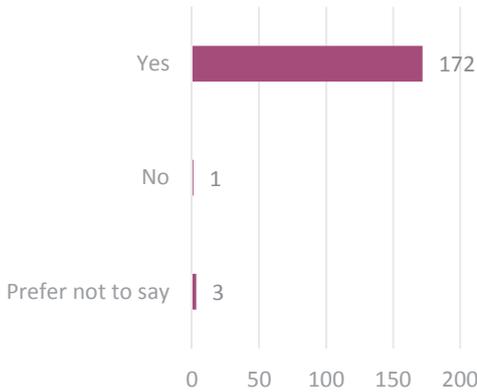


What is your housing situation?  
n=210

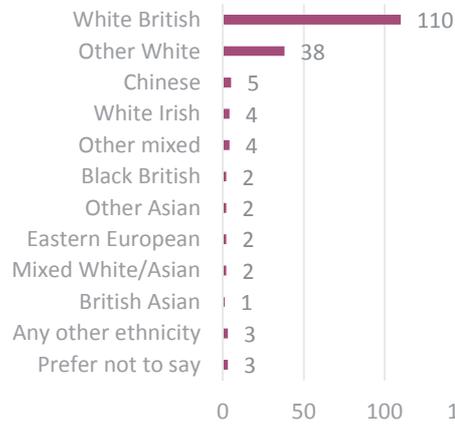


## 2.2. Special category demographic data

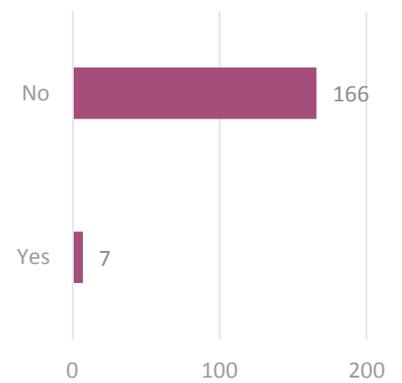
Is your gender identity the same as the sex you were assigned to at birth?  
n=176



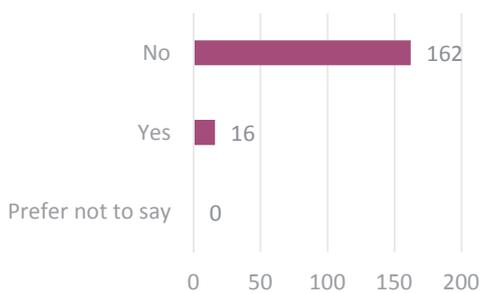
What do you consider to be your ethnic background?  
n=176



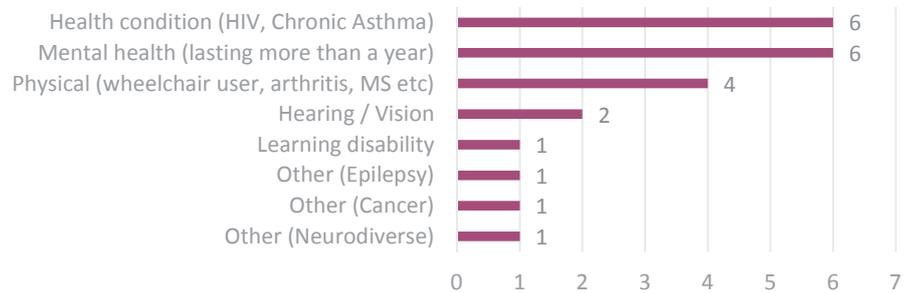
Are you currently pregnant or on maternity leave  
n=173

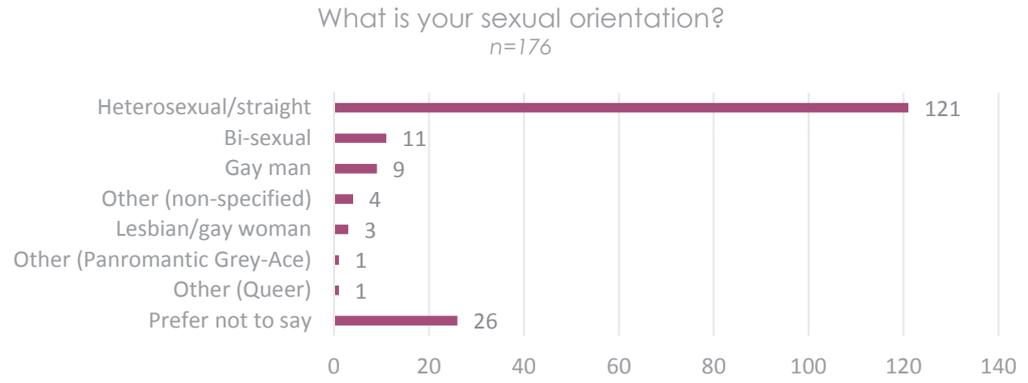


Do you consider yourself to have a disability?  
n=178



If you answered yes: please choose the option(s) which best describe the nature of your disability  
n=22







### 3. Findings

Respondents were invited to answer questions and provide comments across the topic areas. The topic 'Prioritising climate change' consisted solely of multiple-choice questions. For all other topic areas, respondents were asked to think about the issue in terms of what could be done by individuals, by borough or city-level authorities and at a national level to make a positive impact. They provided open responses to the following questions:

- What can we do as individuals?
- What can institutions do at a borough and city level?
- What can we do at a national level?

They were then asked how likely this was to be achieved and to submit any additional, final thoughts.

Across topic areas, respondents identified common ways to leverage power and drive change. Some comments focus on high-level principles and strategies, others on specific, practical actions. Overall, and across the three levels, responses relate to:

- 1) awareness and behaviour change;
- 2) regulating and legislating; and
- 3) influencing.

For example, comments about the role individuals can play included the importance of education on energy efficiency and personal behaviours to save energy. At both the local and national levels, respondents called for regulation to enforce green practices, and they wanted to see individuals press their elected representatives for the same. Respondents talked about influencing from a wide range of perspectives. According to respondents, individuals can influence through their purchasing power and collective action. Local authorities can influence both 'up' to national government through lobbying and 'down' to individuals through campaigns and planning decisions, as well as influencing wider systems through their investments. National government, it was said, can influence through how it is allocating funds. These are not mutually exclusive categories. For example, government can influence behaviour through a policy change, touching on all three. However, respondents tended to focus on one of these key themes in the way they responded.

#### 3.1. *Prioritising climate change*

Participants were asked to respond to the following question by using a sliding scale. This equated to a numerical score, where 'Not at all' is equal to 0 and 'A great deal' is equal to 100.



Over the last six months, to what extent would you say that being 'environmentally friendly' has affected the decisions you have made in your daily life?  
n=63

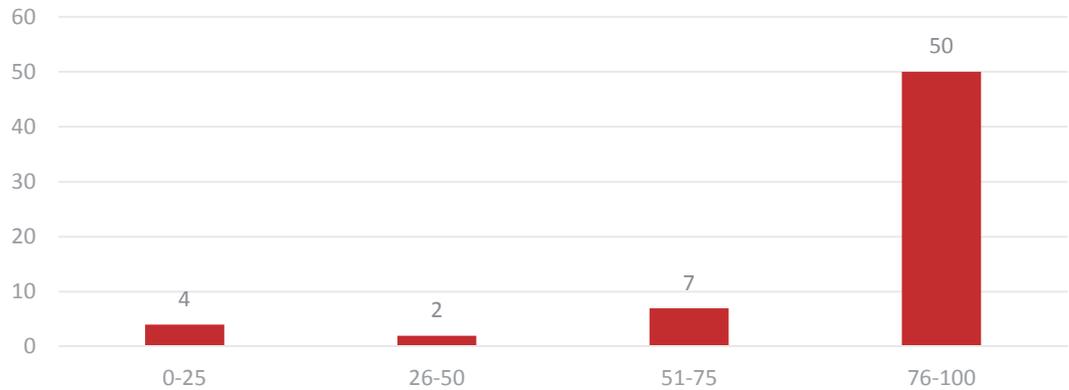


Figure 1

Average score: **82.78**.

The remaining questions in this section were multiple choice. For both the questions shown below, respondents were given the option of don't know and other, but these were not selected by any respondents.

How much of a priority should the climate emergency be, over the next 5-10 years, for...

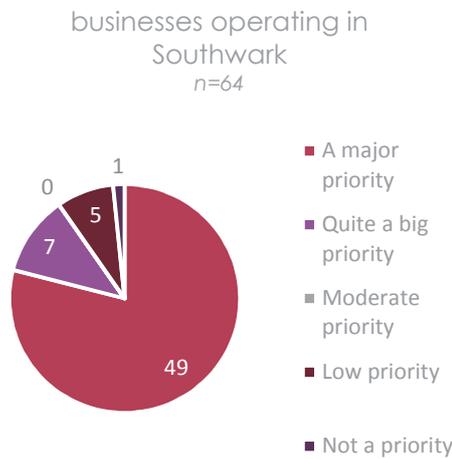


Figure 2

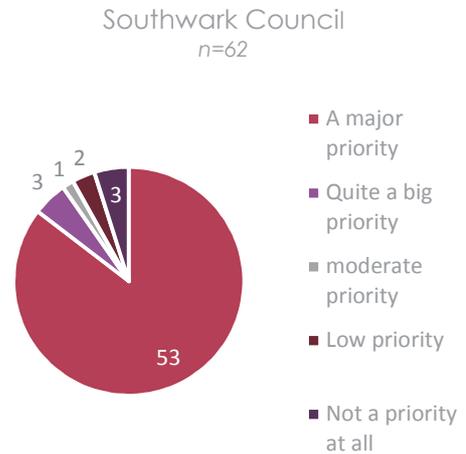


Figure 3

As Figure 1 demonstrates, the great majority of respondents said that being 'environmentally friendly' had effected the decisions they had made in their daily lives over the previous six months. Figures 2 and 3 show a great majority also thought that climate change should be a priority for Southwark Council and Southwark's businesses in the next 5-10 years.



### 3.2. Buildings, construction and regeneration

**Individual level:** There were more calls to collective action in the Buildings, Construction and Regeneration (BCR) topic area than in the other topic areas. Respondents wanted individuals to express concerns to elected representatives, cooperate with their neighbours, lobby landlords and the council, and campaign through direct action. Respondents saw collective action as a way to influence decision makers on issues including green construction, urban planning, and housing inequality. Finally, respondents wanted individual homeowners and private landlords to make climate-friendly upgrades to their houses, including installing insulation.

**Borough and city level:** Most of the comments in the BCR topic area call on Southwark Council to act in its capacity as a landlord. In these comments, respondents called for insulation and double-glazing on estates and efficiency upgrades to council office buildings. There were also comments that argued changes must be made to planning regulation and practices to address the climate crisis. Several respondents outlined principles that local authorities should consider when updating their planning law, including only allowing net-zero new builds. Respondents wanted buildings to be refurbished, not demolished, and wanted higher environmental standards for both new builds and retrofits.

**National level:** Respondents also drew attention to planning regulation in the national government section of the BCR response. The home improvement programmes that were identified by respondents at both individual and local levels also resurfaced at a national level, this time in terms of funding. Respondents wanted the national government to invest heavily in green building programmes, while ensuring higher environmental standards are reinforced. A few respondents emphasised that higher standards should not only apply to newly built, energy-efficient homes, but also to the process of construction – from the materials used to the transportation methods and whether waste can be recycled.

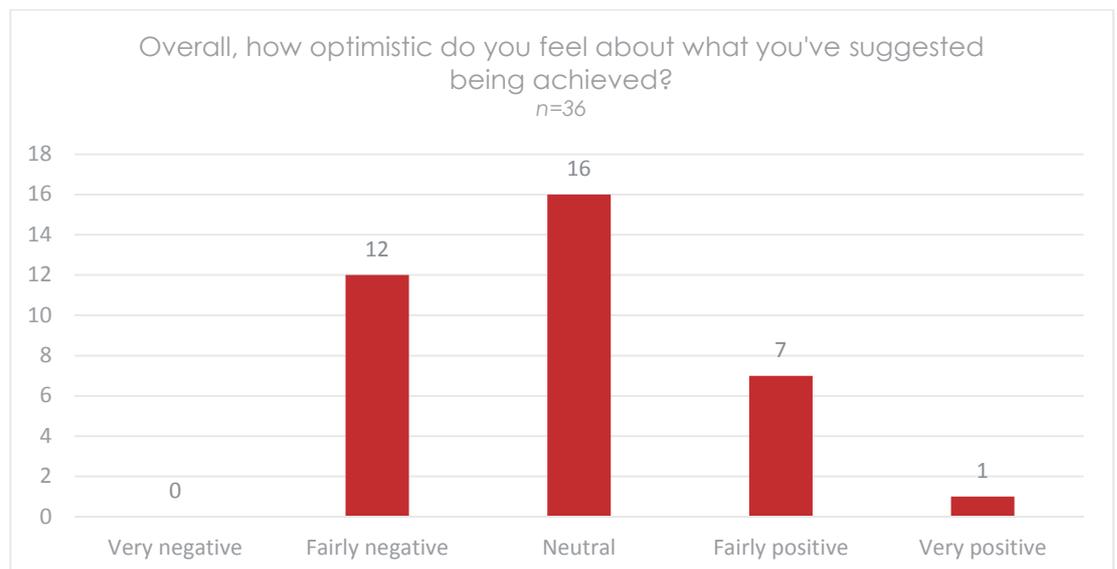


Figure 4



As Figure 4 shows, more respondents were neutral than positive or negative about whether their suggestions would be implemented. However, more were negative than positive overall.

### 3.3. The energy we use

**Individual level:** Respondents suggested that individuals can reduce their energy demand through home upgrades and energy saving behaviour. The latter can be learnt through participating in education and awareness campaigns. A few respondents urged individuals to think about the full lifecycle of efficient products, which are often energy intensive to produce. Respondents said consumer choices, especially choosing to purchase green energy, were very important. Several respondents also called on individuals to act collectively by holding MPs, business leaders, and the media to account on energy issues.

**Borough and city level:** Akin to comments in the BCR topic area, respondents called on Southwark Council to act in its capacity as a landlord to improve energy efficiency in the borough. There were comments that overlapped directly with the BCR – e.g. install insulation in council housing – as well as suggestions that extended beyond energy savings into energy generation – e.g. install solar panels on council buildings to generate renewable energy. Respondents also highlighted the ways in which the Council could influence other actors to transform the energy system away from fossil fuel and towards renewables, including lobbying national government, incentivising landlords and homeowners, and through its investments. Several respondents emphasised the importance of community collaboration on energy projects; they want the council to work with local community groups on energy and heating projects.

**National level:** According to respondents, the National Government has a role and responsibility to decrease overall energy demand and increase renewable energy generation through funding and regulation. In the energy sector, they want the government to fund renewable energy projects, and develop policies that enhance the development of renewable energy, e.g. enabling a decentralised electricity grid, and allowing for onshore wind turbines. In addition to incentivising the production of renewable energy, a few respondents argued that the government needs to prevent the expansion and development of fossil fuel-based energy.

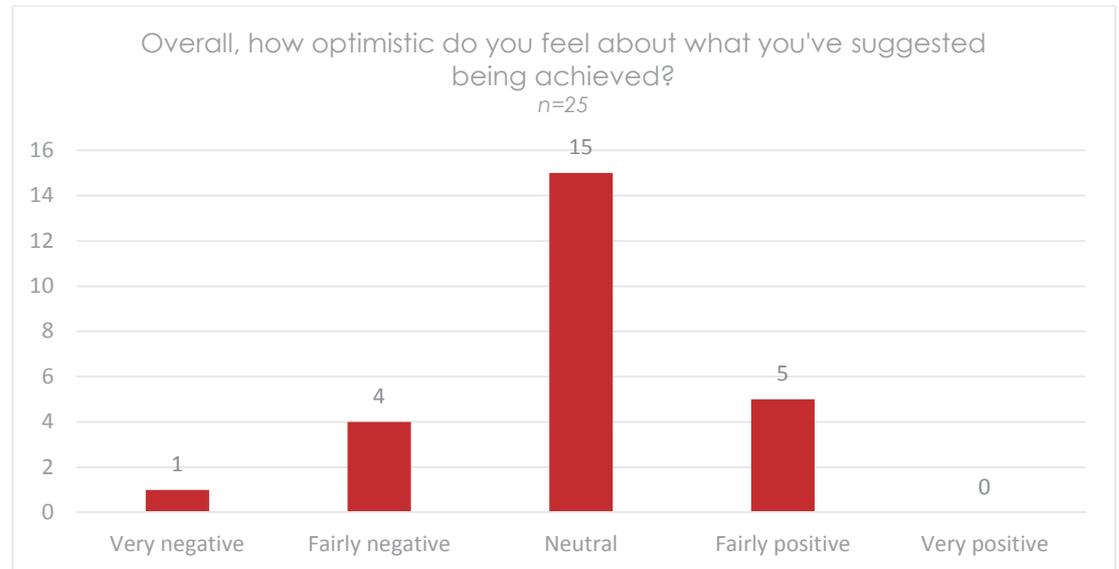


Figure 5

As Figure 5 shows, most respondents were neither positive or negative when considering whether their suggestions on energy usage would be achieved.

### 3.4. Transport and travel

**Individual level:** Respondents outlined how individuals can change their transport behaviour to include more active transport and fewer trips by car. These recommendations were straightforward and included walking, cycling, and taking public transport, in addition to driving less and flying less. Respondents wanted to see individuals encourage their neighbours to do the same and join campaigns that fight for air quality improvements. A few respondents called on individuals to consume less to decrease delivery transport needs.

**Borough and city level:** Transport was the most commented-on topic area amongst the first 100 respondents, i.e. the highest proportion of respondents gave suggestions on this topic, and within this topic area, local authority action received the highest number of suggestions. Responses here were also more specific than in any other topic area. For example, respondents told Southwark Council precisely where bike storage and lanes were needed, and what features they want these lanes to possess. Comments supported active and public transport and asked local authorities to disincentivise car use through taxes, low emissions zones, and outright car bans. Respondents saw car bans on certain road as an opportunity to reallocate space and pedestrianize streets. Respondents connected these transport changes to decreased air pollution and improved public health. Respondents also called on local authorities to influence national infrastructure projects by openly declaring opposition, e.g. oppose HS2 and the Heathrow Expansion.

**National level:** Respondents called for Government to redirect funds away from air travel subsidies and major road infrastructure projects and into a renewable public transport network. There were several comments about the need to

penalise air travel through pricing mechanisms, from broad demands for a general aviation tax to a more specific demand for a frequent flyer tax. There were also a few comments in favour of taking public transport, including the rail system, into public ownership. These comments connected lethargy in the green transport space to profit-making models.

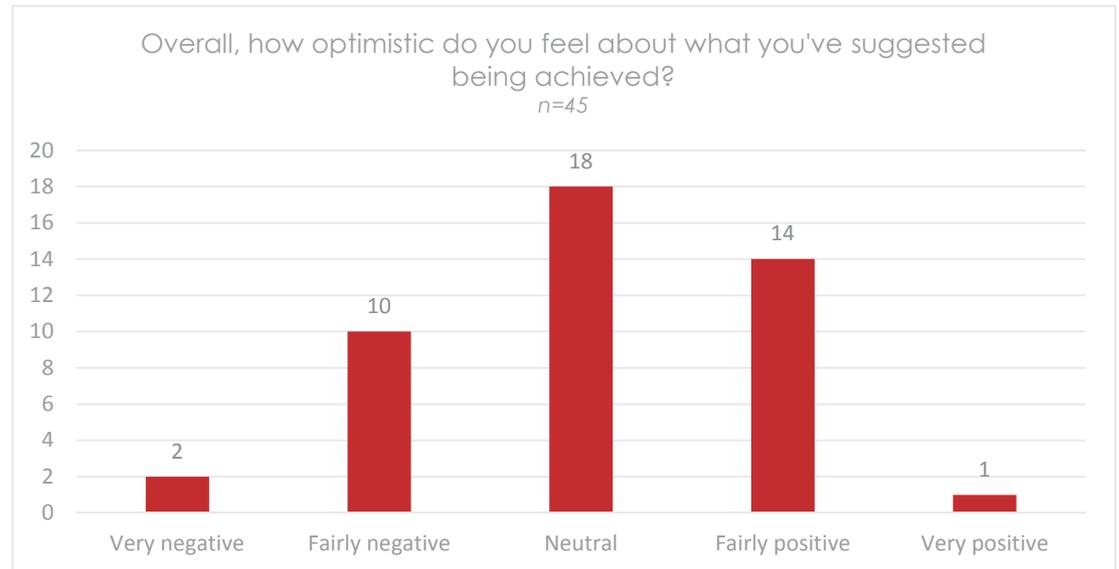


Figure 6

As Figure 6 shows, more respondents feel neutrally towards the potential for implementation, and slightly more respondents feel positively than negatively.

### 3.5. Biodiversity, trees and green spaces

**Individual level:** Respondents wanted to see individuals take better care of and respect the green spaces in the borough - both public parks and private garden spaces. It was suggested that individuals should be mindful of biodiversity in their own gardens, but also how community collaboration could become a tool for furthering green spaces in and around the neighbourhood. One example of such collaboration was for community groups and neighbours to come together to plant in neglected areas around homes and perhaps even start community vegetable gardens.

**Borough and city level:** The clear theme amongst respondents was for institutions at a borough and city level to protect and enhance green spaces and biodiversity. This included calls on the Borough to promote further 'greening' and 'wilding' of public spaces by caring for existing spaces and continue to implement new green corridors, nature reserves and water restoration projects. Respondents emphasised the role of developers and the construction industry in retaining established trees and green spaces and as well as ensuring integration of such green spaces on new developments.

**National level:** On a national level, survey comments asked for more recognition and support of green spaces, tree planting and biodiversity. This related to maintaining green areas, protecting national parks, implementing new

regulations to enable water savings and providing guidance to landowners and farmers.

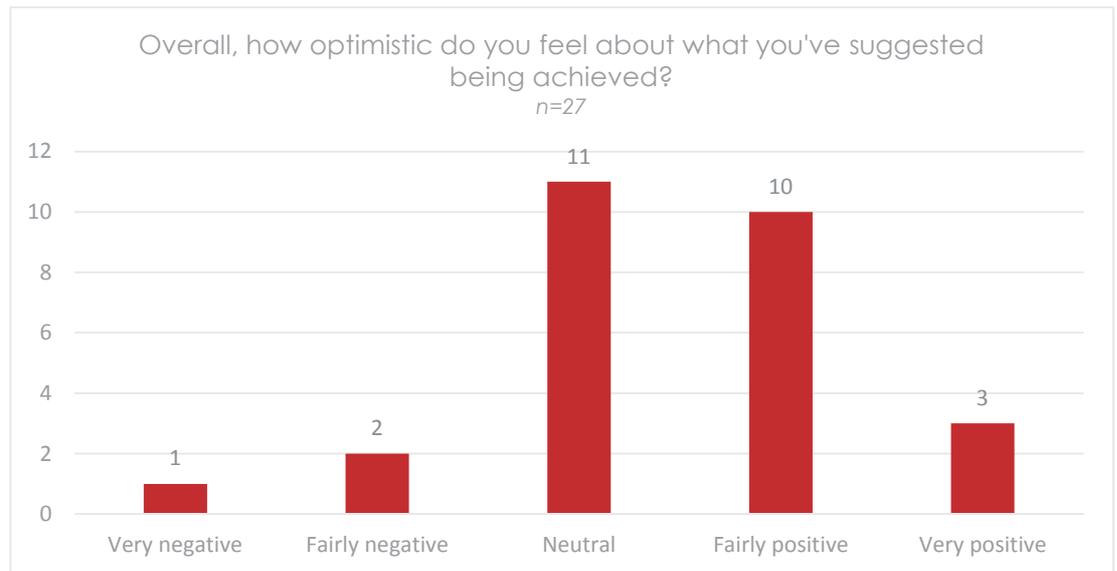


Figure 7

Figure 7 shows that respondents were more positive about their suggestions for biodiversity, trees and green spaces being implemented than negative, and more positive than on other topic areas.

### 3.6. What we all consume

**Individual level:** Respondents wanted people to have higher awareness and understanding of consumerism better waste and recycling habits. They wanted individuals to be more responsible and mindful of their diet, consumer habits and re-using before recycling. There was particular focus on reducing food wastage by buying less and focussing on seasonal, non-imported food when buying; and reusing and repairing goods.

**Borough and city level:** Respondents identified a clear role for the Council and businesses operating in the borough and city to help facilitate increased understanding and awareness among residents – ranging from an increased number of recycle bins and increased recycling collection to reducing plastic in goods sold by businesses in the borough. Survey participants suggested recycling schemes, re-use centres and education around already existing initiatives as measures that could speed up the process. To enable residents to increasingly consume with less impact on the climate, investment in sustainable, local businesses was further emphasised.

**National level:** On a national level, survey comments highlighted the need for the Government to incentivise and penalise behaviours of large. Respondents wanted to see implementation of taxes and new standards to discourage unnecessary consumption and reduce, or even ban, single use plastic and tax food waste at larger supermarkets and food chains.

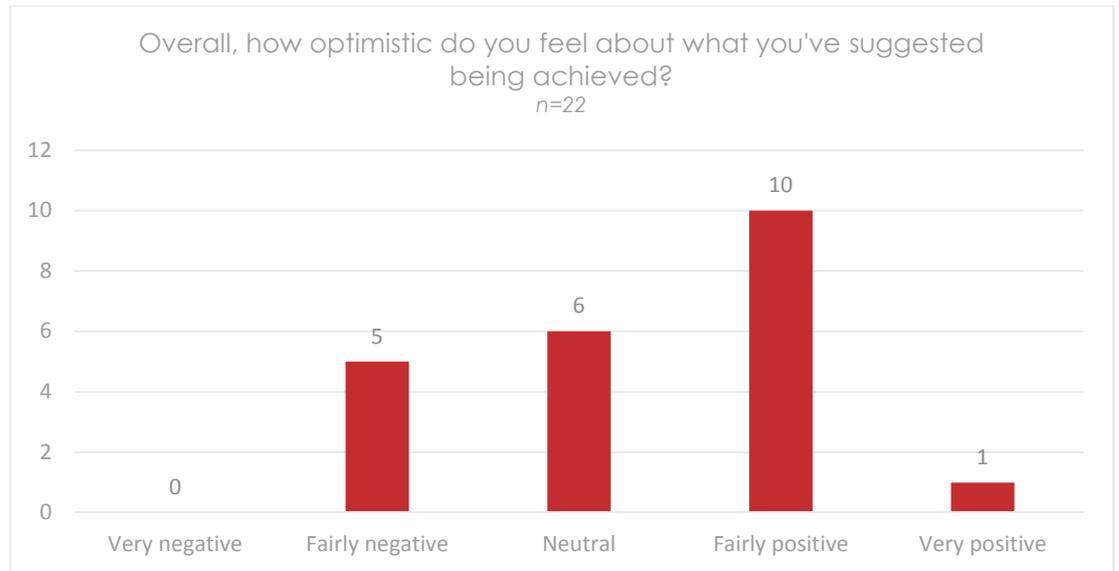


Figure 8

As seen in Figure 8, respondents were more positive towards their suggestions on consumption being implemented.

### 3.7. Final thoughts on climate change in Southwark

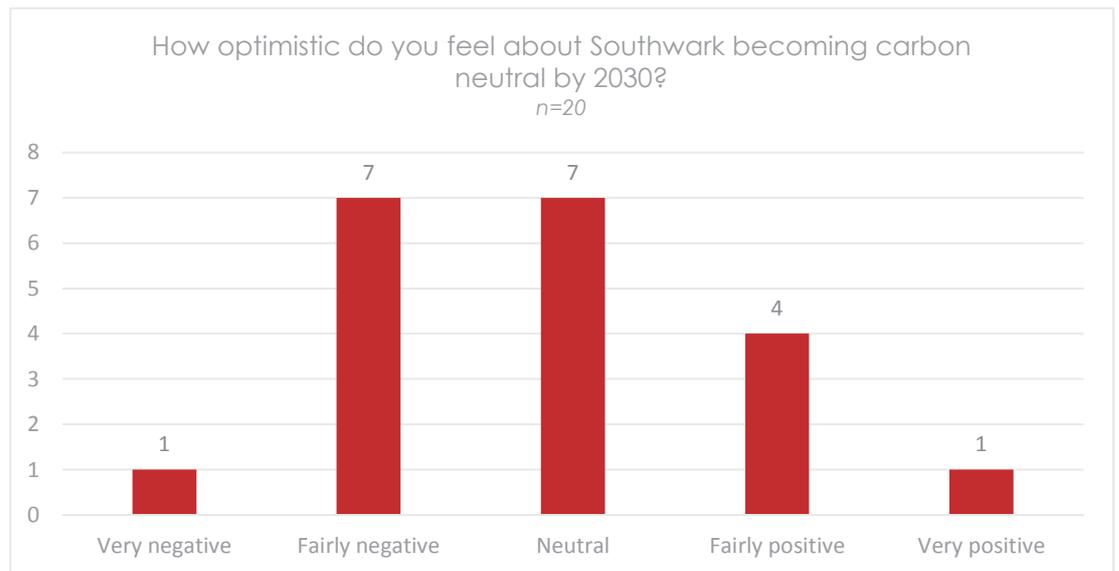


Figure 9

Out of 20 respondents, most felt either fairly negative or neutral about the likelihood of Southwark becoming carbon neutral by 2030.

When asked about what topic or action the Council should primarily focus on in Southwark to address the climate emergency, traffic and transport were by far the most mentioned areas. Reflecting on the amount of traffic passing through the borough, respondents argued that the Council could influence both within and outside borough limits by addressing traffic and transport. Other less frequently mentioned topics included waste and energy efficiency.

Respondents were invited to comment on anything else they thought the Council should focus on, in addition to areas explored in the survey. Some



respondents used this as an opportunity to highlight already explored areas once more or to further encourage the Council to act. Although a few additional suggestions were made, no common themes were apparent. Examples of suggestions made included making environment and climate change a compulsory part of curriculums in education, and to continue to transparently communicate and engage businesses and residents on the issue.



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