



University of the West of England, Bristol

Report on Process and Outcomes of Questionnaire and Workshop Elements of Consultation for the Development of Reading Borough Council's Climate Change Strategy and Air Quality Action Plan

Submitted to: Reading Borough Council

July 2008

By

Air Quality Management Resource Centre

University of the West of England (UWE), Bristol (United Kingdom)

University of the West of England, Bristol
Frenchay Campus,
Coldharbour Lane,
Bristol
BS16 1QY

Executive Summary

This report summarises the outcomes of the consultation activities undertaken by Reading Borough Council in support of the development of their Air Quality Action Plan and Climate Change Strategy. The consultation consisted of a questionnaire being disseminated in both paper and internet formats (including a double page pull-out section in the Reading Evening Post), and two public consultation workshops held in February 2008 in Reading Town Centre.

The consultation was not based on seeking approval on draft documents, but was intended to help assess the viewpoint of Reading citizens with regard to their perception of the problems of poor air quality and climate change, how much of a priority the council should give to addressing these problems, and what sort of measures and actions the citizens would want to see taken, or given encouragement and support to take themselves.

This report summarises the views and suggestions of all those who have participated in the various aspects of the consultation exercise. The detailed open response comments from the 155 questionnaire respondents, or the notes and feedback sheets from around 5 hours of workshops are available in the Annex. Below are 8 key points distilled from the consultation exercise:

Better information on the causes and effects of climate change and air quality, on what individuals can do, and what the council and others are doing about the problems.

The council to take a lead both in terms of managing their own estate and in encouraging, supporting and enforcing better practice.

Trying to resolve the traffic issue mainly through demand management.

Giving non-car transport a higher (perceived) priority so that people do not feel that these modes are more dangerous, more expensive or less convenient than using a car.

Businesses to be encouraged/forced to take more action both to improve their energy efficiency, but also to help individuals perform better by, for example, reducing packaging.

More attention to green spaces to provide pleasant transport corridors for walking and cycling, to help increase fitness and well-being and to help mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Better quality housing development that ensures low carbon properties at affordable prices and uses appropriate land (not gardens, playing fields and other previously green space).

Regulation and enforcement to ensure that individual actions take place on a level playing field and so that environmental protection is seen as a necessity rather than an option.

Contents

Executive Summary	i
Contents	ii
Tables.....	iii
Figures.....	iii
1 Introduction.....	1
2 Consultation Questionnaire	2
2.1 Description of Questionnaire	4
2.2 Summary of Questionnaire Responses.....	4
3 Graphs of Questionnaire Responses	8
4 Description of Workshops	19
4.1 Workshop Participants	19
4.2 Description of Activities	20
5 Results of Activities	22
5.1 Post-It Note Exercise.....	22
5.2 Quiz	22
5.3 Option Generation	22
5.4 Option Prioritisation	26
5.5 ‘Open Space’ Discussion Session.....	27
6 Conclusions.....	31
6.1 Key Issues Highlighted by the Consultation	31

Tables

Table 1: Combined results from Option Prioritisation Exercise (ranked according to no. of green dots)27

Figures

Figure 1: Consultation Questionnaire Page 12

Figure 2: Consultation Questionnaire Page 23

Figure 3: Q1a) What do you think is the most important environmental issue in Reading – TODAY8

Figure 4: Q1b) What do you think will be the most important environmental issue in Reading – IN 20 YEARS9

Figure 5: Q2a) What do you think is the most important environmental issue in the World – TODAY 10

Figure 6: Q2b) What do you think will be the most important environmental issue in the World – IN 20 YEARS 11

Figure 7: Q3a) Which of the following do you think are mainly responsible for poor air quality? 12

Figure 8: Q3b) Which of the following do you think are mainly responsible for climate change? 12

Figure 9: Q4) How important do you think air quality/climate change is? 13

Figure 10: Q5) Who do you think should do something about air quality/climate change? 13

Figure 11: Q6) Do you know what Reading Borough Council is already doing about air quality and climate change?..... 14

Figure 12: Q7) What are you doing/going to do about air quality and climate? 15

Figure 13: Q7) What are you doing/going to do about air quality and climate change? (Other)..... 16

Figure 14: Q8) What would help you to do more about air quality and climate change? 17

Figure 15: Q9) How high a priority do you think Reading Borough Council should give to improving air quality in Reading, reducing our contribution to climate change and being prepared for climate change?..... 18

Figure 16: Summary of suggested options by type (raw data).....23

Figure 17: Summary of options generated (following amalgamation)23

1 Introduction

Reading Borough Council commissioned the Air Quality Management Resource Centre, UWE, Bristol to provide support for public consultation work as part of the development of their Air Quality Action Plan and Climate Change Strategy.

The consultation comprised two main elements:

- a questionnaire, in both paper and internet formats,
- two participatory workshops.

This document describes both the questionnaire and consultation workshops and presents a summary of the responses.

It should be noted that this document does not in itself constitute an air quality action plan (AQAP) or a climate change strategy (CCS) and merely puts forward a range of options which need to be considered within the development of the AQAP and CCS. The measures described within this report do not constitute either a complete list of possible options, or a list of options of the only measures that may be publicly acceptable.

It is recommended that the information generated in this consultation exercise is used to inform the design of the AQAP, the CCS and other relevant processes within the council (for example, the cycling strategy, recycling and waste etc).

2 Consultation Questionnaire

A. The Environment, Reading and You ▼

1. What do you think is/will be the most important environmental issue in Reading:

a) Today _____

b) In 20 years time _____

2. What do you think is/will be the most important environmental issue in the World:

a) Today _____

b) In 20 years time _____

3. Which of the following things do you think are mainly responsible for Air Quality and Climate Change? (Tick as many as you like)

AIR QUALITY		CLIMATE CHANGE	
<input type="checkbox"/> Pollution	<input type="checkbox"/> Natural processes	<input type="checkbox"/> Pollution	<input type="checkbox"/> Natural processes
<input type="checkbox"/> Dust	<input type="checkbox"/> Garden Bonfires	<input type="checkbox"/> Dust	<input type="checkbox"/> Garden Bonfires
<input type="checkbox"/> Air Transport	<input type="checkbox"/> Energy use (Gas/Electricity)	<input type="checkbox"/> Air Transport	<input type="checkbox"/> Energy use (Gas/Electricity)
<input type="checkbox"/> Road Traffic	<input type="checkbox"/> Use of solvents and Paints	<input type="checkbox"/> Road Traffic	<input type="checkbox"/> Use of solvents and Paints
<input type="checkbox"/> Car use	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/> Car use	<input type="checkbox"/> Greenhouse gases
<input type="checkbox"/> Air Conditioning		<input type="checkbox"/> Air Conditioning	<input type="checkbox"/> The Ozone Layer
<input type="checkbox"/> Industry		<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know/Not sure
<input type="checkbox"/> Power stations		<input type="checkbox"/> Power Stations	

4. How important do you think air quality and climate change are?

AIR QUALITY: Not important Slightly important Quite important Very important

CLIMATE CHANGE: Not important Slightly important Quite important Very important

5. Who do you think should do something about climate change and air quality? (Tick as many as you like)

	AIR QUALITY	CLIMATE CHANGE		AIR QUALITY	CLIMATE CHANGE
You	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Reading Borough Council	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other individuals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Government	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local Community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	European Union	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Businesses/industry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other, please state who	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. Do you know what Reading Borough Council is already doing about air quality and climate change? Please tell us what you know. _____

7. What are you doing about air quality and climate change?

	Have done	Will do	won't do or Can't do		Have done	Will do	won't do or Can't do
Cut down on flying	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Buy food grown locally	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use public transport more often	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Recycling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use my bike or walk more often	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Re-use carrier bags	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Car share	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cut down on eating meat	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Insulated my loft	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Carbon offsets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Change to smaller or more fuel efficient car	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Planted trees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Insulated the cavity walls	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Use water more sparingly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Put in low energy light bulbs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Have fewer garden bonfires	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Put in a new efficient boiler	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Use smokeless fuels	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Switch off lights more	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Reduce my waste	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Turn down heating	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other -	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
				please tell us more about this...			

Figure 1: Consultation Questionnaire Page 1

8. What would help you to do more about air quality and climate change?

9. How high a priority do you think Reading Borough Council should give to improving air quality in Reading, reducing our contribution to climate change and being prepared for climate change?

	Not a priority	Low priority	High priority	Top priority
Improving air quality.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reducing our contribution to climate change.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being prepared for climate change.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

B. ABOUT YOU ▼ This will help us see which groups of people have taken part in the consultation.

Are you filling this questionnaire out as an individual or on behalf of a group of people?

Individual Your family
 A business (please state) _____
 Another organisation (please state) _____

Are you: Male Female

How old are you? 0-14 15-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65+

What is your full postcode? _____

How concerned are you about the environment?

Not concerned Slightly concerned Quite concerned Very concerned

Do you own or have regular access to a car/bicycle? Yes No

How do you travel most often? Please tick one box in every row.

	NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	EVERY DAY		NEVER	RARELY	OFTEN	EVERY DAY
Walk.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Car Share.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bicycle.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Motorbike.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bus.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Car.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Train.....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other, please state _____				

Do you think there is a link between health and the environment? Please tick one.

Yes Probably No Don't Know

Have you, or people you know ever experienced health effects because of the environment?

Yes Probably No Don't Know

If you answered yes to either of the last 2 questions please briefly describe the health problems and what you think caused them if you can. _____

Is there anything else you would like to say about air quality and climate change in Reading, nationally or world wide? _____

Would you like to be contacted about your ideas or be involved in a workshop about air quality and climate change? Yes No

If yes, please give us your name, telephone number and email address. We will use this information only to contact you about workshops or your ideas/suggestions on air quality and climate change and we will not keep your details with your questionnaire.

Name: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Figure 2: Consultation Questionnaire Page 2

2.1 Description of Questionnaire

The team at the University of the West of England along with members of the Environmental Protection and Policy & Sustainability teams in Reading Borough Council drafted a questionnaire to examine the views of residents in Reading. The various iterations of the draft questionnaire were circulated amongst councillors and council officers for feedback, to help arrive at the final design and content. The final survey questionnaire (shown below) was divided into two sections. The first section asked questions about the importance of climate change and air quality in Reading and how these issues are/should be tackled. The second provided information on the respondents themselves, including health and travel behaviour.

The questionnaire was disseminated via the council website, council events and contact lists, at libraries, Reading Borough Council reception, community centres and leisure centres, one supermarket stand (Asda, Meadway), stands in the Caversham library and the Broad Street Mall, and through a large double page spread in the Reading Evening Post.

The number of responses (155) was larger than anticipated and can probably be taken to represent the views of a wider community in Reading rather than simply those of environmental campaign groups or other interested parties.

2.2 Summary of Questionnaire Responses

In total, 155 completed questionnaires were returned. 76 were filled out online, 43 completed paper versions were returned to the council and 34 were completed using the version in the Evening post. The questionnaire included a mixture of open questions and closed questions that used either rating scales or multiple-choice responses. Multiple-choice questions also allowed the inclusion of an "Other" option to allow for wider responses.

The responses from the open questions were analysed by summing up the number of times respondents referred to particular words or phrases in their answers. Differing phrases in response to the questions were amalgamated into various groupings. This involved a degree of subjective opinion on the part of the analysers. In Question 1 for example ("What is the most important environmental issue in Reading today?") a response of "Climate change" or "Carbon dioxide emissions" would see 1 added to the "Climate Change (mitigation)" tally. An answer of "Climate change and air pollution from too many cars" would see 1 added to the tallies for the "Climate Change (mitigation)", "Air Pollution" and "Road Traffic".

The sections below summarise the responses for the main questions. Although the summaries and graphs provide a useful indication of opinions the responses to the open-ended questions presented in the annex document provide a much richer insight into the opinions expressed by the respondents.

Q1 The Most Important Environmental Issues In Reading (see graphs on page 8 & 9)

2 Open Questions. 155 Responses for each.

The most important environmental issues for Reading both now and in 20 years time were seen to be road traffic, air pollution and climate change related emissions. Road traffic can, as a problem, also be seen to include air pollution and climate change as effects, but encompasses a much wider range of problems including congestion, noise, visual intrusion, lack of public space, fear related to cycling and walking (in terms of both road-safety and personal safety), breakdown of communities through lack of face-to-face contact.

Q2 The Most Important Environmental Issues In the World (see graphs on page 10 & 11)

2 Open Questions. 155 Responses for each.

With regard to the global environment, climate change was seen as the most important issue by a substantial margin, both now and in the future, whilst air pollution and population came next in terms of immediate problems. Flooding/rising sea levels, water shortages, 'pollution' and overpopulation were seen as being the next most significant issues in 20 years time

**Q3 What Is Mainly Responsible for Poor Air Quality and Climate Change?
(see graphs on page 12)**

2 multiple choice questions (tick as many as you like). 153 Responses for air quality, 149 for climate change.

Road Traffic/Car Use was highlighted by the most people for both poor air quality and climate change. Industry, Power Stations, and Air Transport were also placed highly for both issues, despite them not being responsible for much of the poor air quality in the UK.

Almost a third of respondents incorrectly related the Ozone Layer to climate change (as this is not correct, it suggests a level of imperfect understanding about significant environmental issues and therefore a potential role for Reading Borough Council to act as a provider of accurate and reliable environmental data and knowledge).

**Q4 How Important Do You Think Air Quality/Climate Change Is?
(see graph on page 13)**

2 multiple choice questions (tick single box). 155 Responses for air quality, 152 for climate change.

Over 75% of respondents thought that air quality and climate change were 'Very Important' and at least 15% thought them 'Quite Important'. Only 1 person thought air quality was 'not important', and 3 people thought climate change was 'not important'.

**Q5 Who Do You Think Should Do Something About Air Quality/Climate Change?
(see graph on page 13)**

2 multiple choice questions (tick as many as you like). 152 Responses for air quality, 149 for climate change.

The responses were broadly similar for both air quality and climate change, although there was slightly less emphasis on individual action for air quality. For both issues Business/Industry, Reading Borough Council, and national government were seen as having a greater responsibility to act than individuals, local communities or the European Union.

Within the "Other" category, respondents generally cited a need for widespread global action on both issues to be taken at all levels, but particularly by governments.

**Q6 What Is Reading Borough Council Doing About Air Quality and Climate Change?
(see graph on page 14)**

Open question, 123 responses, multiple responses possible.

The most common response (around 25%) was that respondents did not know what the council were doing, or thought that the council were doing nothing to target air quality and climate change. An additional 13% were not sure what the council were doing or felt that they were doing either little or not enough. One person felt that Reading Borough Council were using these issues as an excuse to raise taxes, and another person felt that Reading Borough Council were wasting citizens' money on taking measures. One respondent felt the council was doing 'good work' on these issues and another thought that they were doing all that they could as a council.

Where particular measures were stated, respondents showed a wide knowledge of measures being put in place by the council (including some that were not, but have high 'local' visibility, such as the Green Park wind turbine). The most high profile measures were

the promotion of recycling / composting / waste reduction, the introduction of a cleaner bus fleet using biofuels, and air quality monitoring. People also showed some knowledge of the council's own internal actions including the recent carbon management activity, low carbon features of the proposed civic centre redevelopment and the inclusion of sustainable development briefs within council policies.

Q7 What Are You Doing About Air Quality and Climate Change? (see graph on page 15)

Multiple choice (tick as many as you like) + Other (open response)

This question was in two parts. The first allowed a choice of "Have Done"/"Will Do"/"Won't/Can't Do", the second provided an opportunity to state other actions already taken. With almost all of the measures stated as options, answers indicated significant uptake amongst the respondents. Only one option (Carbon Offsetting) showed higher numbers of people unwilling or unable to act than having already done so. The graph of results (Figure 12, page 15) clearly shows the measures that have been taken up most widely are those due to either strong promotion and support (such as Recycling) or that are very easy and simple (Re-using Carrier Bags and Turning Off Lights). However, the graph also illustrates less well adopted options that the council may need to consider promoting further (such as cavity wall insulation and boilers).

One of the key elements that came out of the open section was that people living in the residential rented sector often felt that their houses were poorly insulated and energy inefficient and that there needed to be pressure put on private landlords to improve housing so that tenants could reduce their environmental footprint.

Q8 What Would Help You Do More About Air Quality and Climate Change? (see graph on page 17)

Open question, 118 responses, multiple responses possible.

Top of the recommendations for supporting and encouraging people to reduce their environmental footprint was the need for better information. This covered a range of areas, including why people should act, what they could do, what the benefits would be, and what others were doing. This last recommendation was particularly important as there was a perceived need for the council to take a lead on these issues, but much more strongly, for businesses to be seen to be 'doing their bit'. As with the workshops, there was a clear division between whether public transport needed to be better or cheaper with cheaper being almost twice as common in responses here. Better cycling and pedestrian facilities and prioritisation were also very highly placed.

As the previous question demonstrated, recycling was the most common action people had taken to reduce their footprints, and responses to this question frequently cited a 'need' for the provision of doorstep collection for a greater range of materials (primarily glass, more plastics and food).

There was also a range of responses regarding how people should be encouraged to change. At one end of the spectrum there were suggestions for the provision of subsidies or grants for insulation, energy saving devices or micro-renewable energy generation. In the middle were suggestions for using taxation to make environmental options cheaper. Lastly a number of people clearly stated that there should be firmer regulation in order to force behaviour change.

Some of the questionnaire responses such as those that incorrectly linked climate change to the hole in the ozone layer (Section 2.2 Question 3) also indicated a need for better information to be provided on the causes of climate change and air pollution.

**Q9 How High A Priority Do You Think Reading Borough Council Should Give To a) Improving Air Quality In Reading, b) Reducing Our Contribution To Climate Change And c) Being Prepared For Climate Change?
(see graph on page 18)**

Multiple choice questions, 147 responses.

Over 84% of respondents thought that improved air quality and climate change mitigation and adaptation should be either 'Top' or 'High' priorities for Reading Borough Council. Reducing contributions to climate change was seen as the highest priority both in terms of combined responses for Top/High Priority (90%) and in terms of Top Priority alone (51%).

Q10-21 Information on Respondents

- A significant majority of questionnaires were filled out by individuals (82%), 17% by families and 3 by members of organisations.
- 54% of respondents were stated they were women, 43% men, and 3% gave no response to this question.
- Respondents were well distributed by age. There was one respondent under 15 and 18 respondents over 65. The majority of respondents were between 25 and 55 with the largest ages group being 45-54 (38 respondents).
- 66% of respondents were "Very" concerned about the environment. 24% were quite concerned.
- Over two-thirds of respondents had regular access to a car and more than half had access to a bicycle.
- 78% of respondents thought there was a definite link between health and the environment. 17% thought there was 'probably' a link. Only 1 person thought they were unrelated.
- Over two-thirds of people knew somebody whose health had or probably had been affected by the environment (from the open question this was predominantly asthma).
- 37% of respondents were happy to be contacted about their views in the future, or invited to workshops.

(Graphs and tables for Information on Respondents are included in the Annex)

3 Graphs of Questionnaire Responses

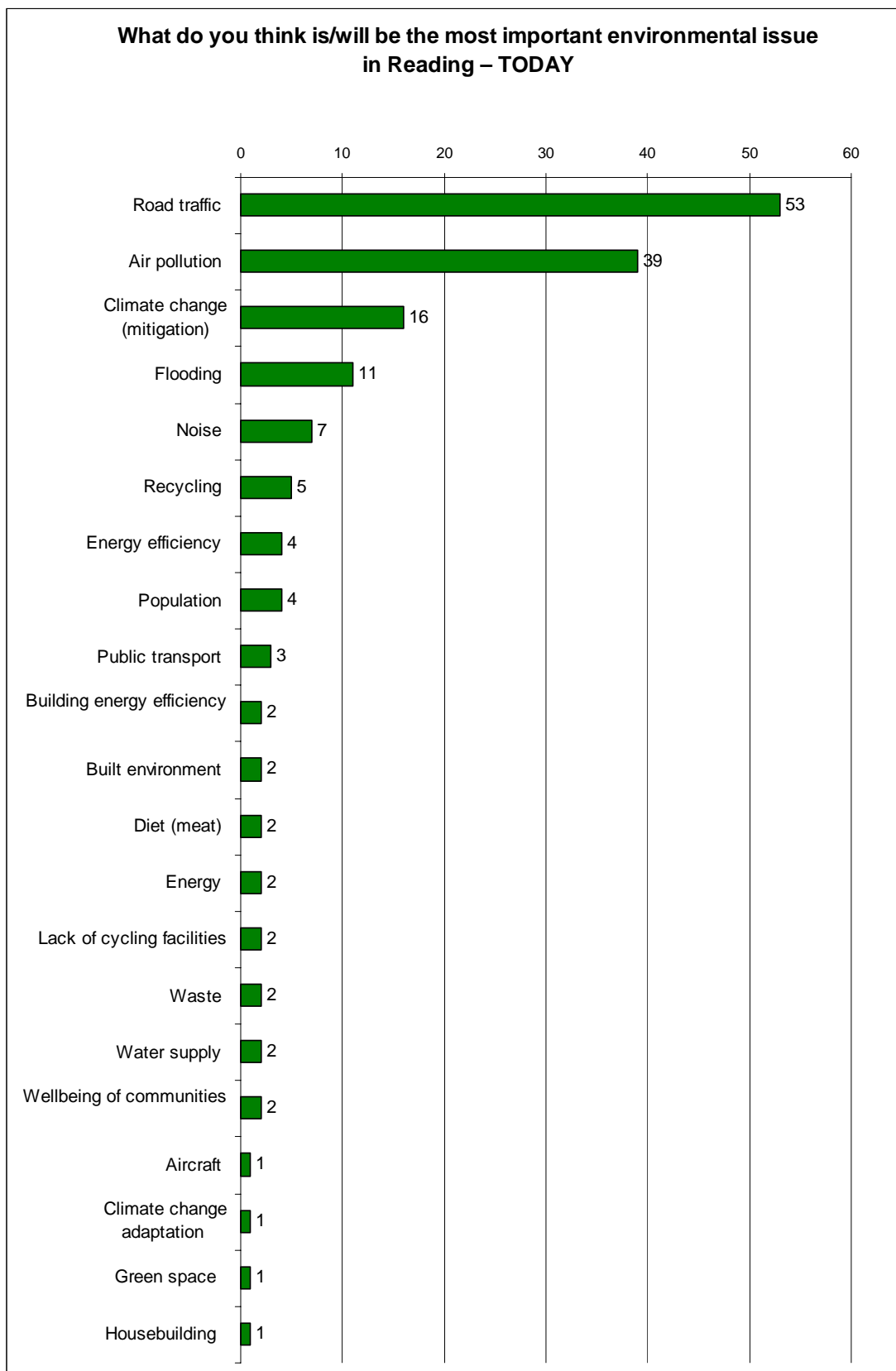


Figure 3: Q1a) What do you think is the most important environmental issue in Reading – TODAY

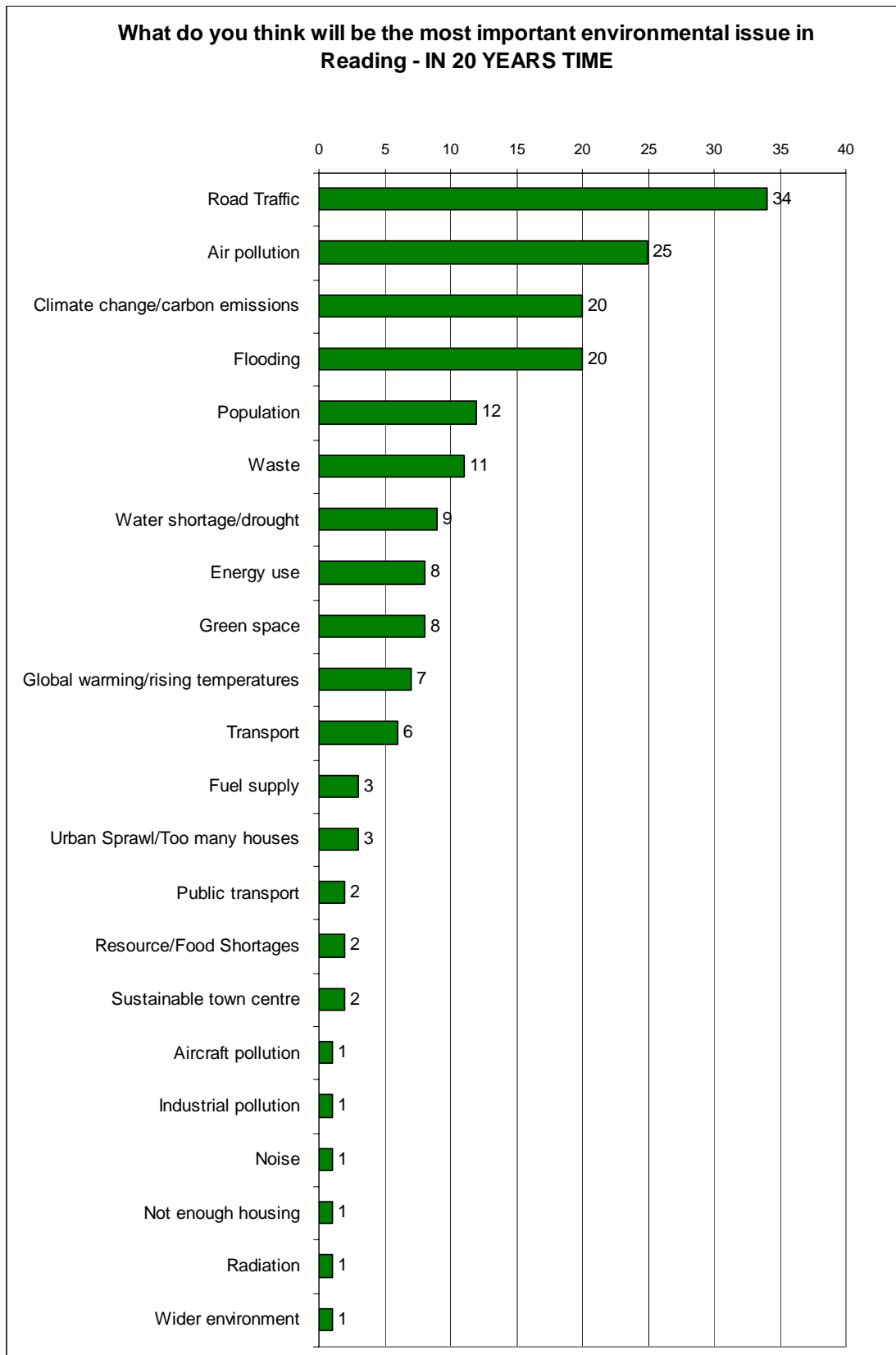


Figure 4: Q1b) What do you think will be the most important environmental issue in Reading – IN 20 YEARS

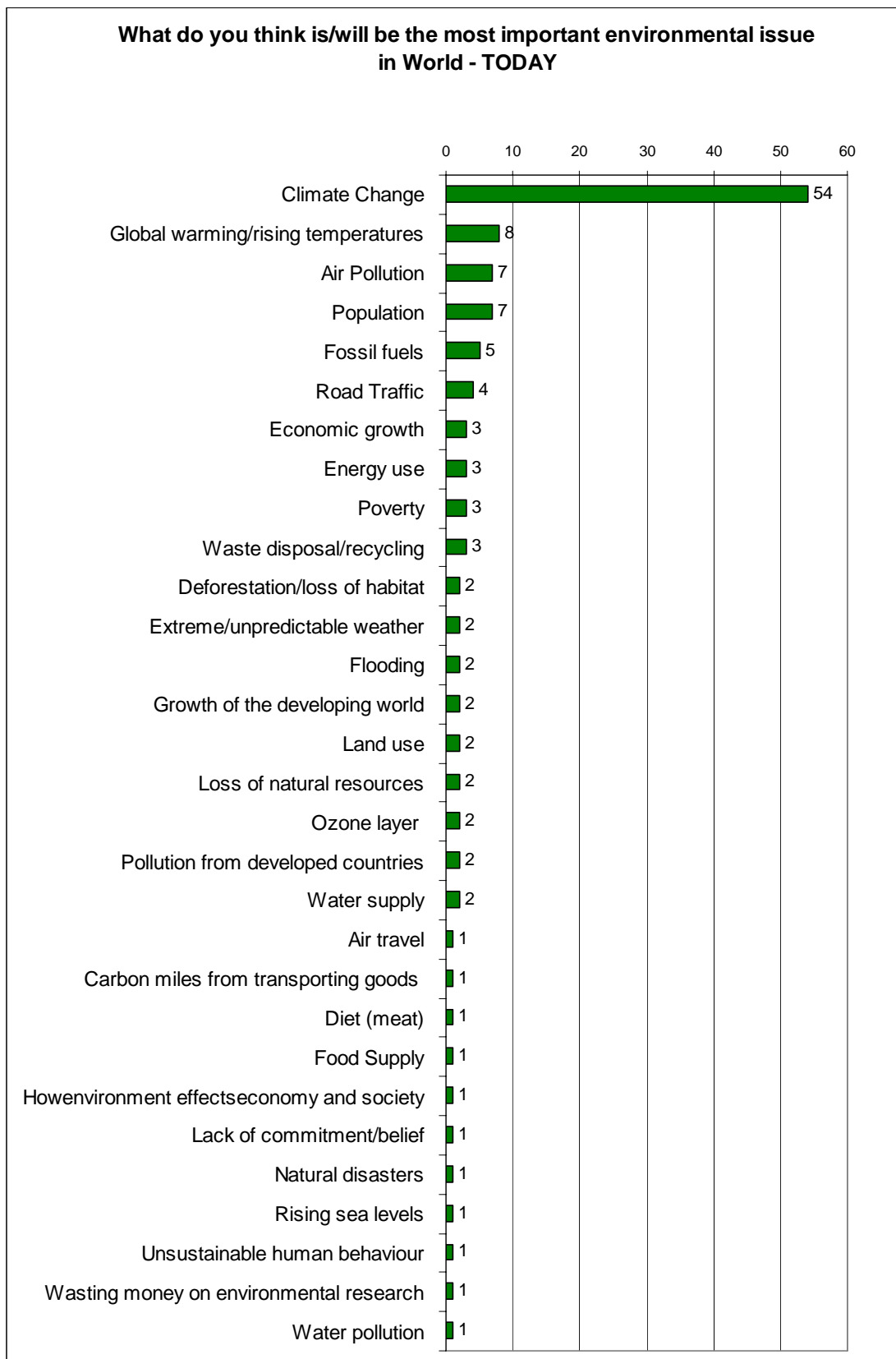


Figure 5: Q2a) What do you think is the most important environmental issue in the World – TODAY

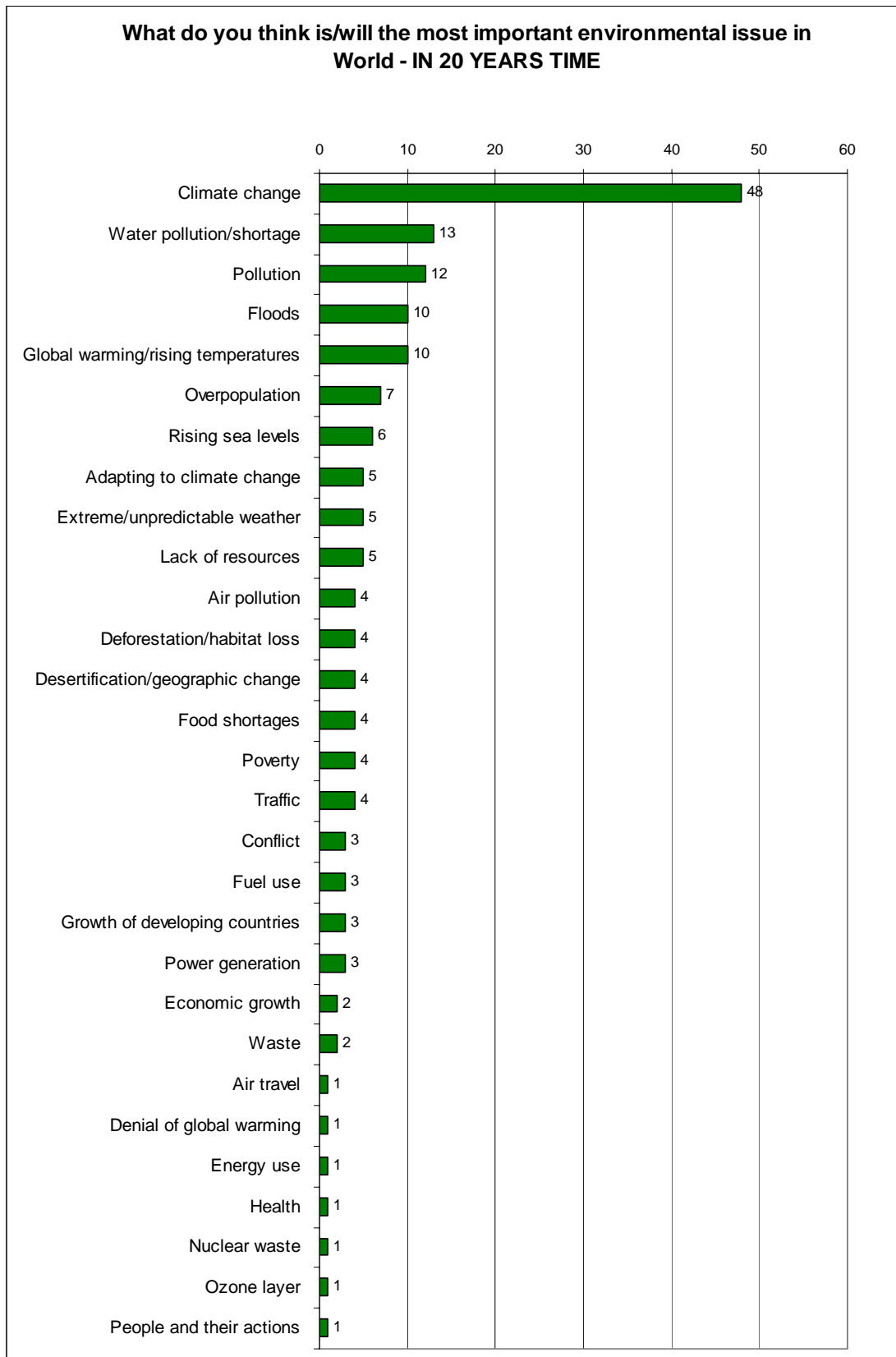


Figure 6: Q2b) What do you think will be the most important environmental issue in the World – IN 20 YEARS

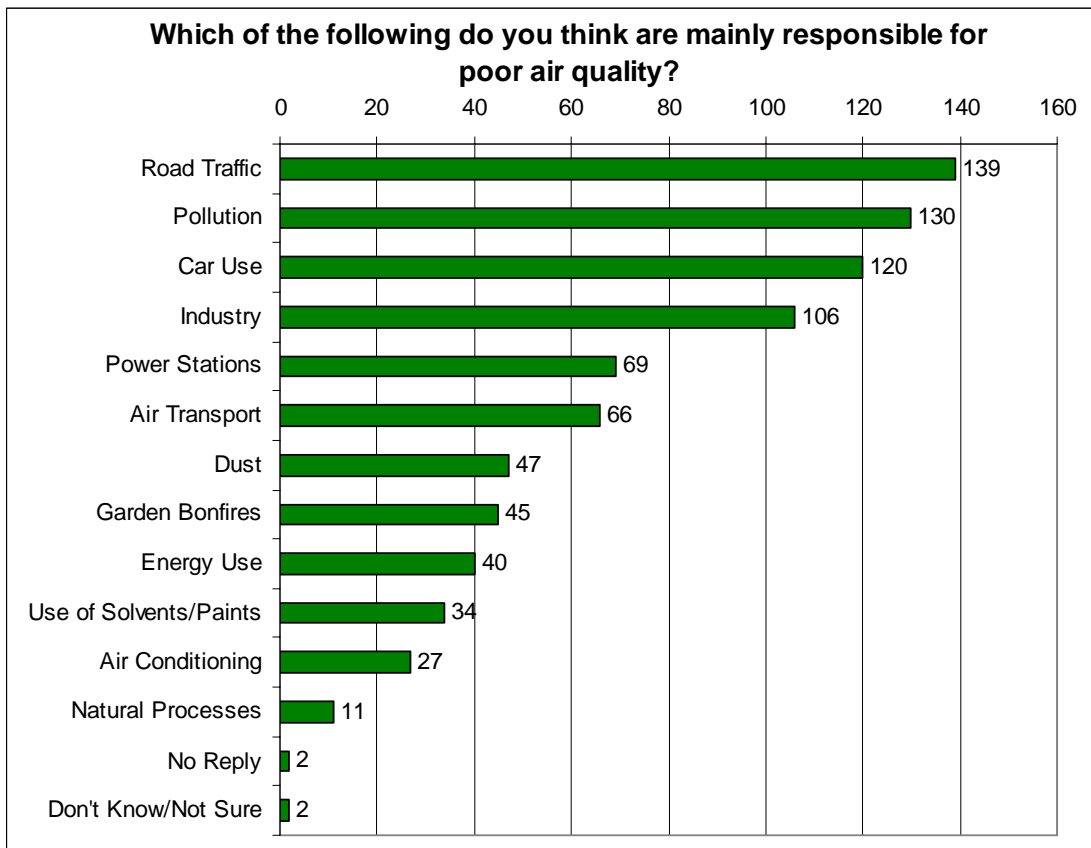


Figure 7: Q3a) Which of the following do you think are mainly responsible for poor air quality?

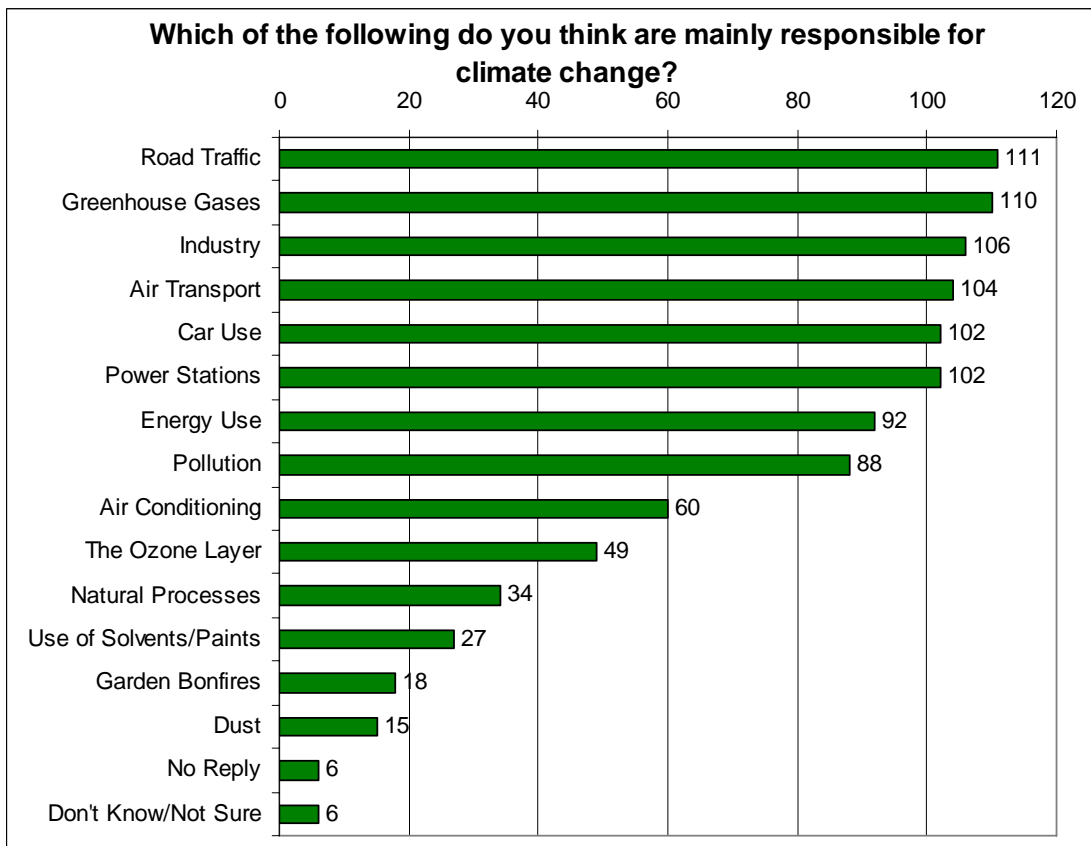


Figure 8: Q3b) Which of the following do you think are mainly responsible for climate change?

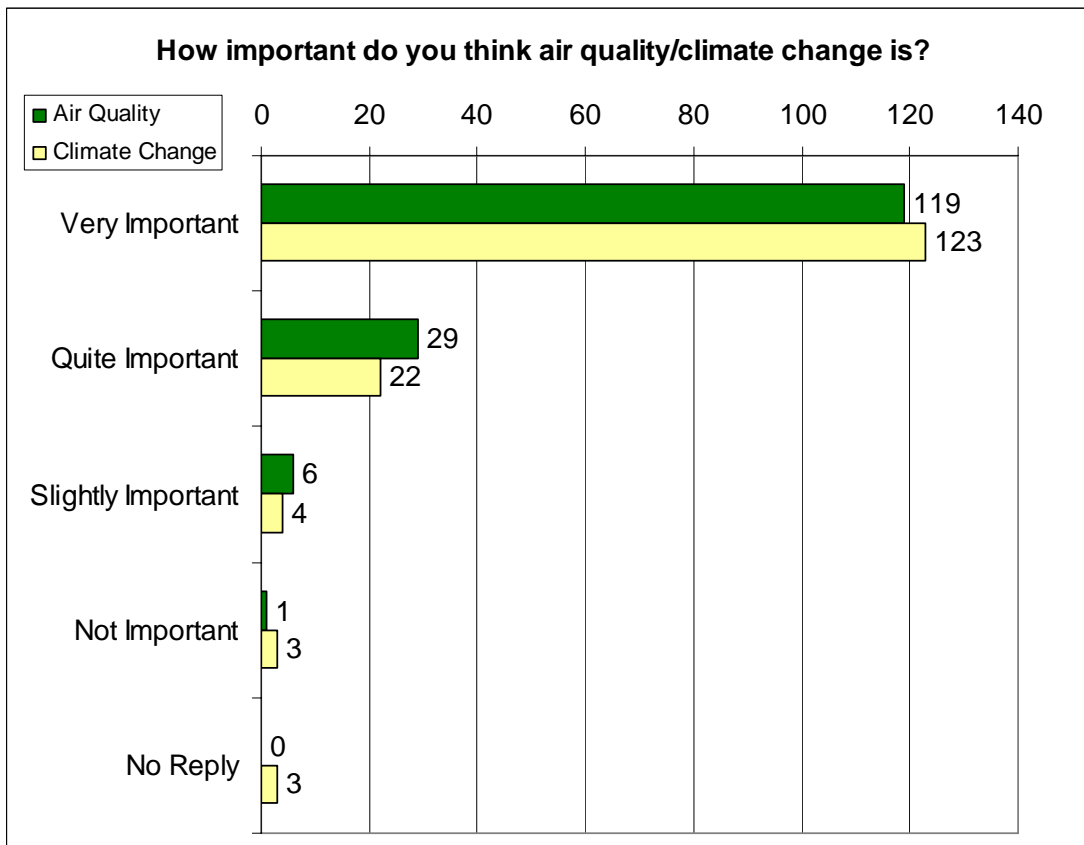


Figure 9: Q4) How important do you think air quality/climate change is?

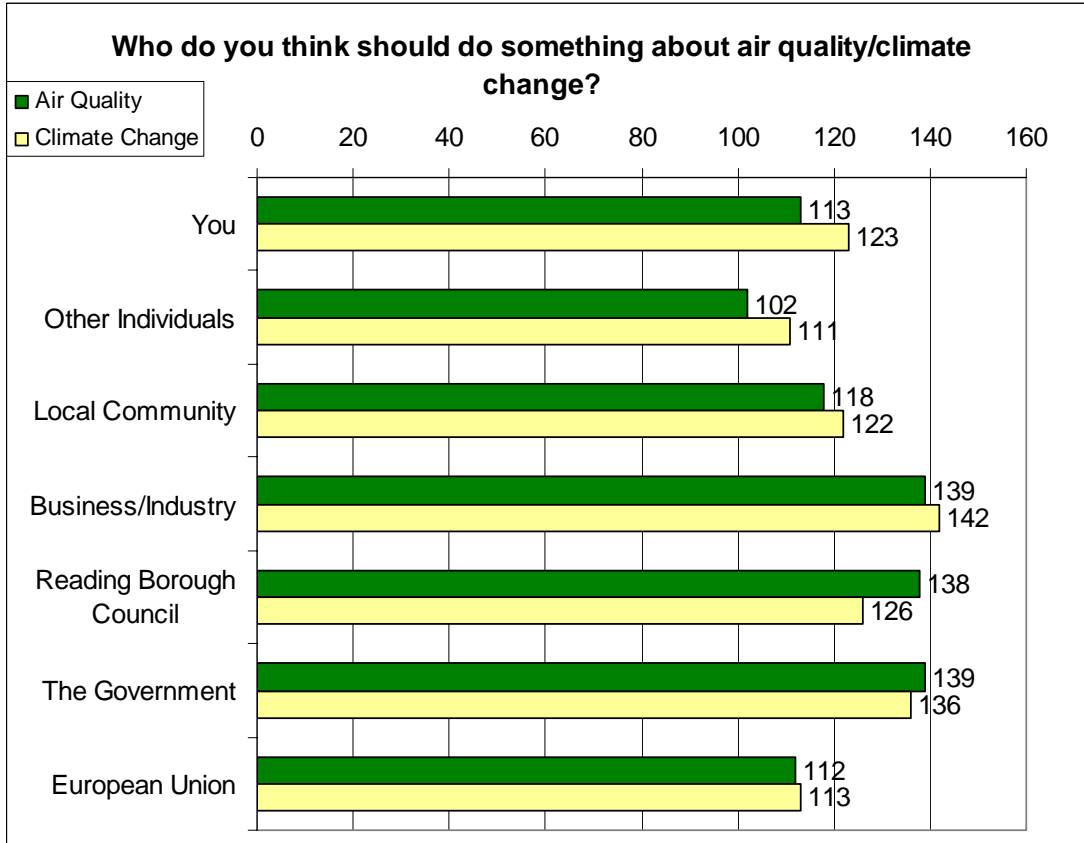


Figure 10: Q5) Who do you think should do something about air quality/climate change?

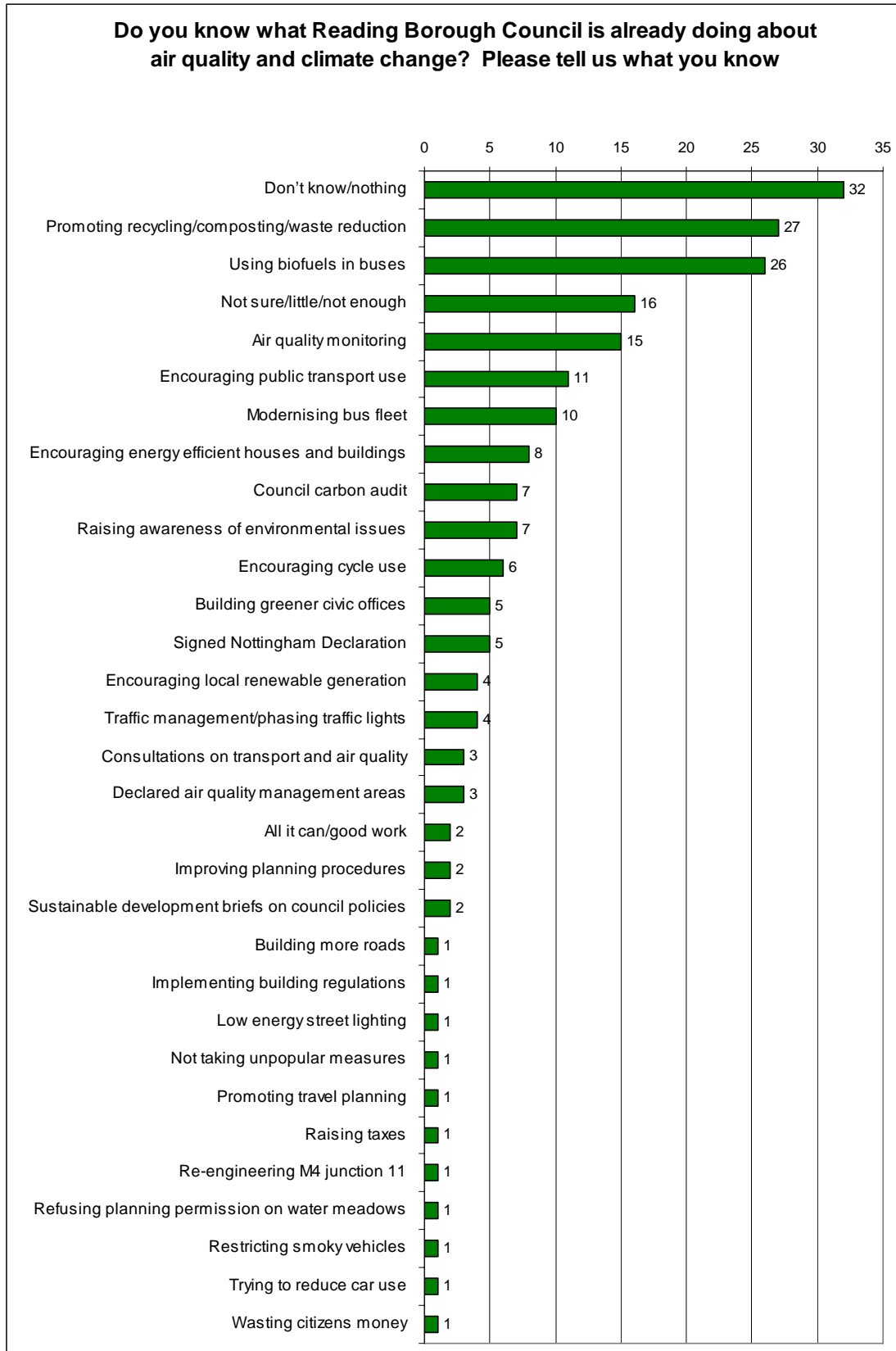


Figure 11: Q6) Do you know what Reading Borough Council is already doing about air quality and climate change?

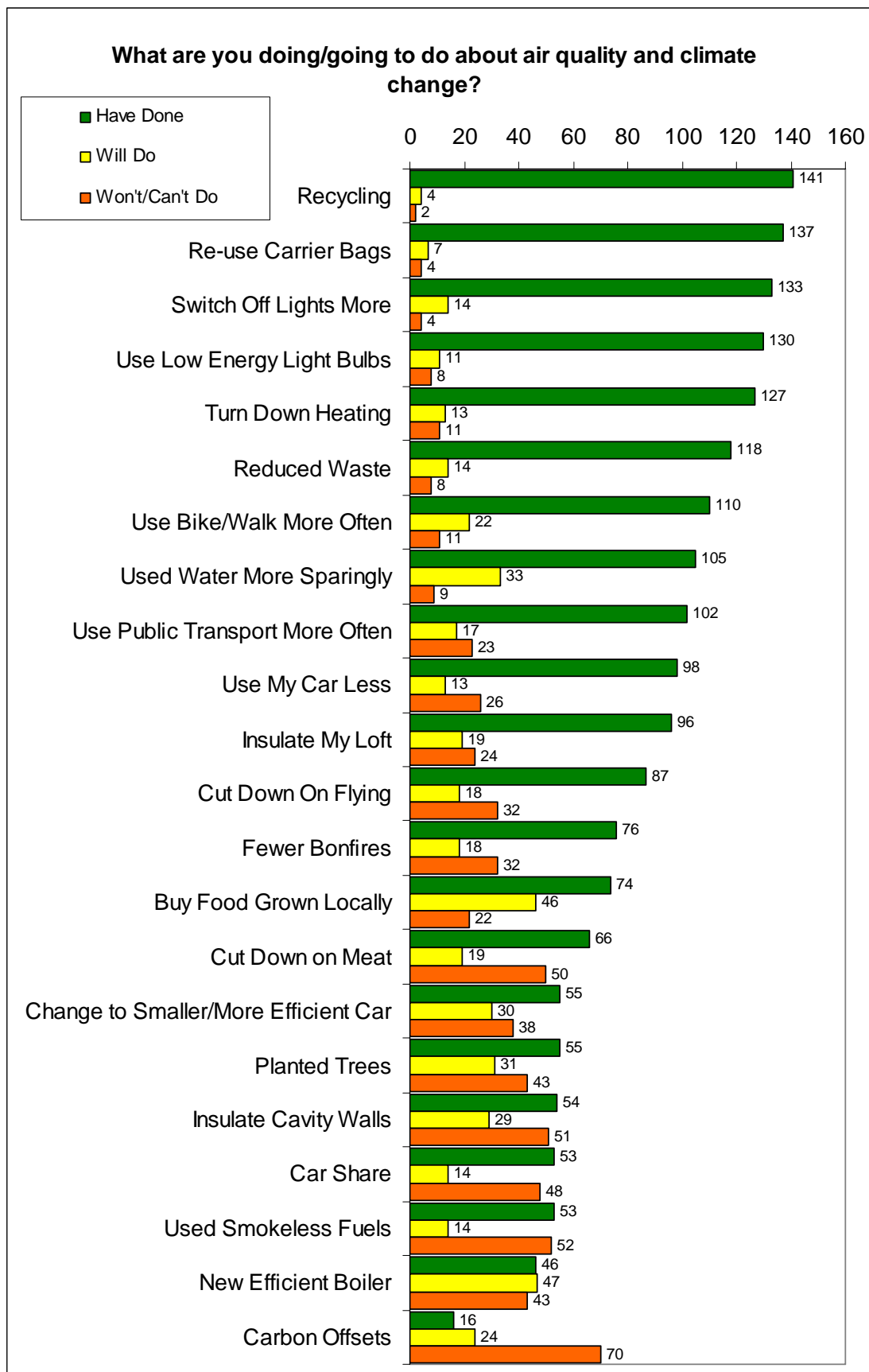


Figure 12: Q7) What are you doing/going to do about air quality and climate?

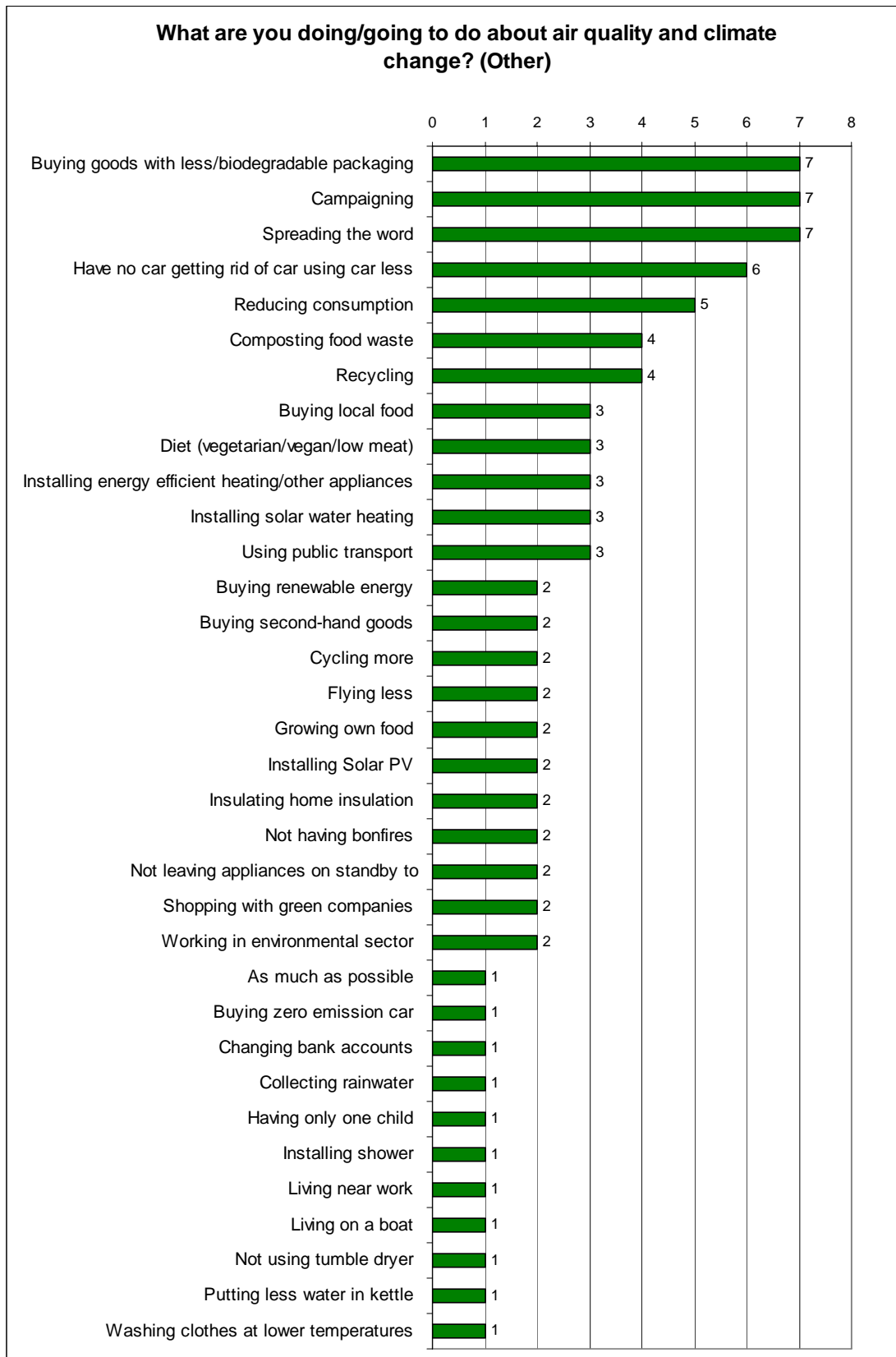


Figure 13: Q7) What are you doing/going to do about air quality and climate change? (Other)

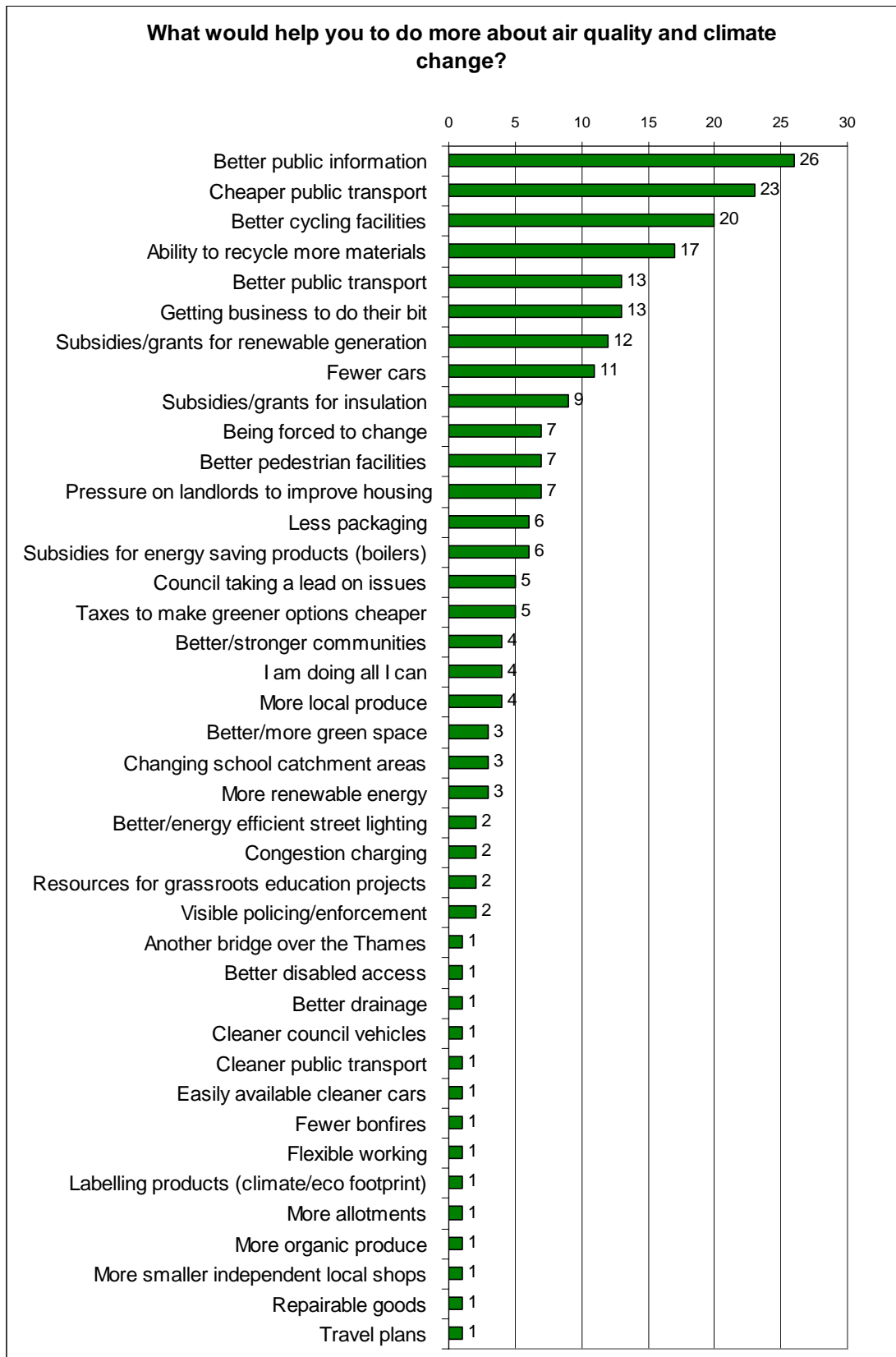


Figure 14: Q8) What would help you to do more about air quality and climate change?

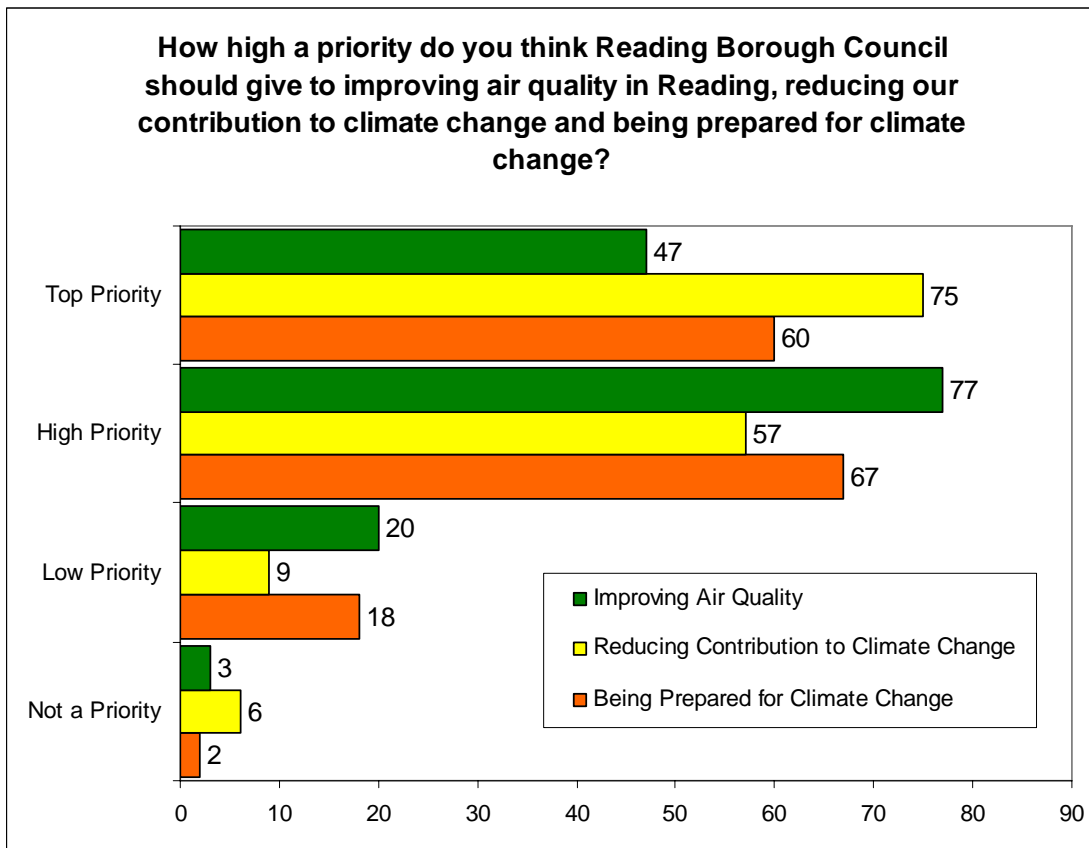


Figure 15: Q9) How high a priority do you think Reading Borough Council should give to improving air quality in Reading, reducing our contribution to climate change and being prepared for climate change?

4 Description of Workshops

Two workshops were held in late February 2008. In order to allow a range of people to attend, one workshop was held on a Saturday morning (11am-1pm 23rd February) at the Civic Centre, and the second was held on a Tuesday evening (6.30- 8.30pm Tuesday 26th February) at Greyfriars Church in the Town Centre.

4.1 Workshop Participants

As part of the consultation process, Reading Borough Council published a press release on Air Quality and Climate Change Consultation (Reading Post, Wednesday 13th February 2008), which included asking members of the public to complete a questionnaire. The questionnaire was available in a paper format with Freepost and online.

As part of the questionnaire, members of the public were asked if they would like to be involved in further discussions about air quality and climate change. Invitations to workshops were sent to those who responded positively. Invitations were also sent to all councillors and to the membership of the relevant council's consultative forums, and to those who had registered an interest via the council's "postcard" consultation asking people to identify any issues they had with climate change and air quality, which had been in circulation from June 2007. These postcards were made available at the Forbury Fever World Environment Day event, in the civic centre and other sites across the town. The postcards were also distributed via interested groups.

A number of participants in the workshops were members of local organisations such as Reading Friends of the Earth and the local green party.

There were 13 participants for the Saturday Workshop and 11 for the Tuesday workshop. 6 people registered to take part in the workshops but did not attend.

4.2 Description of Activities

4.2.1 Post-It Note Exercise

At the start of the workshop each participant was given 3 'Post-It' notes and asked to write the answers to 3 questions on them and then place them on appropriately labelled sheets. The questions were:

1. What is the most important environmental issue in the Reading area today?
2. What is the first thing you think of, about...air quality?
3. What is the first thing you think of, about...climate change?

Most participants completed all 3 post-it notes. A summary of the responses is provided in Section 5.

4.2.2 Quiz

The next activity was an informal quiz based on air quality and climate change issues and facts. The purpose of the quiz was to get a general impression of the participants understanding of the key issues, and to raise some potentially complex issues for discussion without having to present a detailed lecture about the subjects.

12 questions were asked. Each question had a PowerPoint slide providing an initial piece of information with 3 multiple choice answers below. A second slide was then used to provide the answer for each question, and if necessary some additional information.

Questions were put to the group as a whole and participants indicated their answers by raising their hands. No personal scores were taken but notes were made of the numbers of correct/incorrect answers to each question.

Details of quiz questions and responses are provided in the Annex on page 4)

4.2.3 Option Generation

This was the core activity in the workshops. The participants were divided into 3 groups through the random allocation of colour coded name badges. Each group had 3 or 4 members. Each group allocated their own scribe, but also had a facilitator available to take notes and provide assistance if needed.

Each group were provided a number of forms for recording suggested measures for tackling local air quality problems and/or climate change (a copy of the form is provided in Annex, page 6). The forms consisted of a table with a row for each measure they suggested. Each row was divided into six columns headed:

- **What Should Be Done?**
- **What Will It Help?** Air Quality or Climate Change (AQ/CC/Both)
- **Who Needs to Do It?** Council(RBC)/National Govt(NG)/ Business(B)/Individuals (I)/Other (Please state)
- **How Much Will It Help?** (Lots/Some/A Little)
- **How Much Should Be Spent?** (Lots/Some/A Little)
- **Yes AND.....Yes BUT.....** (*This was for recording additional (non AQ or CC) effects of the proposed measures.*)

4.2.4 Option Prioritisation

At the end of the Option Generation session, each group forwarded their top four options from their group's discussion (if any suggestions put forward had already been identified by other groups, they were asked to put forward their next preferred option).

Participants were then given 13 coloured sticky dots (5 Green for indicating "Strong Support", 3 Yellow for indicating "Some Support" and 5 Red indicating "Strongly Against"). They were then allowed to place these dots against any measures that they liked, using as many dots as they wanted to from their quota against 1 or more measures.

A number of measures were then chosen to be taken forward to the next activity for further discussion. These measures were selected primarily on the basis of support for the measure. However, as discussed below in the results section, some were taken forward in order to explore why they appeared to elicit very mixed or strongly negative responses.

4.2.5 'Open Space' Discussion Session

The four or five measures identified in the Prioritisation Session were taken forward into the final Discussion Session which was based on 'Open Space' principles¹. Each of the measures was allocated a flipchart in a different area of the room and participants were allowed to circulate between the corners and to express their views regarding each of the measures. Participants were asked to try and focus their comments on two key aspects of the measures. Firstly, an indication of who needed to take action in order to get the measures put in to action based on the identification of I (individuals), We (Families, Communities, Organisations, etc) or They (The Council, National Government, Businesses, etc). This I/WE/They structure was built on a system of actions identified by Reading Borough Council working on a 'Carbon Connections' project, with a partnership led by National Energy Foundation (NEF) and funded by Defra as part of the Climate Challenge programme. Secondly, they were asked to comment on any significant barriers to the implementation of measures.

Though these were the main points for discussion, any other key issues raised by participants were noted down as well.

¹ These principles allow people to choose what subjects to discuss (i.e. the 5 measures in the prioritisations session) and to determine for themselves which topics they discuss and how long they spend in participating in each discussion. For more information see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_Space_Technology

5 Results of Activities

5.1 *Post-It Note Exercise*

What Is The Most Important Environmental Issue in Reading Today?

21 responses

Responses to this question were dominated by issues relating to transport (11 responses focussed or incorporated transport in some way, 3 of which specifically cited air pollution from traffic).

4 responses specifically cited Climate Change.

Other responses cited litter/rubbish (4), emissions from buildings (1) and flooding (1).

What is the first thing you think of, about...air quality?

19 responses

8 responses out of 21 mentioned road traffic (2 specifically mentioning stationary traffic).

7 responses specifically mentioned health effects, particularly asthma.

1 response stated it was quite good, another stated that it was getting worse.

Other responses included mentioning specific pollutants: Particulates (1) and CO₂(1)

What is the first thing you think of, about...climate change?

21 responses

7 responses related to changes in weather patterns (warmer, drier, wetter, more changeable etc).

5 related to CO₂ emissions and/or specific sources (energy generation, traffic, planes).

5 related to disproportionate impacts on developing countries/and or political instability.

2 responses simply stated "Global Warming".

2 specifically mentioned flooding.

5.2 *Quiz*

The quiz session provided a useful tool to raise and discuss some technical issues with the participants. In particular it allowed the consultation team to assess participants' understanding of the subjects to help correct some misunderstandings.

Whilst workshop participants were generally correct in answering questions about the impacts of air quality and climate change, there was a tendency to over state the role of road transport in climate change related emissions compared to commercial and business sources. However, this provided clear opportunities to illustrate the fact that although many elements of air quality management can be linked with climate change, there is not a complete overlap between the two issues. For example, some areas such as commercial electricity usage have no impact on local air quality in Reading but form a very significant part of the town's carbon footprint.

5.3 *Option Generation*

In total, the 6 groups from the 2 workshops generated 87 individual measures for tackling poor air quality and climate change. There was hardly any duplication between groups. Although groups may have targeted the same source or problem there was almost always some difference in how the problem or solution was expressed. The basic options generated were broken down into different areas and these are shown in Figure 16. This shows that almost half of all suggestions made related to traffic in some way.

An analysis of the suggested measures was undertaken, and where measures were considered to be very similar they were amalgamated into a single measure. The traffic related issues were also broken down into 4 more specific categories representing 'Walking', 'Cycling', 'Public Transport', 'Cars' and 'General Traffic'. The numbers of resulting measures are presented in Figure 17. Even after combining measures, the workshops managed to generate 58 distinct measures, actions or policy initiatives that should be investigated.

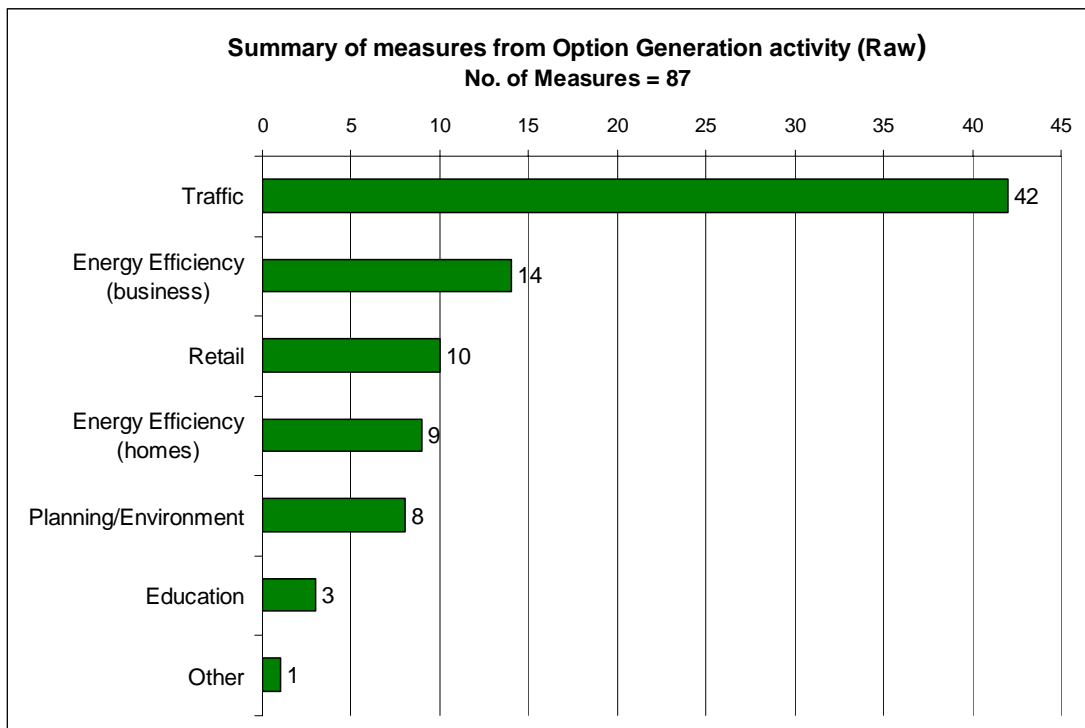


Figure 16: Summary of suggested options by type (raw data)

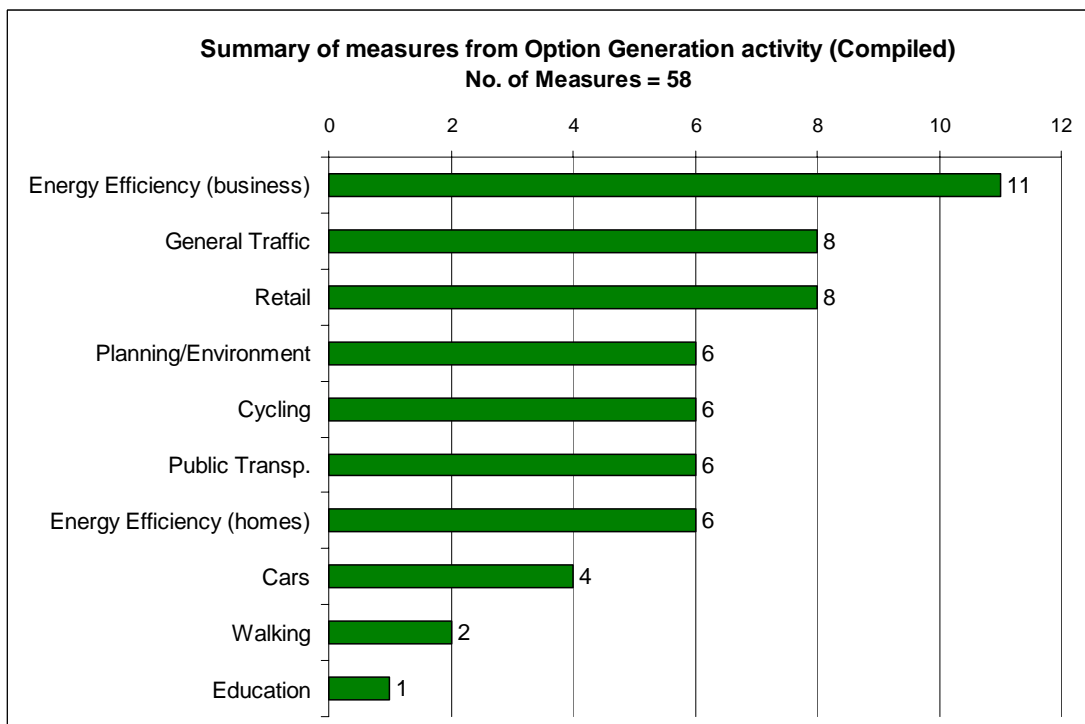


Figure 17: Summary of options generated (following amalgamation)

The measures resulting from the Option Generation activity options are listed below. They have been separated out into groups representing the basic activities and then divided between those actions that the council could directly take on board or that can be acted on/promoted locally (numbers – 1, 2, 3... etc) and those that need action at a higher level (letters – A, B, C... etc). Where action is needed to be taken at a higher level, Reading Borough Council and local stakeholders can still be active in lobbying for relevant action to be taken.

The actions have been roughly listed in each group according to a balance of how much of an impact they might make on climate change or air quality, along with the practicability and likely acceptability of the measures. N.B. this order is purely indicative and has been done simply on the basis of the subjective expert opinion of UWE and the impact of measures can vary greatly in practice. **Bold type** indicates that the measure was one prioritised by the group to be taken from Option Generation to Option Prioritisation Activity 1 to Activity 2. **Bold Italic type** indicates that the measure was taken forward from Option Prioritisation to the final Discussion Session.

It is strongly emphasised that measures should not be considered in isolation, many might not have a significant effect if employed on their own, but may help enable much greater reductions in emissions and/or energy usage as part of a package of measures that will encourage and support wider behaviour change.

Each measure has been given an indication of whether it is likely to be more influential with regard to Air Quality (AQ) or Climate Change (CC). Where measures may help either issue the measures are labelled (AQ/CC) or (CC/AQ) with the order representing what is likely to be the major benefit. Certain measures may have an uncertain *direct* impact and these have been marked with a question mark (?) however, as mentioned these measures can *all* play a part in encouraging wider beneficial behaviour change.

Where measures are judged to have a possible negative impact on air quality or climate change, these have been marked (-AQ) or (-CC).

Key to Effects of Measures:

AQ/CC = Main beneficial impact on local air quality, lesser beneficial impact on climate change

CC/AQ = Main beneficial impact on climate change, lesser beneficial impact on local air quality

CC = (Beneficial) impact on climate change only

?AQ = Impact on local air quality uncertain

?CC = Impact on climate change uncertain

-AQ = Negative impact on local air quality

-CC = Negative impact on climate change

Bold type indicates that the measure was one prioritised by the group to be taken from Option Generation to Option Prioritisation.

Bold Italic type indicates that the measure was taken forward from Option Prioritisation to the final Discussion Session.

Walking

1. ***Better walking routes - safer and more attractive and prioritise walking (AQ/CC)***
2. **Encourage walking bus schemes (AQ/CC)**

Cycling

1. ***Make it easier and safer to cycle with more/better cycle routes (AQ/CC)***
2. **Provide secure cycle parking facilities (AQ/CC)**
3. **Encourage provision of shower and change facilities for cyclists (AQ/CC)**

4. Bike doctors – free checkups (AQ/CC)
5. Pool bike scheme (AQ/CC)

A. No VAT on bicycles (AQ/CC)

Public Transport

1. Electric buses (AQ/CC)
2. More buses/public transport and better timetabling (including evenings) services (AQ/CC)
3. More Park & Ride services (AQ?/CC?)
4. **Make public transport much cheaper or free (at least during certain periods) (AQ?/CC?)**
5. Extend free bus pass scheme (AQ/CC)
6. Introduce Light Rail Transit/Trams (AQ/CC)

Cars

1. **Parking policies - reduce number of parking places (gradually over time) and differentially charge according to vehicle size/emissions (CC/AQ)**
2. Car clubs (CC?/AQ?)
3. **Car sharing (CC?/AQ?)**
4. Encouragement of private electric vehicles (AQ/CC?)

General Transport

1. Target school run (AQ/CC)
2. Promote/enforce Green Travel plans (AQ/CC)
3. Priority routes for low emission + shared vehicles (High Occupancy Vehicle lanes) (AQ/CC)
4. **Improve traffic management and road layout to improve traffic flow (AQ)**
5. Introduce a low emission zone (AQ/CC)
6. **Introduce congestion charging/road pricing scheme (based on emissions/vehicle size) (AQ/CC)**
7. **Increase road space (by providing more roads and bridges) to improve traffic flow (AQ-CC)**
8. Cycle rickshaws (AQ?/CC?)

Energy Efficiency (businesses)

1. Free CO₂ auditing for businesses (CC/AQ)
2. **Businesses should report/monitor carbon emissions (including openly stating carbon footprint on front of premises) (CC/AQ)**
3. **LED lighting and energy fluorescent bulbs for businesses** – this could be extended to all council lighting (including traffic lights and other street lighting) (CC)
4. **Introduce local business Carbon Tax or Carbon Trading scheme, or tie business rates to energy/carbon efficiency (CC/AQ)**
5. Close shop doors/Ban air curtains on doors (CC)
6. Ensure business lights are turned off at night
7. End 24 hr opening for businesses to reduce lighting and heating (CC)
8. Place doors on refrigerators in supermarkets (CC)
9. Reduce use of heating in shops (CC)
10. Reduce security lighting on building sites + make more efficient (CC)
11. Energy efficiency programmes for business, especially retail

Energy Efficiency (homes)

1. **Free insulation to all houses in Reading (CC)**
2. Free CO₂ auditing homes (CC/AQ)

3. Free consumption feedback devices for homes (CC)
4. Free thermal imaging for households (CC/AQ)
5. Encourage LED and low energy fluorescent lighting for public(CC)

A . Remove VAT from energy efficiency renovations (CC)

Retail and Consumerism

- 1. Allow recycling of more materials (esp. plastics and food)**
- 2. Ban patio heaters in pubs (CC)**

- A. Introduce carbon labelling of products (CC/AQ)
- B. Personal carbon allowances (CC/AQ)
- C. Force electrical manufacturers to implement automatic off feature/no standby on electronic goods (CC)
- D. Supermarket packaging (CC/AQ)
- E. Ban sale of portable air con units (CC)
- F. Reduce usage of bottled water by taxing or banning

Planning and Environment

- 1. All new buildings to be low or 'zero' carbon (CC)**
2. Planning policies to discourage car use (CC/AQ)
- 3. Preservation of green spaces, parks e.g. allotments, back gardens (CC/AQ)**
4. Clean Air Act should be enforced (AQ/CC)
5. Planning policies to encourage local energy generation (CC/-AQ?)

A. No more coal-fired power stations (CC/AQ)

Education

- 1. Better Education on Recycling, Energy Efficiency and Climate Change - for communities and schools**

5.4 Option Prioritisation

Table 1 shows the combined results of Option Prioritisation exercise ranked according to the number of green dots each measure received (N.B. differing numbers of people at each workshop means this cannot be an exact ranking but it gives a rough indication of the popularity of the measures). Measures shown in ***Bold Italic type*** indicate those measures taken forward to the final Discussion Session. The basic principle was to take 4 measures forward based on the number of green dots awarded, using yellow dots as a 'tie-breaker', and red dots to indicate that a move might not be popular and so should not be prioritised.

In the Saturday workshop, this method was not strictly adhered to in order to allow for further discussion on some contentious issues. As it can be seen in Table 1, there were two options chosen regarding improving traffic flow - firstly by increasing road space by building more roads and bridges, and secondly by putting in better traffic management systems and reducing obstacles to free flow. The first option was highly controversial, receiving both the most green dots, and the most red dots compared to other measures. It was therefore decided to take both measures through to further discussion.

Specific actions	Number of stickers*		
	Green	Yellow	Red
Get traffic moving by building more roads & bridges (Sat)	12	0	20
Free insulation to all houses in Reading	8	3	3
Make it easier to walk & cycle with better routes & paths (Sat)	8	1	0
Have (very) cheap bus travel in town (Tues)	8	0	0
More cycle lanes (along key routes) (Tues)	7	0	0
Mandate business reporting & public display of emissions/energy use	6	3	0
Improve traffic flow by better management (Sat)	6	2	4
Support to reduce home energy e.g. free thermal imaging & read out devices to energy monitoring	6	1	0
Regulate retail energy usage per m² (Tues)	6	0	1
Reliable cheap/free public transport	5	2	0
Preservation of green spaces (back & front gardens, green belt allotments & park) (Sat)	5	1	1
Reduce retail lighting & efficiency	5	1	1
Introduce congestion charging, based on road tax banding & other emissions levels, and use same principle on parking charges (Tues)	4	5	0
All buildings to be zero carbon on building	4	0	0
Bring walkers to top of urban transport planning hierarchy e.g. walking buses	4	0	0
Engage with community with facilitation & education	3	1	0
Congestion charging (Sat)	2	1	13
Encourage uptake of more efficient lighting options in retail outlets	2	1	0
Progressively reduce the number of parking spaces in town over a period	2	0	0
Increase wider retail energy efficiency	1	5	0
Less cars-using car sharing etc	1	3	0
More materials especially plastics & food waste into 'recycling' stream	1	3	0
Local business carbon tax/carbon trading scheme	1	3	0
Ban patio heaters in pubs & restaurants	0	1	0
* Green indicates "Strong Support", Yellow = "Some Support", Red = Strong Disapproval"			

Table 1: Combined results from Option Prioritisation Exercise (ranked according to no. of green dots)

5.5 'Open Space' Discussion Session

This section summarises the Open Space Discussions from the workshops, along with notes on discussions during the course of the other workshop taken by the workshop facilitators and scribes in each of the other activities.

5.5.1 Get traffic moving by building more roads & bridges

This was the first of two measures intended to reduce emissions by reducing congestion and therefore getting traffic flowing more smoothly. The providing of more road space to conventional traffic was a contentious issue. Some participants saw the building of a 3rd (or even 4th) bridge across the Thames and additional roads as the only way to cope with current levels and future increases in road traffic. Others argued that increasing road space for cars and goods vehicles would lead to increased usage and that as the bridge option focused on only removing through traffic from Reading, this level of town centre traffic reduction could also be achieved by focussing on reducing levels of traffic with destinations inside the town centre by measures such as Park and Ride.

It was generally perceived that the need to undertake key actions lay with the Reading Borough Council, other councils and national government

5.5.2 Make it easier to walk & cycle with better routes & paths/ More cycle lanes (along key routes)

It was generally thought that there was a need for both the council, the Transport Forum, and groups like the Cycle Campaign to work together to help give both cycling and walking a higher priority in the hierarchy of transport modes (or a higher perceived priority for those using these modes).

Key areas for action included the construction and promotion of *networks* of routes for both cyclists and walkers and the need to build cycle lanes that separated cycles from other transport modes (including buses, taxis and pedestrians). In particular, it was suggested that surplus from the yearly transport budget should be prioritised for cycle lanes, that there needs to be a cohesive policy towards funding walking and cycling facilities through Section 106 agreements, and that work refurbishing pavements should always consider taking the opportunity to put in separate bicycle lanes.

Suggestions for helping make cyclists and pedestrians feel as though they were a higher priority including redesigning junctions and changing timings of traffic signals to give priority to pedestrians and cyclists, creating routes away from main traffic routes and encouraging tree planting along these, and increasing the number of (separated) contra-flow cycle lanes around the town. The river and railway crossings were particularly highlighted as places where improvements to cycle ways needed to be made.

Other issues that were suggested to help make cycling and walking easier and safer included: promoting walking bus schemes, increased (and more secure) cycle parking, encouraging provision of shower facilities in workplaces, provision of cycle training and 'Dr Bike' maintenance schemes, and promoting schemes such as those that allow employees to purchase tax free bikes through their workplace e.g. www.cyclescheme.co.uk.

5.5.3 Have very cheap or free bus travel in town

The measure put forward for reducing the cost of public transport was also closely related to the suggestion that services and timetabling needed to be improved. Whilst some felt that the £1.50 flat fare scheme worked well, others thought this still too expensive and a number of people did not like the 'No Change' policy. It was discussed that at some point it becomes cheaper to run a free (at point of use) bus system than to charge very low fares². However, many participants felt that the number of routes and running times (frequency and availability in the mornings and evenings) were a greater problem and that they would be happier to pay a reasonable fare if they felt that they received a reasonable service in return.

² It is worth noting that a number of cities in the UK, Europe and elsewhere run free public transport schemes (of varying sizes). Examples include Sheffield in the UK, Hasselt in Belgium, Portland and Seattle in the US, and Auckland in New Zealand.

Key areas for action included: the University promoting bus services more widely with students – possibly linked to concessionary fares for students, introducing zones to allow for cheaper fares in the Town Centre, and developing the integration of the bus system with other transport modes – including more park and rides and providing racks or other means to carry bicycles on buses.

5.5.4 Reduce Traffic/Improve traffic flow by better management

This option covered a wide range of issues, extending from reducing total traffic by demand management measures and encouraging a shift from cars to cycling and walking; to the naming of specific locations where it was felt that current signalling policies or other management measures were causing congestion and therefore increased pollution.

Some participants in the workshop held the view that traffic management policies were deliberately intended to cause congestion and hence deter the use of motor vehicles. This sometimes related to suggestion that over-arching measures such as congestion charging might reduce demand sufficiently and that remaining traffic could be allowed to flow freely – reducing the burden of both congestion and pollution. Other participants felt that any improvements in traffic flow would lead to increased traffic and gains would be soon lost, and therefore effort should be put into improving conditions and flow for walking, cycling and public transport in order to make these more attractive.

5.5.5 Regulate retail energy usage per m²

The activities throughout the workshops identified a wide range of activities that were leading to the high energy intensity of retail stores including heating, lighting and refrigeration policies. This measure sought specifically to look at ways that overall retail energy usage could be regulated.

There was a suggestion that individuals and campaigning groups could put pressure on local/national government to increase regulation, and also target campaigns on specific stores to try and get them to improve their environmental performance. As well as taking action such as boycotting inefficient stores, the use of the Town Centre market and other farmers markets should be encouraged.

Councils and national government were seen to have a role to play by using planning conditions and building regulations to prescribe and encourage energy efficiency measures. There was discussion as to whether the framework for business rates could be adjusted to take into account, not just floor space but energy usage. It was also discussed that energy pricing should be more carefully controlled to ensure reduced demand – especially with regard to policies that set lower tariffs for larger users.

5.5.6 Preservation of green spaces (back & front gardens, green belt allotments & park)

The loss of green spaces in town was seen as leading to a number of problems: reducing capacity for carbon dioxide and water absorption leading to both greater climate change and increased flood risk, changing the character of areas, making walking and cycling less attractive and therefore contributing to reduced fitness levels. In particular threats to school playing fields and allotments were cited.

Although it was felt there was little that individuals and communities could do, some still stressed the need for these groups to both protest and lodge formal complaints through the planning process. It was felt that local and national government policies should attempt to preserve green spaces in and around towns by preventing building on floodplains and allotments, but also that 'in-fill' development on small urban areas of green space (such as people's gardens) should also be discouraged. It was also suggested that developers should adopt policies to stop them intensively building on very small areas of land in the town.

5.5.7 Introduce congestion charging, based on road tax banding & other emissions levels, and use same principle on parking charges

At the Saturday workshop, Congestion Charging was put forward to the final Discussion Session as it had received an overwhelmingly negative response from the participants. During the discussion session whilst most workshop participants opposed the implementation of a uniform charge for everyone and anyone driving into or through the Town Centre, most expressed possible support for schemes that targeted certain types of vehicles or certain types of journey. However, it was noted that particularly with the journey types, there was little agreement on what the basis for charging should be – with some people wanting to deter through traffic, whilst others wanted to deter journeys ending in the Town Centre.

At the Tuesday workshop the measure developed more specifically to target certain vehicles based on emissions criteria. This was seen as means to directly reduce traffic (and consequently congestion and pollution) but also to help encourage the uptake of smaller, cleaner vehicles. It was acknowledged that it would be a controversial action with strong support from some people and not from others. It was highlighted that any measure like this would need to be very carefully marketed and promoted, and that the revenue would need to be hypothecated/ring-fenced for improving non-car based travel.

6 Conclusions

As with any questionnaire and workshop study, the sample of respondents and participants are inevitably towards those people with an above average degree of interest in the issues concerned. In the sample of 155 questionnaire respondents and around 25 workshop participants, only a very small number expressed the view that either climate change and/or air quality were unimportant or should not be given a high priority by the council.

This element of the consultation process has been intended as a step in the development of Reading Borough Council's Climate Change Strategy and Air Quality Action Plan. It is intended both to help ensure that popular concerns of Reading citizens are addressed by the CCS and AQAP, and also to provide new suggestions for actions or support for potential measures. It is strongly recommended for Reading Borough Council to undertake further consultation on the documents when they are completed, and to specifically include those people or groups that have been involved in the process reported here and have indicated an interest in further participation.

6.1 Key Issues Highlighted by the Consultation

6.1.1 Better information

The need for better information came from a number of different elements of the report. Questionnaire respondents highlighted the need for more information on air quality and climate change, both to enable them to take effective individual action themselves, and also to encourage them into taking action by providing them with knowledge of the actions of other people or organisations so that they did not feel their actions were isolated and insignificant.

The responses from the questionnaire also highlighted a need for the council to better publicise the work it does regarding air quality and climate change. The main response to the question on council actions was that people either believed the council were doing nothing, or that respondents did not know about anything the council were doing.

Responses from the workshops, particularly the quiz, indicated a need for more and better information, particularly on the causes of climate change within Reading. Throughout the consultation, road traffic got disproportionate blame for climate related emissions in Reading.

6.1.2 The council taking a lead

This point relates very closely to point made directly above. There was generally a willingness on the part of individuals to 'do their bit.' However in order to feel encouraged and supported in their actions, and to avoid developing a cynical perspective, respondents and participants expressed the view that although action was necessary at all levels of government (including the EU), the council had a particularly strong role in guiding local actions. This leading role was not just one of leading by example and getting their own house in order, but also one of encouraging and regulating the activities of individuals and businesses.

6.1.3 Trying to resolve the traffic issue

Overall, it seemed that issues with road transport dominated much of the consultation process. It was of interest to note that the focus was almost exclusively on personal transport issues and that there was little specific mention of goods traffic and measures which might relieve this (such as freight consolidation centres). As well as being the most cited problem or cause of problems, the suggested remedial actions also proved to be the most controversial. Opinion was very much divided over whether road-space should be expanded to allow for increasing traffic (including building additional Thames bridges), or whether traffic should be deterred through removal of road-space and re-prioritisation from cars to walkers, cyclist, public transport and High Occupancy Vehicle Lanes.

Congestion/road user charging was also a very controversial measure, however, when this was discussed in terms of being specifically targeted at unnecessary travel, or particularly polluting vehicles there was considerably stronger support for it. It was also acknowledged that this targeting of large and/or polluting vehicles could also be carried out through looking at parking levies rather than in-use charging.

The school run was particularly highlighted for criticism and it was felt that school selection procedures should take more account of where pupils lived, more school buses should be provided and schemes like walking buses promoted.

6.1.4 Giving non-car transport a higher (perceived) priority

Although traffic reduction would play a key role in helping to encourage people to cycle and walk more, there were many other potential actions highlighted. It is anticipated that the council's new cycling strategy may help promote many measures, and it may be helpful for the officers responsible to look at the consultation responses.

Key areas highlighted as desirable included higher priority at junctions (especially for cycles on mixed-use foot/cycle-paths), provision of properly separated cycle paths, the creation of a well-managed and well-publicised network of foot and cycle routes, the provision of more (and more secure) cycle parking in the Town Centre and station.

Public transport was seen as key area for improvement – particularly in terms of routes (especially to locations outside the town), evening services and price.

6.1.5 Businesses being encouraged/forced to take action

Businesses were highlighted throughout the process as having a poor image when it came to environmental performance – particularly the mainstream retail sector. They were identified as having a huge scope for influence through suppliers, customers and staff. However, few examples of good behaviour were identified. With its reputation as a leading retail centre, Reading is well positioned to find innovative ways of working in partnership to encourage better environmental performance from the commercial sector.

6.1.6 More attention to green spaces

Green spaces were seen as providing a range of environmental services, from forming pleasant non-motorised travel corridors, to assisting with climate change mitigation and adaptation by acting as carbon sinks and providing shade from heat and protection from flooding.

6.1.7 Better housing development

There was a strong perceived need for higher quality housing to be provided – particularly with regard to current building standards. Discussion in the workshops in particular aspired to very low, or 'zero' carbon buildings in all new developments. Some comment was also voiced about the quality – particularly with regard to energy efficiency - of existing housing which will continue to be the majority of provision for a considerable time, regardless of the numbers or quality of newbuild.

There was also concern about tendencies for infill development to go on inappropriate sites (gardens, recreational green space and school playing fields)

6.1.8 Regulation and enforcement

Too much of reliance was seen to be being placed on voluntary action on the part of individuals or businesses in terms of improving environmental performance. Whilst many people were prepared to take a wide range of actions to improve their environmental footprint, there was often a concern over the significance of their actions due to a lack of action by other polluters. Increased regulation and enforcement of good environmental practice would create a more level playing field and reduce opportunities some polluters to

try and benefit from inaction, but it would also help to encourage even well-meaning individuals to maintain a high level performance on a more regular basis.

Some of the key elements raised with regard to this included supermarkets – particularly in relation to packaging which gets passed on to become an individual's waste problem, and private landlords who do not provide well insulated, energy efficient accommodation.