



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Climate Action Strategy Consultation Report



Deborah Wyles
September 2023

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Purpose

1. To consult with a variety of stakeholders on the draft Climate Action Strategy. The purpose being to:
 - Measure the level of public support there is for South Kesteven District Council to tackle climate change
 - Determine the level of support from various stakeholders for the newly developed Climate Action Strategy
 - Understand which areas of activity are priorities for residents and the commitments they want to see from SKDC to help these happen

Scope

2. The scope of this consultation was to:
 - Focus on the Climate Action Strategy. It needed to determine if the CAS is a document which
 - Has the support of stakeholders
 - Communicates the ambitions of the Council with respect to climate change to those stakeholders
 - Will help the Council deliver its priorities in respect of climate change
 - Enable and allow stakeholders to articulate what they would like SKDC to focus on
 - Inform the Council's approach going forward

Objectives

3. The objectives of the consultation were identified as follows:
 - Measure the level of public support to address climate change within South Kesteven
 - Gauge the level of support for the strategy
 - Understand which areas of activity are the most important to stakeholders
 - Communicate the types of activity the Council has done/ will be able to do
 - Identify the actions they would like the Council to undertake – thereby informing the Climate Action Strategy Action Plan

Timescales

4. A briefing session was held with the portfolio holders for Environment and Waste – Cllrs Patsy Ellis and Rhys Baker, on the scope, approach and proposed questions on 9 June 2023. The survey was launched on 10th July and open for just over 4 weeks, closing on 7th August.

Stakeholders

5. The stakeholders were identified as follows:
 - Portfolio holders for the Environment (including Climate Change) – Cllrs Rhys Baker and Cllr Patsy Ellis

- Chair and Vice Chair of SKDC'S Environment Committee
- Residents of South Kesteven
- District Councillors for South Kesteven
- Town and Parish Councils
- Voluntary and Community Groups with an environmental focus
- Other organisations with an environmental focus. These include:
 - The Woodland Trust
 - The Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership
 - Lincolnshire Rivers Trust
 - Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust
 - Grantham Rivercare
 - South Lincolnshire Green Party
- Other statutory organisations with a responsibility for climate change
 - Lincolnshire County Council
 - The Environment Agency

Methodology

6. The table below identifies the method(s) that were used to contact the stakeholders:

Stakeholders	Method(s)	Details
Portfolio holders for Environment and Waste	Discussion took place with portfolio holders. Approval sought for approach and content of consultation.	CLlr Rhys Baker Rhys.Baker@southkesteven.gov.uk CLlr Patsy Ellis Patsy.Ellis@southkesteven.gov.uk
Residents of South Kesteven	Members of the public were made aware of the consultation through the following channels: Press release to the local press SKDC Social Media Channels SKDC website	Potential respondents referred to survey monkey to participate in the consultation. Alternatively, if absolutely necessary, they were able to email the Climate Change officer who would have sent them a printed copy of the survey. No requests were received. Press release prepared promoting the consultation to district. Release included the link to survey. Survey contained link to the draft strategy. Consultation promoted on social media channels - Facebook and Twitter. Posts included a link to the survey. Webpage of consultations updated to include information about the consultation.
District Councillors	District Councillors informed of the consultation via the weekly members email	Weekly members email prepared by CP.

Voluntary and Community Groups (with an environmental focus)	Contacted by email and asked to comment	CD and VH contacted voluntary and community groups
Organisations with an environmental focus	<p>The Woodland Trust</p> <p>The Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership</p> <p>Lincolnshire Rivers Trust</p> <p>Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust</p> <p>Grantham Rivercare</p> <p>Lincolnshire County Council</p> <p>The Environment Agency</p>	<p>Organisations contacted by SKDC's Climate Change Officer:</p> <p>enquiries@woodlandtrust.org.uk</p> <p>https://glnp.org.uk/contact-us</p> <p>lincsrivers@gmail.com</p> <p>info@lincstrust.co.uk</p> <p>Rivercare Grantham</p> <p>David Martin</p> <p>sustransranger@hotmail.com</p> <p>Ian Simmons</p> <p>iansimmons@icloud.com</p> <p>https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/comments-feedback/contact-us</p> <p>and then chose environment and planning</p> <p>enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk</p>
Town/Parish Councils in South Kesteven	Town/parish clerks contacted and asked to participate	Climate Change Officer contacted town and parish councils with link to consultation.

Details

- To help collect feedback about the draft Climate Action Strategy, the consultation officer was asked to support the consultation process during the spring of 2023. Actions undertaken by the consultation officer and the Sustainability and Climate Change Officer included:
 - Preparation of a press release to promote the consultation in the local press
 - Drafting of Facebook posts and Tweets to promote the consultation on the Council's social media channels Facebook and Twitter
 - Setting up a webpage to host the document
 - Emailing all parish councils, voluntary and community groups and organisations with an environmental focus
 - Preparing, designing and setting up the on-line survey
 - Analysing feedback from 175 respondents
 - Preparing a report

8. The survey¹ included the following sections:
- An introduction to the consultation. This included some context and background on the actions already undertaken by SKDC, including its declaration of a Climate Emergency
 - Section 1: The purpose of this section was to measure the degree of public support for South Kesteven District Council acting on climate change
 - Section 2: The purpose of this section was to determine the extent of public and other support for the Climate Action Strategy – both in principle but also content i.e. themes and the proposed approach
 - Section 3: The purpose of this section was to establish what stakeholders thought the council should be doing in the future to address climate change. It also asked them what they thought the council should focus on
 - Demographic information: This asked participants for their age, gender and first line of postcode
9. The opportunity to participate in the consultation was promoted both in the local media and on the Council's social media channels and website during the consultation period. Articles promoting the consultation were on the websites of both the Grantham Journal² and the Stamford Mercury³ on 12 July 2023. The Facebook posts reached 3,559 people and 37 clicked on the link. There were 994 views on Twitter and 8 clicks on the link.
10. Various stakeholders including parish councils and organisations with an environmental focus, were contacted at the start of the consultation.
11. The consultation opened on 10th July 2023. It closed a few days later than scheduled (7 August) to allow several Parish Councils a further opportunity to respond. 175 responses were received.

The results

12. The introduction to the survey set the scene. It informed respondents that the purpose of the strategy was to communicate the Council's approach to tackling climate change. It included various targets and commitments – and set out how SKDC plans to achieve its goals. For ease of reference, a link to the draft strategy was also available.
13. The first section of the survey focused on climate change, and asked respondents if they supported the commitments made by the Council in 2019, when it declared a climate emergency. The commitments were:

¹ Copy of survey attached at appendix one

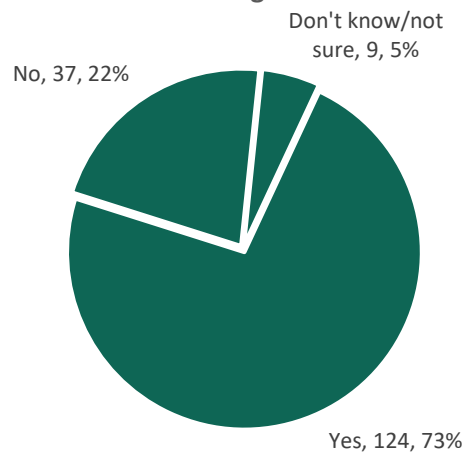
² [Have your say on South Kesteven District Council's strategy to tackle climate change \(granthamjournal.co.uk\)](https://www.granthamjournal.co.uk)

³ [Have your say on South Kesteven District Council's strategy to tackle climate change \(stamfordmercury.co.uk\)](https://www.stamfordmercury.co.uk)

- To reduce the carbon footprint of the Council by at least 30% by 2030 and
- To achieve net zero carbon as soon as is viable before 2050

14. When asked if they supported these commitments, most respondents (124 or 72.9%) said that they did, as illustrated in the chart below:

Q1. Do you support these commitments to act on climate change?

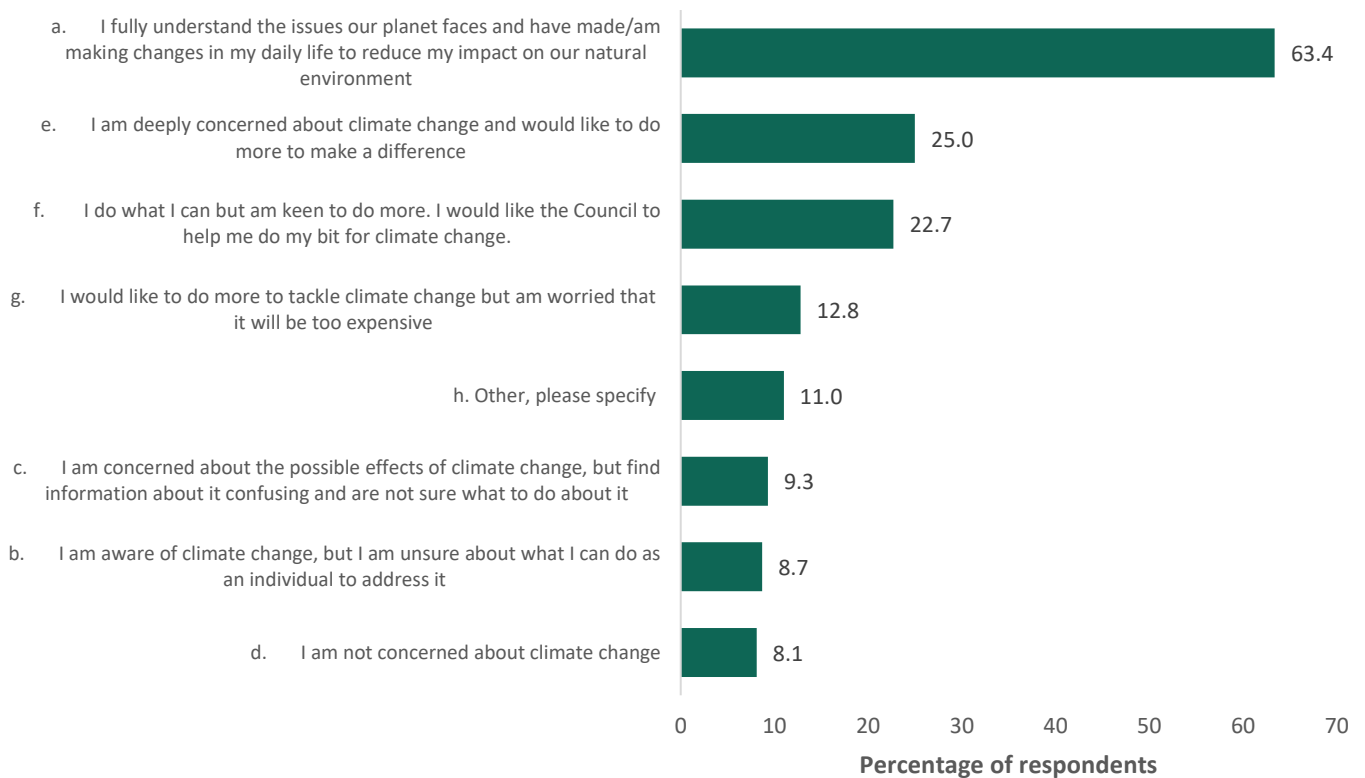


15. If respondents answered no or don't know/not sure, they were given the opportunity to explain why. An analysis of their comments revealed the following broad themes:

- Those who do not think climate change is happening
"It's all nonsense. Don't believe the climate change narrative."
- Those who believe in climate change but don't think the targets are ambitious enough
"They are not ambitious enough in terms of goals and dates"
- Those who object to the Council committing to tackling climate change on the grounds of cost
"because it costs too much money"

16. Respondents were then asked to pick the statement(s) which most closely resembled their stance or position on climate change. The choices ranged from "I am not concerned about climate change" through to "I fully understand the issues our planet faces and have made/am making changes in my daily life to reduce my impact on our natural environment". The percentage of respondents choosing each of the seven statements is illustrated in the graph below:

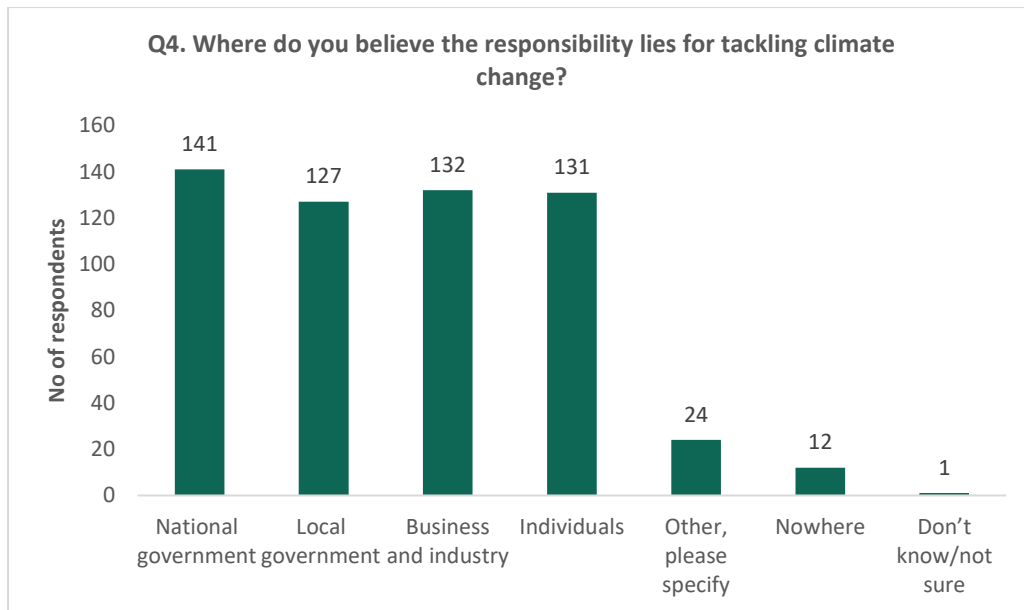
Q3. Which of the following statements most closely describe your position on climate change?



17. The most popular choice was the statement which included a commitment to changing behaviour to protect the environment. Two thirds of respondents (109 or 63.4%) chose this option. The next most popular choice illustrated a commitment to want to do more. (43 or 25%) There was also support for the Council to do more to help (39 or 22.7%). Perhaps not surprisingly, given the current cost of living crisis, costs were also a factor – chosen by one in ten responding (22 or 12.8%).

18. Nineteen respondents (11%) chose other. Some were frustrated and deeply concerned that not enough is being done, others were worried but thought there was little point unless there is global commitment.

19. When asked to say where they believe the responsibility lies for tackling climate change, the responses were interesting. Most respondents thought that the responsibility lay equally with both local and national government, businesses, and individuals. This is illustrated in the bar chart overleaf:



20. The second section of the survey asked respondents to comment on the content of SKDC's Climate Action Strategy. Respondents were informed that the strategy includes a three-part framework for action to reduce carbon emissions which have been categorised into:

- short term targets (2023 to 2025)
- medium term targets (2025 to 2030)
- Longer term targets (2030 and beyond)

21. They were also told that there are three main areas of focus:

- To continue to reduce carbon emissions from council activities
- To work in partnership with district wide stakeholders to achieve net zero carbon
- To adapt to the impacts of climate change at a local level

22. When asked if they agreed with these areas of focus, just over three quarters of respondents said that they did. (128 or 76.2%). 40 respondents (23.8%) answered no or don't know/not sure and were given the opportunity to say why. An analysis of their comments revealed the following broad themes:

- Those requesting that the targets included in the strategy are SMART⁴

"The plan must include specific and measurable targets with a specified time."

- Those wanting to see more of an emphasis on adaptation as well as mitigation

"But report doesn't deal much with adaptation."

⁴ Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely

- Those requesting more of a focus on actions which can be undertaken by individuals and households too

“Maybe individual households”

23. When asked if they thought South Kesteven District Council’s draft Climate Action Strategy provides enough information about the challenges posed to residents and the district by a changing climate, just under half (66 or 45.8%) thought that it did. Over a third of respondents (51 or 35.4%) didn’t think that it did, with the remainder choosing to answer don’t know/not sure. This is perhaps not surprising given the number of comments received in relation to the targets that have been set and how they need to be more challenging.
24. When asked what else they would like to see, there was a lot of support for providing a smaller and more concise document -summarising the Council’s approach. Participants also wanted to see more detail on how targets will be achieved and more emphasis on the challenges and dangers posed by climate change.

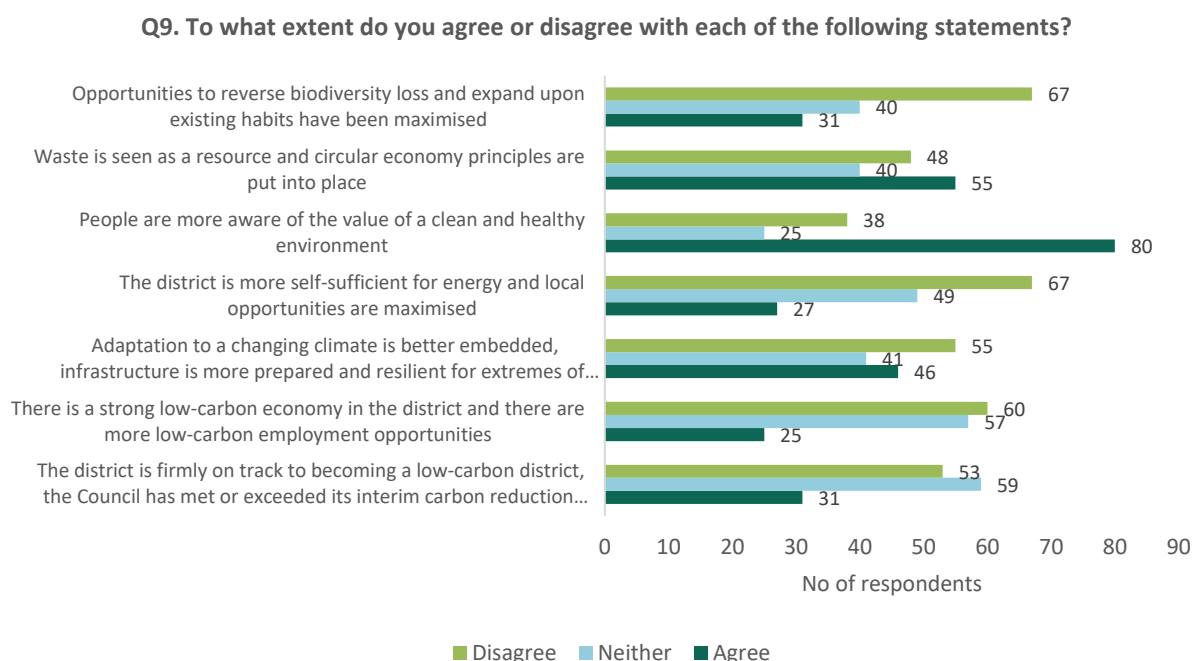
“The strategy is not targeted enough. It is far too long and muddled”

“More info on carbon reduction targets”

“there are only a few lines that talk about the challenges and dangers we face through climate change”

25. Seven statements were included in the strategy. These set out SKDC’s vision for 2030 with respect to climate action. Respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each.
- The district is firmly on track to becoming a low-carbon district, the Council has met or exceeded its interim carbon reduction target
 - There is a strong low-carbon economy in the district and there are more low-carbon employment opportunities
 - Adaptation to a changing climate is better embedded, infrastructure is more prepared and resilient for extremes of weather
 - The district is more self-sufficient for energy and local opportunities are maximised
 - People are more aware of the value of a clean and healthy environment
 - Waste is seen as a resource and circular economy principles are put into place
 - Opportunities to reverse biodiversity loss and expand upon existing habits have been maximised

26. The responses to this question were interesting. There were more respondents who disagreed with the statements reflecting specific actions and outcomes than agreed with them. This might be because they weren't convinced that the statements could be achieved. The two exceptions were waste being seen as a resource and people being aware of the value of a clean and healthy environment. This is illustrated in the graph below:



27. When asked if there was anything else they thought the strategy should include, several very constructive comments were received. They included comments on water security, targets, actions and deliverables, requests for more of an emphasis on mitigation and adaptation, and more information for individuals and households on how they can contribute. The importance of ensuring that the strategy is closely linked to SKDC's Local Plan – particularly in respect of any new development taking place – was also mentioned. These are illustrated in the quotes below:

“Water security and watercourses”

“I think there needs to be much clearer and specific targets with a clear route to achieving them”.

“SKDC needs to be making specific plans for climate change adaptation and resilience to protect its inhabitants from the serious challenges ahead (i.e., heat, drought, flooding and other predicted climate change emergencies).”

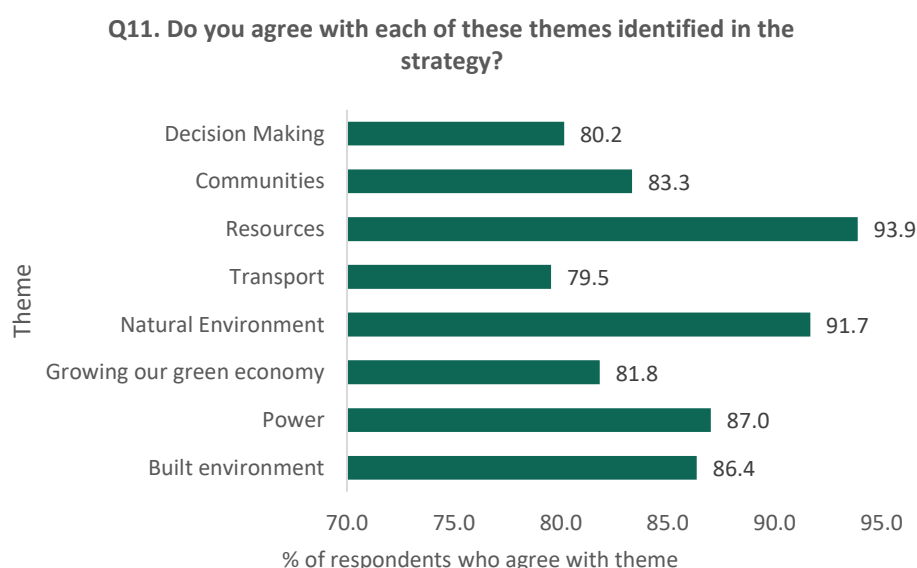
“Support individual efforts to reduce carbon use & generation, e.g., solar hot water and electricity generation on houses.”

“Use their planning powers to force changes in the construction industry with both new build and renovation planning.”

28. SKDC's draft Climate Action Strategy identified eight priority areas or themes to help address climate change and adapt to the impacts of a changing climate. These are:

- **Built Environment** - To lead local action on improving home energy efficiency, embed low carbon principles into new developments and to make public buildings more efficient
- **Power** - To deploy renewable energy for Council properties, facilitate wider renewable energy opportunities for the district and to support energy efficiency opportunities
- **Growing our green economy** - To boost the number of low carbon businesses in South Kesteven, provide support for skills for a low carbon economy and ensure the Council uses its purchasing power to help deliver the benefits of net zero
- **Natural Environment** - To manage Council owned green spaces to benefit wildlife, support tree planting and biodiversity projects, and help to deliver improvements in wild habitats for new developments
- **Transport** - To work to embed public transport and active travel for everyday journeys and ensure South Kesteven has a high-quality network of electric vehicle charging points
- **Resources** - To support a reduction in waste produced in South Kesteven and boost waste reused, recycled or composted
- **Communities** - To communicate and engage with the South Kesteven community on climate change and adaptation to a changing climate, and develop policies and projects which provide a fair transition, ensuring that no resident is left behind
- **Decision making** - To ensure the Council responds to climate change in all areas of service delivery, and reviews where finance can be raised to deliver key projects within the district

29. There was strong support for each of these themes. The graph below shows the percentage of respondents who agree with each of them:



30. When given the opportunity to mention any other priority areas they thought the strategy should include, the following additions were suggested:

More emphasis on walking and cycle routes, and better public transport – particularly in rural areas

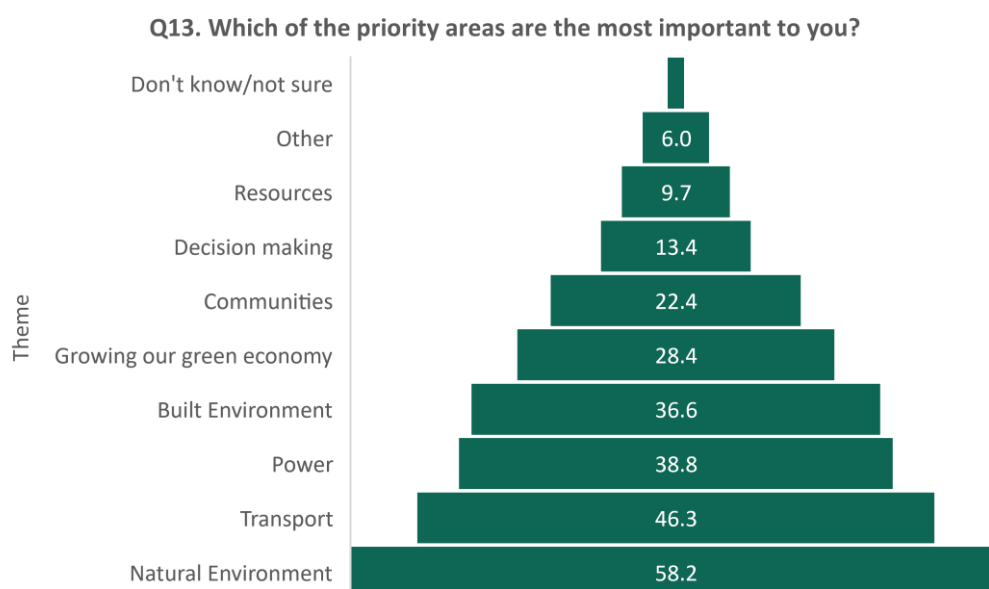
“Encourage cycling as a form of local transport.”

“Making public transport more accessible to rural villages”

Taking steps to reduce reliance on animal agriculture

“a shift away from meat and dairy should be a big area of focus”

31. Keen to establish if there was any difference in how respondents viewed each of the priorities, they were then asked to choose which they thought were the most important. Given instructions to choose at least one but no more than three, the percentage of respondents choosing each of the themes is illustrated in the chart below:



32. This provides a clear view of what respondents think is important.

33. When asked what they thought the Council should focus on going forward, the themes were similar to those that have been expressed previously. These include ensuring new developments are carbon neutral, educating individual households on how they can contribute, and protecting green spaces. Examples of the comments made are listed below:

“I would like to see more done in terms of making sure yav approved new developments are carbon neutral”

“...also help educate local residents on how to use less processed foods, so that there is less packaging, healthier lifestyles, more into compost bins than waste bins....”

“Not building on green fields”

34. When asked if they thought that as well as helping district residents adapt to the impacts of a changing climate, South Kesteven District Council should also develop local solutions to reduce carbon emissions, three quarters of respondents (96 or 74.4%) agreed with this approach. Suggestions included a community plan which sets out the lifestyle changes people should expect and a focus on local energy initiatives.
35. Respondents were given one last opportunity to raise any additional observations they might have about the Climate Action Strategy. The word cloud below shows the key concepts they raised.



WordItOut

Demographics

36. To see how representative those who responded to this consultation were of the stakeholders asked to participate in this consultation, respondents were asked to supply some demographic information. Of those who chose to answer this question, most were residents (116 or 90.6%). There were also responses from those representing various organisations and community groups with an environmental focus (16 or 12.5%), as well as parish, district and county councillors (18 or 14.1%).⁵

37. A slightly higher proportion of males responded to this survey than females (64 or 50.4% compared to 55 or 43.3%). Comparing these results to those of the district's population⁶ revealed that the sample is broadly representative in terms of gender as illustrated in the table below:

Gender	% (sample)	% (PopIn)	Weight
Male	53.8	48.0	1.1
Female	46.2	52.0	0.9
Total	100.0		

38. The majority of responses were received from people aged between 35 and 74 (110 or 85.9%). Only a handful of responses were received from those under 35 (4 or 3.2%). This should be kept in mind when looking at the results. An effort should be made to engage with younger people.

39. The table below shows where responses to this consultation were received from. Most responses were from the urban areas of NG31, PE9 and PE10. There were no responses from the rural area of the district NG23.

Postcode	Number	%
NG23	0	0
NG31	30	23.4
NG32	5	3.9
NG33	5	3.9
NG34	5	3.9
PE6	6	4.7
PE9	51	39.8
PE10	17	13.3
Prefer not to say	6	4.7
Other, please specify	3	2.3
Total	128	100.0

⁵ Please note respondents could tick more than one option. % has been calculated on total number of responses

⁶ Based on ONS population estimates 2023 - total =145,558. M 69901 F 75657

Conclusion

40. The feedback from this consultation has been extremely constructive. Whilst broadly supportive of the themes, areas of focus and priorities, some respondents thought there were some areas which were far too important to have not been included. These included a focus on what individual households can do to contribute towards targets, and much more of an emphasis on adaptation and mitigation. Quite a few thought that the strategy needed to be shorter, with more of a focus on outcomes and targets which are specific and measurable.
41. This is reflected in the answers to the question which asked respondents if they thought the Climate Action Strategy provided enough information on the challenges posed by climate change. Whilst just under half (66 or 45.8%) thought that it did, over a third of respondents (51 or 35.4%) didn't, with the remainder choosing to answer don't know/not sure.
42. Members are asked to note the results of this consultation and approve changes to the Climate Action Strategy which address the comments and concerns of respondents.

Prepared by Deb Wyles
Communications and Consultation
18 September 2023