



Introduction – Report on Climate Emergency Response Plan Engagement – November 2024

The Council's current Climate Emergency Response Plan is being refreshed and as such we wanted to engage with our residents and stakeholders to help to shape the new Plan.

The Response Plan covers all sectors of our economy, and the engagement aimed to identify the key priorities that respondents feel the Council and the wider borough should act on.

The themes and priorities were developed through engagement with internal and external stakeholders before being put forward for wider engagement with residents. This was a process led by the Climate Change Team, in partnership with colleagues from Housing, Transport, Waste, Economic Growth, Biodiversity, Environmental services, Public Health, and a range of other internal stakeholders. This process has also been shaped by our Climate Emergency Taskforce, on which a range of partner organisations are represented, including the NHS, the University of Chester, local environmental groups, Chester Zoo, the Environment Agency, alongside our Councillors and other stakeholders.

The results of the engagement will be used to help develop a draft of the full Climate Emergency Response Plan which will later be consulted on in Winter 2024.

How the engagement was carried out

The engagement was open from 26 July to 1 September 2024. Residents and stakeholders were invited to take part by visiting the online Climate Emergency Response Plan webpage where they could complete a survey, submit ideas on how to tackle climate and nature emergencies, and pin where climate action is currently taking place on a map. People could also attend one of the five in-person drop-in sessions which were held in Northwich, Winsford, Ellesmere Port, Malpas and Chester. People were also able to respond to the engagement by email, letter or telephone.

In addition, three focus groups were held, two with members of the Council's Citizens Panel, and one with young people who attend Cheshire College South and West, and the outputs are included in the report below for completeness.

Communication methods to ensure that key stakeholders were made aware of the engagement and given the opportunity to have their say included emails to key stakeholder organisations, a Member Briefing, communications via the Climate Newsletter which has more than 5000 subscribers, social media, and attendance at community meetings.



The engagement received a total of 474 responses, comprising of 421 survey responses, 18 ideas board contributions, 33 people attending focus groups and drop-in sessions, and 2 emails received.

Key messages:

Across all responses received in response to the engagement the following considerations were identified by respondents as the most important:

- The importance of a rapid transition to renewable energy for all forms of energy use. This is demonstrated in the survey related to Energy, where 47 out of 57 respondents thought that “Enabling renewable (e.g. wind, solar, hydro-electric) energy generation in west Cheshire” was very or fairly important.
- That businesses should be supported to become more environmentally sustainable, such as via using renewable energy, suggestions on how to do this included monitoring their supply chains to use lower-carbon products and services, insulating their premises, and by improving the efficiency of their processes. This is demonstrated in the survey related to industrial and commercial emissions, where 33 out of 46 respondents felt this was very or fairly important. That local places should be designed to promote active and low carbon travel. This is demonstrated in the survey resulting to transport, where 113 respondents of 125 categorised this as very or fairly important.
- That the Council should promote energy efficiency in new build homes by reviewing the elements of the local planning framework relating to this, by lobbying government, and by setting a positive example. This is demonstrated in the survey related to housing, where 58 of 60 respondents indicated higher standards of energy efficiency for new build housing was very or fairly important.
- The importance of conserving nature, by ensuring that nature is a factor in all decision making, by promoting biodiversity, and by planting and preserving trees (and other forms of natural carbon sinks). This is demonstrated in the survey related to land use, where 63 of 68 respondents see this as very important or fairly important.
- That residents should be supported with information to enable them to reduce, reuse and recycle effectively. This is demonstrated in the survey related to waste and recycling, where 49 of 61 respondents considered this very or fairly important.

The outputs of the focus group sessions, including key messages, is included on page 18.

The following section presents an overview of the responses on a section-by-section basis, and key messages received.

Summary of engagement findings:

The engagement findings include feedback from the survey, ideas boards, the interactive map and emails.

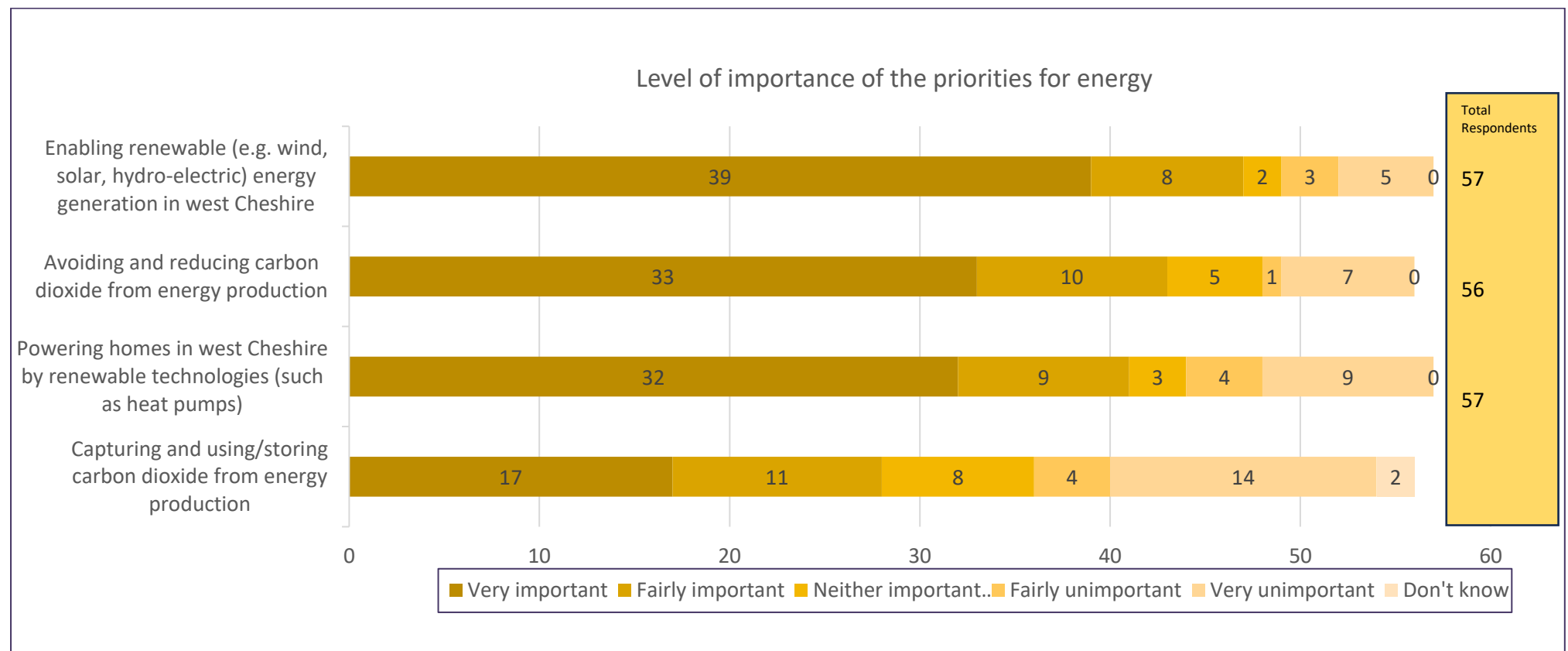
Detailed survey and online engagement feedback

There were six themes that people could choose to respond to with a survey and ideas board for each theme.

Energy

In the survey about energy respondents were asked: 'How important, or unimportant, do you think each of the following priorities are to help respond to the 'energy' challenges and opportunities related to climate change in west Cheshire?'

Graph 1: Level of importance of the priorities for energy





Enabling renewable (e.g. wind, solar, hydro-electric) energy generation in west Cheshire: Very important: 39, Fairly important: 8, Neither important nor unimportant: 2, Fairly unimportant: 3, Very unimportant: 5

Avoiding and reducing carbon dioxide from energy production: Very important: 33, Fairly important: 10, Neither important nor unimportant: 5, Fairly unimportant: 1, Very unimportant: 7

Powering homes in west Cheshire by renewable technologies (such as heat pumps): Very important: 32, Fairly important: 9, Neither important nor unimportant: 3, Fairly unimportant: 4, Very unimportant: 9

Capturing and using/storing carbon dioxide from energy production: Very important: 17, Fairly important: 11, Neither important nor unimportant: 8, Fairly unimportant: 4, Very unimportant: 14, Don't know: 2

The graph above shows that 47 out of 57 respondents thought that “Enabling renewable (e.g. wind, solar, hydro-electric) energy generation in west Cheshire” was very or fairly important. 43 out of 56 respondents answered that “Avoiding and reducing carbon dioxide from energy production” was very or fairly important. 41 out of 57 respondents felt that “Powering homes in west Cheshire by renewable technologies (such as heat pumps)” was very or fairly important. 28 out of 56 respondents felt that “Capturing and using/storing carbon dioxide from energy production” was either fairly or very important, with 8 respondents saying this was neither important nor unimportant, and 17 answering it was fairly unimportant or very unimportant.

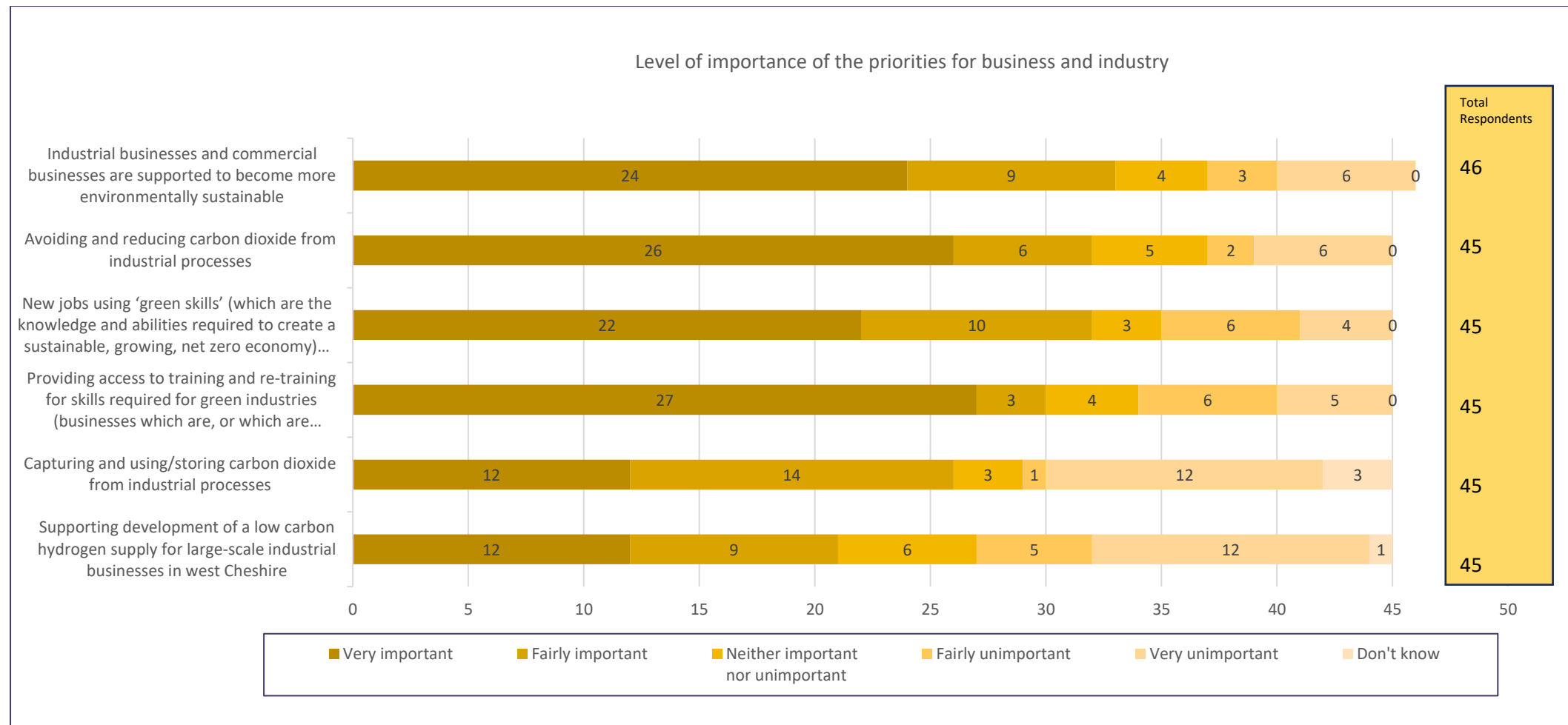
Respondents were also asked to share any comments on the priorities for energy. Feedback was collected through the survey, ideas board and map. In total, 60 comments were received via the survey and the key messages from the comments included:

- Some respondents thought that solar panels and heat pumps should be installed wherever possible, including the roofs of car parks and large commercial buildings.
- Some respondents felt that support and advice was needed for households to transition to renewable energy.
- Some respondents felt that carbon capture encourages the continued use of fossil fuels.
- Some respondents felt fossil fuel use should be stopped as soon as possible.

Industry and Business

In the survey about industry and business respondents were asked: 'How important, or unimportant, do you think each of the following priorities are to help respond to the business and industry challenges and opportunities related to climate change in west Cheshire'.

Graph 2: Level of importance of the priorities for business and industry





Industrial businesses and commercial businesses are supported to become more environmentally sustainable
. Very important: 24, Fairly important: 9 Neither important nor unimportant: 4, Fairly unimportant: 3, Very unimportant 6, Don't Know: 0

Avoiding and reducing carbon dioxide from industrial processes. Very important: 26, Fairly important: 6, Neither important nor unimportant: 5 Fairly unimportant: 2: Very unimportant 6:
Don't Know: 0

New jobs using 'green skills' (which are the knowledge and abilities required to create a sustainable, growing, net zero economy) in west Cheshire:
Very important: 22, Fairly important: 10, Neither important nor unimportant: 3: Fairly unimportant: 6 Very unimportant: 4, Don't know: 0

Providing access to training and re-training for skills required for green industries (businesses which are, or which are working towards net zero) in west Cheshire: Very important: 27,
Fairly important: 3, Neither important nor unimportant: 4, Fairly unimportant: 6, Very unimportant: 6 Don't know: 0

Capturing and using/storing carbon dioxide from industrial processes: Very important: 12, Fairly important: 14, Neither important nor unimportant: 3, Fairly unimportant: 1, Very
unimportant: 12 Don't know: 3

Supporting development of a low carbon hydrogen supply for large-scale industrial businesses in west Cheshire. Very important: 12, Fairly important: 9, Neither important nor
unimportant: 6, Fairly unimportant: 5, Very unimportant: 12, Don't Know: 1

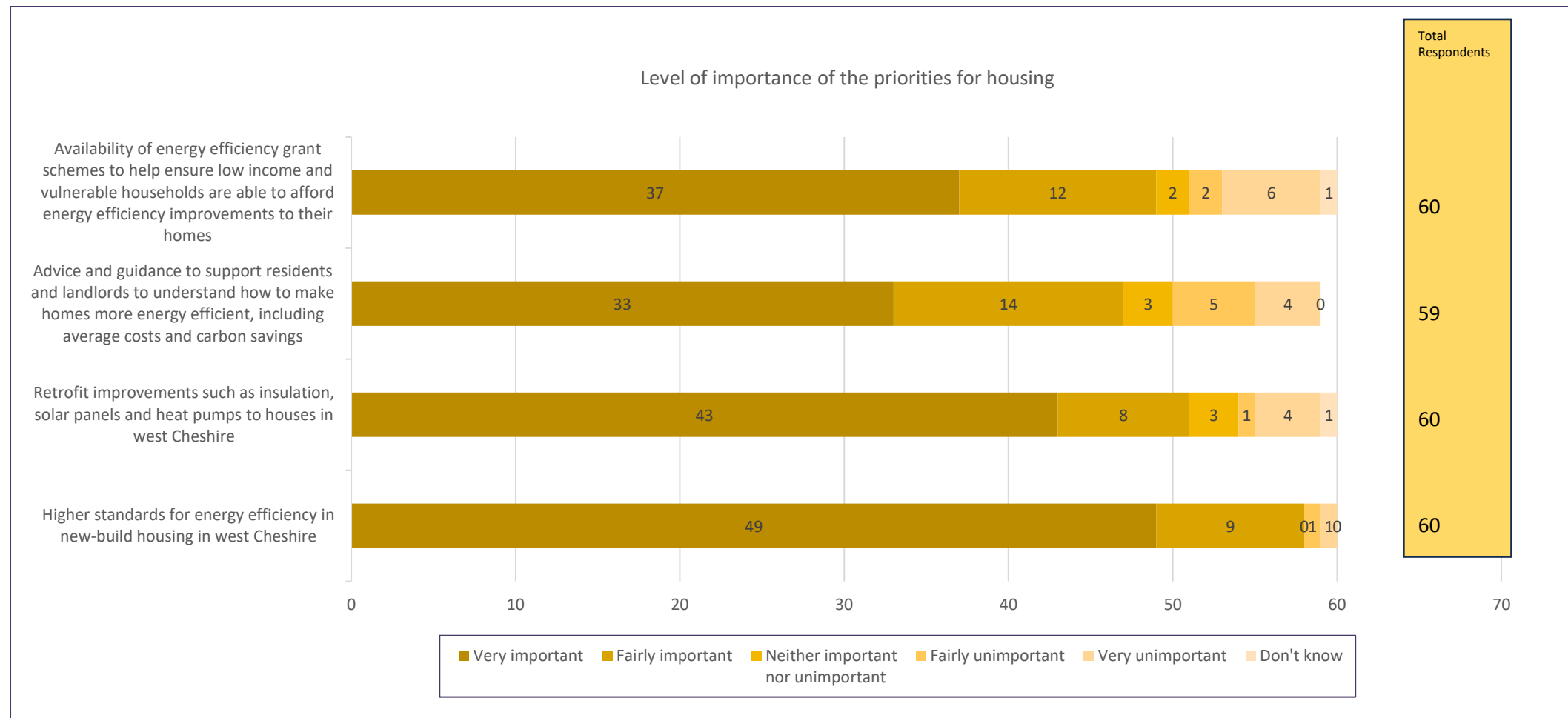
Respondents were also asked to share any comments on the priorities for business and industry. Feedback was collected through the survey, ideas board and map. In total, 50 comments were received and the key messages from the comments included:

- Some respondents thought that carbon capture and storage is insufficiently proven, and promotes the continued use of fossil fuels.
- Some respondents thought that different types of hydrogen have different climate impacts, and this needs further research.
- Some respondents thought that existing businesses need support to reduce their carbon emissions such as via their procurement, processes and on-site energy use.

Housing

In the survey about housing respondents were asked: 'How important, or unimportant, do you think each of the following priorities are to help respond to the housing challenges and opportunities related to climate change in west Cheshire'

Graph 3: Level of importance of the priorities for housing





Availability of energy efficiency grant schemes to help ensure low income and vulnerable households are able to afford energy efficiency improvements to their homes: Very important: 37, Fairly important: 12, Neither important nor unimportant 2 Fairly unimportant: 2, Very unimportant 6 Don't know 1

Advice and guidance to support residents and landlords to understand how to make homes more energy efficient, including average costs and carbon savings: Very important: 33, Fairly important: 14, Neither important nor unimportant 3 Fairly unimportant: 5, Very unimportant 4 Don't know 0

Retrofit improvements such as insulation, solar panels and heat pumps to houses in west Cheshire: Very important: 43, Fairly important: 8, Neither important nor unimportant 3 Fairly unimportant: 1, Very unimportant 4 Don't know 1

Higher standards for energy efficiency in new-build housing in west Cheshire: Very important: 49, Fairly important: 9, Neither important nor unimportant 0 Fairly unimportant: 1, Very unimportant 1 Don't know 0

The results show that the majority of respondents agreed that these priorities were either very or fairly important.

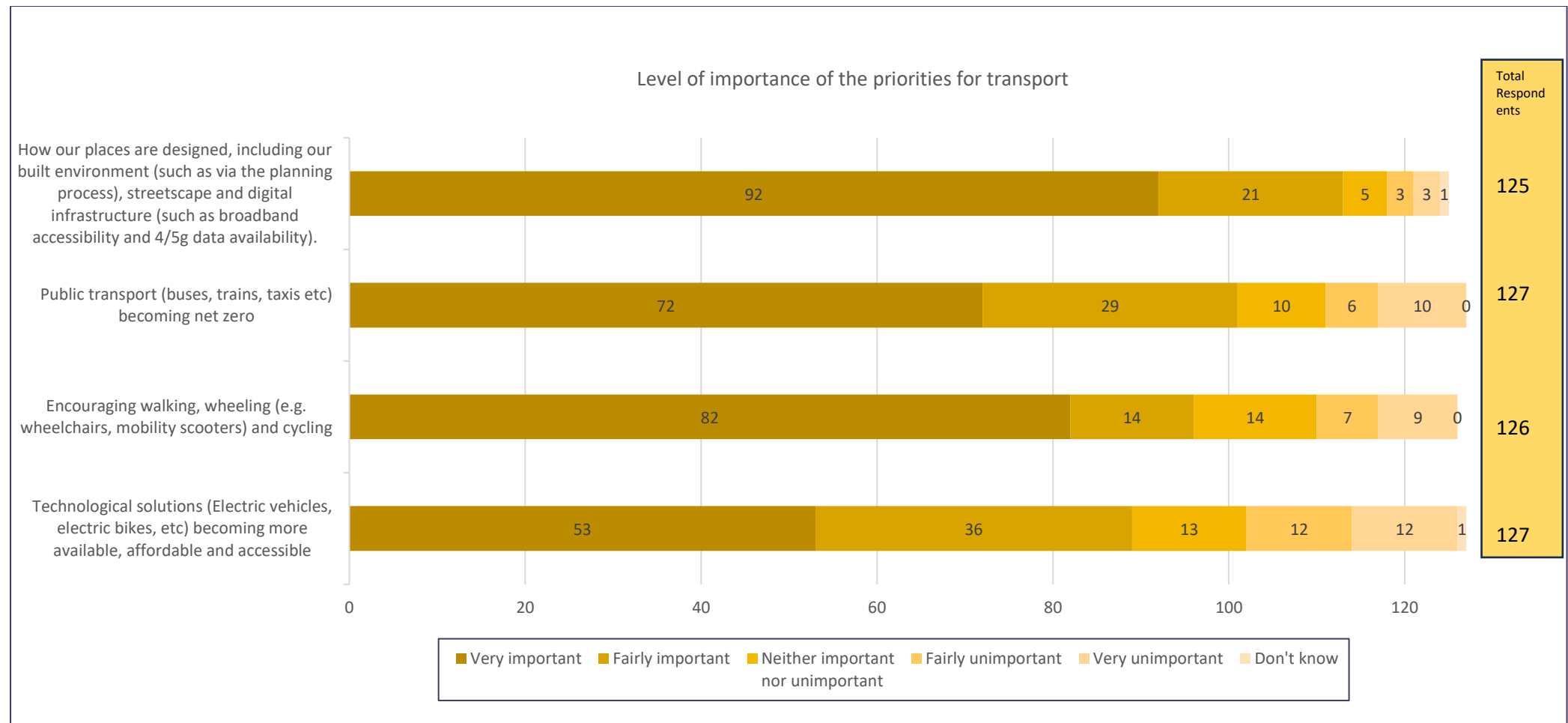
Respondents were also asked to share any comments on the priorities for housing. Feedback was collected through the survey, ideas board and map. In total, 63 comments were received and the key messages from the comments included:

- Some respondents thought that all new builds should be as energy efficient as possible, and that this should be required by the Council's planning department.
- Some respondents thought that grants to support people to improve the energy efficiency of their homes should be available to all.
- Some respondents thought that information on energy efficiency measures should be made easily available, to ensure people know what measures will make an impact in their home.

Transport

In the survey about transport respondents were asked: 'How important, or unimportant, do you think each of the following priorities are to help respond to the transport challenges and opportunities related to climate change in west Cheshire'

Graph 4: Level of importance of the priorities for transport





- For making technological solutions like electric vehicles and electric bikes more available, affordable, and accessible, 53 out of 127 respondents consider it very important, 36 see it as fairly important, 13 as neither important nor unimportant, 12 view it as fairly unimportant, another 12 as very unimportant, and 1 didn't know.
- Regarding encouraging walking, wheeling (e.g., wheelchairs, mobility scooters) and cycling, 82 respondents rated it as very important, 14 as fairly important, 14 as neither important nor unimportant, 7 as fairly unimportant, 9 as very unimportant, with none unsure.
- For public transport (buses, trains, taxis, etc.) becoming net zero, 72 respondents consider it very important, 29 see it as fairly important, 10 as neither important nor unimportant, 6 as fairly unimportant, 10 as very unimportant, with none selecting 'don't know'.
- Concerning the design of our places, including our built environment (such as through the planning process), streetscape, and digital infrastructure (like broadband accessibility and 4/5G data availability), 92 respondents find it very important, 21 fairly important, 5 neither important nor unimportant, 3 fairly unimportant, 3 very unimportant, and 1 didn't know.

The results show that the majority of respondents agreed that these priorities were either very or fairly important.

Respondents were also asked to share any comments on the priorities for transport. Feedback was collected through the survey, ideas board and map. In total, 158 comments were received and the key messages from the comments included:

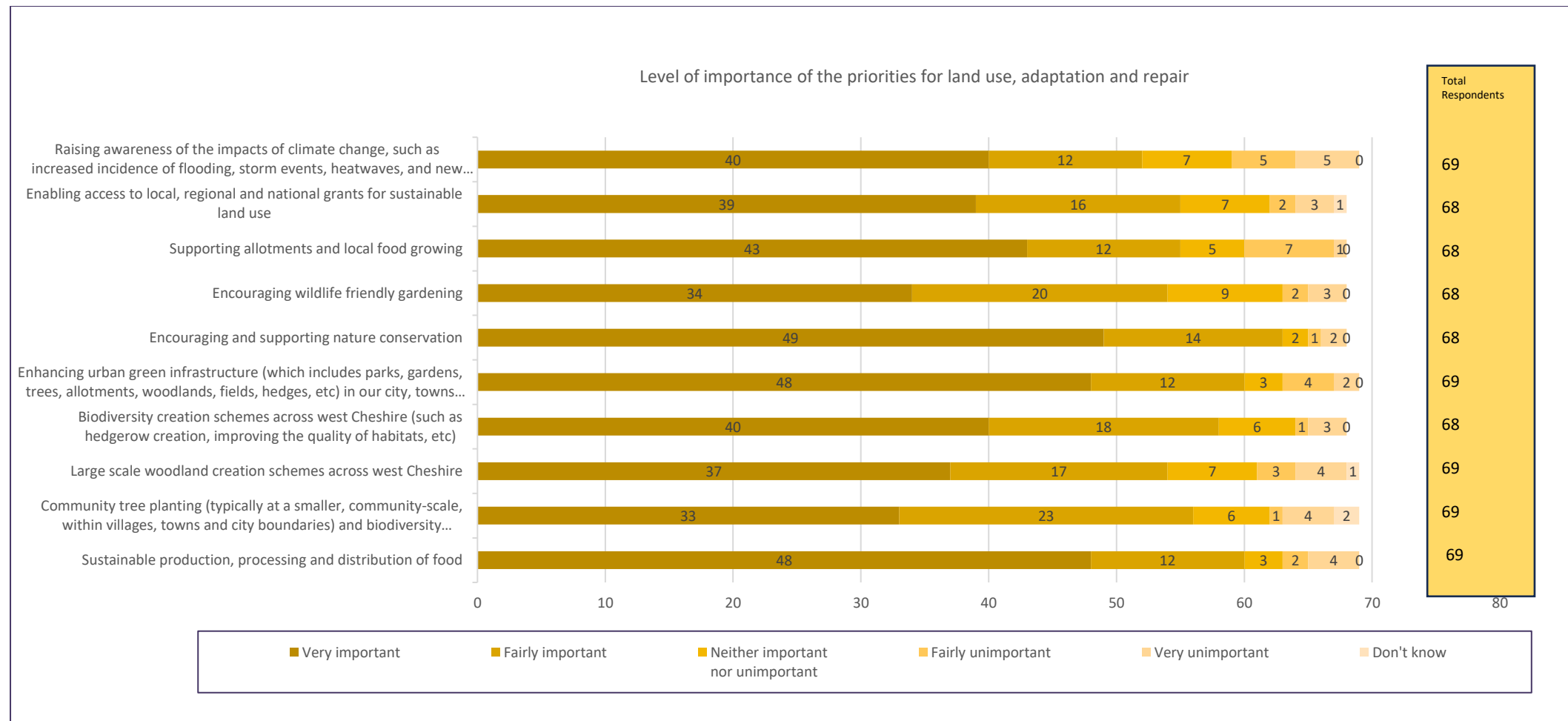
- Some respondents thought that active travel options such as walking, wheeling and cycling should be strongly supported by the Council, partners and central Government.
- Some respondents thought that bus and train travel should be strongly supported by bus and rail operators, the Council, partners and central Government.
- Some respondents thought that bus and trains should be less expensive, to make them more accessible to people of all income levels.

The engagement also received feedback from the Youth Senate, which commented on the importance of accessible transport for young people. They expressed that it sometimes felt unsafe walking or cycling to school, especially where there was not dedicated walking or cycling infrastructure. They felt there should be an increase in investment in public transport infrastructure, and that fares should be capped permanently to enable more people to access public transport.

Land Use, Adaptation and Repair

In the survey about land use, adaptation and repair respondents were asked: 'How important, or unimportant, do you think each of the following priorities are to help respond to the land use, adaptation and repair challenges and opportunities related to climate change in west Cheshire'

Graph 1: Level of importance of the priorities for land use adaptation and repair





- Sustainable production, processing, and distribution of food: 48 respondents consider it very important, 12 fairly important, 3 neither important nor unimportant, 2 fairly unimportant, 4 very unimportant, with none unsure.
- Community tree planting and biodiversity schemes: 33 respondents rate it as very important, 23 as fairly important, 6 as neither important nor unimportant, 1 as fairly unimportant, 4 as very unimportant, and 2 didn't know.
- Large scale woodland creation schemes across West Cheshire: 37 consider it very important, 17 fairly important, 7 neither important nor unimportant, 3 fairly unimportant, 4 very unimportant, and 1 didn't know.
- Biodiversity creation schemes across West Cheshire: 40 respondents find it very important, 18 fairly important, 6 neither important nor unimportant, 1 fairly unimportant, 3 very unimportant, with none unsure.
- Enhancing urban green infrastructure: 48 rate it as very important, 12 as fairly important, 3 as neither important nor unimportant, 4 as fairly unimportant, 2 very unimportant, with none unsure.
- Encouraging and supporting nature conservation: 49 respondents view it as very important, 14 as fairly important, 2 as neither important nor unimportant, 1 as fairly unimportant, 2 very unimportant, with none unsure.
- Encouraging wildlife-friendly gardening: 34 rate it as very important, 20 as fairly important, 9 as neither important nor unimportant, 2 as fairly unimportant, 3 very unimportant, with none unsure.
- Supporting allotments and local food growing: 43 consider it very important, 12 fairly important, 5 neither important nor unimportant, 7 fairly unimportant, 1 very unimportant, with none unsure.
- Enabling access to local, regional, and national grants for sustainable land use: 39 respondents find it very important, 16 fairly important, 7 neither important nor unimportant, 2 fairly unimportant, 3 very unimportant, and 1 didn't know.
- Raising awareness of the impacts of climate change: 40 rate it as very important, 12 as fairly important, 7 as neither important nor unimportant, 5 as fairly unimportant, 5 very unimportant, with none unsure.

The results show that the majority of respondents agreed that these priorities were either very or fairly important.

Respondents were also asked to share any comments on the priorities for land use adaptation and repair. Feedback was collected through the survey, ideas board and map. In total, 71 comments were received and the key messages from the comments included:

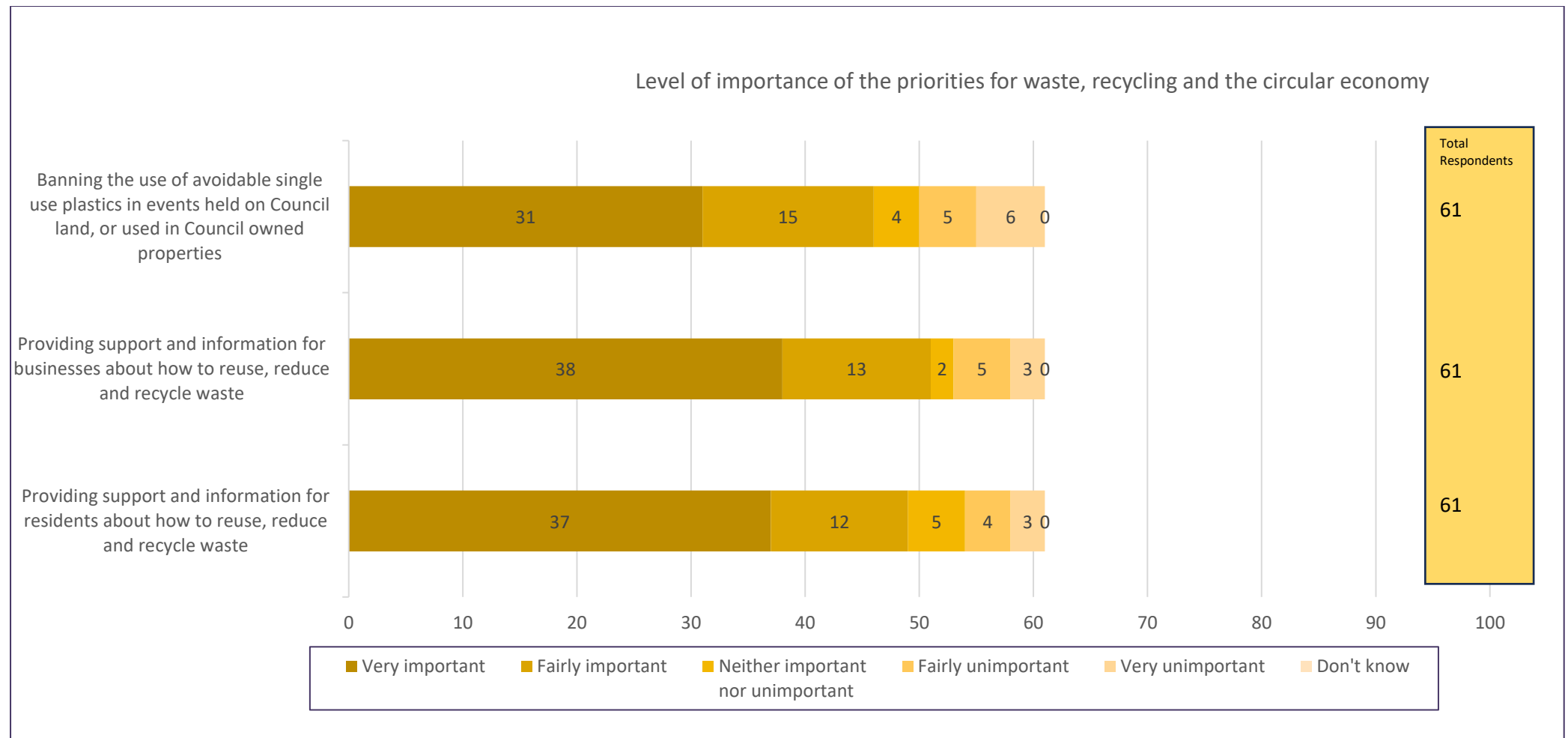
- That tree planting should be encouraged and funded by central government.
- That the natural environment should be considered in all decisions, and that brownfield land (land that has been previously developed, that is under-utilised) should be reused.
- That farming practices should be adapted to promote a sustainable food supply, suggestions on how to do this included using more regenerative agricultural techniques (utilising less artificial fertiliser, among other methods).

The Council also received an email with detailed comments primarily related to the Council's approach to tree and woodland management, and biodiversity creation, which recommended that a long-term, asset based approach to trees and woodland be adopted.

Waste, Recycling and the circular economy.

In the survey about waste, recycling and the circular economy respondents were asked: How important, or unimportant, do you think each of the following priorities are to help respond to the waste and recycling challenges and opportunities related to climate change in west Cheshire'

Graph 1: Level of importance of the priorities for waste, recycling and the circular economy





- Providing support and information for residents about how to reuse, reduce, and recycle waste: 37 respondents consider it very important, 12 fairly important, 5 neither important nor unimportant, 4 fairly unimportant, 3 very unimportant, with none unsure.
- Providing support and information for businesses about how to reuse, reduce, and recycle waste: 38 respondents rate it as very important, 13 as fairly important, 2 as neither important nor unimportant, 5 as fairly unimportant, 3 very unimportant, with none unsure.
- Banning the use of avoidable single-use plastics in events held on Council land, or used in Council-owned properties: 31 consider it very important, 15 fairly important, 4 neither important nor unimportant, 5 fairly unimportant, 6 very unimportant, with none unsure.

The results show that the majority of respondents agreed that these priorities were either very or fairly important.

Respondents were also asked to share any comments on the priorities for waste, recycling and the circular economy. Feedback was collected through the survey, ideas board and map. In total, 55 comments were received and the key messages from the comments included:

- That single use items such as some single use plastics should be banned by the Government, with advice provided on alternatives.
- The importance of education on reuse/recycling.
- That rewards should be provided for reuse and recycling.

Detailed focus group feedback

Three in-person focus groups were carried out with different groups of people to understand residents' views on three key topics, housing, transport and food.

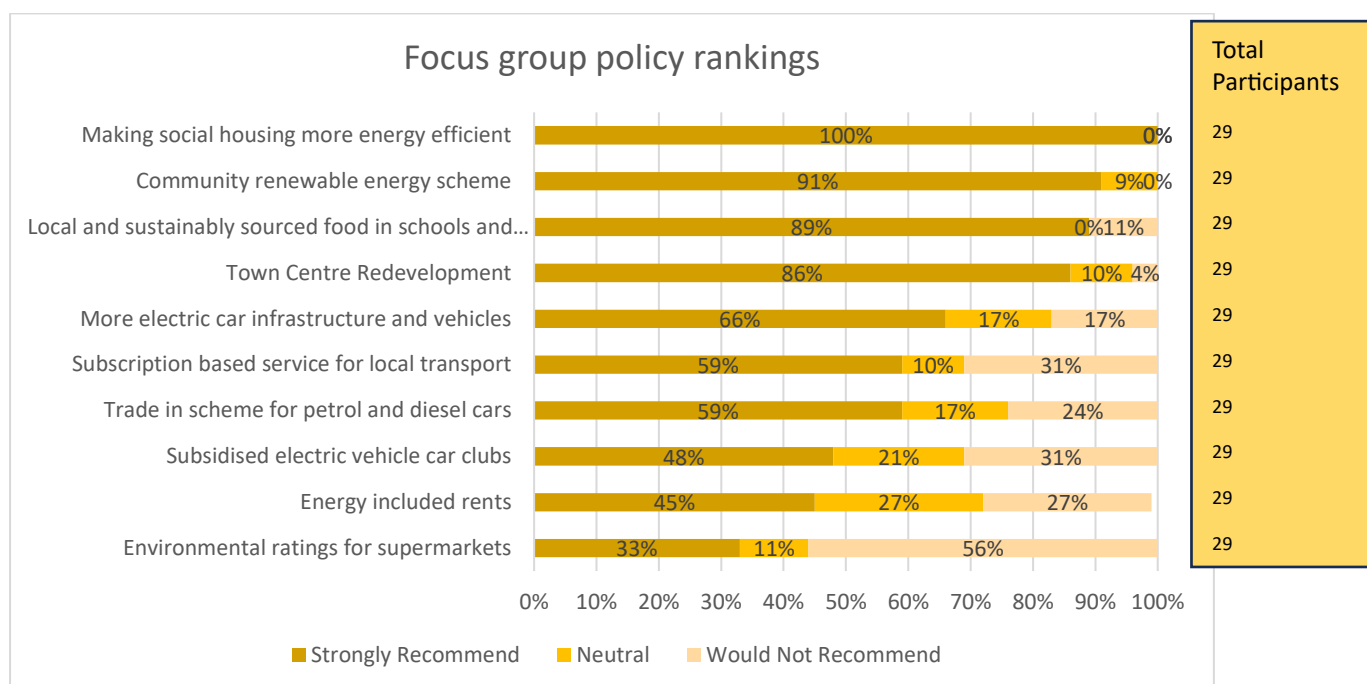
Two groups were with members of the Council's Citizens Panel (the Participate Panel), and one group was with young people who attend Cheshire College South and West. The focus groups were carried out by NESTA, a charity specialising in innovation for social good. NESTA used a structured method, involving ipads for interactive polling followed by discussion on people's choices as a way to explore the topic.

In total, 29 participants attended the discussion groups. Each group focused on two topics. One group considered housing and transport, while the other two considered transport and food. In total, across the 3 groups, housing was discussed by 11 participants, transport by 29 participants, and food by 18 participants.

This was captured as quantitative data to provide consistency between the focus groups. A limited amount of qualitative feedback was also captured, and the key messages were as follows:

- **EV infrastructure:** Some residents felt that significant investment was needed in EV infrastructure to reduce concerns on range and charging. Some participants felt that EVs will reduce in cost over time as production ramps up. Some felt that the quietness of EV vehicles was dangerous.
- **Town Centre Regeneration:** Some participants felt that reducing the number of empty shops will help create more vibrant town centres. Some felt that rural public transport is limited, and more public transport should be used. However, others felt that money should be spent on roads rather than town centre regeneration.
- **Mobility as a service:** Some participants felt that the reason they did not use public transport was because they did not want to be dependent on others, and that they could play their own music. Some felt that mobility apps might work better in larger cities than smaller towns. Some participants felt that a mobility app would be more suitable for younger people.
- **Fairness:** Some participants felt that organisations need to do more to communicate and bring communities along with them on a journey, rather than change too fast. Some felt that accurate information was needed on the cost of change. Some said that tax was rising too fast considering the services provided. Others felt that we needed to pay for change, and that positive community spirit was required.

The qualitative priorities of the participants are set out below.



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1. 100% of participants strongly recommended the proposal to make social housing more energy efficient.
2. 91% of participants strongly recommended the proposal to support community renewable energy schemes. 9% were neutral.
3. 89% of participants strongly supported locally sourced food in schools and hospitals. 11% would not recommend this.
4. 86% of participants strongly supported proposals to redevelop town centres. 10% were neutral. 4% would not recommend this.
5. 66% of participants strongly supported more electric car infrastructure and vehicles. 17% were neutral. 17% would not recommend this.
6. 59% of participants strongly supported proposals for trade in schemes for petrol and diesel cars. 17% were neutral. 24% would not recommend this.
7. 59% of participants strongly supported a subscription-based service for local transport. 10% were neutral. 31% would not recommend this.
8. 48% of participants strongly supported subsidised electric vehicle car clubs. 21% were neutral. 31% would not recommend this.
9. 45% of participants strongly supported rent which include energy bills. 27% were neutral. 27% would not recommend this.
10. 33% of participants strongly supported environmental ratings for supermarkets. 11% were neutral. 56% would not recommend this.

Email responses

The engagement process received one response from the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE), which commented on a range of priority areas within the engagement. Below are some of the key messages from this response.

- Transport:
 - It was noted that the Council had progress to make on decarbonising transport and recommended the adoption of CPRE's approach to prioritising which modes of transport people should be supported to use, prioritising digital communications, active transport infrastructure (such as walking and cycling), public transport, and sustainably fuelled vehicles.

¹ This graph shows whether focus group participants, having taken part in the session and heard from the facilitator and their peers, would recommend, were neutral about, or would not comment this policy proposal.

² Source: Nesta. Available in web format via: <https://strategyroom.uk/explore>

To access results from all CW&C sessions, select Filters, "Council", and then select Cheshire West and Chester Council.



- **Housing:**
 - It was noted that the Council would benefit from setting out how much it would cost to retrofit homes in the area and recommended that the new Local Plan (the area's planning framework, set by the Council) should set high requirements for developments in respect of their environmental credentials.
- **Land Use, Adaptation and Climate Repair:**
 - It was recommended that more thought was given to the title of the section, suggesting that it be re-focused on biodiversity and natural capital.
- **Energy:**
 - CPRE's solar rooftop campaign was noted, alongside an opposition to renewables (such as solar and wind) being installed on agricultural land.
- **Waste, Recycling and the Circular Economy**
 - The CPRE praised the Council for their recycling performance and suggested that more information could be provided on current recycling performance to ensure residents and stakeholders are informed of progress.

Next steps

All the feedback from the engagement will be used to help draft the full Climate Emergency Response Plan. The draft Plan will set out the detail for what achieving the priorities would entail, and the actions that will be required to achieve the priorities.

A consultation on the draft Climate Emergency Response Plan will take place in the winter of 2024.

Appendix 1- profile of respondents who completed a survey

Table 1: Who took part

	Energy	Transport	Business	Housing	Waste, recycling and circular economy	Land use, adaptation and repair
A local Resident	52	117	42	55	58	63
A local business	3	2	2	2	3	4
An employee of CWAC	0	6	4	1	2	2
An elected member of CWAC	1	1	1	1	1	0
An elected town or parish councillor in CWAC	3	1	0	2	2	2
A representative of a partnership organisation	2	1	0	1	1	1
A member of a voluntary or community organisation	6	13	8	7	5	5
Other	1	6	2	1	0	2

Table 2: Gender

	Energy	Transport	Business	Housing	Waste, recycling and circular economy	Land use, adaptation and repair
Male	27	64	24	27	30	33
Female	16	41	12	20	26	29


<div> Cheshire West & Chester Council Climate Emergency Response Plan engagement  </div>						
Prefer to use own term	0	1	1	1	0	0
Prefer not to say	5	12	4	4	2	3

Table 3: Age group

	Energy	Transport	Business	Housing	Waste, recycling and circular economy	Land use, adaptation and repair
Under 16	0	1	0	0	0	0
25 - 34	3	1	5	4	2	25
35 - 44	7	15	2	7	9	5
45 - 54	4	16	6	6	10	8
55 - 64	11	27	9	12	14	18
65 - 74	14	28	14	19	16	14
75+	6	6	3	2	4	8

Table 4: Illness, health issue or disability

	Energy	Transport	Business	Housing	Waste, recycling and circular economy	Land use, adaptation and repair
Yes	4	16	9	6	6	9
No	40	92	30	42	49	47

Table 5: Disability profile of respondents

	Energy	Transport	Business	Housing	Waste, recycling and circular economy	Land use, adaptation and repair
Physical impairment that causes mobility issues, e.g. wheelchair user	1	4	0	1	1	4
Visual Impairment	1	2	1	1	1	2
Mental Health issue	1	5	3	3	2	3
Hearing impairment	0	1	1	1	0	1
Learning disability or difficulty	0	1	0	0	0	1
Long standing issue or health condition	3	8	6	5	6	5
Other	1	5	2	1	1	2

Table 6: Ethnicity

	Energy	Transport	Business	Housing	Waste, recycling and circular economy	Land use, adaptation and repair
White - English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	42	93	33	41	50	53
White – Irish	0	2	0	1	0	0
White - Any other White background	1	4	0	0	2	0

<div>Cheshire West & Chester Council</div> <div>Climate Emergency Response Plan engagement</div> 						
Asian or Asian British - Chinese		2	0	1	0	1
Prefer not to say	6	13	6	8	0	6
Other	0	1	1	1	4	0

Accessing Cheshire West and Chester Council information and services

Council information is also available in audio, Braille, large print or other formats. If you would like information in another format or language, including British Sign Language, please email us at:

equalities@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

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email: equalities@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

web: www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk