THE BIG CLIMATE CONVERSATION

Findings from a programme of public engagement on climate change

January 2020

CONTENTS

MINISTERIAL FOREWORD

2020 is a crucial year for tackling the global climate emergency.

In October 2019, the Scottish Parliament passed our new Climate Change Act, which commits Scotland to some of the most ambitious emissions reduction targets in the world. If we are to achieve this increased ambition, Scotland's response to climate change must be a truly national endeavour and everyone in Scotland has a role to play.

Expert advice has been clear that over 60% of measures to achieve net-zero emissions will require at least some level of change in the way society operates. For this reason, it is vital for the Scottish Government to meaningfully involve individuals in these decisions through constructive public engagement. We want to hear directly from Scottish people as we continue our transition to net-zero emissions.

Launched in June 2019, The Big Climate Conversation has engaged with thousands of people from across Scotland. I've witnessed first-hand the enthusiasm and passion that people brought to these workshops, which has been incredibly heartening to see.

Thank you to all who participated in The Big Climate Conversation. This report shows the breadth and value of the discussions that took place. I look forward to these discussions continuing as Scotland progresses further to a net-zero society during the important years ahead.

Roseanna Cunningham; Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Big Climate Conversation engaged over 2,500 people in Scotland over a six month period in a discussion about Scotland's response to tackling the global climate emergency.

Conversations took place across the whole country in a variety of formats, with events held in over 80% of local authority areas. Participants had the chance to discuss with others the national and societal changes required to transition to a net-zero emissions society.

Participants were able to engage in a variety of different ways. Ten open-audience workshops were held, this included a specific event in Stirling focused at a youth audience. A further 5 facilitated events were held that were specifically targeted at participants with lower prior engagement in climate change. A 'How-To Guide' was also created to enable communities to hold their own conversation events and submit their feedback. This was further supported by a small-grants fund to encourage new audiences to engage in the process. An online event was also held on Twitter.

Due to the differing audiences that engaged in the different workshops, a wide variety of responses was received. For example participants at the 10 open audience workshops were clear in saying they did not think government targets were ambitious enough. This response differed when talking to audiences who were less engaged in climate change issues.

Across responses there was widespread support for increased action on climate change in a variety of areas. A full analysis of sectoral discussions is included within the report.

Although there was a wide range of views expressed throughout The Big Climate Conversation, a number of cross-cutting issues emerged:

1. A holistic and system-wide approach

Participants thought all actions proposed were important, but suggested that they need to be taken forward as part of an integrated plan rather than as individual strands.

2. Government leadership

There was a consensus amongst participants that Government needs to change 'the system' so that low carbon behaviours become the most convenient or only option.

3. A just transition

Participants stressed that action to address climate change should not exacerbate inequalities and, where possible, should reduce them.

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

Background

In April 2019, Scotland's First Minister declared a global climate emergency. Since then, a new Climate Change Act has been adopted by the Scottish Parliament, setting a net-zero emissions target for all greenhouse gases by 2045, and new targets for 2030 and 2040.[1]

The UK Committee on Climate Change (CCC) has been stark in saying that achieving the net-zero emissions target will require a fundamental change in approach, "from the current piecemeal approach that focuses on specific actions in some sectors to an explicitly economy-wide approach".[2] The CCC estimates that less than 40% of the required changes will be achieved through low carbon technologies or fuels alone. Most of the action needed to meet the net-zero target will require some behavioural or societal changes.

Scotland's response to the global climate emergency must, therefore, be a national endeavour, involving all sectors of society. It is more important than ever that everyone understands the nature and scale of the challenge and has the opportunity to have their say on how the country should respond.

Launched in June 2019, The Big Climate Conversation was a collaborative, nationwide dialogue to discuss Scotland's response to the global climate emergency. Through a number of different strands of activity, the Scottish Government has heard from individuals, communities, businesses and public sector organisations in Scotland about the difficult decisions and societal changes that are needed to tackle climate change.

This report focuses on the findings from the strands of The Big Climate Conversation that were aimed at engaging the public in conversations about climate change in the context of their everyday lives, including their homes, communities, workplaces, and schools. The Big Climate Conversation has also included other activities aimed at engaging businesses and public sector institutions, such as the 'Mission Zero Business Summit' and an online consultation on the role of public sector bodies in tackling climate change,[3] and the findings from these events will be reported separately.

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[1] Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2019/15/enacted

[2] Committee on Climate Change (2019) Net Zero: The UK's contribution to stopping global warming
https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Net-Zero-The-UKs-contribution-to-stopping-global-warming.pdf

[3] Scottish Government (2019) The role of public sector bodies in tackling climate change: consultation
https://www.gov.scot/publications/role-public-sector-bodies-tackling-climate-change-consultation/

Aims

The public engagement programme of The Big Climate Conversation was established with four key aims:

1. Allow people to share their views on climate change and how Scotland should respond to the global climate emergency;
2. Gauge public perceptions on behaviour and policy changes required to transition to a 'net-zero emissions' society;
3. Ascertain the steps and decisions the public are prepared to take in response to the global climate emergency;
4. Contribute to awareness-raising on climate change amongst those currently not engaged with the topic.

The views shared are being used to inform the Scottish Government's new 'Public Engagement Strategy' for climate change, to be published in 2020, which will act as the blueprint for the government's approach to engaging with the public on climate change. The views shared are also being used to inform an update to the current Climate Change Plan.

SECTION 2: THE ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

The different types of conversations

The Big Climate Conversation was deliberately designed with the aim of enabling participation from everyone who wanted to have their say. The objective was to gather voices from a wide range of locations and backgrounds, as well as from people with varying levels of engagement with the issue of climate change. This objective guided the design of a programme of different types of public engagement activities, which comprised a mix of face-to-face and online engagement, as well as both government-organised and community-organised events.

The programme contained the following core strands:

- 15 Facilitated workshops
- 110 community-led conversations
- A digital conversation

1) FACILITATED WORKSHOPS (JUL - NOV 2019)

The Big Climate Conversation began with a series of workshops, organised and facilitated by a non-governmental organisation. Following a competitive procurement process, the Scottish environmental charity, Keep Scotland Beautiful (KSB) was appointed to deliver these workshops.

KSB ran three types of workshops in 14 different locations around Scotland (see Figure 1):

i. **9 x large, 'open-audience workshops'.** Attendance was open to any individual who was interested in participating.
ii. **1 x 'youth workshop'.** Attendance was restricted to participants aged 11 – 26 years old to ensure that the voices of young people were represented.
iii. **5 x focussed 'targeted-audience workshops'.** Attendance was by invitation only to enable participants with lower pre-existing engagement in climate change conversations to be intentionally recruited via a screening questionnaire.

With the exception of the youth event, all workshops were held from 17:30 to 19:30 on weekday evenings to enable maximum participation. The youth event was held from 13:00 to 15:00 during school summer holidays. Refreshments were provided at all workshops.
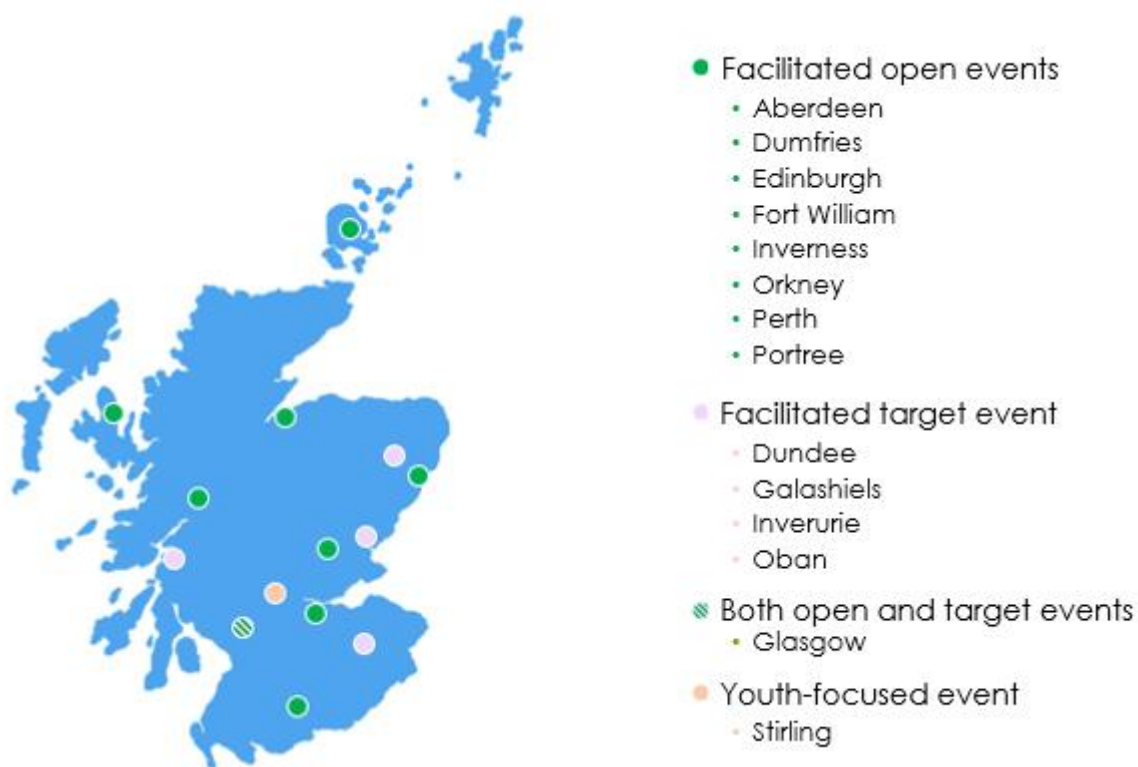
Figure 1: Map of facilitated workshops

Workshop Format

All three types of workshop followed a very similar format. Each event was two hours long and was run as a guided conversation between participants, led by a facilitator positioned at the front of the room. Participants were asked to record their views, either by writing in a specially-designed workshop booklet or by using a web-based tool via their mobile phones (www.sli.do). Full details of the workshop agenda and format, including the discussion topics and activities used, are presented in the Technical Annex accompanying this report.

Targeted event in Glasgow

The content of the workshops was slightly adjusted in response to participant feedback from the first event in Glasgow. Participants found there to be too much emphasis throughout the workshop on individual behaviour change as a solution to tackling climate change. Therefore, the discussion topics and questions were reframed in future workshops to encourage participants to consider societal change more broadly, including actions by government and business as well as individuals and communities.

The youth event followed the same basic structure as the other events, addressing the same overarching questions. However, this event was led by a facilitator with specific experience of working with young people. She made minor adjustments to the language to ensure that discussion topics were appropriate for a younger audience.

Modifications were also made for the targeted-audience workshops to ensure the content was appropriate for an audience with little or no prior knowledge of climate change. In addition, the final activity, a 'readiness ruler' where participants were asked to determine what would help them be more ready for each change, was omitted to allow more time to discuss challenges to societal changes and how these challenges could be overcome.

Recruitment of participants

Each of the three types of workshop were aimed at a different audience and involved a different recruitment procedure.

i) Open-audience workshops (July – September)

These events were designed to allow members of the public to participate in a face-to-face workshop. It enabled individuals who were interested in being part of The Big Climate Conversation with a chance to engage directly with others through a facilitated discussion event. The events were widely advertised and promoted on our various social media pages (@ScotGovClimate) and between 75 and 135 tickets were available for each event (depending on the venue capacity). Anyone was welcome to register to attend online (via Eventbrite) and attendance was free of charge.

ii) Youth workshop (24th July)

This event was promoted through a range of local and national youth organisations. This workshop was also promoted on social media platforms with the specification that it was a "youth-focused group targeted at participants aged 11 – 26". The Eventbrite registration was also organised in a way that prevented registration by individuals older than 26 to make sure that all available spaces were reserved for younger participants.

iii) Targeted-audience workshops (September – November)

The targeted-audience workshops were organised with the specific aim of encouraging participation from people with limited prior engagement in conversations about climate change. Events were held in five locations: Dundee, Oban, Galashiels, Glasgow, and Inverurie and participants were purposively recruited through a two-stage process:

- Stage 1: Widespread advertising in the area via social media, posters in places of high footfall and adverts in the local press. People who were interested to attend were invited to register their interest online which involved completing a short screening questionnaire. (See Technical Annex for screening questions used).

- Stage 2: Selection of participants from the pool of those who had registered. The screening questions were used to identify individuals who appeared to be least engaged in climate change while maintaining demographic diversity (particularly with respect to gender and level of education).

These workshops were designed to be smaller than the open-audience events to enable closer facilitation and greater guidance on discussion topics. Therefore, a maximum of 25 places were available at each event. Unlike the open-audience workshops, participants were offered a £25 cash incentive to attend, which meant that there were very few no-shows on the day.

2) COMMUNITY-LED CONVERSATIONS (AUG - NOV 2019)

The community-led conversations strand of The Big Climate Conversation was designed to enable participation from those people who had not been able to attend a facilitated workshop. The aim was to encourage and assist communities to host their own Big Climate Conversations and submit their views directly to the Scottish Government via a feedback form. The Scottish Government provided support for these community-led conversation events in two ways:

1. How-To Guide

    A 'How-To Guide' was developed to lead participants through the series of discussion topics and questions used in the facilitated workshops. The guide was downloadable from the Scottish Government website and also available on the Impact Funding Partners webpage. Between the two locations, the guide was accessed over 800 times.

To reduce the burden on participants and encourage more communities to take part, the feedback form was much simpler and shorter than the data collection form used at the facilitated workshops. Each group was asked to submit a single form that reflected the collective findings and opinions of the entire group, rather than individual feedback forms for each participant.

2. A Grant Fund

Administered by Impact Funding Partners, up to £300 was available to community groups to cover the costs of organising and hosting a Big Climate Conversation. Each community group could apply to run up to two conversations. The fund was open for applications from 8 August until 31 October 2019. In total, Scottish Government provided £17,770.22 in funding for 71 conversations led by 61 different community groups.[4]

In total, 110 feedback forms were received from 99 community groups that held funded or unfunded events across Scotland, with at least one event taking place in over 80% of Scottish local authorities (26 out of 32), from the Scottish Borders to the Shetland Islands, Aberdeenshire to Eilean Siar (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Map of community-led conversations

3) DIGITAL CONVERSATION (22 AUGUST)

The final strand of the public engagement programme for The Big Climate Conversation was the digital conversation. Hosting a conversation online was an important way to ensure that individuals who were unable to take part in a workshop or a community event were still able to have their voices heard.

The digital conversation took place on the Scottish Government's Climate Change Twitter page (@ScotGovClimate) between 12:30 – 14:30 on 22 August. The questions mimicked those used in the facilitated workshops and were posed through a combination of tweet text and images overlaid with text. Participants were encouraged to engage with the

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[4] 10 funding applications were rejected either because they did not meet the required criteria or because individual groups submitted applications for funding for more than two conversations.

Twitter questions either by replying directly to the post or by tweeting their opinions using the hashtag '#BigClimateConversation'. In total, 82 responses were received during this digital conversation. The hashtag was live for the duration of The Big Climate Conversation public engagement series, which enabled people to share their views before and after the events.

Analysis of responses

The different strands of activity allowed participants to submit responses through a variety of channels. Whilst the central questions asked of participants in each strand of The Big Climate Conversation were similar, the format in which responses were submitted were quite different.

Keep Scotland Beautiful analysed the data collected from the facilitated conversations, including the youth workshop and the targeted-audience workshops. Facilitator notes from each of the five targeted-audience workshops were analysed and compared with the written responses to identify any additional themes that had not been identified in the Slido and booklet data. The format of the feedback forms from the community-led conversations did not mirror those used in the facilitated workshop and these were therefore coded separately. These findings, and the responses received through Twitter, were then compared and combined with the findings from the workshops.

Across the various different strands of activity, The Big Climate Conversation has engaged a large number of individuals and communities all across Scotland. The findings presented in this report can therefore help us to better understand the opinions and feelings of the wider Scottish public. It is important to stress, however, that these findings reflect only the perspectives of the individuals, communities and organisations that took part in The Big Climate Conversation. As participants were not selected to be representative of the Scottish population, the findings should not be considered as representative of national opinion.

SECTION 3: WHO TOOK PART?

Number of participants

Over 2,500 people participated in The Big Climate Conversation:

- 552 participants in 10 open-audience workshops.

- 105 participants in 5 targeted-audience workshops.

- 1,993 participants in 110 community-led conversations.

These numbers only account for the participants who provided formal feedback to the Scottish Government, either by attending a facilitated workshop or submitting a feedback form following a community-led conversation. The 'How-To Guide' was accessed online over 800 times which suggests there may have been some participants who held an event but did not submit feedback. For example, some participants may have held a climate conversation for their own individual or local interests, such as, to increase local carbon literacy or raise awareness of climate change.

Participant characteristics

The Big Climate Conversation aimed to be as inclusive as possible, welcoming participation from anyone who was interested in being involved. The limitation of having an 'open door' approach to participation is that participants could not be recruited to be representative of the Scottish population as a whole.

It is inevitable that people who are already engaged in action and debate on climate change were more likely to hear about, and be motivated to participate in, The Big Climate Conversation. In addition, there are structural inequalities in society – such as, education, resources, work and caring responsibilities, and disabilities – which often act as barriers to participation in community engagement processes such as these.[5] Consequently, the views gathered throughout this process cannot be considered as representative of all Scottish public opinion. Instead, the findings provide insight into different perspectives held by different individuals and the reasons behind those views.

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[5] What Works Scotland (2017) *'Hard to reach' or 'easy to ignore'? Promoting equality in community engagement*. Edinburgh: What Works Scotland.

Within the bounds of this limitation, the programme was designed to hear from as diverse a range of individuals as possible. As different types of engagement processes and activity formats are known to be appealing and accessible to different audiences, the public engagement events offered a variety of different forums for conversations to take place. This included a mixture of face-to-face and online engagement, as well as community-led and professionally-facilitated events.

This section provides an overview of the types of people taking part in the facilitated workshops and the community-led conversations.

DEMOGRAPHICS

To assess the diversity of attendees at the facilitated workshops, participants were asked to provide some basic demographic data, including age, gender and ethnicity. Key participant demographics are shown in Table 1. [6]

Characteristic	Open workshops	Targeted workshops	Scottish Average
Education			
Educated to degree level or above	83%	64%	26%
No qualifications	4%	2%	27%
Gender[7]			
Female	59%	62%	51%
Male	41%	38%	49%
Ethnicity			
White Scottish or British	86%	74%	92%
Age			
Over 45 years old	55%	51%	46%

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of participants in the facilitated workshops

The most striking skew in the demographic characteristics was towards people educated to degree level equivalent or above (83% of participants at the open-audience workshops and 64% at the targeted-audience workshops). In both cases, this is significantly greater than across the Scottish population as a whole (26%).[8] In addition, less than 5% of participants in either type of workshop reported that they held no qualifications, compared

[6] Note: Figures only include those participants who chose to disclose demographic information and did so in a format that could be analysed. Response rate depended on the demographic in question, ranging from 89-94% for the targeted workshops and 67-83% for the open workshops.

[7] Two participants in the open-audience workshops (0.45%) identified as non-binary. No participants in the targeted-audience identified as non-binary.

[8] https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/education-0

to 27% of the Scottish population. One possible explanation for this stark discrepancy is the previously observed link between level of education and concern about climate change. The 2018 Scottish Household Survey found that the proportion of adults with a degree or professional qualification who perceived climate change as an immediate and urgent problem was double that of adults with no qualifications (81% compared to 40%).[9]

Overall, the results for the other demographics were broadly similar to Scotland as a whole. The majority of participants in both types of workshops described their ethnicity as White Scottish or British (86% in open-audience and 74% of targeted-audience). This is, however, lower than the Scottish population as a whole (92%) suggesting that the workshops were relatively successful in engaging with some members of ethnic minority groups. There was a higher proportion of female than male participants in both types of workshop (59% in open-audience and 62% in targeted-audience), compared to the almost equal split between the sexes in the population as a whole. Finally, there was a quite even split between participants aged over and under 45 years, which reflects a slight over representation of older people relative to the population of Scotland.[10]

Demographic data was not collected on all participants in the community-led conversations, however, feedback forms were received from communities in cities, towns, and rural villages the length and breadth of Scotland, including several islands. Conversations were held by a diversity of communities of interest, identity, experience and life-stage. The feedback forms also indicated that different communities were starting from very different places in terms of their experiences of participating in discussions about climate change or their experiences with adopting low carbon behaviours.

KNOWLEDGE ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE

Across the different strands of The Big Climate Conversation, participants were found to have varying levels of knowledge about climate change. In the facilitated workshops, participants were asked to score their knowledge of the global climate emergency before and after the events on a scale of 1 ('This is the first time I've heard of it') to 10 ('I know a lot about this'). Scores were grouped into Low (1-3), Medium (4-7) and High (8-10), shown in Figure 3.

As expected, participants in the targeted-audience workshops, on average, started with a lower level of knowledge than those at the open-audience workshops. Participants

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[9] https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-people-annual-report-results-2018-scottish-household-survey/pages/10/

[10] https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/People/Equality/Equalities/PopulationMigration

reported an increase in knowledge at the end of both types of workshops, suggesting that climate conversations can be an effective tool for improving knowledge about climate change. This was particularly identified in the targeted-audience workshops, after which the proportion of participants reporting a high level of knowledge of the climate emergency almost tripled, from 20% to 55%. The biggest average increase in knowledge at an open workshop was at the youth workshop in Stirling (1.6 points).

Figure 3: Participants' self-reported level of knowledge about the global climate emergency before and after the facilitated workshop

TARGETED AUDIENCE

OPEN AUDIENCE
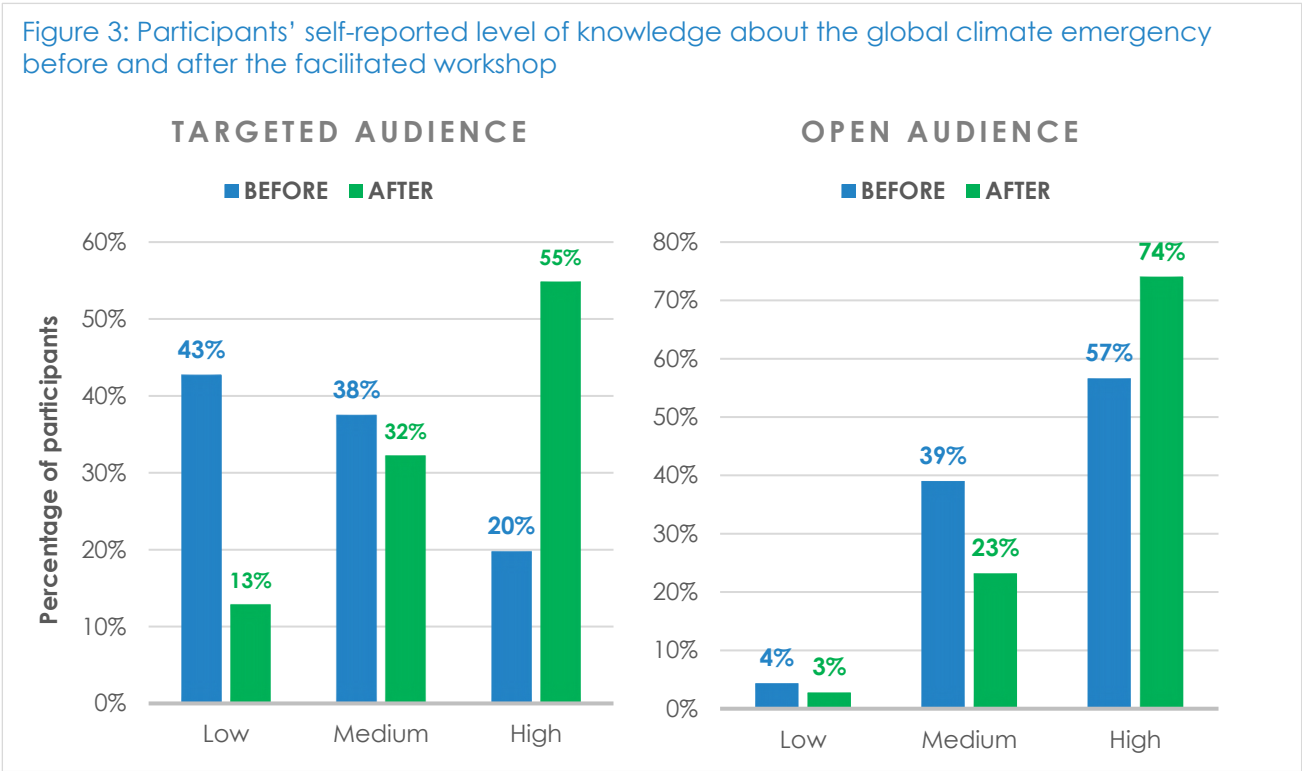
Participants in the community-led conversations were asked to report how much they knew "about climate change, net-zero, and/or the climate emergency". Their level of knowledge was ranked as High, Medium, or Low. As shown in Figure 4, of the 96 responses received to this question, 65% had a high level of knowledge, 28% a medium level, and only 7 had low or no prior knowledge of climate change, net-zero or the climate emergency.

Regardless of overall knowledge, 89 groups stated that at least one of their participants was already taking action to mitigate their personal impact on climate change, most commonly relating to recycling and/or composting, or to changes in diet.

Figure 4: Level of knowledge about climate change, net-zero and/or the climate emergency of the participants in the community-led conversations
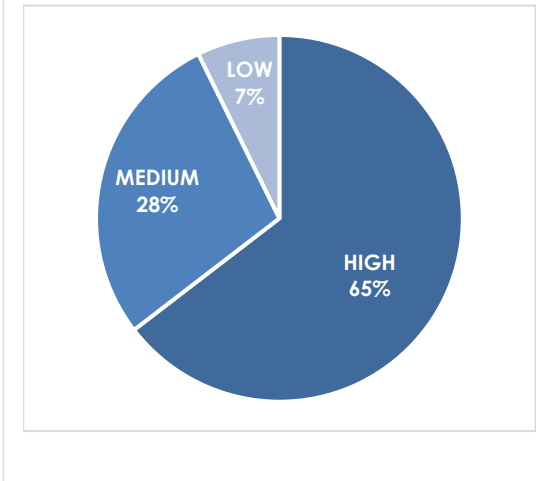
SECTION 4: ARE WE AMBITIOUS ENOUGH?

In 2019, the First Minister declared a global climate emergency and the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 sets a new net-zero emissions target for all greenhouse gases by 2045. Participants in The Big Climate Conversation were asked for their reactions to these developments.

Declaration of a global climate emergency

At the beginning of both the open-audience and targeted-audience workshops, participants were asked to rate how concerned they were about the global climate emergency using a score of 1 (Calm) to 10 (Very worried). These scores out of 10 are shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Level of concern about the global climate change for participants in facilitated workshops
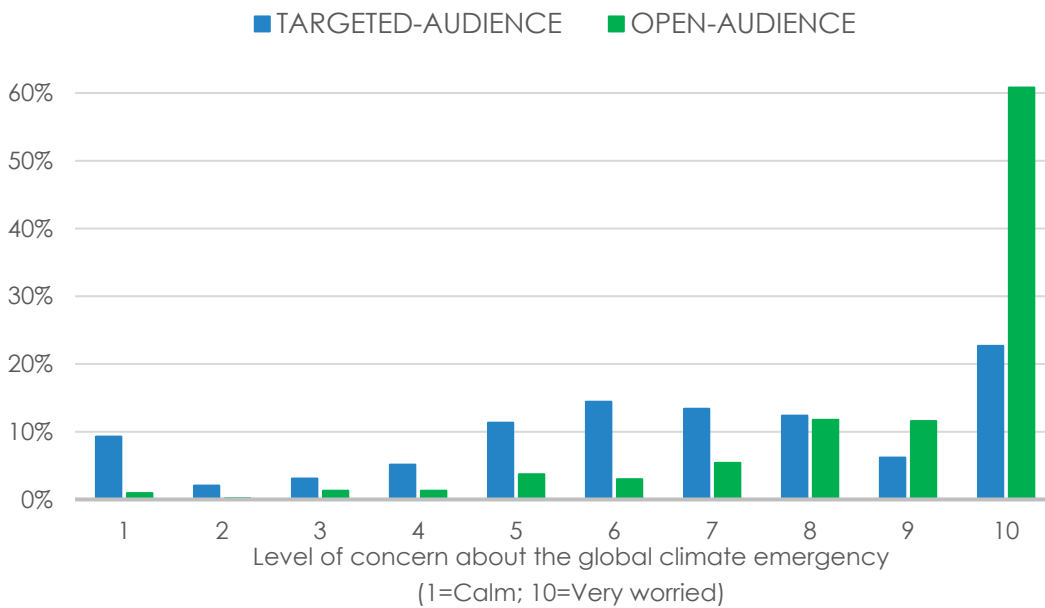
As Figure 5 shows, there was a difference in level of concern between participants at the open-audience and target-audience workshops. The average score in the open-audience workshops was 8.9 out of ten, with over 83% of participants giving a rating of 8 or above. By comparison, the average score at the targeted-audience workshops was 6.6 and only 38% of participants gave a score of 8 or above. The higher levels of concern in the open-audience workshop is likely to reflects the fact that people who are more concerned about climate change are more likely to come to open meetings to discuss climate change.

Participants were also asked to share the word that describes how they feel about climate change. The responses are displayed in the two word clouds in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Word clouds showing the word participants associated with the phrase 'climate emergency'

OPEN-AUDIENCE   TARGETED-AUDIENCE
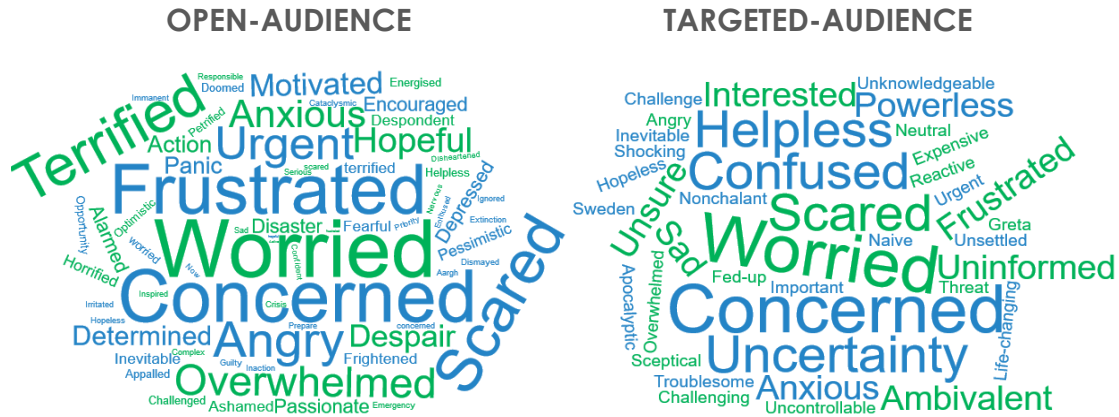
As Figure 6 shows, many similar sentiments were expressed across both types of workshops. Many of the words were very negative, most commonly relating to feelings of concern, worry, anxiety or fear. There were also some interesting differences between the two types of workshops. For example, participants in the targeted-audience workshops more commonly expressed a sense of hopelessness and powerlessness, while the open audience workshop participants were more likely to use words relating to frustration and anger. In addition, several of the open audience workshop participants used language of hope, motivation or determination.

> **"[We need to] look at all policy in light of the emergency – no use planting trees with one hand while giving out oil exploitation licenses with the other."**

Community-led conversation in Perthshire

As the participants in the open audience workshops were reportedly more knowledgeable about climate change, this may suggest that increased knowledge about the issues may help people feel more empowered or motivated in addressing it. This reasoning may also explain the results of the exercise when it was repeated at the end of the targeted-audience workshops.

Figure 7 shows that, at the end of the targeted-audience workshops, there was much greater diversity in the tone of the words. Whilst concern and worry remained the most common feelings, many more positive words were also included, such as, 'hopeful', 'encouraged', 'determined', and 'empowered'. Participants in the open audience workshops were not asked to repeat this exercise at the end of the workshops.
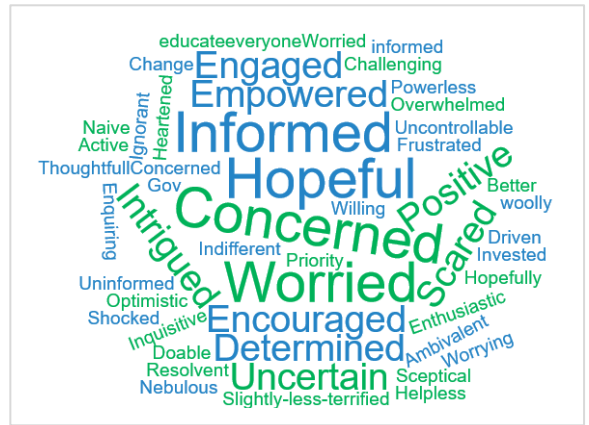

Figure 7: How participants in the targeted-audience workshops felt about climate change at the end of the workshop.

Participants in the community-led conversations also shared their views on the Scottish Government's declaration of a climate emergency, either as single words or in longer explanatory text. As in the facilitated workshops, many of the responses from community groups conveyed fear and frustration that the declaration was too little too late.

> **"It's such a shame; this should have been noticed a long time ago. We shouldn't have to be declaring emergencies in 2019."**
>
> Community-led conversation in Dumfries

Many groups also stated that they perceived this to be a tokenistic declaration, to make it look like politicians were addressing climate change whilst not actually taking any climate change mitigation action. For example, participants shared words such as "propaganda" and "all talk, no action".

There were also positive responses, with some community groups stating that they saw this declaration as an important first step in the right direction, with Scotland leading the way on climate change:

> **"Bigger countries need to act but Scotland can start to show the way."**
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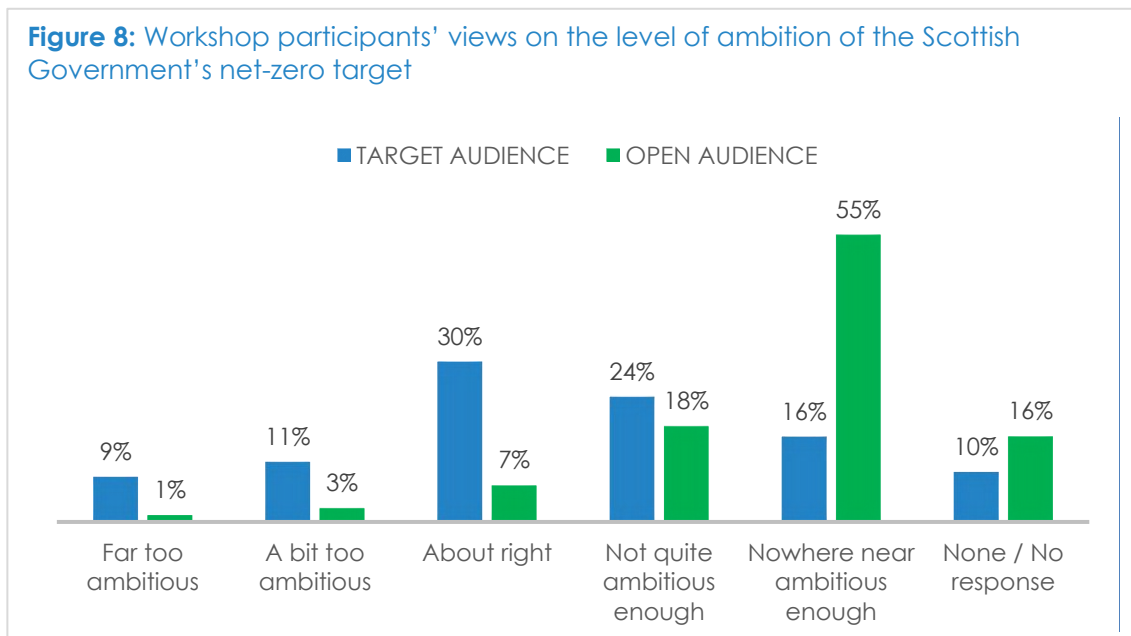> Community-led conversation in Hamilton

Often positive responses were caveated or conditional in nature, characterised by phrases and words like, "good if acted upon" and "Hopefully government believes in this but I'm cautious".

Conversely, there were some responses from community groups that expressed the view that the declaration of a climate emergency was overstated and too inflammatory, using words such as "hysterical", "exaggerated" and "fake news".

As with the shift in attitude seen in the targeted-audience workshops, there was evidence that some participants in the community-led conversations became more positive following the event. In the 'further comments' section at the end of the feedback form, some community groups stated that they felt more hopeful because they were more confident that action was being taken and that the Scottish Government was serious about making meaningful changes in the near future.

Net-zero Target

Participants in the facilitated workshops were asked for their views on the level of ambition of the Scottish Government's target of achieving net-zero emissions by 2045. Figure 8 shows the results for the two different types of workshop.

Figure 8: Workshop participants' views on the level of ambition of the Scottish Government's net-zero target

TARGET AUDIENCE   OPEN AUDIENCE

	Far too ambitious	A bit too ambitious	About right	Not quite ambitious enough	Nowhere near ambitious enough	None / No response
TARGET AUDIENCE	9%	11%	30%	24%	16%	10%
OPEN AUDIENCE	1%	3%	7%	18%	55%	16%

Across both types of workshops, the most common reason given by participants who did not think the target was ambitious enough was the belief that this target did not adequately reflect the scale or urgency of the situation. Several participants stated that

Scotland should be setting a stronger global example and did not believe the target demonstrates the political leadership required.

There were also responses from both types of workshops which suggested that, if we are to adhere with the tenets of climate justice, Scotland has an ethical imperative to be more ambitious on climate change. Some also suggested that a more ambitious target would lead to more positive opportunities for Scotland.

Open event in Kirkwall

In the open-audience workshops, in which many participants considered themselves very knowledgeable about climate change, many of those who felt that the target was not ambitious enough made reference to scientific reports that have indicated the risk of crossing a tipping point before 2045.

For participants who stated that they believed the target is too ambitious, the key reasons given were a concern over the high cost and economic impact of radical change, the lack of action by other major global emitters, and a perceived lack of public support for the necessary changes to consumer culture and behaviour.

Open event in Kirkwall

SECTION 5: HOW CAN WE ENABLE CHANGE?

In both the facilitated workshops and the How-To Guide for community-led conversations, participants were provided with discussion cards that presented examples of potential societal changes and actions that could support a transition to a net-zero emissions economy and society in Scotland (see Technical Annex for copy of discussion cards used). Participants were also encouraged to put forward additional or alternative actions to those included on the cards.

Participants were asked to have a conversation about the different changes and actions, including a discussion of whether the changes would be good for Scotland, which actions they thought should be a priority, and any challenges they envisaged in achieving these ambitions. Discussions on climate change are typically wide ranging and multi-faceted, the changes and actions cards were used to provide focus to the conversations. Although it is important to note that the actions outlined in this section are not an exhaustive list of the possible measures required to address climate change.

Barriers to change

Overall, most participants agreed that all of the suggested societal changes would be good for Scotland. However, participants identified a range of barriers and challenges to achieving them.

GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP

The strongest and most consistent message from participants was the primary role of government in changing 'the system' so that low carbon behaviours become the most convenient or the only option. This included:

- Ensuring pricing signals support positive behaviours, e.g. by subsidising public transport or electric vehicles.

- Increased investment in infrastructure, e.g. in public transport or renewable energy.

- Policy and legislation, for example on building insulation standards.

- Public information to help people make individual changes and to build support for transition to net-zero emissions.

INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIOURS

While the primary role of government in leading change was a common theme, a number of participants acknowledged the need for the wider public to understand the seriousness of climate change and to give the necessary political support for radical change. However, participants also perceived a tendency for many people to choose a path of most convenience and least resistance, even if they understand that their actions will have negative implications for climate change.

CONSUMERISM

Some participants suggested that current western lifestyles are based on a sense of freedom and entitlement to consume, travel, and live with minimal restrictions imposed by the state. For example, many people have a sense of right to fly to international holiday destinations or to spend time with family in other parts of the world. It was suggested that this also translates into a preference for private ownership and a desire to replace and upgrade personal technology, rather than to repair them.

VESTED INTERESTS

Participants suggested that consumerist lifestyles are also encouraged by the current nature of our economy, which is likely to be difficult to change. Some participants highlighted business interests that could stand to lose from a net-zero future, including fossil fuel industries, car industries and some sectors of the food industry. Tourism was also mentioned as a sector that is highly dependent on aviation to bring visitors. Some participants believe that these interests could obstruct the change that is needed.

TECHNOLOGY & SKILLS

Finally, participants suggested that some of the biggest changes required are dependent on technology that isn't yet available or is still too expensive. For example, it was perceived by many participants that electric vehicles have limited range and the necessary charging infrastructure isn't in place, and new technologies for heating homes are relatively expensive and there is a perceived lack of the necessary skills to install and maintain them.

Taking Action

Participants were encouraged to discuss different actions that could be taken to achieve the net-zero emissions target. Discussions covered the following areas of activity: Travel; Energy; Food; Agriculture and Land Use; Waste; and Education and Awareness Raising.

TRAVEL

The discussions about travel focused largely on public transport, electric vehicles, and flying. As transport options are highly dependent on many variables like location and connectivity, the discussions between groups in rural, urban, and island communities were quite varied.

Public Transport

There was very strong support amongst respondents for increased use of public transport. Most participants in the workshops that shared their views on public transport stated that they thought it would be a good thing for Scotland if "most people use public transport for everyday journeys". However, participants also identified a range of challenges, both for themselves personally and for society as a whole.

The primary barriers to increased use of public transport raised by respondents were related to infrastructure and connectivity, accessibility and convenience, and cost. Several participants reported that, due to these barriers, they perceived there to be few incentives to choosing public transport over driving, other than the environmental impact.

> **"People are forced to own cars due to lack of public transport at times that it is needed like for shift workers."**
>
> Community-led conversation in Glasgow

Many respondents suggested that public transport, especially for local trips, should be free of charge or heavily subsidised so as to be cheaper than driving. Some suggested that nationalised public transport network may help control travel prices. This was especially focused on in discussions about train travel, in which some participants felt that the privatisation of trains was a contributing factor in prices being prohibitively expensive.

> **"One success story [from our group] was how free bus passes for the over 60s has changed the attitude of public transport for that age group."**

Community-led conversation in Aboyne

Infrastructure and connectivity were noted as a particular issue for rural areas and the islands where there is typically poorer public transport provision, with fewer, less frequent services. Moreover, due to the more dispersed housing, stops are often not close to people's homes. One participant explained that a local trip that would take only 15 minutes by car can take up to two hours by bus due to the number of stops, inconvenient bus route, and timing of buses. Some rural participants noted that the reliance on private cars is exacerbated by a lack of local services, such as healthcare, which require significant journeys that are unfeasible by public transport.

> **"We have to go to Glasgow for specialized appointments. This isn't possible to do with public transport and would take all day. We have no option but to drive."**

Facilitated targeted-audience workshop in Oban

There were different views expressed on the best approach to improving public transport provision across Scotland. Participants in the Glasgow workshop highlighted the difference in cost between buses in Glasgow and Edinburgh, and suggested that there needs to be similar pricing for similar journeys and routes in different parts of the country. However, in the Oban workshop, participants noted that there should not be a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to improving infrastructure across Scotland. It was suggested that city-centric decision-making and ideas might not translate effectively to rural locations.

Finally, some participants reported that issues with connectivity are sometimes compounded by inaccurate or complicated transport timetables which can be inaccessible or confusing. This point was particularly stressed by a group who engaged with individuals with mental and physical disabilities who felt that bus timetables in particular were inaccessible to them and made it impossible to plan trips using public transportation.

Active Travel

There was an equally high level of support amongst workshop participants for increased uptake of active travel. Of those who gave feedback on active travel, almost all stated

that they thought a society in which "walking and cycling is the norm for short journeys" would be good for Scotland. As with uptake of public transport, however, several barriers to increased active travel were identified.

The most common barrier highlighted was a perceived lack of safe and accessible walking and cycling routes in respondents' local areas. Ensuring that walking and cycling (as well as public transport) is prioritised in town planning processes was one of the actions most commonly selected as a high priority action among workshop respondents.

The only concerns that participants raised in relation to increased infrastructure for walking and cycling were affordability for local authorities and the importance of ensuring that greenspaces and biodiversity are protected. To mitigate the latter risk, several participants supported pedestrianising areas that are currently used for cars. This was considered particularly valuable in city centres and areas of high population densities, where it was suggested that 'no car zones' or 'no car days' could have the co-benefit of helping decrease pollution and increase general health.

To encourage cycling, participants highlighted the value of increased incentives to begin cycling, such as, cycle to work schemes and making electric bikes more available and affordable. It was also suggested that cycling to work could be encouraged through increased workplace investment in showering and changing facilities and greater access to guided cycling trips to help new cyclists gain confidence on their commuting routes. Some participants also suggested that there should be greater access to guided cycle tours and workshops for people with varying abilities.

Electric Vehicles (EVs)

There was strong support for greater use of electric vehicles (EVs), with a large majority of the workshop participants who discussed EVs agreeing that a future in which "all cars on the road are electric" would be good for Scotland. However, this support was not as unanimous as for public transport and active travel.

While many participants believed that EVs would have a mostly positive impact on mitigating climate change and pollution, cost was raised as a barrier by most groups. Therefore, participants suggested that, to increase uptake, there was a need for subsidies for buying new and used EVs and greater availability of trade-in schemes that make it easier to switch from a petrol vehicle. It was also suggested business and public sector car fleets should all be switched to EVs.

> **"Things like electric vehicles are good, but not affordable for many and still just tinkering. More important is simply consuming less and moving to greater self-reliance…"**
>
> Community-led conversation in Hamilton

In addition to cost, another significant concern was a perceived lack of EV charging infrastructure. Participants mentioned that they rarely saw charging points at workplaces and in public areas like shopping and city centres, and there was a need for greater availability of rapid charging stations. Lack of access to charging at home was also a barrier for some participants. This was particularly noted for those living in tenement flats or in areas of high traffic, where there is no designated resident parking and a lack of space for street charge points. Some respondents who did have space to install at-home charging infrastructure were concerned that this was an additional expense that they would have to absorb if they switched to an EV.

Concerns over charging infrastructure were exacerbated by the perception amongst participants that EVs have very short ranges, leading to 'range anxiety'.

Flying

There was support from respondents for a reduction in the number of flights being taken. The majority of workshop participants who discussed this topic agreed that changes that meant "as a society, we fly less" would be a good thing for Scotland. However, there were mixed views about the best way to achieve this change.

One of the actions suggested to participants was the introduction of a 'frequent flyer tax', which would mean that the amount of tax paid on flights increases with each flight taken. Some participants agreed that a frequent flyer tax was a useful way to reduce emissions from aviation. There was particular support from participants for a focus on taxing business travel and wealthier, able-to-pay travellers.

However, several concerns were raised about the introduction of a frequent flyer tax. Island communities noted that flying is often the most convenient and reliable means of connection to the mainland and trips are often necessary for NHS appointments and other services that are unavailable on smaller islands. It was suggested that frequent flyer tax exceptions should be made for islands populations and flights taken for medical or emergency purposes. There were also concerns from some participants that that flight restrictions would prevent them from visiting friends and families abroad, particularly

amongst immigrant community groups. One suggestion was to issue 'flying credits' either for number of miles or total trips that individuals could take before a tax is imposed.

> **"Participants regarded [the frequent flyer tax] as an unfair policy since they have families abroad and hope to be visiting regularly."**
>
> Community-led conversation in Paisley

Other participants were sceptical about the value of a frequent flyer tax as they did not believe it would lead to significant behaviour change among frequent flyers who can afford to pay the increased rates, particularly business flyers. It was also highlighted that feasible alternative transport would need to be available for people who need to fly often.

At a national scale, it was suggested that a frequent flyer tax could have a detrimental effect on the Scottish economy - particularly the tourism industry - and could restrict the way we conduct business as a country.

Community-led conversation in Edinburgh

Rather than the introduction of a tax, several respondents focused on the need to shift the culture around flying, so that it is not considered aspirational. This was closely linked with the suggestion for greater promotion of local holidays to encourage people to explore areas in Scotland and the U.K. As well as alleviating the need for flying abroad, this was seen as having the co-benefit of supporting local business and the wider Scottish economy. However, linked to the responses on public transport, participants noted that there would need to be a reduction in the cost of national train travel as domestic flights are often a cheaper travel option than public transport.

FOOD

The conversations about food demonstrated the complexity of reducing emissions in this sector. Discussions about diet and climate change highlighted the interplay between the types of food we eat, where and how our food is produced, how we access food, and how we prepare and cook our food.

Meat consumption

To prompt discussion, participants were asked for their views on Scottish society changing so that "we eat a mostly vegetarian diet". This received a more mixed reaction from different participants. Almost all participants in the open audience workshops who discussed this change believed that it would be good for Scotland. However, this change received the lowest level of support from participants in the targeted-audience workshops, with a significant minority stating that they disagreed that this would be a good change for Scotland. Several participants stated that they enjoy eating meat and did not want to have that choice taken away from them.

There was even less agreement for the introduction of a tax on beef, lamb and processed meat, and only a minority of participants ranked this as a high priority action for Scotland. Many were concerned that the cost of fresh produce is already high and, therefore, increasing tax on meat would make it difficult for many less affluent families to afford enough to feed themselves. At the other end of the spectrum, participants suggested that more affluent consumers were likely to just pay the tax and continue current behaviours of meat consumption. There was a call for fruit and vegetables to be made more affordable, rather than making meat more expensive.

Youth event in Stirling

> **"Vegetarian food should be seen as a cheaper option – a lot of times it is equivalent or more [expensive] than meat dishes."**
>
> Community-led conversation in Edinburgh

Highland and island communities also highlighted that the majority of land in Scotland is unsuitable for crop farming and can only sustain animal husbandry. It would therefore not be possible for farmers in these areas to transition farming practices. As a result, there was concern amongst participants that a reduction in beef and lamb consumption could have a significant detrimental impact on Scottish farming.

Some respondents also suggested that a shift to a mostly vegetarian diet may increase emissions because there would be greater reliance on importing vegetables, fruits and grains from countries with warmer climates, which would be likely to include aviation. Alternatively, highly energy intensive heated greenhouses would be needed to grow fruit and vegetables in Scotland all year around. For this reason, it was felt that emissions from local beef and lamb production and consumption would be far outweighed by the carbon footprint of sustaining a higher proportion of vegetarian diets.

> **"Beef and lamb are two of Shetland's main products. If we stop eating these meats, what is the carbon footprint of alternative foods that will need to be shipped here?"**
>
> Community-led conversation in Shetlands

Some respondents also felt strongly that organically produced meat should be exempt from any taxing so as to support its consumption.

Food miles

Many participants suggested that rather than focusing on lowering meat consumption, we should instead focus on lowering 'food miles' by only sourcing food, including meat, from our local areas. Therefore, some participants suggested that a tax on *imported* meats would be a preferable alternative to the suggested tax on processed meat, beef and lamb.

However, it was noted that island communities typically rely on a much higher portion of food being imported. Therefore, a tax on products with high 'food miles' would disproportionately impact the islands who are left with few alternatives to importing products.

Participants also suggested that reducing food miles could be supported by including the carbon footprint of foods on all packaging and labelling, providing information for consumers on both production emissions and emissions from transport.

Education and skills

Beyond information on food miles, participants highlighted the need more guidance on dietary choices more generally – both for their own health and the health of the planet. Individuals expressed frustration that there are so many new studies and news stories claiming conflicting ways to maintain a healthy diet, stating that it is difficult to know what advice to follow.

Many community groups also emphasised the importance of re-teaching life skills like cooking and keeping a personal produce garden, practices that participants believed were common for older generations but are no longer being taught to young people. Community gardens and growing projects, cooking courses, and community fridges and food sharing programmes were all suggested as ways in which communities and individuals can produce food sustainably, reduce food waste, and help alleviate food insecurity. These initiatives were also considered valuable for promoting local and seasonal growing practices which would relieve dependence on importing food.

AGRICULTURE & LAND USE

Most conversations around agriculture and land use were focused on discussions of tree planting as this is applicable to a wide range of locations. Discussions about agricultural practices and specifically about reducing emissions from the farming sector were more significantly focused on in rural community conversations where farming is large part of the local economy.

Reducing emissions from agriculture

Some respondents suggested that, rather than focus on diets, the focus should be on switching to lower carbon methods of farming. These issues particularly arose in conversations that took place in rural areas, where agriculture is a larger component of the local economy.

The key challenges of improving the sustainability of the farming sector identified by participants were a lack of knowledge and information about sustainable farming practices and lack of support to implement changes. Participants who were farmers themselves discussed the need for farm diversification but also expressed a wide knowledge gap of how to do this.

> **"Farmers are keen to have climate efficient agriculture whilst maintaining high standards of animal husbandry. They need more information."**
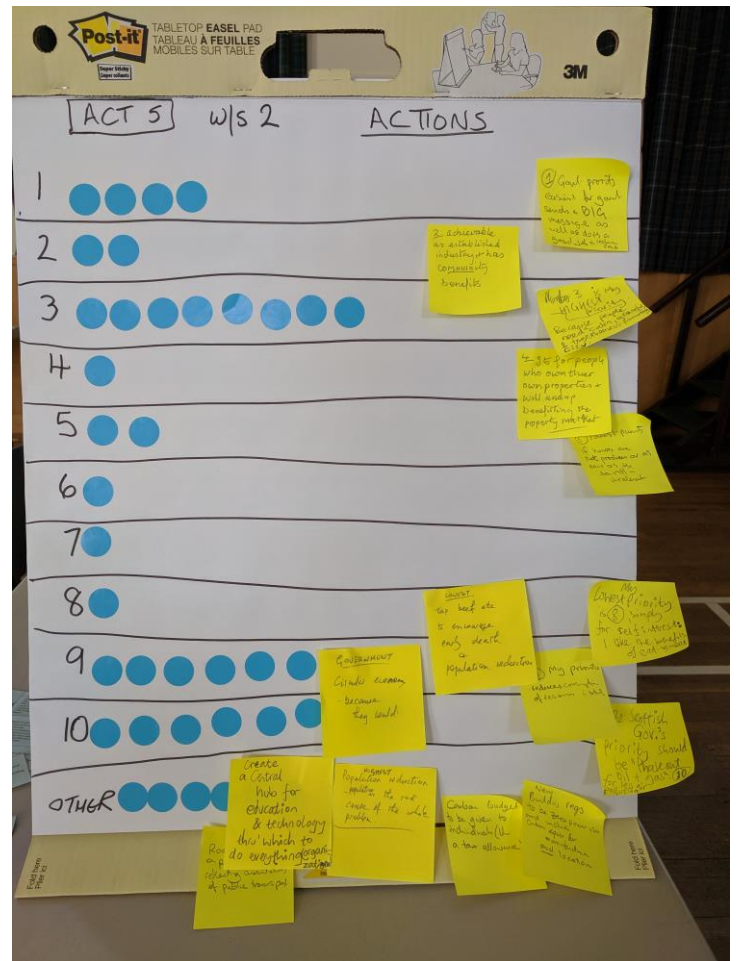
Community-led conversation in Insch

Another suggested action was to end subsidies for the meat industry and instead shift resources to support the transition from meat production, specifically cattle and lamb rearing, to other types of more sustainable food production. This would alleviate the pressure of transition to other farming practices on farmers and also promote the adoption of lower impact farming and animal husbandry practices.

Tree planting

In the workshops, 'incentivise tree planting' was one of the actions that was most commonly ranked as a high priority. It was considered by many participants to be the easiest and most efficient way to 'balance the scales' in terms of providing carbon sinks, with additional benefits for biodiversity and wildlife. It was also suggested that tree planting could provide opportunities for employment and recreation.

Participants suggested that the Scottish Government should incentivise and encourage large landowners to reforest land with native species, ensuring this is permanent reforestation, not tree planting for the purpose of harvesting timber. It was emphasised that tree planting should be done using expert knowledge and supervision to ensure maximum benefits for carbon reduction and biodiversity.

Community-led conversation in Tarland

Where land is publically owned, participants suggested that councils should be promoting and supporting community tree planting initiatives as well as focusing on increasing green spaces such as parks in towns and cities rather than using area for further development.

> **"This former mining area has considerable tracts of un/underused land which could be planted by community groups or even agencies and companies to create attractive greenspaces."**

Community-led conversation in Leven

A minority of respondents were more sceptical, arguing that tree planting is not sufficiently effective or efficient for tackling the problem, with costs that outweigh the benefits.

WASTE

Discussions on waste and climate change focused on the transition to a circular economy and increased recycling and composting.

Circular Economy

The creation of a circular economy in Scotland was the action rated as a high priority by the largest number of participants in the workshops. It also gained a lot of support from participants in the community-led conversations.

Participants identified this as a high priority because of the perceived multiple benefits for waste reduction and improved community cohesion and social equality across Scotland. It surmised that a circular economy could support the necessary lifestyle and behavioural changes for reducing emissions whilst supporting a sustainable form of economy in Scotland.

The key barrier to creating a circular economy identified by participants was the large changes required to the way in which people live and society operates. Participants believed that the transition to reusing, sharing, second-hand buying and repairing rather than buying new would require a massive cultural shift. It was suggested that there would need to be assurance that the cost of long-term renting would be lower over time than the cost of buying new. Therefore, many participants were supportive of the idea of a circular economy but were doubtful that this culture shift was possible.

> **"There's concern that big business would not co-operate in creating of a circular economy – capitalism currently relies on a 'throw-away' society."**
>
> Community-led conversation in Kelso

Participants suggested that the implementation of more 'repair cafes' in cities and towns could help address some of these barriers by enabling people to bring different items to be fixed or improved. It was suggested that increasing the availability and visibility of these types of business could help change people's perceptions of repairing by making it a more convenient and possible cheaper option to buying new. It was highlighted that opening

more of these shops would require the training of more individuals with the necessary skills, which would require government support.

Community-led conversation in Tranent

Another suggested action was the introduction of 'swap-shops' at local landfill and recycling centres, where people could drop off items that they no longer need but that are still in good condition. Participants believed this could reduce the volume going to landfill but still allow individuals to discard items that they no longer wanted.

Recycling And Composting

Participants were asked for their views on the transition to a society in which "all unavoidable food waste is collected separately, composted and/or used to generate energy". Almost all who responded agreed that this would be a good thing for Scotland. In addition, a large majority of participants in the community-led conversations who expressed that they are already taking climate action identified recycling and composting as the actions they are taking to decrease their household impact. Many participants who were not already taking these actions were interested in starting to do so, but identified several barriers.

The barrier that came up most often was a lack of recycling and composting services, particularly in more rural areas. Participants stated that this was especially true for food waste collection, with many participants not having access to this service.

> **"Recycling needs to be made easier – please bring back local (village based) recycling facilities. They used to work very well until they were removed by the council."**

Community-led conversation in Kirkowan

In areas where food waste collection was available, participants highlighted that the infrequency at which waste is collected (up to two weeks in some areas) deterred individuals because they did not like the idea of rotten and smelly food waste sitting around for long periods of time. This was a particular concern for individuals living in flats where food waste bins had to be kept inside.

In terms of recycling more generally, some participants expressed confusion over what can and cannot be recycled, and suggested that guidance can be unclear and also differs between local authority areas. This has led some participants to bin potentially recyclable items rather than risk contaminating the recycling stream. It was suggested that this barrier could be mitigated through provision of clearer information about what items can be recycled, as well as a national standardisation of regulations.

Several participants noted the high cost of the equipment they needed for recycling food waste, particularly compostable bin liners, and suggested that these should be provided free of charge. Participants suggested that this could be coupled with a tax on waste sent to landfill, to incentivise people to maximise the items they are recycling.

Community-led conversation in Tranent

Some participants also expressed concern that a lot of recyclable materials are exported to other countries for processing, generating transport emissions. Many participants suggested that Scotland should create more local recycling facilities to decrease emissions and create local jobs.

ENERGY

The conversations about energy fell into two categories: discussions about where our energy comes from, including government investment in fossil fuels and renewable energy generation; and discussions about home energy efficiency improvements.

Sources of Energy

One of the actions most commonly ranked as a high priority by participants was phasing out the extraction of North Sea oil and gas. It was suggested that this would help encourage the use of alternative, renewable energy sources. Some participants argued that, if oil and gas extraction is phased out now, before resources are entirely depleted, remaining stores could be left as a 'back-up' resource to be used for potential disaster recovery in future. A large proportion of participants also ranked "public divestment from fossil fuels" as a high priority, with suggestions that this could help change public attitudes towards fossil fuel use. However, several participants stated that they viewed public divestment as primarily a token gesture and that it was more important to take direct action to phase out oil and gas extraction with cooperation from the oil and gas industry.

There were concerns raised by participants who viewed oil and gas as an important resource for Scotland and an important part of Scotland's economy. Some participants suggested that, even if we no longer use fossil fuels for energy, there are likely to still be other uses for oil and gas. There were particular concerns raised about the large number of people employed in the oil and gas industry. Even those who saw phasing out North Sea oil and gas as a priority emphasised the importance of ensuring a just transition for those currently involved in the industry. Several participants also stated that they did not believe that renewable energy resources and infrastructure were sufficient to supply all the energy Scotland requires. Therefore, they were concerned that phasing out North Sea oil and gas would not only create instability in the economy but also in Scotland's domestic energy supply.

> **"Many people in Aberdeenshire depend on North Sea Oil. Divesting in this would have economic consequences and given our dependence on oil products in daily life would probably mean just getting it from elsewhere. Thoughtful exploitation would be a better solution."**

Community-led conversation in Insch

> "Oil is the elephant in the room. The economy needs the money generated by its sale to fund the reshaping of the economy – but burning that oil will generate carbon."

Community-led conversation in Edinburgh

Participants expressed support for investment in renewable energy generation to displace the need for fossil fuels. Participants argued that Scotland is well-placed geographically to take advantage of the potential for renewable energy generation and many viewed Scotland as already being a leader in this regard. Participants also called for more investment in energy storage technologies, such as batteries, that could store renewable energy for future use. Participants suggested that the increased investment in renewable energy industries could create new employment opportunities for those no longer employed in the oil and gas industry, with support from government initiatives to help with reskilling the workforce.

Concerns were raised that the current poor grid connectivity in some areas would prevent the large-scale uptake of renewable energy, especially in rural and island communities. Several participants expressed a desire for more information about community energy generation schemes, which they perceived to have become popular in rural areas. Participants suggested that community energy projects could allow for more local uptake of renewable energy while also empowering communities by giving them the ability to sell power back to the national grid. There was a call for the Scottish Government to create more incentives and support for community energy schemes such as community windfarms. Many participants suggested that there is too much 'red tape' and legislation against the implementation of more renewable energy which needs to be rectified.

Some participants were concerned about the cost of transitioning to renewable energy. This included the perceived cost (and environmental impact) of installing and maintaining largescale renewable energy infrastructure, such as offshore wind turbines. There was also a perception amongst several participants that a renewable energy supply is significantly more expensive than current energy supply, which had deterred some participants from switching to 'green' renewable energy tariffs. Linked to this, several participants suggested that changes to energy tariffs were not the best action to take to encourage emissions reduction as this was considered unlikely to reduce energy consumption to a significant extent.

The perceived high costs of renewable energy also raised concerns about the implications for people experiencing fuel poverty as participants suggested that many households

cannot afford to heat their homes at all and therefore would not be concerned about where the heat came from as long as it was affordable. For these reasons, the most common suggestions to Scottish Government were to improve national grid connectivity, especially in rural and island areas, and to carry out an education campaign to inform about renewable energy and clarify information about costs, availability, and co-benefits of switching to a renewable energy supply.

Home Energy Efficiency

There was widespread support for home energy efficiency improvements and almost all participants agreed that a future scenario in which "all homes and buildings are insulated to the highest standard" would be a good thing for Scotland. However, many participants identified significant challenges in achieving this change, particularly with regard to the cost of retrofitting houses and flats, especially older buildings. Many participants stated that they were unclear about how

Community-led conversation in Melrose

they would benefit from improving the energy efficiency of their homes, for example, how much money they would save money or how the comfort of their homes would change. There was therefore a call for more information about the options that are available, coupled with more availability of subsidies and support. Participants felt that the current schemes and programmes in place are inadequate for supporting the cost of insulation and other home improvements. Participants also raised concerns over 'cowboy companies' and financing scams, with uncertainty about how to assess whether schemes are legitimate or not.

Improvements to insulation was brought up most often as being the most prohibitively expensive energy efficiency measure and there was a sense of frustration amongst some participants who had already attempted some of the changes but had not yet experienced tangible benefits. Participants therefore felt demotivated to continue making changes and were reluctant to invest a large amount of money without a better guarantee of return.

> **"I just had insulation put in and it hasn't made a difference."**
>
> Facilitated targeted-audience workshop in Oban

The suggested action to "Require homes to meet minimum energy efficiency rating before they can be sold" was ranked as a low priority by the largest proportion of participants. There were concerns that this could negatively affect homeowners who couldn't afford to upgrade their homes to meet these requirements, potentially exacerbating inequalities across Scotland. Participants believed there may be particular financial and physical restrictions to upgrading older housing stock and non-standard houses. It was suggested that an inability to meet this minimum rating could also cause the housing market to stagnate as fewer people were able to sell their homes.

There were also broader discussions about whether the homeowner should be responsible for the full cost of meeting a minimum energy efficiency rating. A common alternative suggestion from participants was to require all new build homes to be constructed to the highest energy efficiency standards.

EDUCATION & AWARENESS RAISING

Although not included in the discussion cards provided, many participants in the workshops and the community-led conversations called for more public education and access to information about climate change.

Participants suggested there should be a major Scottish Government-led marketing campaign to inform people of the problems and effects of climate change, as well as information about Scotland's emissions reduction targets and how the government plans to meet them. Some participants also suggested wider publicising of the emissions reductions already achieved in Scotland, to help motivate and empower the public.

There was also a desire for more information about the actions that individuals can take to decrease their own emissions. Participants reported that they wanted to do more to help address climate change but were uncertain of what actions they should be taking or how to begin taking them.

> **"Many members have supported climate change action demonstrations and want to do more but want more guidance as to what they can do on an individual basis – what to prioritise as individuals and what will reduce their carbon footprint most."**

Community-led conversation in Glasgow

Respondents particularly flagged the importance of increasing awareness among elderly people, ethnic minorities and individuals whose native language is not English, children and young people, and socially isolated or excluded individuals for whom current forms of information and information dissemination are not accessible.

> **"Our members are elderly and have limited awareness and understanding of how even the smallest changes can have such big effects on our environment. The elderly need to be motivated and encouraged with regular sessions promoting climate change."**

Community-led conversation in Edinburgh

Older participants also iterated a need for life skills to be reintroduced to schools so that children can learn skills like mending and repairing clothes or other common items, how to cook meals from scratch using whole foods, and how to grow their own produce.

Respondents suggested that these skills were common in previous generations and a resurgence in their adoption within society would help to minimise our increased consumption and reliance on packaged or mass produced goods.

Other suggestions for ways in which to increase awareness and education, included, putting climate science and environmental issues at the core of the school curriculum, career guidance for students and young people looking for jobs relating to climate change, the provision of community-based sustainability officers who can answer questions and provide support to people making sustainable transitions, and more opportunities for the public to discuss their opinions and concerns.

Youth event in Stirling

SECTION 6: WHAT NEXT?

The Big Climate Conversation has reached a wide range of individuals from across Scotland. The findings from these conversations, including the wider engagement with business and the public sector, are directly informing the update to the current Climate Change Plan and the development of a new Public Engagement Strategy for climate change. Both of these documents will be published in spring this year.

The Climate Change Plan Update will provide our proposed roadmap to achieving emissions reduction targets and will respond directly to many proposals discussed during The Big Climate Conversation. The Public Engagement Strategy will set out how we plan to continue and enhance our dialogue with the Scottish public on climate change.

The Big Climate Conversation is just the start of the conversation. We know that constructive dialogue with the public and communities – as well as businesses and the public sector – must be at the heart of our transition to a net-zero society. As the need for transformative action increases, the need for this dialogue will only grow in importance. We will use the lessons we have learned from The Big Climate Conversation to continue conversations with all sectors of society, to ensure everyone understands their role in this national endeavour.

There is much to look forward to in 2020. We will establish the Climate Citizens' Assembly of Scotland later this year. This will enable us to build on the important insights generated through The Big Climate Conversation to better understand public views on how we should respond to the global climate emergency. At the end of the year, we will welcome the international community to Scotland for COP26 in Glasgow. This will bring further opportunities to continue discussions about transitioning to a net-zero future as the international spotlight will be on Scotland to lead by example.

We would like to thank everyone who participated in The Big Climate Conversation and we urge you to continue the conversations in your homes, workplaces, and communities.

Community-led conversation in Perth

Community-led conversation in Tranent