

PUBLIC CONSULTATION RESULTS REPORT

On 18th May, nearly 70 residents from Henley and surrounding villages convened at Henley Town Hall for a public consultation to consider how we in Henley can boost nature, halve our carbon footprint by 2030, and what help we need from our local councils to achieve this.

Objective of the consultation:

- Raise awareness and inform about most impactful actions
- Demonstrate what impact we can all have and crucial roles we play
- Listen to local community about how we can ramp up action
- Inspire our local politicians and decision-makers to take action

Format:

Expert speaker Ed Hopkins (communications consultant at Dark Green PR) identified the following as the most impactful things individuals can do to reduce their carbon footprint¹:

1. Switch to renewable energy;
2. Shift to a plant-based diet or at least reduce consumption of meat, fish & dairy;
3. Ethical investment/divestment;
4. Buy new clothes from a proven, sustainable fashion brand, or buy second hand;
5. Use public transport whenever possible.

The participants heard how the Henley Wildlife Group, led by Sally Rankin, had been working over the past 30 years to protect and restore nature at certain locations around the town including Mill and Marsh Meadows. Then Catriona Bass, Co-Founder of the Nature Recovery Network (West Oxfordshire) spoke remotely about how the community has come together to undertake successful nature restoration work in Eynsham.

Participants then broke out into small groups and were asked the questions listed below. They discussed these questions within their groups and wrote their answers on flipcharts, which speakers for each group then reported back to the full meeting in a facilitated discussion.

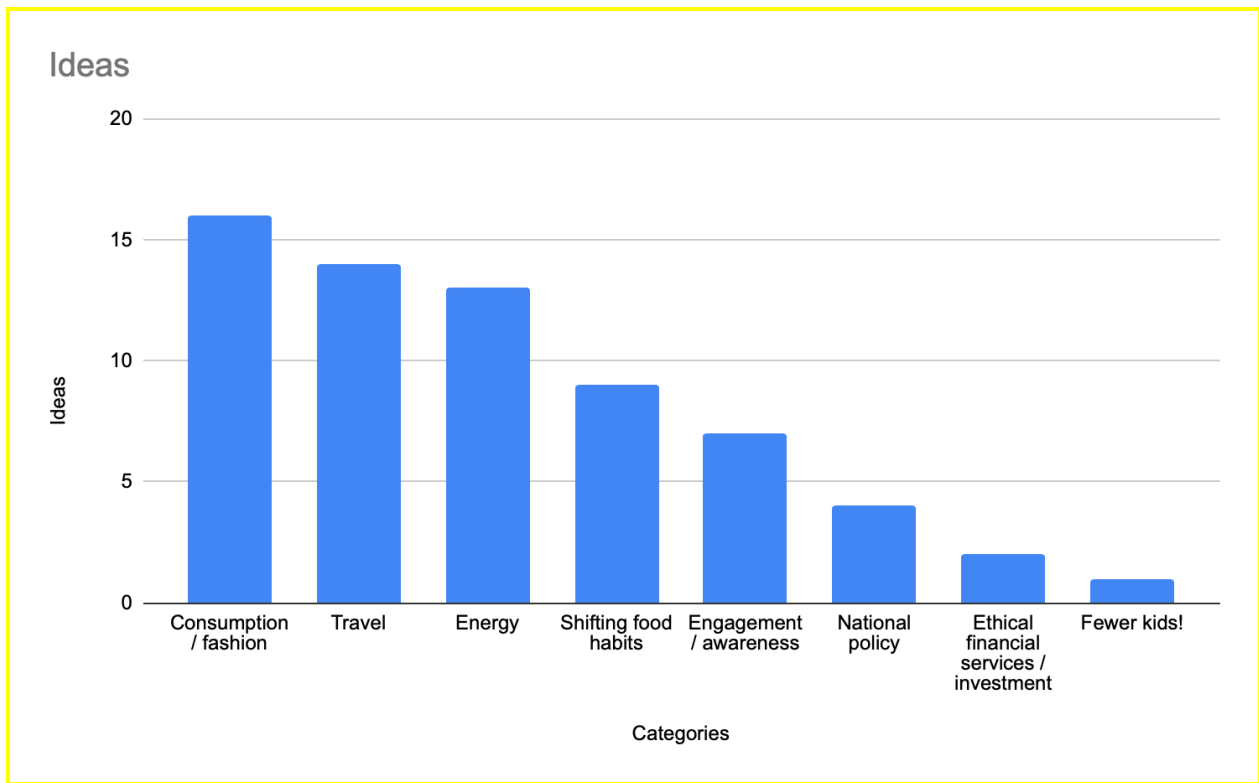
Results:

Question 1:

¹ Recommendations from Professor Mark Maslin to Ed Hopkins

What are the most impactful actions you/your organisation can take to reduce your/your organisation’s carbon footprint?

In answering Question 1, the participants proposed 66 ideas in relation to cutting carbon footprint, including insulating homes, encouraging car sharing, buying used/2nd hand and reducing meat consumption. Appendix 1 shows a list of all the ideas under this question. There were a number of ideas that were relevant to schools, including car sharing, waste awareness posters, more vegan options, and teaching students how to make change. On analysis of the data, we were able to group these ideas into the following categories:



Notable for its low score here was ethical financial investment, given it was highlighted by Ed Hopkins as one of the most impactful areas. We believe that this indicates that a local awareness-raising campaign highlighting the importance of ethical investment/divestment might be appropriate. This is particularly so, since Henley Town Council leads by example on

this with their ethical investment policy, and particularly, too, since Henley is in the top 10 most wealthy towns in the country in terms of number of multi-millionaires².

Question 2:

What are the most impactful actions you/your organisation can take to boost nature?

Participants proposed 41 ideas about how to boost nature including more green corridors for wildlife, community vegetable growing spaces, reducing chemicals and land management to increase biodiversity. Appendix 2 shows a list of all the ideas under this question. On analysis of the data, these ideas loosely fell into the following categories:

1. Rewilding gardens (this included an idea about collective garden rewilding contributions where the Henley area would be mapped to work out total m² of gardens that could participate in a rewilding project.)
2. Reusing rainwater
3. Food
4. Chemicals
5. Habitats for wildlife
6. Encouraging plants
7. Land management for biodiversity
8. Education/community engagement
9. Supporting green businesses/schools
10. Other

Many of the above categories overlap with one another, so the data showed a rather complex picture, which we felt reflected the complexity of nature itself. Given the nebulous nature of the data, we felt that it was misrepresenting the picture to produce a graph.

Question 3:

What are the 3 most impactful actions our local councils could take in and around Henley order to boost nature and cut carbon?

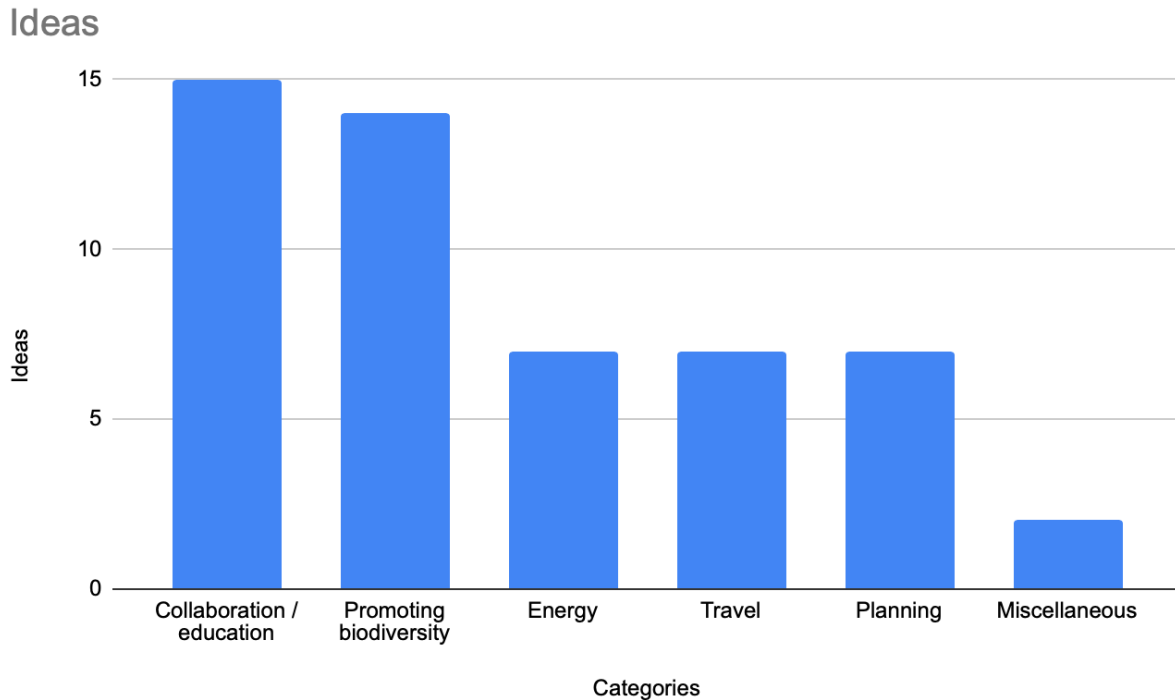
The participants came up with 52 ideas for actions that councils might take, including incentives for people 'greening' their front gardens, increasing tree cover for adaptation, bulk buying solar panels, challenging people to walk more, and integrating the environment into decision-making.

²

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/oliverwilliams1/2019/11/15/these-are-the-uk-towns-and-cities-where-the-wealthiest-live/>

There were some suggestions about the council leading by example on premises, land and food. Appendix 3 shows a list of all the ideas under this question.

As the graph below illustrates, the two most significant categories were community engagement and awareness and promoting biodiversity.



Importance of increasing community engagement and awareness:

One unexpected finding from the consultation was that community engagement and awareness stood out as very important for the participants on all three questions (and they are included in appendices 1 - 3). Participants wanted more information, more education and opportunity for engagement within the community. Ideas included awareness raising within schools, QR codes in town with green information, more public engagement events, expert guidance to local organisations, visiting exemplar sites, and more collaboration to learn and share best practice. It is worth noting that this kind of community engagement can indirectly influence national policy, since it raises the level of awareness of these important issues and can encourage citizens to raise these issues with their local MP (and there were 5 ideas relating to national policy, being 'lobbying politicians' x 2, 'vote well', 'vote green party' and 'activism').

Post-consultation survey

An online survey that was sent out to participants to complete following the consultation. 38 respondents completed the survey and key findings were:

- On climate, a high level of respondents (70% on each category) said they intended to use public transport or walk or cycle wherever possible, reduce their consumption of meat/fish/dairy products, and buy from a sustainable brand or buy second hand. This compares with lower scores on switching to renewable energy (50%) and switching their savings/investments/pensions to a greener bank (26%).
- On nature, 47% of respondents said that they would choose foods with low impact on the planet, with the next largest group of 24% saying they would make their garden nature friendly by increasing pollinators.
- For businesses, less than 20% of respondents said that they would implement a verified carbon assessment and an equally low number said that they would choose an ethical investment policy. 59% said that they would consider the impact of nature on every decision they take.

In response to the question “What were your main takeaways from the consultation?” we grouped the responses into the following areas:

1. The power of coming together as a community - this was the biggest group, there were many comments about the diversity of people and opinions in the room. Example comments:
 - *“I realised that the community network is much stronger than I assumed it to be and I am now looking forward to becoming more familiar with local people from different backgrounds, with different areas of expertise....who all want to cooperate to improve our situation vis-a-vis the climate crisis.”*
 - *“There are lots of enthusiastic people looking for a change towards a greener.future looking for some direction how best to achieve this”*
2. Realisation about the poor state of nature and biodiversity in the UK / soil degradation. Example comments:
 - *“Realised the need for greater communication regarding the natural world, although the issues are complex”*
 - *“I was not aware of the [soil degradation] threat”*
3. The ability of individuals to take action and make a difference. Example comments:
 - *“The variety of actions people are taking”*
 - *“Every individual can make a difference”*

We are grateful for the comments (including criticism) that respondents made in the survey. If you would like to discuss further, please contact Kate Oldridge on kateaoldridge@gmail.com.

Appendix 4 sets out more information from the survey.

Limitations of the consultation:

This was the 2nd public consultation that Greener Henley has run and lessons were learnt from our own observations and feedback including the post-consultation survey. We list the key limitations below:

- The participants not selected by sortition as for a jury, meaning that our participants were probably better informed than if we had a truly representative sample. However it is worth noting that Greener Henley representatives did not take part in the small groups and so their views were not incorporated into the data.
- The data sample size of 67, though strong for a local community public engagement exercise, is nevertheless a relatively small amount of data.
- It was difficult to capture all ideas made and establish weightings (ie if one point was stronger than others) as the analyst wasn't present during discussions. We will be working on capturing the data more accurately.

Given the above, Greener Henley is mindful that the process was imperfect but indicative. The key areas for improvement were:

- There were auditory issues with the space and this needs rethinking for future events, either by reducing numbers, improving the acoustics or choosing a different venue.
- We organised people into 6 groups of about 11 people. It was apparent that the group discussions tended to splinter into a number of smaller discussions. For future events we need to ensure that the groups are no bigger than 7 people per group.

Appendices to follow.

APPENDIX 1

Question 1

What are the most impactful actions you/your organisation can take to reduce your/your organisation's carbon footprint?

We list below all of the written data collected in the consultation. The data listed is noted word for word as documented on the flip charts during the session. We have organised the data into the categories listed below. We have noted 'schools' or 'business' in brackets after the idea if it was presented in the context of those areas.

Consumption / fashion³ (16 ideas)	
Reduce fashion	Less fast fashion
Buy used/2nd hand	Reduce waste
Waste awareness posters at college (schools)	Less consumption
Recycle more / reuse	Reduce consumption
Reuse packaging	Consider life cycle of products
Consider everything you buy	Avoid heavy packaging on products
Coffee, in own mugs	Reusable nappies library
Reduce single use plastic	Reduce waste
Travel (14 ideas)	
Local travel	Cycle paths

³ We have specified fashion here as fashion was listed as one of Ed Hopkins top 5 most impactful actions, but note here that there were only 3 ideas that specifically related to fashion. We decided to group them together with consumption as all of these ideas effectively relate to consumption.

Don't fly	Fly less
Lift shares	Clean transport
Active commuting (walking / cycling)	Increase use of public transport
Travel policy for companies (business)	Cycling and walking
Drive electric cars	Encourage car sharing especially schools (schools)
Work from home (2 days/wk)	Reduce travel
Energy (13 ideas)	
Renewable energy	Switch to renewable energy provider at home (harder for business)
Paperless office (business)	Ask employer for energy audit (business)
Turn off office lights outside office hours (business)	Energy use choices/heating water off (schools)
Instal solar panels	Instal solar panels / energy supply
Insulate houses	Insulate homes/buildings
Reduce home heating	Reduce energy use / green energy
Raise awareness of energy saving schemes	
Shifting food habits (9 ideas)	

Less meat	Less meat and dairy diet
Reduce meat - increase plant-based	Reduce meat consumption
Change diet	More vegan food options (schools)
Minimise food miles	Reduce food waste
Source locally grown food	
Increased engagement / awareness (7 ideas)	
Individuals carbon footprint calculator	Conduct carbon assessment and follow through (business)
'Pioneers' within school (school)	Raise awareness to teach individuals to make change (schools)
More public engagement meetings	Gym owner to get customers more engaged
Make it personal - about our lungs and health - direct impact	
National policy (4 ideas)	
Lobby politicians	Lobby politicians
Activism	Vote well
Ethical financial services / investment (2 ideas)	
Ethical investment	Sustainable finance

Miscellaneous (1 idea)	
Fewer kids!	

APPENDIX 2

Question 2

What are the most impactful actions you/your organisation can take to boost nature?

We list below all of the written data collected in the consultation. The data listed is noted word for word as documented on the flip charts during the session. We have organised the data into the loose categories listed below, but it is worth noting that we acknowledge that many of these categories overlap one another. We have noted 'schools' or 'business' in brackets after the idea if it was presented in the context of those areas.

Rewilding gardens (7 ideas)	
Reduce lawn space	Don't mow grass/meadows
No Mow May	No Mow in May
Wilding land - domestic and business	Collective garden rewilding contributions
Roof gardens	
Reusing rainwater (2 ideas)	
Rainwater harvesting	Water butt
Food (4 ideas)	
Grow your own	Grow your own veg
Grow your own/shared veggies	Diet
Chemicals (3 ideas)	
Less insecticides	Reduce pesticides/chemicals (patio cleaners)

Ditch the chemicals	
Habitats for wildlife (7 ideas)	
Hedgehog homes	Consider habitat loss
Green corridors for wildlife	Gardening - improve for wildlife
Increase water supply features for birds/wildlife	Bird feeders and boxes
Bird feeders	
Encouraging plants (3 ideas)	
Protect native plants	Encourage plants/wildflowers in garden
Increase biodiverse areas	
Land management for biodiversity (5 ideas)	
Surrounding villages - local nature recovery	Land management to increase biodiversity
Communicate with large landowners/landlords to increase biodiversity (surveys)	Increased participation in conservation
More conservation less restoration	
Education / community engagement (5 ideas)	
Education - all levels	Talk about the crisis

Outdoor education - become a Forest School / sustainable school	Eco-clubs to promote biodiversity
Visit exemplar sites	
Supporting green businesses/schools (2 ideas)	
Support for businesses/schools pushing for green initiatives	Support greener local businesses
Other (3 ideas)	
Be a responsible household	Peat-free compost
Vote green party	

APPENDIX 3

Question 3

What are the 3 most impactful actions our local councils could take in and around Henley order to boost nature and cut carbon?

We list below all of the written data collected in the consultation. The data listed is noted word for word as documented on the flip charts during the session. We have organised the data into the categories listed below. We have noted 'schools' or 'business' in brackets after the idea if it was presented in the context of those areas.

Collaboration and education (15 ideas)	
Public engagement events	Conservation officer to educate public and businesses
Local education	Questionnaire to residents – random sampling
QR codes in town with green info	Expert guidance to organisations
More availability of energy info	Improve awareness of meat reduction
Vegan festival	Support Greener Henley events
A “green label” town	Publicise Veganuary/adopt within council and restaurants
Local market gardening – supporting local farmers	Setting example – premises/land
Support for local farmers (including livestock)	
Promoting biodiversity (14 ideas)	
More conservation less restoration	Monitor effectiveness of No Mow May – surveys and monitoring
Mow less (Mill Meadows)	Greywater harvesting

Litter picking at river events	Treekly app-fund global restoration projects
Act on river Thames	Bubble barrier for plastics [on river]
Incentivise greening front gardens/disincentivise paving	Improve tree management audit/Ecotree
Increase tree cover for adaptation	Increase in foliage
Hedgebank policies	Wilder hedges
Energy (7 ideas)	
Support energy provider switching	Stop shops leaving on lights late at night
Weir hydro-electrics	Promote insulation techniques
Promote grant availability for solar panels/heat pumps	Bulk buying of solar panels
Further investigation of EV charging for rows of houses	
Travel (7 ideas)	
Cycling routes / lanes	Communicate with all local bus providers
Easier to use public transport	Increase public transport (HOT – Oxford)
Car sharing encouragement	Less and smarter travel
Challenge people to walk more ^[1]	
Planning (7 ideas)	
Integrate environment into decisions	Encourage retailers to clear shop front
Tougher in development/planning infrastructure/building standards	Greener local plans

Drop in office space	More bins – they are overflowing
Recycling bins	
Miscellaneous (2 ideas)	
Take responsibility	Charity shops

[1] This could also be listed in “Collaboration and education”

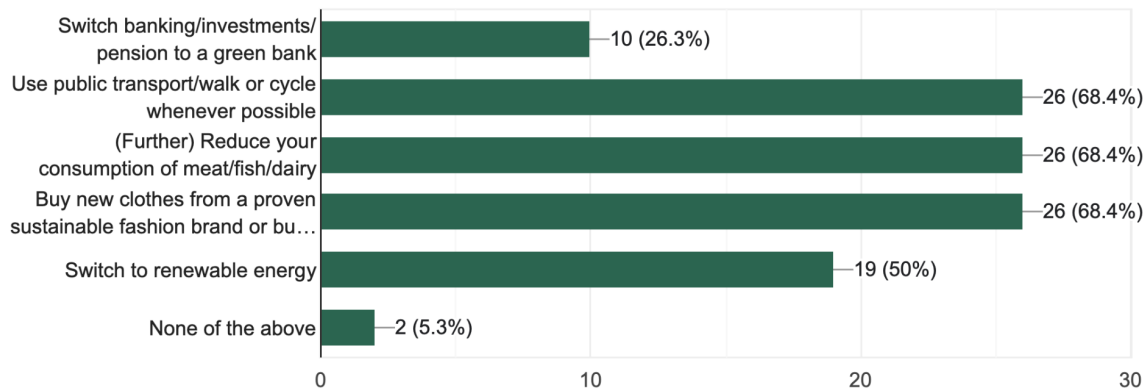
APPENDIX 4

Post-consultation survey

We list below the graphs presented in the post-consultation survey. These have been copied directly from the survey - where the wording is unclear from the graph we set out the full wording below each graph in italics.

38 participants (out of 67 participants in the public consultation) took part in the survey.

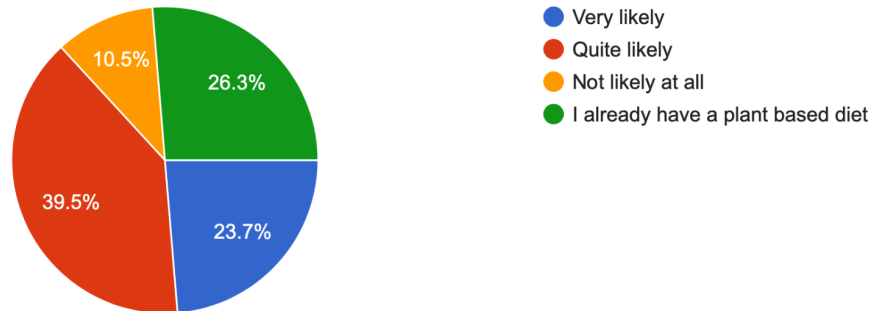
In his talk, Ed Hopkins identified the top 5 most impactful things that individuals can do to reduce their carbon footprint. On reflection, which (if any) ... following do you intend to start or continue doing?
38 responses



**Buy clothes from a proven sustainable fashion brand or buy second hand*

Shifting towards a plant based diet is one of the most impactful things that individuals can do to reduce impact on the planet. On reflection, followi...u to reduce your consumption of meat/fish/dairy?

38 responses

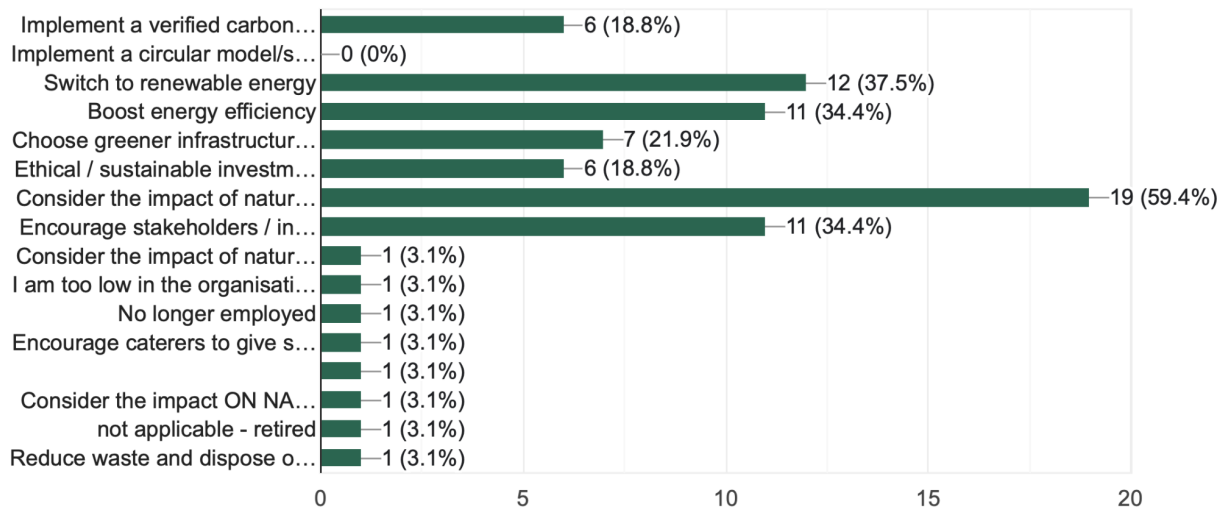


*

Shifting towards a plant based diet is one of the most impactful things that individuals can do to reduce impact on the planet. On reflection, following the public consultation how likely are you to reduce your consumption of meat/fish/dairy?

Within your business or organisation what action will you take (or encourage your employer/the organisation to take) to reduce impact on the planet?

32 responses



*

18.8% - Implement a verified carbon assessment footprint

21.9% - Choose greener infrastructures and equipment

18.8% - Ethical / sustainable investment ie company pensions

59.4% - Consider the impact of nature on every decision you take

34.4% - Encourage stakeholders / incentivise employees to make planet friendly choices

Following the public consultation, which of the following do you/your organisation intend to start or continue doing in order to boost nature?

37 responses



*

Purple = Choose foods with low impact on the planet (eg plant-based, watch out for palm oils, etc) (45.9%)

Orange = Make your garden or community space more nature friendly by increasing diversity of pollinators (24.3%)

Green = Get involved in citizen science activities eg bird watch / counting butterflies / river water sampling (8.1%)