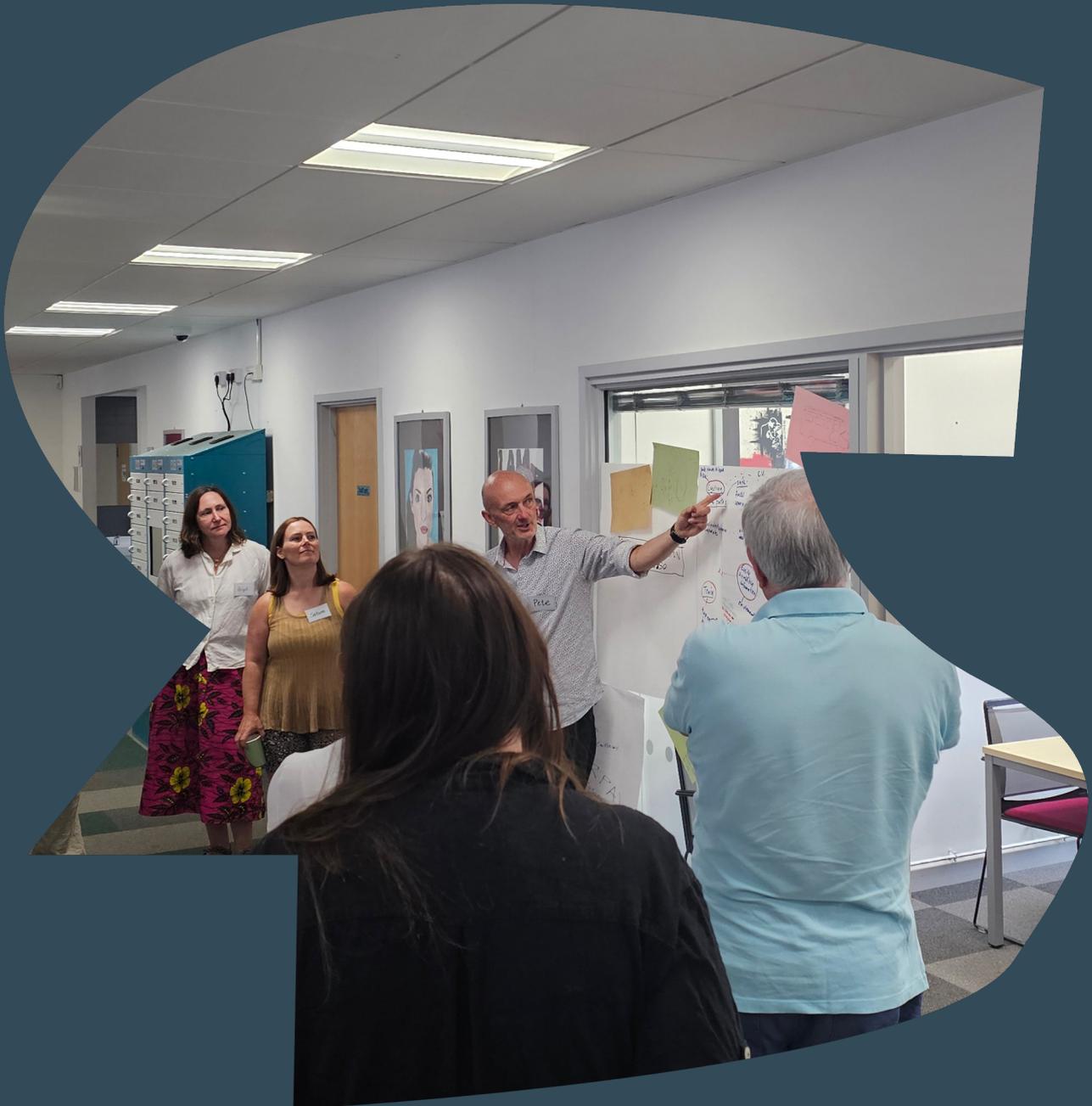
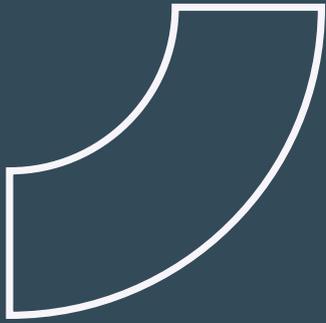


Elmbridge Climate Change Citizens' Panel

SUMMER - AUTUMN 2025





Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Elmbridge Borough Council Officers for their support throughout this process. We would also like to thank Cllr Ashley Tilling for his backing and support as chair of the Advisory Group.

We would like to thank all the commentators, and all the members of the Elmbridge Climate Change Citizens' Panel without whom this project would not have been possible.

About the authors

The recommendations of the Elmbridge Climate Change Citizen's Panel are reproduced here in the Panel's own words. The remaining content was written by Rowan Harris of Shared Future. No legal responsibility can be accepted for any loss or damage resulting from the contents of this document. It does not necessarily represent the view of Shared Future in relation to any policy or projects.

About Shared Future

We are a community interest company working across the UK. Our aim is to provide an excellent service that makes a difference to communities and individuals and works towards a fairer, more equal society. Our mission is to move those we engage with towards greater individual and collective authority and autonomy, by supporting their ability to act wisely, confidently and in community with others. Since setting up Shared Future in 2009, we've built a team of experienced practitioners with a diverse range of skills. We work together on worthwhile and stimulating projects that reflect our personal values.

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www.sharedfuturecic.org.uk

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Introduction

The Elmbridge Climate Change Citizens' Panel was commissioned by Elmbridge Borough Council. The Panel ran from June to October 2025 and was facilitated by Shared Future. This report details the process and final recommendations.

Climate change and environmental degradation pose significant and far-reaching challenges for our communities, with implications for local economies, jobs, public health, infrastructure, food, and the natural environment.

While national governments and international organisations like the United Nations set broad targets for responding to climate change and environmental issues, the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation and the policies enacted in response are felt most directly at the local level.

Meaningful engagement with the public at the local level is essential to ensure that policy reflects local priorities, builds public understanding and support, and ensures that solutions are fair for all and responsive to the needs of the community in question.

It is against this backdrop that legal provisions such as Article 7 of the Aarhus Convention and Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE) under the Paris Agreement are important because they recognise that effective environmental and climate action depends not only on technical policies, but on informed, empowered, and engaged citizens.

Citizens' panels and other forms of participatory engagement are increasingly seen as important tools in shaping our response to climate change. They can support governments at all levels to produce policy that is fair and obtains significant buy-in from the public. This rests on the ability of such processes to engage a cross-section of the public, with diverse opinions and experiences.

With that in mind, the Elmbridge Climate Change Citizens' Panel was convened to answer the question:

'What steps can we take locally to address climate change and protect the environment?'

To ensure a robust, fair, and unbiased process, an independent Advisory Group was recruited, bringing together representatives from local government, the private sector, voluntary sector, educational sector, climate and nature groups, and other community groups. The Advisory Group was responsible for determining the overarching question and selecting appropriate expert 'commentators' for the Panel to hear from.

In Spring/Summer 2025, 5,000 letters were sent to households across Elmbridge, inviting residents to join the Panel. 119 people responded, registering their interest and availability, from which 23 participants were randomly selected to reflect the demographic characteristics of Elmbridge.

The Panel comprised 23 members, aged 18 to 72 and from many different walks of life. The group met for 5 Saturday sessions from June to October 2025. In that time, they heard from a range of expert 'commentators', shared experiences and opinions, and deliberated.

After approximately 30 hours of deliberation, the Panel produced 18 recommendations covering a range of issues, including transport, housing, green spaces, food, and more.

Foreword

Cllr Ashley Tilling is the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change, Environmental Services and Sustainability at Elmbridge Borough Council.

As Portfolio Holder for Climate Change, Environmental Services and Sustainability I have always believed that tackling climate change requires more than policy, it needs partnership and community support. As we considered what meaningful action for climate change could look like for Elmbridge, we were clear: residents must have a voice. Real change happens when communities come together to support shared goals.

Individual commitment is powerful, but when local groups take ownership, the impact is deeper, more enduring and can lead to transformation. In Elmbridge, we want change to be driven by the collective power of our community. That is why initiatives like the Elmbridge Climate Change Citizens' Panel are so important.

We went to great lengths to ensure this panel reflects the diversity of our borough. The Citizens' Panel was designed to represent a true cross-section of Elmbridge, bringing together residents from different backgrounds, neighbourhoods and perspectives on climate change. They were strangers united by one common goal: to explore ideas that could help the community reach a more sustainable and healthier future.

The task we set was ambitious: to develop practical recommendations that address climate challenges across areas that they chose to focus on. These included transport, housing, planning and green spaces. Over five intensive sessions – 30 hours in total – the panel listened to expert insights, shared personal experiences, deliberated on complex issues and developed a set of recommendations aimed at reducing emissions, improving air quality and creating a healthier, more sustainable borough. Their commitment and collaboration have been nothing short of inspiring and the recommendations they produced are thoughtful and wide-ranging.

This process reaffirmed something important: there are no easy answers to climate change. But the panel's work shows that collective action at a local level can make a real difference.

Their vision is now captured in a set of recommendations that have been reviewed by our Advisory Group and will go before Cabinet for consideration. We will explore which actions can be implemented in the coming months and by the new East Surrey authority when it takes shape.

Even in the context of Local Government Reorganisation, this initiative is a model for engagement. These recommendations will not only inform council decisions but will also be shared with MPs, landlords, developers and other key stakeholders and residents to ensure broad collaboration in tackling climate change and protecting the environment.

I want to express my sincere thanks to the panel for their dedication and hard work. Their contributions have been outstanding, and the recommendations they produced are important and valuable in helping shape Elmbridge, the future local authority and our communities.

Cleaner air, improved mental and physical health and lower energy bills are all within reach, if we act together as a community. Even as Local Government Reorganisation progresses, this initiative provides a model for community engagement and collective action.

Councillor **Ashley Tilling**

Portfolio Holder for Climate Change, Environmental Services and Sustainability at Elmbridge Borough Council.



Background

Elmbridge is a borough in Northwest Surrey, England. It is located within the London commuter belt, with towns like Weybridge and Cobham serving as popular residential areas for people commuting to the capital. The borough is steeped in history, from the royal residence of Hampton Court Palace to the first purpose-built motor racing circuit in Brooklands.

Situated in England's most-wooded county, Elmbridge is renowned for its rich woodlands and Sites of Special Scientific Interest, including Claygate Common and Esher Common.

At the time of writing, Elmbridge Borough Council is one of eleven two-tier local authorities sitting under Surrey County Council. As of April 2027, the twelve local existing district and borough councils will be replaced by two new unitary authorities: East Surrey and West Surrey. As part of the East Surrey Combined Authority, Elmbridge will benefit from a council with full control over all services which "will be better placed to respond to local needs."

Elmbridge's economy is primarily service-based. It is considered one of the most affluent boroughs in the UK, and is sometimes referred to as 'Britain's Beverley Hills'. Despite this, it remains one of the UK's most unequal boroughs. A recognition of this must be at the heart of any successful climate policy; ignoring inequality makes effective and sustainable climate action nearly impossible.

Citizens' Panels are an example of a deliberative democratic process. They offer a way to engage with members of the public who would not normally be engaged on climate change, allowing members of the public to be upskilled, consider diverse views, come to an informed conclusion, and provide decision-makers with a clear mandate for ambitious action.

While the Elmbridge Climate Change Citizens' Panel is the first such example of a deliberative process within Surrey, it joins around 60+ examples of such deliberative processes across the UK, including both regional juries and assemblies and the national Climate Assembly UK.

What is a Citizens' Panel?

Citizens' panels are a type of deliberative democracy in which a group of randomly selected residents, that broadly reflect the diversity of the wider population, come together to learn about, deliberate on, and make recommendations on a specific issue. Such processes are sometimes also called citizens' juries, while larger examples are often referred to as 'citizens' assemblies'.

Deliberative processes are particularly useful for addressing 'wicked problems'. These are issues (like climate change) where there are no straightforward solutions, where complex interdependencies mean that such solutions often create new problems, and where the problem can never be solved definitively. In such cases, the 'collective intelligence' of a group of ordinary citizens can prove invaluable.

The Elmbridge Climate Change Citizens' Panel brought together 23 residents from across the borough, selected via a process of sortition. This involved sending out 5,000 letters to randomly selected households, followed by a stratified random sampling to ensure diversity across key demographics such as gender, age, ethnicity, disability, indices of multiple deprivation, primary mode of transport, and attitude toward climate change.

Over the course of five Saturday sessions held between June and October 2025, participants engaged with a range of expert 'commentators', shared their own lived experiences, asked questions, and deliberated in small and large groups.

The process was independently designed and facilitated by Shared Future CIC, a not-for-profit with extensive experience in running deliberative processes.



How was the Elmbridge Climate Change Citizens' Panel Selected?

Citizens' Panels gain legitimacy in much the same way as legal juries: through random selection of members, otherwise known as 'sortition'. This approach ensures that all citizens have an equal chance to participate. To ensure that the panel looks broadly like the community it is chosen to represent, selection is carried out using a method known as random stratified sampling.

The Sortition Foundation (a not-for-profit organisation with expertise in the use of stratified, random selection in decision-making) determined all potential addresses in Elmbridge using the Royal Mail address database. 5,000 randomly-selected households then received an invitation letter with some frequently asked questions.

The letter highlighted the value of lived experience over specialist skills or knowledge of the climate or environment and offered £360 in vouchers as a gift plus expenses for taking part in the process. By providing gift vouchers and expenses, we can ensure that those who are not typically able to take part are able to do so.

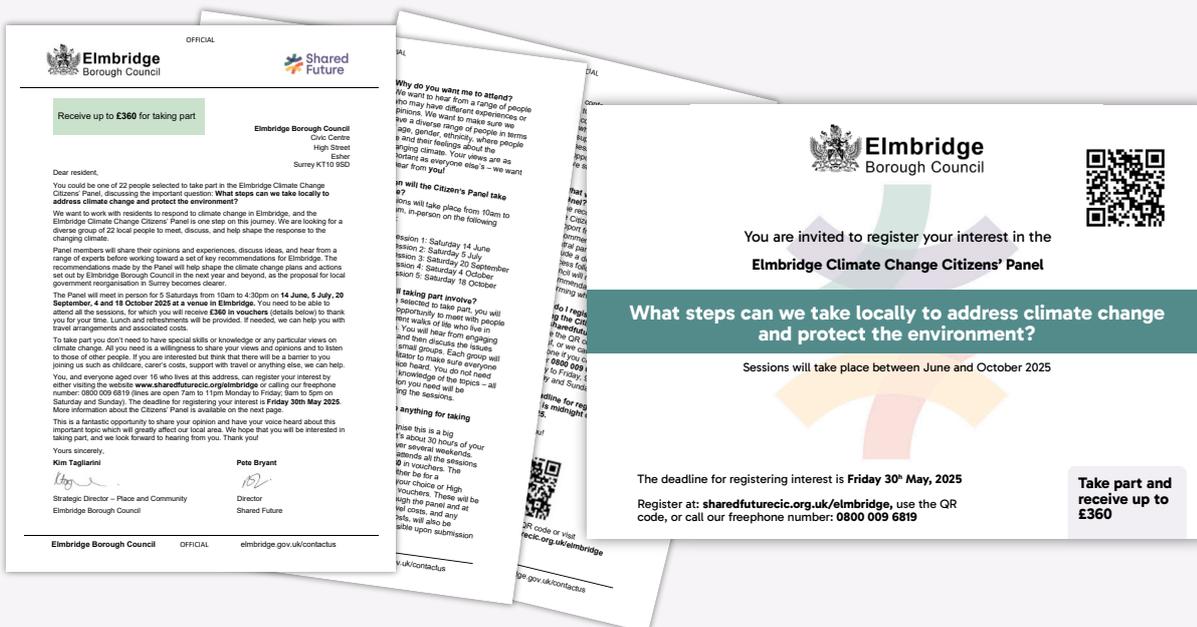
Interested residents were invited to respond via freephone or register their details online. Shared Future was commissioned to run a 22-person citizens' panel.

119 people responded to the invitation and 23 people were invited to take part in the process.

The Panel was designed to reflect the demographics of the population of Elmbridge. Participants were selected based on the following characteristics: Gender, Age, Ethnicity, Disability, Indicators of Multiple Deprivation, Primary mode of transport, and Level of climate concern.

The Advisory Group (see p.7) decided that it was important to overrepresent young people and ethnic minorities, as these groups tend to be the furthest from decision-making power.*

All Panel members were invited to a 1-to-1 phone call in advance of the first session. This helped to establish a relationship with members of the Shared Future team, to summarise the purpose and workings of the Panel, and to reassure Panel members, answer any questions, and identify any further support or travel needs.



Recruitment letter and envelopes.

*Unfortunately, high dropout meant that several members of the panel were replaced after the second session. An additional session was held to get new members up-to-speed. The final group composition is represented in the "Actual Panel Members" column in table in P.6.

Recruitment Targets

	Recruitment target based on available statistics % of pop. (# in the room)	Actual Panel members
Gender	Male: 48.3% (10-11) Female: 51.7% (11-12) Non-binary: 0	Male: 10 Female: 13 Non-binary: 0
Age	16-19: 5.15% (1-2) 20-24: 4.75% (1-2) 25-34: 12.4% (2-3) 35-49: 29.16% (6-7) 50-64: 25.74% (5-6) 65+: 22.82 (4-5)	16-19: 1 20-24: 2 25-34: 3 35-49: 6 50-64: 7 65+: 4
Ethnicity	Asian, Asian British, Asian Welsh: 6.5% (1-2) Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: 1.2% (1-2) Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: 4.1% (0-1) White, White British: 86.1% (18-19) Other ethnic group: 2% (0-1)	Asian, Asian British, Asian Welsh: 2 Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: 1 Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: 0 White, White British: 20 Other ethnic group: 0
Disability	Yes: 18.8% (4-5) No: 81.2% (17-18)	Yes: 2 No: 21
Indices of Multiple Deprivation	1-2: 0% (0) 3-4: 5% (1-2) 5-6: 9.2% (2-3) 7-8: 15.8% (3-4) 9-10: 69.98% (13-14)	1-2: 0 3-4: 5 5-6: 4 7-8: 3 9-10: 11
Level of Climate Concern	Very concerned: 37.0% (8-9) Fairly concerned: 43.0% (9-10) Not very concerned: 13.0% (2-3) Not at all concerned: 5.0% (1-2) Don't know: 1.0% (0-1)	Very concerned: 12 Fairly concerned: 8 Not very concerned: 3 Not at all concerned: 0 Don't know: 0
Primary mode of transport**	Car: Bicycle: Public Transport: Walk:	Car: 13 Bicycle: 3 Public Transport: 5 Walk: 2

**No reliable, Elmbridge-wide figures were found for this category.

Advisory Group and Observers

Citizens' Panels incorporate a range of measures to ensure that the process is as transparent as possible and stands up to scrutiny.

Advisory Group

In line with best practice, an Advisory Group was recruited to ensure that the process was fair and stood up to scrutiny. The Advisory Group, chaired by Cllr Ashley Tilling, the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change, Environmental Services and Sustainability at Elmbridge Borough Council, met four times and consisted of a range of local organisations and individuals. The group met to:

1. Ensure that the project design was fair and rigorous.
2. Agree upon and monitor the process of citizen recruitment.
3. Suggest topics to be considered by participants.
4. Identify 'commentators'/'witnesses' best able to present on these topics.
5. Push for implementation of the Panel's recommendations.

Oversight Panel Member Organisations

- Elmbridge Borough Council
- Walton Charity
- Brooklands Technical College
- Surrey Climate Commission
- Green Elmbridge
- Surrey County Council
- Claygate Parish Council
- University of Surrey
- NHS

Observers

To ensure transparency, we provided external stakeholders with an opportunity to observe the process from start to finish. In addition to commentator presentations and Q&A sessions, observers were able to watch any deliberative exercises or activities. All observers were briefed to remain silent. They were not allowed to participate in

any of the small group discussions.

Who Attended as an Observer?

Representatives from the following organisations attended at least one session as an observer:

- Elmbridge Borough Council: Cllr Ashley Tilling
- Elmbridge Borough Council: Antonia Sheedy
- Elmbridge Borough Council: Joanne Taylor
- Elmbridge Borough Council: Jamie Pourier-Benham
- Elmbridge Borough Council: Annabel Crouch
- Elmbridge Borough Council: Nathalie Allison
- Elmbridge Borough Council: Matt Burrows
- Elmbridge Borough Council: Cllr Mary Marshall
- University of Surrey: Dr Elena Dawkins
- Surrey County Council: Ben McCallan
- Claygate Parish Council: Cllr Jenny French
- Walton Charity: Rob Mills
- Surrey Climate Commission: Prof. Angela Druckman
- Green Elmbridge: Nick Davis

Panel Sessions

The Panel took place between June and October 2025. It consisted of 5 in-person Saturday sessions.

Session 1

The first session was held on Saturday 14th June. After a brief overview of the process from Shared Future, **Cllr Ashley Tilling**, Portfolio Holder for Climate Change, Environmental Services and Sustainability at Elmbridge Borough Council, was invited to give a short overview of the purpose of the panel ([recording](#)), followed by a question and answer session.

We then invited everyone to stand up, shake off and play a game of 'people bingo'. This was intended to help people to get to know each other in a friendly, informal way.

Group Guidelines

When we bring together people from different backgrounds, with different opinions, and varying life experiences, we invite the potential for conflict. Such a mixing of opinions and ideas brings profound opportunities to learn and develop ideas, but only if participants feel respected and able to contribute as fully as possible.

To ensure that we made effective use of our time together, we asked panel members to develop a set of 'group guidelines' on how to work together. It has been shown that when groups are involved in co-designing the norms or principles behind an engagement, they are more likely to abide by them.

Each participant was asked to share in small groups *'one thing that would make it easier for you to take part in the Panel'*. Panel members were able to offer additional guidelines which they felt uncomfortable sharing in public with facilitators during the break.

At the end of the session, all the guidelines were grouped and merged where necessary. The guidelines were shared back with the Panel via email and at the next session. Facilitators would refer to the guidelines throughout the process to keep conversations on track. The final list of group guidelines can be found on p.9.

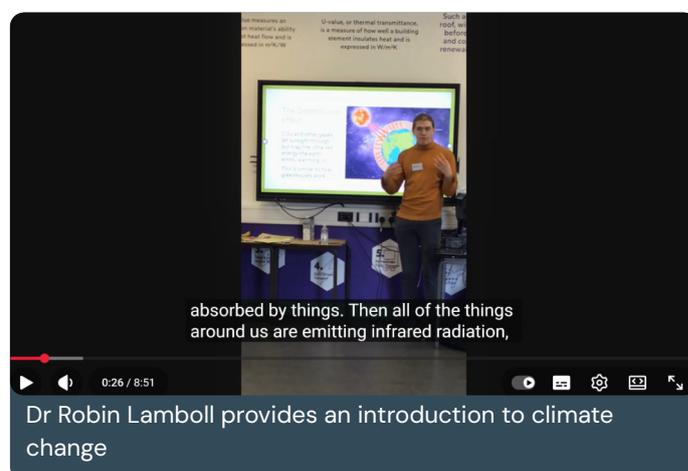
Commentator Slot: What is Climate Change?

After a short break, panel members heard from their first commentator. This purpose of this commentator presentation was to give all participants a foundational understanding of climate change, including its causes and consequences, before they got to grips with the overarching panel question:

- **Dr Robin Lamboll**, Research Fellow at Imperial College London ([recording](#))

After the presentation, panel members were given some time in small groups to discuss what they had heard and develop questions for the commentator. The purpose of this was to begin building rapport and trust between participants, but also ensure that a range of questions were asked in the Q&A while avoiding where possible any duplication. Panel members were encouraged to ask their own questions, but facilitators offered to ask questions on behalf of participants if they were not comfortable doing so themselves.

Before lunch, all panel members were given 5 minutes to reflect quietly on their own about anything they might need to remember from the session.



Group Guidelines

The Panel

1. Listen to others. Be patient and wait for your turn if someone else is speaking.
2. Be mindful of dominating the conversation and let others have their turn to speak.
3. It is ok to disagree, provided you disagree agreeably! Be respectful of other people's views and enjoy the debates and discussions.
4. Speak clearly. Some members of the panel may have difficulty hearing.
5. Respect other people's opinions. People may wish to share the opinions of others. They should not be judged for doing so.
6. Embrace the grey areas and move beyond binary 'yes' and 'no' thinking.
7. Be inquisitive and open to changing your mind!
8. Be polite to each other.

The Facilitators:

1. Help us to keep organised!
2. Help us get to know each other, by using more ice breakers!
3. Give us lots of breaks and make sure we are comfortable when working. This might include working at tables and providing extra breakout spaces for quieter discussions.
4. Give us time to come up with questions and share any unanswered questions with commentators.
5. Make sure there are lots of ways to contribute e.g. for those of us who don't like speaking in large groups.



Constructing a 'human map' of panel members

Human Map

To energise panel members after lunch and encourage them to think about the diversity of voices in the room, we asked them to construct a 'human map'. Panel members were given rough guidance on where within the space they might find West Moseley (north), Claygate (east), Burwood Park (west), and Stoke D'Abernon (south). We asked each panel member to locate themselves on the imaginary map according to where they were from. This also encouraged panel members to speak to people that they hadn't had the opportunity to so far.

Mapping Elmbridge

The next exercise was designed to support panel members to think through how climate change and environmental issues are manifest at the local level.

Panel members were split into 4 groups (North, South, East, West) according to which part of the borough they lived in. Panel members were then asked to note down on coloured sticky notes and place in the relevant part of the map any positive actions that are being taken to address climate change and environmental degradation or any challenges or barriers to addressing the issues.

At the end of the exercise, panel members toured each of the groups. Each group provided a summary of the sticky notes placed on their map.

Problem Tree

A problem tree is a visual tool that helps people to break down a complex issue by digging into the 'root causes' of the problem.

This exercise was intended to help panel members clearly see the links between different causes and their



Panel member explains the positive actions and challenges for climate change and environmental degradation.

consequences, making the issue of climate change easier to understand and discuss.

In small groups, we asked panel members to consider the prompt *"climate change has become a big problem."* This prompt was chosen to enable a wide range of responses with different views on climate change and climate policy.

Each group was then tasked with listing some of the causes underpinning the prompt. Where any cause was provided, a facilitator supported the group to talk through their reasoning and if they felt there were any deeper root causes underlying it.

At the end of the exercise, each group toured the other group's problem tree whilst members of the other group explained their thinking.

What Does 'The Environment' Mean to You?

Everybody has a different understanding of what is meant by the word 'environment'. When we talk about "protecting the environment", we may mean very different things. The purpose of this exercise was to help panel members think through what the environment meant to them in a way that encouraged personal reflection and helped the group to understand some of the diverse perspectives in the room.

Panel members were split into small groups and given a large drawing of a river, with the source at one end and the mouth at the other. The river was intended to

represent a journey through life, with the source representing childhood and the representing the later years of life. This activity would give panel members of all ages an opportunity to draw upon their different experiences of the environment throughout their lives, and encourage reflection on any changes they may have experienced during that time.

Each panel member was asked to share one or two examples on sticky notes of an experience with the environment that triggered an emotion for them, either positive or negative, alone or with others, in Elmbridge or elsewhere. After 10 minutes, panel members were invited to share back with the group if they felt comfortable.



Problem tree: "climate change has become a big problem"

lead facilitator provided a brief overview of points raised in the Advisory Group meeting as well as any commentators the Advisory Group had suggested. It was agreed that at the start of each future session we would brief panel members on any decisions that were taken by the Advisory Group.

Commentator Slot: Where Are The Emissions Coming From?

The second session provided an opportunity for panel members to hear more about the causes of climate change at the local level.

Panel members were reminded of the purpose of the commentator slots: 1) to hear outside perspectives; 2) to build their own knowledge; 3) to reflect on new knowledge and discuss new perspectives with other panel members; and 4) to develop their thinking around possible recommendations.

The panel heard from the following commentator on local emissions:

- **Ben McCallan**, Greener Futures Engagement Lead, Surrey County Council ([recording](#))

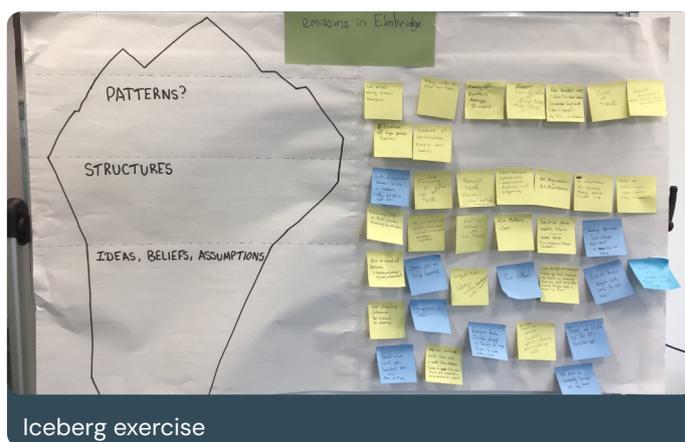
After the presentations, panel members went into small groups to discuss what they had heard and develop questions for the commentator. Facilitators then grouped each question and called up members of the panel to ask their own question of the commentator, where they indicated they were comfortable doing so. If they were not comfortable doing so, facilitators asked the questions on their behalf.

Iceberg and Visioning

After a short break, panel members were asked to choose between one of two activities. An 'iceberg' activity, which encouraged critical thinking and reflection, and a 'visioning' activity, which would encourage panel members to think creatively about what the future might look like.

Iceberg:

The first group was asked to think of an iceberg. The iceberg provides a useful visual anchor. It is hard to grasp the scale of an iceberg, because most of it is hidden beneath the water. Many of the problems we face in society are equally hard to grasp, and our understanding is 'surface level'.



The aim of this exercise was to help panel members explore how everyday behaviours, actions, and events, the way transport is structured and policy is implemented, and the shared beliefs across society all contribute to travel and transport being a major source of emissions in Elmbridge.

Panel members were asked to reflect on the following prompt: *"travel and transport in Elmbridge is a large source of our carbon emissions."*

As we moved down the iceberg, panel members were asked to provide suggestions as to why the problem might exist, starting with observable patterns (what we notice happening again and again). The group was then asked to explain the structures (how things are organised) that encourage the patterns in behaviour or events that we can see. Finally, the group was asked to think about the mental models (how people think about travel) which help to keep the structures in place.

Visioning:

The 'visioning' group was asked to think of what a positive future for transport in Elmbridge would look like in 10 years time. The group was invited to contribute however they felt comfortable, with words, phrases, or drawings.

After 35 minutes, each group shared with the other group what they had produced.

Opinion Lines

Before lunch, panel members were asked to position themselves on an opinion line in response to a number of statements. Panel members were then asked to share their reasoning for standing in a certain position on the opinion line in front of the group.

Commentator Slot: Travel and Transport

After lunch, panel members had the opportunity to hear more about different aspects of the transport issue, as well as some potential solutions. The first two commentators provided an overview of what local government is already doing and what a sustainable transport system might look like:

- **Steve Howard**, Transport Strategy Manager, Surrey County Council ([recording](#))
- **Dr Nikolas Thomopoulos**, Associate Professor in Transport, University of Surrey ([recording](#))

After the presentations, panel members went into small groups to develop questions for each commentator before taking part in a large group question and answer session.

After a short break, the panel heard from two additional commentators on possible transport solutions:

- **Roger Geffen**, Joint Co-ordinator, Low Traffic Future ([recording](#))
- **Jane Halliwell**, Trustee, Chatterbus ([recording](#))

To maximise the time available for questions, each panel member was asked to reflect on their own and write down one question that they had for each commentator. These questions were shared with facilitators who themed them and called on panel members to ask their question of each commentator in the large group.

At the end of the session, each member of the panel was asked to write down one thing from the day that they felt they needed to remember on a piece of paper. Each piece of paper was collected by facilitators to be shared back with the group ahead of the final session.

Session 3

Session 3 took place on Saturday 20th September. The session started with a quick icebreaker. The lead facilitator then reported back on the decisions made during the most recent Advisory Group meeting.

Thinking About Change

The first part of the session was designed to



Roger Geffen, Low Traffic Future presents to the panel

encourage participants to think about some of the ways in which change can happen.

First, we asked panel members to think about a positive change that they have seen in their lives. This might be in their personal life, work life, in their neighbourhood, or further afield. This didn't have to be related to the climate. Panel members were asked to reflect on what it was that made that change happen, what started it, and what encouraged it. Panel members were then asked to share with the person next to them, before sharing with the wider group.

After sharing in the plenary, we invited all panel members to consider different approaches to getting change. Facilitators placed twelve different cards around the room, with each card detailing a different approach to getting change, sometimes called a 'theory of change'. This included approaches like "making other people aware" and "changing how we talk about things and the stories we tell".

Panel members were invited to tour the room and leave a sticky note with an example of a change they have seen next to the approach that encouraged it. The twelfth card provided an opportunity for panel members to share changes and add "any other approaches" that brought about that change.

After 10 minutes, we held a large group discussion, providing an opportunity for panel members to share any additional examples of change and approaches to getting change they had thought of. Panel members were then asked to share which of these approaches they felt were most or least effective, and why.

Commentator Slot: How Does Change Happen?

To bring the morning to a close, we invited two

commentators to share different approaches they have used to get change in their work:

- **Fergus Lamb**, Policy and Engagement Officer, Hope for the Future ([recording](#))
- **Diana Thornton**, Co-Founder, Oxshott Net Zero ([recording](#))

Following the presentations, panel members were asked to develop questions in threes with the people sitting next to them. The questions were then put to each commentator in a plenary question and answer session.

Before lunch, panel members were asked to write down one thing that struck them during the morning on a piece of paper. Each piece of paper was collected and the ideas were themed to be shared back with panel members ahead of the final session.

Commentator Slot: Green spaces

After lunch, and a quick energiser, we invited three commentators to speak about green spaces, including what the council is already doing, and how citizens can get involved:

- **Paul Falconer**, Development Manager, Planning Team, Elmbridge Borough Council ([recording](#))
- **Rodney Whittaker**, Local Correspondent, Open Spaces Society ([recording](#))

- **Rob Mills**, CEO at Walton Charity ([Pre-recorded](#)) and **Pamela Winstanley**, Community Grower at Space to Grow ([recording](#))

After the presentations, members of the Panel were asked to join one of three small groups with a commentator for an informal question and answer session. Panel members were given thirty minutes with reminders at ten minute intervals so that they could switch group if they wanted to.

At the end of the question and answer session, each panel member was given a piece of paper to record one thing that they needed to remember during recommendation writing. These were typed up and shared with participants ahead of the final session.

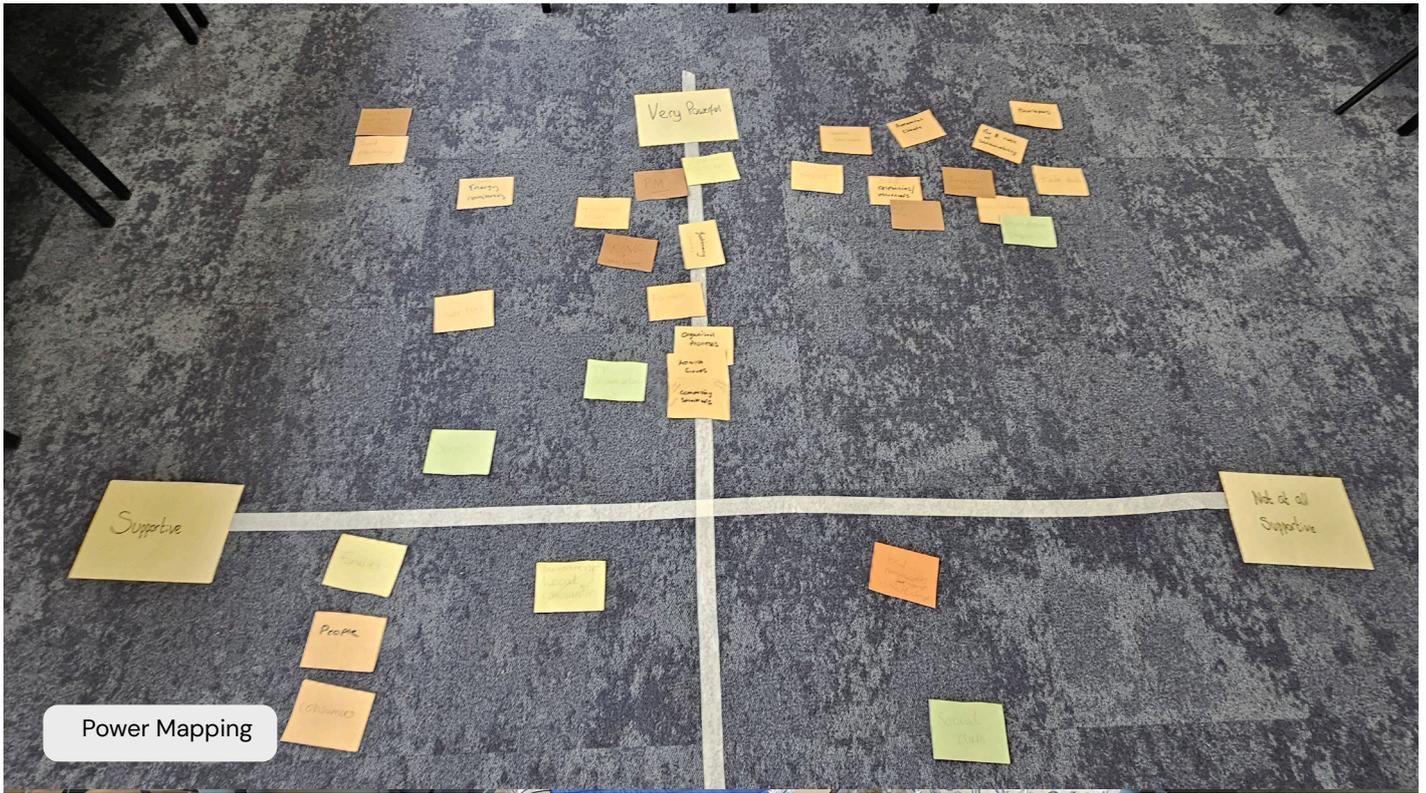
What Does a Good Recommendation Look Like?

To encourage the group to think about how they could apply what they have learned over the course of the process, the lead facilitator gave a short presentation with some simple hints and tips on what makes a good recommendation.

Panel members were reminded that there was no 'right' or 'wrong' approach to writing recommendations, but that they may want to consider a few different things as they approach recommendation writing (e.g. how many recommendations they write, over what timescales they want to see change, who they are addressing, etc).



Panel members reflect on the overarching question



Power Mapping

Towards the end of the day, panel members were split into four small groups to begin a 'power mapping' activity. The aim of this exercise was to encourage the group to think about who has the power to influence decisions on climate change and the environment and how committed they are to acting on climate change.

Each group was asked to list different individuals, groups, and organisations on separate pieces of card for 10 minutes. The groups then merged into two larger groups and began plotting each individual or group on a large 'power grid', with "power to influence" and "commitment to acting" on separate axes. The two larger groups had a 15 minute discussion on where to place each of these cards before sharing their grid with the other group. The facilitators highlighted where key differences had emerged between the two groups' power grids and asked panel members to reflect on why this might be.

Influencing Your MP

At the end of the session, **Fergus Lamb** of Hope for the Future returned to outline some of the support that they intended to offer to panel members should they wish to lobby their MPs or others in positions of power to take forward their recommendations.

Session 4

Session 4 took place on Saturday 4th October, 2025. Prior to this session, we asked the Advisory Group to share a few additional topics which they felt the Panel should hear more about. The Panel voted on these topics and 'housing' was selected as a third topic.

Commentator Slot: Housing

Panel members heard from two commentators on housing decarbonisation efforts at both the national and borough level:

- **Esther Harris**, Residential Buildings Lead, Climate Change Committee ([recording](#))
- **Ben James**, Local Plan Manager, Elmbridge Borough Council ([recording](#))

After the presentations, as with previous commentator slots, panel members were given some time to think of questions in small groups and write these down. These were collected and themed before a large group question and answer session took place.

After a short break, the Panel heard from three additional commentators, who provided additional insight into the work of the county council, as well as



Panel members take part in an informal question and answer session with Esther Harris

examples of what actions housing associations can take, and what some of the co-benefits of climate action in the housing sector could look like:

- **Andrew Gaisford**, Senior Energy Project Officer, Surrey County Council ([recording](#))
- **Dr Negin Sarafraz-Shekary**, Public Health Principal, Surrey Health Determinants Research Collaboration ([recording](#))
- **Gemma Voaden**, Senior Manager Net Zero, Together Housing ([recording](#))

After hearing from each commentator, panel members were asked to join an informal small group question and answer session with a commentator of their choice. They were given reminders at 10 minute intervals so that they could change groups if they wished to do so.

Before lunch, each member of the panel was asked to write down one thing they needed to remember from the morning session and share this with the facilitation team.

Drafting Recommendations

In the afternoon, the panel began drafting some recommendations under the 'housing' and 'green spaces' themes. They were briefly reminded of some hints and tips for writing recommendations shared in the previous session. This included a reminder that recommendations could be as specific and actionable or as ambitious as they wanted them to be.

A 'housing' group and a 'green spaces' group were formed. Within each group a facilitator supported smaller groups to form around specific ideas which the

group wanted to produce a recommendation on. The list of 'things we need to remember' for each topic was shared back with the group to support their thinking. Each group had approximately 50 minutes to work on their drafts independently (with a facilitator nearby to support if required) before sharing them back with the rest of the panel.

Cheerleaders and Voices of Doubt

In the final half hour, we split the panel into different, randomised groups. Each group was given a set of draft recommendations and asked to reflect on them. They were asked to think about:

- Who would be supportive or opposed to the draft recommendation as it stands?
- What words or phrases resonate or turn people off?
- How could the draft recommendation be improved?

After 15 minutes each small group shared their feedback with the rest of the group and took part in a large group discussion. Where there was consensus on how a draft recommendation could be improved, panel members made a note. These changes were then made by panel members in the final half hour. Any changes that could not be made by panel members in that time were made by facilitators ahead of the next session. These were shared back with panel members to check for approval in the final session.

Session 5

The Panel met for Session 5 on October 18th, 2025. This session was focused on developing a set of recommendations which detailed actions that could be taken by certain people or organisations in response to the overarching question.

Statement Drafting

At the beginning of the session, we introduced the statement writing activity. The facilitator gave a brief introduction to the purpose of the statement, which would sit alongside the recommendations, and would reflect the feelings of the group about their experience as part of the panel and what they felt fellow residents needed to know about the panel and its conclusions.

While a small group of panel members would ultimately

be responsible for drafting the statement, we wanted to ensure that everyone had the opportunity to input. We asked each participant to share on a sticky note a word or phrase in response to the following questions:

- What's your experience been like as part of the panel?
- What are your thoughts about the problem that we have been exploring?
- What is the call for action?

The post-its were collected and an outline of the statement was written up by a facilitator and a small group of panel members. This would be shared back with the panel for approval later in the day.

Recommendation Drafting: Transport and 'Other'

Alongside the statement writing group, panel members were able to contribute to writing recommendations on travel and transport and any other themes that had emerged over the course of the panel's meetings which didn't neatly fit into 'housing', 'green spaces', and 'travel and transport'.

To help panel members with their thinking, facilitators shared back the panels' 'things to remember' from the previous sessions.

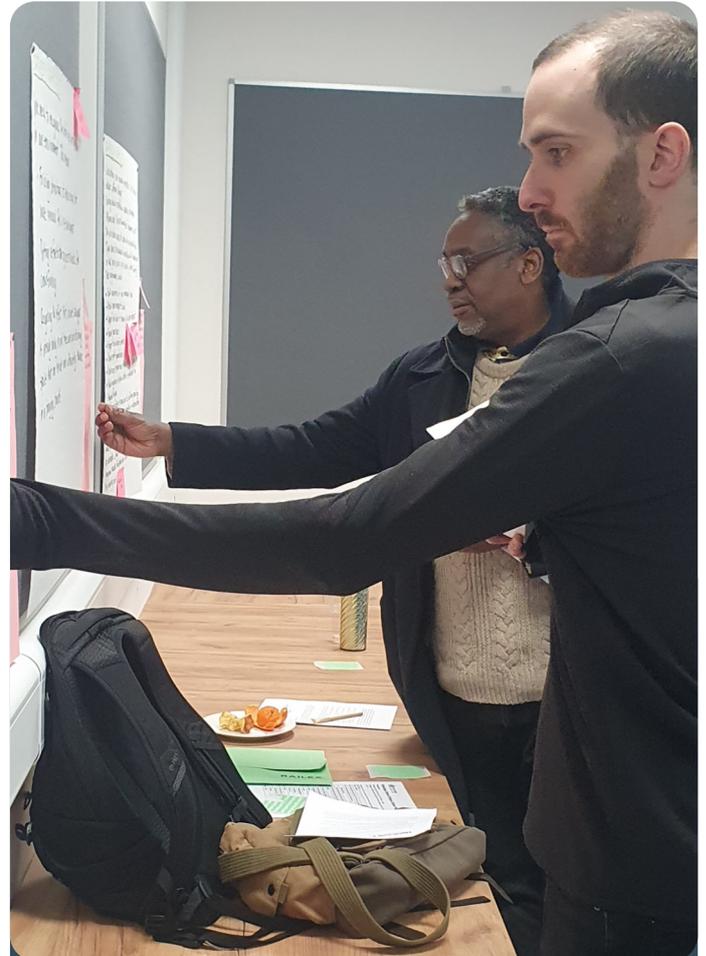
Each group had 40 minutes to write their draft recommendations with the support of a facilitator before they were able to change groups for a further half hour.

Touring the Recommendations and Reflections

After a short break, panel members were given fifty minutes to tour the new draft recommendations as part of a large group. This provided an opportunity for panel members to share ideas for improvements which could be made in the afternoon.

"SMART" Asks for MPs with Hope for the Future

Ahead of the session, we shared the draft recommendations with Hope for the Future. Before the session, they attempted to capture the essence of the draft recommendations and repackage them into SMART Asks. A SMART Ask is something that is:



Panel members leave comments on draft recommendations with ideas for improvements.

Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Relevant, and Timebound.

The SMART Asks were not intended to replace the recommendation, but to support panel members if they were to meet with an MP or other powerholder so that they could get a commitment for action there and then. These would be voted on by the panel after the session so that members of the group that wished to meet with their representatives could put forward the most popular SMART Asks.

Before lunch, panel members were asked to provide feedback on the SMART Asks and suggest improvements, where necessary.

Sharing the Statement

After the lunch break, the statement was read out to the whole group. Panel members were asked to raise their hand if they felt they could 'live with it' and would vote in favour of it. Those who didn't raise their hand

were asked what changes they would like to see for them to be able to support it. The final statement can be viewed on p.21.

What Next?

We invited **Jamie Pourier-Benham**, Climate Change Programme Lead, Elmbridge Borough Council, to share some insights into the next steps for the panel's recommendations.

For the next half hour, we led a facilitated discussion with panel members about the power of a group of ordinary citizens and the value of continuing to work together. We shared some examples of what participants from our previous climate juries and assemblies have done since they took part in their respective processes.

Final Edits to the Recommendations

During the lunch break, facilitators wrote up clean versions of the recommendations with any changes suggested earlier in the day incorporated. We provided the group with a final opportunity to reflect on the recommendations and make any additional changes they felt were necessary.

Small Group Deliberation

All panel members would be asked to vote on the recommendations at home after the session. To give panel members a final opportunity to consider perspectives that they may not have considered thus far, we facilitated a series of small group deliberations. During these discussions, panel members were asked to share their favourite and least favourite recommendations and why.

All panel members were reminded that there was a comments box on the voting form where they could share any additional thoughts on recommendations if there was not enough time to discuss them during the panel.

Celebration Activity

At the end of the session, we asked all panel members to share a short answer to the following question: *what has taking part in the panel meant to you and is there anything else you'd like to say to the group?*

Panel Statement

The following statement was written with the support of a small group of Panel members. An 80% threshold of support was set for inclusion in the report.

The statement received 100% support from the Panel.

We, the Elmbridge Climate Change Citizens' Panel, are a cross-section of Elmbridge residents. We were complete strangers who were given the opportunity to work together with people with different views from different parts of Elmbridge.

The experience has been positive, motivating, and uplifting. We have felt included and listened to. We feel that we have been given a voice. At the same time, we have gained a deeper understanding about what we as a community can do to make a positive impact on our environment.

After 30 hours of hearing from experts, sharing our own experiences, and deliberating, we have collectively concluded that climate change is a big problem. It will cause irreversible damage to our planet unless we make significant changes.

We also recognise that there is no simple solution. We see that many of the current solutions are unaffordable to most people, and that the global nature of these issues can make our actions feel insignificant. At the same time, acting on climate change can bring about cleaner air, mental and physical health benefits, and lower energy bills.

It has been empowering to focus on what we can do locally and think that we can all play a positive role.

The problems run deep but there are steps we can take. This panel is one step in the right direction.

We ask for those with power to take our recommendations and do something about it. This means MPs and councillors, but also landlords, developers, influencers, and so on. Climate and the environment should be at the front of all of our minds.

We must act now before it is too late.

Recommendations

The recommendations are listed in rank order. Panel members were asked to vote on a scale of “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree” for each recommendation, with each vote worth the following number of points:

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
+2	+1	0	-1	-2

The points for each recommendation were tallied and the recommendations ranked accordingly. The maximum achievable score, based on 23 panel members voting, was 46.

The recommendations are grouped into 4 themes: Travel and Transport, Green Spaces, Housing, and Other (any recommendations on topics the group did not discuss at length).

Panel members were also invited to comment on the recommendations. These can be found in Annex A.

Recommendation 1

=1st | 39 Points (Travel and Transport 1)

We need an integrated well-funded public transport system.

The devolution of powers means the opportunity exists for public transport to be fit for purpose so that we can reduce our use of cars (and especially short trips).

We need a system that is frequent, extensive (with more routes), integrated (so that routes link up easily), and affordable.

At the point of starting to develop the local transport plan, the new authority should consider the transport recommendations as the foundation of the new plan to realise our vision of the public transport system we deserve.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
16	7	0	0	0

Recommendation 2

=1st | 39 Points (Other 1)

Elmbridge Council (or its equivalent) should organise a facilitated in-person progress update meeting in September 2026 for citizens' panel participants, the Advisory Group, and interested general public.

A report should be circulated at least 3 weeks in advance to outline progress to date.

We request that a venue is arranged and resourced by Elmbridge council to enable the group and discuss the progress report prior to the meeting with councillors.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
17	5	1	0	0

Recommendation 3

3rd | 38 Points (Green Spaces 1)

We need to recognise the vital role that trees and other plants play in our environment. This means:

- Forcing developers to replace trees that were removed for a redevelopment.
- Putting reforestation projects to the public for crowdfunding.
- Recognising the effect that climate change is already having on our trees and prioritising species that can tolerate and ultimately thrive in a changing climate.

The community can play a role in maintenance and upkeep.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
16	6	1	0	0

Recommendation 4

4th | 37 Points (Green Spaces 2)

We think as far as possible the green belt should be protected. This is important as it provides recreational space, mental health benefits, carbon sinks (e.g. trees) and space for biodiversity.

However, we recognise that the UK Government has set ambitious house building targets which may necessitate building on the green belt. In this instance, any new housing built must be zero carbon, affordable housing which is prioritised for local people and key workers. Investment in local and connected infrastructure (e.g. roads, schools, GP surgeries) must also take place to avoid overcapacity.

Prioritise public use over private land use.

We want to protect our air space. Analysis needs to be conducted and shared publicly on how building on green spaces will affect pollution levels.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
16	6	0	1	0

Recommendation 5

5th | 36 Points (Housing 1)

Decarbonising new and current homes offers major benefits to people's finances, health and general well-being. Currently the cost of insulation and low-carbon solutions such as heat pumps is too high.

Improve uptake by restructuring energy pricing to reduce electricity costs AND providing total financial help and incentives to install technologies such as heat pumps and solar panels.

Means could include creative national solutions to reduce energy costs in a positive way such as moving 'green levies' from electricity bills to gas bills or general taxation. This would make pay back periods and ongoing costs of low carbon solutions more attractive.

Lobby central government to make this happen as needed.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
14	8	1	0	0

Recommendation 6

6th | 35 Points (Travel and Transport 2)

Improving the bus system will reduce the number of cars on the road whichever local government structure Elmbridge ends up with post devolution must not waste the franchising powers they will have over the public bus system. The following changes will improve the bus system and make them more usable:

- More frequent buses.
- Bigger, more diverse routes.
- Smaller buses to make frequent and diverse routes possible.
- Safer, more accessible buses to make them easier for young children and people with disabilities to access.

- Removal of the arbitrary time restrictions on bus passes.
- Introduction of biofuels or electric vehicles.
- Specific school bus networks to reduce school traffic.
- Simplify the ticketing system – for example, a “hop in” system – with dynamic pricing to make it cost effective.
- Schemes to support community buses or walking buses.
- Consideration of an on demand bus system which has been introduced in Coventry and surrounding areas.

If these changes are not considered possible, or there is no bus provider who can accommodate them, they should not be ignored. Instead, a feasibility study should be commissioned to confirm how realistic they are. This study should be carried through post devolution and not buried or forgotten.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
12	11	0	0	0

Recommendation 7

7th | 34 Points (Housing 2)

Residents need clear, accurate, trusted, easily accessible information on options to improve their homes and reduce their carbon footprint.

Elmbridge should develop a ‘one stop shop’ to help. This could include:

- A decision tree to provide personalised guidance/options
- A checklist
- Details on products and services (including cost benefits)
- Details on financial assistance
- Signposts to other organisations
- Red flags (to avoid scams, bad decisions)
- Promotion via physical road show e.g. at community centres and libraries

It is important that this information is not solely web-based – there could be a helpline and printed information to support dissemination. Elmbridge should learn from existing initiatives e.g. Energy Saving Trust and push this as a blueprint to other councils – it could also become a national scheme. This could also be an opportunity to have info about reducing emissions in other areas of life apart from housing.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
13	8	2	0	0

Recommendation 8

=8th | 33 Points (Other 2)

As a panel, we have benefited hugely from better understanding climate change and its effects.

We believe others should have this same opportunity especially those in positions of power in our area.

There should be mandatory carbon literacy training for councillors and senior leadership team of the council and

opportunities for other staff to attend. There must be additional resources identified to be able to deliver this programme.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
13	7	3	0	0

Recommendation 9

=8th | 33 Points (Housing 3)

We want Elmbridge to be a council leader, not a follower. We recommend that the local plan should mandate solar panels on all new builds immediately, not wait for national regulations to change.

Elmbridge Council should also expand solar by enabling installations on schools, hospitals and other community buildings.

Care should be taken to ensure all solar installations are carried out and maintained to a high standard to ensure safety and efficient performance.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
12	10	0	1	0

Recommendation 10

=10th | 31 Points (Green Spaces 3)

Our green spaces (including private gardens, school grounds, parks, roadsides) should be maintained in a sustainable, environmentally friendly way. We need everyone (council and highways contractors, private garden maintenance companies) to:

- Analyse the CO₂ and air pollution impact of machinery on the environment and the toxicity of products e.g. weed killer.
- Take measurable steps to reduce this impact e.g. use electric power not petrol for machinery
- Brush or rake leaves instead of using leaf blowers which pollute with emissions and noise.
- Only clear leaves from hard surfaces.
- Implement non-toxic weed control only where necessary e.g. poisonous weeds or invasive species.
- Inform residents how to look after their garden in a sustainable way.
- We support all verges being wild flower verges mown less often where it's safe to do so.
- Composting should be promoted for households and all green spaces.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
11	9	3	0	0

Recommendation 11

=10th | 31 Points (Green Spaces 4)

Educating our younger generation is key to bringing about cultural change.

Surrey should establish a compulsory Environmental Alliance and 'Access to Green Spaces' programme as part of a fun and engaging curriculum across all schools and early years educational settings. These should be developed in partnership with the community, so that good practice can be shared (e.g. Walton Charity and forest schools). These programmes would:

- Build awareness of local environmental issues
- Deliver green transport to school
- Support individuals to lowering their carbon footprint
- Preserve green spaces
- Support biodiversity outreach
- Provide retrofit apprenticeships
- Provide access to green spaces for those that live in flats.
- Provide a suggestion of different activities to take part in throughout the year.
- Increase appreciation of green spaces as children grow up, by providing young people with a sense of ownership and responsibility for the local environment, for example, by involving them in tree planting and maintenance.

Green spaces need to be protected for this recommendation to be achievable. One way to do this is to ensure that, for example, any new nurseries have green space included as part of the planning process.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
13	5	5	0	0

Recommendation 12

=12th | 30 Points (Travel and Transport 3)

To make cycling safer we must refocus local road design to reduce car usage (especially for short journeys). We want to promote active travel, in particular cycling, and see measures implemented which make cycling safer, more accessible and more acceptable mode of transport. This will unlock public health benefits through increased physical activity, bring communities together, and reduce transport related carbon emissions which are the 2nd biggest contributor to climate change.

- To facilitate this we urge you to implement the following recommendations:
- Whenever roads are resurfaced, provisions can be made for more protected cycle lanes, specifically to and from schools and public places
- Where possible replace two-way roads with one way streets that incorporate two-way segregated cycle lanes (e.g. Kingston City Centre)
- Promote bike hire (including children's bikes)
- We need education opportunities so people feel comfortable to cycle especially at school (starting in reception, e.g., BikeAbility)
- Provide safe cycle storage places at convenient places in the community
- Sometimes bike lanes stop suddenly. This is dangerous and needs to change.

- These measures may also serve to reduce the numbers of people cycling on pavements.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
11	9	2	1	0

Recommendation 13

=12th | 30 Points (Housing 4)

There is currently a lack of maintenance of local social housing. This has led to increased energy use as well as health issues. Addressing this would also help tackle carbon emissions.

We have been inspired by the work of Together Housing in the North West. The proposal is that local housing associations should learn from their work and share their good practice in order to raise standards and protect vulnerable people in society.

Tenants need to be informed about minimum legal standards and how to report breaches and ensure these standards are met by landlords.

Potential measures include tenant liaison communications, accessing grant funding for retrofit to ensure a robust business plan. Buy-in needs to be integrated and interactive including everyone from tenants to CEOs.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
10	10	3	0	0

Recommendation 14

14th | 29 Points (Housing 5)

We have learned that Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) ratings for houses are influenced by energy prices, not just by carbon emissions. This can act as a disincentive to house owners and landlords implementing local carbon technologies. We understand that this is in the process of changing.

We recommend:

- That the revision of the EPC assessment system ensures that it focuses on assessing the energy efficiency of a building separately from energy prices.
- The new EPC system should be prioritised and implemented urgently.
- There should be clear information available about the shortcomings of current EPC ratings.
- The new system should be widely promoted to ensure that property owners can use it to take control of their CO₂ output through being able to assess the best / optimum outcomes.
- The new system should be widely promoted to ensure that property owners can use it to take control of their CO₂ output through being able to assess best/optimal choices

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
10	9	4	0	0

Recommendation 15

15th | 27 Points (Travel and Transport 4)

To increase the use of Electric Vehicles locally we need more public charging points. This would make it easy for those who can't afford their own charging facilities or do not have driveways to feel encouraged to switch to electric vehicle use.

Ideally public charging costs should be comparable to home charging costs.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
9	9	5	0	0

Recommendation 16

16th | 26 Points (Other 3)

The science is clear that to protect the climate, fossil fuel extraction must cease.

Given that fossil fuel reserves exist in Surrey, the council must ensure that there is no further extraction now or in the future.

There should instead be incentives to encourage the electrification of the power supply by wind or solar on roofs.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
12	6	3	0	2

Recommendation 17

17th | 20 Points (Other 4)

Elmbridge needs to help residents reduce their food waste by:

1. Ensuring food caddies are available in flats (and free replacement caddies)
2. Promoting awareness of apps like Olio, community pantries, and similar
3. Share hints and tips e.g. what can be frozen, best before dates vs use by dates.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
7	8	6	2	0

Recommendation 18

18th | 3 Points (Other 5)

Elmbridge needs to help its residents to move to plant based diets by:

- Incentivising schools, canteens, community cafes, etc. to use more plant-based ingredients.
- Encouraging diverse plant-based, good quality and tasty menu options in schools, community cafes etc. and

support to encourage people to try different things.

- Educate and provide info on seasonal eating.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
3	6	7	5	2

Annex A: Comments on the Recommendations

During voting, Panel members had the option to provide a comment next to each principle explaining their reasoning.

The following is a compilation of all comments on the recommendations, listed in rank order. Comments have been further divided into the five voting options. For example, a comment will be listed under 'strongly agree' if the Panel member voted 'strongly agree'.



Recommendation 1

=1st | 39 Points (Travel and Transport 1)

We need an integrated well-funded public transport system.

The devolution of powers means the opportunity exists for public transport to be fit for purpose so that we can reduce our use of cars (and especially short trips).

We need a system that is frequent, extensive (with more routes), integrated (so that routes link up easily), and affordable.

At the point of starting to develop the local transport plan, the new authority should consider the transport recommendations as the foundation of the new plan to realise our vision of the public transport system we deserve.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
16	7	0	0	0

Strongly Agree

- Build the network and people will use it. However, train travel is a hugely costly way to travel. Having read a report recently for a trip to Scotland from Surrey, train travel was the most expensive way to cover the trip, even over flights and taxi transfers, by over £100 for this one trip, based on one person travelling. Trains should be renationalised and private operating companies profits eradicated and return to the tax payers.
- Improving public transport is a key priority.
- Much needed
- It is important that the transport system is connected so that we can move away from car use.
- The current public transport system in Elmbridge borough does not function effectively enough to reduce car journeys significantly. It is still cheaper, quicker to go by car than by public transport. There is not enough incentive to use public transport.

Agree

- Great idea
- Also, Great British Railways must be affordable again. At the time of writing, it costs less to drive to destinations than to take the train. A return ticket to/from London is over £20.00...

Recommendation 2

=1st | 39 Points (Other 1)

Elmbridge Council (or its equivalent) should organise a facilitated in-person progress update meeting in September 2026 for citizens' panel participants, the Advisory Group, and interested general public.

A report should be circulated at least 3 weeks in advance to outline progress to date.

We request that a venue is arranged and resourced by Elmbridge council to enable the group and discuss the progress report prior to the meeting with councillors.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
17	5	1	0	0

Strongly Agree

- We are in East Surrey so questions addressed to that area.
- The citizens' panel is a unique resource that should be "recycled" as a pilot group going forward (rather than "one and done") to evaluate future council initiatives given crowdsourcing of subject specialists and budget which supported the delivery of these recommendations.
- Having had so many people put huge amounts of effort into organising and running the citizens' panel it is very important the recommendations are not forgotten about. By enforcing a future meeting date we can do our best to make sure this is not the case.
- A progress update meeting in September 2026 for citizens' panel participants, the Advisory Group, and interested general public is an excellent way of creating accountability and transparency for Elmbridge Council (or its equivalent) for the recommendations from the citizen panel.

Agree

- Maybe, if the annual review and report is too much, perhaps published quarterly updates about topics that council are acting upon, or reasons why not, with target dates for completion of reasonable results.

Recommendation 3

3rd | 38 Points (Green Spaces 1)

We need to recognise the vital role that trees and other plants play in our environment. This means:

- Forcing developers to replace trees that were removed for a redevelopment.
- Putting reforestation projects to the public for crowdfunding.
- Recognising the effect that climate change is already having on our trees and prioritising species that can tolerate and ultimately thrive in a changing climate.

The community can play a role in maintenance and upkeep.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
16	6	1	0	0

Strongly Agree

- There are many species of plants and grasses which can provide the very effective capture of pollution which don't require the space of trees. These could be abundantly and creatively planted around the borough in addition to trees.
- In Richmond, signs are often placed near saplings and immature trees encouraging passersby to also water. This has helped with tree's survival during the hotter months. Elmbridge needs to follow suit.
- This is critical from a species survival perspective. The key word missing is "must". Wording is much too feeble given the current global ecosystem crisis. Developers removing trees prior to making planning applications must be challenged. A sapling left to die is in no way an adequate replacement for a healthy mature tree. It should be unlawful to remove trees without serious cause. Housing is not one of them. The legal test should be, "Significant risk of serious damage to human welfare."

Agree

- Veteran trees are not replaceable on human time scales and they should have the same status as listed buildings. Trees also provide measurable decreases in the effect of urban heat. When planted, inform residents and help us help you look after them.

Neither Agree Nor Disagree

- I am not convinced that many people today are willing to give up their time to look after plants and trees in public green spaces.

Recommendation 4

4th | 37 Points (Green Spaces 2)

We think as far as possible the green belt should be protected. This is important as it provides recreational space, mental health benefits, carbon sinks (e.g. trees) and space for biodiversity.

However, we recognise that the UK Government has set ambitious house building targets which may necessitate building on the green belt. In this instance, any new housing built must be zero carbon, affordable housing which is prioritised for local people and key workers. Investment in local and connected infrastructure (e.g. roads, schools, GP surgeries) must also take place to avoid overcapacity.

Prioritise public use over private land use.

We want to protect our air space. Analysis needs to be conducted and shared publicly on how building on green spaces will affect pollution levels.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
16	6	0	1	0

Strongly Agree

- There is much land owned by building firms who are not building for various reasons, not least, lack of supply keeps prices high. If there are tranches of land, owned by private investors and just left as fenced off wasteland, councils should have the power to compel builders to build, or have the plots compulsorily purchased and build on by third-parties.
- Protecting the green belt is important.
- Concerns that government will not meet it's housing target. Also, if any housing is built will affordable housing be prioritised for local people and key workers.
- This is critical from a species survival perspective. The key word missing is "must". Wording is much too feeble given the current global ecosystem crisis.
- This recommendation tries to balance the housing needs with the need to protect the climate and environment. It is not right that corporate developers can make profits while destroying green spaces that benefit a large number of people in terms of health, wellbeing- once green space is gone, it will never come back as green space.

Agree

- Very difficult to apply.
- Can we have a ban on wood burning as well given that recent research has shown just how bad this is for local air quality and those who breathe in the resulting particles.
- I disagree with use of the phrase "local people" in this recommendation as it is open to interpretation, possibly in a way to penalise people who have not lived in the area very long but are still in need of affordable housing.

Recommendation 5

5th | 36 Points (Housing 1)

Decarbonising new and current homes offers major benefits to people's finances, health and general well-being. Currently the cost of insulation and low-carbon solutions such as heat pumps is too high.

Improve uptake by restructuring energy pricing to reduce electricity costs AND providing total financial help and incentives to install technologies such as heat pumps and solar panels.

Means could include creative national solutions to reduce energy costs in a positive way such as moving 'green levies' from electricity bills to gas bills or general taxation. This would make pay back periods and ongoing costs of low carbon solutions more attractive.

Lobby central government to make this happen as needed.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
14	8	1	0	0

Strongly Agree

- There is a Student Loan System structurally already in place nationally which could be a blueprint for a similar system to completely finance retrofit costs on a large scale and, at a low interest rate, this would represent a huge net positive financial benefit to UK PLC over the term of repayment whilst the incidental benefits to energy security, health savings, growth, etc are also realised. Please find a way to raise this idea directly with central government.
- We need financial incentives to help people choose to use solar panels and heat pumps
- It's a big one - reducing our reliance on fossil fuels while insulating us against international price shocks from fluctuating gas prices. It's an investment not a cost. People will be healthier and have more spending power.
- Currently, only people who are financially well-off and who are motivated to invest time in researching new low carbon technologies will consider investing in these technologies. From my own experience I can say that there aren't enough credible and reliable heat pump installers available and it takes time to find one. It is difficult to understand that electricity prices that come from renewable energy are higher than the price for climate damaging gas.

Agree

- Decarbonising and lower prices are a win-win. It feels like a tough problem to solve. I don't know enough to comment further.
- But difficult to implement in the current financial climate

Neither Agree Nor Disagree

- Not best system for all properties

Recommendation 6

6th | 35 Points (Travel and Transport 2)

Improving the bus system will reduce the number of cars on the road whichever local government structure Elmbridge ends up with post devolution must not waste the franchising powers they will have over the public bus system. The following changes will improve the bus system and make them more usable:

- More frequent buses.
- Bigger, more diverse routes.
- Smaller buses to make frequent and diverse routes possible.
- Safer, more accessible buses to make them easier for young children and people with disabilities to access.
- Removal of the arbitrary time restrictions on bus passes.
- Introduction of biofuels or electric vehicles.
- Specific school bus networks to reduce school traffic.
- Simplify the ticketing system – for example, a “hop in” system – with dynamic pricing to make it cost effective.
- Schemes to support community buses or walking buses.
- Consideration of an on demand bus system which has been introduced in Coventry and surrounding areas.

If these changes are not considered possible, or there is no bus provider who can accommodate them, they should not be ignored. Instead, a feasibility study should be commissioned to confirm how realistic they are. This study should be carried through post devolution and not buried or forgotten.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
12	11	0	0	0

Strongly Agree

- Finance is a huge consideration of course; however it is not a blocker to at least giving the feasibility of creative transport solutions consideration
- I am not against car travel. But a great bus service often takes stress out of using a car, looking for parking places, cost of parking etc. I love the buses and use that service more and more. But it takes quite a while to get anywhere, but being retired the one thing I have plenty of is time. It would be helpful to makes trips faster.
- Improving public transport is a key priority
- Greatly needed in Elmbridge
- If we are going to move away from car use in Elmbridge it is very important there is an effective bus system. The council should consider running the bus system not for profit in order to keep ticket prices low.

Agree

- This recommendation should be re-edited and merged with a previous recommendation, namely, "We need an integrated well-funded public transport system."
- Bus trips must be cheaper and/ or quicker than using the car. Otherwise any improvement to the bus routes, timetables will not lead to a bigger uptake from people that currently decide to use their car instead.
- In my opinion focus should be on – Specific school bus networks to reduce school traffic. As school timing significantly impacts amount of addition cars on roads.

Recommendation 7

7th | 34 Points (Housing 2)

Residents need clear, accurate, trusted, easily accessible information on options to improve their homes and reduce their carbon footprint.

Elmbridge should develop a 'one stop shop' to help. This could include:

- A decision tree to provide personalised guidance/options
- A checklist
- Details on products and services (including cost benefits)
- Details on financial assistance
- Signposts to other organisations
- Red flags (to avoid scams, bad decisions)
- Promotion via physical road show e.g. at community centres and libraries

It is important that this information is not solely web-based – there could be a helpline and printed information to support dissemination. Elmbridge should learn from existing initiatives e.g. Energy Saving Trust and push this as a blueprint to other councils – it could also become a national scheme. This could also be an opportunity to have info about reducing CO₂ emissions in other areas of life apart from housing.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
13	8	2	0	0

Strongly Agree

- It is important that information is unbiased, but also tried and trusted, processes are recommended.
- Having tried to do this research myself a few times and reach out to contractors and engineers, I understand how difficult this is and how hard it is as an individual to get very good locally relevant information – this should be a more professionally conducted effort for the community to give people greater confidence in their decision making.

Agree

- Elmbridge Council (or its equivalent) is a body/organisation that the residents trust. People would be happy to go the council's website to find this information.

Neither Agree Nor Disagree

- Difficult to achieve

Recommendation 8

=8th | 33 Points (Other 2)

As a panel, we have benefited hugely from better understanding climate change and its effects.

We believe others should have this same opportunity especially those in positions of power in our area.

There should be mandatory carbon literacy training for councillors and senior leadership team of the council and opportunities for other staff to attend. There must be additional resources identified to be able to deliver this programme.

Strongly Agree

- The provision of empirical data, and some of the shocking illustrations of climate detrimental and human effect, should be at the forefront of councillors minds.
- Subject matter literacy should be mandatory for every public official – the fact that critical decision makers are not required to be objectively and measurably informed on their subject of decision making

is criminally negligent and undermines the importance of public office.

- Raising awareness among primary stakeholders is extremely important. It can be safely assumed most council decision makers are not environmental scientists or professional STEM subject researchers. Recommendation: Dr Robin Lamboll from Imperial College London. He is an outstanding scientist and communicator.
- There are clearly a very large number of concerned Elmbridge citizens but without those making decisions within the council properly understanding the challenges we face it is unlikely we will see the needed change. It is imperative that those in the council are properly educated on the challenges we face.
- This recommendation ensures that the council's decision-makers or people of influence are well educated about the climate change topic so they can take decisions or influence how the council's money is spend for climate change measures based on science and facts and not based on assumptions.

Agree

- I think the 'carbon literacy training' should be recommended, not mandatory.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
13	7	3	0	0

Recommendation 9

=8th | 33 Points (Housing 3)

We want Elmbridge to be a council leader, not a follower. We recommend that the local plan should mandate solar panels on all new builds immediately, not wait for national regulations to change.

Elmbridge Council should also expand solar by enabling installations on schools, hospitals and other community buildings.

Care should be taken to ensure all solar installations are carried out and maintained to a high standard to ensure safety and efficient performance.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
12	10	0	1	0

Strongly Agree

- Easy to do a grant may help achieve this project
- The cost of solar panel installation is a fraction of retrofitting. Also the benefits will be ongoing.
- If the rules for new homes/builds can be changed, can they include water butts, heat pumps, bricks for nesting birds and even lighting that shines only where it needs to go. Roll-out of solar panels on council buildings is surely an easy win.
- Solar panels are a low carbon technology that brings savings for electricity immediately, they are readily available, easy to install and widely accepted by property and land owners. If the council walks the talk and installs solar panels on public buildings, many local citizens will find inspiration from this to do the same on their own property.

Agree

- Concerns over financing. Can Elmbridge Council budget for solar installation on schools, hospitals and other community buildings.

Recommendation 10

=10th | 31 Points (Green Spaces 3)

Our green spaces (including private gardens, school grounds, parks, roadsides) should be maintained in a sustainable, environmentally friendly way. We need everyone (council and highways contractors, private garden maintenance companies) to:

- Analyse the CO₂ and air pollution impact of machinery on the environment and the toxicity of products e.g. weed killer.
- Take measurable steps to reduce this impact e.g. use electric power not petrol for machinery
- Brush or rake leaves instead of using leaf blowers which pollute with emissions and noise.
- Only clear leaves from hard surfaces.
- Implement non-toxic weed control only where necessary e.g. poisonous weeds or invasive species.
- Inform residents how to look after their garden in a sustainable way.
- We support all verges being wild flower verges mown less often where it's safe to do so.
- Composting should be promoted for households and all green spaces.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
11	9	3	0	0

Strongly Agree

- All efforts to use eco friendly machinery should carry high- weight when tenders are issued, for contracting companies to maintain open spaces.
- This is critical from a species survival perspective. The key word missing is "must".
- Our verges and green spaces could be so much more – a few token blue hearts is not enough. Engage residents to help – some of us enjoy it! There should be no place for pesticides except in extreme circumstances while we live in a biodiversity crisis.

Agree

- What will be the cost
- This recommendation requires a clear policy and plan and it seems budget-friendly.

Recommendation 11

=10th | 31 Points (Green Spaces 4)

Educating our younger generation is key to bringing about cultural change.

Surrey should establish a compulsory Environmental Alliance and 'Access to Green Spaces' programme as part of a fun and engaging curriculum across all schools and early years educational settings. These should be developed in partnership with the community, so that good practice can be shared (e.g. Walton Charity and forest schools). These programmes would:

- Build awareness of local environmental issues

- Deliver green transport to school
- Support individuals to lowering their carbon footprint
- Preserve green spaces
- Support biodiversity outreach
- Provide retrofit apprenticeships
- Provide access to green spaces for those that live in flats.
- Provide a suggestion of different activities to take part in throughout the year.
- Increase appreciation of green spaces as children grow up, by providing young people with a sense of ownership and responsibility for the local environment, for example, by involving them in tree planting and maintenance.

Green spaces need to be protected for this recommendation to be achievable. One way to do this is to ensure that, for example, any new nurseries have green space included as part of the planning process.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
13	5	5	0	0

Strongly Agree

- Local public resources should be shared, for example, a school lacking access to outdoor space could be able to visit a neighbouring school, or schools could come together to present their environmental initiatives to each other in the community.
- Time should be made in the school curriculums for this vital topic.
- Fundamental life style changes are generational – barring extreme external factors – and require long-term planning and to be rooted in objective and engaging education as a foundation for how we want future generations to live sustainably.
- Research shows that children who spend time in nature are more likely to care for it when they grow up.
- It is important that this teaching is delivered in an effective way that makes children want to be involved rather than just being there because they have to
- If we don't invest in the next generation's education about climate change and love of nature, it will get even more and more difficult to implement strict measures to protect the climate and the environment. On the other hand, if the next generation grows up close to nature, they will be more willing to take action to protect and stabilise both.

Agree

- There should be an emphasis on a 'fun and engaging curriculum for young people' – this instead of compulsory.

Neither Agree Nor Disagree

- Schools have a difficult job already

Recommendation 12

=12th | 30 Points (Travel and Transport 3)

To make cycling safer we must refocus local road design to reduce car usage (especially for short journeys). We want to promote active travel, in particular cycling, and see measures implemented which make cycling safer, more accessible and more acceptable mode of transport. This will unlock public health benefits through

increased physical activity, bring communities together, and reduce transport related carbon emissions which are the 2nd biggest contributor to climate change.

- To facilitate this we urge you to implement the following recommendations:
- Whenever roads are resurfaced, provisions can be made for more protected cycle lanes, specifically to and from schools and public places
- Where possible replace two-way roads with one way streets that incorporate two-way segregated cycle lanes (e.g. Kingston City Centre)
- Promote bike hire (including children's bikes)
- We need education opportunities so people feel comfortable to cycle especially at school (starting in reception, e.g., BikeAbility)
- Provide safe cycle storage places at convenient places in the community
- Sometimes bike lanes stop suddenly. This is dangerous and needs to change.
- These measures may also serve to reduce the numbers of people cycling on pavements.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
11	9	2	1	0

Strongly Agree

- I hope this can be achieved.
- Improving cycle lanes and providing local bike hire are key priorities to reduce car use.
- This investment is vital for public health. Protected cycle infrastructure moves physical activity into our daily local lives, significantly cutting chronic disease risk and improving mental health. Cities like London, Copenhagen and Paris prove that a strong vision for segregated lanes makes cycling the safest, fastest option, boosting community well-being and radically reducing carbon emissions from short, unnecessary car journeys.

Agree

- Cycling is a great way to travel, but many cyclist ride in an inconsiderate way. If an older person is hit by a carelessly ridden cycle it could have life-changing effects. Cyclist should be held to account for irresponsible actions. Also if a cycle lane is provided, cyclists should be compelled to use it. Cycles maybe should be registered and a small licence fee be paid.
- With this cyclists must be insured and take a recognised cycling proficiency test to ensure safety on the road.
- Walking in Elmbridge is also dangerous and cars have total dominance. There is a lack of pedestrian crossings on main roads in the area.

Neither Agree Nor Disagree

- Such a recommendation must consider the safety of pedestrians and thus, one would be against promoting cycling without significant infrastructure changes being made first. A mechanism to stop cyclists from using sidewalks is essential. Elmbridge has many older residents and hearing impaired residents who are endangered on sidewalks as things are.

Recommendation 13

=12th | 30 Points (Housing 4)

There is currently a lack of maintenance of local social housing. This has led to increased energy use as well as health issues. Addressing this would also help tackle carbon emissions.

We have been inspired by the work of Together Housing in the North West. The proposal is that local housing associations should learn from their work and share their good practice in order to raise standards and protect vulnerable people in society.

Tenants need to be informed about minimum legal standards and how to report breaches and ensure these standards are met by landlords.

Potential measures include tenant liaison communications, accessing grant funding for retrofit to ensure a robust business plan. Buy-in needs to be integrated and interactive including everyone from tenants to CEOs.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
10	10	3	0	0

Strongly Agree

- I enjoyed their plan.
- There should be an "ofsted" style review of all social housing providers using Together housing as a benchmark. Penalties of compulsory investment, or director dividends capping, should be enacted.
- Essential that Elmbridge Social housing providers (Mainly PA Housing and A2Dominion) are made aware of the good practice of Together Social Housing and urged to implement similar practices.
- There is no reasonable justification why the quality of a house should be different depending on the fact if the homeowner lives in it or a tenant. Landlords sees the property as an investment. Unless there are legal requirements for maintenance and retrofit and it is easy for a tenant to enforce such measures, landlords will not act.

Agree

- The work of Together Housing has provided a fantastic example of how effective a project can be for both the residents and the environment

Recommendation 14

14th | 29 Points (Housing 5)

We have learned that Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) ratings for houses are influenced by energy prices, not just by carbon emissions. This can act as a disincentive to house owners and landlords implementing local carbon technologies. We understand that this is in the process of changing.

We recommend:

- That the revision of the EPC assessment system ensures that it focuses on assessing the energy efficiency of a building separately from energy prices.
- The new EPC system should be prioritised and implemented urgently.
- There should be clear information available about the shortcomings of current EPC ratings.
- The new system should be widely promoted to ensure that property owners can use it to take control of their CO₂ output through being able to assess the best / optimum outcomes.
- The new system should be widely promoted to ensure that property owners can use it to take control of their CO₂ output through being able to assess best/optimal choices.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
10	9	4	0	0

Strongly Agree

- Having accurate data available about a property's energy performance is the starting point to understand the impact of low carbon technologies on carbon emissions, return on investment (ROI) from the money spent for the low carbon technology. Without having this data available, people are hesitant to make larger investments as they can't be sure of the ROI and positive climate impact.

Agree

- I believe that this is already in the pipeline.
- Hope it doesn't take as long as other current government initiatives

Neither Agree Nor Disagree

- Having sold two houses and bought one recently, the EPC was irrelevant to either the buyers or sellers. No mention, nor I believe any consideration, was ever made of this ranking except when the properties were put on the market, as a requirement by the regulations about advertising houses. If this rating is to have some meaningful positive effect there needs to be positive financial benefits, such as lower stamp-duty, on lower rated properties.
- A final edit to merge any redundant or similar recommendations would be beneficial. With digital age attention spans, writing must be punchier and more concise. The final document delivered to busy decision makers should fit one A4 paper size page. Audiences matter.

Recommendation 15

15th | 27 Points (Travel and Transport 4)

To increase the use of Electric Vehicles locally we need more public charging points. This would make it easy for those who can't afford their own charging facilities or do not have driveways to feel encouraged to switch to electric vehicle use.

Ideally public charging costs should be comparable to home charging costs.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
9	9	5	0	0

Strongly Agree

- And car interfaces should be universal for all manufacturers. Possibly, the prices for public charging should be cheaper than home charging as council buying power could mean lower prices.
- I have noticed that Richmond Borough have a number of chargers incorporated in lamppost for public use. Our borough should be providing the same.
- Vital to encourage change to Electric Vehicles along with financial incentives to encourage people to change to Electric Vehicles

Agree

- Regulate capped price

Neither Agree Nor Disagree

- Switching to electric cars does not need to happen over night, it is a gradually needed change, if there is a bigger demand for electric cars in the future, there will be more charging points available.

Recommendation 16

16th | 26 Points (Other 3)

The science is clear that to protect the climate, fossil fuel extraction must cease.

Given that fossil fuel reserves exist in Surrey, the council must ensure that there is no further extraction now or in the future.

There should instead be incentives to encourage the electrification of the power supply by wind or solar on roofs.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
12	6	3	0	2

Strongly Agree

- Tying into the need to electrify home energy use with heat pumps and insulation. Incentives for those too please.
- This recommendation is closely linked to the recommendation that Elmbridge Council (or equivalent) should install solar panels on public use buildings and its owned properties.

Agree

- Nuclear power should also be considered as a climate friendly energy source.

Neither Agree Nor Disagree

- Costs and timeline may prove difficult to implement a meaningful change

Strongly Disagree

- It is a source we should take advantage of in our area.
- Whilst we have fossil fuel access and reserves, these assets should be used: but in an eco-friendly way. For example emissions control and reduction should be mandated. I suspect that energy companies can reduce emissions more than they do, but the cost will hit shareholder returns. Big energy equals profit before people it would appear.

Recommendation 17

17th | 20 Points (Other 4)

Elmbridge needs to help residents reduce their food waste by:

1. Ensuring food caddies are available in flats (and free replacement caddies)
2. Promoting awareness of apps like Olio, community pantries, and similar
3. Share hints and tips e.g. what can be frozen, best before dates vs use by dates.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
7	8	6	2	0

Strongly Agree

- Reducing food waste is a win-win, it saves money and helps the environment.

Agree

- Information should be easily available from central governmental websites, as well as local council information sources.
- Food caddies being available for flats should be a high priority

Neither Agree Nor Disagree

- I don't use mine

Disagree

- Point 1) I'm not convinced that this measure will make a significant difference to climate change locally. In Elmbridge, the majority of properties are houses and they have food caddies. Point 2) In my experience, many people already make use of free recycling options for items they no longer need. Point 3) of this recommendation: All of this is already easily available on the internet, it's nothing new.

Recommendation 18

18th | 3 Points (Other 5)

Elmbridge needs to help its residents to move to plant based diets by:

- Incentivising schools, canteens, community cafes, etc. to use more plant-based ingredients.
- Encouraging diverse plant-based, good quality and tasty menu options in schools, community cafes etc. and support to encourage people to try different things.
- Educate and provide info on seasonal eating.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
3	6	7	5	2

Agree

- Good to encourage 'seasonal eating'.
- While reducing meat consumption is necessary, not everyone needs to become vegetarian or vegan. It would be important to require from the businesses to make meat production environmentally friendly, people can eat better quality meat. The plants used for a plant-based diet need to be from local farms and seasonal. Many schools include cooking classes as part of the curriculum and when I ask children about the classes, they love them and proudly talk about the recipes they learnt to make.

Neither Agree Nor Disagree

- Could prove too expensive to implement
- Objectives must be SMART. Given humans are omnivores, this is not an easy win. However, the recommendation is valuable as part of a toolkit focused on higher priorities. A more realistic recommendation is to promote the reduction of processed food.
- Although on the face of it plant based diets are less carbon intensive they still have there environmental issues. Therefore, there is not a one size fits all solution to diets but it is important that people receive better education on how to reduce the impact of their diets.

Disagree

- Moving away from low-yield farming methods is vital to provide food for the growing populations, furthermore plant based food is healthier. This info would be helpful to know. However, diet choices are personal and often health issues, such as Crohnes require more meat-based food. The council should not recommend veganism as often vegan foods are unhealthy.

- I agree with introducing more plant based options into our diets but not completely eliminate meat and dairy

Strongly Disagree

- My diet my choice

Annex B: Questions for Commentators

After each commentator slot, members of the Panel spent time reflecting on the presentations as part of a small group. They then individually or collectively posed questions to each commentator. The questions are listed in this section.

Please note, questions that were asked in the small group discussions described in session 3 have not been recorded.



Session 1 (What is climate change?)

Session 1: Robin Lamboll

- Is there a risk register at the council and is it publically available? Does this include climate change?
- Can we encourage upcycling in the borough?
- What is the council doing to incentivise renewable energy?
- Do you think we can learn from other countries for recycling initiatives?
- Is the tipping point only avoided by reaching net zero?
- Does carbon offsetting do anything to help?
- How can the borough successfully offset carbon emissions?
- What industries and parts of society contribute the most to the global CO₂ emissions?
- What are the most effective forms of absorption?
- How effective can small scale local changes be in the face of wider national contributors to carbon emissions?
- What do you think the priority should be for changes community can make to effectively reduce carbon emissions?
- What is the impact of ocean acidification over time / what will happen?
- We had ice age melt. How do we know that this 'warming' is not part of the earth's natural cycle?
- Where does all CO₂ come from?
- What's the one thing you think everyone could do to reduce climate change?
- What happened in the 1960s that increased CO₂ and temperatures
- Which projects and changes have had the most impact on reducing emissions in the UK (e.g. plastic bags)
- In the UK which part of our lifestyle has the biggest impact on carbon emissions? What can we do here to reduce our impact individually?
- Humans causing the rise – has Elmbridge been benchmarked for these findings?
- What is the local impact of climate change?
- If the UK becomes net zero, what impact will this have globally, given what the USA, China, India, etc.

are doing?

- Do you agree that recycling schemes are crucial for battling climate change?
- What effects of climate change can be already see in the UK today?
- Local data of highest CO₂ emissions?

Session 2 (Transport)

Session 1: Ben McCallan

- We are off track with transport so what is the project increase in air quality deaths and life expectancy?
- When you said that you will remove cars from roads, how will you do that when transportation is the biggest thing we need for people to get where they need to be.
- Transport and residential have been determined as the biggest areas for carbon emissions – are there any policies in place already to tackle these are how effective are they?
- Why is the residential emissions higher than transport in Elmbridge. Is it particularly poor residential or is it due to lower than expected transport?
- What is the trend behind the stats? Could you explain the arrows going up and down?
- We currently have a large number of estates and flat blocks being built in Surrey by housing associations. Why is the council not putting in place policy making a large green space and solar power standard building practice for these builds?
- Please repeat the income thresholds for insulation etc. grants. Has a scheme like this been run before and how effective was it?
- What are the top contributors to transport emissions?
- How many residents are there in Surrey and Elmbridge?
- Surrey emissions higher in comparison to London – how?
- Targets set for 2030 unrealistic –> transportation in Surrey worse than London, how?
- What do transport emissions include exactly? (local transport, rail, planes, boats?)
- Percentage of Surrey CC budget spend on climate change?
- How many electric vehicle chargepoints in Elmbridge? How can Elmbridge make choosing EVs

more accessible?

- What are the top contributors for residential emissions?

Session 2: Steve Howard and Nikolas Thomopolous

- Have you thought about school buses?
- 20 mile limit. Does it cause pollution and are you going to increase it in Surrey?
- Why after 30 years do we still not have decent bus services in Elmbridge? Prime example 458 bus which many elderly people use only comes once an hour –why? We could halve our emissions if busees were easy and accessible and scheduled every 15 minutes like all London buses and so much more needs to be done. When is the council actually going to tackle this issue?
- What is being done to improve accessibility for the disabled etc. more drop curbs?
- Continuous and segregated cycle and bus lanes are very important to enable the modal shift towards more active travel and public transport. What is Surrey CC doing on this matter and how much does it prioritise this?
- You said you didn't achieve much. Why? What are the barriers?
- What programmes / measures are in place or planned to educate and engage the next generation about active travelling so they see clear alternatives to using the car?
- You said at the start that you felt not much had been achieved in the last 30 years (which was surprising to hear). Considering the last 2 travel plans, why do you feel not much has been achieved?

Session 3: Roger Geffen and Jane Halliwell

- Can you tell us more about wheeling?
- How are you informing residents who may be interested in grants and do you spend all the allocated funds?
- How can the council support residents to reduce food waste?
- We would all agree that it's better to have more smaller buses than large buses with only 2-3 passengers. How do the bus companies do this?
- Why didn't you make a bus pass quicker rather than later? People to have to go online, do the application, pay for the bus pass and wait 1-2 weeks for it.

- Good to see the plans – where is the how?
- Public transport has been on the decline for years (efficiency, price, accessibility, frequency) – why hasn't the downward trajectory been reduced? (Or has it, and would it have been worse otherwise?)
- Can we consider having more school buses please?
- The length and design of bus routes – how are they planned?
- Breakdown of 2.3 mile average car journey? What are these journeys? (top 3)
- If the public transport crisis can be solved by more money why are we not fundraising and raising taxes like in Denmark and Finland?
- Do you know what was preventing the parents from using the walking bus?
- Can the council help incentivise active transport? Any learnings from other cities / countries?
- How did you get started and what are the main barriers to adopting it on a wider scale?
- Changing to options such as local cargo bikes would require significant buy-in from large companies such as Amazon and Evri. Do you genuinely see any realistic chance of this happening?
- You said you charge commuters different to other users of chatter bus. How much is it and why can't you charge the same (ideally cheaper price)? -> flat price for the day
- How to make it work? Cooperation between councils, government, charities, local politicians?
- As Steve said, road infrastructure changes are very expensive, so what are the quick wins? LTNs etc.?

Session 3 (Green spaces and How does change happen?)

Session 1: Fergus Lamb and Diana Thornton

- What happens when government changes?
- How do you choose / prioritise the subject matter?
- There should be better advertising of when / where MP surgeries are.
- Would like some quantitative data -> impact measurement of initiatives / action
- What was the biggest obstacle to setting up the organisation?
- What's the mission statement? Do you have any successful outcomes? What does good look like? Who pays for this?

- How to make change economical?
- What doesn't work with MPs or councillors?
- What happens if local opinion / local MPs views are different from the party's position?
- How do you gather data that your topic interests lots of people rather than just you? (this is when approaching an MP)
- Do you do any feasibility temperature check before you approach MPs / councils – avoiding waste of effort?
- What possibilities are there for young people to become involved e.g. litter picking?
- What keeps you motivated?
- Could you tell us more about the outcomes of the projects – what are your major wins?
- Involving politicians. What has been an impactful engagement that resulted in change?

Session 2: Paul Falconer, Rodney Whittaker, Pamela Winstanley-Fisher

This question and answer session was run in small groups to encourage a more free-flowing conversation. Questions were not recorded.

Session 4 (Housing)

Session 1: Ben James and Esther Harris

- Why doesn't every new house have solar panels by default?
- Why are electric boilers bringing down EPCs? As a landlord we were advised to switch however we are now thinking of going back to gas. By 2030 landlords need to have all residential EPCs up and above a C.
- Why isn't there more funding to switch to a heat pump?
- New housing – who owns it? Is there any more council housing being built?
- Is there funding for solar panels / heat pumps? What's the criteria? Are there any grants?
- How do the public learn about the local plan consultation?
- How often does the national plan change?
- Can we discuss the housing crisis – do we need 1.6 million houses if the birth rate is low? We are apparently closing 33,000 schools next year.
- How can the cost of electricity be brought down?

- What is the plan to move electricity generation away from fossil fuels between now and 2050 and keep the cost of it down?
- Why are renewable energy prices linked to the price to generate energy via gas?
- Is there a planned upgrade to national grid? Energy is being produced that we cannot access or use from wind farms. How can it be stored?
- What is the carbon footprint of solar panels? Specifically compared to gas and heat pumps?
- Are there learnings from other countries re: change away from fossil fuels?
- What would you like local councils to do?
- Is there anywhere in the UK where nuclear energy is an option? Why not?
- What's stopping developers not installing gas boilers?
- Should you switch to an EV even if your current car is ok? Or should you wait?
- Do the benefits of an EV take into account the car's carbon lifecycle?
- If there was a rule that no new development could be build without e.g. solar panels / heat pumps, would this be a national framework or a local plan thing?

Session 5 (Recommendation Writing)

The panel did not hear from any commentators in this session.

Annex C: SMART Asks for MPs

The Panel were supported by Hope for the Future to develop a series of SMART Asks, based off their recommendations, to ask in any future meetings with local MPs.

A SMART Ask is a request for something that is **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ctionable, **R**elevant, and **T**imebound. A SMART Ask is not intended to replace a recommendation, but it can be easier for an MP to commit to during an initial meeting. This can be an important step in building trust with politicians.

Each SMART Ask was voted on by panel members to determine the level of support within the panel.



Hope for the Future is a charity dedicated to training and supporting people to engage in effective and constructive conversations with their local politicians on climate and nature.

Find out more about their work supporting deliberative processes at: hfff.org.uk/citizens-assemblies

SMART Ask 1

=1st | 39 Points

Will [MP] submit an oral question to Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, Ed Milliband MP, asking him how the government plans to restructure the energy pricing system to reduce electricity costs?

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
16	7	0	0	0

Strongly Agree

- There is a Student Loan System structurally already in place nationally which could be a blueprint for a similar system to completely finance retrofit costs on a large scale and, at a low interest rate, this would represent a huge net positive financial benefit to UK PLC over the term of repayment whilst the incidental benefits to energy security, health savings, growth, etc are also realised. A large scale solution at pace.
- Key to help people change to EVs and Heat Pumps.

Agree

- Look forward to trying via a private member bill.
- He previously stated that energy costs would come down by £300 per year. They have not. Very interested in his reply this time

SMART Ask 2

=1st | 39 Points

Will [MP] meet with local councillors, bus company leaders, and stakeholders to discuss the recommendations outlined by the panel and what actions need to be taken to enact them?

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
17	5	1	0	0

Strongly Agree

- Essential bus company leaders attend to see if they will commit to changes in bus operations

Agree

- Could local people have an input

SMART Ask 3

3rd | 38 Points (Green Spaces 1)

Will [MP] submit a written question to Minister for Housing and Planning, Matthew Pennycook MP, enquiring if new houses are aiming to be zero carbon, and if so, what measures will be taken to ensure this?

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
15	8	0	0	0

Agree

- We need strong backing from the general public

SMART Ask 4

4th | 37 Points

Will [MP] attend an in-person progress update in September 2026 to learn more about what changes are happening locally in response to the panel and discuss some of the actions they have taken in response to the recommendations?

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
17	5	0	0	1

Strongly Agree

- Will see how supportive local MP's are for our proposals.
- This would show that our local government is serious about trying to make the needed to changes on matters of climate change

Agree

- Yes please

Strongly Disagree

- This question should not need asking. Surely [MP] will attend this meeting.

SMART Ask 5

5th | 35 Points

Will [MP] write a letter to the Chair of the Environmental Audit Committee, Toby Perkins, asking what recommendations they have made on maintaining green spaces in a climate and nature-friendly way, and suggesting further inquiry into this to help inform local authorities and government bodies protecting natural spaces?

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
14	7	2	0	0

Strongly Agree

- Of utmost importance. Actions they will take and commitments should be the focus. The current global ecosystem crisis indicates a sense of urgency is non-negotiable.

SMART Ask 6

6th | 34 Points

Will [MP] submit an oral question to Steve Reed OBE MP – Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, asking what measures the government intends to make to ensure infrastructure keeps up with the accelerated rate of house building?

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
14	6	3	0	0

Neither Agree nor Disagree

- Give it a try

SMART Ask 7

=7th | 32 Points

Will [MP] submit a written question to Minister for Local Travel, Lillian Greenwood MP, asking what resources are available or being made available in the near future to support local authorities in developing more joined-up cycle networks?

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
13	6	4	0	0

Strongly Agree

- To encourage cycling

Agree

- But note that 'cycle lanes' should not be implemented where they would cause traffic flow problems which could not be mitigated by sensible re-routing.
- Cost/benefit analysis will be interesting

SMART Ask 8

=7th | 32 Points

Will [MP] submit an oral question to the Secretary of State for Energy and Net-Zero, Ed Milliband MP, asking how they plan to support councils invest in local renewable energy and push back against fossil fuel extraction projects in their area.

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
14	5	3	1	0

Strongly Agree

- Possibly not so relevant to our MP Monica Harding but certainly to some others in Surrey.

Agree

- Hopefully not more wind farms. Where will they be located?

SMART Ask 9

9th | 28 Points

Will [MP] help host a stakeholder meeting of key Elmbridge decision makers to discuss the implementation of a 'one-stop-shop' energy advice centre, by the end of the year?

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
9	10	4	0	0

Agree

- I hope it can be done

SMART Ask 10

=10th | 26 Points

Will [MP] write a letter to Secretary of Education, Bridget Phillipson MP, including the panel recommendations and encouraging her to consider the need for more curriculum change to include better climate education, before the end of the year?

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
11	5	6	1	0

Strongly Agree

- Could she also include time learning in nature particularly for disadvantaged children where access is limited.

Agree

- Interesting to see how (if) she responds It will probably be another one put on the back burner

SMART Ask 11

=10th | 26 Points

Will [MP] meet with MPs and panel members to discuss what government funds are already being accessed to increase EV charging stations, and what additional support they may require from the central government?

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
9	9	4	1	0

Strongly Agree

- A Key priority to encourage people to change to EVs

Agree

- Will there be a definite financial commitment from central government?

SMART Ask 12

12th | 23 Points

Will [MP] write a local article in the next month, in response to the panel's recommendations, talking about the importance of local tree planting and calling for stronger policies around this?

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
8	7	8	0	0

Neither Agree Nor Disagree

- Really

SMART Ask 13

13th | 22 Points

Will [MP] write a letter to Steve Reed OBE MP – Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, relaying the panel's call for the EPC assessment system to be changed and voicing their support, in the next 3 months?

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
7	8	8	0	0

Strongly Agree

- The current system is flawed so it is very important that this issue is pushed as much as possible.

Agree

- Would not hold my breath for it to be within 3 months.

SMART Ask 14

14th | 15 Points

Will [MP] hand on a letter from citizen panel members to the Minister for School Standards, Georgia Gould MP,

calling for a national inquiry into the climate impact of school dinners and an investigation into how increasing plant-based options and sourcing more food locally and seasonally could support climate and nature?

S. Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	S. Disagree
4	9	9	0	1

Strongly Disagree

- Personal choice.

