

# TACKLING THE CLIMATE CRISIS in Croydon



## A report of the work of the Croydon Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change

Report from The Campaign Company (TCC)  
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## Executive Summary

### 1 Background

In July 2019, the Leader of Croydon Council declared a climate emergency. *The Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change* was set up to ensure that the voice of residents across the borough would be put at the heart of Croydon Council's plans to tackle this.

A representative group were recruited to form the *Citizens' Assembly*. These 42 members met on three occasions in January and February 2020 to review evidence and explore the options for reducing carbon emissions across the borough. By the end of the process, Assembly members agreed a position statement for the Council to consider. The deliberations of the Assembly will inform the work of the *Croydon Climate Crisis Commission* set up to identify long-term actions and goals to reduce the Council's carbon emissions.

*The Campaign Company (TCC)*, an independent research and engagement company, was commissioned to recruit, facilitate and report back on the work of the *Croydon Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change*. This report represents the results of the Assembly's work. We are grateful for the enthusiasm and commitment that Assembly members showed throughout the process.

### 2 The approach

Citizens' Assemblies are a form of deliberative engagement that give members of the public, not already actively engaged in civic life, the time and opportunity to learn about and discuss a topic, before reaching conclusions.

As the urgency to take action to address the climate crisis has become more apparent, some councils have used the *Citizens' Assembly* approach (one that is also advocated by campaigning organisations such as *Extinction Rebellion*) to gain community insight into how to address the issue locally.

The small number of Citizens' Assemblies that have discussed climate change issues so far have set residents the task of deliberating on the question of the climate emergency and agreeing detailed outputs, targets and measures over a discrete short period of time. This was rightly never the objective in Croydon. The Council had invested in previous research on sustainability across the borough and understood that in Croydon a longer-term process would be needed to produce inclusive and sustainable change. This is one reason why it had been agreed to set up an independent *Climate Crisis Commission* to carry forward the work.





The conclusions of the *Citizens Assembly* represent an important stage in the process which was set up to better understand:

- **The priority climate change issues for residents**
- **How residents would like to see their town develop in a sustainable way**
- **The role that residents and communities can play in achieving this**
- **The challenges, barriers to, and also opportunities for change**
- **The propensity of residents to take action**
- **What residents want to see from the Council and other partners**

At the core of the **deliberative approach** is a **format** and **environment** with **both resident and expert input**

At the core of the deliberative approach is a format and environment with both resident and expert input that allows for reasoned, informed discussion of the issues. Assembly members met experts, elected members and officers and were able to express concerns, raise questions and put forward suggestions. Discussions were designed to share experiences and perspectives so that areas of consensus and disagreement could be captured.

In addition to the priorities for discussion around key areas such as transport, air quality and clean energy, the Assembly added the priority of increasing awareness and engagement for Croydon residents. This group of previously largely unengaged residents demonstrated an appetite to learn and take further action once they had heard evidence and expert witnesses. Deliberation with each other cemented this interest, and a high proportion of Assembly members have signalled a desire to stay involved in the process.

**This suggests that a key component of the strategy now to be developed by the independent Commission should be how to inform, involve and inspire the people of Croydon to be part of the change.**

### 3 What Citizens' Assembly members said

The position statement below reflects the outcome of the deliberations of the Assembly which has been agreed by Assembly members.

#### **CROYDON CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY ON CLIMATE CHANGE: OUR VIEWS**

We support the Council's decision to take action on climate change.

We believe that Croydon has a great opportunity to be one of the first to act and develop some trail blazing solutions.

We believe that the issue is too big for anyone to do on their own so we call on the Council to show leadership and act as a role model collaborating with others including businesses, the NHS, the voluntary sector, communities and special interest groups (eg the *London Cycling Campaign*, *Ramblers*, *Friends of the Earth* etc) to develop concerted and co-ordinated action.

We are prepared to take action ourselves on climate change but this will be boosted if the Council also leads by example by considering the following:

- **Building climate impact into everything it does (commissioning, operating etc)**
- **Educating and encouraging its staff to become Workplace Environmental Protection Officers, advocates and champions for climate action**
- **Supporting businesses, landlords and residents to take action**
- **Lobbying for more action from Government, the Mayor of London and other bodies**
- **Using its influence within Croydon to encourage all agencies to adopt action plans**

We believe that many people are put off taking action on the climate because the information is confusing. We believe that we need a set of simple, understandable measures to chart our progress in Croydon.

We believe that education and awareness around the issue cannot start too early. We therefore call for an extensive programme in all the borough's schools as a central part of the syllabus rather than an optional bolt-on. Colleges, training establishments and centres of adult education also have an important role to play.

We want to see clearer and more regular feedback on the impact being made on the issue.

We believe that there is a great opportunity to embrace and harness new technology to provide solutions to some of the challenges we face. Putting Croydon at the forefront of this will help to make this a centre for jobs and innovation and will promote Croydon as a future facing place to live and work.

We want to see local business (particularly small and medium sized enterprises) rewarded if they sign up to environmentally friendly policies.



Businesses and residents should be involved in discussions about the cost and payment schemes for environmental plans.

We want the majority of socially responsible residents supported and recognised for contributions they make. We also want to see those who let us down identified and penalised.



Action on climate must go hand in hand with measures to make the place cleaner, greener and safer.

Young people are key - we want to see them taking a central role.

We are open to the idea of charging people at a reasonable level who have highly polluting cars more on condition that efforts are made to improve public transport and those who adopt greener solutions (like walking, cycling, car sharing and electric vehicles are rewarded). But above all we want to see fewer cars in total on the borough's roads with shorter journeys in particular being cut.

We believe that the scale and speed of action required to tackle the climate challenge will need a whole community approach.

We understand that Croydon faces a housing crisis and it needs to build more homes especially affordable housing for local people who are unable to find suitable accommodation. We call on the Council to develop a set of principles and regulations that will ensure that additional homes do not compromise the commitment to a greener, cleaner and more attractive borough. Making better use of existing housing stock that is empty or under-used would help in this respect.

The key priority areas for this are: transport, air quality, energy use and awareness and engagement.

We do not believe that currently, Croydon residents are sufficiently aware, engaged or equipped to play the central part needed in this change. Addressing this should therefore be a major priority.

We support a community advocate programme that will train and support residents to be help their communities effect change.

The spaces, networks, organisations and expertise that the borough has should be identified and co-ordinated to provide maximum environmental impact.

Waste and recycling is an important aspect of the environmental challenge as most people should be responsible for it. Information and action is needed to enforce good practice and take measures to penalise those who do not act responsibly.

We are pleased to hear that the *Climate Crisis Commission for a Sustainable Croydon* has been set up and that residents' voices will be represented on this. We would like to see work from the Council and the Commission begin as soon as possible (we think some action can be taken immediately) and for residents' to be formed and engaged in this important area.

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Croydon Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change - the context

Croydon Council has a vision of making Croydon the greenest and most sustainable borough in London. Taking action locally to tackle the climate and ecological emergency is a key part of that vision. In July 2019, the Leader of Croydon Council declared a climate emergency and the Council has a target of being carbon neutral by 2030.

The Council has always recognised that it cannot tackle this challenge alone and that to succeed a longer-term process would be needed to produce inclusive and sustainable change. It has invested in seeking the views of key statutory partners, businesses and most critically Croydon residents which culminated in a *Sustainable Croydon Summit* held at Boxpark in June 2019 which explored how everyone in Croydon could work together to achieve its ambitions.

One of the key outcomes of the *Sustainable Croydon Summit* was to set up an independent *Climate Crisis Commission* to help deliver a sustainable Croydon and identify long-term goals to reduce carbon emissions across the borough. It was also agreed that a *Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change* should be set up in advance of the launch of the Commission to ensure that the voice of residents across the borough could inform the work of the Commission and Croydon Council's plans.

*The Campaign Company (TCC)*, a Croydon based independent research and engagement company, was commissioned to recruit, design, facilitate and report back on the work of the *Croydon Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change*. This report represents the results of the Assembly's work.

**Croydon Council** has a **vision** of making Croydon **the greenest and most sustainable borough in London.**

## 1.2 How the Citizens' Assembly worked

Citizens' Assemblies are a form of deliberative engagement that give members of the public, not already actively engaged in civic life, the time and opportunity to learn about and discuss a topic, before reaching conclusions.

As the urgency to take action to address the climate crisis has become more apparent, councils have increasingly used the *Citizens' Assembly* approach (one that is also advocated by campaigning organisations such as *Extinction Rebellion*) to gain community insight into how to address the issue locally.

In Croydon, a group of residents were recruited to form *Croydon Citizens' Assembly*. These Assembly members were recruited to be broadly representative of the borough by age, gender, ethnicity and geography. More information about the recruitment process is set out in Appendix A.

The organisation of the *Citizens' Assembly* was led by officers from Croydon Council, overseen by an independent advisory board and supported by TCC.

The role of the advisory board was to review the structure and content of the *Citizens' Assembly* to ensure that Assembly members were provided with information to allow them to deliberate in an informed manner.



The members of the Advisory Board were:

- **Polly Billington** - *Director, UK100 Cities*
- **Tim Coombe** - *Croydon Extinction Rebellion*
- **Shifa Mustafa** - *Director of Place, Croydon Council*
- **Richard Jackson** - *Director of Environmental Sustainability, University College London*

### 1.3 The Citizens' Assembly journey

Croydon's Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change was set up to help the Council better understand:

- **The priority climate change issues for residents**
- **How residents would like to see their town develop in a sustainable way**
- **The role that residents and communities can play in achieving this**
- **The challenges, barriers to, and also opportunities for change**
- **The propensity of residents to take action**
- **What residents want to see from the Council and other partners**



A programme of three deliberative sessions, attended by 42 Assembly members, was designed and delivered in January and February 2020 to help gain a better understanding of these issues.

The programme covered these in the following way:

- **Introduction to the Croydon Citizens' Assembly (pre-event communication)** – this focussed on setting out the purpose of the Citizens' Assembly and expectations of members as well as distributing a briefing on Croydon's approach to sustainability to provide some context
- **SESSION 1: What climate change means for people in Croydon** (22 January, Stanley Halls, South Norwood) - this set out why climate change was an urgent issue; what this meant for Croydon; an overview of the priority issues that Croydon Council wants Assembly members input on including tackling transport; improving air quality; improving energy efficiency and any other issues that Assembly members want to focus on
- **SESSION 2: How we can tackle climate change in Croydon together** (6 February, Braithwaite Hall, Croydon Clocktower) - exploring the roles individuals, communities, the Council and its partners can play in reduced carbon emissions in the key priority areas
- **SESSION 3: Taking action to tackle climate change** (20 February, Braithwaite Hall, Croydon Clocktower) - agreeing a position statement reflecting the deliberations of the Citizens' Assembly and prioritising action.

At the core of the deliberative approach is a format and environment with both resident and expert input that allows for reasoned, informed discussion of the issues. *The Croydon Citizens' Assembly* sessions were designed to allow Assembly members to meet experts, elected members and officers and to express concerns, raise questions and put forward suggestions in a safe environment. Discussions were designed to share experiences and perspectives so that areas of consensus and disagreement could be captured.



Each session involved introductory presentations on each topic from the Council or external speakers. Assembly members split into groups for facilitated discussion, using open-ended questions and exercises to capture the full range of views of the Assembly members, who showed insight and a range of informed opinions in deliberating each topic. Feedback from table discussions were also shared at each session so that Assembly members could hear what their peers on other tables had discussed.

The final session was an opportunity to get consensus from the whole Assembly on what residents across Croydon felt were the important issues to address to effectively tackle the climate emergency.

As part of their discussions, Assembly members met key decision-makers from the council, including the Leader, Deputy Leader for Housing, Deputy Cabinet member for *Clean and Green Croydon* and the Deputy Cabinet member for *Environment, transport and Regeneration*.

Throughout the process, those participating in the Assembly showed a high-level of enthusiasm in helping to shape the changes taking place in Croydon and the importance of ensuring that any action taken would benefit their community.

The content generated as part of each session is detailed below. The presentations and exercises that were used to guide discussion are available to download separately from **[www.croydoncitizensassembly.org](http://www.croydoncitizensassembly.org)** (an online space to support *Citizens' Assembly* deliberations).



## 2 SESSION 1: What climate change means for people in Croydon

### 2.1 Overview of the session

The agenda for this session covered the following key elements:

#### **Presentations**

- *"Why Croydon Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change is important"*  
Cllr Tony Newman, Leader of Croydon Council
- *"The Climate Emergency"*  
Dr Alex Chapman, New Economics Foundation
- *"Climate change and Croydon: the story so far"*  
Shifa Mustafa (Executive Director-Place, Croydon Council)



#### **Table discussions**

- **Table discussion 1: What do you think?** Inviting Assembly members to comment on and add to Croydon's priority issues – transport, air quality, improving energy efficiency
- **Table discussion 2: What does this mean for you?** Inviting Assembly members to discuss the priority issues in more details

### 2.2 What the Citizens' Assembly said

Table discussions focussed on the key issues that the Council are looking for resident feedback on to inform decisions on reducing carbon emissions across the borough and creating a sustainable Croydon. These issues are air quality, transport and improving energy efficiency. Assembly members themselves identified an additional priority that they wanted the Council to consider - educating and engaging the public around climate change.

The key headlines from these discussions are summarised below. At this stage, members were also asked to prioritise the issues that were most important to them: transport was identified as the most popular issue for discussion. This is followed by air quality then education and lastly improving energy efficiency.

#### **Air quality - the issues and challenges**

- There is a general consensus that this is really important because of the health challenges this presents to the most vulnerable in communities (especially children and older people) and people who are trying to be healthier (including runners, walkers and cyclists)
- There is recognition that although the Council is trying to address this through anti-idling measures especially near schools and no parking zones. However, this could potentially exacerbate pollution in other areas - "it just moves the problem to other streets". More strategic and holistic approaches that takes into account the impact on the "whole place" should be taken.

More **strategic and holistic** approaches that takes into account the **impact on the "whole place"** should be taken.



- There was strong agreement that since there is clearly a link between air quality and transport, developing sustainable forms of public transport to discourage people using cars would also improve air quality.
- It was suggested that there should be stronger enforcement on "pollutants" (including heavy road users, higher emission vehicles and businesses) - "stop procrastinating and act"
- It was also recognised that there is a conflict between the need to improve the climate and the extent to which individuals will make sacrifices - flying to holiday destinations exemplified this. More education about the impact and what can be done to offset any actions would be helpful.

There is a **conflict** between **the need to improve the climate** and the **extent** to which **individuals will make sacrifices**

### **Transport - the issues and challenges**

- The following sentiment summarised a common feeling across all discussions: "The thing about public transport at the moment is that it isn't good enough or regular enough - make it better and of course we'll stop using our cars as much".
- There is a general consensus that Croydon has a really strong transport infrastructure and the biggest impact on the climate could be made by "greening" this and looking at sustainable forms of public transport. A number of suggestions to build on these assets and discourage car use were made including: extending the tram link; improving connections across Croydon (not just through town centre), having more park and rides; incentivising car sharing schemes, more *Boris bikes*, banning 4x4 vehicles "*Chelsea tractors*" in high density parts of the borough, points off licences, etc).
- Affordability of public transport and accessibility were raised as issues to be addressed if we were to steer people away from the convenience of cars
- It was also felt that more could be done to support the growth of electric vehicles including more charging points in public places for electric cars, more electric buses, etc





### **Improving energy efficiency - the issues and challenges**

- It was felt that a big opportunity to address this would be to set enforceable targets for developers to introduce energy efficiency measures in all new-builds (homes and businesses)
- It was felt that more action might be taken if there were financial incentives for energy efficient homes and businesses.
- More should be done to tell people what to do to make their homes more energy efficient (eg solar panels, insulate roofs, use LED bulbs, etc)
- Could introduce innovations such as V2G (vehicle to grid) to “recycle energy” better
- Make sure each part of a “sustainable system” eg electric cars is eco-friendly rather than just putting a zero-carbon step at the end of a process which starts with burning fossil fuels

### **Educating and engaging the public - the issues and challenges**

- There was consensus that carbon literacy was really important to engage more people on the issue of tackling climate change and getting them to take action. This included “de-jargonising” the whole climate change language (eg explaining what net zero means) and making targets more realistic and more local/individual (rather than global).
- The need for better education, information and awareness on how to make a difference crossed all the themes discussed. In addition, people thought that there should be more on other areas too including recycling - especially of plastics and food waste
- Campaigns or information to change people’s attitudes was also felt to be important and the need to start educating people at an early age (eg in schools) was felt to be critical to this.

There was **consensus** that **carbon literacy was really important** to **engage more people** on the issue of **tackling climate change**

## 3 SESSION 2: How we can tackle climate change together

### 3.1 Overview of the session

The agenda for this session covered the following key elements:

#### **Presentations on how to take action on the priority issues**

- *"Changing how we travel"*  
Ian Plowright (Croydon Council)
- *"Engaging and communicating with Croydon residents on climate change"*  
David Evans (TCC)

#### **Table discussions**

- **Table discussion 1: What can individuals do to tackle climate change?** Inviting members to explore what people can do to change the way way they travel; clean up their energy / be more energy-efficient; engage people to change their behaviours (including changing what they eat and buy, how they waste less and recycle more, and work with nature)
- **Table discussion 2: What can communities do to tackle climate change?** Explore what can be done at a neighbourhood / community level to reduce carbon in terms of travel; energy efficiency; community engagement, etc)
- **Table discussion 3: What can the Council and partners do to tackle climate change?** Explore what the Council can do as provider, enabler and influencer to reduce carbon across the themes but also in partnership with health, businesses, VCS, etc

### 3.2 What the Citizens' Assembly said

Table discussions focussed on the key roles that individuals, communities and the Council (and partners) can play in tackling climate change.

Some of the cross-cutting themes that were raised across all tables included:

- The best role the Council can play is creating an environment where individuals, communities and others can easily take actions to tackle the climate emergency - this can be done through raising awareness and engaging people on the issues; incentivising good behaviour; punishing bad behaviour; being an effective advocate for the people of Croydon





- To show its commitment to this agenda, the Council should aim to “Be the first” and lead the way in a number of areas – role modelling the right actions, piloting innovative solutions, engaging widely
- The big “issues” that the Council needed to address as part of this agenda were:
  - the challenge of building homes to meet the housing crisis vs protecting the borough’s valued green and open spaces
  - Croydon is a growth borough – there is an opportunity to make sure that targets for “growth” have sustainability – especially environmental sustainability - built in to them
  - making the most of the borough’s excellent transport infrastructure to discourage car use
  - equipping communities and individuals to do more for themselves

The Council should **aim to “Be the first” and lead the way** in a number of areas

More detailed feedback on the table discussions around roles that individuals, communities and Council can do is summarised below.

## WHAT CAN INDIVIDUALS DO

### Changing how we travel

- Encourage people to make sustainable modes of transport (cycling, walking, public transport etc) a part of their daily routine, rather than certain options occasionally taken. By getting into habits and making this a regular part of their day, people will find it much easier to avoid using polluting forms of travel
- Fly less
- Gain confidence in cycle roads routes (know design, lights and where you feel safe)
- Use electric bikes
- Sharing car journeys and car-pool more
- Think of the health benefits of cycling or walking
- Stop car-idling - one’s own car but also not be shy about politely asking people leaving their engines running to turn them off.
- Evaluate the need to actually own a car, and in the case of families with multiple cars, look into the possibility of all sharing one car rather than each having a personal vehicle.



### Managing what we eat

- Grow own food
- Reduce food wastage/ don’t over food shop
- Portion sizes reduced (Reduce food waste)
- Eating less red meat



### **Cutting energy at home**

- Insulate homes more efficiently - lofts, windows, doors
- Close doors to trap warmth
- Use central heating sparingly or just in the room you want to heat
- Landlords can incentivise tenants to be energy efficient
- Solar panels
- Smart technology including smart heating, smart meters, etc
- Timers on appliances that use water
- Wash on lower temperatures
- Use energy more efficiently, bulbs, running appliances at off peak times.

### **Managing what we buy**

- Recycling and reusing material waste as much as possible, as well as being conscious to buy/use products which don't produce much plastic waste (eg unpackaged fruit)
- Make own cleaning products
- Re-use bags
- Reduce plastic usage
- Don't use wrapping-paper and plastics over Christmas
- Buy fewer clothes that last longer

### **Other**

- Treating the area directly around you (eg your street) as "your patch", to be looked after and maintained. This can be done in collaboration with neighbours and will contribute to an overall cleaner borough for everyone
- Set own personal goals (i.e. targets for recycling, lowering food and clothing purchases)
- Compost more
- People should make sure to police, where possible, fly tipping in their area
- Recognise that for some families - particularly in low income households - that they will have more urgent priorities than the environment.

## WHAT CAN COMMUNITIES DO

### Work together

- Carpooling
- Cycling clubs
- Walk to school days
- Local community orgs to form a pan-network of community groups that can share information and resources to help tackle the climate emergency together
- Coordinate resources/ skills/ knowledge including community and business spaces
- Local community transport schemes eg school buses
- Groups can set their own targets for reducing waste and emissions, tailored to their own circumstances, goals and resources.
- Shared shopping schemes



### Community voice

- Form parent lobby groups in schools
- Spread information through community groups
- Use social media eg neighbourhood WhatsApp groups to share, educate and inform
- Engage with neighbours (start a conversation about recycling, actions one can take)
- Lobby energy companies
- More neighbourhood assemblies like this (Croydon Citizens Assembly) but in local areas. Have 'green events' in communities to host climate crisis briefings like this.

### Raise awareness

- 'Safer cycling for kids' courses and clubs
- Give help and publicity to existing action groups and local initiatives
- Develop and support community "green" champions
- Pyramid messaging - a good way of educating the community is for a group or individual to share ideas which have worked well for them and then share those ideas with another three people, helping creative solutions spread through the community.
- Workshops for local community groups to raise awareness on how and what their community spends energy on.
- Promote the 'Don't mess with Croydon' App.
- Use transport areas and community spaces to promote initiatives

A good way of **educating the community** is for a group or individual to **share ideas which have worked well for them**



### **Encourage and incentivise community action**

- Businesses reducing use of light, sensor lighting for public buildings
- Subsidies for more expensive lightbulbs
- Providing perks for “wanted behaviour” i.e. timers for water usage during showers
- Give communities targets
- Give people posters, badges that show they are taking part (neighbourhood watch style)
- Environmental themed competitions, to encourage communities and people of all ages.
- Companies can introduce a cycle scheme for their employees whereby they help people buy a bike (and the relevant safety gear, safety being identified as a major disincentive to people wanting to switch to cycling). On this bike shops are specifically identified as needing to offer more bundles to people buying a bike (helmets, lights, locks etc)
- Businesses need to take more pride in the area surrounding them and treat it as if they lived there. Therefore the “personal patch” idea also applies to them.
- Eco-friendly shops and businesses. Ensure that local shops and businesses are eco-rated on things like how much they recycle or energy use. We have it for hygiene so why not for their environmental impact?



### **Allow communities to innovate and lead the way**

- Schools should be electricity generating hubs i.e. swings, bikes, playground accessories - generating power
- Tree planting schemes in schools
- Reduce light usage in schools, have outside lessons when seasons allows it (ie using natural light)
- Expand the “*Library of Things*” concept where rarely but frequently used items (eg Hedge Trimmers) are held for community use - helps to reduce consumerism
- Turn parts of parks into allotments, vegetable patches, polytunnels, garden centres
- Use waste to create art, i.e. instead of drawing on new paper, use what is available of food wrappers or lollipop sticks to create the art.
- “*School streets*” - more initiatives and schemes like this.
- Solar panels on the roofs of schools.



## WHAT CAN THE COUNCIL DO

### Lead by example

- Eliminate single-use plastics from its services and set standards for others
- Take on a leadership role among partners including NHS, nationally run public services and government departments in the borough, TfL and others to achieve and exceed its sustainability goals
- Hybrid electric fleet
- Reduce waste within council i.e. paper
- Go fully green in the council
- Have recycling opportunities in work place
- Council staff should drive less
- Practice what you preach and inspire people to make a difference



### 'Be the first'

- Set ambitious targets to inspire action
- For example, the first all-electric bus routes
- The first to have community water points to fill up chilly bottles, etc
- The first to have public smart bins
- The first to have wind powered schools or other public services
- Using Westfield as an opportunity to be the best model for "green and sustainable" high street and retail development

### Enable 'greener' travel

- The council should look into making sure that streets (and bus stops especially) are well lit at night - safety is a large factor for people choosing to drive over more sustainable travel options.
- The council needs to bring in more dedicated bike lanes, prioritising common commuting routes and particularly dangerous roads. Make existing bike lanes safer and signpost them more clearly.
- In central Croydon a "park and ride" scheme would help prevent people from driving into the town centre, where air pollution is especially bad. People could park in a large car park, before buying a ticket which pays for both their parking and a bus journey into town. In peak commuter times, buses could be constantly running back and forth.
- There needs to be more clarity on which tram lines can be driven around (Church Street was identified as particularly confusing). Gradually removing cars altogether from streets with tram lines was also suggested.
- The risk of theft is also a big disincentive to people wanting to take up cycling. The council should look into a scheme of public bike sheds where people can securely leave their bikes, not having to worry about it being stolen.

**The risk of theft is also a big disincentive to people wanting to take up cycling.**

- Subsidise community transport schemes including school buses
- Look at best practice elsewhere eg *Birmingham Big Bike scheme* (Giving bikes to individuals that don't normally cycle and teaching them how to cycle)
- Expand tram system so it extends to the whole borough
- More bike storage on streets
- More electric charging points
- Lobby for cheaper transport
- Better travel during peak times, tram extensions
- 20mph speed limits
- Ban cars in central Croydon and pedestrianise the Town Centre
- Buses with less seating for shorter journeys possibly shuttle type operation (airport bus style) more able to accommodate luggage, shopping bags, pushchairs etc.
- Make buses, electric / hydrogen cell
- Expand rental bikes
- Close off roads to help with walking
- Incentivise no car days
- Make roads less scary for cyclists, reduce speed limits, car free bike routes.
- Electric busses - V2G systems from Honda
- Have signs around Croydon which show how long a distance to a location is and make people aware of driving vs walking times
- Limit car idling, especially in school areas.
- Electric scooters should be on the road. Also there should be scooter hire/ rentals just like Boris bikes.

**Look at best practice elsewhere, eg Birmingham Big Bike scheme**





### **Encourage and incentivise green behaviour**

- Use data and knowledge to link people up/ facilitate community action/ provide information to relevant groups
- Ring-fence tax for environment
- Reduction in council tax bill or business rates if you take part in a green initiative (or other tax incentives)
- Innovate - generate income not just through tax and encourage green business
- Create green *street champions*
- Give incentives to recycle eg more free waste bags for food waste
- Introduce sharing schemes where individuals can borrow equipment they might not want to buy outright (eg lawnmowers) and then return it for other residents to use. This would reduce the amount of new material being consumed by the borough whilst also saving residents space and money.

**Introduce sharing schemes** where individuals can **borrow equipment** they might not want to buy outright

### **Better enforcement**

- Punish super market wastage and poor business practice
- Instant fines for car-idling
- Get litterers to do community service eg give them litter pickup duty

### **Be more green-minded in decision-making including planning**

- When opening new council services (e.g. leisure centres, libraries etc), the council should make sure they are in areas which are easily accessible by walking or at least by public transport to the people who will use them. The goal should be to make sure that nobody needs to drive to benefit from local services and amenities. The "pram-walk" test was suggested here: could a parent pushing a pram easily reach this location?
- The council should, both through its own building and when considering planning applications, consistently prioritise or even require the highest environmental standards (energy efficiency and building materials were identified as important factors).
- The council should look to equip existing and new buildings with solar panels where viable - this could help create a solar network within Croydon producing clean energy for residents and businesses within the borough.
- Tree planting and new green spaces should also be explored as a significant part of planning new developments.
- Be more commercially green i.e. invest in hemp
- Build green social housing



- Long term planning not short term
- Incentivise the use of smart tech in homes
- Be bold - i.e. all new housing - "a right to green space"
- Fewer incinerators
- Have a woodland burial site in Croydon
- More efficient bin collections
- Create more green spaces
- Promote Croydon as a 'Green Centre'



### **Raise awareness and engage more widely**

- The council needs to communicate better when acting against fly-tipping and other anti-social practices. The use of physical letters, and local or building noticeboards was agreed as a good way of reaching as many people as possible.
- Be more open and transparent about targets and whether they have been reached or not
- Education about all the themes - waste management, transport, energy efficiency, smart technology
- Make it clear what needs to be recycled
- More engaging information leaflets
- Tap into the political awareness created by Brexit debate and divert it to environmental issues
- Use real phrases and language and not so much jargon like "tipping point" people have to relate to the issues.
- Make sure people are aware about what can and can't be recycled
- Recognise the 'doom' and 'denial' modes when communicating to people about this issue
- Big fun days/family day outs raising awareness on green issues

### **Work in partnership**

- The council should work with all businesses and public bodies (eg NHS) to promote sustainability
- Surrey Street Market was singled out as a good opportunity to support good environmental practice whilst helping local businesses. The council could work with vendors (perhaps through subsidies) to eliminate plastic from the market
- Encourage partners to host / facilitate community meetings

The **council** could **work with vendors** (perhaps through subsidies) to **eliminate plastic from the market**

## 4 SESSION 3: Taking action to tackle climate change

### 4.1 Overview of the session

The agenda for this session covered the following key elements:

#### **Presentations**

- *"How your views will inform the Climate Crisis Commission"*  
Dr Alex Chapman (New Economics Foundation)
- *"Inspiring Action"*  
Alethea Warrington (Possible – formerly 10:10 Climate Action)
- *Thank you and next steps*  
Cllr Alison Butler, Deputy Leader

#### **Table discussions]**

- **Table discussion 1: What the Assembly thinks – agreeing an Assembly position statement**
- **Table discussion 2: What's most important to you? – prioritising actions raised at the last session**
- **Table discussions 3 & 4: Deep dive discussions on "Tackling transport and improving air quality" and "Community action on raising awareness"**





## 4.2 What the Citizens' Assembly said

The position statement below reflects the outcome of the deliberations of the Assembly which has been agreed by Assembly members.

### **CROYDON CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY ON CLIMATE CHANGE: OUR VIEWS**

- 1 We support the Council's decision to take action on climate change.
- 2 We believe that Croydon has a great opportunity to be one of the first to act and develop some trail blazing solutions.
- 3 We believe that the issue is too big for anyone to do on their own so we call on the Council to show leadership and act as a role model collaborating with others including businesses, the NHS, the voluntary sector, communities and special interest groups (eg the *London Cycling Campaign*, *Ramblers*, *Friends of the Earth* etc) to develop concerted and co-ordinated action.
- 4 We are prepared to take action ourselves on climate change but this will be boosted if the Council also leads by example by considering the following:
  - **Building climate impact into everything it does (commissioning, operating etc)**
  - **Educating and encouraging its staff to become Workplace Environmental Protection Officers, advocates and champions for climate action**
  - **Supporting businesses, landlords and residents to take action**
  - **Lobbying for more action from Government, the Mayor of London and other bodies**
  - **Using its influence within Croydon to encourage all agencies to adopt action plans**
- 5 We believe that many people are put off taking action on the climate because the information is confusing. We believe that we need a set of simple, understandable measures to chart our progress in Croydon.
- 6 We believe that education and awareness around the issue cannot start too early. We therefore call for an extensive programme in all the borough's schools as a central part of the syllabus rather than an optional bolt-on. Colleges, training establishments and centres of adult education also have an important role to play.
- 7 We want to see clearer and more regular feedback on the impact being made on the issue.
- 8 We believe that there is a great opportunity to embrace and harness new technology to provide solutions to some of the challenges we face. Putting Croydon at the forefront of this will help to make this a centre for jobs and innovation and will promote Croydon as a future facing place to live and work.
- 9 We want to see local business (particularly small and medium sized enterprises) rewarded if they sign up to environmentally friendly policies.

- 10 Businesses and residents should be involved in discussions about the cost and payment schemes for environmental plans.
- 11 We want the majority of socially responsible residents supported and recognised for contributions they make. We also want to see those who let us down identified and penalised.
- 12 Action on climate must go hand in hand with measures to make the place cleaner, greener and safer.
- 13 Young people are key - we want to see them taking a central role.
- 14 We are open to the idea of charging people at a reasonable level who have highly polluting cars more on condition that efforts are made to improve public transport and those who adopt greener solutions (like walking, cycling, car sharing and electric vehicles are rewarded). But above all we want to see fewer cars in total on the borough's roads with shorter journeys in particular being cut.
- 15 We believe that the scale and speed of action required to tackle the climate challenge will need a whole community approach.
- 16 We understand that Croydon faces a housing crisis and it needs to build more homes especially affordable housing for local people who are unable to find suitable accommodation. We call on the Council to develop a set of principles and regulations that will ensure that additional homes do not compromise the commitment to a greener, cleaner and more attractive borough. Making better use of existing housing stock that is empty or under-used would help in this respect.
- 17 The key priority areas for this are: transport, air quality, energy use and awareness and engagement.
- 18 We do not believe that currently, Croydon residents are sufficiently aware, engaged or equipped to play the central part needed in this change. Addressing this should therefore be a major priority.
- 19 We support a community advocate programme that will train and support residents to be help their communities effect change.
- 20 The spaces, networks, organisations and expertise that the borough has should be identified and co-ordinated to provide maximum environmental impact.
- 21 Waste and recycling is an important aspect of the environmental challenge as most people should be responsible for it. Information and action is needed to enforce good practice and take measures to penalise those who do not act responsibly.
- 22 We are pleased to hear that the *Climate Crisis Commission for a Sustainable Croydon* has been set up and that residents' voices will be represented on this. We would like to see work from the Council and the Commission begin as soon as possible (we think some action can be taken immediately) and for residents' to be formed and engaged in this important area.

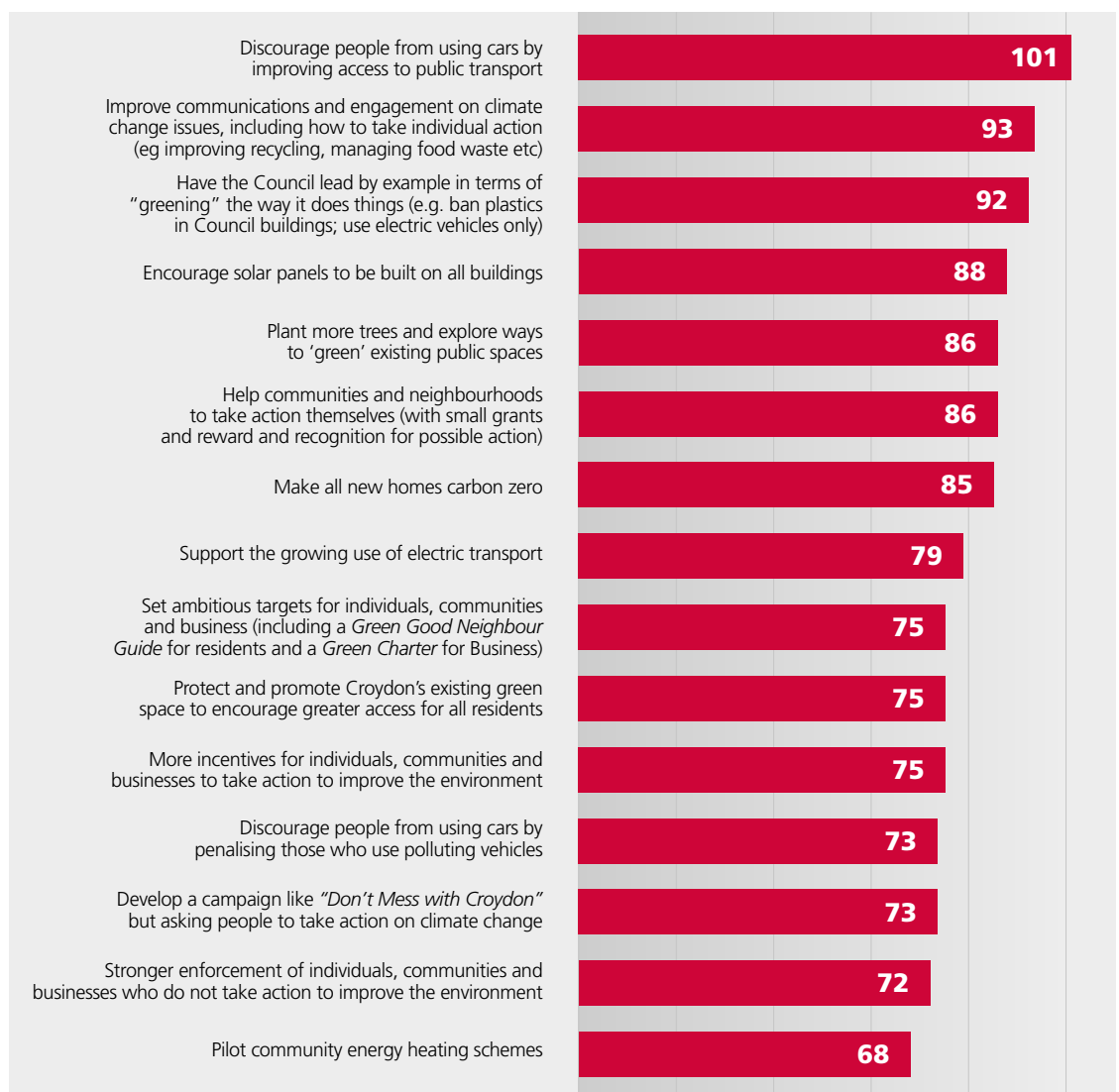


### 4.3 Prioritising council actions raised at the last session

The previous meeting had helped develop concrete actions that could realistically be taken by the council to act on the climate crisis. Members were asked in this meeting to label each action a first, second or third priority. In order to calculate the total level of prioritisation, these priorities were then reversed (so first preferences were counted as 3, and third preferences as 1) and summed up.



- The graph below shows the results of this exercise, demonstrating a clear preference for incentive-based actions rather than enforcement, creating a standard of practice in which residents find it easy to make the environmentally conscious choice.





## 4.4 Deep dive discussions on council priorities

In the previous meeting, members discussed various measures to tackle the main priority areas the council had identified. This discussion was intended to develop a sense of what disincentives or enforcement actions they were willing to put up with, and consider the most effective incentives.

### Tackling transport and improving air quality in communities

This was the most commonly mentioned issue in discussions throughout. It was recognised that Croydon's transport infrastructure is an asset across the borough. However, a significant number of people are still reliant on carbon-emitting cars - especially for short journeys. So how can people be encouraged to change their behaviour? Assembly members have already raised a list of measures to address this challenge (summarised in the table below)

It was **recognised** that **Croydon's transport infrastructure** is an **asset** across the borough

There was broad consensus on the incentives listed, with several groups noting the importance of keeping people onside through positive rather than punitive actions.

- Fines in particular were criticised as most damaging for those with the fewest means, and often regarded as unnecessary. One potential alternative would be to pay fines into an environmental fund, or replace it with a form of community service on an environmental project. A minority saw the value of fines in making cleaner transport options more attractive.
- Any punitive actions would only be fairly introduced after a concurrent push on awareness
- General understanding that any punitive measures against drivers would affect the poorest most, and would face difficulty winning support if not explicitly tied to a specific, popular and relevant incentive.
- Awareness of council's limited power, and many unanswered questions about how it can campaign for central government to provide incentives for electric car use.



## THE INCENTIVES

### More and safer cycling lanes

There was general agreement that this is a reasonable trade-off with decreased car traffic. Some members argued that any further uptake of cycling will only happen once infrastructure is in place. Safety as well as connectedness were a priority here, with increased pavement coverage allowing for segregated cycle lanes.

### Encouraging car-pooling and car-sharing (eg car-sharing lanes)

This proposal was relatively popular, though there was no concrete sense of whether members would consider car-pooling themselves.

One member brought attention to the integration of BlaBlaCar into Google Maps in some European cities like Barcelona. Another mentioned the potential for car-pooling commuters travelling from the south coast.

### Pedestrianisation of areas

Pedestrianisation was seen as an inevitable part of other developments in central Croydon, including Westfield. There was general acceptance of this as a positive, but one group felt planning incentives to make more journeys on foot had to be paired with more visible policing.

### Clean air zones (eg around schools)

There was general enthusiasm for this measure, including piloting car-idling fines, and increasing public awareness with a street-by-street air quality information app.

Several groups also mentioned the potential effectiveness of negative advertising akin to cigarette packs. Using vivid, grotesque imagery would be more likely to make the effects of pollution hit home more.

## THE DISINCENTIVES

### Close roads to cars

This suggestion was treated with caution by most groups. While some noted the success of such measures around schools, others suggested that this usually moved traffic elsewhere rather than taking cars off the road. That said, one group was enthusiastic about further experimentation with the "Play Streets" concept.

Any road closures must be tied to assurances for small businesses, delivery companies, postal services, and those with disabilities and limited mobility.

### Restrict or remove parking

Most felt this was not a realistic option until transport links across the borough had improved dramatically and the proliferation of Park & Rides increased.

Certain types of shopping require closely dedicated parking, such as more residential areas like Purley Way. In the face of Croydon developments, there is also the question of what will happen to existing car parks.

### Fines for car-idling

These fines were viewed as impractical, presumably being much harder to police than speeding offences. On top of this, there was a feeling that this may unfairly target older cars which need their engines on to heat the car. Nevertheless, taxi hotspots and schools were felt to be good areas to begin pilots.

### Increase parking charges

Increased parking charges were viewed as a necessary evil, but one which could be made far more tolerable if wedded to positive environmental initiatives, such as a green fund, or lowering the cost of tram fares.

As this could have a significant impact on the local economy, it should be carefully applied with a view to encouraging local shopping closer to home, alongside pairing it with free parking days in certain areas.

## THE INCENTIVES

### Extending tram system

Members were enthusiastic about extending the tram, and saw this as an opportunity to make a distinctly Croydon example to the rest of London. One group proposed an extension to Crystal Palace and Morden. Another group suggested trams could be integrated with a Park & Ride scheme.

### Making public transport more affordable

More affordable, as well as reliable, public transport was viewed by many as the basic trade-off of any fiscally punitive measures. Several suggestions were made, including a "short hopper fair" of 90p for a few stops, or reviewing the fairness of free bus pass concessions. One group also mentioned extending Oyster compatibility beyond Zone 6, coordinating bus services with Surrey County Council.

### A better infrastructure to support electric vehicles (eg more charging points)

General enthusiasm for this proposal, but alongside an understanding that big impact on this can only be sought by national government subsidies on electric cars.

Some suggestions included establishing an upgrade scheme, especially for those on low incomes with diesel cars, and lobbying national government for incentives and subsidies. One group suggested Croydon bid for the recently announced All Electric Bus Town Scheme.

## THE DISINCENTIVES

### Pollution charge

Most members felt fiscal punishments were particularly damaging for those on low incomes, especially when there are few alternatives. Above all, many of those driving more polluting cars are older, less mobile or on lower incomes, often having been encouraged to buy diesel cars two decades ago.

An alternative basis of pollution charges was suggested on the basis of number of cars per household, as they would appear to be more capable of paying.

### Business / workplace parking charges

No strong feelings on this, but one group suggested Councillors could set an example by forfeiting their Car Parking Pass. Another insisted that commuters need more Park & Rides in place if cars are discouraged from the centre.

Some bigger businesses are keen to create a green image, and could be vulnerable to pressure. For example, businesses with a fleets of cars could move to electric vehicles, creating demand for electric charging infrastructure.



### Empowering communities to take action

- There was a strong recognition across Assembly discussions that more can be done to equip communities to take responsibility and action themselves to tackle climate change
- Having been raised several times during the assembly, we wanted to explore the idea of developing community “green” champions to help raise awareness and engage their local neighbourhoods to take action. These could be similar to existing *Street Champions* and *Neighbourhood Watch* volunteers.

We asked members about:

- What would be in the “job description” of a *green champion*?
- How could they be supported to carry out their role? (ie what tools, resources, information might they need?)
- What would encourage people to take on this role? What barriers might there be?

### Green Champion role

- Above all, the *Green Champion* must be an independent but constant liaison between residents and the Council, in daily contact with a dedicated council employee to provide research and information.
- There was strong feeling that they must be highly trained and independently accredited, including this on any publicity they use. Some members suggested it was difficult to trust some community groups’ materials. They may also need a clearly identifiable uniform.
- They should be already embedded and trusted by their community. For example, having one per postal sector, supported by local councillors, would be local enough while keeping numbers at a point where they’re accountable? No community can be left out so postal sector may not be only form of segmentation.
- The *Green Champion* must be impartial, enthusiastic, but not evangelical to remain wedded to the community. Frequent speaking opportunities at schools, reporting back to community through leaflets and local newspapers will be necessary.
- They must be well-resourced, including access to venues, litter picking sticks, shovels for tree planting, leaflet budget.
- Clear targets should developed as part of this relationship, started by the Council and made more suitable to a particular community after consultation by the *Green Champion*
- They must have the ability to help secure people council subsidies for green initiatives surrounding the home, e.g. financial support for loft insulation, empowered to contact Veolia to quickly dispose of bulky goods, give away free biodegradable bags.
- Must have experience of event organisation, team management - More broadly bring people into the system and get them hooked on green

**Above all, the Green Champion must be an independent but constant liaison between residents and the Council**





initiatives, e.g. organising litter picking parties with councillors and local residents, speed tree planting (speed dating with an impact).

- The Council should assist in building initial relationships and monitoring the progress of *Green Champions*, as most people don't have the neighbourly relationships required for this.
- The *Green Champion* could play a role in monitoring green initiatives and claims by local businesses.
- There is robust debate over whether it should be a paid role. Creating a part or full-time post may encourage people to take part who otherwise may not be able to afford to. A large amount of responsibility would lead to it being a full-time job. Others felt payment undermines the cause, and that other incentives would motivate people to participate - e.g. knowledge, guidance, training, support and public recognition - though this comes with a realistic expectation of their capacity. Splitting the role into smaller less time-consuming roles might help, with a separation between voluntary and organisational paid roles.

Splitting the role into **smaller less time-consuming roles** might help

### **Green Hub**

One discussion group also developed their own idea of a *Green Hub*:

- Information point for advice, volunteering opportunities and new green initiatives
- Base camp for the *Green Champion* to hold environmental surgeries
- Could use public space such as libraries, schools at weekends or after school.
- Online entity for discussing green issues
- Pass on embedded knowledge of what has worked and what hasn't about green initiatives, so the Council has a better evidence base.

Finally, some related but more individual points came up in the community discussion:

- People don't know everyone in their neighbourhood as much as in the past - these initiatives should acknowledge this, and act as a new way of bringing people together.
- Recycling still requires better communication from the council, whilst people living in blocks need more support in increasing capacity of recycling bins.
- The key to public education is visual aids - a *green champion* should have access to the best materials available for informing and educating their communities.
- Some people added that the community policing system should be brought in to the fold as well - perhaps on enforcing rules on fly tipping and car idling.
- Regarding community solutions more broadly, some groups agreed that, whatever form community action takes, it must be backed by enough funding to make meaningful change.
- Small, time-limited ways to get involved are necessary. There's a need for a specific timed framework with allocated actions and materials. Any action must be highly structured or people won't do it, while also giving flexibility for creative input.
- There's a generally low awareness of existing schemes. Organisers must be given the tools and knowledge to properly conduct outreach with neighbours and communities to generate interest and take action. Small businesses are particularly good at getting the word out. There's already generally low awareness of *Street Champions*. There's a need to be more connected and visible through public events and engaging with different communities in sometimes unorthodox ways.

A green champion should **have access to the best materials available** for **informing and educating** their communities







## 5 Summary and next steps

**“ To be honest, I wasn’t sure what to expect before the first meeting but I thought I should come along but this is such an important issue and it was nice to be asked to share my views. I was so glad I came because I absolutely loved these meetings – we had some really interesting speakers and I learnt some new things each time. It was also great to meet and hear the views of others like myself who have lived here most of our lives and who love the place. I also really feel that we’ve been listened to. Can’t wait to see what happens next. ”**

Croydon Citizens’ Assembly Member

After six weeks of deliberation on this pressing global challenge, the process demonstrated that if the issues are framed correctly in a way that is accessible and relatable there is genuine concern and appetite to get involved. The Assembly validated the investment in such a representative and deliberative exercise by providing evidence of clear priorities for residents; insight into how to communicate and engage effectively and some concrete steps (such as the leadership residents will expect from the council and its partners) that the Council and the independent commission will now need to consider carefully.

The Assembly was broadly representative of Croydon. This meant that the complexity and diversity of the borough played out in its deliberation. Each member of the *Croydon Citizens Assembly* brought their own life experience to bear and had different local circumstances and experiences of Croydon. Alongside this, the entire spectrum of awareness of climate change was present; from the disinterested to the evangelical; sceptics to physics lecturers. The strength of deliberation came through accommodation of these differing experiences, learning styles and expertise on the topic.



The Assembly has not produced a definitive blue print for action. That was never its purpose. It was not established as a task and finish group. Rather it was designed to provide insight into the core themes that residents believe are important and give evidence as to how Croydon should design a truly inclusive and sustainable approach.

There was a distinct appetite and desire to see Croydon taking a lead on the issue and forging a cutting edge, pioneering approach. There was recognition of Croydon's particular opportunity as a fast-developing area with already very good transport links.

Although we did not explicitly engage with young people (under 18s), the Assembly was resolute that their involvement would be key, both as change agents in themselves and to motivate others to get involved. A work strand must be developed to authentically harness young people in the changes proposed.

Finally, the overriding view of the Assembly was that there is a unique opportunity for Croydon to harness the capacity of the community to address the issue. It is almost banal to state it, but the borough's diversity is its strength. Action and engagement around the climate emergency could be a profound catalyst that has a range of collateral benefits within and between communities that go beyond climate change, as important as that is. But it will need investment, creativity and a continued commitment to working with residents to design and deliver it effectively.

It is almost banal to state it, but **the borough's diversity is its strength**





## Appendix A: Recruitment process

All Assembly members were recruited face-to-face. TCC researchers ran a street recruitment campaign across different parts of the borough; this was based around train stations, shopping centres, supermarkets and other areas of high footfall. All prospective Assembly members had a conversation on the phone with TCC before their membership was confirmed.

Special emphasis was made to make sure lesser-heard groups were included. Final recruitment was representative of the borough, and the below table shows who eventually attended the Assembly.

Demographic	Assembly %
<b>Male</b>	<b>45.2</b>
<b>Female</b>	<b>54.8</b>
<b>16-24</b>	<b>9.5</b>
<b>25-34</b>	<b>16.7</b>
<b>35-44</b>	<b>26.2</b>
<b>45-54</b>	<b>26.2</b>
<b>55-64</b>	<b>9.5</b>
<b>65-74</b>	<b>4.8</b>
<b>75-84</b>	<b>4.8</b>
<b>White</b>	<b>52.4</b>
<b>Mixed</b>	<b>7.1</b>
<b>Asian/Asian British</b>	<b>9.5</b>
<b>Black/Black British</b>	<b>28.6</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>2.4</b>



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