

The Future Rutland Conversation

Narrative summary report:
Climate Change and the Environment

June 2021

A summary report outlining the key findings and themes identified as part of
the Future Rutland Conversation on 'Climate Change and
the Environment'

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*We asked and this is what you told us.
Is there anything we've missed?*

1. Introduction

The Future Rutland Conversation is just that: a conversation with everyone who lives and works in Rutland, to find out what's most important to local people – both now and in the future.

Using a series of specially designed surveys, open forums and live discussion events held over a period of two months in the spring of 2021, people of all ages and backgrounds from across Rutland were invited to share their views on wide range of important issues. They were:

- Your Life in Rutland
- Climate change and the environment
- Getting around
- Leisure and recreation
- Health and well-being
- Living in the county
- Learning, skills and employment
- Local services and public spending

There were dedicated surveys and discussions for young people, businesses and visitors to the county. Local stakeholders, schools and new digital channels, like Instagram, helped to reach the widest possible audience. People without internet access were also supported to take part in Future Rutland Conversation by phone, making sure that everyone had an opportunity to share their views.

In total, 2022 people took part in the Future Rutland Conversation. This comprised 1,557 adults who registered online, plus 465 children and young people who were not required to register their details. Together, these participants provided more than 4,500 responses across multiple themed surveys. Alongside these surveys, more than 1,000 contributions were made across nine online forums and some 250 people took part in live discussion events.

The aim of all this is to develop a new shared vision of Rutland – a set of common goals and aspirations based on the things that matter to local people, and which can help to shape a bright and prosperous future for our county.

The following report summarises the comments and feedback received as part of Future Rutland's 'Climate Change and the Environment' conversation.



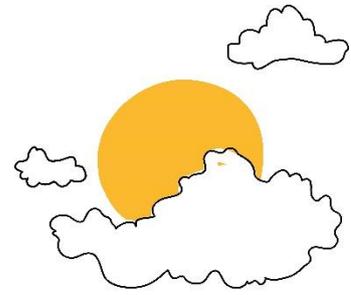
2. Method statement

The Future Rutland Conversation ran for a period of eight weeks, from April to June 2021. During this time, 15 online surveys were launched, asking participants more than 100 questions. This was supported by eight two-hour engagement events led by independent facilitator Michael Maynard, plus a further seven two-hour face-to-face video calls with the Leader and Chief Executive of Rutland County Council. Feedback was also gathered in the form of submissions from Rutland County Councillors and Parish Councils, who provided responses from local meetings and other forms of engagement. A significant awareness-raising campaign took place online and through traditional local media outlets, such as newspapers and radio stations. This helped to support engagement with children and young people, visitors to the county and local businesses, as well as those who live, work and were educated here in Rutland.

The many thousands of pieces of raw data and information resulting from the eight-week conversation were sent for analysis by Rutland Community Ventures (RCV), a community-based company in Oakham and operating independently of Rutland County Council. RCV's analysis involved watching and transcribing verbatim comments from hours of video-recorded Zoom conversations; listening to audio files; analysing and summarising survey data; reading and annotating event notes and reports; and reviewing the highly detailed statistics derived from the online surveys. This intensive independent analysis was undertaken over a three-week period without influence from Rutland County Council. The results of the analysis were then submitted by RCV to the Council, who have published this material in a series of theme-based reports. These reports summarise while fully representing participants' original uninterpreted views, opinions and experiences.

If you would like to view all of the original data and information behind these summary reports, this can be read in full online at:
future.rutland.gov.uk/climate-and-environment

3. Who took part?



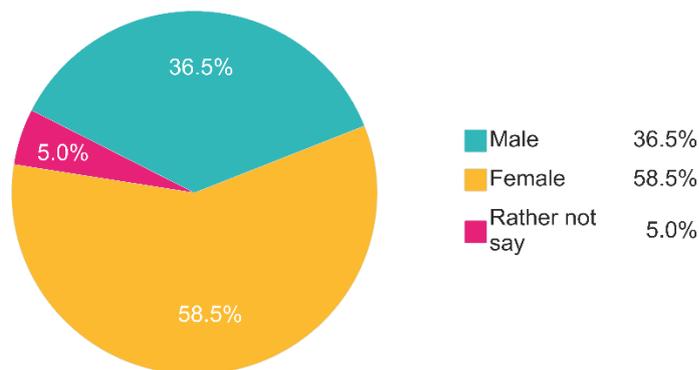
486 responses

A total of 486 people provided responses to Future Rutland’s ‘Climate Change and the Environment’ survey. As well as the survey, live discussion groups and online forums, this part of the Future Rutland Conversation was supported by Rutland’s first Climate Summit. This virtual event took place in May, bringing environment and climate experts together with professionals from other related fields and more than 70 Rutland residents.

Gender profile

Just over half of respondents to the ‘Climate Change and the Environment’ survey were female (58.5%), while 36.5% were male. A small proportion of (5%) chose not to share this information.

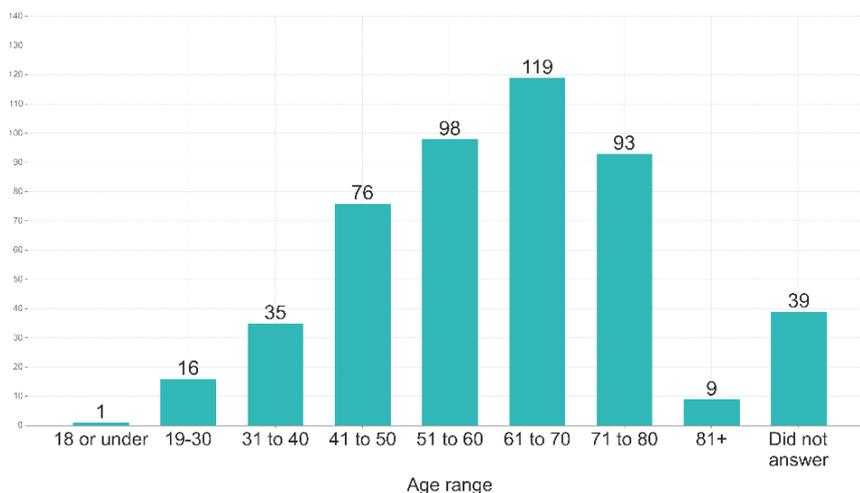
Figure 1 – Gender profile of ‘Climate Change and the Environment’ respondents



Age range

The largest number of responses to the ‘Climate Change and the Environment’ survey came from the 61-70 age group. More than two thirds (71%) were aged 51 and over. There was a single respondent in the 18 or under age category. However, Future Rutland’s dedicated survey for children and young people asked specific questions about environmental issues and received 465 responses. The results from this survey are detailed in a further report.

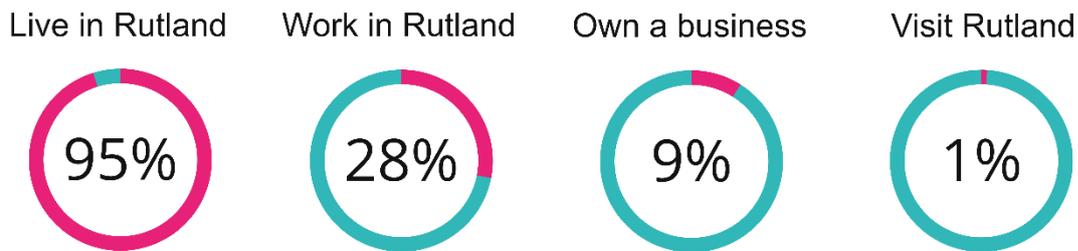
Figure 2 – Age range



Connection to Rutland

Respondents were also asked to give an indication of their connection to Rutland. Almost all respondents to the 'Climate Change and the Environment' survey (95%) lived in Rutland, while 28% worked in the county. Business owners accounted for 9% of respondents. A very small percentage of respondents identified themselves as past visitors to the county. The results from a dedicated 'Visitors' survey carried out as part of the Future Rutland Conversation have been captured in a further report.

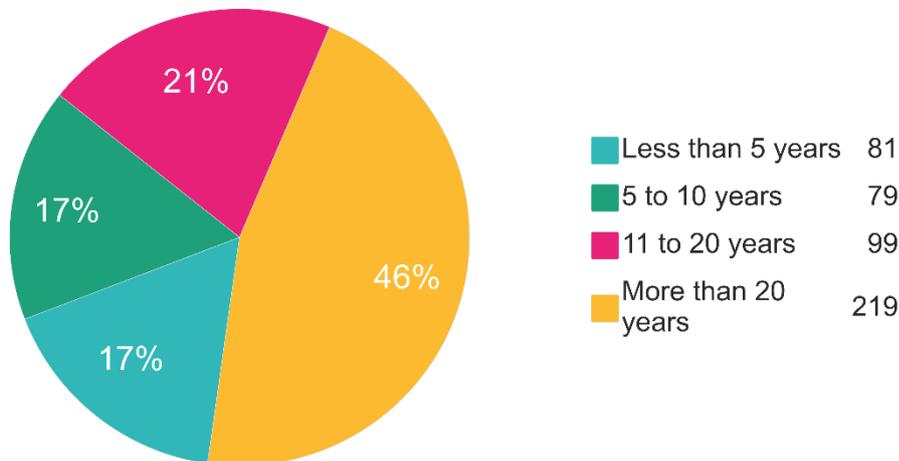
Figure 3 – Connection to Rutland



Length of residency

Of the respondents who took part in the 'Climate Change and the Environment' survey and identified themselves as local residents, 43% have lived in the county for more than 20 years. Just 17% of respondents have lived in the county for less than five years.

Figure 4 – Length of residency



In terms of geographical location, the areas of Rutland that contributed the largest number of responses were:

- Oakham (30%)
- Uppingham (9.5%)
- Barleythorpe (6%)
- Whissendine (4%)
- Cottesmore (3.5%)
- Ketton (3%)
- Langham (3%)

4. Thoughts and feelings about key issues

The overwhelming majority of views and opinions expressed by people who engaged with Future Rutland's 'Climate Change and the Environment' conversation were sympathetic to climate change issues and action. However, others do not believe there is a climate problem. Many of the respondents were passionate and knowledgeable about this topic. From the many hours of live discussion and hundreds of responses to open text survey questions, a number of green issues can be identified as being of particular importance to people in Rutland. They are:

- Housing and development
- Transport and travel
- Nature and wildlife
- Food and waste
- Energy and fuel
- Leadership and responsibility
- The climate crisis
- Education

In this section of the report, people's thoughts and feelings about these key issues have been summarised in a series of short statements, which are accompanied by direct quotes from individuals who took part in live discussions and completed the 'Climate Change and the Environment' survey.

Housing and development

Summary statement

The environment is a key concern for many people in Rutland. You feel strongly that the way homes are built and maintained has a big impact on our climate and the environment. You talked about the need for new homes and developments to meet the highest possible environmental standards, so they can be greener, more sustainable and minimise carbon use. You also said it's important to consider what's immediately around the homes we build, pointing to the need for integrated technology, such as charging points for electric vehicles, and gardens that allow people to grow food or make a positive contribution to nature. Respondents also spoke about the need to ensure new developments do not have an adverse impact on wildlife and our local ecology.

 *"Rutland should be a centre of excellence when considering Eco friendly building developments. All new developments should be based on the Spinney Hill development on the Uppingham Road, Oakham."*

 *"Regulations around home, and future developments, (eco-friendly boilers; proper insulation; solar panels; a baseline for eco-friendly appliances; Biodiversity Net Gain principles) would contribute towards significantly reducing fossil fuel consumption."*

-  *“No new buildings of any kind should be allowed to be built without solar panels, top insulation and heat exchangers.”*
-  *“All types of future development should be required to minimise carbon use in both the running of the buildings and ideally their construction (‘embodied energy’). Building standards such as the ‘Passivhaus’ standard should be adopted which aim for as little as 10% energy use set against current building standards.”*
-  *“The proposed St George's Barracks development, if it transpires, is very likely to result in a large commuter estate away from relevant employment opportunities with increased car usage.... The airfield provides large areas of limestone grassland which are ecologically precious, as stressed by Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust staff at a recent Parish Councils Forum.”*
-  *“I could buy an electric car, but the council will not allow me a charging point on the road outside my house.”*
-  *“Does the council actually look at new developments they agree to with regard to the size of the gardens? You cannot grow food or many plants on handkerchief size gardens.”*
-  *“Rutland is a rural county with an elderly demographic. So, without much public transport infrastructure, I can see the need for cars. However, 40% of our emissions still come from our homes.”*

Transport and travel

Summary statement

Respondents felt strongly that the way we travel and move around Rutland has a significant impact on our climate and the environment. In particular, lots of comments referenced the need for more cycling provisions/infrastructure and improved public transport to reduce people’s reliance on cars. You spoke about the importance of having good transport links for our rural communities, as well as the need to provide genuinely sustainable travel options for residents as they get older. You told us that having a good network of well-maintained footpaths is important to encourage walking. The availability of charging points was again mentioned for those residents who need their car but want to make the switch to an electric vehicle.

-  *“Stop investing so much in motorists. The reason so few people cycle is that infrastructure is poor. While millions are invested in Rutland on road building and maintenance every year, whether by the council or highways agency, a tiny fraction of that is invested in cycling.”*
-  *“I would like to see secure and more widely available cycle areas; limits on traffic using the High Street; cycle lanes; speeding reduction measures and enforcement.”*

-  *“WE NEED TO DRASTICALLY IMPROVE THE ABYSMAL BUS SERVICE, including but not limited to having integrated public transport policies in conjunction with neighbouring counties/bus companies.”*
-  *“Improvements to public transport (are needed). Dietary commitments are up to me.”*
-  *“Impossible to use car less as public transport provision is poor, also need to use the car when we have occasion to travel to Leicester or Peterborough Hospitals as no direct transport links to either.”*
-  *“Sustainable car transport is not affordable for many pensioners, who may have mobility issues that preclude walking, cycling and getting to and from bus stops when loaded with shopping etc.”*
-  *“I would use my car less, but only if there was more regular transport from the villages to towns.”*
-  *“Give out second-hand bikes (restored to good working condition by Stocken Prison) to Rutland adult residents who don't have one, and open school playgrounds in the school holidays for them to practice and/or re learn their skills along with their children.”*
-  *“We need better footpaths. Walking along the Braunston Road after the footpath ends is lethal. The footpath between Preston and Uppingham could be replicated on so many roads.”*
-  *“Help people who don't have off road parking to switch to electric cars by offering them charging points outside their homes.”*

Nature and wildlife

Summary statement

Lots of people who shared their views were mindful of the need to protect Rutland’s wildlife – our plants, animals and insects. Many of you feel passionately about the importance of planting trees, as well as creating and preserving wild areas that support greater biodiversity. A number of your comments mentioned specific features or aspects of Rutland’s wildlife, such as Rutland Water and our wild bird population, which you value a great deal and want to protect. All of this feedback gives a strong sense that we are a rural county where people love and appreciate nature. However, you also recognise that we are not as ‘green’ as we could or should be.

-  *“Let Rutland become a beacon for wildlife protection - take advantage of the reputation of The Osprey project and expand to cover other wildlife and bird populations.”*
-  *“Light pollution [is an issue]. Rutland benefits from dark skies – and should be officially designated a Dark Sky Reserve.”*

-  *"We need wider messages to the neighbourhood that scruffy is good! [We have] very neat suburban streets, so peer pressure to keep super trimmed, but that's not good for wildlife!"*
-  *"Stop lorries from using our country lanes and damaging verges and protect ancient hedgerows and trees."*
-  *"We need A genuine (right tree, right place, right support), local tree planting scheme would be of interest. Local fruit and vegetable markets should be required to mark local produce with a RCC approved 'standard' sign. A page on the RCC website to encourage bee friendly plants, 'hotels' etc."*
-  *"I would contribute to Tree planting, particularly on and around Greenfield sites which have been proposed for future development."*
-  *"I would like Rutland to be the greenest county in the UK. Any available space we should plant trees and create wild meadows."*
-  *"The County needs a biodiversity action plan which needs to include promoting a green network across the whole county connecting up the scattered designated and local wildlife sites so that wildlife can expand and grow naturally."*

Food and waste

Summary statement

How food is grown, packaged and consumed are all felt to have a big impact on the environment. Lots of people said they wanted to grow their own food but lack the space, knowledge or means to do so. Others feel that buying local produce would make a positive contribution to the environment but are not sure how to find/identify foods that are grown locally. Packaging – and particularly plastic packaging – is a major source of concern for lots of people, some of whom are making a conscious effort to buy food items with less packaging. Where that's not possible, respondents said they want to have the knowledge and ability to recycle packaging properly. A number of respondents talked about the need to reduce the amount that we, as a society, consume and then throw away – making sure that any waste is disposed of effectively and responsibly.

-  *"Last year I started growing my own food but to have a greater availability of allotments for our community would be a good thing, as opposed to what's happened to the Brooke Road allotments!"*
-  *"We need Rutland to collect food waste separately, to be used for sustainable projects."*
-  *"It is sometimes hard to get the things I want to buy with less packaging so I would like more places to take this packaging to recycle it."*
-  *"We should become the first county to control packaging to exclude all plastic."*

-  *“As a young adult on minimum wage, shopping at butchers/veg market is much more expensive but currently the only option to get plastic free produce. I would like supermarkets to offer affordable plastic free options.”*
-  *“We need more awareness raised around the impacts of food waste on the environment and how our daily lives are controlled by a capitalist society where buying more is a show of success.”*
-  *“We need guidance on how to create a wild space and gardening tips, guidance/communal garden lessons on how to grow seasonal food or learning more meat-free meals.”*
-  *“I’m currently setting up my own allotment. It’s difficult to get started. I am doing it on personal land, but more allotments should be made available to people.”*
-  *“Encourage retailers and vendors to make shopping available in the evenings. Full time work drives us to supermarkets most often, as markets and shops close after 5pm.”*
-  *“We need better labelling to identify local produce.”*
-  *“Increase availability of plastic-free and seasonal produce, maybe via a farmers’ market. Increased number of vegan and vegetarian-friendly cafes and restaurants, or current restaurants having more vegetarian/vegan options that may appeal to more people.”*
-  *“A delivery service from local producers [would be welcome]. It would cut cars on the road if local suppliers had a delivery round. One van making multiple deliveries rather than many cars visiting shops is more environmentally efficient.”*

Energy and fuel

Summary statement

Lots of you see renewable energy as a way to reduce our impact on the environment. You feel that our homes can and should be made more sustainable, and that Rutland should aspire to be a leader in this area. Many people expressed a desire to move away from fossil fuels towards greener energy sources but said this would be difficult due to the cost of switching or making modifications to their homes. Lots of people said they would like help and support to make this change. A number of respondents feel strongly that we should generate more wind and solar energy – not just as individual home owners but also as a county.

-  *“Rutland should be the leading county in the use of renewable energy - ground and air source heat pumps, solar and wind power. No new homes or conversions should be built without serious insulation and local renewable energy supply. Resilient Rutland should be off grid in 10 yrs.”*

-  *"I live in a terraced house and use a gas boiler. To change to something more environmentally friendly would be very expensive."*
-  *"Living in a village that only has oil is a problem as heat pumps are expensive."*
-  *"We need a seed swap area... community allotments.... grants to support a switch to renewable energy supplier."*
-  *"We need subsidies to switch energy, install heat pumps and solar panels etc."*
-  *"I don't think enough is being done to encourage residents to adopt green energy options."*
-  *"We need Rutland Council to allow planning permission for local wind power schemes."*
-  *"We need a secure potable water supply and planned recycling of domestic and industrial water and to expand locally provided renewable energy sources so Rutland can go 'off grid'."*
-  *"Energy efficiency standards of new build homes needs vast improvement."*
-  *"I cannot car share to work, use my car less or use fewer fossil fuels at this time because I do not have access to the means to do this. Restrictions are money, work and home location and lack of alternatives."*

Leadership and responsibility

Summary statement

Many of you expressed strong feelings about who should lead the way when it comes to combatting climate change and protecting the environment. Some are adamant that green initiatives should be driven by local residents – drawing on Rutland's strong sense of community – and that everyone has a responsibility to do more. Others feel it's important that we have a county-wide action plan set at the highest level, to reduce carbon and establish goals or standards that residents and communities can then follow. While views differ as to who should be the driving force behind environmental initiatives in Rutland, there is a consensus that action is needed.

-  *"As a community Rutland has the opportunity to lead the way in environmental matters."*
-  *"(The greatest barrier is...) people thinking it's not their responsibility and the climate crisis will not affect them."*
-  *"Having community-level initiatives would certainly help. There is a fantastic sense of community in Rutland, and I believe that people would become involved in environmental initiatives if they were positioned from a community perspective."*

-  *“The county needs a clear and well-illustrated carbon reduction plan... The dialogue with the community should be one of leadership by example and a continuous process promoting and rewarding action.”*
-  *“Rutland Council should focus on statutory responsibilities and represent the constituents. An emergency implies restrictions on vehicle travel, restrictions on business investment. It should come from the grass roots, not be forced onto people. That’s why it isn't working now.”*
-  *“Not given enough attention politically or in civic life. It shouldn't be the domain of specialists/specialist groups - it's everyone's problem and opportunity. Needs to be more visible. Children are ahead of the grown-ups on this one - the recent young people's food waste campaign was a great example.”*
-  *“I feel that many of these issues are for individuals' own actions and should not be enforced by Council policies. The Council should concentrate on performing its own duties better.”*
-  *“We need a clear policy statement and action plan with clear targets for Rutlanders to literally sign up to... (and then) ensure reports on progress are made widely available.”*

The climate crisis

Summary statement

A number of respondents argue strongly that we are not experiencing a climate crisis and, therefore, no action is needed. Others do believe that we are in the grip of a crisis but feel that Rutland cannot make a meaningful contribution to tackling the issue because of its size, relative to large polluters and nation states across the world. In stark contrast, others are concerned about global temperatures and carbon emissions and want Rutland to play a more active role in addressing these problems. Those who believe there is a climate crisis feel strongly that we need clear environmental policies, objectives and a roadmap to support positive change.

-  *“There is not a climate emergency! Please do not waste Council resources trying to tackle a non-existent emergency.”*
-  *“We need environmental justice. There are inequalities in who feels the impacts of these environmental issues.”*
-  *“Stop trying to turn saving the environment into a way of making money out of people. The UK is a tiny polluter compared to Asia, South America and most of East and West Africa.”*
-  *“It is not just for Rutland to deal with. We are not the problem in Britain. Start with the major polluters in the world. It is stupid to believe Rutland is going to save the world.”*

- "If there was a climate emergency there is nothing that Rutland can do which would have a significant effect on global warming. Any such futile and expensive efforts are a questionable use of public money."*
- "Global warming is an outdated term. The Climate crisis is much wider than just the increase in temperature. We need to entirely decarbonise... [RCC needs to show] the people of Rutland that you are actually doing something about the climate crisis... We need a road map."*
- "The next 10 years are crucial in the actions that need to be taken to address the climate crisis. Any vision for Rutland's future has to have carbon reductions measures as its primary goal and all other objectives and policies will need to align with that goal."*

Education

Summary statement

Education is felt by many to be key a component in tackling climate change and protecting the environment. A number of respondents spoke about the importance of educating children about the environment and environmental issues at an early age, through schools and the national curriculum. However, there was also a recognition the education should not stop after school and must continue throughout adulthood, so that residents of all ages have the knowledge they need to live more sustainable lifestyles. Examples given by respondents included the need to provide information about recycling, biodiversity, growing food and understanding our carbon footprint.

- "Education [is important]. We need to build into our life opportunities to understand our planet and our individual and collective responsibility. Practical actions could range from review of school curriculum to better PR on the importance of recycling."*
- "Invest in safe cycle paths around the town and between towns Information and education through direct mail and local events to promote ideas, understanding and behaviour. Get things happening in schools and to get young people more involved and active with the likes of tree planting and growing produce."*
- "A sense of responsibility must be instilled from an early age. The first duty lies with parents but, as not all can be relied upon, schools should help."*
- "Eating less meat doesn't mean I'm anti-farmers - I want to spend more money on good quality, local food and I think it's really important to understand the carbon footprint of individual foods. Education and sharing knowledge will help with this."*
- "We need Parish level education and a potential loan scheme of rotavators and gardening equipment that have a higher cost."*
- "Greater education would help me [to live more sustainably]... education and facilities are the only reasons I don't."*

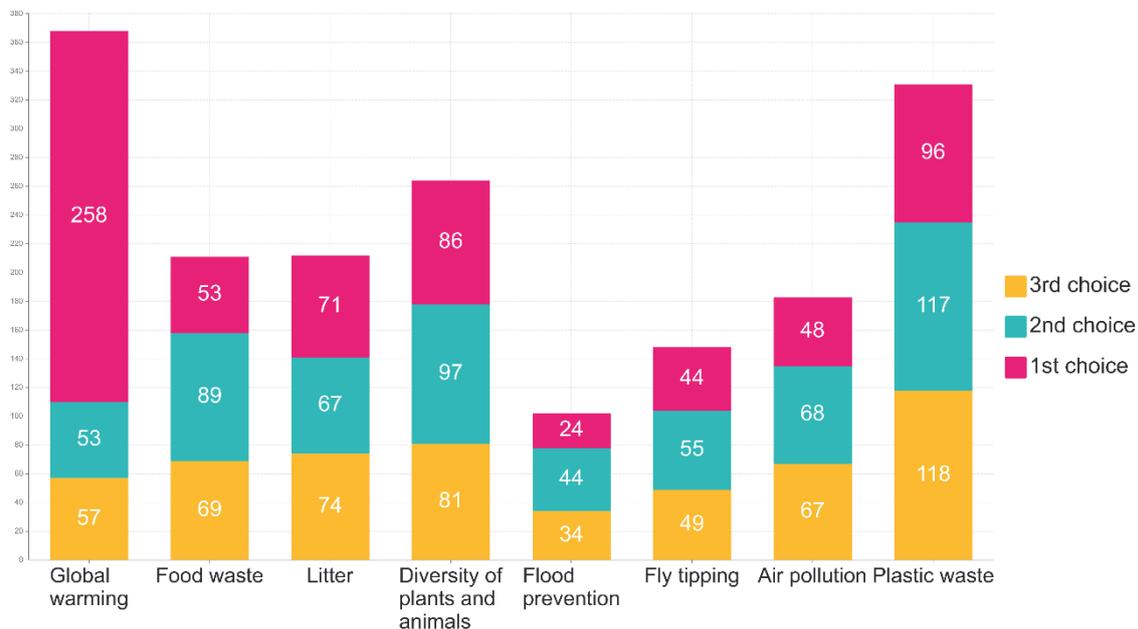
5. What issues need addressing urgently?

As well as giving people the opportunity to talk openly about the things that are most important to them, Future Rutland’s ‘Climate Change and the Environment’ conversation asked some specific questions. In particular, we asked:

Which three aspects of the environment do you feel need addressing most urgently?

From the list of options provided, global warming and plastic waste were the two issues that people were most concerned about. Increasing the diversity and abundance of plants and animals was also felt to be important. Food waste was identified as a key concern, as well.

Figure 5 - Which three aspects of the environment do you feel need addressing most urgently? (Choose three options and rank them 1-3 in terms of importance)



As part of this question, respondents were also asked to list any aspects of the environment that needed addressing but weren’t given as options to choose from. This question prompted long, passionate and very well-informed answers. Some who had expertise in this area were keen to be more involved. In general, respondents wanted to address the following:

- Preserving and planting trees and green spaces
- Recycling – Tips should be more accessible to help to reduce fly tipping
- Limiting urban sprawl – people are concerned about over development
- Waste disposal – reducing litter/fly tipping/ plastic waste
- People were keen for Rutland to become a beacon of good environmental practice
- The use of green power sources – solar was mentioned in several comments

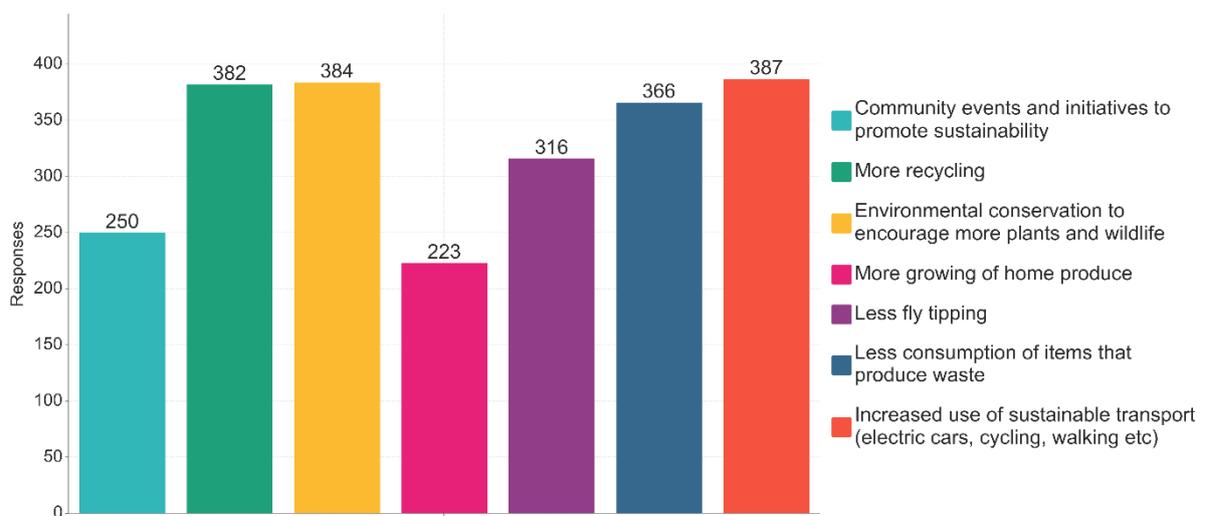
6. What does a sustainable Rutland look like?

As well as being asked to identify what they considered to be the three environmental issues that needed addressing most urgently, respondents to Future Rutland's 'Climate Change and the Environment' conversation were asked to give their views on what do a sustainable Rutland should include in the future?

This was a multiple choice question, allowing respondents to select as many options as they wanted. The top five answers were (in rank order):

1. Increased use of sustainable transport (electric vehicles, cycling, walking etc.)
2. Environmental conservation to encourage more plants and wildlife
3. More recycling
4. Lower consumption of items that produce waste
5. Less fly tipping

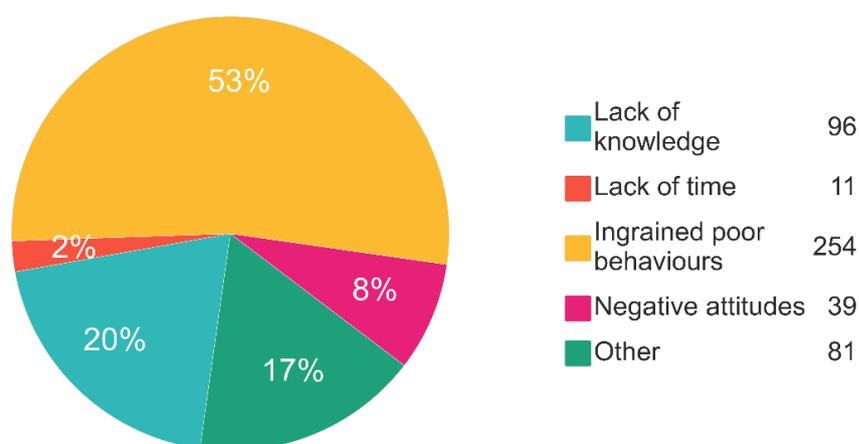
Figure 6 - What do you think a sustainable Rutland should include in the future? (Select all that apply)



7. Barriers and change

To give a full picture of the environmental issues affecting Rutland, respondents were asked to share what they thought was the greatest barrier to resolving the climate crisis, locally. The top answer by some considerable way was ingrained poor behaviours with respect to the environment. More than half of respondents (52.8%) felt this was the biggest obstacle. This was followed by a lack of knowledge, which was selected by 20% of respondents.

Figure 7 - What do you think is the greatest barrier to Rutland resolving the climate crisis?



To gauge people's attitude and willingness to change, respondents were asked to select three things that they might commit to doing over the next year to support Rutland in becoming more sustainable. The top five answers were (in rank order):

1. Avoid plastic packaging
2. Reduce food and water waste
3. Eat local produce
4. Plant bee friendly plants in my garden
5. Use my car less

When asked what would help them to achieve the three things they chose, respondents wanted:

- Rutland to be a front runner in good practice and a leader in ecological issues
- Shops and supermarkets to reduce their use of plastic packaging
- Ready access to local produced seasonal produce and more allotments
- Wider access to recycling facilities
- More electric vehicle charging points
- Improvements to cycle and footpaths
- Tree and bee friendly planting to be a priority
- Information and help with knowledge of how to improve

Many respondents also used this questions to register concern about the overdevelopment of green spaces.

8. Sharing further feedback

This report summarises the comments, feedback and survey responses collected throughout Future Rutland's 'Climate Change and the Environment' conversation. The purpose of gathering this feedback is to develop a new shared vision for Rutland – one that's based on things that really matter to local people and helps organisations like Rutland County Council plan for the future.

Please remember that you can read all of the original data and information behind this summary report by visiting: future.rutland.gov.uk/climate-and-environment.

Getting your views and feedback was just the first step of the Future Rutland Conversation. Now, we need to know if we heard you correctly. To tell us what you think about this report and whether you feel it's an accurate representation of what matters to people in Rutland, please go to: future.rutland.gov.uk or email: rutlandconversation@rutland.gov.uk. If you don't have access to the internet, you can call us on 01572 722 577.

Once we're sure that there's nothing we've missed, we'll use all this information to develop a draft vision for the county, which we hope to publish before the end of summer 2021 to invite even more discussion and feedback.

[Click here to comment on this summary report](#)

