

BRIEFING PAPER

SUBJECT: A GREEN CITY CHARTER FOR SOUTHAMPTON
DATE: 15th March 2019
RECIPIENT: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

THIS IS NOT A DECISION PAPER

SUMMARY:

The introduction of a Green City Charter ('the Charter') and subsequent delivery of a Green City Action Plan is intended to support and facilitate the delivery of the Councils existing priority outcomes, refresh existing activities, and deliver new ones. It will ensure that environmental impacts are given due consideration in the delivery of services and decision making and where possible ensure we maximise the opportunity to deliver benefits. It will provide an opportunity to satisfy the expectations and ambitions identified in the Clean Air Zone Consultation exercise. Southampton City Council will seek to encourage city stakeholders to adopt the same set of principles and deliver their own actions by signing up to the Charter. It will encourage all stakeholders including both business, community groups and public sector organisations to work together to deliver a shared outcome, making Southampton a cleaner, healthier, more sustainable and attractive environment for all.

The Charter is intended to identify priorities and commitments that will facilitate the council and other city partners and stakeholders to deliver actions that will:

- reduce pollution and waste;
- minimise the impact of climate change;
- reduce health inequalities and;
- create a more sustainable approach to economic growth.

The Charter identifies a clear set of priorities which satisfy the local need and appetite for change whilst being aligned with national priorities.

Last summer the council undertook a consultation exercise to seek opinions on measures needed to improve local air quality. The council had been required by government to assess if a Clean Air Zone was needed to deliver compliance with the European Union's limit level for Nitrogen Dioxide. The consultation exercise received an unprecedented response and there was significant support for delivering improvement. The subsequent proposal indicated that nitrogen dioxide concentrations have improved in recent years, by as much as 24% in some of our most polluted areas, as a consequence of both local and national action. It recommends a package of measures to ensure the likelihood of compliance being achieved. However, the consultation illustrated that there is significant ambition and aspiration to achieve more than the CAZ project could deliver. A new set of objectives and actions are needed if this is to be satisfied.

The Government published its Environment Strategy in early 2018, 'A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment' which proposes to deliver a range of measures to improve the environment within a generation. A set of priorities are identified and it recommends that local efforts be guided by the same goals. The UK [Clean Air Strategy](#) was published in January 2019 and advocates a joined up approach in delivering cleaner air, wider environmental and public health improvements and sustainable development.

Both form part of a wider vision promoting sustainable development.

A special Cabinet meeting was held on the 22nd January 2019 where approval was granted to submit the proposed *Plan to Deliver Compliance with the EU Limit for Nitrogen Dioxide* to the Secretary of State. That Plan was submitted on the 31st January 2019. At the same Cabinet meeting the recommendation to develop a Green City Charter was also approved.

A Green City Working Group comprising of council officers from across its services has been established to support the delivery of the Charter and has conducted both internal workshops and an engagement exercise with external stakeholders to ensure the Charter caters for all groups and identifies appropriate priorities for action.

The Green City Working Group will establish a delivery, action and governance plan (Green City Plan) that will establish how the commitments within the Charter will be satisfied and engagement with external stakeholders is maintained. The Green City Working Group will report to the Cabinet Member for a Green City and seek to have the plan implemented no later than 2020.

BACKGROUND and BRIEFING DETAILS:

1. It is important to ensure that the city continues to support economic growth, but that this growth continues to support Southampton to be a green and environmentally sustainable city that will be resilient to the challenges of climate change. A move towards a low carbon, cleaner economy and greener landscape will enable the city to grow and evolve as a modern, healthy and attractive place to live, work and do business.
2. Southampton City Council have been issued a Ministerial Direction requiring it to undertake a local assessment (feasibility study) of air quality in the city, and produce a business case for a Plan to demonstrate how compliance with the EU Ambient Air Quality Directive (AAQD) of 40 µg/m³ for Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) can be achieved in the shortest possible time. This was submitted to the Secretary of State for Environment for approval on the 31st January 2019.
3. Between June 21st 2018 and the 13th September 2018 the council undertook a consultation exercise with neighbouring authorities, local communities and businesses to: explain the objectives of the Clean Air Zone study; consider the potential health and economic impacts; understand any concerns; and assess the need for any mitigating actions or identify alternative options for consideration.
4. The response was unprecedented. 9,309 replies were received and have been accounted for in developing the Clean Air Zone business case and identifying a preferred option for the Plan that will deliver compliance. 75% of respondents indicated that they thought air quality was a fairly or very big problem in Southampton. 80% agreed with the overall aim of a proposed Clean Air Zone and 56% supported a vehicle charging scheme as a means of delivering improvement. 78% and 77% believed it would deliver positive impacts on the environment and public health respectively.

Of the comments received some of the most significant topics raised concerned; the need for action to improve air quality, the proposed measures not being enough and, the need to focus on sources other than road transport.

5.	<p>The subsequent Plan being proposed indicates that nitrogen dioxide concentrations have improved in recent years as consequence of both local and national action. It also recommends a package of measures to ensure the likelihood of compliance being achieved. However, the consultation illustrated that expectations and ambitions for cleaner air in Southampton extended beyond achieving legal compliance and the objectives set by the governments Clean Air Zone Framework.</p> <p>A new set of objectives and actions is needed if this is to be satisfied. To satisfy this expectation a proposal to introduce a Green City Charter is recommended which will provide an opportunity to establish more ambitious improvements through alternative long-term, far-reaching projects.</p>
6.	<p>The Clean Air Zone consultation and the wider stakeholder engagement work has identified that there is a significant appetite amongst stakeholders to contribute to delivering improvements. Although the council has far reaching responsibilities it recognises that it cannot deliver the scope of change needed to achieve the standard of air quality that many want. The council also believes that encouraging and supporting voluntary change can be more effective in the long term than enforcing it.</p> <p>The Green City Charter can provide a vehicle to harness the enthusiasm seen during the Clean Air Zone Consultation and seek to maintain and even accelerate to momentum apparent during this exercise.</p>
7.	<p>The principles driving improved air quality support wider environmental improvements and benefits to the city. Similarly, the approach to delivering improved air quality (like partnership working) can be applied more generally to create a set of objectives and commitments that are mutually beneficial and can collectively build a more sustainable city.</p>
8.	<p>Making Southampton a greener city can only be achieved through partnership working with local residents, businesses and other stakeholders. Everything we do, whether as an individual in work, at home or visiting the city, or as an organisation, has an environmental impact. The council's intention is to work with partners to develop a shared set of principles that will ensure the environment is at the forefront of all decision making whether at work or at home.</p>
9.	<p>Government published its Clean Air Strategy on the 14th January 2019. This forms part of a wider government vision on the environment including the vision for a Green Brexit (the new Environment Bill) and A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment. Section 3 identifies the link between clean air, the wider environmental and public health agenda and sustainable development. It states that <i>"in the past, pollution was sometimes seen as a price we had to pay for progress, but that is outdated thinking. We now know that clean, green and healthy environments in urban and rural areas are an essential component of progress, not a barrier to economic development"</i>.</p>
10.	<p>Government published 'A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment' in January 2018. This identifies key environmental benefits and pressures and sets out goals and targets for improving the environment within a generation. It details how government will work with communities and businesses to do this. It recognises many organisations and partnerships pursue their own plans, and opportunities for joining up and integrating environmental work are missed. At a local level it suggests that environmental effort be guided by the goals it has outlined but also to reflect local needs and priorities as well as being more integrated and efficient.</p>

11.	A Green City Charter can achieve this and can ensure Southampton is best placed to benefit from the support, initiatives and funding that central government will provide through the delivery of its own strategy.
12.	Southampton City Council is already actively delivering schemes that support sustainable living. These include its Clean Air Strategy, the MyJourney sustainable travel programme, Fuel Poverty Action Plan and CitizEn Energy. But there is scope to build on these and an opportunity to use the experiences gained in delivering them to invest in a wider range of opportunities that will benefit the council and the city.
13.	Other cities have been recognised as <i>Green Cities</i> for the efforts they have made to promote sustainable living. They have been able to demonstrate the significant benefits a more sustainable economy can deliver. Southampton can learn from these cities, identify good practice and how to deliver it.
14.	An internal Green City Working Group of Southampton City Council officers developed a draft Charter. An initial workshop session on the 11 December 2018 was used to identify the key objectives and themes for further development using the priorities published in the government's 25 Year Plan and feedback from the CAZ consultation as a guide. A subsequent session on the 9 January 2019 attended by cabinet members and a wider range of officers developed the objectives further and developed some specific commitments around the identified themes. The draft charter was included with the proposal for a Green City Charter presented to Cabinet on the 22 January 2019.
15.	A programme of external stakeholder engagement was subsequently undertaken to develop the Charter further to ensure it is suitably extensive; focused on the key priorities; inclusive to all and capable of delivering the positive outcomes needed to achieve its aims. This engagement included an online survey, a Youth Forum event, People's Panel poll and three workshops attended by members of the local business community and health community, academia, community and campaign groups, neighbouring councils and government agencies. Feedback from the engagement exercises has been used to generate the Green City Charter as published in Appendix 1.
16.	During the external engagement exercise some stakeholders have expressed a wish to become "early adopters" and have indicated a commitment to sign-up as part of the Charter's official launch.
17.	The Green City Working Group will establish a delivery, action and governance plan that will establish how the council will deliver on the commitments included in the Charter and how it will ensure wider adoption of the Charter and delivery of actions amongst other stakeholders, including joint working opportunities. It intends to introduce a stakeholder group that will be able to scrutinise adoption of the Charter, provide steer on subsequent actions and develop ideas and joint working. Green City Working Group will report to the Green City Cabinet Member and seek to have the plan implemented no later than 2020.
RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	
<u>Capital/Revenue</u>	

18. There is currently a budget of £30k set aside for delivery of the Green City Charter in the 2019/20 budget proposals were agreed at Council on 20th February. The Charter represents an opportunity to establish more ambitious improvements through alternative long-term, far-reaching projects which will be developed during Action Planning exercise. This will involve a full assessment of any costs associated with the delivery of the proposed actions that are not covered by existing budgets, identification of appropriate funding streams (including new grant opportunities) and approvals made in line with financial regulations.

19. There are a number of existing projects and budgets across the Council that will support the Green City Charter and become part of that programme. These will need to be assessed and built into the Green City Action Plan, but are likely to include;

Capital & Revenue Projects	General Fund Capital Budgets		General Fund Revenue Budgets	
	2018/19	2019/20 - 2020/21	2018/19	2019/20
	£M	£M	£M	£M
Cycling & cycle network improvements	2.734	0.809		
Urban Freight Strategy	0.008	0.047		
Electric Vehicle Action Plan	0.270	0.812		
Proposed electric vehicle fleet replacements	-	0.820		
Green Projects – partnership with Environment centre	0.063	-		
City wide insulation projects	0.056	-		
Bus retrofitting	1.170	1.500		
MyJourney behavioural change (Transport Access Fund)			0.695	0.795
Totals	4.301	3.988	0.695	0.795
Grand Total		8.289		1.490

20. The Council also submitted a business case to government for reducing Nitrogen Dioxide levels within the City with a funding request of up to £6.4M and, if accepted, it will also form part of the Green City Charter work stream.

Property/Other

21. None associated directly with adoption of the Charter. The delivery and action plan will confirm implications associated with specific actions that subsequently emerge.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:

22. s.1 Localism Act 2011 allows the Council to do anything deemed necessary or desirable to deliver or support its functions and duties providing that action is not otherwise prohibited by statute (the general power of competence). The preparation and delivery of a Green City Charter is authorised by virtue of s.1.

Other Legal Implications:

23. The contents of a Green City Charter and its subsequent actions may be authorised by a variety of statutory powers and duties, depending on what those actions are. Legal powers to undertake those actions emerging from the Charter will be further investigated as part of the delivery process and be subject to the democratic process as applicable. In undertaking the preparation of the Charter and subsequent actions the Council needs to have regard to the impact of any proposals on protected characteristics under the Equalities Act 2010 and s.17 Crime & Disorder Act (the duty to reduce or remove opportunities for crime and disorder in the area) as well as the duty to secure the rights and freedoms protected under the Human Rights Act 1998. These duties will be addressed by the preparation of an Equalities and Safety Impact Assessment ('EISA'). The Council also has various duties under the Environment Act 1995 and Environmental Protection Act 1990 to address air quality and other environmental pollutants and the proposals under the Charter will assist in delivering this duty.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

24. There could be potential reputational risk for SCC if it is not seen to be 'delivering' the stated goals in the Strategy.

POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

25. A Green City Charter will support the delivery of the Council Strategy 2016-2020 outcome "People in Southampton live safe, healthy, independent lives".

26. A Green City Charter will support the delivery of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2017-2025 outcomes "People in Southampton live active, safe and independent lives" and "Inequalities in health outcomes are reduced".

27. A Green City Charter will support the Clean Air Strategy by providing a mechanism to deliver further improvements in local air quality.

28. A Green City Charter is consistent with the principles outlined in the Government's Environment Strategy, 'A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment' and their [Clean Air Strategy](#).

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices

1. Draft - A Green City Charter for Southampton

2. Engagement Summary Report

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Green City Charter for Southampton

Our vision is to create a cleaner, greener, healthier and more sustainable city. Southampton will be a better place for present and future generations that is prepared for the challenges presented by climate change. We will achieve this by ensuring we are ambitious, lead by example and set ourselves challenging goals.

- 1. We want to be carbon neutral by 2030;**
- 2. We will take actions that will improve the quality of life in our city. We want the *Healthy Life Expectancy Indicator* to the best amongst our peers and to remove the difference cities like Southampton experience with rural areas in terms of *deaths attributed to air pollution*;**
- 3. We will work in partnership – share our knowledge and inspire others;**
- 4. We will protect and enhance our natural environment;**
- 5. We will make the best use of our resources, reduce our energy consumption, minimise waste and ensure we repair, reuse and recycle;**
- 6. We will encourage, promote and incentivise the use of sustainable and active travel;**
- 7. We will reduce emissions and aspire to satisfy World Health Organisation air quality guideline values. By 2025 we want to see nitrogen dioxide levels of 25 µg/m³ as the norm;**
- 8. We will use energy that is generated from renewable sources and support the generation of sustainable energy that does not compromise local air quality;**
- 9. We will use services and products that support our vision.**

We are committed to delivering on these commitments.



Green City Charter – Engagement report

Introduction

Last summer the council undertook a consultation exercise to seek opinions on air quality. This consultation received a huge response and illustrated that there is significant ambition and aspiration to do more to make the city greener. The council is developing a new Green City Charter which will seek to deliver actions that will reduce pollution and waste, minimise the impact of climate change, stop health inequalities and create a more sustainable approach to economic growth. The Green City Charter will play a key role in helping Southampton City Council deliver its vision of a cleaner, greener more sustainable and resilient city in partnership with residents, businesses and organisations from across the city.

In order to create a charter that the whole city can own and contribute to a range of engagement has been undertaken to gather feedback and ideas to feed into the final charter. It has also provided an opportunity to get some early suggestions of commitments that organisations and individuals could make to the charter once launched.

Methodology

A range of methods were used to capture the views and feedback from a range of stakeholders. The following list of engagements took place:

1. Online suggestion box situated on the homepage of the council website.
2. A People's Panel Poll asking respondents to prioritise potential actions for the Green City Charter to get feedback from a wide range of members of the public.
3. Engagement session with the Youth Forum.
4. Engagement sessions with key stakeholders.
5. Clean Air Zone Consultation analysis. There were a number of points raised within the responses to the consultation that can help feed into the development of Green City Charter.

By using a range of feedback from different sources the resulting charter can be a document that many groups recognise and support.

Feedback received

The feedback received from the different sources outlined, has been analysed and summarised within the following section. In total, 1,126 people were engaged on the Green City Charter.

Online suggestion box

An online suggestion box was situated on the homepage of the council website for a total of 6 weeks. A total of 105 respondents completed the short survey. Respondents were asked to provide any ideas or suggestions for the Green City Charter or an offer of support or a commitments that would like to make. Figure 1 shows the ideas and suggestions raised by respondents. The offers of support and commitments are summarised within a later section.

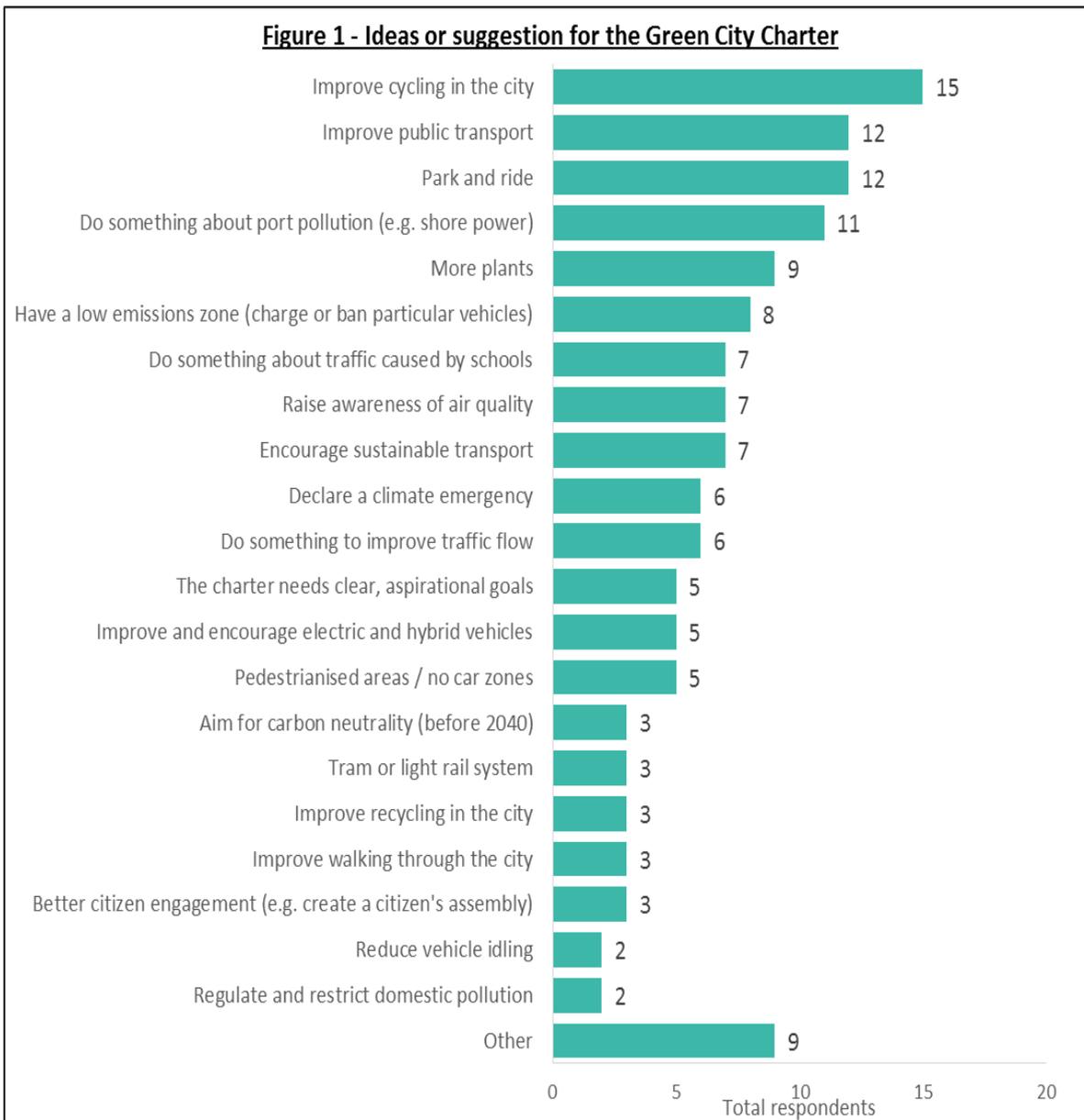


Figure 1

The following table gives the unique ideas and suggestions given which have been listed as 'Other' in Figure 1:

Don't develop or expand the city more until emission levels are an acceptable level
More car clubs to reduce the number of cars that need to be parked on the roads and pavements.
Increase city centre parking
Get rid of parking in city centre
Use technology to reduce traffic. (i.e. parking bay sensors that tell an app for drivers what spaces are available in the city to save them driving around)
Workplace parking levies
Last mile deliveries by cargo bike
Improve advice on what is best environmentally as it is inconsistent and keeps changing
We have lots of ideas for how energy efficiency, energy generation and fuel poverty work could be streamlined to be more effective and have a greater impact. We also have ideas for how air quality work could be tied together, more action focused and lead to an increased public and stakeholder

engagement.

The Southampton Warmth for All Partnership (SWAP) welcome the opportunity for a Green City Charter in strengthening opportunities to reduce fuel poverty, support low carbon and renewable energy initiatives, improve the health and wellbeing of local communities and reduce health inequalities.

People's Panel Poll

In the latest People's Panel poll, members were asked to prioritise actions that they felt should be included within the Green City Charter. A total of 973 respondents completed the poll. Respondents were first asked to select up to 5 actions from a list of 16 that they felt should be prioritised higher than the others. From their shortlisted 5 actions, they were then asked to select just one that would be their top priority. Figure 2 show the results of these two questions.

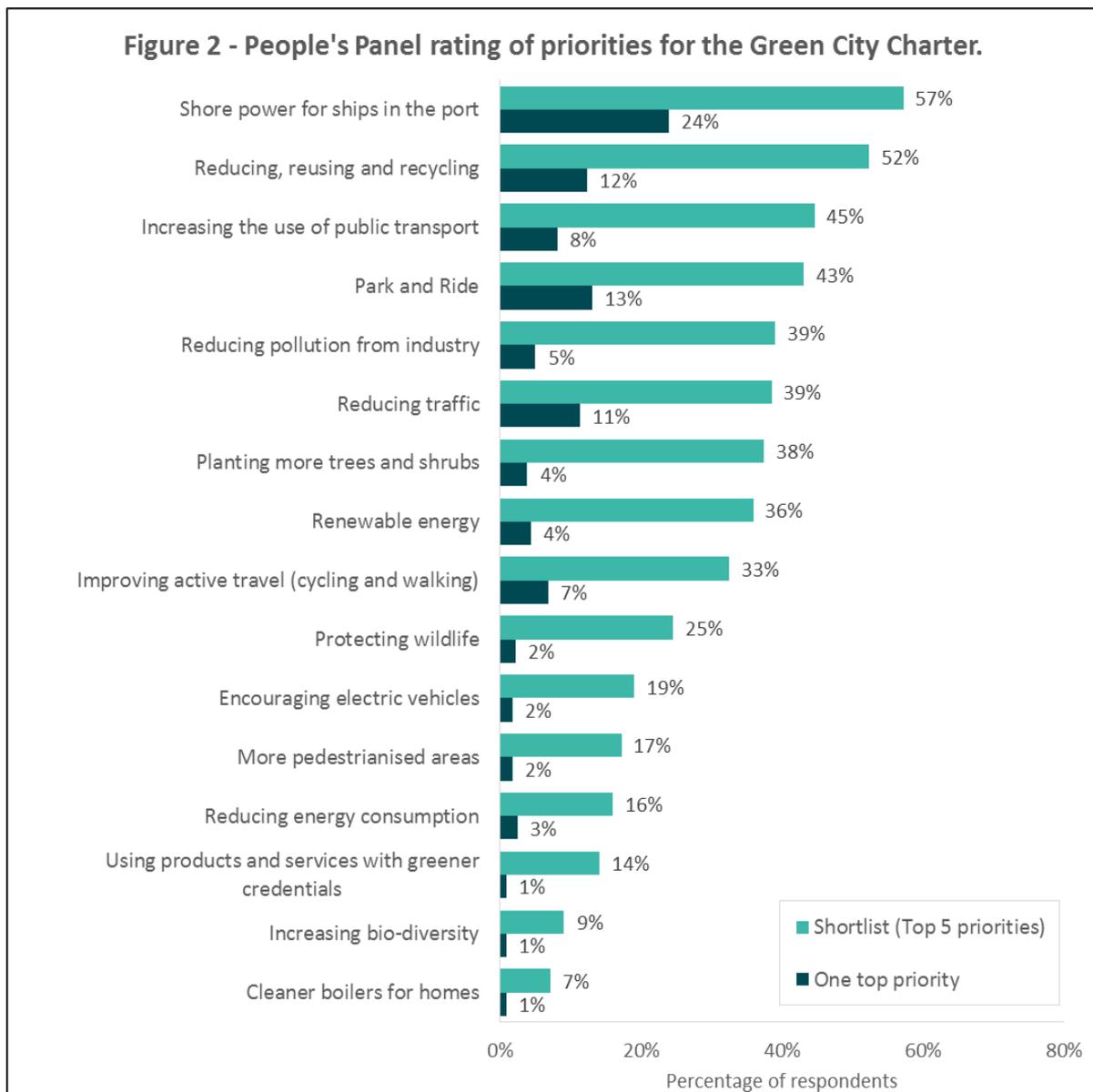


Figure 2

Youth Forum engagement

In total 18 young people attended the youth forum champions event to feedback on the draft charter and give their suggestions. The young people started the session with the Leader of the council hearing about the vision for the Green City Charter and a time to ask him some questions.

The young people were given an opportunity to provide feedback on the wording and content of each of the charter commitments, the main themes of their views were:

- The commitments are very wordy and contain unclear terms
- It is not always clear what the commitment is aiming to achieve
- Some of these things should be happening already (recycling, reducing energy consumption etc.)
- The commitments don't talk about educating people on the benefits of these things or the risks if we don't do anything

The group was also asked to rank the draft commitments in order of priority, they did this in two groups the three themes that featured in the top five for each group are below:

- Enhancing the natural environment
- Using renewable energy
- Promoting sustainable and active travel

Engagement sessions with key stakeholders

On 4 March 2019, three stakeholder workshops were held at the civic centre to gather feedback from a variety of business and health representatives, academics and experts and environmental and community groups, to inform the targets and actions of the Green City Charter. Each session ran for an hour where discussion on the vision for the Green City Charter was opened up to the stakeholders before moving on to an activity where groups were asked to add suggestions and pledges of their own to the charter.

Over the course of the day, feedback was captured from these three workshops and used to amend the charter. The following views on the vision and themes are below:

Vision statement

From the feedback, stakeholders felt that the charter should extend further than climate change and the themes should be broadened. The word proposed wording focusing on resilience was disliked across all 3 working groups as it was felt too 'defeatist' in accepting the effects of climate change, rather than progressively reducing the effects.

Communication was a large factor in the vision of the charter and stakeholders felt that working together with shared values and collaboratively was essential. The second paragraph should therefore widen the scope of the charter and highlight the level of partnership required to ensure a successful charter. The sentence for removing economic barriers should be removed as it was felt to be negative and the charter should reflect positive outcomes and growth.

Some stakeholders agreed with the vision, supporting the idea of 'lifelong commitments', however, some felt that the focus needs to be more tangible.

1. We will protect and enhance our natural environment and improve the quality of life of those in our communities.

Stakeholders were keen to establish what was meant by 'enhance' and suggested that all policies should reflect this statement of protecting the quality of life for people, noting this statement was key.

2. We will reduce emissions and improve air quality, beyond existing legal standards.

Stakeholders felt that stating 'beyond' legal levels was too vague and not a measurable target. It was felt that set targets should replace the broadness of this theme, such as those being set by the World Health Organisation to reduce NOx by 2025.

3. We will prioritise the use of sustainable and active travel.

It was agreed that the term 'prioritise' did not come across proactive enough and 'encourage', 'promote', and 'incentivise' was preferred. A lot of stakeholders wanted to include specifically the implementation of more cycling, bus routes and pedestrianised zones.

4. We will innovate using new technology to reduce emissions, waste and energy consumption.

Although the majority agreed with the approach to 'innovate' there was debate around what that translated to in delivery, for example, whether it should include specific mention of the universities and their involvement or whether it reflects future use of technological innovation. The feedback also highlighted the similarities between theme 4 and 6, both with a targets to reduce energy consumption and minimise waste.

5. We will seek to use of energy that is generated from renewable sources and support the generation of local sustainable energy that does not compromise air quality.

The term 'seek' did not feel ambitious enough and stakeholders wanted a bolder commitment to the charter that was accountable for swifter change. Stakeholders noted that the charter currently does not have any targets to educate or raise awareness to the importance of consumption.

6. We will make the best use of our resources, reduce our energy consumption, minimise waste and ensure we reuse and recycle as much as we can.

Stakeholders raised concerns that this theme overlapped with theme 4.

7. We will help to create a city which will support our vision and is resilient to the challenges presented by climate change.

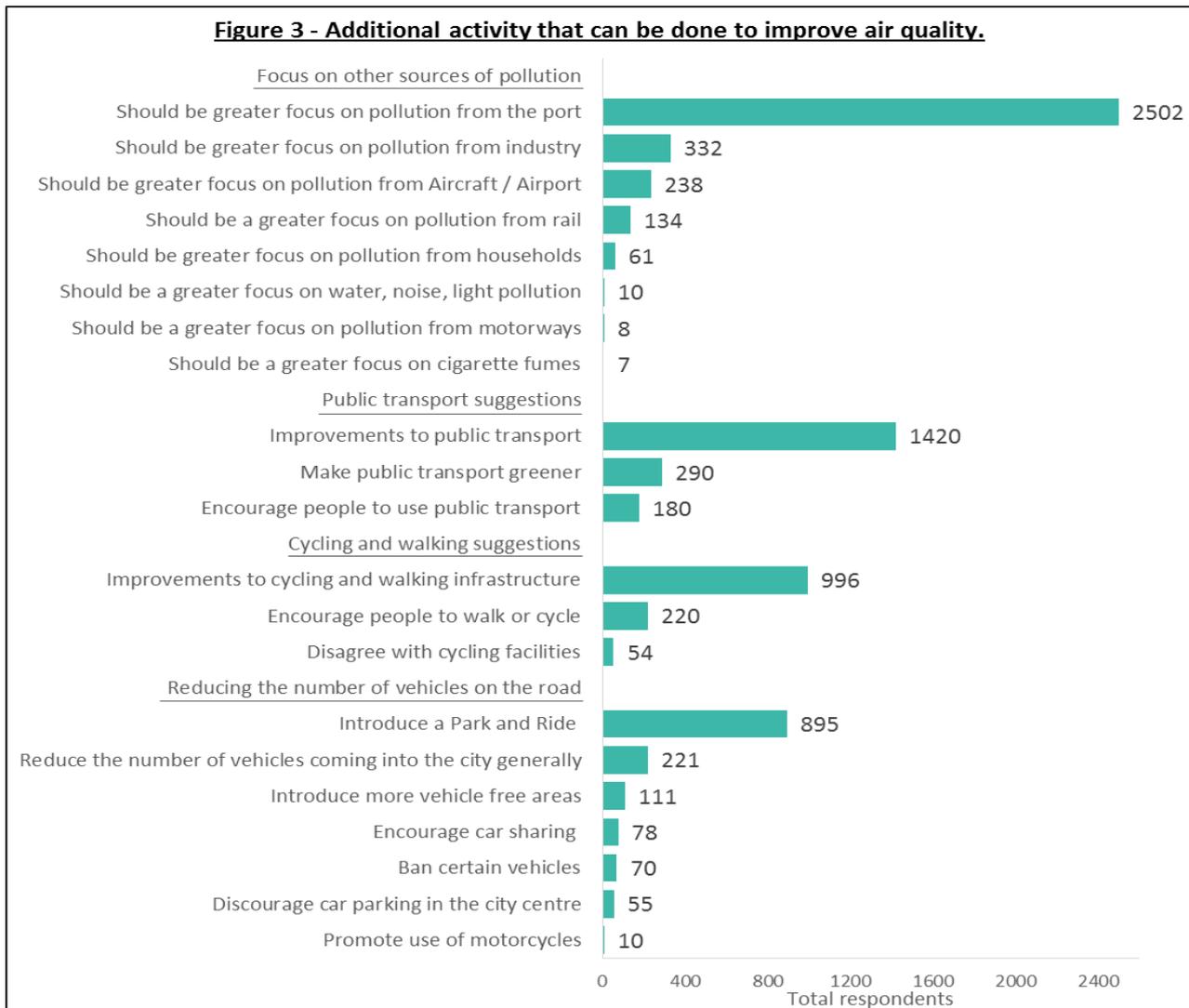
Feedback from the 3 working groups suggested that this theme was a reflection of the charter's vision rather than a specific commitment, setting out the type of place the city wants to be or inspire towards.

8. We will seek to use services and products that share our vision.

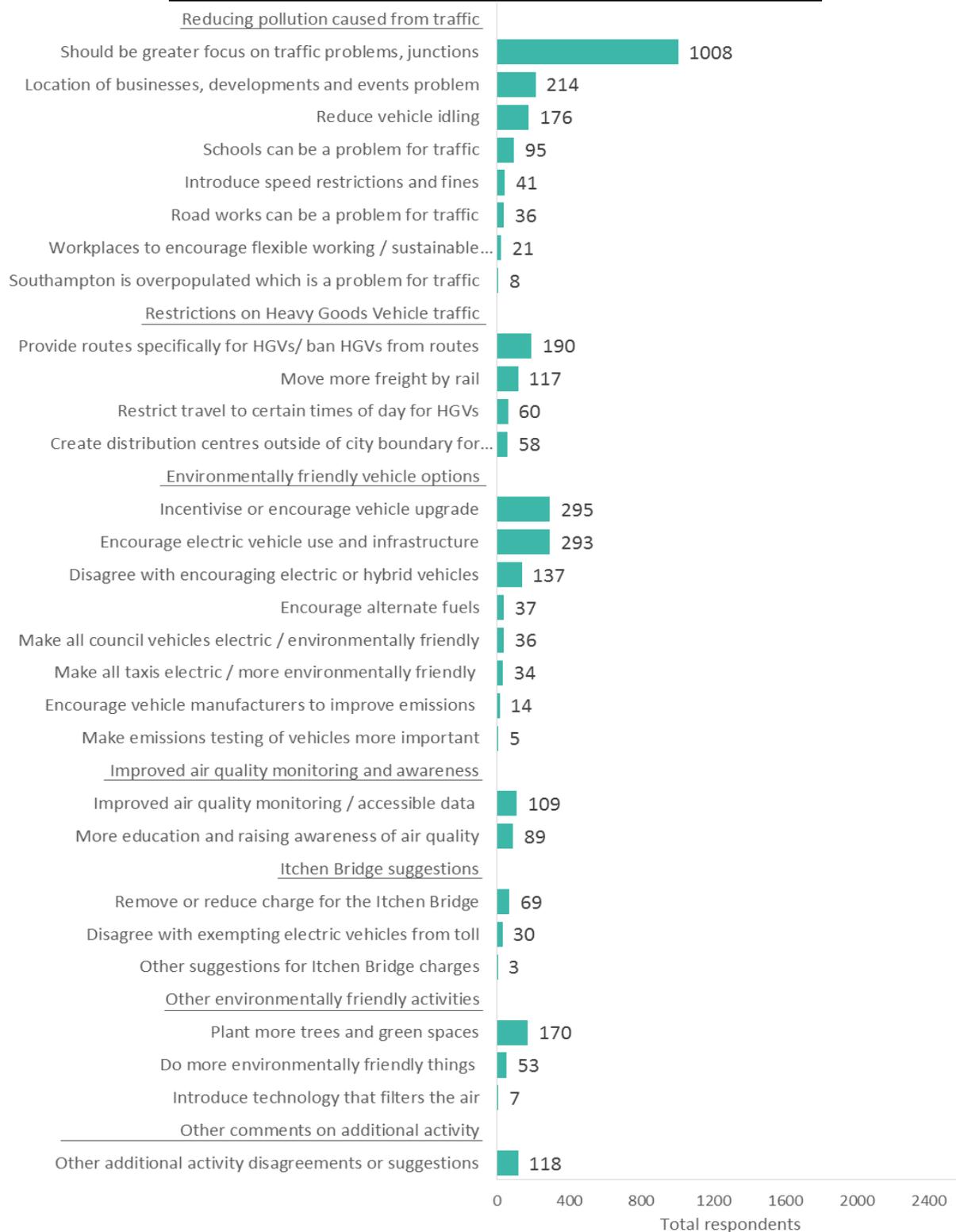
Previous feedback already suggested that the word 'seek' was not ambitious enough. Stakeholders noted a lack of health targets within the charter, to increase the quality and health outcomes of the community.

Clean Air Zone consultation

The Clean Air Zone consultation ran for 12 weeks from 21 June 2018 to 13 September 2018 and sought views on proposals for a Clean Air Zone in Southampton. In total, there were 9,309 responses to consultation through a combination of questionnaires, emails, letters and social media comments. This was the highest response of any consultation run in Southampton. All written responses were read and comments were assigned to 132 categories based upon similar sentiment or theme. Around 50 of these categories were specific suggestions for additional activity that could be done to improve air quality. Figure 3 shows these suggestions and the numbers of respondents that raised this in their comments. The five suggestions raised by the highest numbers of respondents suggested that there should be: a greater focus on pollution from the port (2502 respondents); improvements to public transport (1420 respondents); a greater focus on traffic problems and junctions (1008 respondents); improvements to cycling and walking infrastructure (996 respondents); and the introduction of a Park and Ride (895 respondents).



Additional activity that can be done to improve air quality continued



Additional activity that can be done to improve air quality continued

