

Sustainability Engagement

February 2020



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Background

Purpose

Council's Environment and Sustainability Branch required community and stakeholder input to two different projects relating to the broad topic of sustainability. This engagement was to provide input to the development of:

- An overarching Sustainability Policy to provide strategic direction for Council and the City of Ipswich led by the Emergency Management and Sustainability Section;
- A public awareness and activation campaign including a program of events themed around environment and sustainability led by the Partnerships team within Natural Environment and Land Management Section.

Given the synergies between these projects it was decided to combine the community engagement efforts as one package.

Council's Community Development Section and other members of the Natural Environment and Land Management Section provided support including advice and assistance at engagement activities.

Methods

A 10-question survey was devised for Council's community engagement digital platform Shape Your Ipswich. This was open from 25 November 2019 to 5 February 2020 to allow time for people to respond during the summer holiday period. There were 105 contributions.

Paper copies of the same 10-question survey were delivered to Rosewood Community Centre, with the results manually entered and combined with the digital results. There were 28 contributions.

Three survey questions were put onto large interactive posters and displayed at various suburban shopping centres and Queens Park Environmental Education Centre. Staff were on hand to gather feedback from participants (with exception of QPEEC).

Only one of the poster activities allowed a tangible participation account, so the figures below are the minimum total and do not include all interactions:

- Queens Park Environmental Education Centre: 19 participants
- Riverlink Shopping Centre: 28 participants
- Orion Springfield: 22 participants
- Winston Glades: 32 participants

The draft policy principles were also presented to the October 2019 Environment Community Reference Group meeting. Reference Group members were also able to participate through the Shape Your Ipswich platform.

In total there were more than 200 individuals who participated. Adding an estimate of shopping centre interactions not recorded on the poster could have the figure as high as 250.

The Ipswich Youth Council will also provide input in March 2020.

Key findings

Sustainability is a topic of strong discussion from the global stage through to local households.

Whether it is climate change, recycling, the environment or natural resources, there is a general community appreciation that we need to do more on an individual level – but also that Council needs to advocate and lead on a government and corporate level.

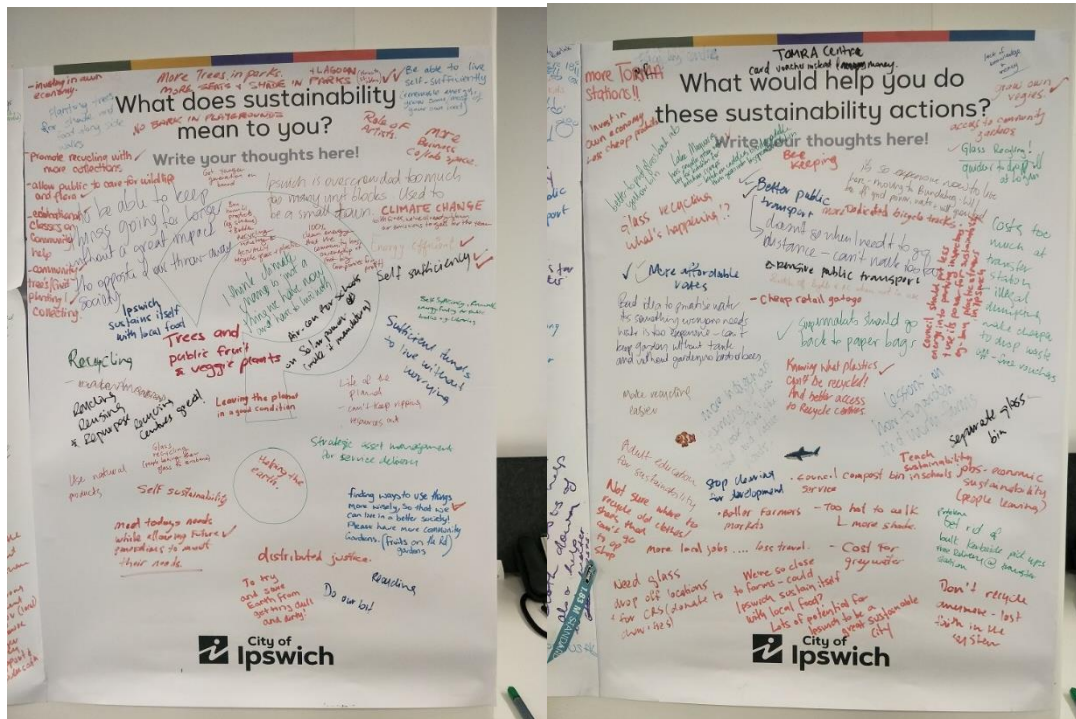
Ipswich City Council has an opportunity to build its, and the City's, reputation on sustainability through providing strong strategic direction through policy, as well as genuine 'behaviour change' engagement that has the community as co-delivery agents for the 2020 program of events.

The engagement responses revealed dominant themes as waste (particularly recycling and waste minimisation), our use of resources (particularly energy and water) and the natural environment (particularly urban trees and land clearing).

There were synergies between people's responses to 'What does sustainability mean to you' (Q1) and the principles put forward for the Policy (Q9). In particular themes of considering future generations, taking a global perspective, our use of resources, and protection of our environment.

There were some early indications that people 'new' to sustainable living would like education and support around basics such as worm farms and compost, while those more 'experienced' in sustainability would like connection and advocacy.

Images



Response data

Q1. What does sustainability mean to you

This was an open comment field on the survey and a blank poster at shopping centres, allowing people to answer however they wished. It was deliberately left open to gauge people's instinctive responses to a broad topic.

Findings

While there was overlap on many responses, there were clear trends.

- 25 responses were on the theme of personal responsibility and individuals doing their bit
- 10 responses said that sustainability for them meant self-sufficiency.
- 26 responses specifically included that we need to be mindful of future generations. These are closest to the World Commission definition
- 23 responses looked at sustainability from a global perspective
- 45 responses were concerned with our impact on the current environment and/or natural resources (of this half were specifically about the 'environment', a quarter specifically about 'resources' and about a quarter touched on both together).
- 4 responses specifically mentioned climate change.

It was interesting to note that organic connections formed between the recurring themes of this question and the broad intent of some of the policy principles addressed in Q9. For instance, responses that identified our need to be mindful of future generations can be linked to the principle of intergenerational equity.

Q1. What does sustainability mean to you

Sample comments

Creating or maintaining a clean planet where there is enough resources for everyone to thrive forever

Valuing the natural environment and believing that economic prosperity and environmental protection are not mutually exclusive. I try and find the sustainable option in all my actions and purchases. I also avoid plastic where ever possible!

Avoidance of the depletion of natural resources in order to sustain and maintain ecological balance. We can talk, scream and protest but until the consumer speaks with their choices NOTHING will happen

The ability to preserve the ecosystem and to coexist with nature. Becoming more focused on finding solutions to reverse climate change and mitigate it's effects, by thinking of both short and long term solutions for the ecological breakdown we are faced.

Clean and green, systems that work with instead of against the natural environment. Development that responds to changing climates and infrastructure that enhances liveability. A circular economy that minimises waste, and minimises emissions.

Sustainability means that we are respectful and supportive of our environment (particularly protecting water and native flora/fauna), reducing our pollution and waste of energy/water resources, and moving towards a circular economy

The importance of nature, the land and natural ecosystems. Renewable energy is fundamental in moving in a positive direction for all life, ecosystems and the planet

Sustainability to me means finding community, state, national and global ways of living that will have a neutral impact on the environment particularly in relation to all areas of consumption - including food, water, transport etc.

Living in a way that ensures our natural resources and those which we need to survive are not depleted for the future generations

Be able to live self-sufficiently (renewable energy, grow some/most of your own food)

I have food, and the environment is kept unaffected

Better infrastructure planning long term

Using and giving back to the earth

Help people who need it, and give to others who need more than you

Being environmentally friendly, not using resources and releasing CO2 into the air

Helping the planet should be part of everyday life

Making changes now so we don't have to compromise our lifestyles in the future

Q2. Rate how sustainable you feel Ipswich is as a city

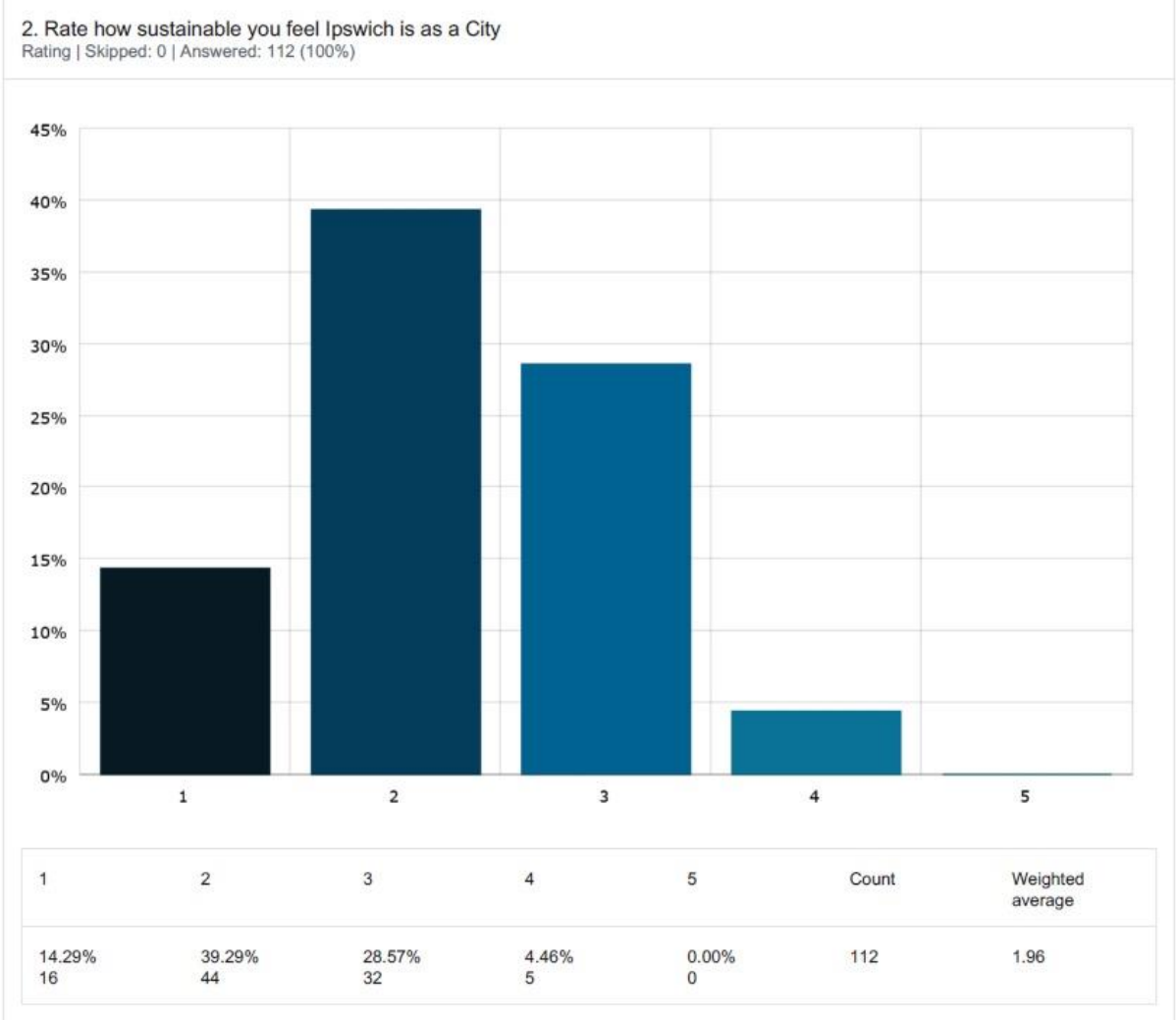
*Note: Shape Your Ipswich and paper survey only.

This was a star rating field from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest).

Findings

The majority of responses were at the lower end of the scale. Anecdotally this is reflected in social media response to Council’s previous Sustainable Ipswich Week messaging, and community sentiment towards the city’s waste and recycling issues.

Responses



Q3. What are your priorities in Ipswich becoming a more sustainable city

*Note: Shape Your Ipswich and paper survey only.

This was a ranking field with 8 options. Respondents were asked to select their top 4.

Findings

The top 4 responses in terms of total numbers were waste management, protecting natural areas and waterways, renewable energy and climate change. This is consistent with the broad themes that were dominant through the rest of the engagement.

Responses

	#1	#2	#3	#4	Total
Be more energy efficient	8	5	9	9	31
Use more renewable energy	15	19	9	9	52
Take action on climate change	20	10	6	8	44
Better waste management and less going to landfill	22	21	17	14	74
Better conservation of water	6	14	16	7	43
Provide sustainable transport options	10	7	7	7	31
Produce and buy local food	3	8	8	20	39
Protect our natural areas and waterways	13	13	25	19	70

Q4. Rate how sustainable you are in your everyday life

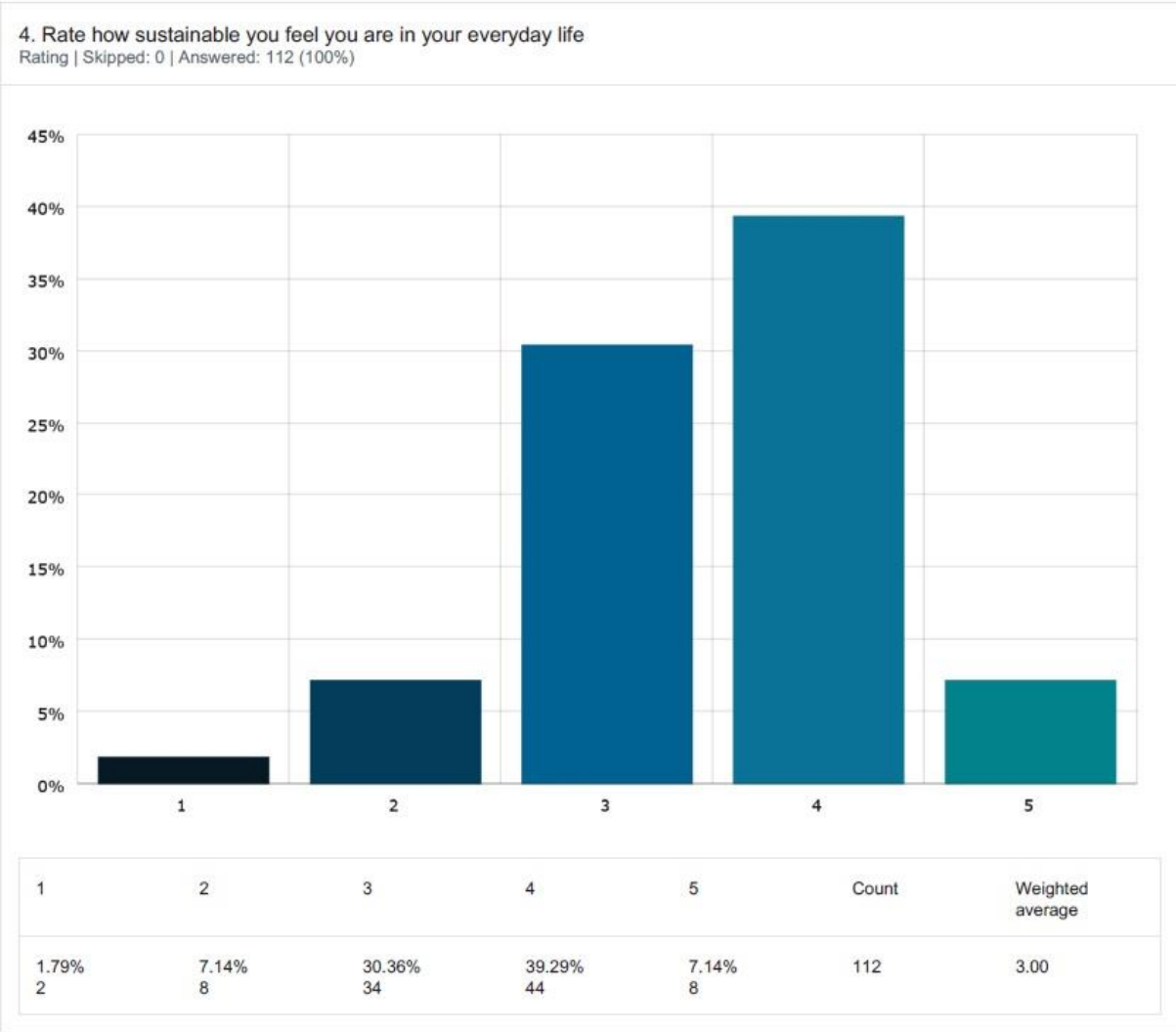
*Note: Shape Your Ipswich and paper survey only.

This was a star rating field from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest).

Findings

Respondents felt they were moderately to highly sustainable in their everyday lives already. They saw themselves as being far more sustainable than the city as a whole. The following question delves into more detail about what specific actions people do in their everyday lives.

Responses



Q5. Which of these actions do you do in your everyday life

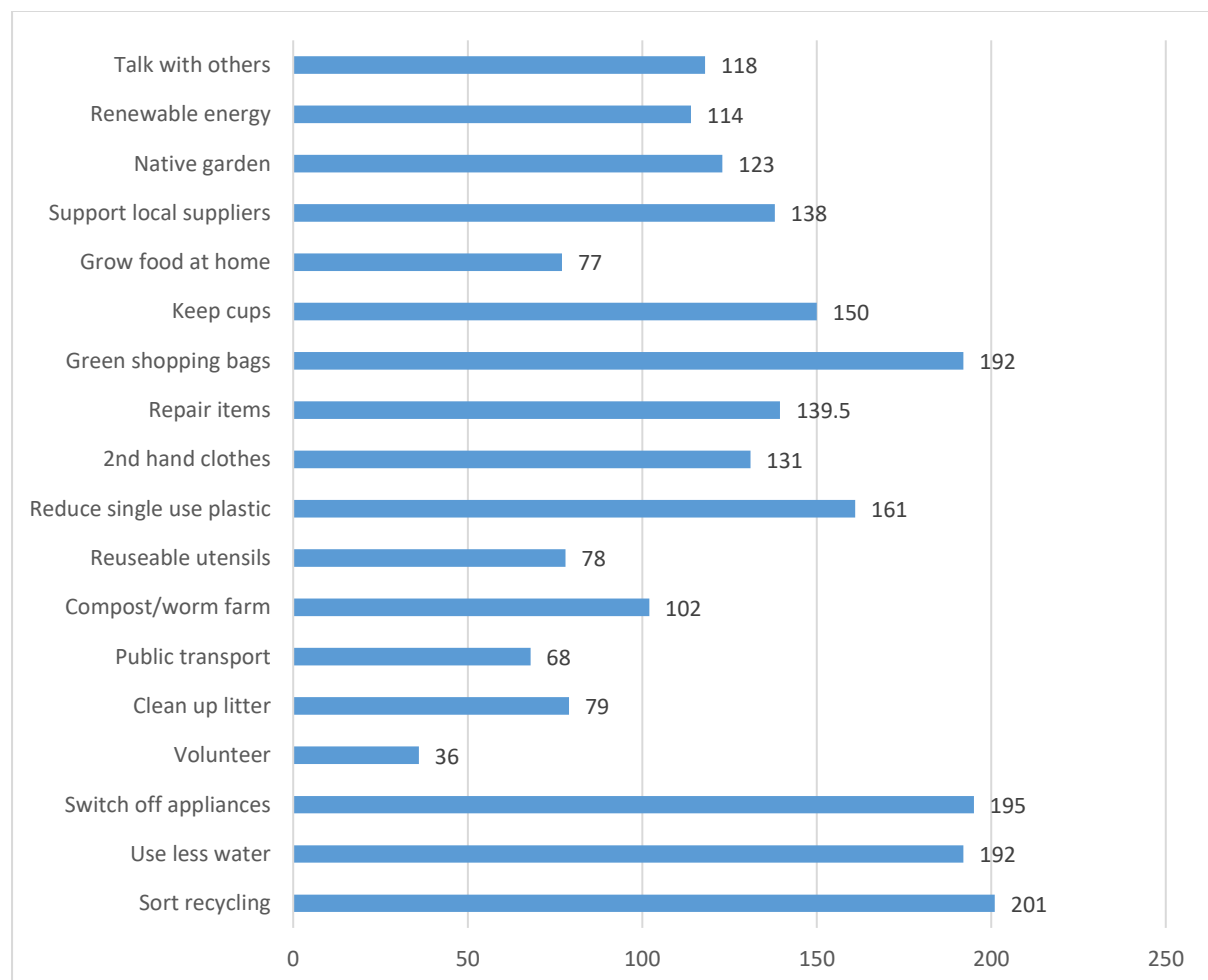
This was a tick box activity with 18 options. Respondents were able to select as many as they wished.

Findings

Sort recycling was the most common action – however responses to the next question indicated that people wanted a lot more, particularly around glass recycling, green waste and zero waste. Resource efficiency (water and energy) was also a strong response. These areas also attracted comments, particularly around the cost of solar and tanks being a barrier.

Topics with low response rates such as volunteering, growing food at home and taking public transport were strongly connected to comments that identified barriers such as lack of knowledge, time commitments and cost.

Responses



Q6. What actions would you like to do, and what's stopping you

This was an open comment field.

Findings

There were 32 general comments that time, cost and knowledge were the biggest barriers to people being more sustainable in their everyday lives.

Food and gardens were a strong theme.

- 34 comments around backyard growing food/composting/worm farm. Many commented that they don't know how, are restricted by space, or it costs too much.
- 9 comments were supportive of community gardens or public food trees and plants.
- 12 comments were around local suppliers and markets. People said they didn't know where to find retailers or wanted more market opportunities.

Resource efficiency was again mentioned by many respondents.

- 26 comments about renewable energy technology. The majority were about people wanting solar but it's too expensive.
- 17 comments about saving water. This ranged from household water saving through to Council's water use during drought, and more dams.

Waste and recycling was a dominant topic.

- 20 comments about glass recycling. People find it too hard to drop off at recycling stations and confused as to why Ipswich doesn't allow glass in yellow lid bin.
- 43 around recycling and waste services. Cost, availability and knowledge were barriers.
- 24 around waste minimisation, from individuals reusing items or alternatives like metal straws, through to many calls for supermarkets to do more to reduce single use plastic.

Our city services, priorities and lifestyle were also raised by respondents.

- 46 around government and corporations doing their bit. This was split between natural habitat (planting more trees/stopping land clearing) and concern about infrastructure, public services and jobs/economy.
- 41 about public transport – the costs and availability the major themes
- 3 about active travel (bike and walking) – more bike lanes for safer travel

Q6. What actions would you like to do, and what's stopping you

Sample comments

Grow your own food workshops would be good. To take into consideration the health of the dirt we have in Ipswich. Being more knowledgeable in the garden would also assist bird and bee friendly gardens naturally.

Would love to assist birds and bees in my garden but don't know how to.

Planting trees for shade and food along sidewalks.

Trying to grow own food and encouraging more community gardens to support local produce.

We're so close to farms – could Ipswich sustain itself with local food? Lots of potential for Ipswich to be a great sustainable city.

Top of Town – utilise buildings for big market area like Vic markets.

New houses should have grey water systems.

Want to install solar panels and rain water tanks but don't have any spare money to invest in these as they are too costly.

Shops using less plastic and packaging – compostable options over biodegradable.

Not everyone can drive to a (glass) drop off.

Community support with sustainability measures funded by local government with input from community.

Driving is more convenient for me in my area, I have to wait more than half an hour if I miss the bus.

I would love to ride to work more (I walk instead) but the traffic is pretty bad so better bike lanes would be appreciated.

Knowing what plastics can't be recycled! And better access to recycling centres.

Separate bins for all recycling types

Ability to trade unwanted items

I would like to get involved with helping to plant trees in my local area, but I'm not sure where/how.

Adult education for sustainability.

Make the sustainable choice the 'easy choice' for us.

Low cost workshops – how to do things at low cost.

Q7. What prevents you from being more sustainable in your everyday life

*Note: Shape Your Ipswich and paper survey only.

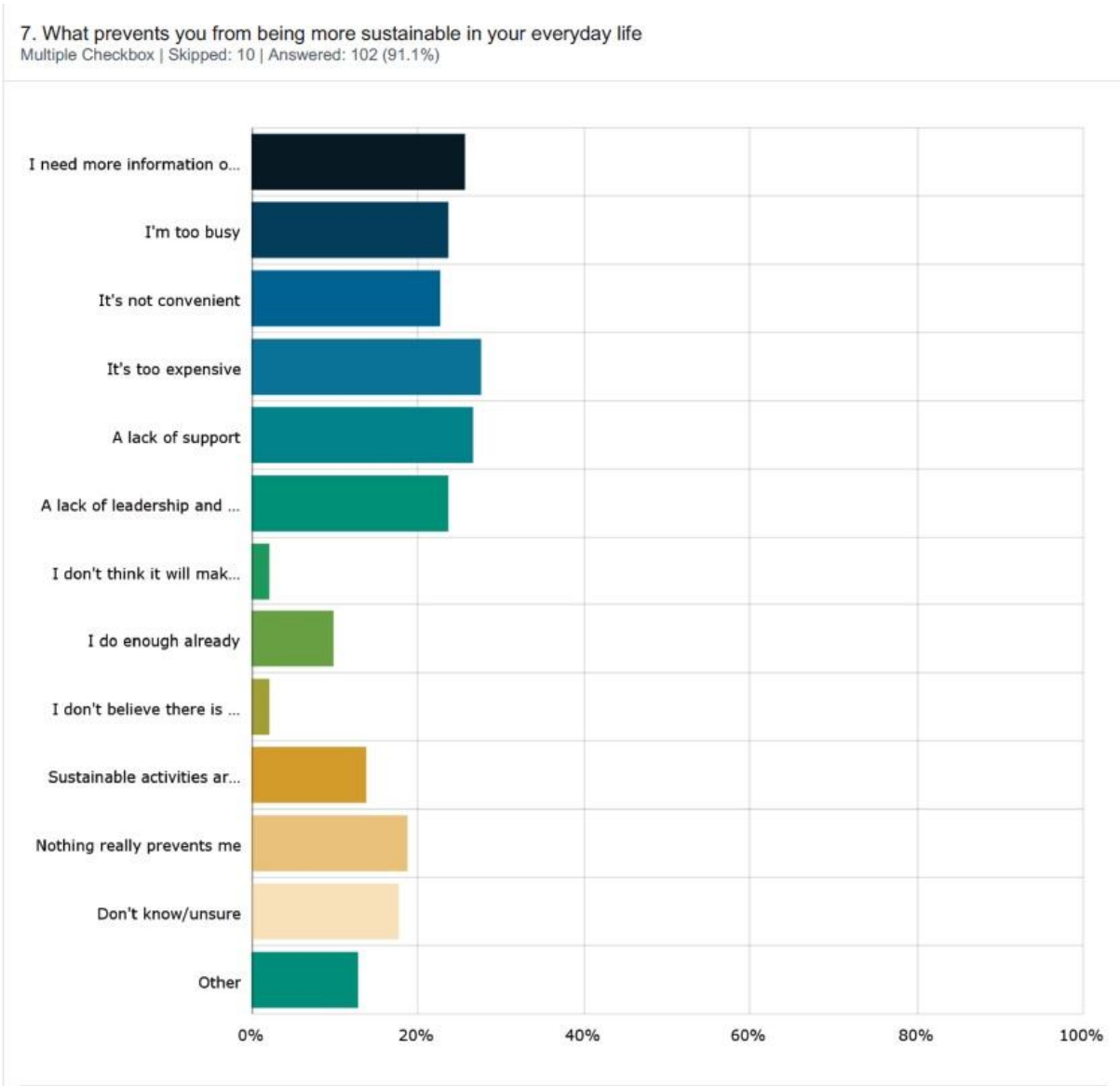
This was a multiple checkbox question. Respondents could chose as many as they wanted.

Findings

Once again time, knowledge and cost were strong barriers identified.

It is positive to note that very few respondents felt that their actions won't make a difference. This correlates with the high sustainability rating people gave themselves and demonstrates an opportunity for further empowerment and community grassroots sustainability.

Responses



Q8. Have you heard of these initiatives?

*Note: Shape Your Ipswich and paper survey only.

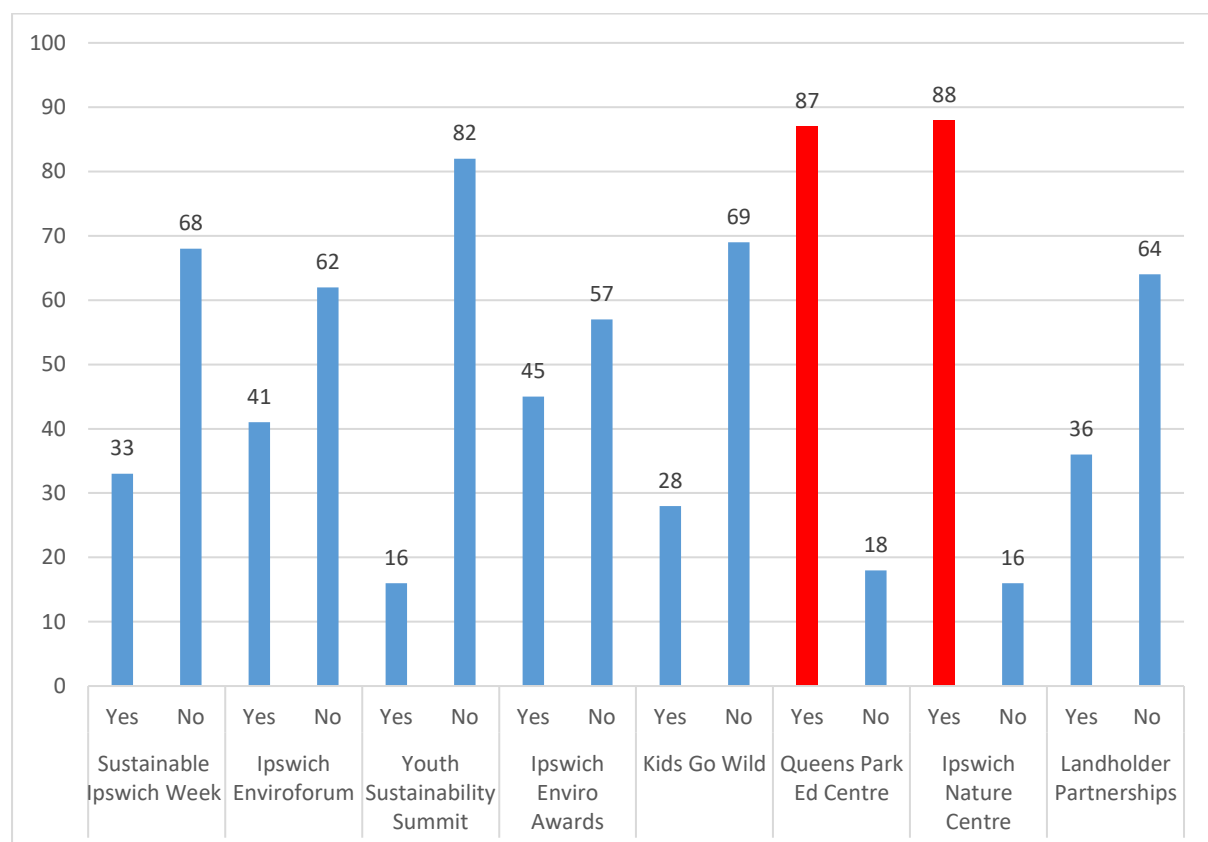
This was a multiple checkbox question. Respondents could chose as many as they wanted.

Findings

Only two initiatives scored high awareness – Queens Park Environmental Education Centre and Ipswich Nature Centre. This may reflect these locations as central Ipswich visitor destinations.

The two lowest scoring initiatives were Kids Go Wild and the Youth Sustainability Summit. This is to be expected given the limited relevance of these initiatives to primary school aged children.

Responses



Q9. Sustainability Policy principles

*Note: Shape Your Ipswich and paper survey only.

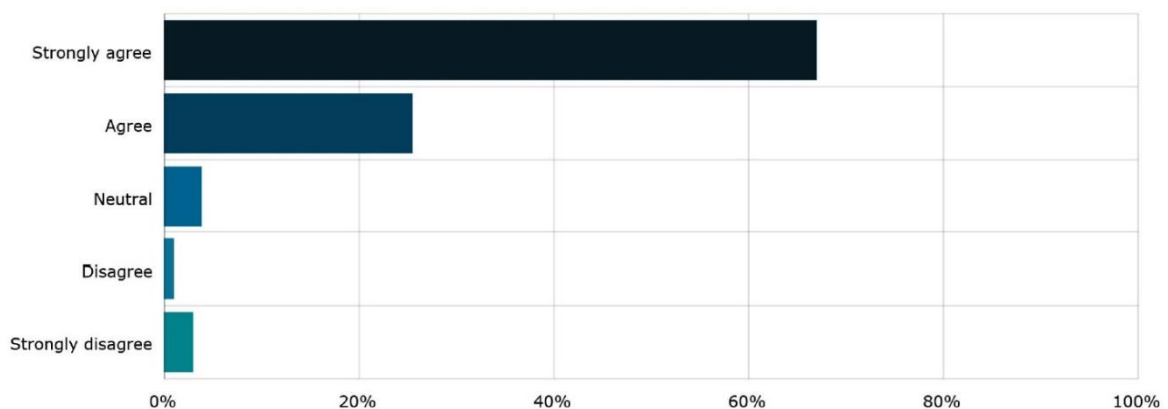
Each of the draft policy principle statements had a drop down menu rating from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'.

Findings

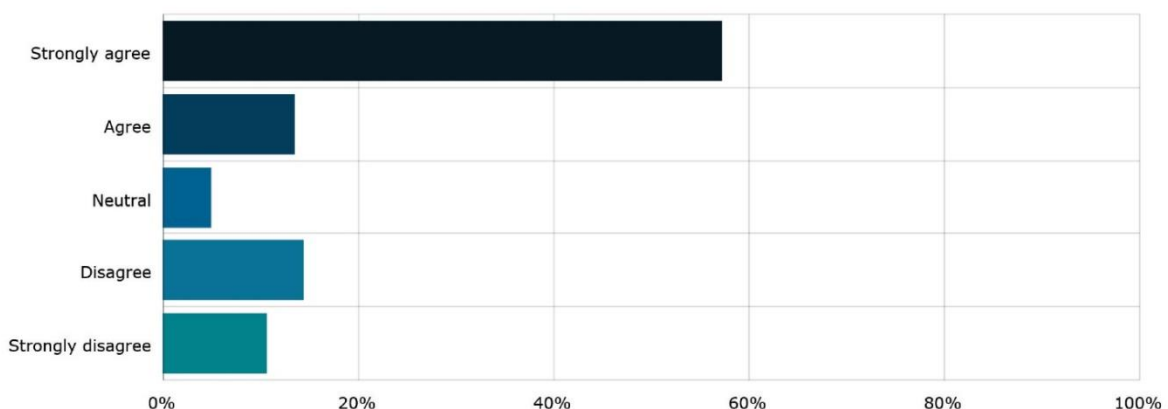
While there was overall strong agreeance with all principles, 'Responsible Decision Making' and 'Think Global Act Local' had the highest disagree/strongest disagree. This was mostly picked up in paper survey responses from Rosewood Community Centre.

Responses

9. Governance and leadership:
Dropdown | Skipped: 6 | Answered: 106 (94.6%)

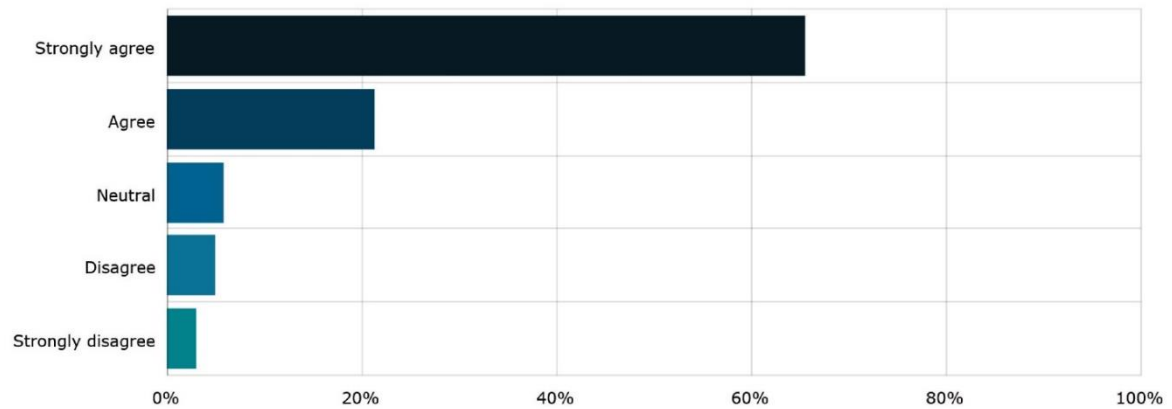


10. Responsible decision making:
Dropdown | Skipped: 7 | Answered: 105 (93.8%)



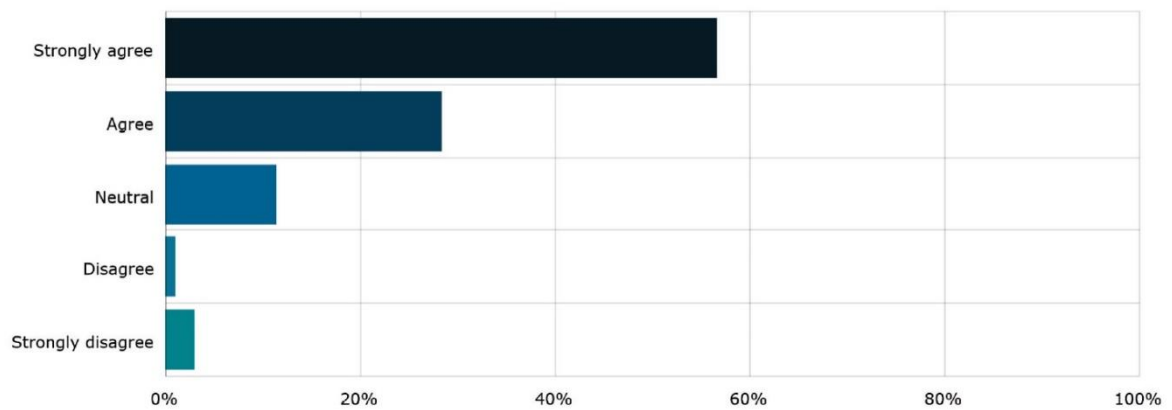
11. Efficient use of resources:

Dropdown | Skipped: 8 | Answered: 104 (92.9%)



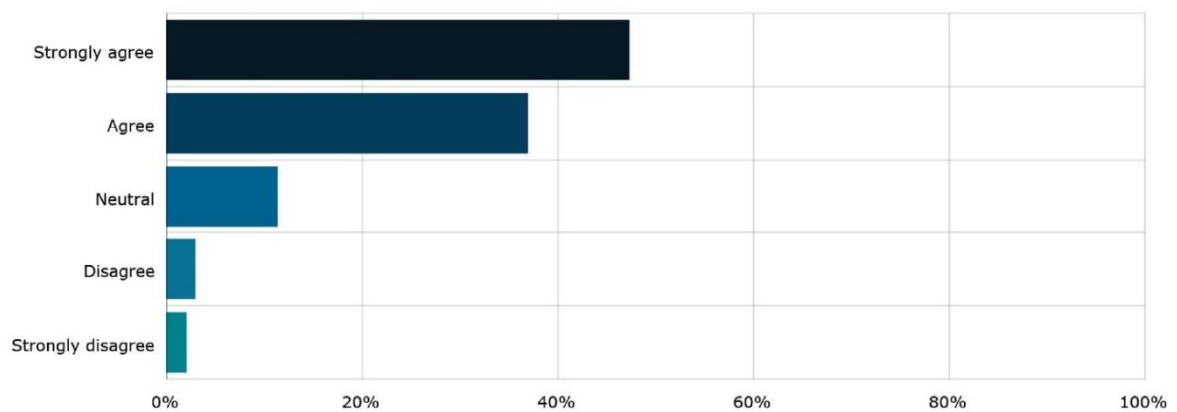
12. Sustainable procurement:

Dropdown | Skipped: 6 | Answered: 106 (94.6%)

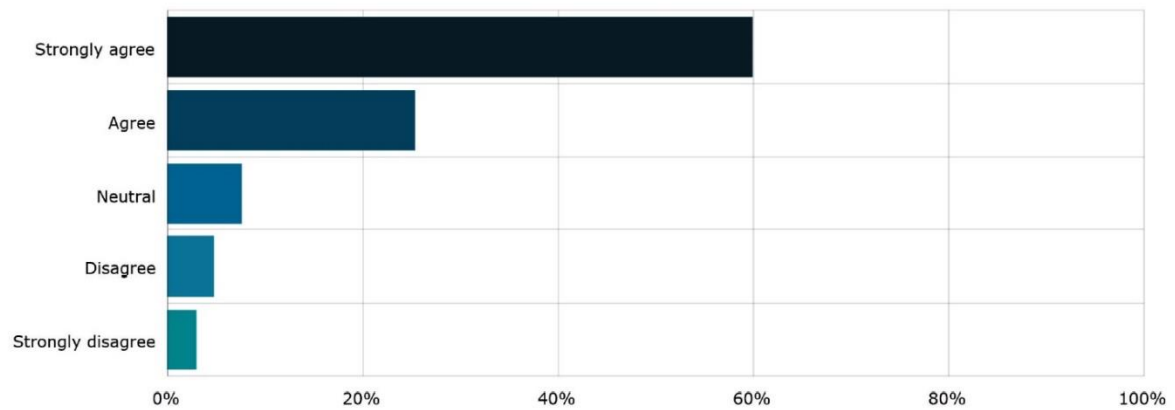


13. Meaningful collaboration:

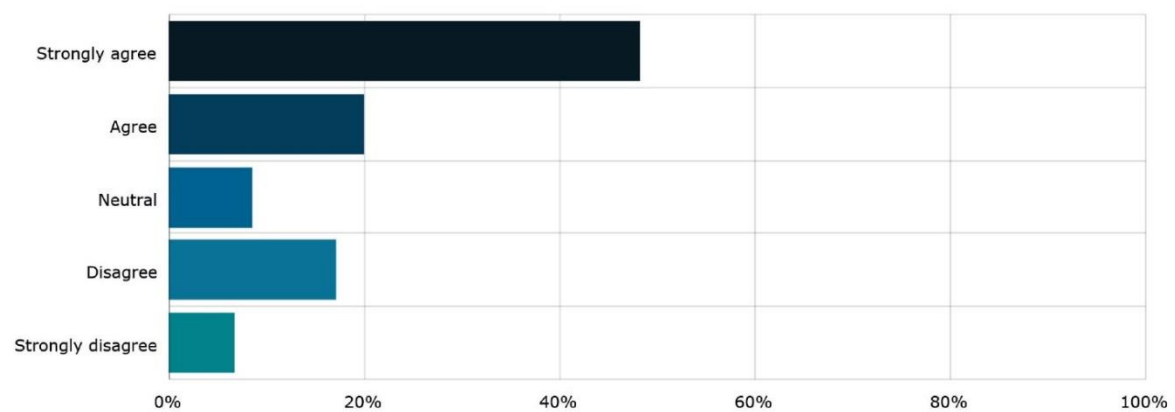
Dropdown | Skipped: 6 | Answered: 106 (94.6%)



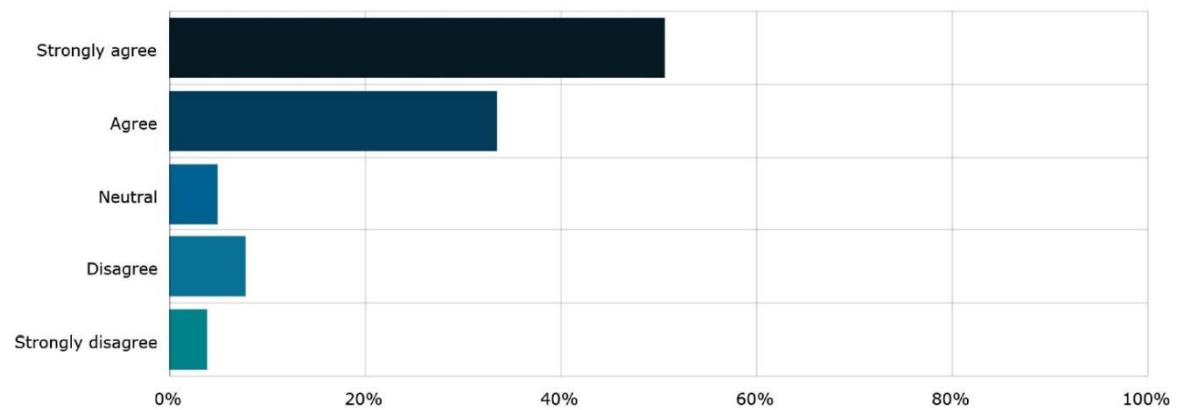
14. Intergenerational equity:
Dropdown | Skipped: 5 | Answered: 107 (95.5%)



15. Think global, act local:
Dropdown | Skipped: 6 | Answered: 106 (94.6%)



16. Quality of life:
Dropdown | Skipped: 7 | Answered: 105 (93.8%)



17. Sustainable living:

Dropdown | Skipped: 6 | Answered: 106 (94.6%)

