CITIZENS' CLIMATE ASSEMBLIES

Understanding public deliberation for climate policy

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Centre for **Climate Change** and **Social Transformations**

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National net-zero targets require ambitious policy and have implications for the way people will live over the coming decades. To achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, or sooner, requires active participation across civil society.

Citizens' assemblies on climate change are a promising means by which citizens can be placed at the core of a democratic decision-making process to develop or advise on policies. In this report we show that a diverse cross-section of citizens can come together with minimal prior understanding and conclude in favour of far-reaching climate policies, often going further than polls or politicians' assumptions about public opinion suggest is possible. All the same, there is no single way to run a citizens' assembly on climate change: the ways in which they are designed has an important influence on assembly outcomes and recommendations.

In this report, we present an in-depth analysis of the Climate Assembly UK (CAUK), focusing on: a) the design of the process including its structure, scope and framing; b) the deliberations that took place and the underlying values surrounding how to achieve net-zero that they revealed; and c) assembly members' wider perceptions of climate change, derived from follow-up interviews with CAUK participants. We next examine the similarities and differences between the French Convention Citoyenne pour le Climat (CCC) and the UK approach; we also focus on the CCC's consideration of 'consumption' and question the extent to which this allowed citizens to address the underlying and systemic drivers of unsustainable consumption. Finally, we explore the diversity of local and regional processes within the UK, emphasising their ability to galvanise action despite limitations surrounding the ability to achieve wider public engagement or specific policy recommendations.

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Key findings

❖ There is no one way to carry out climate deliberation, and no method is able simply to reflect the underlying wishes of citizens - rather, the recommendations reached are a product both of the inputs to the assembly from experts and organisers, and the perspectives of citizen participants.

❖ The scope, structure and design of climate assemblies have major consequences for the recommendations that emerge. This applies both in terms of general approach (e.g., use of voting, overarching questions) and the specific measures (e.g., policy options) that are presented to citizens.

❖ Assembly processes have emphasised both top-down and bottom-up approaches: the former can lead to policy-relevant proposals but restricts the capacity for citizens to bring their own ideas to bear; the latter allows for more creative and citizen-led deliberation but can lead to generic or unworkable outcomes.

❖ The majority of the policy recommendations arising from the CAUK were developed by experts in advance of deliberations, and subsequently appraised and/or voted upon by citizens. This strongly shaped the recommendations that citizens were able to propose. In some cases, citizen choices are highly constrained such that recommendations can only reflect variations on similar options presented to them.

❖ There are specific features of climate change as a topic for public deliberation that require specialist input, but this has so far been mostly lacking. These include how to consider the systemic nature of acting on climate change, the research evidence on climate communication (e.g., use of human stories versus graphs), and methods to elicit people's perspectives on ethical and values-based concerns.

❖ Assembly processes tend to lead to some types of values and concerns being emphasised more than others: affordability, personal freedom and convenience are often highlighted; however, the wider social science evidence base shows that people in other settings are as keen to emphasise concerns such as fairness and responsibility, trust and accountability.

❖ Assembly processes have typically framed climate change as a scientific or technical problem, with strong reliance on expert views to 'solve' the problem and a technocratic approach; assembly members are in effect viewed as empty vessels to be filled with knowledge and respond accordingly. This risks side-lining deeper reflection and contextualising topics to everyday life, as well as downplaying emotional and personal responses to the issues presented.

❖ Citizens' recommendations were found to be dependent on underlying values and conditions of acceptance around 1) the importance and urgency of tackling climate change and protecting the natural environment, and 2) ensuring the low-carbon transition is well-governed and protects personal freedoms, jobs and livelihoods and guarantees a fair, equitable and affordable future.

❖ Looking across the range of climate assemblies from the national to the local, we see clear themes emerge across citizens' recommendations. The policies that have the most visible and tangible impact on people's lives were those that had the highest levels of support, e.g., improvements to public transport and access to cycling and walking, improvements to home heating, and access to green space. Yet, these are often the areas of policy that receive the least attention in wider policy debates, and which arguably have the least amount of public engagement outside of assembly processes.

❖ Citizens participating in climate deliberation tended to become more concerned and engaged about climate change throughout the process. They also tended to conclude in favour of creating significant behavioural and social changes, such as reducing flying and meat consumption.

❖ Climate assemblies commonly concluded with recommendations for the importance of public engagement, communication and education. Participants generally found the experience highly impactful and enjoyable, and expressed a desire for greater opportunities for other citizens to be engaged in tackling climate change.

❖ There were core similarities and differences between the UK Climate Assembly (CAUK) and France's Convention Citoyenne pour le Climat (CCC). Both considered similar topic areas and used a broadly similar learning and deliberation process. However, the CAUK focussed upon appraisal of predetermined policies whereas the CCC existed more as a policy development forum. Citizens were more able to shape the process and remit of the CCC than were those involved in the CAUK.

❖ In the CCC the use of subgroups charged to tackle particular issues led to innovative proposals, such as measures to regulate advertising to reduce consumption, later described as having 'the effect of a bomb in the advertising world'. There were however limits to citizens' scope to tackle deeper underlying issues - such as the shape and objectives of the economy - despite their interest in doing so.

❖ Climate assembly organisers and commissioners were not always clear about the expectations and outcomes from a citizens' assembly, or in ensuring there was a sufficient follow up process in place. This led to disappointment and in some cases disillusionment, which undermined the very high levels of engagement and enjoyment of the participants in the process. In France, strong expectations of an unfiltered incorporation into policy of CCC recommendations (as promised by President Macron) were not met, leading to disappointment among assembly members.

❖ In the UK, there has been a flourishing of local and regional processes to address the climate and ecological crisis. There has been a large variation in methods, questions asked, expectations and delivery. The most successful local and regional processes have been delivered in tandem with wider public engagement.

❖ Local and regional processes have achieved political legitimacy, allowing decision-makers to hear a diversity of views. Most local authorities have incorporated citizens' proposals in their plans; in some cases they have adopted these in full.

Recommendations

❖ Greater transparency is needed in terms of how proposals and policy recommendations are derived through climate deliberation. There is a place for evaluation of predetermined policy proposals, but these should not be presented as participants' own ideas in isolation from the specific features of the deliberative process itself.

❖ Recommendations of citizens' assemblies should be interpreted in terms of top-down versus bottom-up processes. In a more open and bottom-up process, recommendations can be said to have been *developed* by citizens. In a more top-down and closed process, recommendations are developed by experts and *appraised* by citizens.

❖ Future design and interpretation of climate deliberation should recognise that the scope and structure of assemblies has consequences for recommendations. There is a need to ensure that expert provision of content and policy options is balanced with the ability for citizens to have creative freedom and to think beyond the parameters of mainstream policy debates.

❖ The values and conditions underlying citizens' recommendations need to be explored in greater depth, both during an assembly, and in combination with the presentation of results. This would allow a better understanding of public perspectives beyond those summarised by facilitators or through mechanisms such as voting and consensus statements.

❖ Citizens' assemblies on climate change should always have a sufficient follow-up process, for ensuring accountability for implementing policy recommendations, providing feedback to participants, and providing a place for those citizens who want to further engage in climate action.

❖ Climate assemblies should always be designed and delivered as part of a wider public engagement exercise, rather than solely a closed-room process to input into policy making. This would enable the citizens' assembly to facilitate broader public engagement in the policy changes that may subsequently be developed.

❖ Independent research and evaluation should be built into the design of citizen assemblies to ensure there is the ability to scrutinise and provide alternative perspectives, outside of those presented by those contracted to run them. Commissioning bodies should require organisers to provide access to independent researchers as a condition of funding.

REPORT SUMMARY

Why climate assemblies matter

Chapter 1 outlines the value and potential for climate deliberation to address the many complex issues that climate change raises. There are many possible ways in which emissions can be reduced with a range of knock-on effects for wider society. Deeper engagement with citizens as to which pathways to choose can ensure that decisions reflect society's wider values and preferences.

Climate assemblies have the potential to accomplish these aims, and as such have seen a surge of interest in recent years. These processes nevertheless require greater scrutiny to ensure appropriate interpretation of findings, and to shape best practice in years to come. This chapter outlines our approach and objectives in undertaking our research on climate deliberation.

Structure, scope and framing - the importance of good design

Chapter 2 presents reflections on how the outcomes and recommendations of climate assemblies are influenced by the structure and framing of climate deliberation, as well as choices surrounding the overall scope and remit of the process. To do this, we focus specifically on the case of Climate Assembly UK (CAUK), with the aim of drawing attention to the types of decisions that can be taken and the consequences of these. Our reflections are based on observations of the process when attending the assembly, as well as analysis of the materials and approaches used during the Climate Assembly and its final report. We also draw on interviews conducted with those involved in the commissioning, design and delivery of the process.

We identify a range of key considerations that should be taken into account when designing a climate assembly. One of the most significant design factors to influence the nature of climate deliberation is its overall scope and remit. The choice of question around which an assembly is based is able to drastically close down or open up debate. Other choices surrounding the top-down or bottom-up nature of the process can significantly impact outcomes: top-down approaches are well-suited to answering practical policy questions, but also limit citizens' ability to direct proceedings and come up with creative or far-reaching proposals. On a practical level, we found that the way in which assemblies are designed (in terms of materials, activities and deliberation processes) also have a significant impact on outcomes, for example through the selection of voting options or the wording of policy pros and cons in expert witness materials. Finally, the way in which climate change itself is framed and presented is crucial, with an over-reliance on scientific and technical framings at times side-lining the social, moral and political contexts of climate action.

The conditions of acceptance underlying the CAUK recommendations

Chapter 3 provides insights into the conditions of acceptance that underlie the deliberations that took place at the Climate Assembly UK. We analysed audio recordings of discussions by assembly members surrounding the core topics of the assembly to assess the deeper values that underpin assembly members' preferences. By bringing to the fore the underlying values that people's preferences are based on, we provide further insight into the basis of the voting and recommendations presented within the assembly's final report.

We identified two core values, surrounding the topics of *Tackling Climate Change* and *Good Governance*, each of which encompassed a series of conditions of acceptance through which proposed policies and possible futures were judged. Acceptance under the *Tackling climate change* value required options to encompass the following features: Reduce carbon emissions; Foster urgent change; Encourage innovation and Protect wildlife and nature. Acceptance under the *Good Governance* value required options to be seen to: Safeguard jobs and livelihoods; Demonstrate leadership, transparency and trust; Protect freedom and choice; Ensure fairness and equity; and Support affordable change. Together these conditions represent the underlying social values that determine how assembly members chose to cast their votes. Whilst they do

not represent the views of all or any one participant, arising in different contexts and with different weightings for each individual, they provide a strong basis for understanding wider public acceptance of the various futures and policies presented.

Climate change perceptions among assembly members

Chapter 4 presents an overview of assembly members' perceptions of climate change and its solutions. We describe assembly members' views on the topic of climate change and how these changed throughout the process of the assembly. These findings are based on surveys conducted at the beginning and end of each weekend of the Climate Assembly UK (with 103 out of 108 members participating), as well as a series of follow-up interviews with 28 members (reflecting a representative sample of members).

Concern about climate change was found to increase to a modest degree, with many members describing feelings of anxiety, worry, and fear, especially for future generations; only a few expressed 'sceptical' views about climate change. The majority of assembly members believed there was an urgent need for action on climate change, however, perceptions of the appropriateness of the 2050 net-zero target were fairly evenly split (45% who thought this to be about right vs. 37% believing the target date was too late). Overall, there was a strong support for measures tackling climate change; however, the agency of individuals was perceived to be limited and feasibility to achieve emission reductions was felt to depend on government leadership and support. While assembly members were hopeful that the recommendations from the Climate Assembly UK would be influential in guiding future policy, there was also concern, cynicism, and uncertainty that this would happen, underpinned by distrust in government to follow through on the recommendations.

Comparing national climate assemblies in the UK and France

Chapter 5 presents a comparison of the UK and French assembly processes, highlighting the similarities and differences that arose in their aims, methods and outcomes. These findings are based on the observations and research of report author Claire Mellier who attended both the Climate Assembly UK (CAUK) as a facilitator and the Convention Citoyenne pour le Climat (CCC) as an accredited researcher. While both these national processes shared some common features and objectives, we describe a number of core distinctions, including surrounding: the purpose and design of the processes, and the levels of political engagement with each.

Whereas the CAUK was designed to provide a body of evidence to the Parliamentary Select Committees with limited scope for wider public engagement, the CCC was conceived to simultaneously come up with policy recommendations and to engage the wider French population. The CCC adopted a more bottom-up approach to deliberation, in which citizens were expected to actively participate in the creation of 149 measures; by contrast, the CAUK took a largely top-down approach, where assembly members primarily responded to pre-determined policy options developed upstream by experts. The CCC's citizens were actively encouraged to engage with politics and power; the strong political framing of the CCC led the 150 citizens to engage with political outcomes of the process during the development of the Climate and Resilience Bill, which was based on the CCC's recommendations. By contrast, the CAUK assembly members were not expected to engage with the political context, but rather to provide the views of citizens to inform the work of the Select Committees which had commissioned the Assembly.

The process of developing recommendations at the CCC

Chapter 6 presents a case study of the process by which the citizens from the group "Consumption" developed the measures to be voted on with the Convention Citoyenne pour le Climat. Although the group tackled the topic of consumption and the role different actors can play in changing their behaviour (e.g., individuals, businesses), nevertheless this process did not always support deeper deliberation regarding the systemic conditions that shape how we live, for example how this is underpinned by particular economic

models and assumptions; this was despite interest from the citizens in discussing these topics. Whilst the groups' interest in carbon footprints and imported carbon emissions led to the development of measures that were influential within the CCC's final report, these measures have not been fully translated into the French Climate and Resilience Bill, providing one example of how difficult it will be for some of the most transformative and impactful measures to be incorporated into actual policies.

The value of local citizens' assemblies on climate change

Chapter 7 presents an analysis of the local citizens' climate assemblies that have proliferated in the UK over the past two years. These have varied widely in terms of the number of participants, the question set, their expectations, the organisations involved, and the approach to commissioning and delivery of the process. As we were not able to attend all 15 of the processes considered here, our evidence is based on desk-based analysis including a review of the assembly websites and publicly available information, reports and papers. In addition, we conducted a small number of interviews with council officers and facilitators involved in three assemblies (Brent, Leeds and Oxford), considered local media coverage, and drew on two practitioner sessions held in early 2020 to share experiences, insights and reflections on different local citizens' assemblies.

Overall, we found that local authorities benefited from hearing the voices of a representative, diverse group of residents. This led to an increased interest and commitment to deliberation by councillors and officers, and contributed to a sense of great political legitimacy when making policy recommendations. Whilst most local authorities did try to incorporate assembly recommendations into policy plans and announcements, some of the recommendations were high-level and unspecific, making it hard to meaningfully track policy impact. In addition, whilst participants of such processes left the experience galvanised and inspired to take action, few of the assembly organisers had plans to provide any form of follow-up for these highly engaged participants. Finally, we also found that the success of such processes was influenced by the extent to which a wider public engagement programme was delivered. Across all local assemblies, a call for greater public engagement, education and community participation were consistently top recommendations from participants.

CHAPTER 1: Why Climate Assemblies matter

Climate change is among the most complex and urgent problems facing societies, with far-reaching implications for everything from the structure of economies to the minutiae of everyday life. While nations are increasingly signing up to a range of emissions reduction targets, there are many ways in which this can be achieved. The physical and natural sciences can shed light on the level and speed of cuts needed, and the key sectors in which this must occur. What they cannot do is to decide between competing approaches that differ in terms of their effects on wider society. The ways in which we travel, our diets, working practices, and the ways in which we power and heat our homes are all implicated in tackling the climate crisis. Change in these areas can be accomplished through shifts in people's behaviour and a move towards different ways of life, through technological innovation, and/or intervention by industry. All these in turn are likely to require policies, laws and economic measures to drive that change.

Who is to decide the best course of action to bring about a low-carbon society? For the most part, politicians and policy-makers have been expected to do so, with input and advice from experts and others with the ability to make their voices heard in the corridors of power. Citizens' role in the political process has traditionally been limited to voting in elections, aside from that small section of society that is motivated enough to engage directly with politics and activism. Climate assemblies aim to change that, by giving citizens the knowledge and the ability to directly inform policy-making.

Citizens' assemblies have experienced a growing prominence in recent years, as a form of 'deliberative democracy' – a version of decision-making in which citizens are informed, discuss and debate, and then offer recommendations. Citizens' assemblies have a proven track record in enabling difficult questions to be resolved on a range of topics, and for inspiring creative and ambitious approaches for tackling social problems. It is only recently, however, that the highly complex problem of climate change has been put before the collective wisdom of a group of citizens. Ireland's citizens' assembly was an early example of using such a process to address climate change, with this component carried out in 2017. More recently, the UK, France, Denmark and Scotland have set up major national processes that have aimed to inform policy-making and generate wider interest and momentum on climate action.

These processes have the potential to be positive developments in creating and enabling policy responses on climate. Nevertheless, it is critical that climate assemblies are scrutinised to understand the means by which recommendations have been obtained, and the ways in which both experts and citizen participants contribute to these. It is problematic to claim that the outcomes of such processes are simply representations of the public's true desires and preferences. In reality, people's proposals are formed from a mix of pre-existing assumptions and values, the information to which they are exposed, and the structure of climate deliberation, including the choices people are able to make. For example, the French Convention Citoyenne recommended a law of Ecocide in part because the process built in advice and assistance from legal experts in drafting new laws. The UK Climate Assembly recommended a tax on flights because all three possible options presented to citizens to influence demand for flying featured variants of this measure. Recognising these nuances in particular processes of climate deliberation is critical so that recommendations can be interpreted in context, and so that lessons can be learned for future deliberative processes.

In this report we set out our findings and observations from research examining the UK's Climate Assembly, the French Convention Citoyenne pour le Climat, and several regional processes undertaken in the UK. Our conclusions are based on a range of approaches carried out over many months, and long-standing research experience in public understanding of climate change and the use of deliberative methods. We have interviewed citizen participants and experts involved in climate deliberation, observed deliberative processes at national and local levels, analysed recordings of citizen discussion and debate, and appraised the techniques and designs used to generate proposals.

We remain enthusiastic advocates of citizen engagement in addressing climate change. Our perspectives on climate deliberation reflect this, as well as drawing attention to areas where we have concerns or where we stress the need for greater transparency and developments in the future.

CHAPTER 2: Structuring climate deliberation: the role of scope, framing and design

INTRODUCTION

This chapter looks at how the structure of climate deliberation is connected to citizens' engagement with ideas around climate action and policy, and ultimately how this influences the outcomes and recommendations from a process. We consider the role that the overall scope and remit of climate deliberation plays in shaping and influencing the recommendations of a citizens' assembly on climate change. This includes: the decision on the assembly's overarching question; the extent to which the process is open-ended or focused on particular choices or policies; the way in which material is presented or 'framed'; the ways in which citizen learning is understood within the process; and the extent to which the options presented to people affect their endorsement of different options. There is no single correct way in which to run a climate assembly, and its remit will be determined both by the decisions of those organising the process, and the wider contexts in which it has arisen. We focus in detail on the case of the Climate Assembly UK (CAUK) for this chapter. Our aim in doing so is to draw attention to the types of decisions that can be taken and the consequences of these, rather than to advance criticisms of previous processes or to advocate for any particular approach.

METHODS

This chapter presents the reflections of the research team and is based on attendance at the assembly and analysis of a range of different data sources, as well as drawing on the team's existing knowledge of broader social science literature surrounding the structure and framing of climate change deliberation.

Observation of the Climate Assembly UK: As agreed with the assembly organising team, a member of the research team attended each of the in-person Climate Assembly UK weekends to observe the evidence sessions, within the constraints of privacy accorded to the assembly members. All full group evidence sessions were observed in person and notes were taken on both the content of the evidence provided and the process by which these sessions were run. Not all sessions could be observed in this way (e.g., when assembly members were divided into sub-groups); in this case publicly available recordings of the evidence sessions were assessed in a similar way following each weekend. Attendance at voting sessions was not permitted. Combined with analysis of the Climate Assembly UK final report, these observations allowed for a detailed consideration of the framing and structure of the assembly, as well as the futures, policies and voting options presented to assembly members.

Stakeholder interviews: Following the assembly, a series of three follow-up interviews were conducted by the research team in March 2021. These included a representative from the organising team (Involve), one of the four expert leads, and a spokesperson from the Parliamentary commissioning team; each interview lasted for approximately an hour. The interviews explored a range of topics, including the aims and terms of reference of the assembly, the framing and structure of the assembly (and how decisions were made about this), and the outcomes and recommendations of the assembly. With the permission of two of the interviewees – Sarah Allan from Involve, and Rebecca Willis from Lancaster University – we have provided attributable quotes. We have retained anonymity for the interviewee from the Parliamentary commissioning team at their request.

SCOPE AND REMIT OF CLIMATE DELIBERATION

The guiding question: background and implications

One of the most significant factors to influence the nature of climate deliberation is the guiding question used to frame the discussion. In the case of CAUK this was: "How should the UK meet its target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050?"

This 'net zero by 2050' question was set at an early stage by the commissioning Select Committees but influenced by wider events unfolding in Parliament. Soon after the decision was taken to support a deliberative process, Teresa May's government separately published legislation that committed the UK to net zero UK carbon emissions by 2050 (itself a strengthening of a previous commitment to an 80% cut in emissions). At this point, no overarching question had been set for the citizens' assembly; however, from the perspective of those working to shape the terms of the CAUK, the introduction of this legislation proved fortuitous for anchoring it to these political developments. As the parliamentary spokesperson from the commissioning team described this:

> *When we started, that was before the legislation was introduced… we began to think about what's the right question to ask. And then when the [net zero] legislation was passed we thought… that's the right question to address because that's going to be linked into legislation that has political consensus… We could ask not* whether *we should get to net zero… but* how *do we deliver it.*

The choice of this question has the advantage of being clearly aligned with national policy processes in relation to climate change, and for being oriented towards practical, actionable responses. It nevertheless frames the issue as a long-timeframe and technical matter, rather than one requiring near-term and urgent action with implications for wider society. Other climate deliberation has incorporated such concerns into the guiding question; for example, the French Convention Citoyenne asked how to reduce emissions "in the spirit of social justice", and the more recent Scottish Climate Assembly asked: "How should Scotland change to tackle the climate emergency in an effective and fair way?"

Irrespective of whether a 2050 target is politically expedient, it remains controversial among scientists. In order for the UK to remain within its fair carbon budget and to be compliant with its obligations under the Paris Accord, Jackson (2019)[1] finds that a net zero target date of closer to 2030 (if not sooner) is required, and that a net zero target of 2050 could lead to the UK using more than five times its fair carbon budget. Similarly, Anderson (2020)[2] argues that net zero by 2050 would mean the UK being two to three times in excess of its commitments under the Paris Accord.

A related issue of the 'net zero by 2050' target is that this masks the need for more immediate and rapid emissions reduction[3]. Of most consequence for climate mitigation is the total amount of greenhouse gases put into the atmosphere, rather than the date by which these cease; if emissions are cut quickly but

then tail off to zero by 2050, this leads to lower total emissions than does a uniform, gradual decline. In this context of the need for deep and immediate cuts to emissions, Jackson (2019) argues that "it makes no sense to set a target date of 2050".

While there is a strong argument for inclusion of the notion of 'net zero' as a part of policy considerations, this too has consequences for the ways in which emissions reduction is understood: as a matter of balancing out remaining 'positive' emissions with an equivalent level of removal. The framing of climate action in terms of achieving net zero is a central part both of policy objectives and formal advice to government from its official advisers, the Committee on Climate Change; however, it also presents risks from the point of view of public deliberation. These include the potential for 'moral hazard' in terms of permitting ongoing emissions which can be subtracted via as-yet unproven technologies[4], as well as obscuring the differences between the immediate addition of carbon to the atmosphere versus the longer timeframe required to remove them[5] in ways that have the potential to undermine effective climate policy[6]. While it was emphasised in presentations to citizens that negative emissions technology should be used only where direct emissions reduction was problematic, they were nevertheless also asked to rank different forms of greenhouse gas removal in order of preference. Based on this ranking exercise, the CAUK report then concluded that: "Assembly members recommended four greenhouse gas removal methods should be part of how the UK gets to net zero".

Top-down or bottom-up approaches

Once the topic of any citizens' assembly has been decided, a key set of design decisions revolve around the selection of what we term *top-down* or *bottom-up* approaches to deliberation. Box 1 provides a brief overview of the key features of these. Top-down approaches tend to be pre-determined, with expert evidence, structure, and voting options largely decided in advance. This approach is associated with addressing specific questions, (e.g., around policy or technology acceptance), where the problem is clearly defined, and precise answers are required. There is a strong focus on evidence provision within top-down processes, on the basis of which participants are expected to form opinions. In contrast, bottom-up approaches are less constrained, with the structure designed to provide opportunities for participants to guide the content and direction of the process (e.g., by deciding on topics for debate, inviting experts to speak on particular topics, or choosing the motions on which to vote). Such co-produced approaches lend themselves to consideration of wider, more open questions around the future of society, and greater emphasis is given to the diverse forms of knowledge that citizens can provide. Although not mutually exclusive, it is important for those designing climate deliberation to be clear which elements of these

approaches they are adopting and why, as they have significant implications for the character, scope and outcomes of deliberation.

The process adopted by the Climate Assembly UK was a primarily top-down approach to deliberation, although some aspects of the design did allow for bottom-up elements to be included (see Table 1). The value and practicality of the generally top-down process developed was referred to within the stakeholder interviews, with this having been a deliberate decision on the part of the conveners of the CAUK. Sarah Allan, the lead organiser from Involve, articulated this in terms of a top-down process being most appropriate for the remit and scope of the CAUK:

> *We thought it [a top-down process] was appropriate… because of the [Parliamentary] brief… [The guiding question was] how should the UK get to net zero by 2050. We thought it would be politically difficult and also importantly not very useful to then come up with a set of recommendations that didn't get you to net zero by 2050… If you had [run] a very open process there was no guarantee that the recommendations coming out of it would have got to 2050.*

Table 1. The Climate Assembly UK: top-down and bottom-up features of the process.

TOP-DOWN FEATURES	BOTTOM-UP FEATURES
The guiding question for the CAUK was decided in advance and used to structure and frame all decision-making.	At the start of the process, assembly members were able to develop the underpinning principles used to guide the deliberations.
The majority of the choices on which assembly members voted were prepared in advance; participants were able to express levels of (dis)agreement or preferences between choices, but not to amend the options available[7].	Assembly members developed the considerations that they felt policy-makers should take into account when implementing specific policies.
All expert speakers were decided in advance, with talks scrutinised and approved by advisory and academic committees.	At the end of the process, assembly members were able to develop additional policy options and to vote on these.
Supporting material and content were prepared by expert leads in advance.	
The methods used to draw out and collate assembly members' perspectives were decided in advance, with table facilitators summarising, collating and eliciting votes on these.	

The Parliamentary spokesperson involved in commissioning the CAUK likewise pointed to the value of a process connected both to the need for participants to obtain some guidance, as well as being connected to political realities:

> *I think on such a complex question, you need some guidance… I think if you were to ask really open questions about the future shape of the economy, then you'd have to have a very different set of presentations and it might get more political as well: do you believe in a capitalist economy based on consumers?*

Despite the affirmation of the value of a primarily top-down process from the organising stakeholders, one of the expert leads, Rebecca Willis, did reflect on the value of addressing more far-reaching or fundamental questions through climate deliberation:

> *Climate change actually changes the operating conditions of our society and politics and economy, we'd better talk about that, and I really want to have those debates, I want citizens to have those debates [but] it's very very difficult to design a process which allows you to have those debates, and then also get into the detail […] to go much wider and talk about the climate challenge in its broadest terms, and get really considered deliberation about that. With hindsight, I think we could have had more input on those big issues… we didn't allow enough time for that.*
>
> *I would have liked more bottom-up development of recommendations… more participant development of recommendations, and [participants] coming up with speakers and getting their own areas to explore and so on. […] But then set against that is the logistical horror of organising something on that scale… The idea of opening that up further is really tricky in the time and resources you have available.*

These reflections highlight the fact that while top-down approaches are suited to answering practical policy questions, they nevertheless limit the ability of citizens themselves to direct proceedings, or to allow participants to build their own vision of a future society, and risk losing the wider context in which citizens' views – and ultimately the assembly's recommendations – need to be understood (see Chapter 3). It has recently been observed by other researchers that the use of a pre-determined structure is more 'consultative' than genuinely engaging of citizens' creativity, particularly in cases where people are required to choose a list of pre-prepared strategy options as in the CAUK[8].

More bottom-up approaches, by contrast, have the potential to provide the flexibility and space for participants to shape an assembly's proceedings and recommendations. They can allow more in-depth and diverse insights into public perceptions and preferences to be revealed, for example asking how transport systems and urban design might be re-imagined in order to reduce emissions. However, recommendations from such processes may be less specific, or less closely connected to contemporary policy processes, and so risk reduced traction with policy-makers and make them less likely to be implemented in concrete ways.

Open and focused approaches to deliberation

Across the range of themes addressed by the CAUK, three main approaches were applied: the use of *considerations*, *futures*, and *policy options*.

These approaches were distinct in the degree to which they used what we term an 'open' or 'focused' approach. An open approach, characteristic of a more bottom-up design of climate deliberation, allows for content and recommendations to be developed and driven by assembly members themselves; this permits scope for creativity and unrestricted viewpoints to feed into the content of recommendations. A focused approach, by contrast, entails the appraisal and voting upon ideas that have been developed in advance by experts; this permits expert-informed and policy-relevant content to be prioritised.

For the CAUK, the derivation of *considerations* followed a primarily open process; by contrast, appraisal of *futures* and *policy options* used a primarily focused format, as summarised in Figure 1. In the case of *considerations* (matters to bear in mind when implementing policies) assembly members were able to develop aspects to which policy-makers should be alert when addressing each of the thematic areas relating to the UK's emissions. This was carried out in advance of the appraisal of specific measures, and so this process led to generalised considerations linked to a thematic area. A wide range of considerations emerged across the thematic areas, with common threads including an emphasis on fairness, information provision, and investment in technology.

In the case of both *futures* and *policy options*, assembly members voted on preferred future scenarios and/or expressed the extent to which they agreed that measures should be implemented.

The future scenarios – *futures* – were in all cases combined assemblages of what society might look like some years in the future. Assembly members' appraisal of these mostly entailed ranking by preference, with the proportion of first choices seen as an indicator of their appeal; in this sense, their appraisal comprised a forced choice between a small number of possible versions of society.
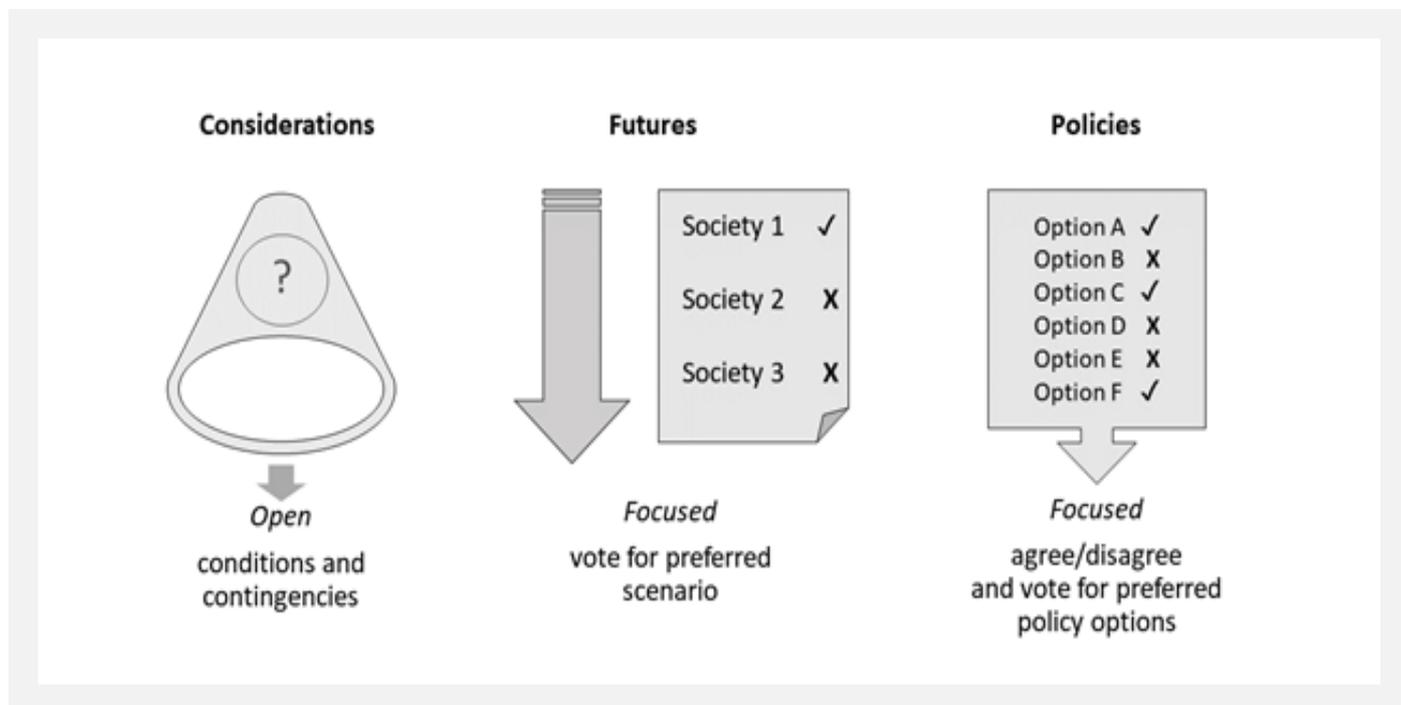

Figure 1. The main approaches used to derive CAUK recommendations.

Policy options were for the most part appraised through assembly members indicating whether they agreed or disagreed that provided options "should be part of how the UK gets to net zero". Surveying of members' views on this did not treat *policy options* as mutually exclusive; as many options could be supported as people wished, as we explain below.

THE PROCESS OF CONSTRUCTING RECOMMENDATIONS

Examples from *How we travel on land* and *How we travel by air*

While embedded in the detail of assembly design, it is nevertheless critical to recognise that the ways in which climate deliberation is structured has consequences for the types of recommendations reached. Both the wider terms of reference and the specific options presented to participants enable and constrain their decisions; this is particularly true in the case of the focused techniques used to present *futures* and *policy options*.

How we travel on land **futures**: Prominent recommendations to have emerged from the CAUK included a "ban on the sale of new petrol, diesel and hybrid cars by 2030–2035" and a "reduction in the amount we use cars by an average of 2–5% per decade". These recommendations were widely reported by the BBC and others. While these options were supported by assembly members, it is important to note that this was in the context of a restricted choice based on degree of preference for each of three *futures*; these were structured in advance to emphasise the date of a ban on polluting vehicles versus reduction in car use, as summarised in Figure 2. For each of the three *futures* considered, a range of other hypothetical circumstances were also included (not shown in Figure 2), and so assembly members were required to express their preference for these as a complete package when voting upon them rather than on particular features such as level of reduction in car use.

In the case of *How we travel by land*, assembly members votes were, in the event, split evenly between 'Fast action' and 'Change cars and driving'. As such, the decision was taken to combine these two options when compiling recommendations. While a pragmatic solution to a tie-break situation, nevertheless this meant that the majority (from two of three scenarios) of the content presented to citizens, itself designed by experts, was then incorporated into the recommendations of the CAUK; indeed, the only proposals that were *not* included in the recommendations were the features of the 'reduce travel' scenario that reflected more dramatic reduction in car use. The specific features of this process illustrates the extent to which decisions on design, content and the pre-determining of options available, is highly consequential for recommendations reached, in ways that risk being obscured in summary reporting of citizen perspectives.

Fast action   Emphasis on changing types of car

- Ban new petrol, diesel, hybrids **by 2030**
- **Reduce car use by 2%** per decade

Change cars and driving   Change types of car and reduce use

- Ban new petrol, diesel, hybrids **by 2032-2035**
- **Reduce car use by 5%** per decade

Reduce travel   Significant reductions in car use

- Phase out of cars to happen naturally
- **Reduce car use by 10%** per decade

Assembly members equally favoured the first two options, leading to a recommendation of a ban by 2030-2035 and reductions of between 2-5% per decade – a combination of these measures

Figure 2. Futures for consideration in relation to *How we travel by land*

***How we travel by air* futures:** Design features were also highly consequential for recommendations reached in deliberations around *How we travel by air.* Here, the idea of a frequent flyer tax (also termed a frequent flyer levy) was embedded in two of three available options presented to people, these being "a carbon tax on all flights", "taxes that increase as people fly more often" and "taxes that increase as people fly further". Whereas the last of these was most strongly supported (by 80% or 29 of 36 people) it is critical to note that this was relative to two other options that imposed financial restrictions in a similar (but ostensibly less fair) manner. No option was presented that did <u>not</u> impose a tax on flying. While the notion of a charge on flights, particularly upon a wealthier minority taking the majority of
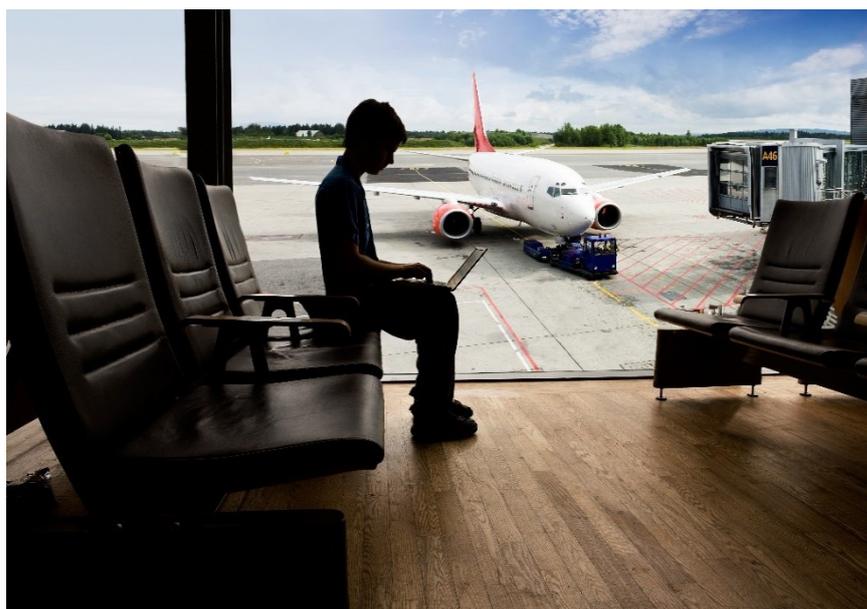
flights, can be seen as desirable from the point of view of climate policy, nevertheless it was not an option about which citizens had much choice.

The options available for a potential increase or decrease in passenger numbers was also consequential in terms of recommendations reached; in this case, in a more problematic way as it has led to the suggestion that passenger numbers are able to increase. Assembly members were required to indicate a preference vote across five potential scenarios, ranging from a *reduction* in passenger numbers of 15% to an *increase* of 65%. Notably, of five futures, presented[9], four stated varying degrees of increase in air travel with only one scenario seeing flying decreasing; as summarised in Figure 3[10].
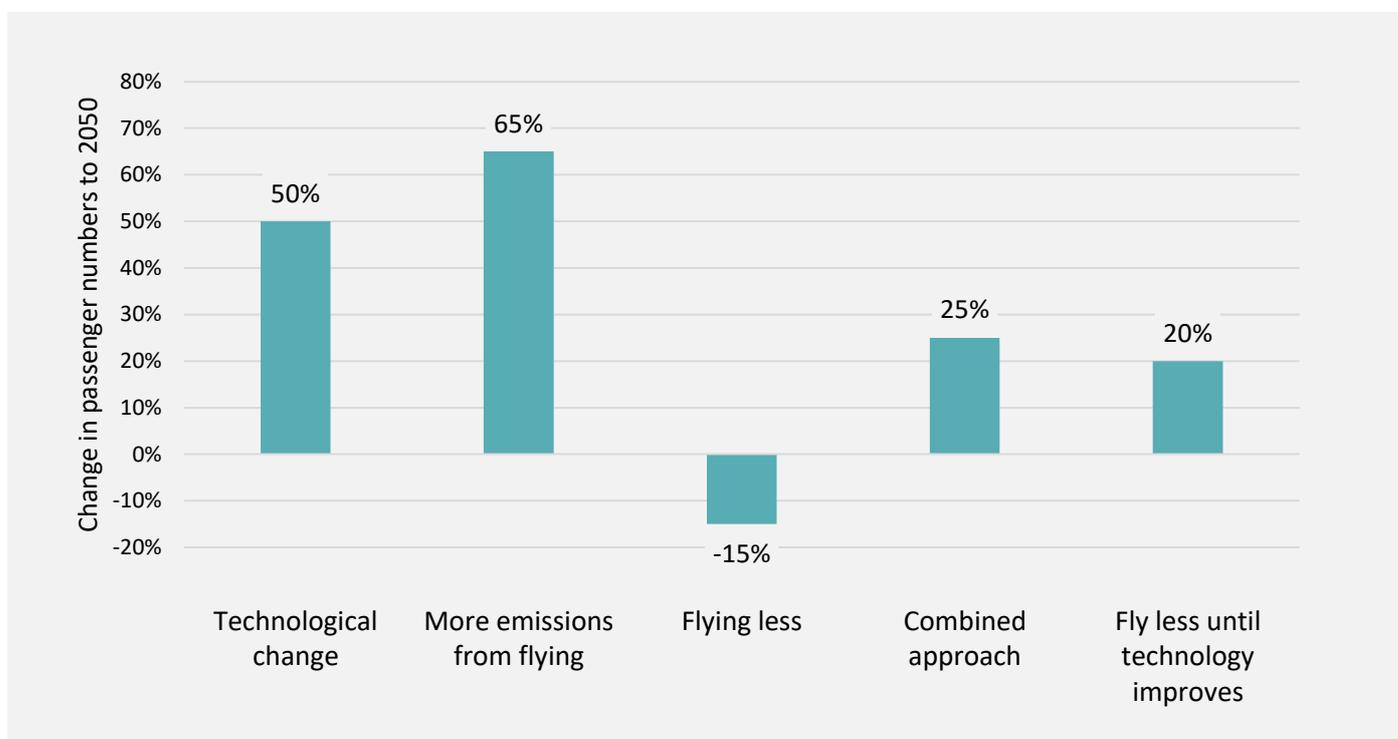

Figure 3. Change in passenger numbers in *How we travel by air* futures.

In a similar manner to the decision-making for *How we travel on land*, assembly members were split in their votes between 'technological change' (incorporating a 50% increase in passenger numbers) and a 'combined approach' (25% increase). As a result, the formal recommendation presented from the CAUK was for a future in which "air passenger numbers increase by 25–50% [by] 2050".

Whereas the combination of two futures can again be seen as pragmatic in reflecting more favoured options, in the case of the *How we travel by air* futures we note that this was predicated on a particularly precarious vote. In terms of first preference votes, the 'combined approach' (25% increase in passenger numbers) received just one more vote - 8 of 36 assembly members[11] - than 'flying less' (15% decrease in passenger numbers) which received 7 votes of 36 members. This slight difference in a very small number of votes was nevertheless highly consequential in leading to a formal and headline recommendation of increased passenger numbers, rather than one that stressed a future in which people fly less.

It is not an overstatement to point out that had one person, among a subgroup of 36 people, voted differently, then this could have led to a very different recommendation in terms of the extent to which passenger numbers could continue to grow or instead be recommended to shrink. This, again, demonstrates both the consequences of using constrained decision-making, as well as the risks of a reliance on voting with sub-groups of participants.

As importantly, the recommendation that "air passengers increase" risks being misleading if considered in isolation from the particular ways in which this recommendation was arrived at.

Near-universal agreement with policy options

In relation to policy options, citizens were asked in most cases to express their level of support or opposition to measures; this was done through gauging the extent to which they agreed or disagreed that each option should be part of the UK's net zero future. Altogether, across all the thematic areas on which citizens deliberated, 139 policy options were considered. These were made up in turn of 100 options which were developed in advance by experts (i.e., oriented towards a top-down approach), plus a further 39 policy options developed by participants in the final stage of CAUK (i.e., oriented towards a bottom-up approach).

Policy options were not treated as mutually exclusive; citizens could agree (or disagree) with as many or as few options as they wished. In practice, this led to very widespread agreement across the range of options presented.

Figure 4 illustrates the extent to which citizens agreed with policy options across the topic areas. Bars show the total number of options (red bar), the number of options where the level of agreement among citizens was greater than the level of disagreement (orange bar), and the number of options for which the overall level of agreement was above 50% (purple bar). For 90% of the 100 policy options developed by experts, the proportion of people agreeing with them was greater than the level of disagreement; for over 80% of the expert-led policy options there was majority agreement (more than half of citizens agreed with them). In the case of the bottom-up policy options developed by assembly members, all 39 options received majority agreement.
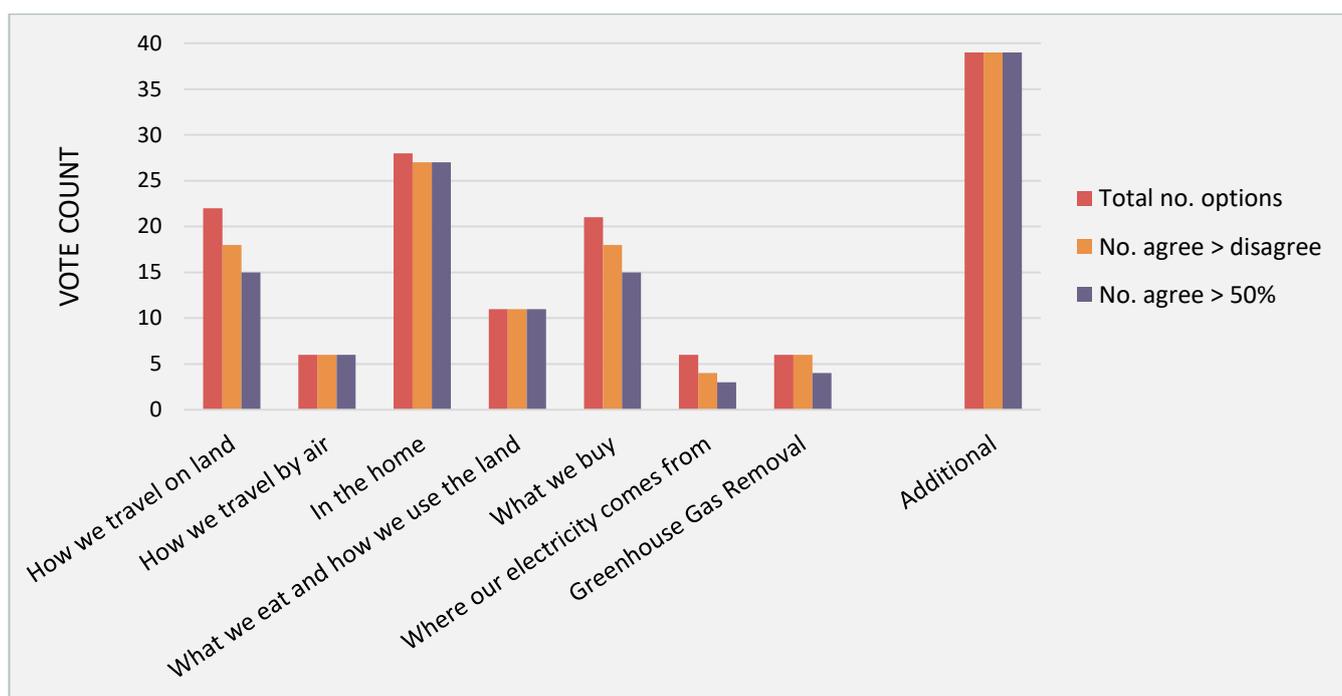
Figure 4. Extent of assembly members' agreement with policy options for each topic area.

From one perspective, this resounding support could be taken as demonstrating citizen endorsement of a range of policies; it may also be taken to demonstrate the appeal and feasibility of those options that both experts and citizens developed. However, it also raises the question of the extent to which assembly members might be inclined to support whichever options they had presented to them – the use of agree/disagree in survey methods can fall prey to 'acquiescence bias' whereby people are naturally inclined to agree with options presented to them[12] and begs the question whether other, less or more ambitious policy options might also have been endorsed in this way. The risk of using this type of process is that it can lead to recommendations being derived from citizens' near-universal support for largely expert-derived options - with this being misconstrued as originating in citizens' own innovations. Again, the nature of 'inputs' to the process have a direct and highly consequential effect on the outcomes.

Expert lead Rebecca Willis reflected on the high levels of support and how this was linked to the process, noting also the importance of assessing the relative levels of support between options:

> *With hindsight I think [there was] a little bit too much of: 'here are the options for you to choose from'. That probably showed in… surprisingly high levels of support for nearly everything… Most of the recommendations that we put to them scored over 50%. So the only way of actually working out what is less popular, is to see what got slightly fewer votes*

The echoing of expert opinion: the use of 'pros and cons' lists

Another way in which design decisions can be consequential for climate deliberation is through the use of pre-existing lists of pros and cons to trigger debate on specific policy options. This approach has the advantage of saving time in focusing attention on particular issues and can help to prompt initial responses and wider debate. However, an important drawback is that this approach often impedes deeper deliberation by leading to a reliance by participants (whether consciously or not) on a pre-determined set of pros and cons.

The use of expert-derived pros and cons in the CAUK was consequential for the outcome of deliberations. At its most extreme, this manifested in assembly members repeating word-for-word the quotes that were includeed on the slides of expert presentations, with these then presented, in effect, as the voice of participants themselves. We show in Table 2 how this occurred, comparing the phrasing used by expert speakers, with the pros and cons presented as citizens' viewpoints. This relates to the deliberations of the *What We Buy* sub-group and specifically the *Efficiency and old-into-new* 'future'.

Table 2. Examples of phrasing as used by experts within policy option slide pack (left column) and quotes from assembly members as presented in the Climate Assembly UK final report (right column)

EXACT PHRASING PRESENTED ON EXPERT SPEAKER SLIDES	EXACT PHRASING OF ASSEMBLY MEMBERS' PROS AND CONS PRESENTED IN CAUK REPORT
PROS	
Little change required by individuals	Some assembly members liked that it requires "little change by individuals"
Additional employment opportunities	Some assembly felt [this] would provide "additional employment opportunities"
Sending less waste to landfill saves money and reduces pollution	Some [assembly members] noted that sending less waste to landfill saves money and reduces pollution
Some producers may save money in the long-run by being more efficient	Other [assembly members] felt that "some producers may save money in the long-run by being more efficient"
CONS	
No additional benefits for individuals' wellbeing	No benefits for individuals
Some industries/jobs will be at risk (e.g., cement/steel manufacturers)	Some assembly members said it would put "jobs at risk". Others expressed concerns about "job losses – steel", "cement and steel manufacturing"
Need industry to change practices – may need incentives and training	Other [assembly members] noted that it "needs industry to change practices – may need incentives/training"
May be upfront costs for some measures (e.g., renewables)	Others suggested… that there "may be upfront costs for some measures"

In a less direct way, the pre-design of pros and cons of particular policy options can also lead to the omission of perspectives that are commonly observed in other deliberative research methods. In particular, concerns which are linked to the impact of technologies or policies on everyday life (such as the need for a person to find time in a busy daily routine to perform a new task such as visit a repair café) risk being side-lined using a 'pros versus cons' approach, precisely because these are less likely to have been highlighted by policy experts who tend to focus on more technical or 'big picture' concerns.

To some extent, participants' responses to the use of pros and cons lists still represent valid expressions of their opinion. However, we argue it is essential to recognise during the design stage that these decisions can be consequential for the depth and quality of deliberations – and also for the nature of recommendations obtained.

FRAMING CLIMATE CHANGE

A question that has arisen in respect of climate deliberation is whether this has features that are unique or sufficiently different from other topics (e.g., Brexit, social care) as to warrant a fundamentally different approach. Given the sense in which climate change relates to so many aspects of human (and non-human) life, as well its complexity and its many technical concerns that span all aspects of society, there is a strong argument that this is the case.

Impartiality in the CAUK: A great deal of attention was given in the CAUK to ensuring that a structure and process was in place such that all decisions received expert advice and oversight – including through the use of an advisory panel and the support of the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology – and to ensure transparency in how this occurred.

Sarah Allan of Involve affirmed the emphasis on careful curation of materials and evidence, including through the use of formal definitions for key terms of *balanced*, *comprehensive* and *accurate*:

> *Together [this means that materials] cover all key viewpoints and perspectives; none is omitted through bias or oversight; it covers each viewpoint to a similar level of detail, or that any difference is objectively justifiable rather than stemming from bias… and that [material] is factually accurate.*

This position on the part of the organiser of the CAUK, as well as the processes put in place, reflects a commitment to integrity and a high-quality process. At the same time, we question whether an emphasis on factually accurate information overlooks the evidence base that has shown that the framing of climate change is crucial to how it is understood and how people respond to it.

The consequences of framing climate change in different ways can lead to this being communicated – and so understood – in markedly different ways. For example, an emphasis on scientific or technical information communicates that climate change is to be understood in terms of expert knowledge or consensus (as opposed to, say, a person's emotional response), whereas an emphasis on morality or ethics presents climate change in terms of a matter of right and wrong[13].

Framing in terms of factual information and technology options also risks omitting topic areas which are inherent to tackling climate change, such as questions of political economy, power and influence. This was articulated as a concern by expert lead Rebecca Willis:

> *I feel like I should spell [this] out, that as ever in the climate debate, there was a reluctance amongst the organisers and speakers to talk about the… power issues… [There is] the tendency to frame it as 'which technology should we pick?', rather than, 'where does the money and the power and the influence lie, and where does it need to lie, if we're going to crack this one?*

Framing science and solutions in climate deliberation: Whilst presentation of the science of climate change is essential to contextualising climate deliberations, it needs to be recognised that there is no scientific representation of the climate crisis that exists in a political vacuum, outside of wider social and cultural contexts[14]. Whether intentional or not, the framing of climate change – the way that it is portrayed and the means used to do so – has consequences for people's understanding and responses to it[15]. Research by Climate Outreach, for example, has shown how different visualisations (e.g., using images of climate impacts, protest or scientific processes) lead to different types of reactions from people[16].

The consequences of framing decisions raise questions about how best to broach the subject of climate change with members of the public, unfamiliar with such debates and with a reasonable expectation that information they encounter will have been carefully curated. For example, should they be informed of average or most likely warming trajectories for global temperature rise, or the worst-case scenarios that could confront society in specific locations and the implications this would have for people's lives? Should the causes of climate change be explained in a technical manner, in terms of greenhouse gas emissions, atmospheric physics and abstract industrial processes; or morally, in terms of the responsibility that wealthier, industrialised countries bear for driving such emissions increases and their impacts on vulnerable children in the developing world?

In the case of the CAUK, the scientific presentations in the *What is climate change* panel primarily – though not exclusively – emphasised technical and abstract material rather than the human consequences of climate change; as for example in Figure 5.
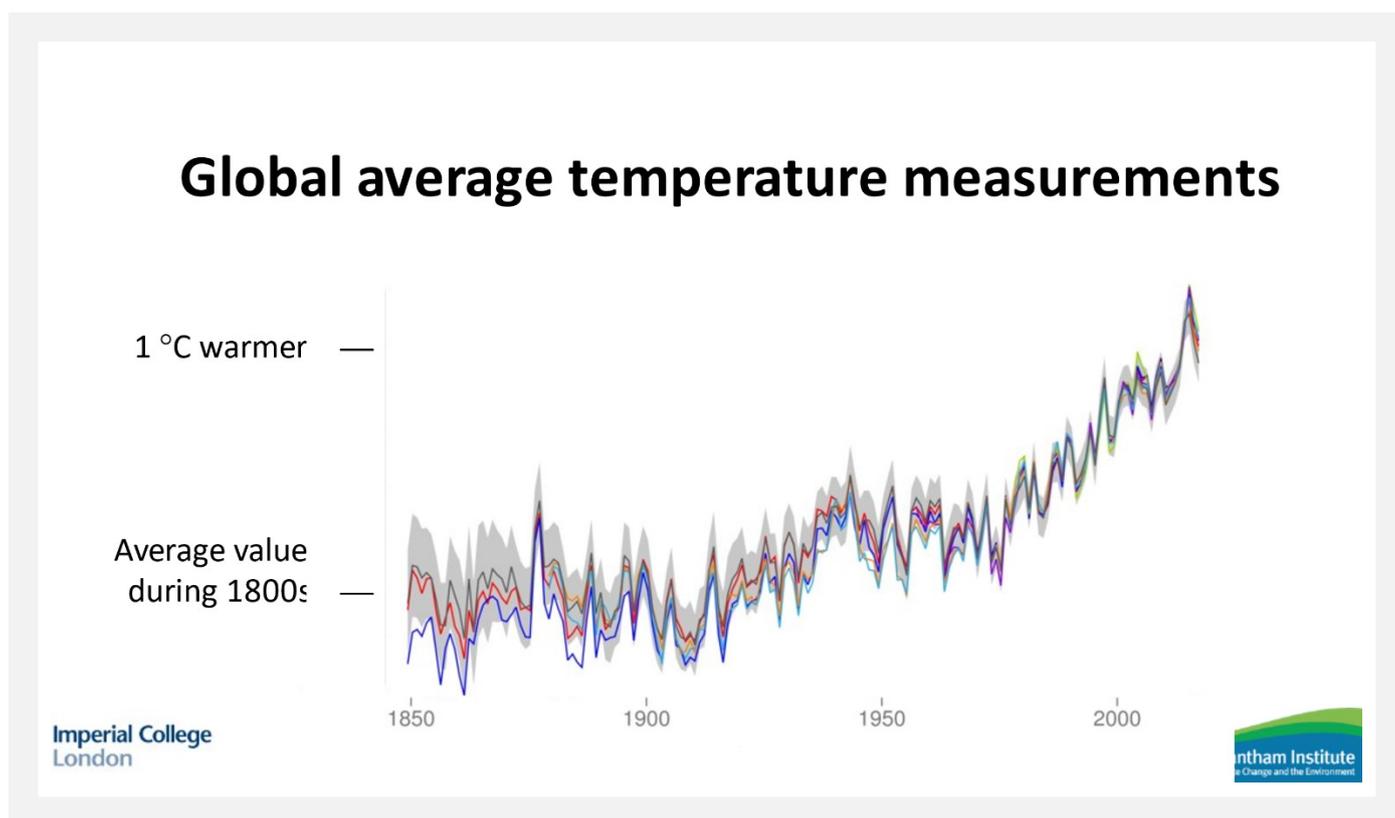
Figure 5. Example slide from scientific presentations in the *What is climate change* panel.

Decisions about science communication have potentially unintended consequences in terms of an ability to adequately convey the very real human consequences of climate change: put bluntly, the higher the rise in global temperatures, the greater amount of suffering and death there will be. The omission of more personal and emotional stories of climate change impacts effectively neglects this critical aspect of the climate crisis. Expert lead Rebecca Willis reflected on this concern in terms of the need for human stories and testimony:

> *A dimension that I thought was missing was, testimony about potential impact… […] We could have heard from people whose house had fallen in the sea, we could have heard from*

people who had been affected by Hurricane Sandy. It would have had to be done really carefully, but I think we need that human dimension. I think it is very difficult, but you need to get citizens up to speed on what happens if we don't meet the targets.

In terms of the consequences of climate change, this might include, for example, the IPCC's conclusion that "several hundred million" more people will be exposed to climate-related risks and susceptible to poverty at 2°C versus 1.5°C, and that the vast majority of warm-water coral reefs will die should the planet surpass this higher temperature rise. While this is likely to be challenging subject matter for a non-expert audience, it is at least as important as an appreciation of atmospheric physics.

[1] Jackson, T. (2019). Zero Carbon Sooner: The case for an early zero carbon target for the UK. CUSP Working Paper no. 18. https://www.cusp.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/WP18%E2%80%94Zero-carbon-sooner.pdf

[2] Anderson, K., Broderick, J. F., & Stoddard, I. (2020). A factor of two: How the mitigation plans of 'climate progressive' nations fall far short of Paris-compliant pathways. *Climate Policy*, 20(10), 1290-1304.

[3] This has been reflected in the more recent advice of the Committee on Climate Change that the UK adopt an emissions cut of 78% by 2035, emphasizing near-term reductions: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-enshrines-new-target-in-law-to-slash-emissions-by-78-by-2035

4 As Anderson and Peters (2016) point out, there is little sign that negative emissions technologies can work at the scale assumed in many integrated assessment models; they conclude that "the mitigation agenda should proceed on the basis that they will not work at scale". Anderson, K., & Peters, G. (2016). The trouble with negative emissions. *Science*, 354(6309), 182-183.

5 Mackey et al. (2013) argue in respect of the carbon cycle and its implications for emissions reduction that: "considering carbon storage on land as a means to 'offset' CO2 emissions from burning fossil fuels (an idea with wide currency) is scientifically flawed […] for all practical purposes, fossil fuel CO2 emission is irreversible". Mackey, B., Prentice, I. C., Steffen, W., House, J. I., Lindenmayer, D., Keith, H., & Berry, S. (2013). Untangling the confusion around land carbon science and climate change mitigation policy. *Nature Climate Change*, 3(6), 552-557.

6 Carton et al. (2021) point out that "[w]hile 'a ton is a ton' might be a useful abstraction for creating and apportioning carbon budgets… it is a poor guide in the design of climate policy, where different options for mitigation and their distribution in time and space correspond to radically different values, socioeconomic effects, and risk profiles." Carton, W., Lund, J. F., & Dooley, K. (2021). Undoing equivalence: Rethinking carbon accounting for just carbon removal. *Frontiers in Climate*, 3, 30.

7 In a very small number of cases participants did ask to amend the wording of voting choices, e.g., in relation to How we travel by air, one vote choice was amended from 'Taxes that increase as people fly more often' to 'Taxes that increase as people fly more often and as they fly further'.

8 Wells, R., Howarth, C., & Brand-Correa, L. I. (2021). Are citizen juries and assemblies on climate change driving democratic climate policymaking? An exploration of two case studies in the United Kingdom. Preprint: https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-273650/v1 These authors observe that "an assembly with a pre-determined structure may be performing more of a consultative role rather than genuine citizen engagement as they are choosing from a list of pre-prepared strategy options, denying citizens the opportunity to present their own solutions to issues".

9 The 'fly less until technology improves' scenario was developed at assembly members' request.

10 To varying degrees, technology was also embedded within these scenarios; for example, the 'combined approach' allowed for a 25% increase in passenger numbers while incorporating "moderate use of low carbon fuels and hybrid electric aircraft", whereas 'technological change' emphasised "a high use of low carbon fuels" and "some hybrid electric aircraft by 2050".

11 In the CAUK report, these numbers are reported as percentages, based on a proportion of the sub-group of 36 individuals.

12 Dunsch et al. (2017) report how this effect can be demonstrated in health care: https://gh.bmj.com/content/3/2/e000694.abstract

13 Nisbet (2009) details the range of ways in which climate change can be framed and how this affects the nature of debate about it. Nisbet, M. C. (2009). Communicating climate change: Why frames matter for public engagement. *Environment: Science and policy for sustainable development*, 51(2), 12-23.

14 Donner (2017) comments on the relationship between scientific research and advocacy: "There is no statement, position, or action that is solely motivated by 'science'. Even the most anodyne actions of a scientist, such as choosing a research subject or applying for a grant, are forms of advocacy informed in some way by normative judgements". Donner, S. D. (2017). Risk and responsibility in public engagement by climate scientists: Reconsidering advocacy during the Trump era. *Environmental Communication*, 11(3), 430-433.

15 Research by Whitmarsh (2009) showed that even describing the phenomenon as 'climate change' or 'global warming' had consequences for the level of concern evoked in audiences. Whitmarsh, L. (2009). What's in a name? Commonalities and differences in public understanding of "climate change" and "global warming". *Public Understanding of Science*, 18(4), 401-420. Nisbet (2009) details the range of ways in which climate change can be framed and how this affects the nature of debate about it.

16 https://climateoutreach.org/reports/climate-visuals-seven-principles-for-visual-climate-change-communication/

INTRODUCTION

This chapter sets out to present an analysis of the deeper values that underpin assembly members' discussions within the Climate Assembly UK and the recommendations that were reached from these. Drawing on research exploring the values underlying public perceptions of a range of energy and climate technologies and policies[17,18], this analysis aims to look beyond the (possibly more changeable) public preferences of the futures and policy options discussed at the assembly as presented within voting outcomes, to expose the underlying values that such preferences are based on. This is important for two reasons: 1) to understand the basis of the decisions reached, so that the implementation of specific future climate policy can be guided by an appreciation of how and why these were arrived at, as this may not always be obvious; and 2) to understand the wider value bases on which these decisions were reached because these can expose important contingencies or conditions of acceptance that are implicitly attached to policy proposals and may lead to shifts in public opinion were they to be breached. Whilst all the conditions of acceptance described below arose in relation to most or all of the topic areas discussed at the assembly, they of course do not represent the views of all or any one participant and arise in different ways or to different extents depending on the context of the policies discussed; for each participant, acceptance will be based on a different balance of such concerns. Nevertheless, these themes represent the wider social values that assembly members drew on when discussing and voting on the various futures and policies presented.

METHODS

The findings presented in this chapter are based on analysis conducted by the research team that made use of qualitative data from three sources:

Table audio recordings from the Climate Assembly UK: The Research and Evaluation teams were granted access to the assembly in order to collect data via table recordings. Assembly members were asked to give their consent for this data collection and were then seated together by the organisers. In total, approx. 9 out of a total of 15 tables consented to this process (which translated to 3 out of 5 tables for each of the subgroups). This provided us with a significant quantity of recorded data for each of the table discussions which was then analysed thematically to explore the deeper values underlying participants' deliberations and assess the conditions of acceptance for any net-zero transition set out below.

Assembly members' questions to the experts: As a core part of the expert evidence sessions on each of the topic areas, assembly members were given the opportunity to ask questions of each of the speakers. These questions were collated on post-it notes and collected for thematic analysis as above.

The Climate Assembly UK's 'The path to net zero' report: The published report provided detailed lists of the pros, cons and considerations that assembly members put forward for each of the topics discussed. These were also analysed thematically as above.

Tables 3 and 4 provide a series of example quotations to illustrate assembly members' responses for each condition of acceptance. These quotes are taken from the table audio recordings only, and as such do not represent every point that is made in the following analysis.

TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE

Permeating discussion of all the net-zero futures discussed, the first set of core values emerged around a desire to tackle climate change. Closely bound up with concerns around the urgency with which climate change needs to be addressed and debates surrounding the possibility for finding technological solutions to the problem of reducing emissions, four key conditions of acceptance arose (see Table 3 for example quotations):

Reduce carbon emissions

Primarily, this encompassed a range of different concerns relating to the environmental harms caused by wider society, and the need to tackle these by reducing carbon emissions and fossil fuel dependence and reducing waste. The need for urgency in the face of such damage, emerged throughout discussions, with approval for futures and policies in part determined by how effectively and rapidly they could achieve such change. Unsurprisingly, adopting policy options that were seen as quick wins (such as policies surrounding increased product or building standards in *What we buy* and *In the home*) were seen as a crucial first step. However, beyond this, careful planning to ensure policies would be effective and

feasible was seen as essential. As such, futures and policies that were perceived to be more realistic, less complex or easy to implement, as well as more politically and publicly acceptable - whilst still achieving emissions reductions - were often seen more positively.

Foster urgent change

For many, futures and policies that were seen as lacking ambition or providing slow or limited opportunities for reducing carbon emissions were viewed quite negatively. This was particularly true for topic areas *In the home*, which by its very nature requires a long-term planning approach, and *How we travel by air*, where futures that allowed the aviation industry to continue growing were viewed as a backwards step. An (over)reliance on technology that was not yet clearly proven, was a common concern that was raised repeatedly in relation to fears that action to tackle climate change would be delayed indefinitely in order to chase (possibly) unrealistic technological solutions that might never materialise.

In relation to *How we travel by air,* this concern emerged as a lack of trust that low-carbon aviation technologies could be developed fast enough to play any meaningful role in reducing emissions. In addition, concerns emerged around the effectiveness of greenhouse gas removal technologies, both specifically in relation to aviation, as well as during the more general discussions within *Greenhouse gas removals* topic, due to a common belief that this emerging technology was still unproven. These concerns partially explain the limited support seen for the more technical greenhouse gas removal options such as Direct Air Carbon Capture and Storage, and to a slightly lesser extent Bioenergy with Carbon Capture and Storage, where more natural and rapidly deployable options were preferred.

Encourage innovation

Emerging as a counterpoint to concerns raised surrounding the risks of over-reliance on unproven technology, the strong beliefs of many assembly members that low-carbon technologies could provide at least a partial solution to tackling climate change highlighted how technological progress and innovation were still viewed as central to perceptions around how societal change can (and for some, should) occur. The benefits of making use of already proven technologies were often cited as an influencing factor in policy acceptance. In particular, this was a common response to the options presented within *In the home*, where proven retrofit and low carbon heating technologies generally receive strong support, as well as the renewable energy options presented within *Where our electricity comes from*.

However, it was in relation to the potential for future technological developments that this theme really resonated. Arising as a relatively simple dichotomy, where policies that were seen to support low-carbon technological development and innovation were viewed more positively than those that were seen to reduce such opportunities, this theme dominated discussions surrounding *How we travel by air.* With flying seen as an integral part of modern life, a technological solution (at least in the longer term) was seen by many as essential to maintaining the current freedom of travel that was valued so highly.

Protect wildlife and nature

Although not the focus of the assembly itself, protecting wildlife and the natural environment more widely within any proposed net-zero transition emerged as a strong theme across many of the topic areas. Unsurprisingly, these concerns arose most prominently in relation to *What we eat and how we use the land*, where concerns about appropriate land-use and protecting biodiversity, as well as links to river health and the risk of flooding, strongly influenced perceptions of policies relating to the ways in which farmland might be used differently to promote low-carbon farming practices. Similar concerns also arose in relation to *Greenhouse gas removals*, where more natural approaches were seen in a much more favourable light.

Table 3. Example quotations for each of the conditions of acceptance described for 'Tackling climate change'. All quotes are taken from the table audio recordings taken in Weekend 3 (*In the home, What we buy, What we eat and how we use the land, How we travel on land,* and *How we travel by air*) and Zoom audio recordings from Weekend 4 and 5 (*Where our electricity comes from* and *Greenhouse gas removals*).

TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE

Reduce carbon emissions

"I don't feel like this [future] goes far enough in terms of carbon emissions" (What we eat and how we use the land)

"Another con, it might not reduce carbon emissions dramatically enough" (In the home)

"Reducing waste is probably my favourite thing. We waste so much of things. But I also like the idea of low-carbon foods. Again, I like incentives instead of taxes. […] I think supermarkets need to be held more accountable." (What we eat and how we use the land)

"We had more than one [pro]. We put avoids high emissions materials and uses renewable energy to produce things which is brilliant, and creates less waste as well" (What we buy)

"If it's land that couldn't be used for other things it would be a good solution for [tree planting]. In other places it could also be combined with tree cover. [...] It's costs benefits again. If you grow more trees in a particular area rather than solar panels, which is more beneficial?" (Where our electricity comes from)

Foster urgent change

"I thought they had already talked about banning gas boilers. It is a bit of a no brainer, isn't it. Because we have got to do something and boilers only last so long" (In the home)

"I would say everything can be helpful in moderation. It's just whether or not you would get carried away with these things and I worry that people would see it as, not an easy way out, but that this is new technology and it's obviously better. […] You can't just rely on new technologies; I think that's dangerous. When people say let's just carry on as normal until we get these new technologies" (Greenhouse gas removals)

"I think that future is counter intuitive to me. I think the more emissions [future] is basically saying, don't worry about planes, we'll cut everything else to the bone. It isn't realistic and unnecessary. Even if it was realistic to cut everything else to nothing. I don't see any reason to not make any efforts to reduce air travel emissions. Can you imagine, if we give the green light for more emissions? It would be mad" (How we travel by air)

Encourage innovation

"In 10 years time, I hope there will be some progress. Hydrogen boilers possibly. Something will have happened surely in ten year the way government is throwing money at improvements and incentives and technologies" (In the home)

"This is getting awfully complicated. Isn't it better to throw all the work on the solutions. Producing the fuel, let the planes fly. [...] You mention about R&D, they need to get on with it. It's ongoing, and as they work on producing these fuels they'll get better at it and find cheaper ways of doing it" (How we travel by air)

Protect wildlife and nature

"It sounds good because it's natural and I'm usually in favour of anything natural, using natural fertiliser, because the artificial ones are causing damage to the environment and killing bees. So even if it doesn't help with carbon, I'd still be in favour of going back to natural fertilisers" (Greenhouse gas removals)

"Restoring woodland would mean reducing flood risk and increased biodiversity. That stuff would be good. So lots of butterflies and insects, so if you have certain types of yields and plants and flowers it attracts [...] we need all these things to help make changes" (What we eat and how we use the land)

"I think being up in Scotland, we see [wind turbines] a lot [...] the degradation of land, you use because it's a different land use. Obviously some places, where you can put them there's not much else to be done there, up in the hills. But that's a negative to me, the use of the land in a potentially damaging way. [...] And potentially environmental as well damage to wildlife, bird strikes, that's not ideal" (Where our electricity comes from)

GOOD GOVERNANCE

The second set of core values that arose were in relation to a desire to live better and improve society through any net-zero transition. Here concerns related to the governance of such a transition, both in terms of protecting existing valued ways of life and moving towards a fairer low-carbon future for all. This led to the emergence of five more key conditions of acceptance for any net-zero transition (see Table 4 for example quotations):

Safeguard jobs and livelihoods

Another universal value that emerges across all topics is the need to protect the economy within any transition to net-zero. At their most general level, discussions of the risk that futures and policies may pose to the economy as a whole arose across all topic areas, with those perceived as possibly damaging viewed more negatively than those that may provide economic benefits to society. However, although encouraging best practice and competition amongst businesses did play a small part of these discussions, this theme was not dominated by high level concerns about the overall economy or growth. Instead, the focus was almost always on the implications for jobs and livelihoods.

Creating new job opportunities was thus seen as a crucial element of any successful net-zero transition. This theme arose strongly in discussions around *In the home*, where efforts to stimulate the green housing market and create jobs in the building industry were viewed favourably. Similarly, the balance between the possibility for creating new jobs and green industries and the risk of unemployment as existing, higher-carbon, industries become obsolete was a fundamental concern within discussions of changing the way we produce and consume products in *What we buy*. This theme was most strongly articulated within *What we eat and how we use the land*, where concern for the farming industry dominated discussion of reducing meat consumption and adopting low-carbon land-use practices. Policies that were seen to place too much burden on farmers, or risk jobs losses were viewed more negatively because of this and support for the farming industry as whole was seen as essential.

Demonstrate leadership, transparency and trust

Government leadership was also seen as a core element to a successful net-zero transition and emerged repeatedly across discussions of most of the topic areas. Commitment to strong effective policies for reducing carbon emissions, as well as to significant investment in the development and deployment of low-carbon technologies were at the centre of this theme. Specific examples of this include the desire for bold Government action to support the development of low-carbon aviation (*How we travel by air*), and a

transition away from gas boilers towards low-carbon heating technologies (*In the home*). Whilst generally, the Government was seen as a reliable source of information and funding, questions around how decisions over various regulations and standards are being made (and by who) were raised within discussions of *What we buy* and, *In the home*, highlighting the importance of transparency around new regulation. However, wider distrust of Government motives did emerge more strongly in discussions surrounding *In the home* and *How we travel by air*, where there was significant disbelief that the Government would prioritise climate action over profits.

While there was a strong sense that businesses should also play their part in the transition to net-zero (a feature seen particularly strongly around discussions of product standards within *What we buy* and *In the home*), the notion that they would actually do so was seen as dubious and a general distrust in business and industry emerged in variety ways within many of the different topic areas. Within *What we buy,* concerns were raised that companies were unlikely to stick to voluntary agreements and would make use of legal loopholes to avoid responsibility wherever possible. Similarly, when discussing *In the home*, many felt that the transition to low-carbon housing could not be left to the market alone, as companies could not be trusted not to cut corners or in some other way put profit above meeting the required carbon standards. In such cases, enforcement through standards, regulations and either Government or independent monitoring were thus generally supported as a way to legally require companies to meet their responsibilities.

Protect freedom and choice

Another theme that arose across topic areas emerged from many assembly members' deep concerns regarding the protection of a wide range of personal freedoms, with futures and policies thought to threaten personal lifestyle or product choices generally seen in a more negative way. Emerging most prominently within *What we buy*, the idea of restricting the range of available products and services was controversial. Whilst support was generally high for measures to improve product standards and repairability, policies that were seen as significantly restricting product choice or banning products outright was still a concern. Similar concerns were also raised in relation to the banning of gas boilers in discussions of *In the home*. In such cases, concerns were often related to fear that the products remaining on the market would be unaffordable to many, and as such, reliance on less restrictive measures, such as introducing labelling and education schemes was thus often seen as preferable.

While such restrictions on available products and services were a cause for concern for some members, it was where restrictions were perceived to impinge on wider lifestyle choices that real opposition arose. This was most clearly seen in discussions of *How we travel by air*, where air travel was perceived by many to be a right that should not be interfered with by the state. Similarly, another area where any suggestion of restrictions on lifestyle choices was rapidly rejected was in discussions surrounding *What we eat and how we use the land* (where again, state intervention to restrict food choices was seen as unacceptable to many).

As such, any policy that was thought to threaten valued lifestyle choices was perceived more negatively and with emotions sometimes running high, references to a controlling 'big brother state' often arose in debates. The ultimate example of this can be seen in responses to the idea of Personal Carbon Allowances within *What we buy*, where deep and often emotional objections to government intervention and restrictions on personal consumption choices led to references to a socialist or communist state.

Ensure fairness and equity

Concerns about the impact that futures and policies may have on particular groups of people arose across all discussion topics, highlighting the strong desire for a fair and just transition to net-zero. The most common (and most strongly held) concern was around the fears that the burdens of net-zero policy options (be they financial or otherwise) might fall disproportionately on low-income or otherwise vulnerable households. This emerged most strongly in discussions of *In the home*, with concerns raised where policies were thought to increase inequality (e.g., by pricing people out of products and services they needed or leading to an increase in energy bills). Similarly, concerns that food prices might rise, leading to increased pressure on low-income households and possibly pushing more people into food poverty were raised in discussions around *What we eat and how we use the land*. In addition, such concerns were also noted in relation to *How we travel on land* and the risk that those on low-incomes would be priced out of car travel, while no other alternatives exist.

Whilst equal access to food and heating was seen as a non-negotiable necessity to any net-zero transition, what constituted a fair distribution of the costs of benefits of consumption was more contested around the other topic areas. Although concerns about low-income households were still present, a polluter pays concept also emerged in relation to *What we buy*, where those that are wealthy enough to afford more luxury products and services should pay, rather than everyone being penalised to the same extent. This sentiment was particularly strong within discussions around *How we travel by air*, due to the recognition that there were many people in the UK who rarely or never fly. Debate around the pros and cons of taxation were closely linked to these concerns and opinion was usually split between those who found carbon-based taxes a fairer way to reduce emissions, making people responsible for their carbon footprint, and those that thought this would only lead to greater inequality, as the rich could continue their high-carbon lifestyles.

A second priority within this theme was based on fairness in terms of geographical location and risks that where you live may determine both the opportunities and burdens that any transition to net-zero may present. These concerns were particularly relevant when discussing *In the home*, where rural households were thought to be at a disadvantage, both in terms of low-carbon heating options available to them and also a possible lack of interest and investment from Government and businesses in comparison to higher density urban areas. Unsurprisingly, the influence that location would have on the fairness of futures and policies addressing *How we travel on land* was also a significant concern. In particular, those living in rural areas were seen to be at a significant disadvantage due to the lack of infrastructure for public transport, electric car charging and car-clubs. Policies aimed at reducing driving in rural areas were thus perceived as risking the quality of life of rural populations who may become more isolated and unable to access services.
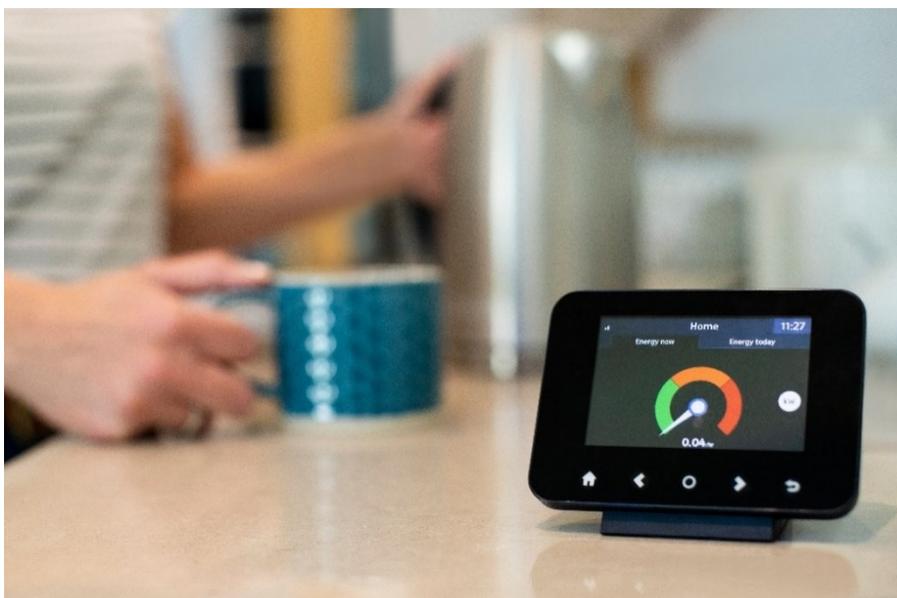
Support affordable change

The costs associated with the various futures and policies presented at the assembly arose as a core theme, primarily focusing on household, rather than national spending. Across a number of different topic areas (*What we buy, In the home, How we travel on land*) there was discussion of the balance of upfront costs and long-term savings, e.g., in relation to *What we buy*, concerns were raised that although high quality, durable, recyclable products were seen very favourably (due to both their reduced carbon footprint and the possibility for longer-term savings), this was only really practical if such products were still affordable in the short term. Such discussions were relatively simple and universal in their content, i.e., increased costs were always seen as a concern, whilst the opportunity for long-term savings was viewed positively (as long as any upfront costs could be accepted).

However, more nuanced understandings of costs and affordability did arise amongst discussions around *In the home*, where this theme emerged most strongly. Perhaps due to the much higher costs associated with retrofitting housing, there was deeper discussion surrounding the financial implications of such costs for the wider population. Despite the similar focus of discussions, here the emphasis was much more on affordability and linked closely with wider themes around fairness and equity. In particular, the upfront costs for both homeowners and landlords associated with many of the policies discussed, led to concerns that a range of groups would be disadvantaged or excluded from such a transition, including those on very low incomes, vulnerable or elderly people, and tenants.

Table 4. Example quotations for each of the conditions of acceptance described for Good Governance. All quotes are taken from the table audio recordings taken in Weekend 3 (*In the home, What we buy, What we eat and how we use the land, How we travel on land*, and *How we travel by air*) and zoom audio recordings from Weekend 4 and 5 (*Where our electricity comes from* and *Greenhouse gas removals*).

GOOD GOVERNANCE

Safeguarding jobs and livelihoods

"I feel like all of these put a lot of on us on farmers for changing their land and for some farmers this is not an option to live. For some they will have loads of options and take out grants to do planning, improve it and have lots of ideas whereas others are going to be stuck and there is nothing they can do. I have to be a sheep farmer or have to sell my land" (How we eat and how we use the land)

"I'm an advocate of business, no one is paying me, but I advocate for business, I believe business should be allowed to thrive and that's how humanity has been able to gain all the things we've gained in the last 1500 years. So I don't think that should change. We shouldn't go backwards. So how do we move forward and still maintain these good things we have" (What we buy)

"Hopefully it will provide more job opportunities as you'll have to provide services for installation and maintenance for the different types of heating" (In the home)

Demonstrate leadership, transparency and trust

"If the government sets the precedent for awarding contracts to carbon storing products or crops that then gives those industries a foot up and move into the commercial sector and also the government has to lead by example […] I think the government almost needs to step into that and help with that transition" (How we eat and how we use the land)

"The local Government are held to account. They're encouraged to do better things, because you vote your council in. They're a lot more held accountable by local residents. You can get them out. Whereas central

Government, something that will suit central London, won't suit York, or Bristol or other small towns" (In the home)

"Small companies need consideration and regulation. [...] You don't know if they are legit. [...] You have to put some laws down if you are supporting them [...] Not everyone can trust them. That is the thing. I would rather go with a big one with what I know and has been around for years" (In the home)

"I think a lot of brands will jump on the bandwagon of being green. And we need proper oversight of an independent body" (How we eat and how we use the land)

"I liked bans and restrictions because it forces the producers, like the people who are in charge, to change their ways and then it trickles down to us" (How we eat and how we use the land)

"You can't incentivise them. Because the likes of Huawei, Apple, Samsung, they've already been found guilty of building redundancy into their phones. And then the Government's like 'you're bad you're doing this' and they're like 'hahaha what's you going to do about it?'" (What we buy)

Protect freedom and choice

"No one is going to tell me when I'm doing something to my house. I do it when I want to do it. [...] If it's a homeowner who is paying for it, it is the homeowners choice" (In the home)

"I don't think we should have restrictions. You know, don't tell us what... yeah education people, make the policies right to make them work properly. But taking control of what people can and can't do. [...] I will do what's right, but I don't want to be controlled, you will do this" (How we travel by air)

"I drink tea with milk every day, but that will not change [...] banning and restriction doesn't work [...] Restrictions, not ban. Less dairy not ban dairy" (How we eat and how we use the land)

"You can't just give everyone the same carbon allowance. I just don't want us to get to be a socialist state [...] buy less, you can only buy less in a socialist state, you have to force it" (What we buy)

Ensure fairness and equity

"The problem with surface transport is if you are disabled that is not a choice. If we say we need to reduce the cars on the road, for a disabled person that is massive [...] the vulnerable in our society have to be protected" (How we travel on land)

"If hydrogen suddenly drops in price, then you're giving a massive advantage to people that live in gas provided areas. They're going to have much lower energy bills than people who live in rural areas. [...] Different types of heating might develop at different rates, [...] it might disadvantage people that live in a rural area if heat pumps. People who have no choice because they live in a certain area" (In the home)

"If you live near a hospital, you can use their energy and network. But there aren't that many of them. Unless you live near a hospital or a big industrial estate, it is not going to be of benefit, it is not going to be accessible. [...] It's only accessible to a few at the moment and not readily available for everyone" (In the home)

"I can't afford to fly myself. So why am I paying for people. It has to be targeted at those who use it. [...] I love the idea [of taxing flights] but does it benefit everyone, if [...] all the rich do is factor in the cost to the flight" (How we travel by air)

Support affordable change

"One of the downsides of the low-carbon farming regulations is that the price will go up so it will affect low-income families" (What we eat and how we use the land)

"Government would have to put in place subsidies for lower income households to retrofit their homes. […] Doing it gradually will also be better for people with low disposable incomes" (In the home)

"We've got increased costs. To be perfectly honest, I quite like this future. But there are increased costs for renewables and for some it may increase prices for things that you have to buy. So anything that puts up prices is not a good thing" (What we buy)

"Don't make one more expensive so other options look cheaper, that's not fair" (How we travel by air)

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[17] Parkhill, K., Demski, C. C., Butler, C., Spence, A., & Pidgeon, N. F. (2013). Transforming the UK energy system: Public values, attitudes and acceptability-Synthesis report.

[18] Cherry, C., Scott, K., Barrett, J., & Pidgeon, N. (2018). Public acceptance of resource-efficiency strategies to mitigate climate change. *Nature Climate Change*, *8*(11), 1007-1012.

CHAPTER 4: Perceptions of climate change: the views of assembly members

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores assembly members' perceptions of climate change and its solutions, with the purpose of providing a deeper description of assembly members' views on the topic of climate change as an issue (as this was largely outside the scope of the assembly itself), how these views may have changed throughout the assembly process, and where possible, how these views compare to those of the wider UK public. We do not consider members' views on the process of the assembly as these are to be presented in a separate evaluation report for the Climate Assembly UK[19].

METHODS

The findings presented in this chapter are based on analysis designed and conducted by the Research and Evaluation teams, in the form of ongoing surveys throughout the assembly process and follow-up interviews with a subsection of assembly members.

The survey: Eight surveys were conducted throughout the Climate Assembly UK, completed at the beginning and end of each weekend. These surveys contained a range of questions, including some evaluating the assembly process itself and others designed to explore wider research questions around perceptions of climate change and democratic processes. Many of these questions were repeated across multiple surveys to assess how members' views changed throughout the process. Overall, 103 of the 108 assembly members consented to complete these surveys, although not everyone answered every question.

The follow-up interviews: Once the assembly was complete, a series of 28 follow-up interviews were conducted in May 2020 by the Research and Evaluation teams via telephone or video-conferencing software. To ensure the interview sample was representative, a sub-sample of just over a quarter of participants was selected whose demographics closely matched those provided for the assembly as a whole (including age, gender, geographical location, ethnicity, education, and climate change concern). Quotes provided below in all cases come from assembly members, whose anonymity we have retained.

CLIMATE CHANGE CONCERN

> *I would say I'm really concerned about [climate change]. It's literally like a long-term, real world problem. You can't just avoid it. It's going to affect us for so long, I don't know how you couldn't be worried.*

Public concern about climate change is now at an all-time high in the UK, with recent nationwide surveys showing that 78-82% of respondents are very or fairly concerned about the issue[20]. Given these high levels of concern within the wider UK public and the representative sampling of assembly members, it was not surprising that concern about climate change was high amongst participants. Figure 6 shows how participants' concerns varied over the course of the Climate Assembly UK. Prior to the start of the assembly concern was close to national levels at 73% very or fairly concerned. Although varying slightly each week, this concern overall increased following the presentation of scientific and expert information on a range of issues surrounding climate change, eventually settling at 86% by the end of the assembly.
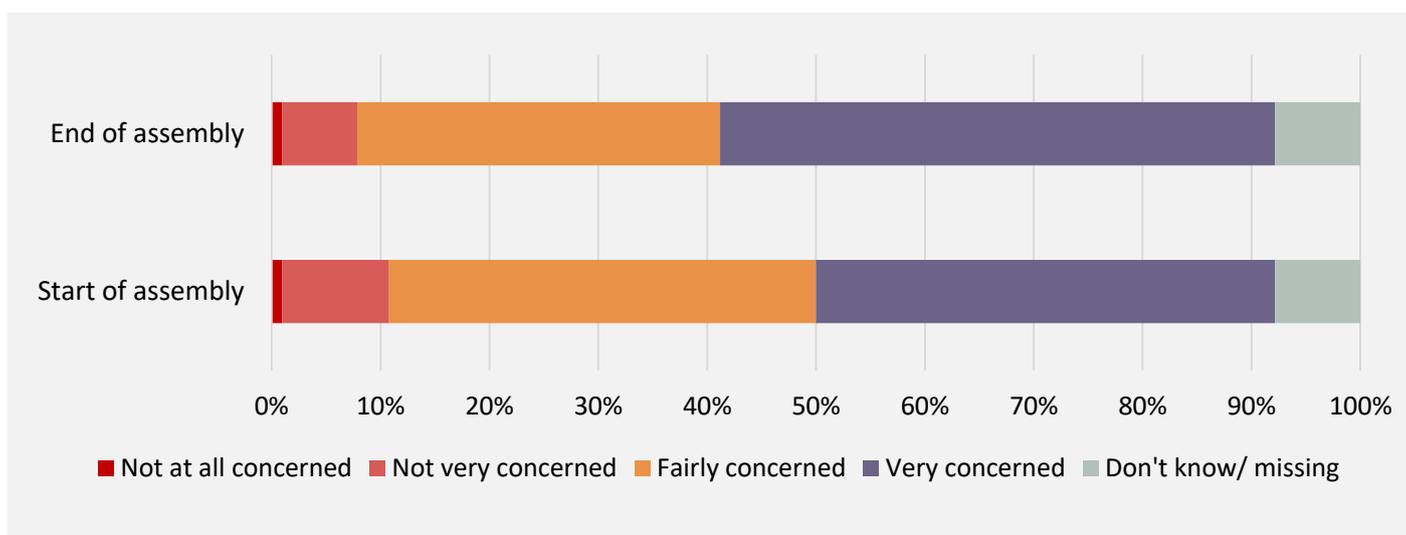

Figure 6. Assembly members' level of concern about climate change at the start and end of the assembly.

People's concerns about climate change were also evident in the follow-up interviews, with many participants displaying high levels of emotional concern when asked about this: '*I'm very anxious, overwhelmed, frustrated, erm frightened. I feel, I have two small children, it's their future*'. Anxiety, worry and fear characterised their responses, with some participants describing how their concern had increased since taking part in the assembly. Concerns for future generations and that it may now be too late to act were the most commonly cited reason for these feelings, which were often triggered by concern of the destruction of the natural world and the images of environmental change:

> *Having seen the science on the first weekend, I was made aware of the scale of the problem which I wasn't before. [...] I used to think it would be nice to do something about it sometime in the future, that we'll wait until it's urgent, whereas now I think, bloody hell, we need to do something now.*

For some, these emotions led to a sense of despondency, whilst others were more optimistic that positive change could be achieved. In both cases, distrust of Government and concerns around current inaction in the UK were seen to be the biggest barrier to change:

> *We live in a country where the population and the Government aren't taking it seriously enough and so it feels like an insurmountable problem because there doesn't seem enough public and political will to bring about that change.*

> *If anything, I think [tackling climate change] feels a bit easier than I thought before. I don't know. It feels like there are ways of getting to the solution. It's just whether or not we'll actually do that. Whether there's enough desire in the government to do it.*

Whilst outright denial of climate change as a problem was low, some participants did express sceptical views surrounding the science on the need for action:

> *If you're asking me do I believe in what was said, then no [...] I lived through all the crisis we were supposed to have in the 70s where we were going to run out of oil, we were going to be in another ice age in the 80s that never happened. Then in the 90s along comes global warming and now climate change.*

Another used the comments of expert climate scientists to argue that no action needed to be taken right now: "if we were approaching a tipping point, if we were approaching a certain 5°C or 10°C warming then there will be a need to do something about it". However, despite these views many of those with sceptical opinions were still engaged in discussions about how to reduce emissions, describing their interest in ideas around renewable energy technologies and living low-waste lifestyles.

THE NEED FOR URGENT ACTION

The level of urgency surrounding the speed with which climate change needs to be addressed was also a topic of discussion (despite the fact that participants did not hear expert evidence directly on this question). Initially, 74% of assembly members agreed that a high or extremely high level of urgency was required, rising to 80% by the final weekend; a figure that closely aligns with the most recent survey of general public opinion on this question[21]. When asked about the scope of the assembly and its focus on the target of achieving net-zero by 2050, no one questioned that the concept that net-zero was an appropriate level of emissions reductions to aim for. In contrast, the question of when this should be achieved was more split (Figure 7), with 45% agreeing that the 2050 target was about right, 37% believing that it is too late and only 11% believing it is too soon (a further 8% did not know).
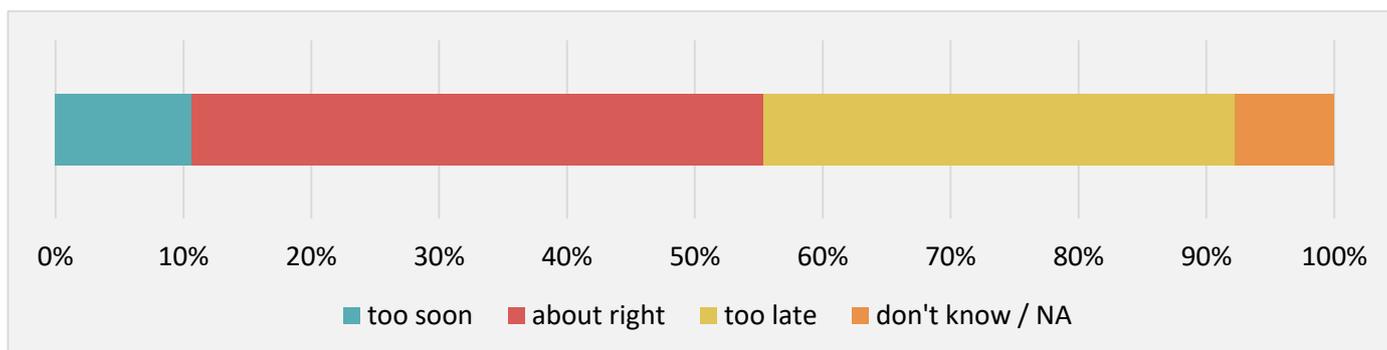

Figure 7. Perceptions of the timing of the 2050 net-zero target.

Where participants felt 2050 was the right timescale for action, the reasoning was often based on acceptance of the explanation provided by the Climate Assembly UK organisers - that the Government had set this target in law and that the assembly was not to address the what or when of this target, but specifically to consider

how it could be achieved. Many participants agreed with this view and felt that there must have been a good reason for the selection of 2050 as a target: '*Well I guess as they've set it, they think its achievable*'; more practically, others felt the fact that this target was already set-in stone politically meant that focusing the assembly on this target was '*the only way they could do it*'.

When asked whether achieving net-zero by 2050 was possible within the survey and follow-up interviews, the majority of participants felt that 2050 was an appropriate and achievable target. However, whist this target was thought 'realistic', this view was often still based more on the idea that this was the earliest that such a target could be achieved, and so while many professed a desire to bring the target forward, the view that this was simply not feasible often prevailed:

> *I was sceptical at first […] it's an ambitious target, but I think it's possible. I'd be amazed if they can achieve it before that. There's a lot of people that want it done by tomorrow, but that's just not possible in my mind.*

> *We need all that time to actually do it all. If they brought the target forward, say make it 2035, there's so much to do… I think we'll have to work really really hard, even to get to 2050.*

Whilst on balance, there was a sense that net-zero by 2050 was a reasonable and achievable goal, there were still a significant number of participants who felt more strongly that the 2050 target was too late and not ambitious enough to address the scale of the problem. The urgency of the climate crisis led them to advocate for this to be brought forward, with some participants giving specific dates they thought were more appropriate:

> *I definitely think we should bring it forward. There are cities that have set their own target of 2035 […] I don't know why we couldn't as a country.*

> *I fail to see why we should give companies 30 years to change. […] If you aim for 2040 you might just get 2050.*

Multiple reasonings for this position arose, including: a desire not to leave it until the last minute; the idea that the target would not be taken seriously if it was too far in the future; concerns that targets are always missed and aiming earlier would leave a buffer for error; and a desire not to let companies off the hook and continue business as usual for the time being. For these participants, the absence of debate on the appropriateness of the target was thought to be a significant drawback of the process, with several highlighting their disappointment that this Government target was not even up for discussion:

> *There are more reports out now saying we're already on course for 1.5 within the next 5, 6 years, so I think the timeframe was the big issue. We should have had a really big discussion about, is 2050 OK or is it far too late.*

We already know from reports that the target should be earlier, like we've only got 12 years before a certain amount of warming. […] I just think it should have been discussed to see what people think.

Most of those holding this view discussed how there had been extensive discussion about this omission and believed that there was significant concern across wider assembly members. However, these strong opinions still remained tempered by a sense of unfeasibility – bringing the target forward was seen as desirable and even necessary, yet not perhaps achievable: '*I think it's a laudable aim, whether it's achievable or not I have my doubts*'.

Finally, there were also a small number of participants who felt that the 2050 target was too ambitious and should be pushed back or scrapped. For some this was a more extreme continuation of concerns about feasibility of the changes required and a disbelief that this target was achievable:

At the time I didn't think it was achievable, and the more we did it the less I thought it was achievable. […] At first, I think I thought 2050 was a long time away, but the more I saw of data, the more I learned, the more I though gosh, that's the earliest we can hope to do this by.

Others were more sceptical about the need for such a target and/or climate change more generally and felt that the cost implications meant other issues should take priority:

If we go net zero by 2050, the cost involved would be huge. And if it turns out to be wrong, and I don't say it is […] would it be the most expensive mistake in the history of humanity? I'm not saying that it is wrong, but I'm not 100% convinced that it is right.

Responsibility for action

When asked towards the start of the assembly about where responsibility for climate action primarily lies, there was an emphasis on shared responsibility, primarily between government and citizens, although many still weighted Government responsibility more highly (Figure 8).

- 0-19 (Gov mostly responsible)
- 20-39 (Gov more responsible)
- 40-59 (Gov and cit equally responsible)
- 60-79 (Cit more responsible)
- 80-100 (Cit mostly responsible)
- Missing data
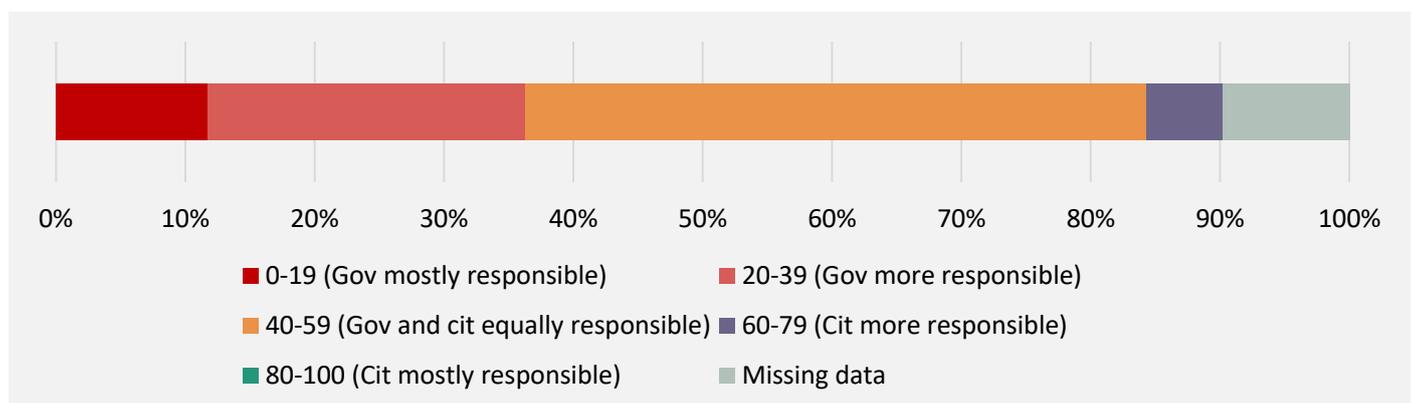
Figure 8. Responsibility for addressing climate change based on sliding scale between Government and individuals.

This more general sense of shared responsibility was also prevalent with in the follow-up interviews, however, further discussion often moved quickly to the need for Government leadership and concerns that the public could not take action without greater support:

I think Government's got to lead. I think we have personal responsibilities, but then we're back to this question of we all have different ideas of what we're responsible for. If you've got to feed your kids, the responsibility is to feed your kids. Not go round all the posh shops trying to buy eco-friendly stuff.

100% government. They are the ones that make the laws. […] There is a moral responsibility for everybody, but that's where it stops. A person like you or me can't do very much about it.

Discussion of the future impact of the assembly's recommendations arose repeatedly, with many concerned that this issue '*was never fully confronted*' during the assembly. Most participants were hopeful that the recommendations would have an impact on the outside world and that Government would take notice and implement appropriate laws and policies, with survey results on the topic relatively mixed (Figure 9).
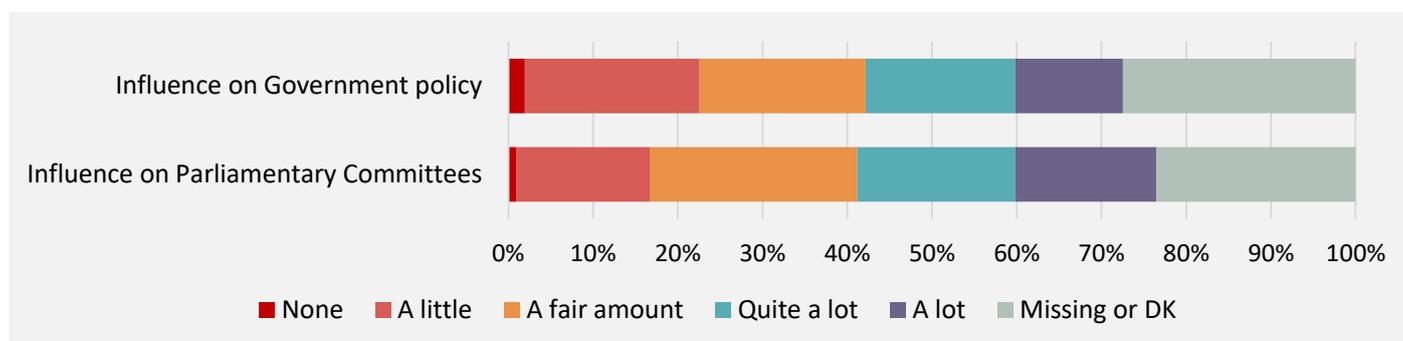

Figure 9. Participants' perceptions of impact of assembly on parliamentary committees and Government policy.

However, concern, cynicism and uncertainty still dominated participant's responses, with the majority expressing the view that they were not optimistic that this hope would be fulfilled:

I think, from what I can see of the recommendations so far, I can see that everyone is really keen and willing to make changes to their lives. So I hope that's really reflected and the government take notice of that.

Let's just say I hope, I hope they will. They don't often have an opportunity to hear directly from the public. I hope they will take notice.

A significant distrust in Government emerged as the primary reason for this concern, both generally and in relation to current priorities:

Knowing how the, any Government works? Or is it going to be one of these things that will be pushed further down the line, maybe considered at another time and date?

I am concerned because Governments, politicians around the world, say all the right things to please the people, to get the votes and then go away and do nothing, sometimes nothing at all.

You can't help thinking that they're going to put the economy first always. The economy has made us open up from coronavirus maybe quicker than we should have. So I find it hard to believe they'd put the climate change in front of any economic decision

In arguing that the Government have a responsibility to listen to the public on this issue, the assembly was cited as a fair and democratic process for gauging public opinion. Participants commented on how surprised they were to find that people from so many different walks of life were able to agree, with one even comparing this to the divisions of the Brexit vote to highlight how in their view it would be stupid not to act on such a strong consensus as that achieved at the Climate Assembly UK:

The process of the citizens' assembly was a real eye opener […] We agreed on a lot of things, that given the makeup of the group, I feel is quite astonishing.

When you have 95%, almost unanimous support for some of these positions, it would be foolish not to take that into account. When so much was fought over 52 to 48%. They tore apart all the existing trade deals, threatening to tear apart the country over 4% difference. Whereas when you have things with 80% support, 95% support… if you don't enact those directives, then you're failing.

CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

Given the strong concern about climate change it is not surprising that general support for measures to tackle climate change was also high (Figure 10). Echoing findings from wider public surveys, the majority of assembly members agreed that we probably or definitely need to reduce home energy use (85%), reduce consumption (84%), limit flying (78%) and reduce meat consumption (65%).
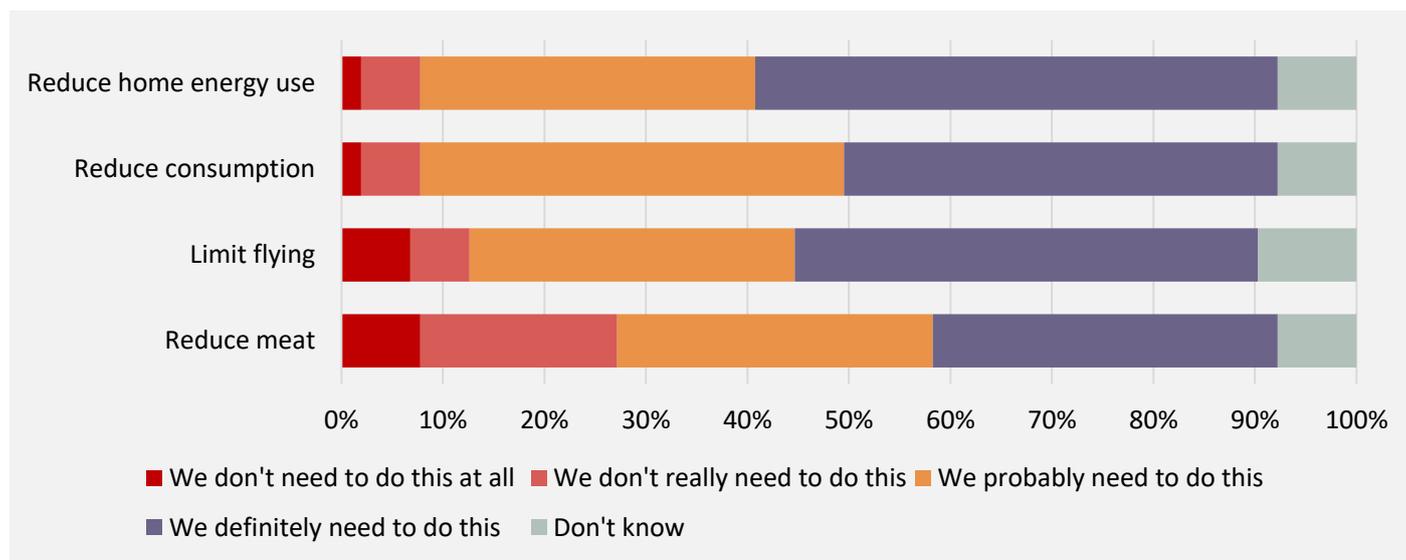

Figure 10. Support for measures to tackle climate change.

Discussions within the follow-up interviews highlighted a varying list of actions individual citizens could undertake to play their part, including a range of more impactful actions such as installing insulation and double glazing, reducing meat consumption, flying or general consumption, reducing business flights, living car free, as well as general support for 'small changes'.

However, discussions of individual agency in efforts to reduce emissions, again highlighted concerns that without Government intervention and support, these actions were not feasible for most people. Unsurprisingly, affordability and lack of education were the most commonly cited reasons for public inaction, leading to many suggestions for improving public information provision. Government incentives and taxation were also highlighted as important mechanisms by which change could be encouraged:

It's going to take a lot of education, a lot of information for people to make those right decisions and to understand why any government intervention is being used. If there's a carbon tax or something like that.

This sense of lack of agency, led a smaller number of participants to instead stress the importance of public pressure on Government and the need for mass protest and consumption choices to be used as methods for change:

Politicians listen to public pressure; they cave in to it. People like Greta Thunberg, you may not agree with some of the things she says, or may not agree with the way she does things, but she does put pressure on governments […] people like you and me, all we can do is vote and advise and have an opinion, but we can't actually do anything.

When asked whether they personally would be more engaged with climate change issues following participation in the assembly, the most common responses were thus related more to awareness and education than practical actions.

Most assembly members felt that the increased awareness of climate change and its solutions that the assembly provided had led them to take an active interest in learning more about the topic, paying more attention to the news and wider political agenda: *'It's got me googling and researching a lot more, reading up on things'.* In addition, many described how they would now be more likely to engage in conversations with family and friends, with many discussing how interested friends and relatives had already been in their experiences of such an unusual process.

A smaller number also commented that they were now planning to engage more with the climate change agenda in their local area, including writing to their MP or local council, or getting more involved in charities or campaign groups. One assembly member has been asked to talk to his niece's school about his experience at the assembly, while another now plans to stand for election on the Parish council:

> *Because I've got an interest in it now. And when I saw that the Parish council were looking for new people, I thought well maybe that's a way of getting on the ladder, of sharing information that I've been given to make an information decision on things to do with climate change that are in my community.*

Three assembly members also described their intention to change switch jobs/training to focus on more environmentally friendly careers. This is included one member who has now taken on the role of sustainability manager at their existing firm and another who hopes to retrain as an installer of electric car chargers.

Few participants mentioned getting directly involved in climate activism, however, with many assertively stating that they were not the type of person to get involved in this kind of activity. The stigma around activism here tended to stem from the recent surge in awareness of such activities (particularly in relation to Extinction Rebellion and Greta Thunberg), with several highlighting their discomfort at the idea of participating in protests or civil disobedience: *'I'm not going to be one of these Greta followers or Greenpeace, tying myself to railings, but I'll certainly be watching with interest'.*

Despite prompting, only a small number of participants actually discussed making specific lifestyle changes as a result of the assembly. The most common change people would like to make would be to switch to an electric car, although, as yet none had actually done so:

> *It's made me more aware and made me think a little bit. Our car is a bit knackered, and it's made me think about getting an electric car which we wouldn't have thought about before. But there are still issues with electric cars anyway.*

Of those that discussed this, most felt that the big changes discussed at the assembly were out of their reach and fell back into a discourse of 'small changes', advocating recycling, gardening, and reducing food waste. Only one assembly member really engaged with the more radical concepts for demand reduction introduced at the assembly, highlighting her desire to reduce her consumption of products and meat and dairy foods, as well as get an electric car and insulate her house. However, even here, she describes how anxiety about the lack of action on climate change leads her to switch off from the issue to protect herself from negative emotions:

> *If things feel like they're moving, then I will. But if they're not, it's too depressing. So from a point of self-protection, I need to feel that we're moving. Otherwise, I don't think I can deal with reading about it without feeling like something is being done to change it.*

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[20] BEIS (UK Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy) (2020) Public Attitudes Tracker: (December 2020 Wave 36, UK). London: UK Government. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/959601/BEIS_PAT_W36_-_Key_Findings.pdf

[21] Whitmarsh, L., (2020). Tracking the effect of COVID-19 on low-carbon behaviours and attitudes to climate change: results from wave 2 of the CAST COVID-19 Survey. CAST Briefing Paper 05. Available at: https://cast.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/CAST-Briefing-05.pdf

CHAPTER 5: Comparing the Climate Assembly UK and the Convention Citoyenne pour le Climat

INTRODUCTION

In Spring 2019, President Emmanuel Macron in France and six parliamentary committees in the UK decided, at similar times, to initiate a national deliberative process on climate change: Convention Citoyenne pour le Climat (CCC) and Climate Assembly UK (CAUK).

A comparison of these two major, national processes is revealing for highlighting the similarities and differences that arose in their aims, methods and outcomes. For those considering options for future assemblies, this sheds light on the availability of different approaches, and the consequences of wider social contexts for their trajectories. While both these national processes shared common features and objectives, many of the contrasts between them have not been identified in any detail previously. In this chapter, we seek to show the main distinctions and the ways in which this influenced their recommendations and uptake.

METHOD

This chapter is based on the observations of report author Claire Mellier. Claire attended both the Climate Assembly UK as a facilitator and the Convention Citoyenne pour le Climat as an accredited researcher, as well as undertaking a detailed desk-based analysis of the two processes.

OVERVIEW OF THE TWO ASSEMBLIES

Here we provide an overview of the key similarities and differences between the CAUK and the CCC, before discussing these in more detail below. Table 3 highlights the key features surrounding the commissioning of the two assemblies, including the overall scope and framing, the commissioning body and sampling of participants. Table 4 sets out the governance and oversight of the two assemblies. This includes listing the various organisations and institutions involved in the organisation of each process, as well as describing the role of experts and assembly members/citizens in shaping the process. Finally, Table 5 provides details of the content and design of the two processes, focusing on highlighting the different ways in which the topic of climate change was divided in thematic discussion groups, the way in which speakers were selected and how the voting was conducted.

More detail on many of the features included in these Tables (including the commissioning, sampling, design, governance and voting), as well as the full reports for each assembly, can be found on their websites[22].

Table 3. Commissioning the CAUK and CCC

	CLIMATE ASSEMBLY UK	CONVENTION CITOYENNE POUR LE CLIMAT
OBJECTIVES	To assess the level of support on various climate policy options and provide recommendations	To identify structuring measures that will be enacted either by a national referendum, parliamentary vote or directly turned into regulations "without filter" from the Executive.
FRAMING QUESTION	How should the UK meet its legally binding target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050?	How can France reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40% (in relation to 1990's levels) by 2030, in the spirit of social justice?
COMMISSIONING BODY	Six Select Committees of the House of Commons	President Emmanuel Macron
TOTAL BUDGET	£ 560K	€ 5.4M
PARTICIPANT SELECTION	108 selected by Sortition Foundation – random stratified sampling according to 7 criteria, which included ethnicity and attitude to climate change.	150 selected by sortition by polling company Harris, using random stratified sampling according to six criteria. Ethnicity and climate change attitudes were not included.

Table 4. Governance and oversight of the CAUK and CCC

	CLIMATE ASSMEBLY UK	CONVENTION CITOYENNE POUR LE CLIMAT
GOVERNANCE	**Core team:** Involve (led on process design, facilitation, project management), Sortition Foundation (led on citizen selection and recruitment), My Society (created CAUK's branding and website) and four Expert Leads (who worked closely with Involve on the assembly's design). **Oversight team:** The process was overseen by the Advisory Panel and Academic Panel and signed off by the House of Commons and the Parliamentary Office of Science & Technology.	**Organising body:** Conseil Economique Social et Environnemental **Governance Committee:** composed of 17 people: 15 permanent stakeholder members and 2 citizens (drawn by lot) rotating between each session of the Convention. This committee set the agenda and the rules for deliberations. **Three Guarantors:** independent overseers, ensuring the compliance of the process with the rules of independence and deontology.
ROLE OF EXPERTS IN SHAPING PROCESS	Four Expert Leads ensured that CAUK was "balanced, accurate and comprehensive" throughout all stages of the process and that it focussed on how to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. They were supported by the advisory and academic panels.	Citizens were supported throughout the process in a number of ways: 1) an expert support group 'groupe d'appui' that assisted citizens in developing their recommendations; 2) the 'Comité légistique' that advised citizens on the legal nature of their measures to ensure their compliance with the rule of law; and 3) fact Checkers that answered citizens' technical questions in real time (via WhatsApp)
ROLE OF CITIZENS IN SHAPING THE PROCESS	Minimal involvement of citizens in shaping process. Following requests from assembly members, a session was added to explore the implications of Covid-19 for reaching net zero.	Citizens sat on the governance committee of the assembly and had the opportunity to suggest experts they wanted to hear from. Citizens requested to hold an additional seventh session of the assembly.
MONITORING AND EVALUATION	An official evaluation team specialising in deliberative democracy was commissioned to produce a report focusing on: how assembly members were recruited, how expertise was presented to assembly members, how individuals' views evolved during the four weekends, and the assembly's impact on Parliament.	There was no formal external evaluation, but the process was monitored by 40 Accredited Researchers observers. In addition, the charity "Les 150" was created by the citizens, the partial remit of which was to monitor the future of their proposals leading to the creation of a monitoring tool to check which measures were rejected or implemented[23].
WIDER SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT	There was no online consultation platform. Stakeholder engagement informed the design of the assembly, which included consultation with a number of prominent business, faith and civil society leaders from across UK society.	An online platform was set up to gather the contributions from the public and wider stakeholders during the process. It was managed by Open Source Politics who produced three contributions summaries during the Convention, which were reviewed and validated by the Governance Committee, and are available online.

Table 5. Content and process of the CAUK and CCC

	CLIMATE ASSMEBLY UK	CONVENTION CITOYENNE POUR LE CLIMAT
DURATION OF THE PROCESS	4 months (25th January – 17th May 2020)	9 months (3rd October 2019 – 21st June 2020) up to the voting stage and an additional 8th session in February 2021.
LENGTH OF THE SESSIONS	3 in person weekends (6 full days) + 3 online weekends	7 in person sessions (2.5 days) + 3 online weekends
THEMATIC CONTENT	**4 thematic groups of 36 people:** 'how we travel', 'in the home', 'what we buy' and 'what we eat and how we use the land' **Full group of 108 people:** 'where our electricity comes from' and 'removing greenhouse gases from the atmosphere	**5 thematic groups of 30 people:** 'Se deplacer' transport, 'Se nourir' food, 'Consommer' consumption, 'Travailler et produire' work and manufacturing, 'Se loger' housing
SPEAKER SELECTION PROCESS	47 speakers presented evidence to the Assembly members, either as informants (who provided a range of views or options that exist on a topic) or advocates (who presented their personal or organisational opinions). Speakers were selected by the Expert Leads, who identified the core content and questions for each theme and selected a range of speakers to ensure members heard a 'balanced, accurate and comprehensive' view of the topic. The Academic Panel and the Advisory Panel, as well as the CAUK team at Parliament were also consulted.	140 speakers presented evidence, either in plenary sessions, in thematic groups, or during the "speed dating". The speakers came from a range of sectors, including universities, journalists, civil servants, businesses, NGOs, think tanks, trade unions, and local/national government. Speakers were selected by the Governance Committee, but the citizens were able to request experts, who, where possible were invited to present to the assembly.
VOTING	**Votes by 36 members of thematic groups on:** future scenarios for reducing emissions; and policy options for achieving those changes. **Votes by all 108 assembly members on:** principles underpinning the path to net zero; electricity generation and greenhouse gas removals; recommendations to Parliament; and recommendations on Covid-19 recovery and the path to net zero. **Votes conducted:** by secret paper ballot and secure online survey.	**Votes by all assembly members on:** 149 measures from 5 themes; revision of the Constitution and Governance; how to finance the transition; and response to the post-COVID recovery plan. **Votes conducted:** by secret electronic votes system (SMS or online).
OUTPUTS	Over 50 recommendations – 556 pages report	149 measures – 460 pages report

SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE CAUK AND THE CCC

Each assembly followed a broadly standard format, allowing time for learning, deliberating, and voting. The CAUK and the CCC involved a similar number of people (108 and 150, respectively), who were selected by sortition and stratified sampling to ensure that they reflected their country's population.

In both the UK and France, citizens at times participated together as a full group, but in both cases, citizens were divided into groups that explored different topics. Groups of thirty-six people covered four themes for the CAUK: how people travel; in the home; what people buy; and food, farming, and land use. Likewise, for the CCC, five groups of thirty people covered different themes: housing; traveling; eating; consuming; and working and manufacturing.

In both the UK and French assemblies, the questions citizens were asked to consider were set within the existing commitments of reaching net zero emissions by 2050[24]. In the UK, citizens were asked "How should the UK reach its legally-binding target of net zero by 2050?". In France, by contrast, citizens were asked to address an intermediary target, as clarified in a letter[25] from the Prime Minister inviting citizens to "define structuring measures to cut France's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by at least 40% by 2030 compared to 1990, in a spirit of social justice". While the overall goal between the two assemblies was comparable – enabling a route to net zero emissions by 2050 – the emphasis on a nearer-term target and 'social justice' is likely to have contributed to different expectations in the CCC as compared to the CAUK.

Differences in process and design

In terms of design differences, one of the most important overarching differences between the two was that the CAUK was designed to support a social appraisal of predetermined policies, whereas the CCC was a policy development forum.

The CAUK's objectives were to allow citizens to express their personal views and to deliberate as a group on predetermined policy proposals, informed by "balanced, comprehensive and accurate" information provided by expert informants and advocates[26]. The CAUK took assembly members through a format of presentation (evidence provision), deliberation (discussion and debate), and voting (expressing opinions and preferences) in order to generate appraisal of policy proposals. However, although all 108 citizens voted on wider issues (such as electricity generation, the underpinning principles of the UK's path to net-zero emissions, and greenhouse gas removal from the atmosphere), most proposals[27] were only voted on by the issue-specific subgroups of 36 citizens. This approach raises questions as to the legitimacy of the proposals not voted on by all participants, including where small differences in voting patterns led to certain recommendations being emphasised over others in the CAUK's official report.

By contrast, the CCC aimed to generate and finalize policy proposals through collective decision-making and consensus, respectively. All the proposals arising from the CCC were refined over the six sessions before all 150 participants cast their votes in the final session in June 2020. The 149 proposals produced were grouped into forty-three blocks of one to thirteen measures.

It is important to acknowledge that the CCC's citizens were able to shape the process in a way that the CAUK's citizens were not. With input from experts, the 150 French citizens participating created 149 measures[28], including recommendations not originally in the convention's remit. These recommendations included a proposal for a law on ecocide, and in relation to trade agreements (one proposal, for example, asks for a moratorium on the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement[29]). Also, upon the citizens' request, an additional seventh session was added, and experts of their choosing were invited.

The CAUK did allow some space for additional recommendations to be developed towards the end of the process, although less time was made available for this, and this citizen-led aspect was not as embedded as in the French assembly. In all cases, the additional measures developed in the CAUK were supported by assembly members. Among the more popular of the 39 proposals were transparency in the relationship between big energy companies and government (94% support), and a dedicated government department for achieving net zero (86% support).

For both the CAUK and CCC, overall high levels of support were obtained across the recommendations considered. As we outline in chapter 2, many policies received high levels of support from assembly members as part of the CAUK. Likewise, in the CCC many of the recommendations that were developed received over 95% support. While this may ostensibly be considered a similarity of the two processes, it is striking the extent to which different methods – a more top-down versus a comparatively more bottom-up approach – led to these high levels of support. In both cases, support for policies was likely influenced by people's positive view of the policy options before them. A critical distinction between the CAUK and CCC, however,

is that this favourability related to expert-derived options in the former case, and citizen-driven proposals in the latter case.

Comparing the impact of the CAUK and CCC

The impact of these two processes on climate policies is still unclear at the time of writing, but there is evidence that the climate policy environment has shifted in both countries as a result of these two assemblies. In the UK, Alok Sharma, then Secretary of State for the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), welcomed the report arising from the CAUK and committed to using it to help shape the Government's work in the run-up to COP26. He later added that "the report's recommendations are an important part of the evidence base for developing the Government's Net Zero Strategy". A number of other developments indicate the degree to which consideration of CAUK recommendations by different institutions has so far occurred:

❖ The Climate Change Committee (CCC) references the assembly's recommendations to inform their report on the Sixth Carbon Budget, which also calls for a public engagement strategy for net zero that gives people a role in shaping decision-making.

❖ The commissioning Select Committees are also seeking to build on CAUK's work and use the recommendations to inform their inquiries in a number of ways, including:

◆ An overarching inquiry to monitor the Government's engagement and interaction with Assembly findings and progress in implementing proposals (BEIS Committee)
◆ An inquiry into de-carbonising heating in the home (BEIS Committee)
◆ An inquiry on zero emission vehicles and road pricing (Transport Committee)
◆ An inquiry on the role of hydrogen in achieving net zero (Science & Technology Committee)

In France, the assembly has influenced policy and political decision-making through a more binding process committed to by French President Emmanuel Macron at an early stage, which at the time of writing included:

❖ 7 Dec 2020: the draft climate bill (loi climat et résilience[30]) was presented to the Convention's citizens and MPs.

❖ 14 Dec 2020: Macron met for the second time with the Convention's citizens to answer their questions with regards to the draft Climate Bill.

❖ 10 Feb 2021: the Climate Bill was presented to the National Assembly.

❖ 13-23 Feb 2021: the Convention's citizens met Ministers with ministers during six thematic zoom calls to hear how the Government had translated their measures into the bill.

❖ Feb 2021: the Convention's Citizens shared their views on the bill at National Assembly hearings.

❖ 8-19 Mar 2021: the bill was discussed in a Special Commission in an accelerated procedure. 7,327 amendments were tabled.

❖ 29 Mar-17 Apr 2021: the bill was discussed in the National Assembly during the first reading.

❖ 4 May 2021: After 110 hours of debate, the National Assembly votes in favour of the bill.

A second measure of the impact of Citizens' Assemblies can be seen in the level of wider public awareness of the processes. In the UK, an assessment of the public awareness of CAUK is not available at the time of writing this report and we are not aware of any existing analysis of media coverage or the results of polling data to assess the level of public awareness. However, in France two polls have provided an indication of the level of public awareness[31]. Conducted in June 2020 (just after the voting stage of the CCC), one poll found that 7 out of 10 French people had heard about the Convention's proposals, and 3 out of 5 considered that

the Convention was legitimate to make recommendations on behalf of the French population. In addition, 64% of people who had heard about the Convention considered that its work was useful to fight climate change and lead to an ecological transition in a spirit of social justice. A second poll revealed that there was support for a lot of the key measures of the Convention, apart from the motorway speed reduction measure. Overall, the measures were approved by 62% of the respondents who had heard about the convention and were judged realistic and efficient. However, there was scepticism about their implementation by the Executive, where 73% of the respondents thought only a small proportion of the measures would be implemented. 81% of the respondents were in favour of the key measures from the convention being put to a referendum.

Differences in political and wider social contexts

From its inception, the CCC was closely linked to a political (rather than parliamentary) process. When President Macron announced[32] the CCC on April 26 2019, he created high expectations. President Macron made a political commitment that measures generated by the Convention were to be put to a national referendum or parliamentary vote, or directly turned into regulations 'without filter'. This was a strong commitment on the part of the President, as it meant the CCC had been given more power than most citizens' assemblies so far. Until this point, almost all citizens' assemblies (and subsequently including the CAUK) had been consultative. In addition, citizen deliberation had often considered narrower questions such as the decriminalization of abortion or lowering the voting age, which were then put to a referendum. By contrast, the CCC applied a very different framework: for the first time, at a national level, citizens had been asked to go through the process of drafting laws, with the potential to impact entire sectors of the economy and requiring difficult trade-offs as well as the need to undertake a deeper analysis of the systemic drivers and barriers for change.

Due to the orientation of the CCC specifically towards the generation of concrete options that could be taken to the next stage of policy implementation, citizens were explicitly asked to go through the process of drafting laws, with the support from legal experts: this influence of the wider political and legal context, as such had a clear influence upon the design of the assembly and the nature of citizen participation. The Convention led to the creation of a Climate Bill[33].

The strong political framing of the CCC undoubtedly made it possible to mobilize citizens and offer a real sense of responsibility and ownership for the outcome of the process. However, in the event the 'no filter' promise was ambiguous and inapplicable in its most literal interpretation, and so was arguably a counter-productive promise to have made. This commitment generated strong expectations among the citizens, which then led to disappointments: the results from the final 8th session of the Convention[34] in February 2021 did not appraise the Governments' Climate Bill in favourable terms. Most assembly members, for example, stated that they were 'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied' with the extent to which the government had taken their recommendations into account.

In the case of the UK process, the remit of the assembly was, from its inception, to inform the work of the select committees which had commissioned it. While informing the policy process, for better or worse this approach did not require any further action from government or policy-makers. The main outcome in the UK has been the provision of in-depth briefings to the commissioning Select Committees, Government Departments and external stakeholders, in order to inform future work programmes and policy development.

The key distinction and lessons from these two contrasting processes, relate to the French CCC having been cast as a political chamber, whereas the CAUK existed to inform a political chamber. Furthermore, the CCC's civil society representatives had a formal, active role in shaping the mandate and process, whereas CAUK's civil society members did not. For instance, Gilets Citoyens[35] (Citizen Vests), the civil society representatives on the governance committee, had an active role in determining the convention's framing question[36]. The CCC was in large part a response to the Gilets Jaunes (Yellow Vests) protests, which were prompted by a

proposed carbon tax increase, but eventually came to symbolise the divide between ordinary citizens and Parisian elites. By contrast, discussions on the idea of a climate assembly began in late 2018 and early 2019 – before the UK Parliament's declaration of a climate emergency[37] in May 2019 and widespread protests initiated by Extinction Rebellion[38] in April 2019.

In the UK, the processes underpinning the climate assembly were tightly controlled and designed to ensure the citizens were shielded from external factors or political forces, except those that were permitted by the conveners of the assembly. Observers were not permitted to speak to assembly members or even to use the same parts of the building as them, for example, in order to keep the process as 'neutral' or objective as possible. The conveners of the CAUK set out to design it as an apolitical, independent, rigorous, and deliberative research process to inform policy making. The UK's parliamentary committees set the CAUK's framing question, without input from the stakeholder advisory panel (which included representatives of civil society organisations such as Greenpeace and youth organizations). While the 'net zero by 2050' question was in line with wider government intentions, climate activists[39] raised concerns almost immediately that the CAUK framing question was problematic.

Whereas CAUK participants were supported to be independent and as representative of 'ordinary' people as possible, CCC participants were actively encouraged to engage with politics. It was not suggested to CAUK participants that they undertake additional research on the topic of climate change in between sessions, or to have wider conversations with friends and family about the issues at hand. In France, however, assembly members were given a greater role and agency in seeking outside input. They were encouraged to speak to the media and engage with their communities and members of parliament. They also created their own WhatsApp groups to freely communicate between themselves without any third-party interference, as well as having access to an online platform (J'enparle) to increase engagement. In addition, they attended webinars to support the learning process and maintain momentum between sessions. Many CCC participants started acting as de facto representatives—in some cases, speaking on behalf of the whole convention (or sometimes their region) – to the media and gathering input from those they sought to represent.

The difference in the level of control and types of process used across the two assemblies, extended also to the nature of discussions held within assembly members' groups. The structure and facilitation of the CAUK contrasted with France's more collective self-organizing approach. For many who specialize in developing participatory processes, one of the most surprising aspects about the CCC was the absence of table facilitators. The lack of table facilitators raises the question of whether citizen discussions may have been dominated by certain people, as it is typically trained facilitators whose role it is to ensure that all voices are heard and that discussions stay focused and productive. As a whole, the French process was far less technically exact than the UK process. The UK process had clear, agreed-upon ground rules for participation, which were reiterated at each session; the French process had none, trusting citizens to self-organize and self-regulate.

A final difference between the UK and French processes concerned the budgets available. France's CCC budget was nearly ten times that of the UK's (€5.4 million versus £560,000). This large disparity in funding inevitably impacts on what can be accomplished through deliberation, and comparisons of assemblies therefore must be seen through this prism. The greater budget for the CCC, as well as its high-profile political status, is likely to have enabled it to bring about a wider national conversation. The French process led to a genuine national debate at breakfast tables, cafés, and restaurants across France. A poll from January 2021 showed that 48% of the French population thought the media didn't talk enough about the Convention in 2020 and only 12% didn't know what the Convention was about[40]. This public endorsement has generated a very powerful mandate for change. Despite some national press coverage of the UK assembly, the CAUK was never designed to create a genuine national debate, and this did not occur. Public awareness of the assembly will likely remain much lower in the UK than in France.

22 For the CAUK: https://www.climateassembly.uk/index.html; and for the CCC: https://www.conventioncitoyennepourleclimat.fr/en/

23 https://www.les150.fr/ for more information. Monitoring tool output is available here: https://sansfiltre.les150.fr/

24 https://www.nsenergybusiness.com/news/countries-net-zero-emissions/

25 https://www.conventioncitoyennepourleclimat.fr/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/lettre-de-mission.pdf

26 https://www.climateassembly.uk/about/speakers/

27 https://www.climateassembly.uk/report/read/final-report-exec-summary.pdf

28 https://propositions.conventioncitoyennepourleclimat.fr/pdf/CCC-propositions-synthese%20-%20EN.pdf

29 https://propositions.conventioncitoyennepourleclimat.fr/se-nourrir-2/

30 https://www.ecologie.gouv.fr/loi-climat-resilience

31 https://reseauactionclimat.org/sondage-des-gaulois-pas-si-refractaires-a-laction-climatique/ http://www.odoxa.fr/sondage/mesures-de-convention-citoyenne-seduisent-francais-a-lexception-notable-110-km-h/

32 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zLkR6Ps2haA&feature=youtu.be&t=2513

33 https://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/dyn/15/dossiers/lutte_contre_le_dereglement_climatique

34 https://www.conventioncitoyennepourleclimat.fr/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/CCC-rappor: t_Session8_GR-1.pdf

35 https://giletscitoyens.org/

36 https://www.involve.org.uk/resources/blog/opinion/convention-citoyenne-pour-le-climat-what-can-we-learn-french-citizens

37 https://time.com/5581615/uk-declares-climate-emergency/

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CHAPTER 6: Exploring development of measures in the Convention Citoyenne pour le Climat

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a case study, overviewing the process through which the citizens who were part of the group 'Consumption' created their measures. It sheds light on two key aspects of the process: (1) The respective roles of the citizens, speakers, experts support group and facilitators during the learning and deliberation phases, and (2) The evolution of the number of measures and their content; from the initial brainstorming (which took place in session 1) to the finalisation of the measures (taking place in in session 5).

METHOD

This chapter is based on the observations of report author Claire Mellier. Claire attended the Convention Citoyenne pour le Climat as an accredited researcher.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE MEASURES

The citizens developed the measures in a primarily bottom-up way. While in a top-down approach the policy options would be pre-determined upfront by experts, the bottom-up approach facilitated the creation of policies by the citizens with input from experts (see also Chapter 2 for a discussion between top-down and bottom-up approaches). In total, the group 'Consumption' developed five blocks of measures:

- ❖ Create an obligation to disclose the carbon impact of products and services

- ❖ Regulate advertising to reduce incentives for over-consumption

- ❖ Limit overpackaging and the use of single-use plastics by developing bulk products and deposits scheme in distribution sites

- ❖ Make education, training and awareness-raising the leverage tools for responsible consumption

- ❖ Ensure better implementation of public environmental policies and evaluate them in order to make them more effective

The analysis presented in this chapter is based on the observation of the experts' input, the group deliberation, and the analysis of the written materials produced by the group. All of the Convention's sessions, both in person and online, were observed as part of the research process[41].

OVERVIEW OF THE THEMATIC GROUP 'CONSUMPTION'

The Convention's sessions combined plenary discussions (with all 150 citizens) and thematic gatherings in smaller groups. Five thematic groups were identified by the Governance Committee to cover relevant aspects of France's emissions: housing (Se loger), work and manufacturing (Travailler et produire), transport (Se déplacer), food (Se nourrir), and consumption (Consommer). The allocation of citizens to the thematic was done at random in order to prevent people from choosing their preferred subjects and risk introducing an element of bias into the process.

The Consumption group was composed of 28 citizens. Within the group, citizens divided themselves into five sub-groups of up to six people each for small group table discussions. The self-selection at tables led some people to naturally gravitate together based on a shared sense of geographical connection (i.e., where they were from), age or affinity built over time. This was in some cases problematic as it prevented a diversity of perspectives to be heard during the table discussions and in some cases led to a bias towards consensus due to shared outlooks[42].

The group as a whole was facilitated by two Lead Facilitators; however, table discussions were not facilitated, and citizens were responsible for note taking using prepared recording templates. The group meetings stretched from October 2019 (session 1) to February 2020 (session 5). Sessions 6 and 7 took place as a whole assembly of 150 people. Between session 1 and 6, four webinars were organised in order to complement the work done in person and to provide opportunities for further learning and collaboration in between sessions. Those webinars were not compulsory, and only a minority of the citizens attended them (a maximum of 10 people out of 28).

Final measures from Consumption group and voting results

Table 6 presents the final measures developed with the Consumption group. These measures were developed by the smaller thematic group but they were voted on by the whole assembly on 20th-22nd June 2020. These measures, called 'propositions' in the assembly final report[43] are organised as follow:

- ❖ Group (A, B, C etc): describes the overarching heading

- ❖ Objectives (C1, C2, C3 etc): describes the aim of each grouping

- ❖ Proposals (C1.1, C1.2 etc): describes the specific measures / proposals under each objective

Table 6. Measures for the thematic group 'Consumption'.

MEASURES (ENGLISH TRANSLATION FOLLOWED BY ORIGINAL FRENCH)	VOTES
Group A: Information Display	
C1: Create an obligation to disclose the carbon impact of products and services (Créer une obligation d'affichage de l'impact carbone des produits et services)	**98.0% Yes**
◆ C1.1 Develop and then implement a carbon score on all consumer products and services. ◆ C1.2 Make it mandatory to display greenhouse gas emissions in retail and consumer places and in advertisements for brands.	
Group B: Advertising	
C2: Regulate advertising to reduce incentives for over-consumption (Réguler la publicité pour réduire les incitations à la surconsommation)	**89.6% Yes**
◆ C2.1 Prohibit the advertising of products that emit the most greenhouse gases, in all types of advertising. ◆ C2.2 Regulate advertising to strongly limit the daily and non-chosen exposure to incentives to consume ◆ C2.3 Put in place labels to encourage people to consume less	
Group C: Overpackaging	
C3: Limit overpackaging and the use of single-use plastics by developing bulk products and deposits scheme in distribution sites (Limiter le suremballage et l'utilisation du plastique à usage unique en développant le vrac et les consignes dans les lieux de distribution)	**95.9% Yes**
◆ C3.1 Gradually introduce an obligation to introduce zero-waste systems in all stores and impose a percentage on central buyers ◆ C3.2 Gradually implement a glass deposit system until generalised implementation in 2025 ◆ C3.3 Promote the development of compostable bio-based packaging ◆ C3.4 Replace a part of the Household Waste Disposal Tax (TEOM) by modalities that encourage eco-responsible behaviours	
C4: Encourage digital sobriety in order to reduce its environmental impact (measure merged with PT12) (Encourager la sobriété numérique afin d'en réduire les impacts environnementaux (proposition fusionnée - vote PT12))	**No votes (Measure merged)**
Group D: Education	
C5: Make education, training and awareness raising leverage tools for responsible consumption (Faire de l'éducation, de la formation et de la sensibilisation des leviers d'action de la consommation responsable)	**97.9% Yes**
◆ C5.1 Modify the education programme to generalise education on the environment and sustainable development in the French school system ◆ C5.2 Strengthen education on environment and sustainable development by making it a cross-cutting subject for teachers ◆ C5.3 Raise awareness among the French population by linking understanding of the climate emergency and action	
Group E: Monitoring and control of public environmental policies	
C6: Ensure better implementation of public environmental policies and evaluate them in order to make them more effective (Assurer une meilleure application des politiques publiques environnementales et les évaluer pour les rendre plus efficaces)	**95.9% Yes**

'CONSUMPTION' GROUP PROCESS ANALYSIS

This section provides an analysis of the process that led to the creation of the measures from the Consumption group. Tables 7-9 provide an overview of the process and illustrate the respective roles of the citizens, speakers, experts support group and facilitators in that process and how this shaped the final recommendations that the assembly voted on.

Table 7. Overview and outcomes of sessions 1-3.

SESSION OVERVIEW	SESSION OUTCOMES
SESSION 1: 4-6TH OCTOBER 2019	
An open discussion and initial reactions on the theme Consumption and suggestions of experts that the group wanted to hear from.	**Initial thoughts:** The group shared their first thoughts on the topic, the themes of which centred on: Ways of consuming; Awareness raising; Regulation; Transparency; and Waste. **Initial questions and concerns:** The group raised concerns surrounding the practical process, developing the recommendations and defining the scope of the topic. For instance, they wondered whether they would be able to suggest topics which were not part of the 5 themes, or other subjects such as degrowth. It is worth noting that this was the first time the concept of degrowth was mentioned in the group.
OPTIONAL WEBINAR: 14TH OCTOBER 2019	
An update on the expert selection process and introduction on how the contradictory expert debate will take place.	**Initial thoughts:** Experts were chosen based on requests made by the citizens in their thematic groups, as well as suggestions from the Advisers from CESE who were on the Governance Committee.
SESSION 2: 25-27 OCTOBER 2019	
Presentations and a Q&A session with the focus on Identifying levers and blockers of change and a reflection on the concepts of fairness and social justice.	**Initial thoughts:** Following an initial presentation from a Ministerial department representative in charge of Sustainable Development, three counterpoints were presented by three different speakers, from the NGOs and public sector which made an attempt at framing the debate as contested. A cross-pollination approach was used in order to gain a sense of what the other groups had covered. Six ambassadors from the Consumption group visited the other thematic groups. Their role was to bring the information gathered from the other themes back to their original group to start identifying cross-cutting topics. **Prioritisation of preferences:** At the end of the session, seven topics emerged as priorities: (1) Circular economy, (2) Information provision, (3) Monitor lobbying activities, (4) Develop financial incentives to encourage eco-responsible consumption, (5) Reduction in energy consumption in businesses and public spaces, (6) Transforming transport modes, and (7) Promotion of local products.
SESSION 3: 15-17 NOVEMBER 2019	
Expert support group presentations, discussions on a future scenario '2030 visioning' exercise, reflections on the groups of measures, feedback on the roadmap for the group, and cross pollination with other groups. Two members of the expert support group highlighted the challenges faced by the citizens when developing their measures: impact, trade-offs and definitions. At the end of the session, eight measures were synthesised by facilitators.	**Critical reflection of impact:** 1) The impact of the measures is often indirect (medium to long term) but essential to achieve GHG reduction, 2) Information provision considered a low impact measure, 3) Measures should reflect impact on GHG emissions as well as symbolism and profound changes. **Trade-offs of measures:** 1) Consequences of a reduction or ban of advertising on financing of media and price of goods and services to be considered, 2) The measures on taxation are surprising in the light of the previous discussions within the Convention related to the carbon tax. It was specified by the members of the group that the aim is to make taxation fairer, not to increase it.

During session 3, the proposals from session 2 were reviewed and amended. The citizens were asked to undertake a priority judgment exercise (see Table 8), by ranking each measure on a scale from 1 to 5 (1: low priority, 5: high priority). The 5 measures with the highest scores (measures 4 to 8) were presented to the whole assembly in plenary. This was the first time that some of the measures were dropped as a result of a ranking process. Table 9 then provides an overview of the process following this point.

Table 8. Results of priority judgement exercise for the Consumption group.

MEASURES	AVERAGE RANKING
1. Reduce waste by developing reuse, especially of glass, and recycling	4.11
2. Tax the product at the source according to the waste it produces	3.81
3. Make the use of recyclable materials mandatory in the textile industry	3.92
4. Increase the life span of consumer goods	4.74
5. Create an observatory for the ecological transition	4.40
6. Regulate advertising in France	4.29
7. Significantly limit the use of energy (electric and fossil) in public and private places	4.53
8. Index the amount of VAT on the distance between the location of production and the location of sale	4.44

The group expressed what needed to be further explored or developed, or what was still up for debate, such as the subject of 'Change of the economic system' which was stated as a major problem but was also seen as 'utopian'. This framing illustrates the fact the group was grappling with the deeper systemic drivers of consumption, and the need for further exploration of the economic models. However they were not able to explore this aspect any further due to the way the process was designed.

REFLECTIONS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF MEASURES

The measures were developed by the 28 citizens of the Consumption group, however, there were opportunities throughout the process for the rest of the Convention for members to input and challenge the measures. The approach used to identify overlaps, duplications or gaps between measures had the intention to ensure a cross-fertilisation between the different groups, through the use of citizen 'ambassadors'[44]. This ensured that the assembly members were able to vote on all proposals across all five themes rather than just their groups.

Although the group tackled the topic of consumption and what role different actors can play in changing their behaviour (i.e., individuals, businesses), the process did not always support deeper deliberation on lifestyle change (i.e., the systemic conditions that shape how we live) and the implications for the economic models of development (e.g., growth vs. degrowth

agenda). The observation of the group deliberation and the analysis of the minutes of the meetings done by the facilitators shows there was an interest from several citizens in the group to explore those more systemic questions, but the process did not allow those conversations to happen in a structured way.

Table 9. Overview and outcomes of sessions 4 and 5.

SESSION OVERVIEW	SESSION OUTCOMES
OPTIONAL WEBINAR: 15 DECEMBER 2019	
A discussion of the feedback from the expert group and the cross-cutting themes	Between session 3 and 4, the expert support group provided feedback on the 8 draft measures. They also received feedback from the Ministry of Ecological Transition on existing policies and new planned policies relevant to the group. This demonstrates how civil servants from the Ministry had an input into the review process.
SESSION 4: 10-12 JANUARY 2020	
A group discussion to review the expert feedback and start identifying priority recommendations of the measures.	**Measures kept:** 1) Reduce waste production drastically and incentivise Circular economy, 2) Give consumers the means to be informed and act accordingly in their everyday consumption choices, including digital choices, and reduce overconsumption patterns.
	New measures: 1) Encourage digital sobriety to reduce its environmental impact, 2) Make children the actors of responsible consumption
	Measures dropped: 1) Limit significantly the energy use (electric and fossil) in public and private places
	Reflection: During session, the ambition of the group became clearer. They highlighted the need to consider imported emissions as well as territorial emissions when dealing with consumption, and they started using the concept of personal carbon footprint, instead of just focusing on GHG emissions reduction.
OPTIONAL WEBINAR: 25TH FEBRUARY 2020	
A review of the outputs from session 4 to clarify what additional information is required from the Expert support group and the legal experts.	This was the first time the Legal Experts provided formal feedback on the proposed measures from the group in order to ensure they are fit for direct translation into legislative or regulatory text.
SESSION 5: 7-9 FEBRUARY 2020	
A review of 45 measures across all 5 themes (as a whole assembly and finalisation of the measures).	In order to identify the various inputs made throughout the process, the document reviewed by the citizens clearly highlighted three types of content: the text that was originally created by the citizens themselves, the comments from the expert support group and the notes from the facilitators based on their understanding of the key outcomes from the sessions. This ensured there was clarity on how the measures were shaped.
	The purpose of session 5 was to finalise the measures from each thematic group and to hear the reactions to these measures from various business stakeholders (e.g., on bulk purchase, waste packaging prevention and digital sobriety). The range of perspectives during that session led to a detailed debate between the citizens and the speakers.
OPTIONAL WEBINAR: 25TH FEBRUARY 2020	
Review of measures prior to session 6	This webinar closed the cycle of work in groups. It was followed by session 6, which brought everyone back together to look at the entirety of the measures across all 5 themes. During this webinar, some citizens expressed concerns about the lack of engagement as a whole assembly until that point.

The citizens from the Consumption group became aware very quickly that they needed to consider carbon emissions at the territorial level, as well as the co-called 'imported' emissions (those associated with consuming products and services from abroad). This led them to consider the question put before them: *'How can France reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40% by 2030 while ensuring social justice?'* in light of the concept of carbon footprint. The evidence presented in the information booklet distributed to all of the Convention's members at the start of the process had a section on carbon footprints, which explained the challenges here[45]. As a result of that awareness, citizens came up with the following wording for the group's ambition: 'In order to reduce GHG emissions by 40% by 2030, it seems inevitable to review our lifestyles and in particular our consumption patterns: in 2019, the average carbon footprint of a French person is 11.2 tonnes whereas it should be 2 tonnes per year to achieve the objectives of the Paris agreement. We must therefore consume less'. This shaped the wording of the introduction of the Convention's final report, which included a section on transition and carbon footprint.

CONCLUSION

Among the consumption measures, the proposal to regulate advertising was perhaps one of the most innovative of the Convention. According to the academic Libaert[46] this measure 'had the effect of a bomb in the advertising world', especially as this measure received high levels of support from the Convention members at the voting stage (89.6 % in favour of the measure). Recent developments with the Climate and Resilience bill[47] have shown that this measure hasn't been fully translated into the bill according to 'Les 150'[48], the charity which monitors the implementation of the Convention's measures. This is one of many other examples[49] which illustrates how difficult it will be for some of the most transformative and impactful measures to be translated into actual policies.

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41 Seven in person sessions (sessions 1 to 7) and three online sessions (sessions 6bis on 3-4 April 2020, 6ter on 30-31 May 2020 and session 8 on 26-28 February 2021) and several optional webinars throughout the process.
42 Table groupings observations from sessions 2 to 5.
43 Full report in French: https://propositions.conventioncitoyennepourleclimat.fr/pdf/ccc-rapport-final.pdf English summary: https://www.conventioncitoyennepourleclimat.fr/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/062020-CCC-propositions-synthese-EN.pdf
44 See details from session 2: Six "Ambassadors" from each group visited the other groups to identify the cross-cutting topics.
45 page 31: https://www.conventioncitoyennepourleclimat.fr/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/03102019-convcit-socledoc-web.pdf
46 https://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2020/08/24/la-responsabilite-du-modele-publicitaire-dans-la-transition-ecologique-est-desormais-questionnee_6049741_3232.html
47 https://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/dyn/15/dossiers/alt/lutte_contre_le_dereglement_climatique
48 https://sansfiltre.les150.fr/
49 https://multinationales.org/IMG/pdf/rapp_2.pdf

CHAPTER 7: Local citizen assemblies (and juries) on climate change in the UK

INTRODUCTION

During 2020, and continuing in 2021 despite national pandemic lockdown, there has been a flourishing of local citizen assemblies and juries (similar to assemblies but typically consulting a smaller number of citizen participants) on climate change held across the UK; these have been commissioned by a local or devolved government (and in the case of Leeds commissioned by a 'climate commission' in partnership with city stakeholders). These have taken place across the country as follows:

Citizens' assemblies: Adur and Worthing, Brent, Brighton & Hove, Bristol, Camden, Croydon, Leicester, Oxfordshire, and Newham. Two assemblies were on air pollution - Cambridgeshire and Kingston.

Citizens' juries or inquiries: Kendal, Lancaster, Leeds, and North of Tyne, and Warwick.

There are others delayed by the pandemic and are, at the time of writing, planned or being delivered online in 2021 in Blackpool, Devon, Jersey, Lambeth in London, Scotland and Blaenau Gwent in Wales, with others under consideration. There have also been citizens' juries organised by civil society organisations, for example, UK think tank the Institute for Public Policy Research has run a series of climate change citizens' juries across the UK to inform their climate policy recommendations in: Aberdeen, South Wales, Tees Valley and Country Durham and Thurrock.

These local citizens' assemblies and juries varied hugely, in terms of number of participants, the question set, the expectations and the organisations and approach to delivery of the process. For example, in Leeds,

a citizens' jury for 25 people used a very open question, in Oxford there were 42 citizens involved in completing the process, and in Camden 50 people addressed a long and specific climate question set for the assembly, doing this over a much shorter period of deliberation than other assemblies. This variability makes it difficult to compare the different approaches to the design and delivery of local climate assemblies and juries. However, we have identified themes both in the style of delivery as well as the outcomes and expectations.

Summary of outcomes from local climate assemblies

❖ The most successful assemblies were delivered as part of a wider public engagement programme, and those that weren't highlighted this as an oversight.

❖ Local authorities benefited from hearing from a representative, diverse group of residents, rather than the 'usual' environmental voices, contributing towards greater political legitimacy for the policy recommendations.

❖ Many of the citizens' assemblies/juries led to an increase in interest and commitment to deliberation by councillors and officers.

❖ Most local authorities incorporated citizens' assembly recommendations in subsequent plans and policy announcements. However, some of the recommendations were high-level and unspecific, making it hard to track meaningful policy impact.

❖ Participants left the experience galvanised and inspired to take action even though that was not the aim of the process. Few of the assembly organisers had planned for how to provide follow-up for highly engaged participants.

❖ Across the different local assemblies/juries, a call for greater public engagement, education and community participation were consistently top recommendations.

METHODS

We were not able to access the same level of data on the local citizens' assemblies as the national UK climate assembly or the French climate assembly analysed in the other sections. Only one of the local authority climate assemblies has had an independent evaluation (Camden). Our evidence here is based on our own desk-based analysis including a review of the assembly websites and publicly available information, such as available on Participedia, together with published material such as UCL's evaluation of Camden[50] and an academic paper by Boswell[51] describing his insights as a participant at the Kingston-Upon-Thames citizens' assembly on air quality. In addition to the literature and desk review, we conducted interviews with council officers and facilitators involved in three assemblies (Brent, Leeds and Oxford), assessed local media coverage, and drew on two practitioner sessions held in early 2020 - sharing experiences, insights and reflections on different local citizens' assemblies.

THE CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY PROCESSES

Assemblies and juries

In practice, a citizens' assembly can vary hugely in size, design and length. Generally, citizens' assemblies consist of between 50 and 250 members of the public selected by lottery (sortition) with a random stratified sample, with deliberation over at least 30 hours (four days). Not all of the local citizens' processes that describe themselves as assemblies met these criteria. Budget constraints meant commissioners were not always able to hold full citizens' assemblies, and some created citizen panels, for example in Leicester, or citizens' juries, for example in Leeds, which typically involve a smaller number of people. Citizens' juries are also commissioned not just because of their lower cost but because they tend to address more open questions. Whether a citizens' assembly or jury, the typical structure entails first an information stage through presentations, then a facilitated deliberation stage followed by citizens developing and agreeing their recommendations (with voting then carried out with respect to the recommendations).

Methods for recruiting the citizens varied from sortition postal invite (Newham, Oxford, Leeds), street or door to door recruitment (Camden, Brent), however all used random stratified sampling to ensure a demographically representative group of people.

To ensure inclusivity, citizens were paid an 'incentive' for participating, as well as often being given travel or childcare contributions, and in Camden an onsite creche was provided for those with children, with translators provided for those not fluent in English.

Scope and purpose of deliberations

Generally, these local deliberative events were commissioned by local government, following a local authority commitment to 'declare a climate emergency'. Citizens' assemblies became popular, promoted by Extinction Rebellion activists particularly in 2019, as a way for a local authority to seek public input and legitimacy into their climate change plans. In our research and interviews we found motives ranged from commissioners simply wanting to seek local engagement in their climate plans, to a desire to shift from the authority having sole responsibility towards shared responsibility towards responsibility being shared between authority, businesses and local residents. There was in some cases also an interest in ensuring public legitimacy for any difficult or ambitious decisions.

We found the organisers delivering the assemblies and those commissioning them, were not always clear about their purpose and expectations to the citizen participants. Many participants expressed confusion over their expectation, and were disappointed that there were not opportunities for further engagement.

Most of the citizens' assemblies and juries requested the local authority to commit to a follow-up process where they could report on whether they had adopted the recommendations or not, which has been the case in the majority of cases (Cambridge, Camden, Oxford); others have not yet either because not enough time has passed since they were completed or because of the pandemic delays.

Design and delivery of the process

For the local processes we examined, the assembly question was typically set by an oversight or advisory panel, whose role was to help support the commissioners in appointing facilitators and guiding the design of the assembly process. The advisory panel was typically made up of academics, experts, local authority officers or councillors, NGOs and sometimes a local business leader. In addition, the oversight or advisory panel usually played a role in choosing speakers and expert witnesses, with a view to ensuring the process was independent and that the recommendations had been produced with balance and autonomy. The questions set for the citizens' assembly ranged from very broad and open questions to more specific questions; some used language of the climate crisis, others referred to 'net zero', while others still referred to carbon neutrality (see Box 2). The framing of most of these questions are relatively open, and none of them assumed 2050 as an end-point - some asking if that should be sooner, and some focused on the next decade of action. In cases where the question asked about the date of 2050 (i.e. the goal of becoming net zero by 2050), the

majority of participants voted for an earlier date, but with no agreement on what that date would be (Oxford, Lancaster, Leeds). This contrasts with the UK climate assembly which took as a starting point the UK net zero goal of 2050; as we outline in chapter 2 this is connected to the commissioning process of the UK parliament.

Box 2. The range and framing of questions set for local citizens' assemblies.	
Adur & Worthing	'How can we in Adur and Worthing collectively tackle climate change and support our places to thrive? What does this mean for the way we live and for our local environment?'
Brent	'How can we work together to limit climate change and its impact, whilst protecting our environment, health and wellbeing? Consider the Council, businesses, organisations and individuals'
Bristol	'How do we recover from COVID-19 and create a better future for all in Bristol?' Climate change, transport and health were used as the three main topics. The climate change question was, 'How do we rapidly reduce the impact of our homes on climate change?'
Brighton & Hove	'The Climate Assembly will recommend and prioritise practical actions the city can take to become carbon neutral by 2030 and will be used as part of wider consultations on city plans and strategies such as the Local Transport Plan.'
Camden	'We are now facing a climate and ecological crisis. How can the council and the people of Camden help limit the impact of climate change while protecting and enhancing our natural environment? – What do we need to do in our homes, neighbourhoods, council and country?'
Croyden	'What climate change means for Croydon'. 'How should we tackle this together?'
Kendal	To decide on a set of recommendations on what Kendal should do about the emergency of climate change.
Leeds	'What should Leeds do about the emergency of climate change?'
Lancashire	'What do we need to do in our homes, neighbourhoods and district to respond to the emergency of Climate Change?'
Leicester	To design a roadmap to carbon neutrality as part of the City Council's sustainability planning.
Newham	'How can the council and residents work together to reach the aspiration of being carbon zero by 2050 at the latest?'
North of Tyne	'What should we do in the region to address climate change and its causes fairly, effectively and quickly?'
Oxford	'The UK Government has legislation to reach 'net zero' carbon by 2050. Should Oxford be more proactive and seek to achieve 'net zero' sooner than 2050 and what trade-offs are we prepared to make?'
Scotland	'How should Scotland change to tackle the climate emergency in an effective and fair way?'
Warwick	'What do we need to do in Warwick district to help address climate change by 2030?'

Although the stated goal of most of the local assemblies were to solicit representative public input into the local authority climate plans, most of the assemblies did not just focus on the role the local authority plays but also on residents, business and other local actors.

All of the local assemblies analysed were delivered by professional deliberation experts, and there was broadly positive feedback on the experience of the process by participants and those commissioning them. However, only one undertook an independent evaluation and so all of the assemblies struggled to show their impact. Involve, one of the facilitation organisations who had been commissioned to provide citizens' assembly processes, created a set of principles, along with other organisations delivering assemblies, which itself recommends independent evaluation, and so this availability of evidence may change in the future.

Many of the authorities that were commissioning citizens' assemblies described the budget constraints and how that had an impact on the size and length of the assemblies. Participants in some of the processes described how they felt rushed, with a lot to cover in a short space of time (Camden, Leeds).

Most of the citizens' assemblies took a sector-by-sector approach, looking at what could be done to reduce carbon emissions in housing, energy, transport and green spaces. Camden and Croydon looked at household, community and borough changes, with sectors cross-cutting these domains.

Vision setting was a technique used in Leeds and Newham - asking participants to discuss and articulate their vision of a future for their area based on what they had heard. Leeds appeared to be the only deliberative process that asked participants to describe how they felt on hearing the implications of climate science, which was then developed into a collective statement. Most of the processes focused on technical and practical solutions, rather than exploring emotional, cultural, political or ethical issues. This could be seen as a consequence of the way in which many climate assemblies are commissioned and delivered by facilitators - soliciting citizen input into specific technical policy options - rather than creating a process for taking the participants on a journey of discovery and engagement. It is nevertheless interesting to note many organisations delivering the assemblies (aside from in Leeds and Newham) asked participants to visualise the future or express feelings about the transition they were discussing.

In Newham, the language of climate emergency and crisis was discussed, with some participants describing that they did not want to induce panic in their recommendations and preferred to focus on a framing based on improving the local area.

Nature and themes of the recommendations

Some recommendations were relatively generic without any specific timeframe or quantifiable targets - for example, 'Harness and generate renewable power by exploring wind farms, water usage (tidal barrage), and power generation (energy co-ops)', or 'The council should leverage the capabilities of local institutions to educate and raise awareness while collaborating with each other to reach our goals' (Newham climate assembly recommendations). This made it quite hard to assess the extent to which these recommendations were adopted or were already in place.

Some of those we interviewed suggested it would have been more useful to start from an understanding of what the authority was currently planning, subsequently inputting into those plans, rather than assuming no action (Camden, Oxford). Some of the citizens' assemblies incorporated criteria to assess the recommendations according to cost, feasibility and fairness (e.g., in Brent).

The difference in recommendations reflects both the location (rural or urban) as well as numerous design factors including variability in the speakers/expert presentations and how topics were chosen. Some of the assembly questions included the scope of individual, community and local business action as well as local authority action, which meant that these included behavioural and social change recommendations, as well as policy or technical proposals. Many of the assemblies expressed views that the participants wanted to see leadership by the local authority, and they were prepared to undertake changes in their lifestyles if they felt that was being matched by local authority leadership.

Box 3 provides an over of the top ranked themes of the recommendations within UK climate assemblies and juries.

BOX 3. Top ranked recommendations	
Transport	Improved cycling infrastructure (Warwick)
	A car free city centre (Brighton & Hove)
	Public control over buses to increase provision, and prioritising cycling and active travel over cycling (Leeds)
Education	Educate young people (Lancaster)
	Council to produce citizen briefings (Newham)
	School education and young people participation (Croydon, no ranking of recommendations)
Skills	Training and upskilling the population (Bristol)
Food	Greater allotment provision (Kendal)
	Encourage low carbon diets (individual action scope) and establish a climate emergency scrutiny panel of experts and citizens (Camden)
Waste	Improve waste collection (Brent)
	Support for residents to reduce waste (Oxford, no ranking of recommendations)
Green space	Rewilding parks, verges and other green spaces and food growing in schools/colleges (Adur & Worthing)
Energy	Incentivise energy efficiency improvements (Adur & Worthing)

In some cases, the way the processes were designed often grouped people together to come up with recommendations with respect to a theme e.g., transport or education. This meant it was not always easy for participants to assess the trade-offs and systemic impacts across sectors (Newham, Oxford).

There were many recommendations focused on re-localising and local ownership - e.g., local renewable energy projects and particularly local food production (Kendal, Leeds, Camden, Newham, Brent). There was also a consistent desire for more opportunities for deliberation, participation and education across all of the citizens' assemblies (Oxford, Croydon, Lancaster, Kendal, Camden).

There were few objections to technology solutions (wind and solar, electric cars and active travel) but concerns did emerge about the cost to individual households and fairness. There is some indication that the assemblies produced recommendations that might have been expected to be unpopular if put to a simple public vote, thus potentially helping to create a political mandate for more contentious policy areas - for example, making the city centre car free (or only allowing electric cars) was a recommendation in Cambridge, and Brighton & Hove).

WHAT OUTCOMES WERE ACHIEVED BY THE LOCAL ASSEMBLIES

Policy impact

Newham and Camden local authorities adopted all of the citizens' assembly recommendations in full. In Oxford, the local authority convened a cross-departmental group to help deliver the response and announced a new climate budget along with a pledge to incorporate the recommendations into their new net zero plans. One interviewee described how valuable but challenging this cross-departmental way of working was. Many of the citizens' assemblies recommended reconvening in one year to hold the council accountable and to have an oversight body to continue ensuring implementation (Newham). This has been

challenging due to coronavirus disruption, and for many of the local authorities, it is too soon for them to report on progress. At the same time, a remaining challenge is that many of the recommendations were quite generic with no specific targets or goal, which makes it difficult to analyse the extent of any policy impact.

Political mandate

The impact of a citizens' jury or assembly is often seen in whether its policy recommendations were adopted by the local authority. However, there are a number of other ways in which a deliberative process like a citizens' jury can have a material impact, including a greater political mandate, increased public engagement and support for climate action and new ideas to inform climate action.

Although most of the local climate assemblies were commissioned to seek a representative public input into local authority climate plans, many were delivered alongside wider public engagement activities. No available materials analysed media coverage, wider public knowledge of the assemblies or public support for recommendations. However, we found that where the citizens' assemblies were part of wider engagement plans, this created a strong sense of political mandate for the elected representatives (Camden, Newham, Brent, Leeds). Councillors and officers we spoke to described how valuable it was for them to see a representative group of the local population call for strong and ambitious action on climate change. Many of the local authorities that commissioned assemblies have gone on to explore further potential deliberation.

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50 Cain, L. & Moore, G. (2019). Evaluation of Camden Council's Citizens' Assembly on the climate crisis. UCL, London.
51 Boswell, J. (2021). Seeing like a citizen: how being a participant in a Citizens Assembly changed everything I thought I knew about deliberative innovation. Journal of Deliberative Democracy.