CO-PRODUCING BRADFORD'S JUST TRANSITION

COMMUNITY CLIMATE EVIDENCE

Report aims and purpose

This report summarises key findings from workshops in two Bradford wards to explore their views and concerns regarding climate change, and how these can be reflected in Bradford Council's Climate Action Plan.

Evidence base

This project is underpinned by insights from the previous research project, *'Understanding family and community vulnerabilities in transition to net zero'* (Snell and Middlemiss, 2025; Middlemiss et al., 2023; 2024; Theminimulle et al., 2024). This research highlighted that:

- Within the net zero transition, there are considerable opportunities for transformative and inclusive policies
- To be inclusive, net zero policies must recognise the existing characteristics and needs of different communities, and how they are impacted by policy change
- Structural factors such as income, infrastructure, social networks, and political access shape who benefits from, and who is excluded from, the transition to net zero
- If net zero policies do not address existing social and structural inequalities, they risk worsening these barriers and leaving people behind

Figure 1: Areas of Life categories that will be impacted to the net zero transition (Middlemiss et al., 2023)

This project

The project was grounded in the aim to create ethical, community-based partnerships to facilitate inclusive and equitable involvement, and to ensure that our research was firmly guided by local voices. Based on criteria established in the previous research, two wards were selected for the project: **Tong and Bowling & Barkerend**. These wards were identified as areas where residents may potentially not benefit and could be left behind in the transition to net zero. They were chosen for their diverse social, economic, and housing characteristics, alongside their strong potential for inclusive climate action.

We formed partnerships with **The Sutton Centre in Tong** and **The Anchor Project in Bowling & Barkerend**, where **six local residents were trained as climate community researchers** to help co-design and co-facilitate workshops and represent their communities. Our community partners led the recruitment for and hosted the workshop events, as well as other climate community engagement activities.

A series of three workshops was created based on the previous research and **co-produced** through consultations with a bespoke Steering Group, community partner organisations and the climate community researchers. The workshops focused on three themes: understanding community strengths, understanding how climate change impacts local communities, and co-developing a community climate manifesto to promote action and give a voice to communities and their needs. All aspects of the activities had the capacity to be amended or removed based on the views of the climate community researchers, ensuring they reflected the relevant contexts and priorities of these wards.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Findings

Each ward created their own climate community manifesto which **highlighted their top four priorities for climate action**. Bowling & Barkerend chose: Public Transportation; Family and Children; Schools and Education; and Housing. Tong chose: Public Transportation; Family and Children; Schools and Education; and Community Safety.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this project, rooted in co-production with the Bradford communities, we recommend:

1. Adopt a 'person-first' framing for climate action

- Connect all climate policies and programmes **directly to people's everyday lives**
- Communicate how actions affect key areas of life such as health, travel, home, comfort and safety; the *Areas of Daily Life* (Middlemiss et al., 2023) can be a useful avenue for this
- Reframe climate discussions around issues communities already care about, such as housing, energy costs and local safety
- Ensure engagement begins from residents' personal experiences before discussing wider environmental outcomes

2. Prioritise coordinated, multi-actor partnerships for climate action

- Design projects and schemes to **include collaboration** between Bradford Council and different actors and groups in the communities
- Build partnerships that reflect community expectations for cooperative, place-based climate action
- Empower local government to act via national and regional government
- Promote shared resources and responsibility across actors and groups together, including residents

3. Establish meaningful two-way communication and trust-building on climate action

- **Create authentic, ongoing community dialogue** between Bradford Council, partners and residents
- Engage residents in comfortable and accessible spaces, and through a variety of appropriate communication channels, to help foster inclusivity and genuine dialogue
- Design engagement to occur early enough to allow feedback to influence decisions and also ensure clarity over how community input shaped outcomes
- Maintain continuous communication throughout implementation of the Climate Action Plan to maintain trust and involvement

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

In Bradford District, the Council declared a "Climate Emergency" in 2019 and is developing a measurable pathway towards net zero through the development of the local Climate Action Plan (CAP) 2025-2028. The plan aims not only to create better environmental outcomes, but seeks to improve the quality of life for local Bradford residents and communities. To accomplish this, it will mean reflecting on how transition to net zero shapes people's lives, by ensuring it is equitable, inclusive and a *just* transition (Bradford Council, 2025). This means ensuring that the CAP, and its implementation, supports all households in Bradford through the complex yet vital process of transitioning to net zero (Theminimulle et al., 2021) – in particular, reflecting on community voice and co-produced approaches that allow communities to reflect on what 'net zero' means for them. This is all the more important as existing research highlights that certain socio-economic and demographic groups - for example, families living on a low income, in poor housing, with lack of access to services - are potentially more at risk of harm and/or less able to take advantage of any benefits during the transition (Theminimulle et al., 2021). There is a need to understand how to engage with residents and ensure community involvement, which may help articulate positive discussion about net zero, and what it means for local communities.

Bradford, as of 2018, has relatively low levels of CO2 emission at 3.8 tonnes per head (compared to the wider region); Yorkshire and Humber have 6.5 tonnes of CO2 per head and the UK average is 5.2 tonnes (Bradford Council 'A sustainable district' webpage, accessed 1.7.2024). Despite the low emissions, Bradford has taken on initiatives to better the climate landscape. **Current initiatives such as the Clean Air Zone** (launched September 2022) **are already making significant differences to people's quality of life** by tackling air pollution caused by road traffic, particularly from vehicles that do not meet emission standards. There have already been significant known impacts from interim health impact assessments, including a reduction in primary care visits for respiratory health by 25%, amounting to 598 fewer visits to GPs per month, with a reduction of 134 in cardiovascular health visits (Mebrahtu et al. 2025; Shepard, 2024). We can see efforts in Bradford around climate and net zero can positively impact people's lives, but **further efforts are required for Bradford's transition to be just.**

The aim of the research was therefore to find out about the needs and concerns of residents in Bradford whose **voices have not traditionally been heard in local climate action, and who may be at risk of being left behind in the transition to net zero** (Snell and Middlemiss, 2025). Not only is it necessary for public policy to embed local voices so that policy can reflect community concerns, but there is also a need for deeper understanding on how to support communities across Bradford. In response to this, this research project seeks:

- To **explore residents' concerns** relating to the net zero transition – as well as wider understandings relating to how they perceive wider climate change concerns and issues
- To **understand barriers and relevant levers to ensure the participation** of residents so these can be reflected in the Climate Action Plan
- To understand specific communities and wards' views about climate and environment – **so more localised understandings of these issues can be addressed** in the Climate Action Plan
- To **bring communities together** to educate and reflect on what climate related issues means for their local communities – where their voices are given priority

Background

The University of York (UoY) and Bradford Council (the Council) have partnered in the Bradford Health Determinants Research Collaboration (HDRC), funded through the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR). This collaboration aims to promote evidence-informed policy to improve wider determinants of health and reduce health inequalities. UoY researchers act as embedded researchers within the HDRC's Evidence into Policy and Practice Hub (the Hub).

Through this collaboration, UoY researchers offer their knowledge and expertise to the Council to support policy development, community engagement, and implementation. Specifically, several UoY researchers possessed interdisciplinary expertise in net zero transition from previous work. The Hub proactively engaged with the Council's Sustainability Service, offering relevant support around the net zero agenda. Coincidentally, the Council was at a pivotal point in the development of its Climate Action Plan (CAP) and required additional community-based evidence. The Hub, the Sustainability Service, and other UoY subject experts then collaborated to establish this project, the approach of which is detailed in subsequent sections.

Evidence base

This project is underpinned by insights from previous research involving members of the current team, entitled *'Understanding family and community vulnerabilities in transition to net zero'* (funded by the Nuffield Foundation) (Snell and Middlemiss, 2025; Theminimulle et al., 2024). This research emphasised the importance of taking a person-centred, place-based approach to net zero.

Figure 2. Framework for a person-centred, place-based approach for understanding family and community vulnerabilities in transition to net zero (Theminimulle et al., 2021, p5)

BACKGROUND

Insights from this predecessor project — undertaken by the University of York, the Institute for Community Studies powered by The Young Foundation, the University of Leeds, and Trinity College Dublin — directly informed the approach taken in this work. This included guidance on how to identify and select areas that may contain residents more likely to be left behind in the transition to net zero, and the importance of a participatory research approach in exploring these issues (Theminimulle et al., 2024; 2021).

Specific elements from this body of work that underpin this project are (Snell and Middlemiss, 2025):

- **There are significant opportunities in the net zero transition** for transformative policies that leave no one behind
- Net zero policies that do not recognise and address existing social inequalities are likely to replicate them, increasing the risk of leaving some people behind during the transition
- Structural factors such as income and financial assets, public and social infrastructure, social networks and support, and access to political decision-making are all differences that shape how people and places will respond to the transition, enabling some to keep up while causing barriers for others
- To be inclusive, net zero policies need to recognise existing community characteristics, the people and places that might be most affected by policy change, and **must be grounded in community needs and priorities**
- **Community voice is an essential element** of all policy action in this space

Two explicit elements incorporated into this work are Middlemiss et al.'s (2023) summary of *'Areas of Daily Life'* (Areas of Life), drawn from their literature review on net zero-related change, and crucial lessons regarding language. Specifically, recognising that 'net zero' and 'just transition' are jargonistic terms that may not be conducive to productive community dialogue. Instead, as supported by the evidence base, we utilise the Areas of Life to discuss climate accessibly with communities. We also use terms such as 'climate action' to signify policy, behaviour, and other practices geared towards climate change, rather than a term solely associated with activism.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Community-based Participatory Research (CBPR)

In line with the work of Theminimulle et al. (2024), we used a community-based participatory research (CBPR) approach. The purpose of this was to find out about the needs and concerns of residents whose voices are not traditionally heard in climate action, and are at risk of 'being left behind' during the transition to net zero; for example because they do not have the resources buy an electric vehicle (EV), or their landlord refuses to upgrade the energy efficiency of their home.

CBPR is a collaborative research approach that seeks to equitably involve all stakeholders, recognising the strengths that each brings, and particularly the strengths of community members who have lived experience (knowledge) of the issues being explored (Minkler and Wallerstein, 2011). A 'defining feature' of CBPR is also a commitment to action (Minkler and Wallerstein, 2011).

We felt that CBPR was essential in the context of this study. Our team's previous involvement in research to understand family and community vulnerabilities and priorities in transition to net zero had highlighted the importance of person-centred and place-based approaches (Theminimulle et al., 2024). In this research, CBPR was a means to recognise the knowledge and importance of involving communities at risk of harm or less able to take advantage of benefits during the transition to net zero, and to simultaneously try to connect those residents to local action (i.e. the local Climate Action Planning process underway in Bradford, specifically the work of the Sustainability Service).

As research funded by the Valuing Voices project (an initative funded by Wellcome under the Institutional Funding for Research Culture grant), we utilised the Valuing Voices toolkit, implementing the five principles for equitable and responsible research:

1. *Engagement and impact:* research is credible and has real-world benefits when you engage with those affected by and interested in it
2. *Equality and diversity in teams:* diverse research teams generate fresh perspectives on complex problems, address unfair hierarchies and promote global equity
3. *Strategic risk mapping:* research plans are strengthened by careful risk mapping that makes the most of limited resources
4. *Environmental sustainability:* environmentally conscious research sets a societal precedent, is cost-effective and safeguards the future of research
5. *Reflecting and learning:* research practices are made effective and robust when they are informed by reflective learning

"The Co-producing Bradford's Just Transition to Net Zero project goes beyond the typical remit of academic research by engaging community partners in genuinely ethical and meaningful collaboration. This approach is enhancing the potential for impactful outcomes - both for the community itself and for the development of a robust, community-informed Climate Action Plan."
- Dr Graham Gill, Valuing Voices Evidence Lead

RESEARCH DESIGN

Steering group

At the start of the process, a Steering Group was set up with the support of the Bradford HDRC team to formalise the involvement of key Council officers involved in CAP-related research, and to provide a potential route for the CBPR to inform the CAP process in a timely way. Members of the Steering Group included key officers from the Sustainability Service, a Public Health Consultant and the HDRC Evidence Lead, as well as Council officers involved in the Clean Air Zone, and members of the UoY research team.

Community partnership approach

Our partnering principles involved a commitment to (Islam et al., 2022):

- Involving community organisations, community members and wider stakeholders in the research as equitably as possible
- Respecting local community members' knowledge and experience and how this is expressed and shared - and avoiding making assumptions about people's understandings of, or using jargon about, climate change and net zero
- Making sure that there are benefits to all involved in the research
- Working flexibly to meet different people's needs
- Working in ways that build relationships (academic-community-policy) for the long term, underpinned by an open-dialogue approach with regular check ins
- Ensuring everything we do is adequately resourced, reflecting the fair economic valuing of people's contributions, rather than what may be the norm (Patient Information Forum, 2024)

In terms of process, a core part of our CBPR approach from the outset was to develop partnerships with local community organisations, and to work with them to engage a small team of local residents - 'climate community researchers' - who would work alongside us as part of the research team. The climate community researchers would receive training in climate science and research approaches, and work with us to co-design a series of workshops to explore the needs and concerns of a wider group of residents in Bradford living in areas more at risk of harm or unable to benefit in the transition to net zero, as well as barriers and levers to participation. The intention throughout was to work together across this community partnership to co-produce outputs that would connect to the Steering Group and inform Bradford's CAP processes.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Community area selection

To initiate our community partnerships, we first identified two constituencies in Bradford that could be considered more at risk of being left behind during the transition to net zero (Bradford East, Bradford West), and then wards within these geographical areas that would be useful cases for engaging residents to learn about needs and priorities for inclusive climate action planning in Bradford. A core set of criteria (and associated indicators) was developed to inform our ward selection. The criteria were informed by the work of Theminimulle et al. (2024) and developed in agreement with the Steering Group. We decided that each ward selected needed to meet the following:

- Moderate to high area-level deprivation (IMD deprivation decile, life expectancy, child poverty)
- High levels of fuel poverty (fuel poverty rates higher than Bradford District overall)
- High unemployment rate (unemployment rate higher than Bradford overall, IMD employment domain decile)
- Poor area-level health (IMD Health Deprivation and Disability decile, resident's description of their health as bad or very bad)
- Low housing energy efficiency (average EPC rating of homes in constituency)
- Be considered an 'energy crisis hotspot' (Friends of the Earth, 2022)

In making our selection, we also sought to select wards that had different types of housing, and to make sure that there was ethnic diversity either within or across those selected.

Finally, we considered whether there were community organisations in the area that could potentially support the research, and whether there had been any previous engagement in co-produced research (i.e. working with the Bradford Co-production and Peer Research (CoPPer) Network), highlighting potential community interest in engaging in co-produced research.

The wards of **Bowling & Barkerend and Tong** were selected as they met our pre-determined criteria of potential vulnerabilities in the transition to net zero. Both wards are considered energy hotspots (where high energy bills meet low incomes) (Friends of the Earth, 2022), have higher-than-average fuel poverty rates than Bradford overall, and poor area-level health: Tong in particular has high rates of poor self-rated health. Taking fuel poverty as an example, in the transition we will see significant changes to home energy, upgrades in heating systems, changes in the energy we use and a shift to smart energy systems (Theminimulle et al., 2024). To achieve this transition will take an outsized effort where there is poor quality housing and high levels of fuel poverty. Conversely, these areas offer tremendous opportunities for a just transition, where people are not left behind and quality of life and wellbeing is improved (Snell and Middlemiss, 2025).

Each ward has specific characteristics which make them points of interest. For Tong, this includes its mixed rural and urban communities and, for Bowling & Barkerend, its ethnic diversity and new migrant and refugee communities. See Figures 3 and 4 for maps of each area.

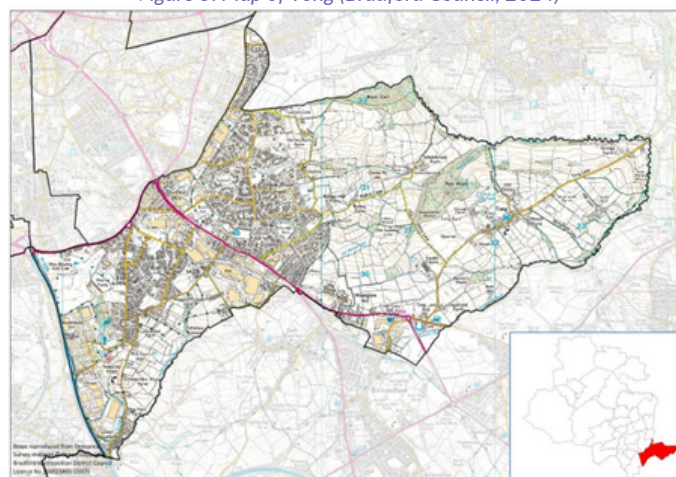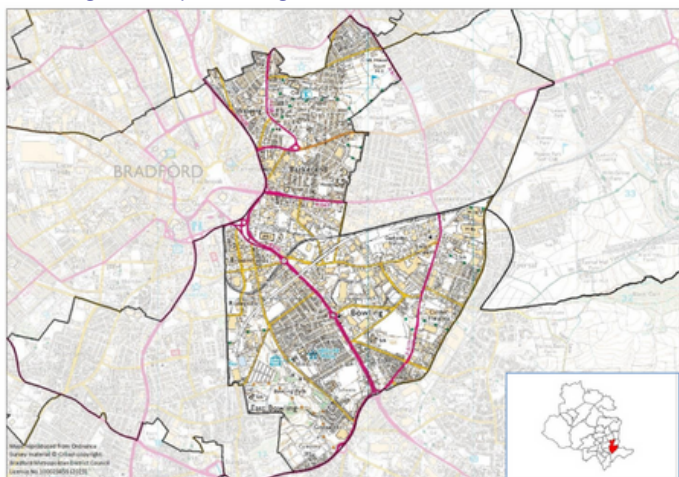*Figure 3: Map of Tong (Bradford Council, 2024)*

Figure 4: Map of Bowling & Barkerend (Bradford Council, 2024)

Identifying our community partners

As indicated above, a central pillar of CBPR was to create ethical partnerships. We issued an open invite for community organisations to partner with the University of York research team and work with the local community to help ensure local voices, needs and priorities inform Bradford's Climate Action Plan. We ensured that the application form was relatively short, focused and simple to complete, was clear about the time commitment, and that resources were available to cover this and community involvement. Six community organisations applied, of which three had the most applicable experience to the project. We scheduled telephone interviews with the three organisations and made final selections on the basis of the organisation's community engagement approach and facilitation ability (e.g. physical space to host events), experience in climate or academic research, and through mutual agreement as to what the community would like to gain from the partnership.

Our two partner organisations were **The Sutton Centre in Tong**, and **The Anchor Project in Bowling & Barkerend**.

Our goal was to model the most 'ethical' partnerships possible. Prior to initiating the partnerships, the research team consulted the Involvement@York team to advise on ethical pay and approaches in partnerships, resulting in use of reference documents such as Fair Market Value for Charities in Partnership Work (Patient Information Forum, 2024). In initial meetings, we discussed previous experiences that the organisations had with working with academic partners and in research: in particular what aspects they would like to avoid reproducing. We also talked about how we could usefully feed back to each other regularly and discuss our progress, community benefits and impacts. We used a progressive pay model rather than solely requesting the organisations give us a rate for their engagement. This included an explicit recognition of the relationships and connections that each organisation brought to the partnership, based on years of experience and trust-building in their communities, described in the pay structure as a flat additional payment for the intangible benefits they bring to the partnership. One staff member per organisation joined our 'climate community researcher' team, with their time 'bought out' from their organisation to establish a hybrid connection where the organisations were embedded in the entirety of the research process.

The community organisations were tasked with participant and climate community researcher recruitment, acting as the default venue for events, organising catering and supporting communications and reminders about workshop dates/times with participants. The trusting relationship these groups had with their communities was essential and undoubtedly contributed to extremely low drop out rate: no participants actually dropped out, but only had unavoidable conflicts such as a trip to A&E or a funeral.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Climate community researcher approach

Overall, we had **six climate community researchers join our team from the Bowling & Barkerend and Tong communities**, becoming casual workers at the University of York to fulfil the role. The recruitment process was deliberately broad, asking potential researchers why they wanted to engage and to confirm that they:

- Live in or have strong ties to Bradford's Bowling & Barkerend and/or Tong
- Have an interest in climate change and net zero and want to learn more
- Can commit to 30 hours of paid training and work over June – July 2025. This includes research training and helping run at least three of any of the six community research workshops on climate change and net zero in July 2025
- Are willing to undergo a right-to-work check by the University of York
- Feel comfortable communicating in English
- Have access to the internet and video calls (e.g. Zoom)
- Will follow health and safety rules and guidance
- Will follow data protection rules and guidance
- Will support fairness and diversity for everyone

This broadness meant the group of selected climate community researchers had dynamic, varied experiences to bring to the cohort. Six of the seven applicants were qualified and all were accepted into the cohort. The seventh applicant was accepted by our team, but did not pass the right to work check as a result of their asylum seeker status. The majority of the cohort were immigrants from other countries, giving a unique insight and community connection, and were all women. Ages and life experiences varied across the group, ranging from one woman still attending college, to a stay-at-home mum, and a small business owner. This variation in cultural touchpoints, languages, life experiences and life stages proved a major asset in the workshop facilitation, as each participant could likely connect with at least one of the researchers in a personal way.

The climate community researchers engaged in an intensive training programme to introduce research skills and climate knowledge, as outlined below. These trainings were collaborative, bringing together members of the UoY team, climate community researchers, HDRC team, and Bradford Council for shared education, and learning together, establishing shared knowledge and to address potential power dynamics. The climate community researchers brought a community lens to the project and worked with the research team to craft the research activities and facilitate the sessions, making the work an example of co-production.
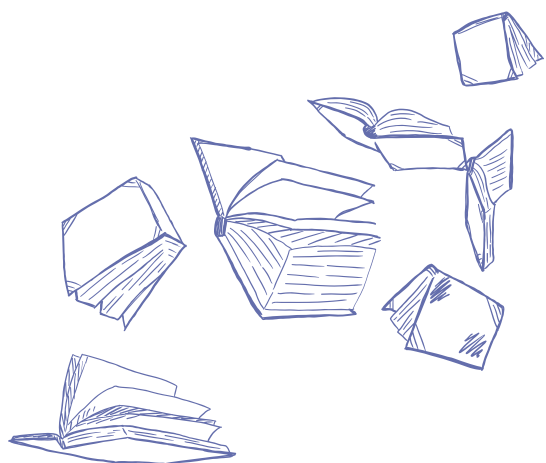
"Taking on this role has been very insightful. Initially, I felt anxious with the limited knowledge in this area. Yet, I was determined to partake in this rewarding opportunity. The training sessions were informative and I expanded my knowledge and skillset quickly. In a short period, my knowledge around climate change alongside my confidence increased. Mainly from the range of activities which required communicating ideas, holding conversations and engaging my local community. Every stage was designed with a lot of research from professionals. As a result, educating and empowering individuals with evidence based information."

- Fatima* (pseudonym), Climate Community Research

The training programme included the following:

1. *Facilitation 101 masterclass:* Facilitation experts at Facilitation 101 gave a bespoke online workshop for the UoY team, an HDRC team member and the climate community researchers cohort *(June 2025)*
2. *Climate Fresk training:* The workshop session, facilitated by With Many Roots, was attended by the community researcher cohort, UoY team, a HDRC team member, a member of the Steering Group and other community researchers in Bradford (e.g. from the CoPPer network). The debrief centred around gaining the climate knowledge to speak about climate in their communities in a community researcher capacity *(June 2025)*
3. *Introduction to community research and ethics session:* A UoY-led session introducing the climate community researchers to the concept of community research and why it is important. The group then discussed the Climate Action Plan and why community evidence is important to consider in climate action; engaged in activities to understand their assets they could bring to the project, creating shared expectations of each other in the project as community researchers; and learned about ethics in research *(June 2025)*
4. *Workshop co-production session:* The UoY team went through the Climate Action Plan draft with the researchers, with time to share ideas, questions and initial thoughts. The climate community researchers reviewed an abridged version of all the proposed workshop activities, giving feedback on what was working, what was not connecting, what they felt suited their communities best, and suggesting changes. The UoY team committed to making the changes based on feedback *(June 2025)*
5. *Final review:* Climate community researchers, UoY team, and HDRC members reviewed the final workshop schedule and activities. The team decided how they would like to debrief between sessions, with individual phone, email, and Zoom follow-ups being the selected options *(June 2025)*
6. *Storyslinger training:* Nifty Fox company delivered an online training session on story development, attended by UoY team, an HDRC team member and the climate community researchers. The activity supported the team to build communication skills for how to talk about and frame the findings from the manifestos and create a narrative *(July 2025)*

Additional optional training was offered to the cohort, including attending general UoY Carbon Literacy training sessions, in which three of the six participated, and the UoY partnered FutureLearn Massive Open Online Course *Tackling Environmental Challenges for a Sustainable Future*. The researchers were given the option to gain certificates for these sessions, paid for by the project.

The bespoke training programme for the climate community researchers was devised based on previous reports and toolkits, such as the *Community-led Researcher Training Toolkit* developed by the City Conversation project with the Heseltine Institute for Public Policy, Practice and Place at the University of Liverpool (2021) and the *Asset Mapping Tools for Discovering Individual Gifts & Skills* toolkit by the Asset Based Community Development Institute Evaluation Team for the IMLS Community Catalyst Initiative (2022). One activity the researchers engaged in was visually 'creating' a researcher (see Figures 5 and 6), then committing to each other to try to embody these values throughout the project.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Figure 5: Group 1's: Create a community researcher activity
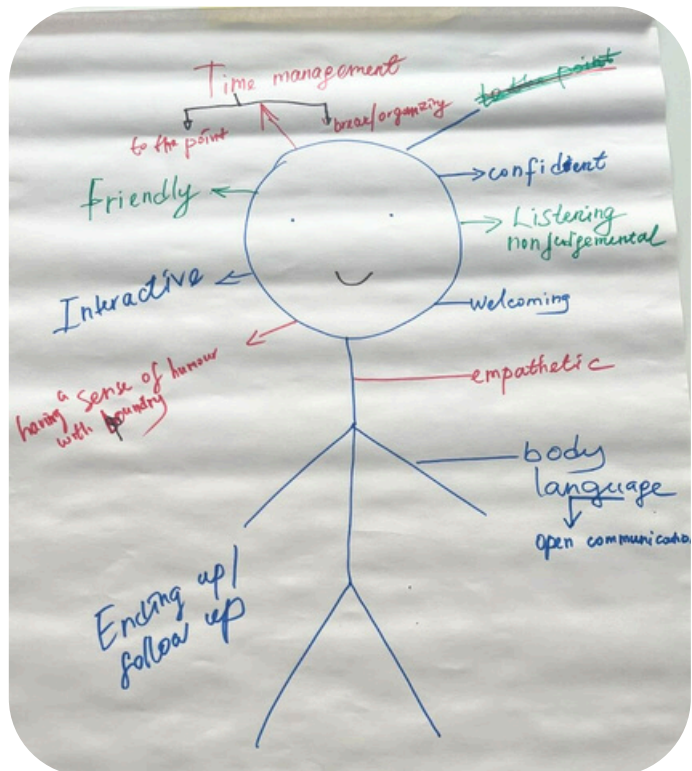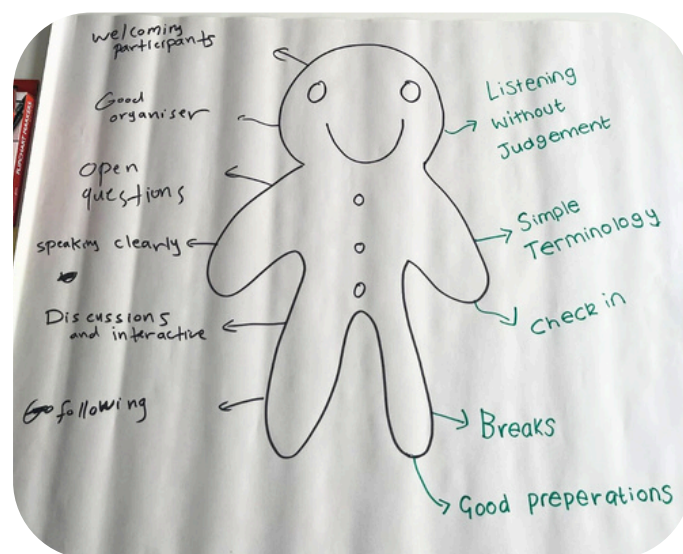(based on Community-led Researcher Training Toolkit, 2021)

Figure 6: Group 2's: Create a community researcher activity
(based on Community-led Researcher Training Toolkit, 2021)

Communication with the climate community researchers was frequent, with regular 1-to-1 and group debriefs throughout the workshops. The researchers were also asked to support the workshop design and facilitation between sessions, as well as after the sessions: outlined in the workshop design section of this report. This consistent engagement was underpinned by the previously stated principles of the project, so that the climate community researchers were fully integrated into the planning and facilitation of the workshops and manifestos. This integration was not only with the project but with the UoY and HDRC team, to dismantle as much of the inherent power dynamics as possible.

Workshop design

The workshop design process was first modeled on the previous structure and activities of the *'Understanding family and community vulnerabilities in transition to net zero'* project (Snell and Middlemiss, 2025; Theminimulle et al., 2024). The original 3-part series structure was replicated in this work, with local place-based adaptations made based on consultation with the Steering Group and with the community partner organisations. Ethics was approved by the University of York in Spring 2025.

Following these consultations, the UoY team - including an original author of the previous work, Prof Carolyn Snell - held a workshop planning session, outlining the aims, goals, potential approaches and activities for each workshop. This outline of the workshops and activities was brought back to the Steering Group for feedback. Following this, the UoY team mapped out needed resources and materials for the potential activities. Crucially, at all stages these activities were viewed as initial suggestions to bring to the climate community researchers. All aspects of the activities and structures were amendable, or could be fully removed, based on the views of the climate community researchers. Their insights introduced the necessary placed-based and community understandings needed for the workshops and activities to be successful.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The three workshops thematically focused on:

1. Understanding your community and its strengths
2. Understanding climate change and how it will affect your community
3. Developing a community climate manifesto to promote action and voice community priorities

The following is a detailed description of the agendas for each workshop. We offer a condensed version of this below for a) transparency; b) reproducibility; and c) to demonstrate that the actual activities themselves were accessible and not resource-intensive.

Figure 7: Car park exercise (SC)

Workshop 1 - Understanding your community

Introduction to the team, consent to participate and introducing the 'car park'

A 'car park' is a flipchart within the room for people to capture any questions they would like to be answered, but which it is not possible to focus on immediately.

Activity 1: Icebreaker

Community members choose to share an answer to one of the following with the group:

- Tell us a story about a pet or animal
- What's a topic you could talk about for hours?
- What is your favourite season of the year and why?
- What are you hoping to get out of these workshops?
- Something that has brought you joy recently?
- On a scale of 1-10, where is your energy today?

Figure 8: Example of icebreaker prompts

Activity 2: Community asset mapping

Small group activity to ask community members to capture down (on flip chart paper) assets (positive things) going on in: your homes, your local community and neighbourhoods, & Bradford overall

This includes all the physical things community members think are great about their area (the buildings, homes, wider environment) and also the social things (social networks, relationships, connections people have) that connect to the area.

Figure 9: Community asset mapping exercise (SC1)

Note: any quote or image references to SC means it was produced at the Sutton Centre; AP means it was produced at the Anchor Project. Any numbers listed are the group, table or flip chart identification number for transparency
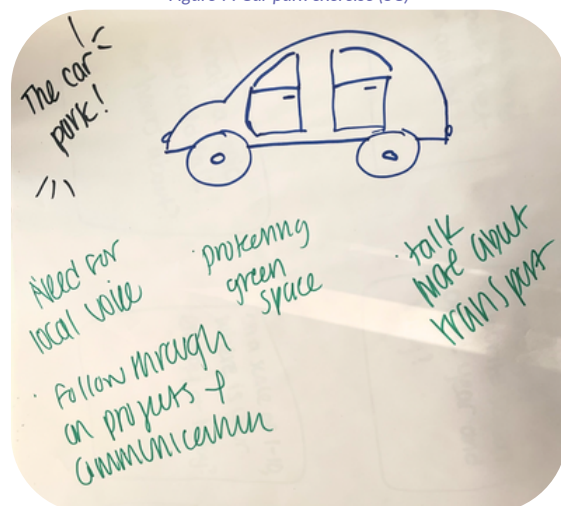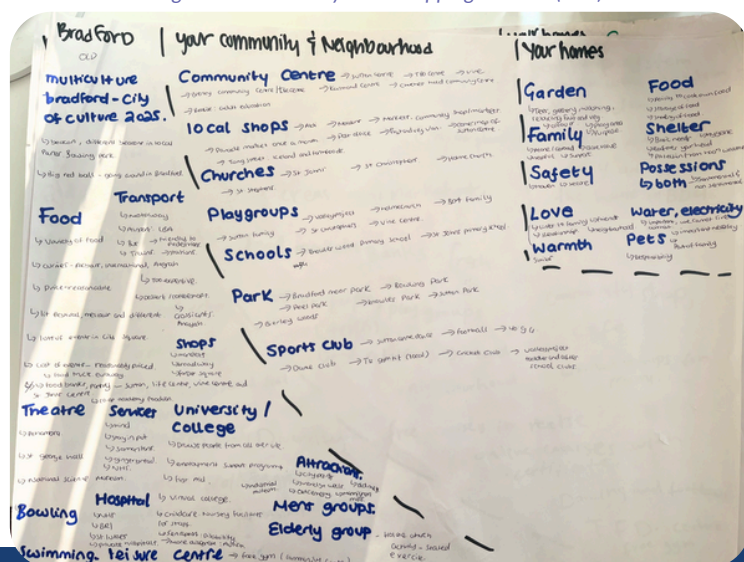
Activity 3: Group reflection

Groups share their maps, then were asked questions about how the activity went: How did it feel to do that activity? Did anything surprise you from the other groups? Is there anything else we can add to this list now that we've listened to others? What overall are the things we think as a group are the most important assets in the community? Bradford? Identify by consensus the number one strength their area has to offer and should be remembered in climate (e.g. pride). ***Wrap up and link to Workshop 2***

Workshop 2 - Understanding climate change and how it will affect your community

Introduction to the session and icebreaker

In small groups, ask people to find three things they all have in common that are not immediately obvious (e.g., "We all have siblings" "We all prefer tea over coffee")

Activity 2: Climate information session

Explain that everyone will be affected by climate change and while we won't become climate scientists today, we can learn a few things to help us have a basic understanding of what climate change is and how it may affect you, your community and neighbourhood, and Bradford as a whole. Climate will affect every area of life, which we'll talk through today.

Show the climate change explainer video (Science Museum, 2022), then talk through the '*Bradford and Climate Change*' hand out (see pages 16 and 17). Each climate community researcher prior to the session selected one *Area of Life* (Middlemiss et al., 2023) and co-created a script with the UoY team to give a high-level, broad explanation to the group.

The six A*reas of Life being:*
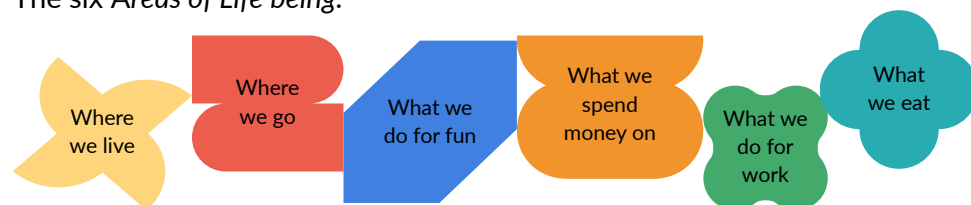
As we move to page two of the hand out, each climate community researcher will read out their script - should one not be in attendance a UoY researcher will read it out on their behalf. One example of a devised script, read out by the authoring climate community researcher in the session is reproduced below:

What we do for work - Dinara (Climate Community Researcher)

This is about our jobs and how climate change policies might affect them. We think there are a number of ways that people's jobs could be affected.

Firstly, we think that people working in jobs such as mining, the oil industry, the steel industry, the petrol and diesel car industry will all be affected by climate policies. It is possible that people working in these industries will find their jobs at risk or will need to retrain to adapt to changes such as the shift from petrol cars to electric cars. This may mean for a car mechanic, they need to learn how to work on electric cars since there will be more of them. It'll mean we'll need to charge our electric cars with renewable energy to make sure they are sustainable and help the environment.

Secondly, it is not all bad news. The number of so-called 'green jobs', so jobs that help the climate rather than negatively impact it, is likely to increase. So for example there will potentially be more manufacturing jobs producing electric cars, more builder jobs installing solar panels, technology jobs developing bio-degradable materials for packaging.

What is important here is that people whose jobs are at risk are given the opportunity to re-train and access education to protect them during this period of change. At the same time, it is important that schools and colleges are teaching the knowledge and skills that we will need for these new green jobs.
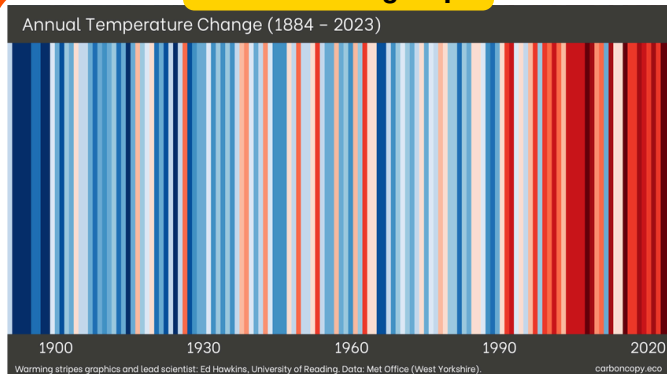
Where we live

Where we go

What we do for fun

What we spend money on

What we do for work

What we eat

Figure 1 (reprinted): Areas of Life categories that will be impacted to the net zero transition (Middlemiss et al., 2023)

Bradford & Climate Change

UNIVERSITY of York

What is Climate Change?

Climate change refers to long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns. Some of these shifts are natural, but based on research and data from scientists, academics, historians and other experts, since the 1800s, human activities have been the main cause, primarily due to burning fossil fuels like coal, oil, and gas. One way or another we all contribute to climate change, through the energy we use at home, the way we travel, the things we buy, and the food we eat.

Bradford Warming Stripes

Annual Temperature Change (1884 – 2023)

1900   1930   1960   1990   2020

Warming stripes graphics and lead scientist: Ed Hawkins, University of Reading. Data: Met Office (West Yorkshire).   carboncopy.eco

Each stripe represents the average temperature in Bradford in a single year, from 1884 to 2023 - it shows things are heating up at a very fast rate, we know primarily because of human activities

Source: Prof Ed Hawkins, University of Reading

The Causes of Climate Change

- **Greenhouse Gas Emissions:** When we burn fossil fuels like coal, oil, and gas, we release greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide and methane into the atmosphere. Think of our atmosphere as having a natural, thin blanket that keeps the Earth warm enough to live on. But these extra greenhouse gases are like adding more layers to that blanket, making it thicker and trapping more and more heat. This causes our planet to warm up, just like you'd get warmer under a thicker duvet
- **Deforestation:** Trees absorb carbon dioxide. Cutting down forests reduces the Earth's ability to remove these gases from the atmosphere
- **Industrial Processes:** Some industrial and business processes release greenhouse gases directly, including from factories such as those in Bradford

Effects of Climate Change

One way or another we will all be affected by climate change, like dominoes falling one after another. Effects include:

- **Rising Temperatures:** Leading to heatwaves, wildfires, and power cuts
- **Extreme Weather:** More frequent floods *(in Bradford, but also in places we have loved ones like Pakistan, Bangladesh and India)*, hurricanes, and other natural disasters

  Think of climate as a loaded die for weather. While a normal die (our past climate) gives you an equal chance of different outcomes (weather), climate change is tilting the odds. This means even though any specific day's weather is still a roll, the chances of extreme events like heatwaves or intense storms are now much higher than they used to be
- **Food Shortages:** Changes in weather patterns are linked to reduced harvests and increased food prices. Reduced harvest = less food available = higher costs for foods we usually buy
- **Health Impacts:** Increased risk of illnesses, threat to life, spread of disease, and heatstroke in the UK
- **Economic Impacts:** Damage to the economy, loss of earnings, loss of property at home and overseas
- **Inequality:** Climate change may affect the poorest hardest, making inequality and poverty worse - Bradford already has higher rates of poverty than other places in England

Actions Bradford May Take

- **Switch to Clean Energy:** Help households and businesses move to solar, wind, and other clean energy so everyone can benefit regardless of income. *Clean = does not give off greenhouse gas emissions*
- **Improve Energy Use:** Use less energy in homes *(such as improving insulation in homes so they don't require as much energy to heat)* and in businesses *(such as installing timers so lighting and heating does not come on when the building is closed)*
- **Create More Green Spaces:** Planting more trees throughout Bradford to absorb carbon dioxide
- **Greener Practices:** Make it as easy as possible for people in Bradford to adopt environmentally-friendly practices in industry, food production and consumption, transport, and waste

Climate Change and You

We know that climate change and climate policies will impact everyone's daily lives - including yours. Previous research suggests that the following six areas of life are expected to change for everyone in Bradford, including you and me.

Adapted from Snell and Middlemiss, 2025; Middlemiss et al., 2024; 23

Where we go

Use greener transport, such as electric vehicles, public transport, walking and cycling. Travel fewer miles altogether by using more local services.

What we do for fun

Spend our free time by socialising and holidaying locally,and spending time in outside spaces such as parks and woodlands.

What we eat

Eat more locally grown food and less red meat.

What we spend money on

Buy more energy efficient items and fix broken items rather than replace them.

What we do for work

Work in green jobs such as the renewable energy industry. Some people will need to re-train as their jobs are phased out.

Where we live

Improve the energy efficiency of our homes, switch from gas to electricity, use smart technology.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Activity 1: Changes to home life (Your Home exercise)

Each person is asked to spend time thinking on their own about how changes to the different areas of life might (or already do) impact them or their households.

Each person has a sheet to draw their household and capture areas of life that are already affected, how things could change, or how activities may look in the future - as well as their household's climate superpower and resistance point.

An example of a completed 'household sheet' is explained so everyone knows what to do.

People are asked to share their drawing, superpower and resistance point with someone on their table.

Activity 2: Our community and the areas of life affected by climate change (Areas of Life exercise)

In small groups, people are asked to think about how climate-related changes to different areas of life could change the assets in their community and neighbourhood, and Bradford as a whole (which were identified in Workshop 1). The asset maps from Workshop 1 are posted around the room for reference, but each small group is given a blank community asset sheet to draw out how climate-related changes to different areas of life fit in with local assets.

Figure 10: Your Home exercise (AP8)

Groups are asked to highlight what are the assets they want to preserve, or assets that need to change or strengthened to adapt to climate change. Can you show what changes to different Areas of Life it would be possible to take advantage of based on the assets and strengths of the area?

Provide sticky dots representing the different Areas of Life that will change through climate change.

Give a pre-made example of what the group could produce (Figure 11).

Climate community researchers support conversations and facilitate the small groups.

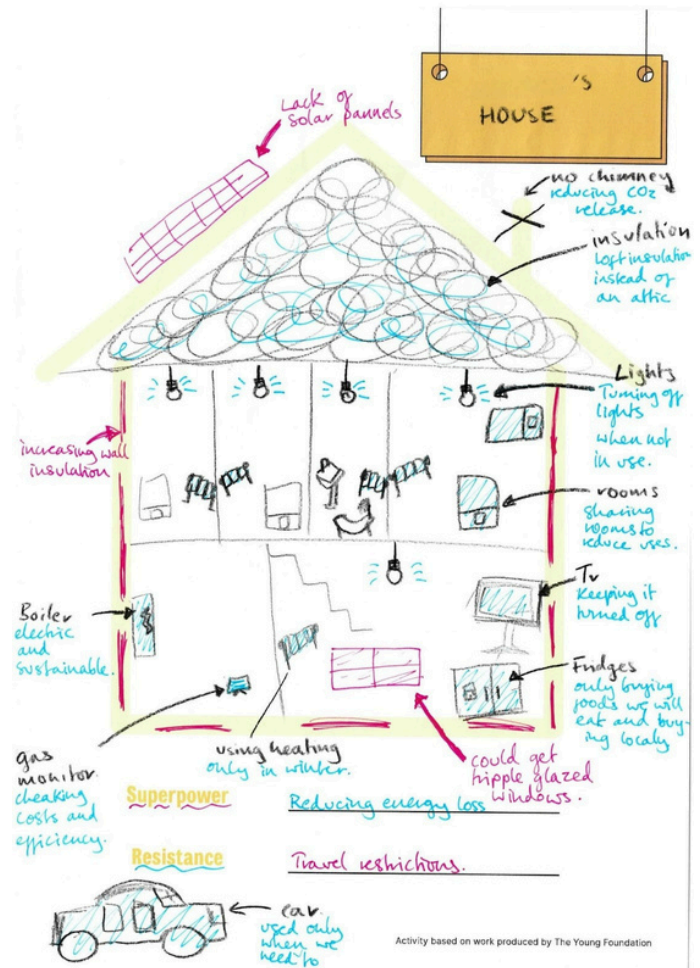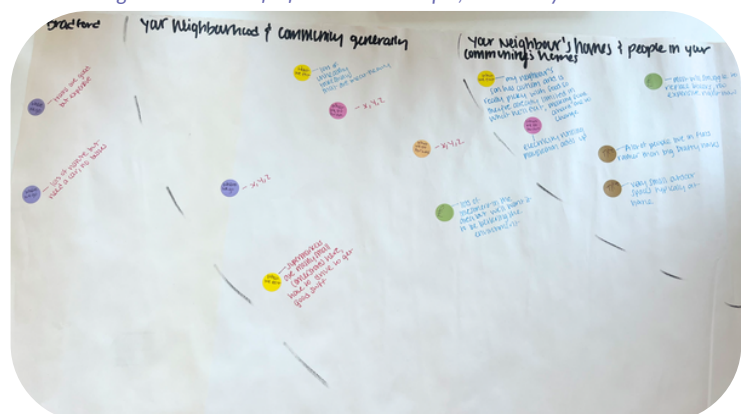*Figure 11: Areas of Life exercise example, created by UoY team*

Activity 3: Whole group discussion

The whole group discusses their revised asset maps. What was the area of life/sticker colour used the most or least, why? Which area of life that will change was the hardest to talk about or to picture how it would change? Which area of life and assets do you feel the most confident about making changes in, if needed? Which area of life and assets feel the most difficult to adjust? How will community strengths factor into these areas and climate?

Wrap up and link to Workshop 3

Ask each individual to write what they think is their community's strength in the transition, and their community's resistance point on a sticky note and put them on their asset maps. Explain that next time we'll build on what we have discussed today, focusing on what specific things do you care about and want to see happen in Bradford and your area to make important climate-related changes.

PREPARATION FOR WORKSHOP 3:

After Workshop 2, the research team identifies common issues and opportunities for change that have been noted down on the asset maps produced by the community group and sort these into neighbourhood topics or themes (e.g. housing, family and children, public transport, clear energy, food availability and so on). The topics and themes are identified from the data itself, not pre-determined.

A summary of the issues and opportunities by theme is written up on separate sheets of flip chart paper for use in Workshop 3.

Workshop 3 - Developing a community climate manifesto: to promote action and voice community priorities

Welcome, icebreaker and purpose of the session

Start with an icebreaker to get people thinking (and to identify words that could potentially be used later in the manifesto activity): "If we are thinking about addressing climate change, what's one word that describes your hope for a better, greener Bradford?" (e.g. fair, fun). Explain that the workshop will involve taking the strengths and challenges identified last week and turning them into more concrete actions for change - our goal is to create a draft manifesto by the end.

Figure 12: Words exercise (AP1)
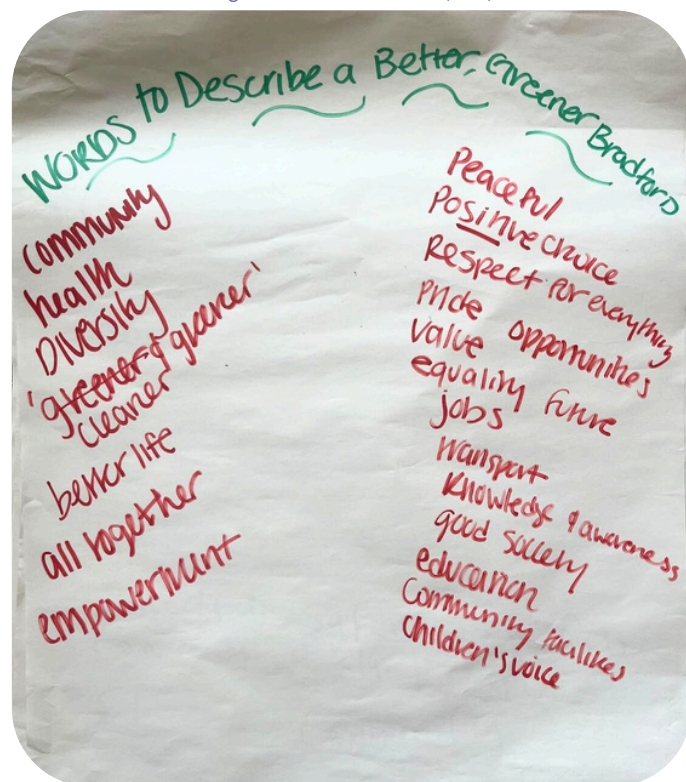
Activity 1: What is a manifesto for change?

Ask if anyone knows what a manifesto is. Explain that a manifesto is a bit like a public plan or set of actions that you want to happen (show/give an example). Explain that it often has a few different parts so you can tell a story and clearly indicate what you want to change:

- **Our Vision:** This is what we dream of for our community – a short, inspiring statement about the kind of future Bradford could have.
- **Our Values:** These are the core beliefs or values that will guide everything we propose. What's most important to us when we think about a climate future that includes everyone (e.g., Fairness, Community Power, Health, Green Spaces)?
- **Our Actions:** These are the specific actions or changes we want to see happen in Bradford.
- **How we want to be involved:** What do we want others (like the local council, businesses, or even other residents) to do next to help make this vision a reality?

Explain that everyone will work in small groups in the workshop to develop different sections of the manifesto, but we need to start by thinking about the issues and opportunities that we identified in the last workshop.

Activity 2: Review of "what we heard about issues and opportunities"

Talk everyone through the issues and opportunities flip chart sheets that were prepared between Workshops 2 and 3 (display these on the wall).

Ask the group if it feels important to add anything to each one so that we can take this into account today. Write these on the flip chart themselves during discussions.

For example, ask: "Is there anything on the flipcharts that you discussed last week that doesn't look like it is captured in this list?" Prompt by asking about issues around fairness and not 'leaving anyone behind'.
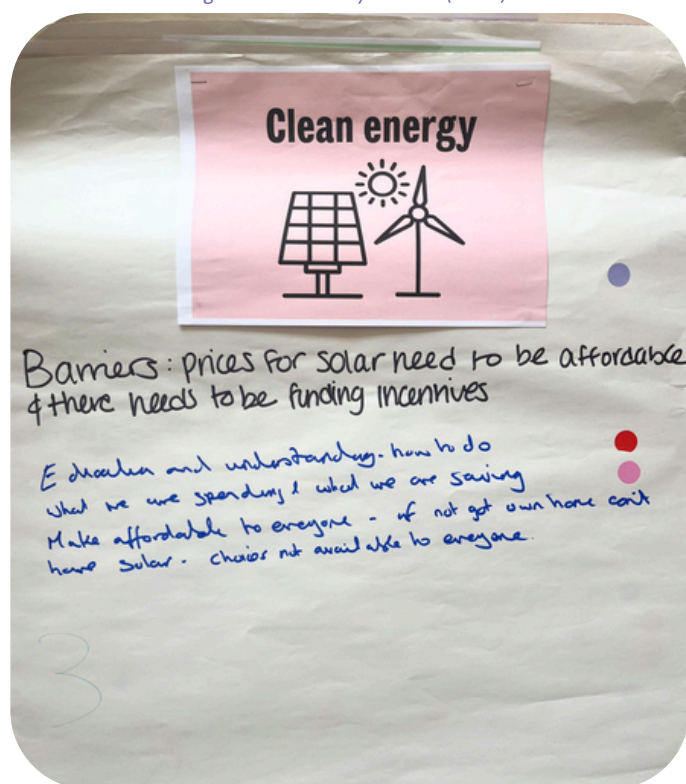

Figure 13: Vote Tally exercise (SC10)

Activity 3: Group prioritisation (Vote Tally)

Explain that when thinking about making changes, it is not always possible to act on everything - when developing a manifesto, it is often really important to focus on/draw attention to the things we think are most important; for example, what we really think needs to happen or will make the most difference to the people that live in the area.

Give each person 10 voting sticker dots. Ask people to place their dots across the flip chart topics that have just been discussed to show what they think priorities issues for this area are when tackling climate change.

Explain that we'll count up these votes to identify the top four community priorities issues/opportunities - these will become the focus of the manifesto and what we'll focus on in the rest of the session. *[Count votes to identify the top four issues/opportunities - set up the tables for the next activity based on the priorities topics]*

Activity 4: Barrier-to-solution brainstorm (Actors Exercise)

Present what the top four community priority issues/challenges for climate action are. Explain that everyone will now work in small groups to identify what specific actions need to happen to address the issue/opportunity - in a way that will leave no one behind in their area.

Give groups flipchart paper with pre-set headings to complete:

- What important actions are needed to address this issue/opportunity and help us to make sure that everyone is included and no one in this community is left behind in tackling climate change?
- Who needs to make this happen? Provide sticky dots to show different actors who may need to be involved.

Figure 14: Actors exercise (SC1)
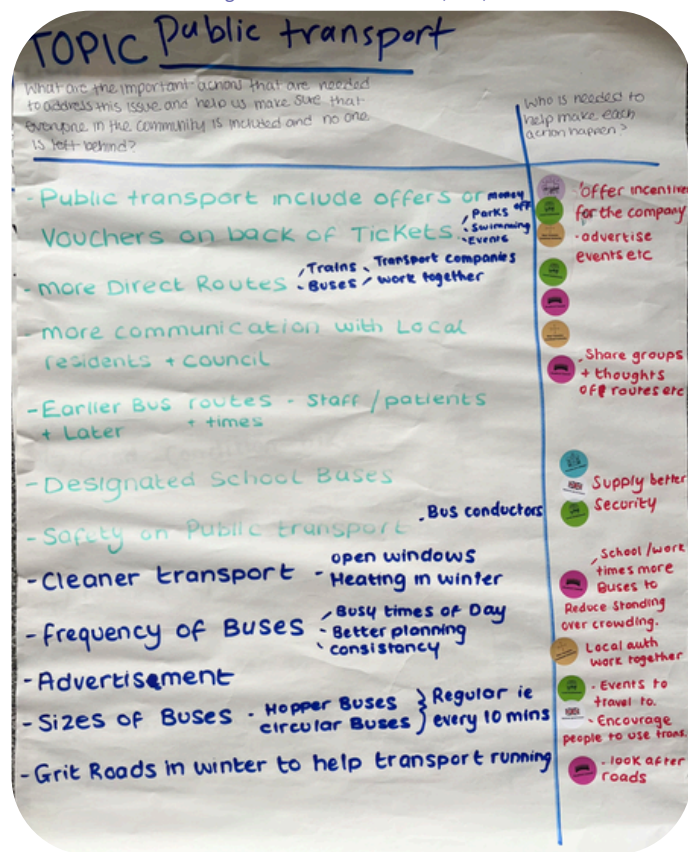
Activity 5: Actions-to-manifesto statements

Divide the group into five sub-groups: four groups to write up the manifesto draft per theme ('actions to statements' groups), and one additional 'vision/values' group to create the vision statement for their manifesto. The four 'actions to statements' groups need to take the prioritised actions from the previous activity and start writing them out as clear, concise statements for the manifestos on flip chart paper. The flip chart will already say "The change we need is…" to help prompt the statements. Example: If we have an action about "More EV charging points" they might write a full sentence like: "The change we need is 1: Expand electric vehicle charging infrastructure equitably across all neighbourhoods."

The remaining group is told that we also need to create a short statement to frame the manifesto, like an introduction. On flip chart paper, a climate community researcher helps the group devise a Vision Statement. The flip chart paper is already labeled with the prompt "We envision a future where Bradford and [location of the workshop] is…"). The group then turns 3-4 values that should guide action to address climate change into an inspiring statement.

Give the group questions to help develop these:

- Q1: What is your vision for the future of Bradford in a changing climate? e.g. "We envision a future where Tong is… [FILL IN THE BLANK]".
- Q2: What are the values you think should guide climate action in Bradford? (e.g., "We believe in affordable green transport," "We value healthy, accessible green spaces"). The words from the ice breaker can be used here if helpful.

Activity 6: Whole group review and rapid refinement

Show all the flipcharts and vision/values statements so everyone can see the full draft of the manifesto. Ask each group or the climiate community researchers to summarise what their section of the manifesto says, starting with the vision/values group. Ask the whole group for feedback, asking if anything is missing or needs to be added.

Next steps and close

Thank everyone for their time and energy working on their strong draft manifesto. Explain what will happen next to create a final version of the manifesto, with the climate community researchers taking a lead. Explain how the manifesto will be used (e.g. presented to the Council, inform climate action planning). Indicate that there will be a community launch event for the manifestos that everyone will be invited to join to celebrate our work together.

Producing the final climate manifestos

After the workshops, the UoY and climate community researcher team worked with an illustrator Emma Kelly to create each final manifesto - one for Tong, one for Bowling & Barkerend - as a tangible output from the workshops. The manifesto text that was drafted in each workshop was edited and refined line-by-line with the climate community researchers; for example, to ensure there was flow and impact, and remove any repetition, without changing the core ideas or intent of each community group's input. The community researchers represented the wider members of each group in this process, as they were from each community and their role was to ensure that the manifesto reflected everything each community group sought to convey. The climate community researchers were also involved in the style and design choices for each manifesto, working directly with the illustrator.

Printed copies of the booklets were mailed to each community organisation for sharing with community members and posted online for general view.
See both manifestos at: https://heyzine.com/shelf/ClimateManifestos

Connecting to research to action: policy and wider engagement

Informing the development of the Bradford Climate Action Plan

Throughout the research, we reported regularly to the Steering Group. This included working with the Group to provide an update to local elected members about the research, and an interim briefing and report on emerging findings. The interim report included a comparative analysis of how the community group's priorities for socially-just climate action in Bradford related to topics in the Council's draft Climate Action Plan, and highlighted implications and recommendations to inform the development of the final Plan.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Community manifesto launch event

A community manifesto launch event was held on 9th October 2025 at The Anchor Project in Bradford. This event also served as an opportunity to address a direct request from the community groups to create a two-way communication channel and strengthen relationships between decision-makers and organisational leaders (e.g. in Bradford Council), and the communities involved in the research.

Approximately 25 - 30 people attended, including representation from:

- The Council's Sustainability Service, public health and neighbourhoods teams
- Those who attended the workshops in Tong and Bowling & Barkerend
- Our two community partner organisations
- Climate community researchers
- The UoY research team
- Bradford HDRC
- Yorkshire & Humber Climate Commission
- West Yorkshire Police
- A local school
- Local elected members
- Local community groups
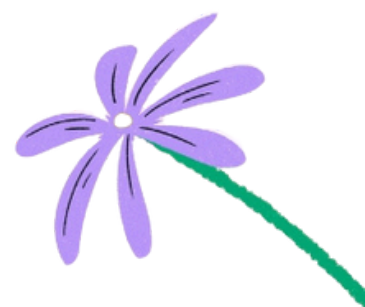
The event provided an overview of the research and its goals, gave our partner community organisations and climate community researchers an opportunity to share their experiences, and created space for a wider group of organisational stakeholders to hear about the community group's priorities and to listen to and engage directly with community members. During the event, **we organised a two-way listening exercise** between community members and wider stakeholders around four key priorities across the manifestos. Community members spoke about their lived experience while wider stakeholders listened. Listening roles were then reversed, with wider stakeholders responding to what they had heard based on their experiences in a work capacity. At the end, everyone shared back on what had been discussed as a group.

Community manifesto launch event
October 2025

RESEARCH DESIGN

Additional Community Engagement

During the CBPR process, we sought to carry out the research in a way that might strengthen existing wider community research networks in Bradford and other people's knowledge about climate change and climate action. This included connecting with the CoPPeR network, Healthy Urban Places research programme and HDRC public contributor activities, inviting staff and community members involved in these to attend our Climate Fresk events, community manifesto launch event, and a Biodiversity Collage session. During the CBPR, we also discussed hosting further Climate Fresk sessions for Bradford Council officers and elected members to attend, connecting to the Sustainability Services ongoing plans in climate education.

*Climate Fresk workshop session
June 2025*

"The Climate Fresk workshops provided a valuable additional opportunity for our Public Contributors and community groups. They enabled us to continue engaging meaningfully with residents beyond our initial workshops. Participants greatly appreciated the chance to explore climate-related issues in an interactive and accessible way, framed through a community perspective. Many felt inspired to share their learning within their own settings and requested materials to support this. It was incredibly rewarding to witness the impact of this work — how it empowered and upskilled individuals and groups, truly exemplifying collaborative work 'with' communities." - Shabana Din, Co Production & Partnerships Lead, NIHR Health Determinants Research Collaboration, Department of Adult Social Care, Health and Housing

*Biodiversity Collage Workshop Session
August 2025*

With Many Roots, our facilitation partner for the sessions, ran follow-up surveys following both events. When asked 'who else do you think might benefit from the Biodiversity Collage?' responses included: "people from multiple backgrounds and ethnicities; school staff; key pillars within the community; faith based organisations; mothers especially because they are the main figure in child's education and learning; and various community organisations and community action groups in the Metropolitan District of Bradford" (Follow Up Survey, August 2025). The Climate Fresk session similarly received strong support from the participants, with almost all survey respondents indicating they would like to become trained facilitators of the session.

Findings

The following findings are primarily from the workshop series in Bowling & Barkerend and Tong. Some additional supportive commentary from the manifesto launch and community are also included. The community climate manifestos — written by the project's participants during Workshop 3, then edited by our climate community researchers to maintain community voice — serve as the basis for the findings and highlight each community group's thoughts and calls for climate action on their top four most important issues. During the workshops and engagement events, the research team also established a range of other insights about what residents felt was important in climate action, which we report on here.
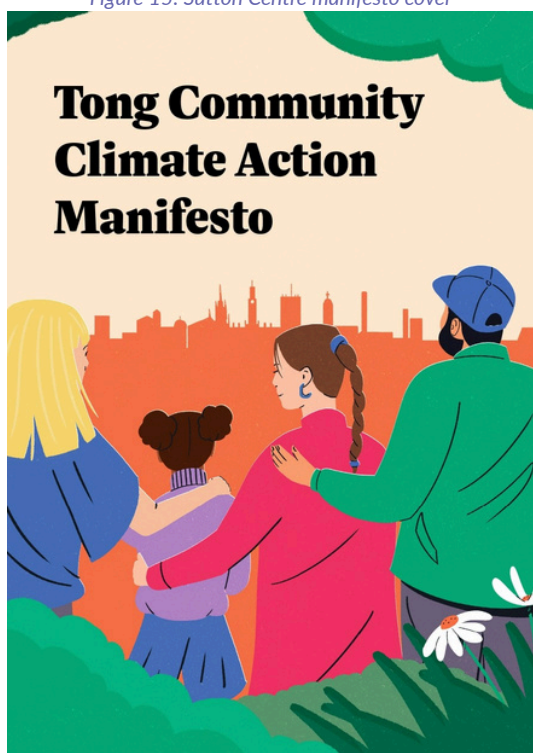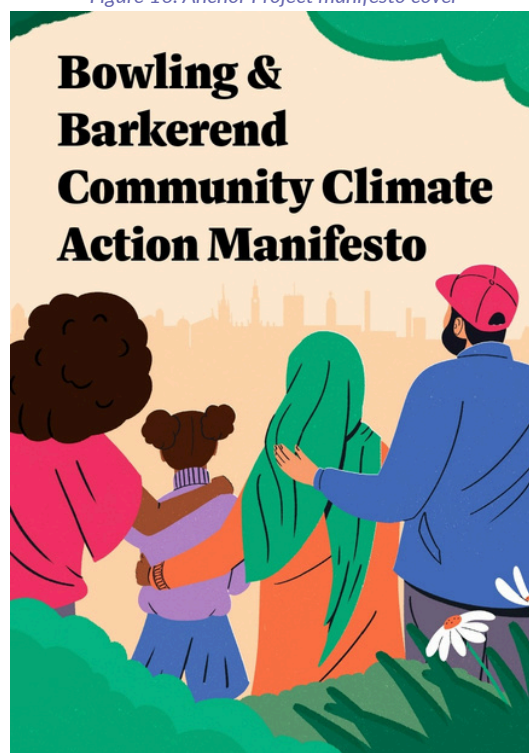

Figure 15: Sutton Centre manifesto cover

Figure 16: Anchor Project manifesto cover

We identified impacts and learning from our community-based participatory research approach for the climate community researchers, UoY research team, and community organisations involved, and also report on these here.

Community views and priorities for climate action

Figure 17: Community assets excercise (SC4)

Both the communities in Bowling & Barkerend and Tong engaged dynamically with the climate activities and discussions. Supported by the climate community researchers, participants identified the strengths and assets their community brings into climate action.
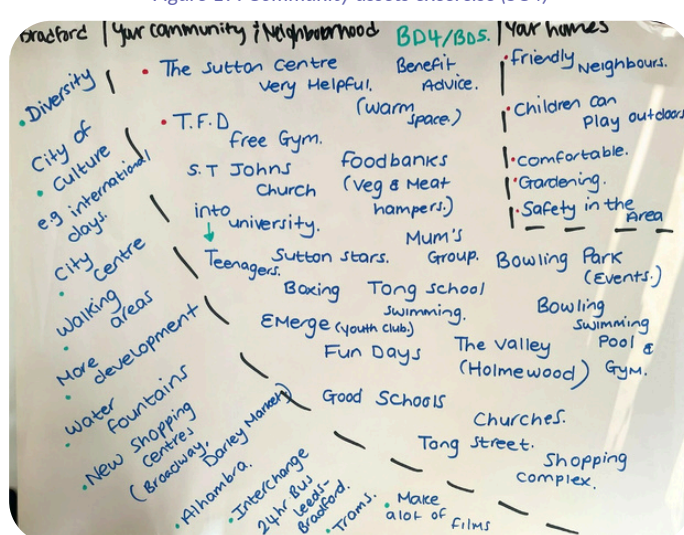
FINDINGS

By consensus, each group agreed on the main strength their community brings: diversity in Bowling & Barkerend and community in Tong. While consensus differed, both communities offered similar strengths and attributes within their immediate area and Bradford more generally. The most commonly stated first strength identified in Bradford was the City of Culture 2025 programme.

As the workshops progressed, we asked participants to vote for their top four topics to include in the manifestos. Tables 1 and 2 show all the topics that reached this stage, along with each group's interpretation of them. The cells in green highlight the final four following the voting activity.

Table 1: The Anchor Project community's Areas of Life excerise summary

Community safety • bonfire night needs to be safer • CCTV usage needs to improve • there are feelings of safety in local area compared to wider UK but not universal throughout Bradford	**Pollution** • need for clean air/cleaner transport • better air filtration needed	**Food availability (and links to education and jobs)** • want for availability of local produce in local shops and local restaurants in areas • desire for a system where local = affordable • promoting allotments and community growing (have lost allotments to housing locally - some people used to sell produce locally) • want food locally available (within walking distance) instead of needing a car for the supermarket • you can buy organic in Bradford but not everywhere • butchers and locally handled food available • need in the community for more garden and growing spaces, to harvest herbs, fresh fruit and vegetables - with links to education and local jobs in the community
Community cleanliness • animal control and rat infestation problems need to be addressed • fly tipping and littering is a big problem • improper drainage can lead to flooding issues • littering and flooding issues make it harder for mobility	**Quality Jobs / Sustainable Livelihoods** • better local employment needed; linking to local services in our area and community needs • need for a lot of support and training to change to green jobs • many jobs may be online; groups mentioned their own jobs - some lend more to being climate-friendly and others may have to change	**Public transport** • affordable travel, including via discounts, free travel schemes, access buses and transport that is good for those with disabilities • currently too expensive • currently poor quality, takes too long/infrequent, and is not reliable • poor public transport = encouraging car use
Local leisure / leisure centres • lots of opportunities for local leisure in community or Bradford - swimming, gyms and yoga	**Schools / Education** • garden/growing clubs at schools needed • learning from early age the truth and facts about sustainability • colleges should provide (re)training for green jobs	**Clean Energy** • solar wanted but need infrastructure - it can save people living in our community money on their bills
Green spaces • there are good parks in areas, including Peel Park and Moor Park • more affordable travel options are needed to green spaces further away • green spaces need to be safe, as they are not always for women and girls, and young people	**Recycling and Composting** • facilities needed - including supplying recycling bins • have lost local tips/recycling centres • needs to be taught in schools • there is improper disposal of food waste and foods currently so education is needed	**Active travel** • not everyone has bike • need confidence/skill • subsidise electric bikes • bike lanes not everywhere you need to make a journey
Communication issues • need for better communications between community venues • need to share climate knowledge where people already go • right now inconsistent communication • desire for leaflets and personalised letters • not as big of a desire to learn online but it's part of it • it is hard to know all the local places and where to go and not sure where to find that out	**Housing** • hit and miss whether new homes are 'smart' homes - may come to cost more later on by not sorting upon initial build • some areas have better quality materials used than others • worries over EPC ratings • worries about insulation making homes too hot in the summer • some things we like in our homes, like scented candles are toxic and not good for the planet • concerns about electric heating for houses being any good (based on current experience of neighbours with old electric heating having damp)	**Diet** • culturally a lot of people in Bradford consume meat - giving a meat-based dish can be showing people respect and giving them special treatment [respecting elders for example] whereas only giving vegetable gives the opposite effect • reducing dairy is difficult for everyone • hard to ask children and older people to switch their diets - kids are fussy and older people may not want to change • when cooking for fun or having a get together, using fire instead of gas BBQ, reverting to 'old style' cooking
	Families and Children • Bradford is good for families; kind and diverse people; • if activities are fun for the kids then things can slowly change. With kids, one person has to start doing it (like biking to the park instead of being dropped off in the car) and then others will eventually follow • should be encouraged and made normal	

FINDINGS

Table 2: The Sutton Centre community's Areas of Life excerise summary

Community safety • prioritise community safety (particularly for women and children) when making climate changes such as good lighting • areas need to be safe enough for people to consider walking, particularly at night • reduce uneven footpaths to make walking safer • cut back bushes and trees over footpaths near our homes	**Families** • community centres need to offer more family trips • second hand shopping including for school uniforms • groups for families needed • food and clothing costs add up for families	**Public transport** • new tram system needed • more routes for all public transport • need to bring back dedicated school buses • costs need to be reduced for more people to use public transport (subsidies) • need transportation support for those with difficulties, the elderly, and those with disabilities - otherwise they are cut off from things like events in their area and Bradford city centre • overall need for better bus services to help people get about
Activities and things to do • currently there are a lot of free activities and events in Bradford, which we value (including the use of the water fountains in Centenary Square) • easy access to cultural events in the city centre • while a lot of community centres with good facilities, it's difficult to engage without community-arranged transport (e.g. arranged trips or centres having activities out of their usual place) • need more local walking groups in Tong • more street parties • desire for leisure time that's not always tech-based (reading, games) • keep events like rugby matches and music so people can attend	**Jobs and businesses** • financial support is needed so new ventures and businesses can be set up in our area • need for a different range of jobs in Bradford overall • need for more local jobs in Tong • cafes and bars will likely need to change their takeaway cups and boxes, affecting our food • the big shops like Asda are cheaper than our local shops meaning we go farther to Asda using the car	**Food Availability** • need more local shops in Tong • water refill stations needed throughout area and in town • there are local butchers and farm shops • neighbours share food with each other in Tong • need for community allotments to grow food, then sell at a reduced rate • need for more local, seasonal foods that are easier to access (more appealing) • want shopping close to home • helping older neighbours with shopping as transport is too difficult with bags • eat less processed food - good for the climate, good for our health
Communication • need free access to online information - an idea for this is Wi-Fi for bus routes that takes you to an information page about climate, how to compost and how to reduce global warming • leaflets and letters are helpful, particularly at community centres and groups where people already are • desire for a local newsletter to help spread the word on climate stuff like this workshop • make use of digital screens to advertise events • events need to be better advertised	**Recycling and composting** • need local access sites and composting facilities • more education • the Too Good To Go app helps with food waste saving • supermarkets to help more with food waste and advertise how to help more • less takeaways will reduce rubbish and waste • reducing the cost to recycle large items or garden waste would encourage more people to do it • food waste to be given to local families • overall need to recycle more	**Active travel** • people need to learn to cycle, so that skill needs to be develop • cycle lanes need to be safe enough for children to use for school • Bradford does have cycle lanes but not the best • install bike tracks at the parks
Green space and green areas • want more parks and woodlands around our homes and neighbourhood • need more activities in the local parks to make them enticing • no space to grow fruit and veg in homes • acknowledgement there are a lot of green spaces though	**Housing** • need more housing options that are climate-friendly, so support with solar panels, insulation • support both with retrofit and in new builds • stop building houses on green space	**Education** • green scheme - education and awareness is required • more education on how to grow your own food • learning to fix things so we don't buy them
Clean energy • funded incentives for solar panels • prices need to be accessible for solar overall		

With the topics selected, participants were then tasked with creating a vision statement to frame their manifestos (Figures 18 and 19). These visions should be borne in mind when reading the findings related to each location and theme.
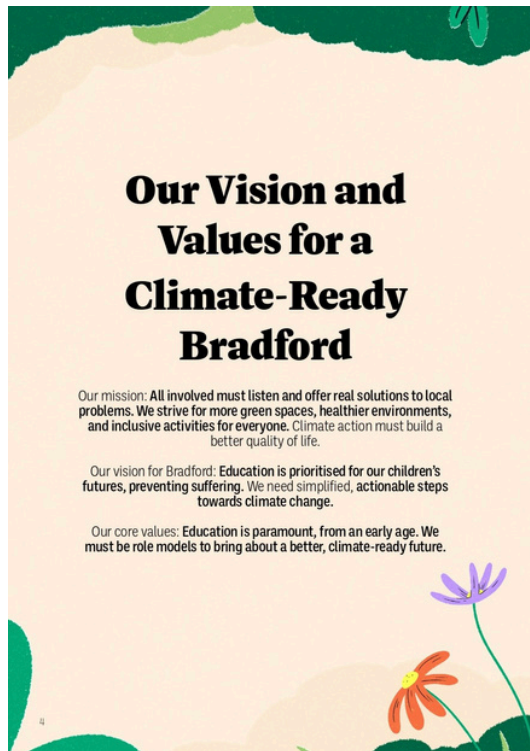
Figure 18: Sutton Centre community's vision statement

Figure 19: Anchor Project community's vision statement

Our Vision and Values for a Climate-Ready Bradford

Our mission: **All involved must listen and offer real solutions to local problems. We strive for more green spaces, healthier environments, and inclusive activities for everyone.** Climate action must build a better quality of life.

Our vision for Bradford: **Education is prioritised for our children's futures, preventing suffering. We need simplified, actionable steps towards climate change.**

Our core values: **Education is paramount, from an early age. We must be role models to bring about a better, climate-ready future.**

Our Vision and Values for a Climate-Ready Bradford

Our mission is to **"cultivate a vibrant and inclusive community where everyone thrives, fostering connection, opportunity and positive change."** This guides our understanding that climate action builds a better quality of life for all.

We envision a resilient and sustainable Bradford, shaped by local action and community engagement. A city with abundant **green** spaces, an **active community, affordable transportation** for all, and where **children and families** flourish.

Our core values for climate action in Bradford are:

- Community Engagement
- Equality & Diversity
- Opportunity
- Respecting Everything and Everyone
- Focus on People's Voices
- Jobs
- Empowerment
- Health
- Delivery
- Knowledge/Education

Below we review **the top four themes from each location:** Public Transportation (voted in the top by both groups); Families and Children (voted in the top by both groups); Schools and Education (voted in the top by both groups); Housing (voted in the top by Bowling & Barkerend only); and Community Safety (voted in the top by Tong only).

FINDINGS

1. Public Transportation

Overwhelmingly, the highest ranked topic to bring into the manifesto for both groups was public transportation. A key priority for both communities was a focus on transforming the quality, coverage, variety, and affordability of current public transport - a particularly important initiative as the most common 'resistance point' participants identified within their household for climate action was moving from car use to public transport.

Firstly, there was a general barrier to entry for public transport use around quality and safety. There was consensus amongst the groups that if the public transit systems are not clean and safe (usually defined as safe enough for women and children to use) then it was not viable. In particular, this was linked to transportation companies, such as First Bus, maintaining minimum standards of cleanliness and enforcing safety standards, with Councils having enforcement mechanisms. A key additional barrier was that people with disabilities were often not considered in transit planning, leading to calls for *"Supporting people with difficulties to get to events" - Areas of Life exercise (SC2)*

There were further, clear calls for additional public transport options, such as trams, but also a variety in bus transportation. Variety options suggested included hopper fleets, dedicated school buses, and circular buses to respond to local needs; in Tong, school buses were widely agreed upon as an important initiative.

More expansive timetabling was also noted, with one participant from Tong noting they utilise bus services during the week for their shifts at a hospital, but because of reduced timetabling on the weekends, they must order a taxi to be able to work the morning shift. In all, more direct, frequent routes responsive to local needs appeared as a baseline for consistent usage. *"Bradford's public transport is poor and unreliable, it takes a long time. Not frequent enough service, so people reliant on cars" - Areas of Life exercise (AP3)*

Both groups advocated for additional, and more dynamic, affordable bus schemes and discounts for various groups. Those identified for targeted reduced fare schemes included students, young people, regular users via loyalty schemes, and children. Some participants from both locations advocated for free public transport for all - this was generally supported but participants were pragmatic, and reflected on whether this would be possible. A role for partnerships with local and larger businesses to offer discounts or rewards for arriving by public transport (e.g. £1 off for showing your bus or train ticket) was also favoured by participants.

A recurring theme from both groups in discussing public transport throughout the workshops and the policy launch event was the need for community engagement prior, during, and after transport-related initiatives. There was a repeated sentiment, notably in Tong, that if the community had planned the public transport routes and bike lane maps, there would be better usage and enthusiasm for usage.

FINDINGS

Box 1: Other modes of travel: active travel and electric cars

Bike lanes were discussed by many of the groups, however as separate conversation under active travel. Electric bikes were spoken of in many cases wearily, with concerns over safety for users and the lack of health benefits from electric bike usage compared to standard bikes. Current bike lanes, for all bike types, were generally found to be insufficient for full routes to locally needed locations. The Bradford Leeds Cycle Superhighway was mentioned as an example of a lot of effort, but not responsive to the needs of many for everyday use.

Both groups agreed that car usage was a major problem for climate change, health, and safety. *"Excessive use of vehicles and misuse of them releasing exhaust which is unhealthy and has an impact on climate change" - Areas of Life exercise (AP4)*

This said, there were major concerns as to the investment in electric vehicle (EV) networks around Bradford and how it would not solve some of the known problems with car usage (e.g. the abundance of cars that partially park on pavements during school drop off or general road safety). Interestingly, there were also distinct concerns around EV batteries - both the environmental implications of their usage and disposal, and the health impacts of being around such large batteries.

In the workshops, we aimed to answer concerns and questions around climate as needed to inform the conversations. Following this discussion around EVs, the UoY team consulted an environmental expert for an evidence-based explanation to their questions. This approach was generally met with positive feedback for taking their concerns seriously, but participants still wondered whether future studies might find health impacts from battery exposure.

FINDINGS

2. Family and Children

Communities emphasised how climate action needs to centre families and children in their approach. In practice, this meant a change to person-centred framing of conversations around climate, away from policy and action, and instead focusing on how it relates to people and their lives. Both groups prioritised families and children, though with an expansive, multigenerational understanding that included grandparents, neighbours, community members, and young people. The idea of family extended beyond immediate geography. Participants expressed concern and empathy for families affected by climate impacts abroad. For example, when an American UoY researcher shared a story about the 2025 Texas flooding, participants checked in afterward to make sure her family was safe.

Part of this understanding of family and children was a needed appreciation of culture, diversity, and family structures. While many climate initiatives may be appropriate in some contexts, participants discussed barriers shaped by cultural norms. South Asian women in Bowling & Barkerend, for example, described the social importance of serving meat, saying,

"Giving someone a meal of meat is giving people special treatment, showing respect. Not treating someone well [is] if you only give vegetables... Culturally, most people in Bradford are meat eaters" - Areas of Life exercise (AP3)

Tong participants did not link meat consumption to culture, although many related their cultural backgrounds and life experiences (e.g. immigrating from Poland, living in South America, practicing Islam) to other aspects of climate, such as the need to travel abroad to see family. Both Tong and Bowling & Barkerend participants acknowledged the importance of shifting diets toward eating more vegetables and fewer animal products, framing this as both a health and climate benefit. Both groups linked healthier eating and reducing ultra-processed foods with the climate, describing it as a 'win-win' for people and the planet.

At the manifesto launch event, the table engaged on school and education discussed the difficulties engaging with men on climate and the need for climate spaces separated by gender. Muslim women in the group, as in the workshops and community engagement activities, highlighted the importance of meeting communities where they are. They explained that men and women often have different schedules, so events should be timed accordingly to accommodate this. For example, men may have better availability on weekends, while women can typically attend mid-week. Similarly, Muslim community members highlighted that shared gender spaces may prevent some women from being comfortable participating, so various options need to be considered for climate action.

Children's needs and wellbeing were spotlighted as a motivation for climate actions across areas and themes, ranging from the need for green, locally relevant jobs for them to age into, to giving them green spaces to play and thrive, and better quality schooling. This motivation was framed as an internal reflection of the adults, especially in Tong where they wanted to role model for children how to act in accordance with climate needs. This conflicts with a popular narrative where 'children are the future' and action for change often is placed onto younger generations. For both groups of participants, there was a call to action to create the future that they want children to grow up in through community and parent-led action.

Bradford City Park Mirror Pool
Mentioned by numerous participants as a fun place to take children

"If doing something with children is fun, it can slowly change things. One person has started cycling to the park with kids. Others use[d] to laugh, now others do it…" - Areas of Life exercise (AP3)

Teenagers were especially discussed in this context, with both groups stating they need to be targeted with climate-friendly initiatives and green programming *"… plan things for teenagers to do; reach everyone" - Vote Tally exercise (SC4)*. The desire to reach everyone was constructed as age-appropriate engagement and activities. One example offered was that parks are often targeted at young children, making them less desirable spaces to bring your teenager or whole family. Similarly, there was a call for creating more spaces, such as youth centres, where teenagers can thrive and engage in climate.

3. Schools and Education

Schools and education was one of the strongest areas people felt should be linked with climate action, acting as the bedrock for short- and long-term efforts. The theme was broad, covering both learning spaces and how climate information and schemes are communicated.

Both schools and community centres were identified as spaces for climate learning, where education should translate into action. Schools were considered essential for children's climate awareness, with a particular emphasis on interactive lessons and site visits. A repeated suggestion was to invite farmers to schools to teach about food growing and climate, alongside visits to farms. Food growth was seen as a universal entry point for climate learning, acting as an accessible way to engage with the topic, particularly as many participants already had a desire to grow their own vegetables.

At the manifesto launch event, schools were also described as an underused resource for community education; although they receive investment and have physical space, they are often closed during evenings, weekends, and school holidays.

Community spaces were viewed as safe, welcoming environments for education programmes. Meeting people where they are at — youth groups, carers groups, playgroups — was seen as an effective way to build engagement on climate. Community spaces also were valued as examples of good practice, demonstrating green spaces, trees, and sustainable transport. Community spaces were also viewed as bridges between school-based climate learning and wider community knowledge, with food growing again highlighted as a shared benefit for children and adults alike.

Figure 20: Schools and education actors excercise (AP3)
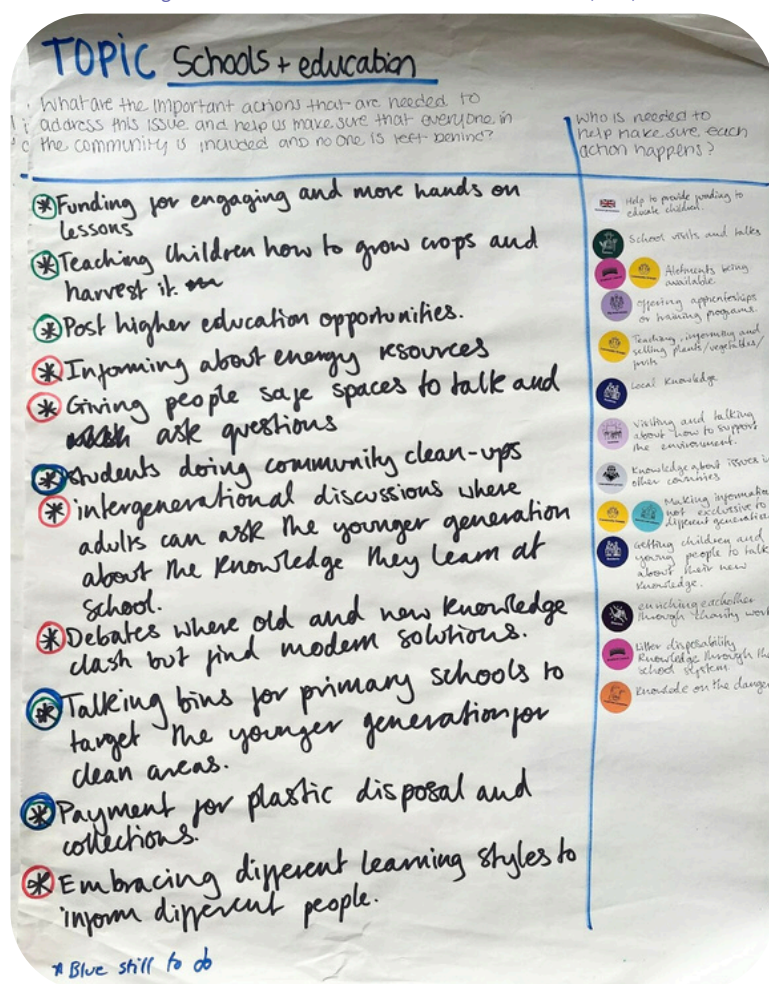
Education was also understood as communication: outreach, awareness, and informing people on climate-friendly activities and alternatives. This outreach was partly thought to be linked to better advertising of events, user-friendly information and in-person engagement on climate. Communication was linked to the Council, but participants also called for community-led awareness. Importantly, all groups expressed that free or low-cost information sources were integral towards actually reaching residents. Suggested communication strategies included leaflets through doors, default Wi-Fi pages on buses promoting recycling and composting, and supermarket campaigns about food waste.

In both locations, communication and outreach needed to be culturally and generationally aware, offering materials in multiple languages and using culturally relevant terms. There was a need for climate awareness activities and schemes to be tailored for different age groups, while creating intergenerational spaces that facilitate two-way conversations. In Bowling & Barkerend, participants discussed this in depth, emphasising the need for older generations to have safe spaces to ask younger people (who generally have more climate knowledge) questions without feeling "stupid", while recognising that each generation contributes valuable insights; a place for *"Debates where old and new knowledge clash but find modern solutions" - Actors exercise (AP3).* These intergenerational conversations were seen as a way to bridge social gaps and also build stronger communities around climate action.

5. Housing

Community members from Bowling & Barkerend emphasised the importance of quality housing that meets local needs and supports climate action. In Tong, housing was highly voted, but did not make the final list of topics for discussion in the manifestos.

Housing, in relation to climate, was spoken about at the larger level, e.g. housing stock, as well as at the personal level, e.g. participants' personal homes. Individual actions mentioned included turning off lights and televisions when not in use, staying in one room to reduce energy consumption, and using energy-efficient appliances. Wider housing reflections included comments such as, *"Why not spend £1bn on houses rather than airports?" - Vote Tally Exercise (SC9)*

Box 2: Garden Space

Across all themes, garden space emerged as an area of climate importance. When thinking about how they could contribute to a greener, low-carbon Bradford, both groups suggested gardening and growing their own food to share or sell to neighbours at low or no cost. Gardening was discussed in relation to both community allotments and also at home itself. Gardening was not just viewed as a way to contribute towards climate action, but also an act of leisure which many in the group gain joy from. This repeated area of engagement holds scope to bridge the areas of community, leisure, green space, climate action, and personal health. *"[We] have a lot of bee-friendly plants [in the] garden. We do enjoy green space areas together, it encourages [the] community to do planting together" - Your Home exercise (SC17)*

FINDINGS

Participants in both locations displayed enthusiasm for clean energy, solar being the most common source mentioned, followed by wind. Groups stressed the need for local solar projects (e.g. solar farms) to make energy accessible, as well as the need to make household-based solar affordable. In Bowling & Barkerend, one popular idea was widespread solar panel grants for south-facing homes to encourage installation. Across all the suggested ideas for renewable energy, participants emphasised that solutions must be realistic and affordable for all households in Bradford, especially for those on low incomes.

Low or no upfront costs was a commonly agreed approach by both groups on housing improvements. Measures such as insulation, double-glazed windows, and efficient heating systems were viewed as necessities rather than luxuries. Not only was affordability considered an important component of this, but accessibility to information was as well. In particular, participants prioritised the availability of in-person support to help residents understand and navigate available schemes. *"I rent my house and someone came last week to check if I have insulation in my house, which I don't so they may put it in [in the future]" - Your Home exercise (AP2)*

Building on accessibility, participants expressed a need for more choices around climate-friendly housing. Options raised included: a variety of housing styles and sizes to appropriately accommodate the number of residents (i.e. not too big); free or affordable at-home recycling options; and limitations on where new housing developments can occur (e.g. cannot build on allotment spaces or green belts). This desire for more comprehensive options reflects residents' wishes to be able to actively participate and engage in choices that may better the climate.

The contrast between wanting more options to act and placing limitations on unsustainable options rang true with ongoing concerns over new builds and retrofit. In Bowling & Barkerend, participants discussed in depth concerns that new builds are failing to: include solar by default, use green technology, build sufficient green spaces in its surroundings, and use quality building practices. There was commentary that, in Bradford, the quality of smart housing and sustainable new builds were unreliable and that, without stronger regulations for Housing Associations and developers, these homes may soon require retrofits - *"... and this might come back to bite us [financially] in the future" - Areas of Life exercise (AP2)*

"Make houses they already have greener. Win-win: cheaper to live and better for [the] environment..."
- Vote Tally exercise (SC9)

5. Community Safety

Community safety and trust in systems, institutions, and within their community more broadly, acted as the foundation for engaging with climate action. Both communities ranked safety as a high priority, placing it in the top four topics in Tong and top five in Bowling & Barkerend. Further to this, the concept of safety extended into other areas traditionally associated with climate, such as transportation and green spaces.

Facets of community safety in both locations included:

- **Trust in institutions** e.g. building relationships between West Yorkshire Police and communities
- **Trust in responsiveness** e.g. action being taken by the Council and police when issues are raised
- **Trust in each other** e.g. standards of respect and care in general community engagement
- **Trust through transparency** e.g. clear communication from national government, West Yorkshire Combined Authority, and Bradford Council on how climate funds are spent
- **Trust through visibility** e.g. face-to-face services from landlords and Housing Associations in local community settings to build trust on housing adaptation — *"When's the last time you saw a police officer?" - Vote Tally exercise (SC2)*
- **Safety in transportation routes** e.g. adequate lighting and CCTV at bus stops and footpaths
- **Safety through engagement** e.g. climate-friendly activities and green spaces offering young people safe and enjoyable behaviours
- **Safety from health harms** e.g. reducing car pollution and maintaining clean, hazard-free footpaths

How community safety and trust were discussed was inherently place-based, given the local nature of many of these institutions. A key finding was that there was a trust and expectation in Bradford Council to take action on climate change. While participants highlighted issues about engagement with certain institutions, especially local police, there was a shared desire to better these relationships. Both groups displayed an optimism that local institutions and actors could collaborate in meaningful ways, building trust in climate-related actions.

This optimism within the workshops carried into the final manifesto launch event, where meaningful, respectful two-way conversations on community safety took place. The group focusing on community safety identified clear next steps for collaboration with relevant groups and actors in Tong.

"There was a really respectful conversation about community safety at the event, which I felt was really positive given it is quite a heavy issue. One of the residents mentioned that they didn't often have a chance to discuss these kinds of issues at an event like this. The event was a chance to share what residents felt about how community safety really underpins climate action. Without community safety, people won't be able to use public transport to minimise carbon emissions, green spaces when it's hot, or use local services more. But it was more than that, it was also a space to promote different kinds of understanding about what people feel community safety is about, and to connect the residents who were there to people involved in addressing community issues, hopefully leaving both more motivated to act together. Continuing community safety-focused conversations on climate is key for community development." - Dr Amy Barnes, Deputy Director of the Born in Bradford Centre for Social Change and Senior Researcher in the Department of Health Sciences at University of York

FINDINGS
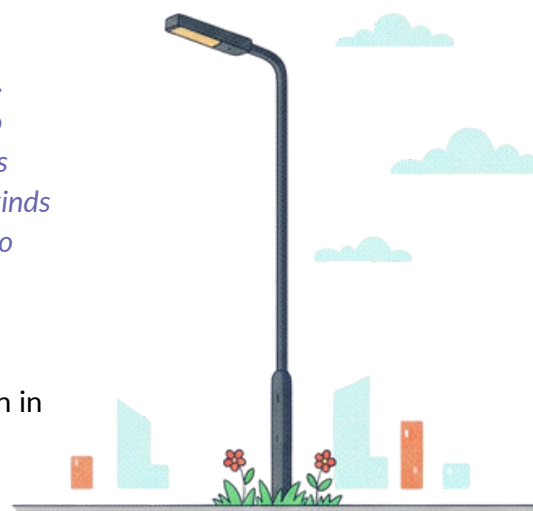
Linking concepts and themes together

As mentioned in previous sections of this report, we utilised Middlemiss et al.'s (2023) Areas of Daily Life summation of their literature review of policy and academic works related to net zero-related changes. These 'Areas' (where we live, where we go, what we do for work, what we eat, what we do for fun, and what we spend money on) acted as a foundation within our project for linking climate change to participants' everyday lives.

Drawing on the Areas was successful in teasing apart how climate change and climate action may impact participants' lives in Bradford and their families elsewhere. The workshop groups then skillfully used these Areas to rank their top four themes of climate action for the manifestos. This process of deconstructing and reassembling ideas meant that the approaches to the manifesto themes were substantively nuanced and interconnected across multiple Areas of Life.

Below are two scenarios derived from group discussions amongst the participants that illustrate how the themes and Areas of Life intersect:

Scenario 1: Maria takes her child from their draughty, under-insulated home to school using public transport, despite the walking route to the bus stop being dimly lit, leaving both of them feeling unsafe. Her child, Andrea, learns a lot about food and climate in her lessons, including learning about growing vegetables from a Yorkshire-based carrot farmer. Andrea comes home to her mum, asking to grow their own carrots, but as there is no community allotment space available nearby and no garden space at home, this request cannot be met.

Scenario 2: Young adult Yusuf and his wife Zara are cooking dinner for his grandparents, parents, and cousins in their small, but comfortable, new build home with solar panels. When planning the menu, Yusuf wanted to purchase locally grown meat and vegetables, but would have to take two buses to get to the grocery store where he could find them or afford them. While Zara is a vegetarian, they compromised by including chicken on the menu, as culturally it felt more important to show respect to their elders by serving meat, rather than serve a purely vegetarian meal.

Both scenarios showcase how, by using dilemmas raised by participants, policy and climate actions often intersect imperfectly. Each scenario reflects nuances across the Areas of Life and manifesto themes, for example, 'What we Eat' linking with 'Family and Children'. Discussions in both groups throughout the workshop series, as well as at the launch event, highlighted how interconnected all the themes were (e.g. transport was strongly linked with community safety). Taking a holistic, person-centred, and place-based lens on how these Areas and manifesto themes overlap, creates more opportunities for successful climate action.

FINDINGS

The impacts of the community research process

We found considerable enthusiasm amongst those who attended the community events and workshops to be involved in practical research on climate action. During the workshops, there was much positive energy and motivation from participants to stay engaged once the main project had finished, with requests for activities to continue. It was clear that participants wanted sustained involvement from local decision-makers and organisations, and to understand how their priorities might have wider impact. The launch event in early October acted as a two-way listening exercise between communities and policymakers, intended to strengthen relationships between residents and the Council, which could support future implementation of the Climate Action Plan. Numerous participants from both Tong and Bowling & Barkerend expressed positive feelings about the event, stating it was refreshing to get to talk about climate and be directly heard on issues that matter to them.

*"The members of the community enjoyed sharing their thoughts and experiences. The workshop proposed consultation and engagement from the very first session 'what is climate change?'. Towards the end, the community were inclined towards seeing results around the information shared across the sessions. **Now, the main questions were: the research is complete "what is going to actually be done?" and "what changes will be made?"**. I find that the Climate Action Plan addresses this. Specifically, including key actions and outcomes, priority areas and actions. This section will be valuable for those who raised the above concerns. To recognise the outcome of their contributions — there has been a real difference made."* - Fatima* (pseudonym) (Climate Community Researcher)

"From my experience as a climate community researcher, I found that explaining climate change in a simple way to the local community helped to build trust between the people and local authorities so we can work together to make the region healthier for the future generation. " - Ruaa (Climate Community Researcher)

Box 3: Encountered obstacles example: payment

No research or community project is free of obstacles or barriers. As an act of transparency and to inform future best practice, we highlight a challenge we encountered with payment.

While the UoY team endeavoured to offer the most comprehensive, ethical pay rates for all (community organisations, community participants, and climate community researchers) these rates clashed with previous rates received on other projects. This in part came from the ethical issue of the project budgeting for workshops to be longer in duration and basing rates on the previous project. When consulting with the community partners, it was agreed that limiting the workshops to two hours with an optional lunch, rather than three hours, was necessary to match community needs.

The community partners and UoY team discussed what the most ethical way forward may be, to adjust the payments pro rata or continue with the pay rates as budgeted. Together, the team opted to clearly state high expectations of the participants to match the high payment rate (e.g. explicitly stating the need for engagement and commitment to attending all sessions) and explained that the high rate was intended to cover costs such as childcare and transportation. Potential pitfalls from this are that future projects with smaller budgets may face unintended barriers if participants expect similar compensation levels.

Box 3: Encountered obstacles example: payment (continued)

The second issue related to pay structure for the climate community researchers. For the two researchers based at the Sutton Centre and the Anchor Project, their time was 'bought out' through additional payments made to the organisations. For the remaining four researchers, given their responsibilities and level of required training, they were hired as casual workers at the University of York. This required candidates to undergo a right to work check and use of unfamiliar platforms to log timesheets and expenses. There was a substantive learning curve for both the UoY team (engaging casual workers for the first time) and the researchers (navigating the platform and submitting travel receipts). For both groups, there were frustrations with the process, such as unclear pay dates for the researchers and high levels of admin for the UoY team. However, the benefits from this approach are already emerging, with one climate community researcher being able to list this casual employment with the University of York on her CV, contributing towards an upcoming job interview.

Sustaining the relationships between community members, organisations, and the Council is integral to maintaining trust on climate issues. Establishing a meaningful feedback loop and communication channel was a stated goal for both groups — i.e. how could the participants find out which aspects of the Climate Action Plan were influenced by the community? More broadly, there were calls for this research, and Bradford's climate action, to conclude differently to past, one-way consultations, where communities are asked for input but never contacted again with updates or involved in follow-up actions.

In response to this and the findings in their entirety, we offer three core recommendations for taking climate action forward in Bradford.
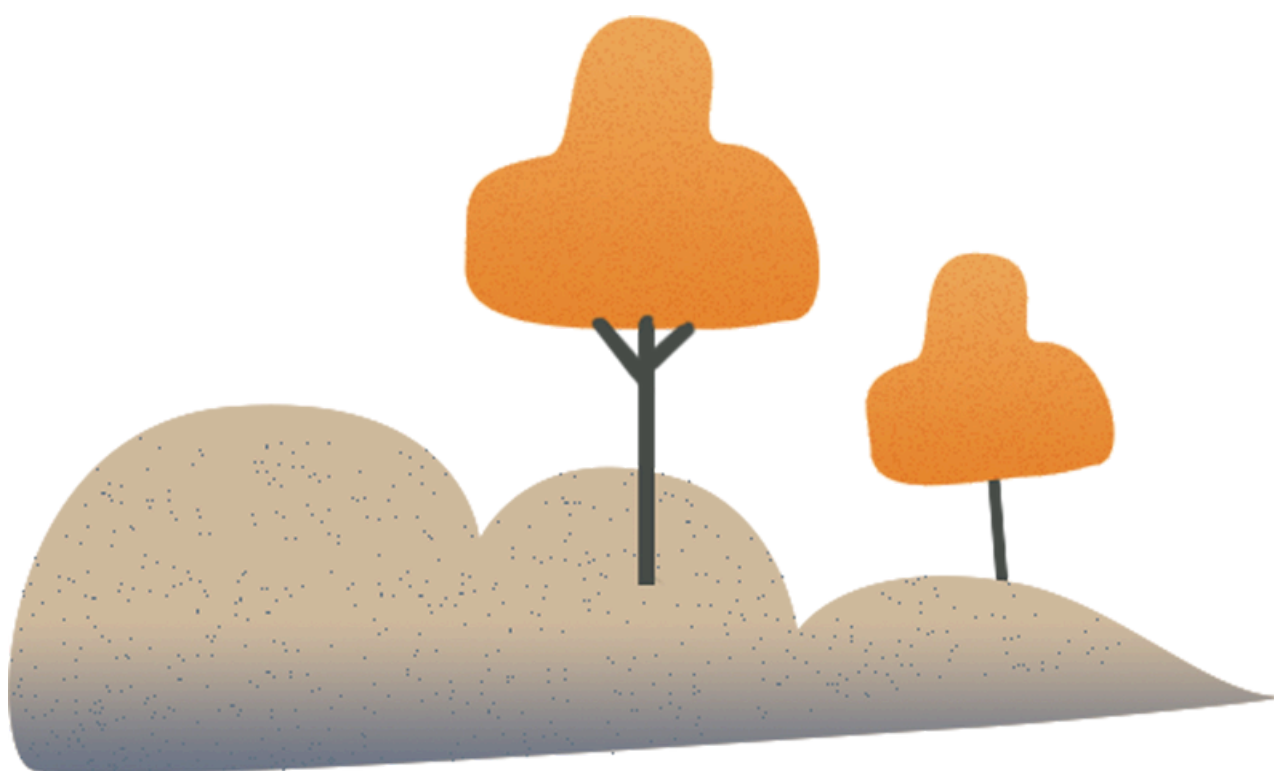
RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations

Based on the project's community evidence into Bradford's approach for climate action, **we propose the following three key recommendations:**

1. Adopt a 'person-first' framing for climate action
2. Prioritise coordinated, multi-actor partnerships for climate action
3. Establish meaningful two-way communication and trust-building on climate action

Recommendation 1: Adopt a 'person-first' framing for climate action

We recommend that climate action policies, schemes, and programming in Bradford **adopt a 'person-first' frame, connecting the action directly to people's lives as the default starting point**. This holistic reframing should allow for improved community understanding, connection, and engagement with climate action. This research suggests that reframing policies and programming to the specific areas of people's lives that will be impacted is highly effective in supporting community understanding and connection to climate action. Middlemiss et al.'s (2023) *Areas of Life* serves as a useful shorthand for actors to target their communications, and this project has substantiated its usefulness in facilitating nuanced personal and community conversations about climate action.

The Bradford communities of Bowling & Barkerend and Tong, alongside other engaged residents in the community activities, clearly demonstrated the benefits of bringing climate action into the personal sphere. Moving the discussion from abstract concepts to personal and community understandings connected to these specific Areas of Life led to the emergence of additional themes not currently present in climate discussions, e.g. communities consistently and strongly linked community safety with climate action. A separate, practical example of this altered framing could be recognising and addressing the realities of existing local concerns such as housing conditions, energy efficiency, and energy bills, and making links with relevant schemes like the Warm Homes Healthy People. Without a personal framing approach, and a process of genuine personal engagement, opportunities to connect with communities on their own terms regarding climate may be missed.

To implement this recommendation, we suggest that Bradford Council and its partners prioritise communicating the personal relevance of all public-facing climate action. This involves explicitly defining and communicating how a given policy, scheme, or programme impacts relevant Areas of Life (e.g., health, travel, safety, home comfort) as a primary communication point, ensuring that engagement always begins by centering the resident's immediate experience before detailing the environmental outcome.

Recommendation 2: Prioritise coordinated, multi-actor partnerships for climate action

We recommend that all climate action projects and schemes in Bradford are designed from the outset to prioritise integrated, multi-actor approaches. This strategy aligns with explicit community expectations and serves to effectively share both the resources and the responsibility required for successful local action. Throughout the project, there was a clear community perception and expectation that multiple actors should be involved in climate action in Bradford. Across every theme, participants identified roles for various actors, and crucially, there was a distinct call for integration and cooperation. Across all findings — whether related to public transport, families and children, education, housing, or community safety — participants consistently expressed the need for meaningful, coordinated action between Bradford Council, residents, and community groups. Diverse actors were expected to be involved across policy areas; for example, both locations heartily called for farmers to have a prominent role in environmental education, while businesses of all sizes were expected to take on roles in bettering public transport (e.g. First Bus enforcing cleanliness standards on their fleets and small businesses offering discounts for transport users). Most significantly, responsibility for climate action was not expected solely of one actor.

Our findings support the place-based emphasis on climate action (Snell and Middlemiss, 2025), where local government and other local actors are viewed as essential to delivering locally-appropriate solutions and should be at the forefront of change. Discussions also highlighted the importance of empowering local government to act, particularly via national government but also the West Yorkshire Combined Authority. Participants acknowledged that local governments were both supported and constrained by outside governance and funding structures. In part, this understanding fed directly into the expectation that multiple actors — at multiple levels and across disciplines — should work in tandem to support Bradford's climate action efforts.

To implement this recommendation, projects and schemes in Bradford could purposefully integrate multiple groups and actors together, including residents, from early stages. Multi-actor, multi-sectoral climate action aligns with community expectations but also always for shared resources and responsibility.

Recommendation 3: Establish meaningful two-way communication and trust-building on climate action

We recommend establishing meaningful, two-way communication channels and programming to support authentic community engagement and build trust on climate action. This approach suggests a proactive, sustained, and transparent method for how the Council and its partners engage with residents.

Climate community researchers, partner organisations, and project participants unanimously emphasised the need for meaningful bi-directional communication loops on climate action. They defined 'meaningful' engagement by its setting, reason, timing, and method.

A key aspect of this involves meeting communities "where they are at". Engagement should be designed to meet residents in comfortable physical spaces, rather than only inviting them to council-led, formal settings. Joining communities in their own spaces is crucial for building trust and fostering genuine dialogue. This also extends to the topic of discussion. Addressing climate via themes like health, cost of living, and local infrastructure should be more beneficial and accessible than limiting engagement to siloed, 'climate-only' discussions (see also Recommendation 1).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Box 4: Methods of engagement

Drawing from participant feedback across various themes and activities, the community identified several channels and approaches deemed important and appropriate for climate communications and two-way engagement. Suggested communications channels included:

- *Community groups and established organisations:* Prioritising communication through existing community groups, clubs, and organisations to reach residents in familiar settings
- *Physical information documents:* The continued use of physical information, such as leaflets, to disseminate relevant details
- *Digital signposting:* Providing free online access and clear signposting to evidence-based resources
- *Advertising campaigns:* Implementing better targeted advertising campaigns focused on specific relevant topics and community events
- *Council web presence:* Enhancing Council webpages to provide clearer, more accessible climate-related information
- *Public Wi-Fi integration:* Utilising default public Wi-Fi pages to share evidence-based climate information

Suggested methods for engagement included:

- *Localised feedback mechanisms:* Creating community suggestion boxes in accessible locations for residents to provide feedback directly to the Council
- *Familiar locations:* Hosting climate-related communications and events at familiar community spaces, such as GP offices
- *Expert site visits:* Arranging visits to schools and community sites by practical experts who can discuss their specific area of environmental engagement

The reason for engagement is also critical. **Participants expressed fatigue from being 'consulted' without ever hearing how their views influenced policy**, leading them to suspect a "check-box exercise". Communities are keen to engage when the purpose offers genuine policy influence and where their voices are appropriately valued. This suggests that engagement needs to occur at stages where feedback can still influence decisions; consultation that takes place after decisions are fully made may not be considered meaningful. A core metric for meaningful engagement is a commitment to close the loop. Groups desire a clear feedback mechanism detailing how their views were incorporated, or why they were not, and the resulting next steps.

To implement this recommendation, community engagement on climate action could be integrated across multiple stages of policy and scheme development, with clear parameters defined for how public opinions and feedback will be integrated at each stage. Additionally, there should be planned programming and continuous community engagement during the implementation of the Climate Action Plan. Finally, a transparent mechanism for providing feedback to consulted groups on the outcome of their input should be established, ensuring they know their contributions were genuinely considered.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Limitations

The primary limitation of this project stems from its convenience sampling and recruitment strategy for the community workshop participants.

In both Bowling & Barkerend and Tong, recruitment relied on the local community partners inviting participants from their existing pool of engaged residents and reaching out to other community organisations in the area. The absence of formally mandated sampling requirements (e.g. specific demographic quotas) and the involvement of two separate community organisations, each employing their own recruitment tactics, make this the least transparent aspect of the research process.

While this approach deviates from more rigorous academic sampling methods, this community-led recruitment was deemed valuable. The method allowed the local organisations to assemble a participant group that they felt authentically represented their community, rather than being constrained by university or Steering Group-driven quotas. Consequently, the findings represent the views of the engaged segment of the community, which may limit generalisability to the wider, less-engaged population of Bradford.

We also had general geographic and temporal constraints. Due to limited budget and timing constraints, this project engaged primarily with groups and residents in Bowling & Barkerend and Tong. These locations, and specifically the groups involved in this research, may not fully represent the wider population of Bradford. Therefore, to ensure a broader evidence base for future policy-making, we recommend that additional community evidence research projects be developed in other areas of Bradford during the implementation of the Bradford Climate Action Plan.

Next Steps

Bridging our current project phase into the next, the UoY, Bradford HDRC project team, and project Steering Group, alongside Sophia Cheng of With Many Roots, are organising a pilot series of Climate Fresk and Biodiversity Collage sessions. These will take place with various community groups across Bradford to assess their utility as a community engagement tool on climate action. This pilot is a direct outcome of the research findings and community feedback, and we will ensure that the communities we have worked with to date are able to take part and benefit from these activities.

Our project's next formal steps are geared towards embedding these recommendations into action. In autumn 2025, **we officially launched our recently commissioned phase two: Co-producing Bradford's Just Transition to Net Zero**, supported by the Born in Bradford Centre for Social Change and Research England Funds distributed by The York Policy Engine.

"I have delivered climate and ecological education workshops in all kinds of settings and I consistently find myself most inspired when I run them for active grassroots citizens, supporting them in their wider community engagement initiatives. There was a great level of enthusiasm. It is clear there is a real appetite for accessible climate education and action across the communities of Bradford. I was delighted to be invited back!" - Sophia Cheng, With Many Roots

This initiative directly addresses the need for linked-up, multi-actor approaches (Recommendation 2) by formalising a partnership between the University of York's Department of Health Sciences and School for Business and Society, Bradford Council, the Bradford HDRC, The Anchor Project, and the Bradford Institute for Health Research's Co-Production and Peer Research (CoPPeR) network, in collaboration with visual artist and creative facilitator Jean McEwen and illustrator and animator Emmy Kelly.

The project will co-produce a 'climate stories' animation, highlighting the stories in Bradford that residents want policymakers to hear. The animation will be a **fully co-produced** work, led by the five recruited community researchers or 'co-animators'. Its agenda and structure is being formed in response to the recommendations of this report. This work models a 'person-first' frame (Recommendation 1) and forms the basis for a powerful, meaningful communication channel (Recommendation 3), integrating a tangible representation of community experiences into policy at local and national levels.

This project has highlighted the necessity for ongoing, authentic engagement around climate in Bradford. We are pleased to confirm that our project is positioned to build on the current momentum, with the necessary institutional and resource support and, most importantly, the strong willingness from community members to continue collaborating to shape Bradford's just transition.

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