



Green City Charter – Engagement report

Introduction

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

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

Methodology

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

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

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

Feedback received

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

Online suggestion box

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

Figure 1 - Ideas or suggestion for the Green City Charter

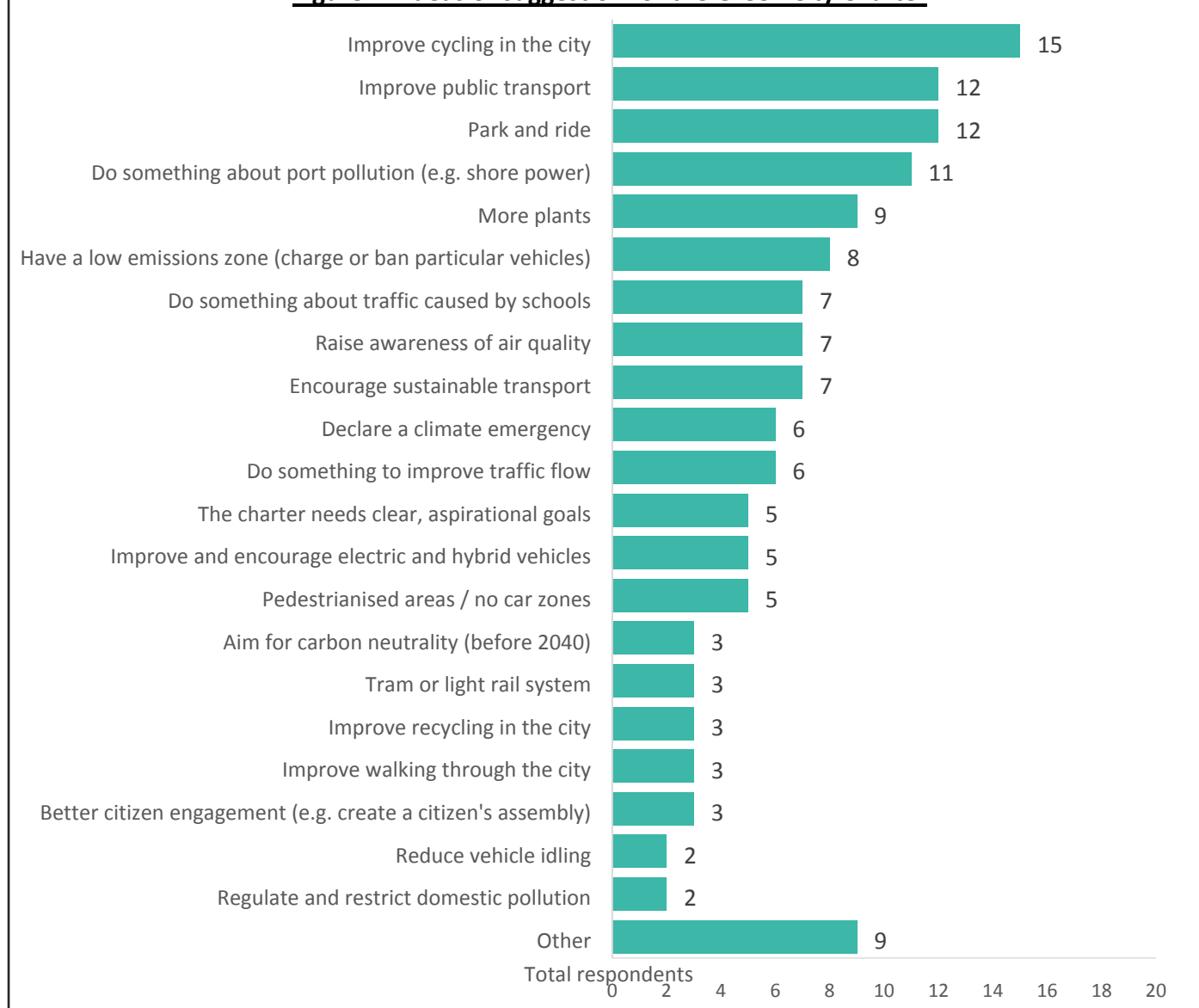


Figure 1

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

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

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

People's Panel Poll

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

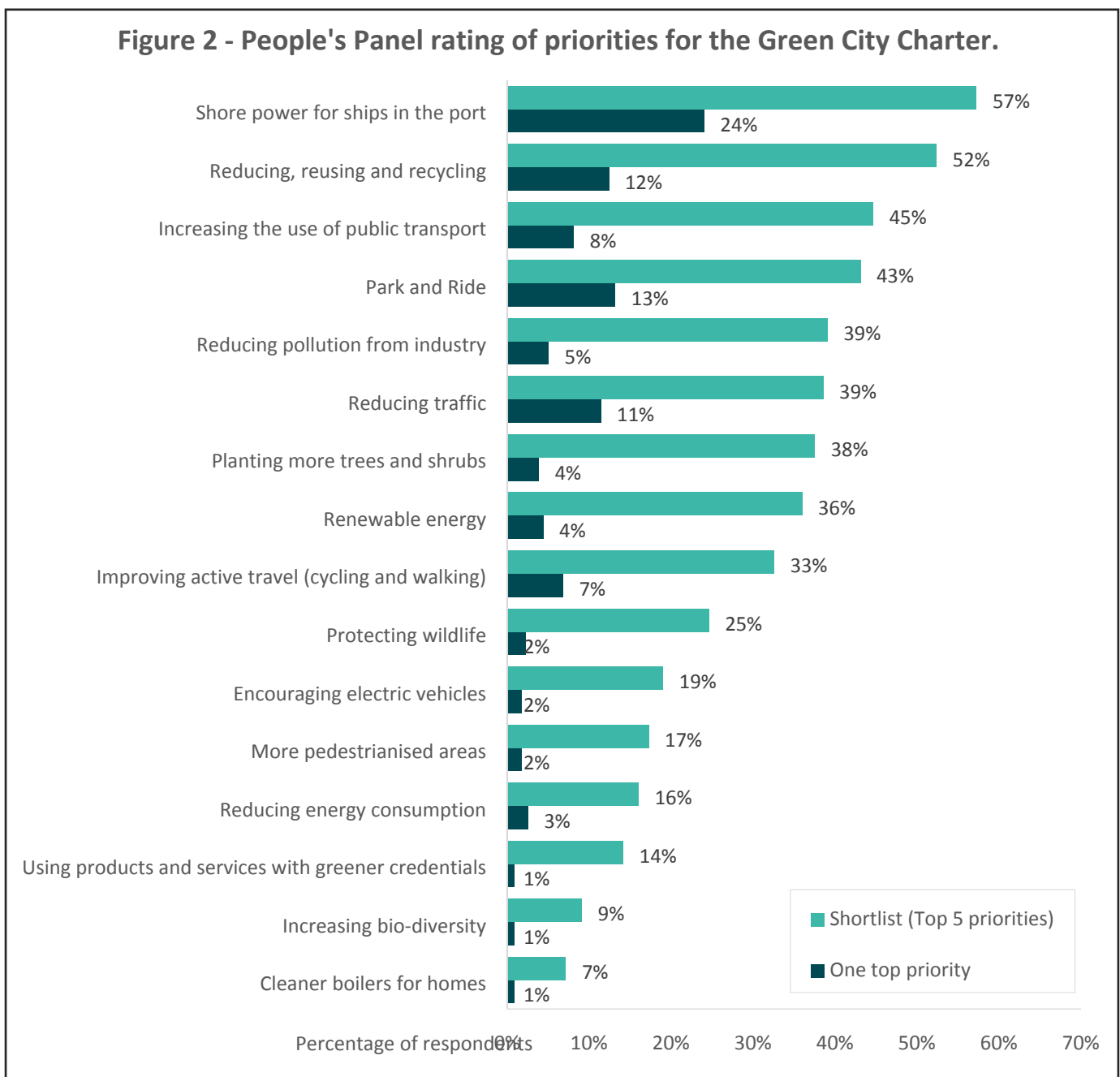


Figure 2

Youth Forum engagement

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

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

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

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

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

Engagement sessions with key stakeholders

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

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

Vision statement

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Stakeholders raised concerns that this theme overlapped with theme 4.

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

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

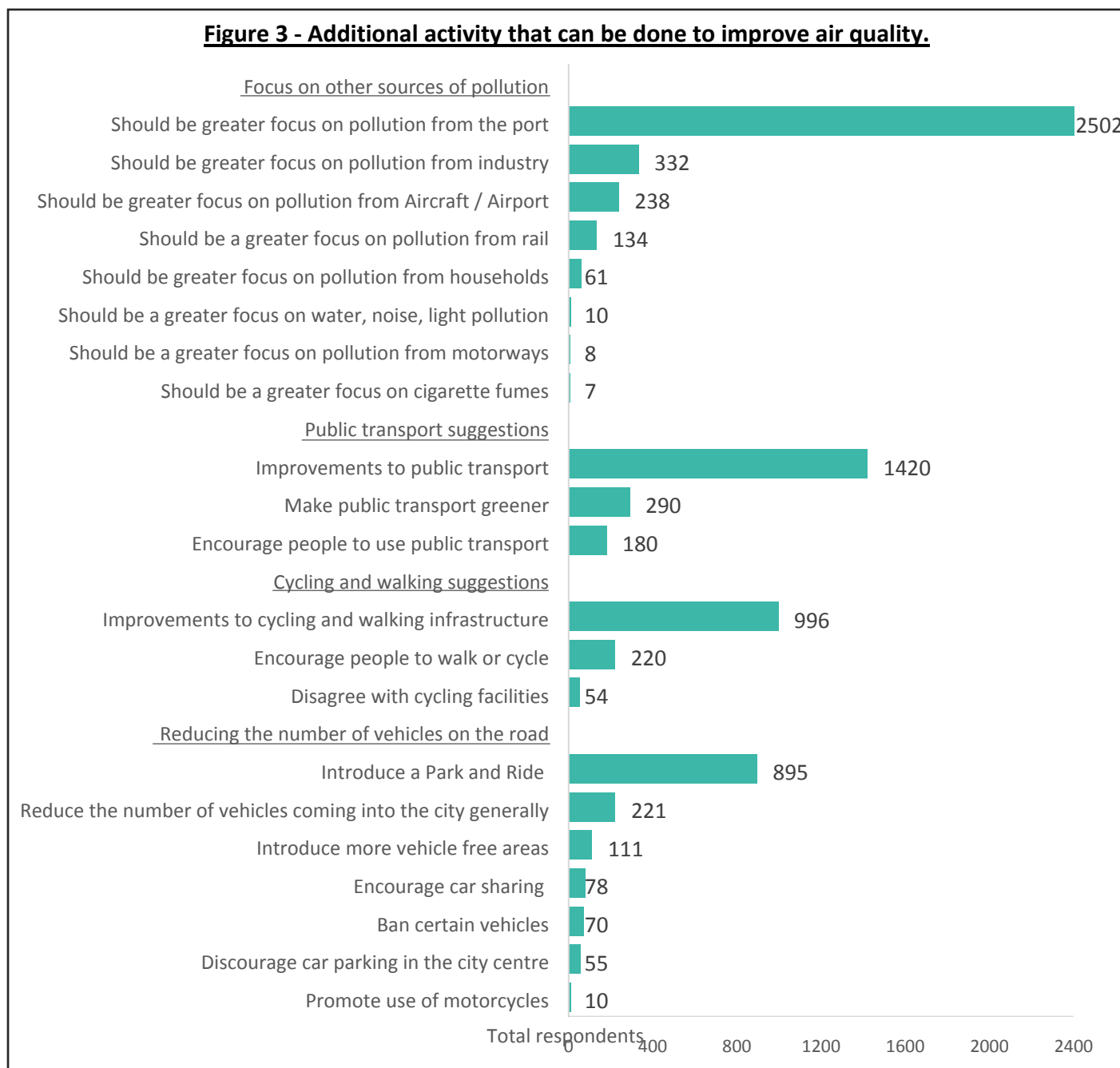
8. We will seek to use services and products that share our vision.

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

Clean Air Zone consultation

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

Figure 3 - Additional activity that can be done to improve air quality.



Additional activity that can be done to improve air quality continued

