Welsh Government

Analysis of Consultation Responses: Draft 'Strategy for Public Engagement & Action on Climate Change'

July 2023

Summary Report compiled by Miller Research

SECTION 1: Introduction

Background to the strategy

This report summarises the responses received to the consultation entitled Draft strategy for engaging the general public in action on climate change. The consultation was undertaken in response to a commitment in Net Zero Wales (Carbon Budget 2)(Policy 16) to consult on a Public Engagement Strategy.

The results of the consultation have informed the changes and amendments made to the final strategy – Climate Action Wales – Public Engagement Strategy (2023-2026).

The final strategy also considers and incorporates findings from other research commissioned by the Welsh Government, such as the Just Transition to Net Zero Wales: Call for Evidence which focuses on enabling civic participation and will feed into the Just Transition work programme.
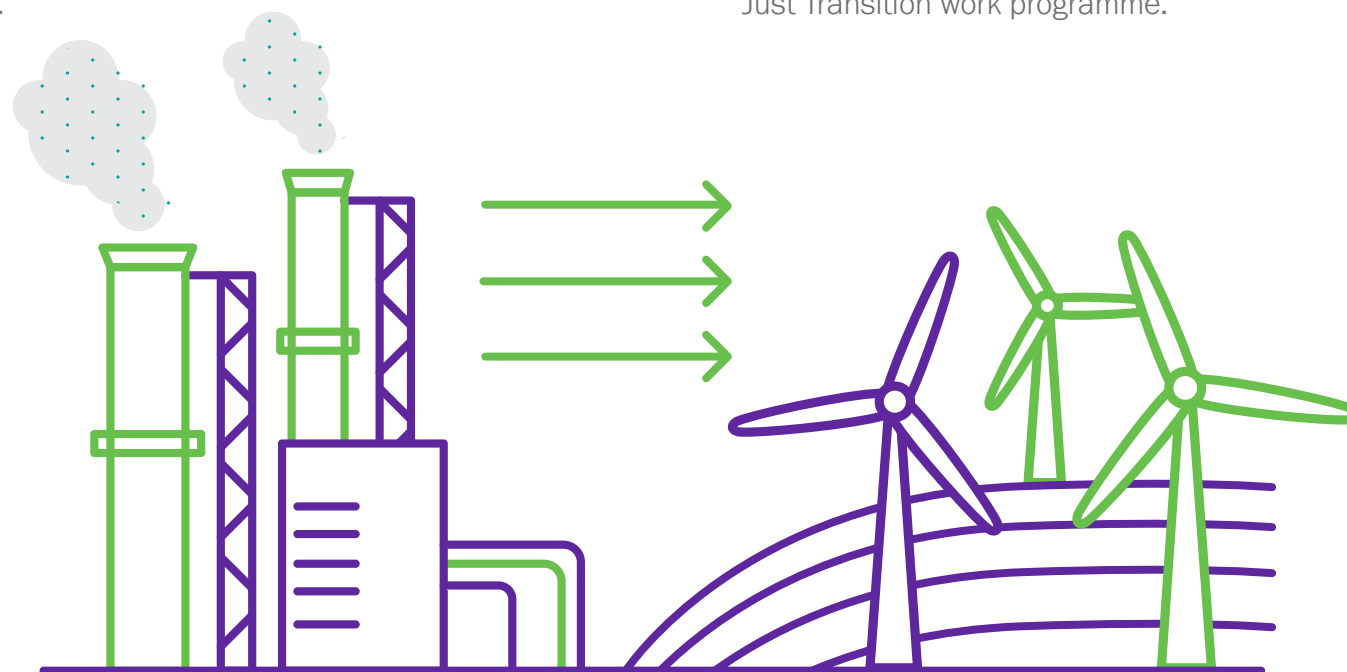
Reason for the consultation

The consultation ran for eight weeks and collected responses between the **20th October 2022** to the **14th December 2022**.

The purpose of the consultation was to encourage widespread feedback about the way in which the public engagement programme should be delivered. The strategy will provide an important framework and guiding principles around which the Welsh Government and other delivery partners will work together to support and engage the people and communities of Wales in action on the climate and nature emergencies.

Alongside the open consultation, fringe events were held during and following Wales Climate Week (from November – December 2022).

These took the form of workshops hosted by national and regional organisations with links to young people, as well as marginalised groups, including those who do not typically engage in climate conversations. The purpose of the workshops was to encourage discussions on climate change and explore the new strategy, as well as the support needed from Welsh Government and other organisations to help overcome barriers to making green choices.

The final strategy sets out the Welsh Government's approach to engaging people in decision-making (including policy making) about how to tackle climate change, and in action necessary to tackle climate change.

Miller Research was commissioned by the Welsh Government to undertake an analysis of the consultation responses and compile this summary report.

ENGAGING PEOPLE IN SOLUTIONS FOR TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE

ILLUSTRATION BY: LAURA SORVALA
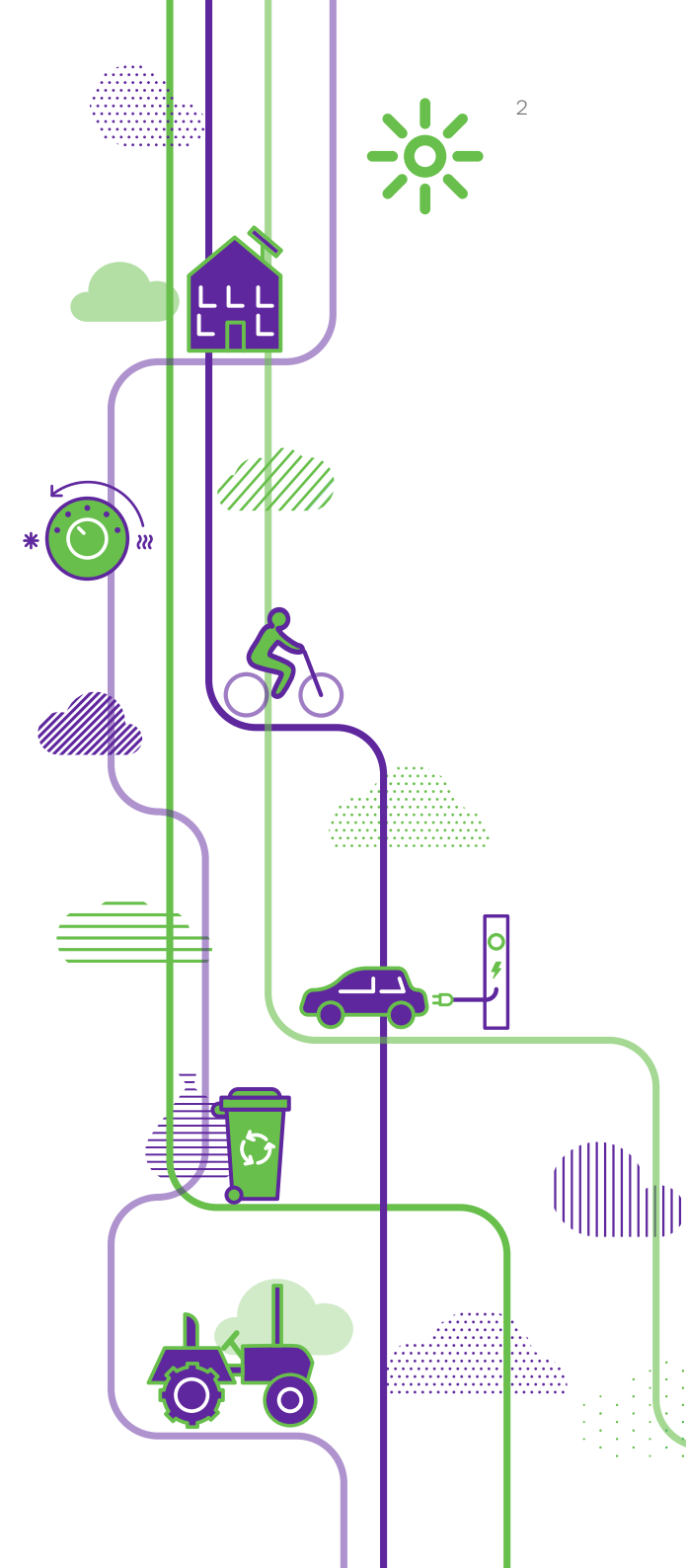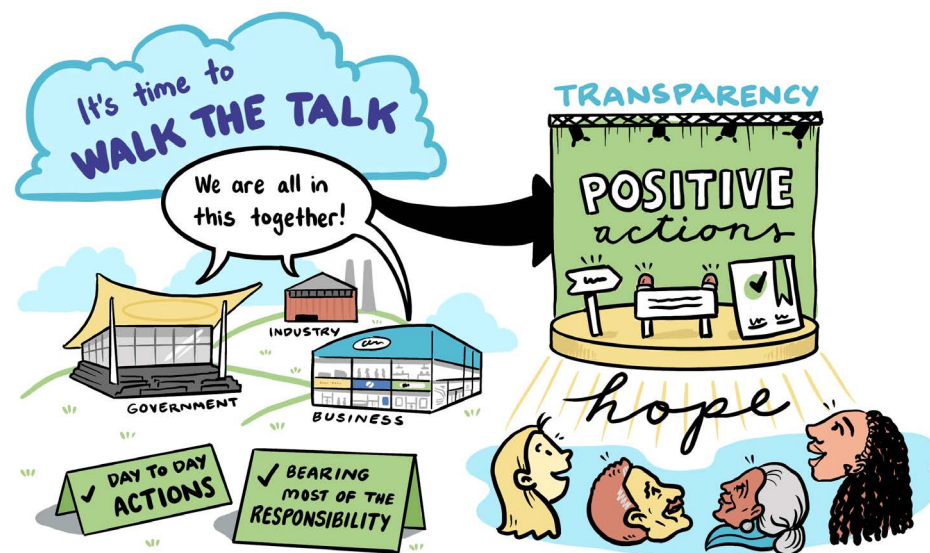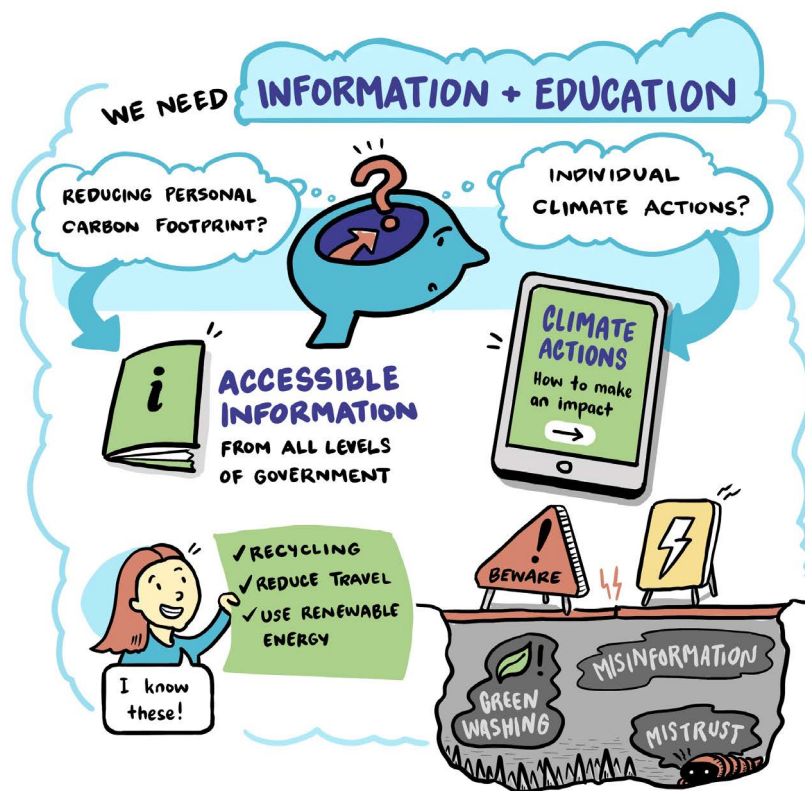
Method

The questionnaire design employed a combination of both open and closed questions, allowing space for respondents to provide detailed feedback and raise any questions or relevant concerns relating to the strategy.

Consultation responses were received as PDFs and Word documents and the responses were collated into a central, tabular database. The responses to the consultation questions were analysed by section in order to support the redrafting of the strategy. This analysis was conducted thematically with analysts identifying common themes that emerged across stakeholder responses.

Given the diversity of responses received, as well as the broad scope of the strategy, a qualitative assessment was undertaken to identify the key emerging themes.

Some themes arose from multiple responses e.g. around use of language and communications, whereas other themes arose from more limited responses e.g. around the need to increase references in the strategy to the nature emergency. However, given the number of responses to the consultation was quite limited i.e. 57 in total, as long as points made were common across a few of the responses, then these were treated as key themes.

Sentiment Analysis

A sentiment analysis was conducted where each response was assigned a grade, ranking the general sentiment of the response to the strategy as a whole, ranging from very positive to very negative. The sentiment analysis was used to conduct a quantitative analysis

with a breakdown of sentiment frequency, average sentiment by organisation type, and sentiment by question answer (where the questions were appropriate for quantitative analysis).

The respondent types with the most positive sentiment towards the strategy were local authorities, marginalised groups and networks, and voluntary organisations and networks. The respondent types demonstrating the least positive sentiments towards the strategy were individuals and environmental groups (although these were either neutral or generally positive). The emerging themes and sentiment of responses were used to inform the shaping of the final strategy.

Figure 1: Frequency of different types of sentiment towards the strategy
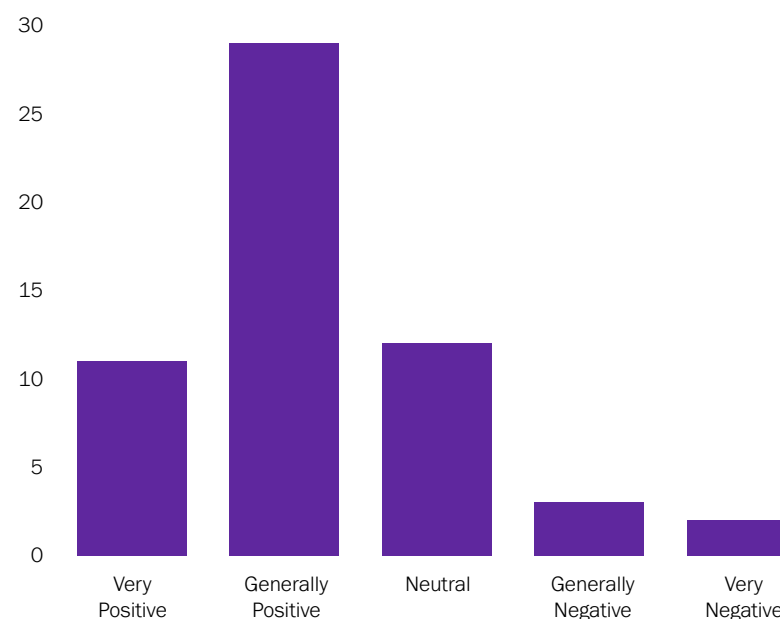
Overview of respondent types

In order to conduct a quantitative analysis, responses were grouped into different types of organisations. These included:

› **Academic and behavioural science practitioners** – i.e. respondents from academic institutions or behavioural science practitioners.

› **Environmental groups** – i.e. organisations with a focus on environmental conservation or activism.

› **Individuals**.

› **Industry and business stakeholders** – i.e. businesses or bodies representing the interests of businesses.

› **Local authorities**.

› **Other public sector bodies and networks** – i.e. public sector organisations beyond the Welsh Government and Local Authorities.

› **Marginalised groups and networks** –i.e. individuals or organisations representing the interests of marginalised groups (meaning people excluded from society, for example due to race, gender, identity, sexual orientation, age, disability, language and/or immigration status).

› **Voluntary organisations and networks** – i.e. not-for-profit groups or organisations which work for the public benefit.

Figure 2: Frequency of different types of consultation responses

Respondent Type	Number of responders
Academic and behavioural science practitioners	3
Environmental groups	11
Individuals	10
Industry and business stakeholders	5
Local authorities	3
Other public sector bodies and networks	10
Marginalised groups and networks	5
Voluntary organisations and networks	10

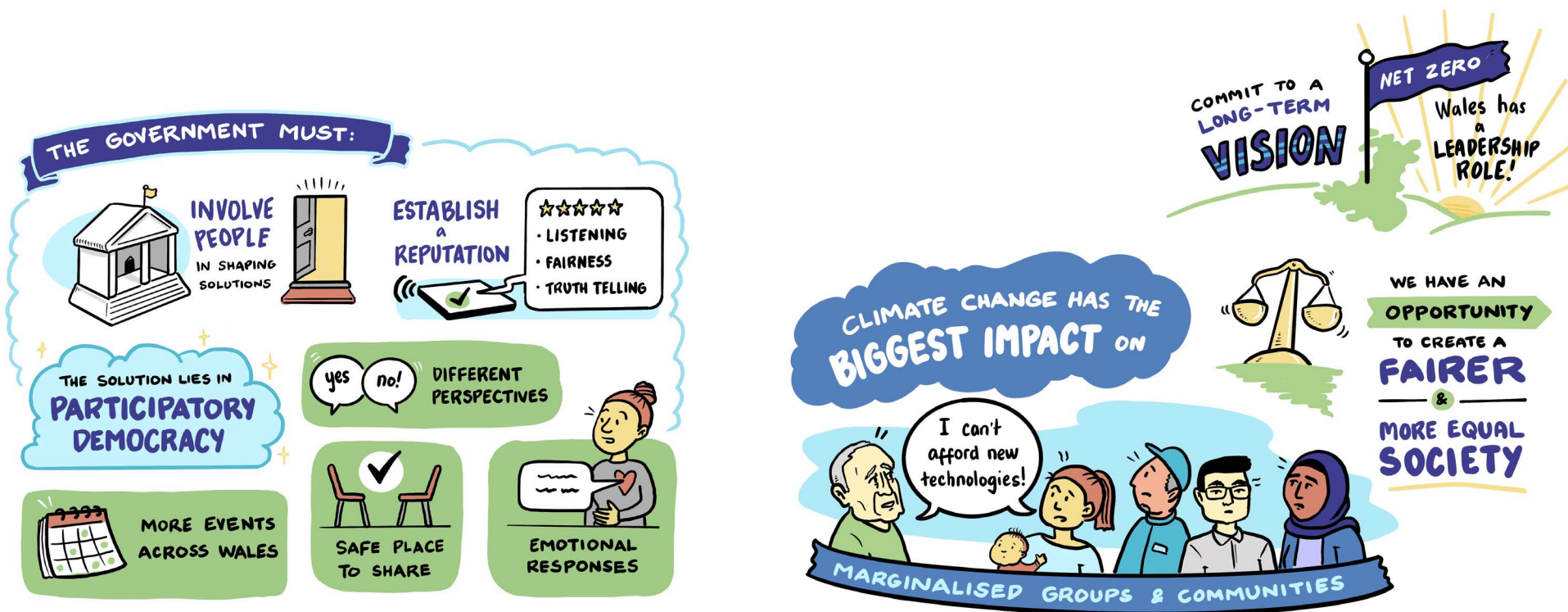# ENGAGING PEOPLE IN SOLUTIONS FOR TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE

ILLUSTRATION BY: LAURA SORVALA

SECTION 2: Quantitative Analysis

## Quantitative analysis by respondent type

As part of the consultation analysis, a quantitative assessment was carried out, specifically focusing on closed questions. The primary objective of this analysis was to determine how well each chapter of the strategy was received among different respondent groups. It is worth noting that the remaining questions in the consultation were open-ended and were therefore considered as part of the qualitative analysis. This section provides a comprehensive breakdown of the statistical analysis performed on 8 closed questions, organised according to respondent type.

Question 1: Does this introductory section set out the challenges and opportunities this programme presents or is it missing any key points?
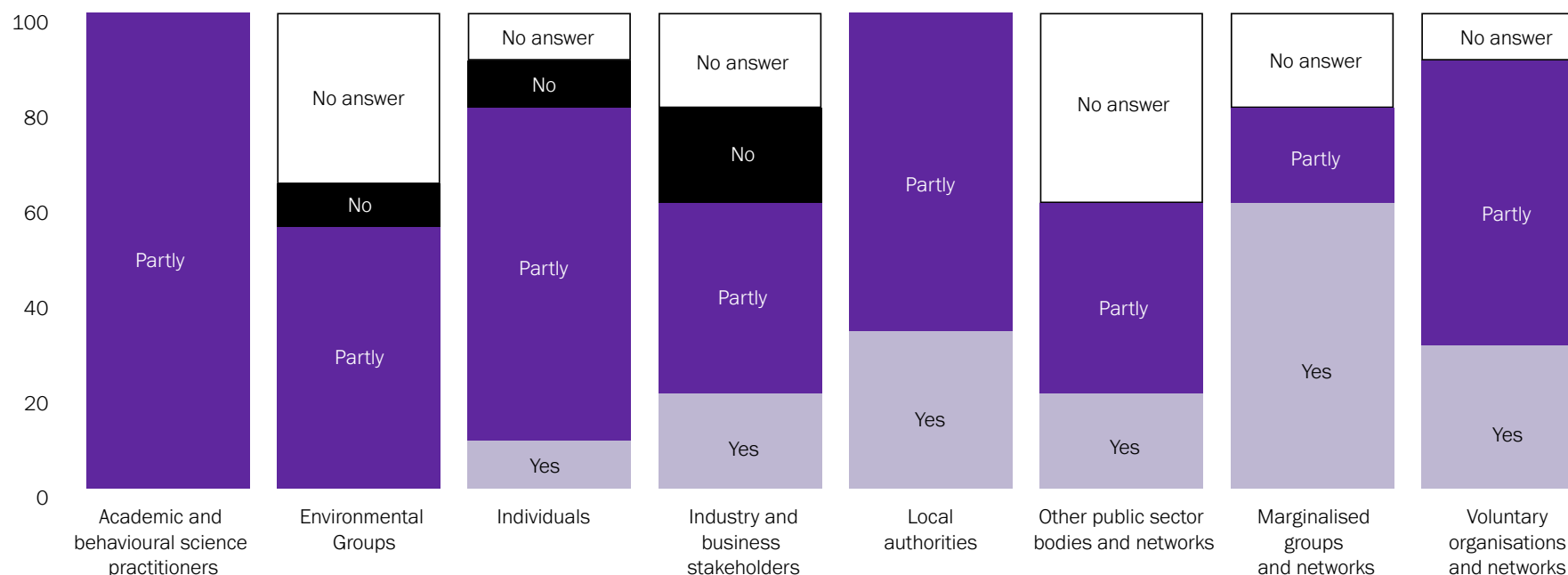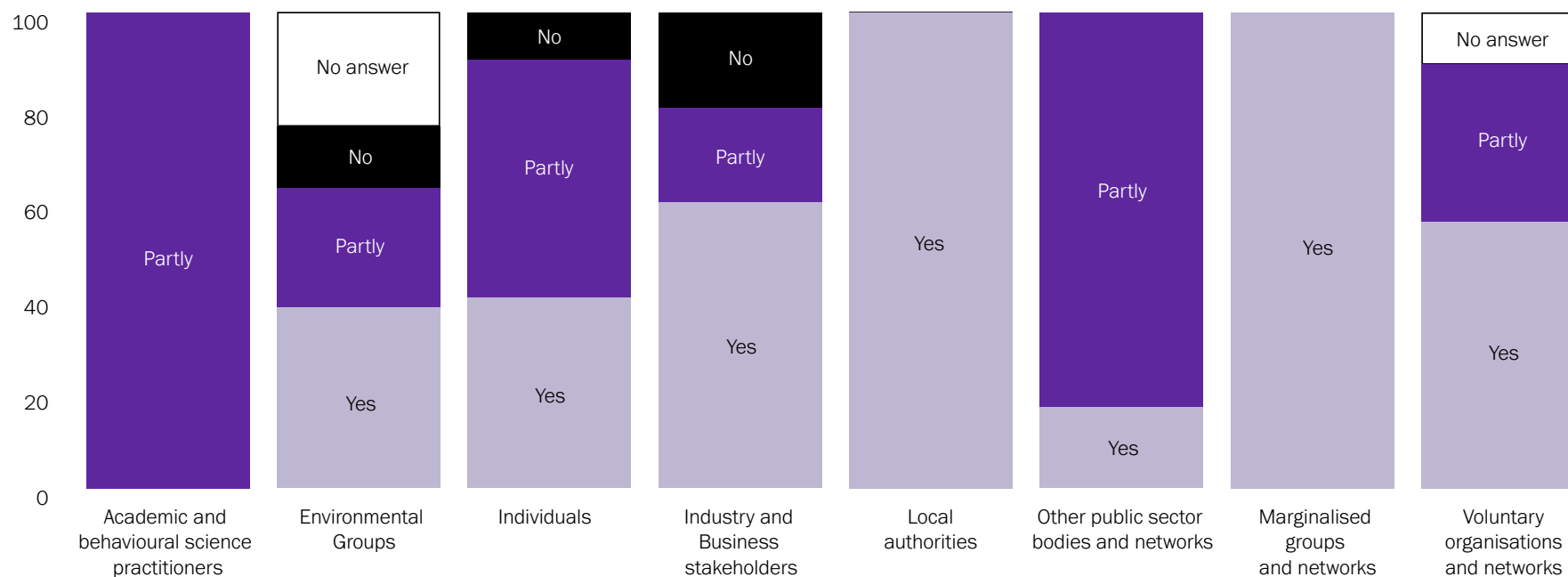

Environmental groups, Individuals, and Industry and Business stakeholders were the most common groups that felt the introduction did not meet their expectations. Their main concerns primarily revolved around the choice of language used to depict the magnitude and seriousness of climate change. They also emphasised the importance of explicitly referencing the interconnectedness between the climate and nature emergencies.

Question 2: Do you agree with the approach we have taken to engagement and consultation on the strategy?
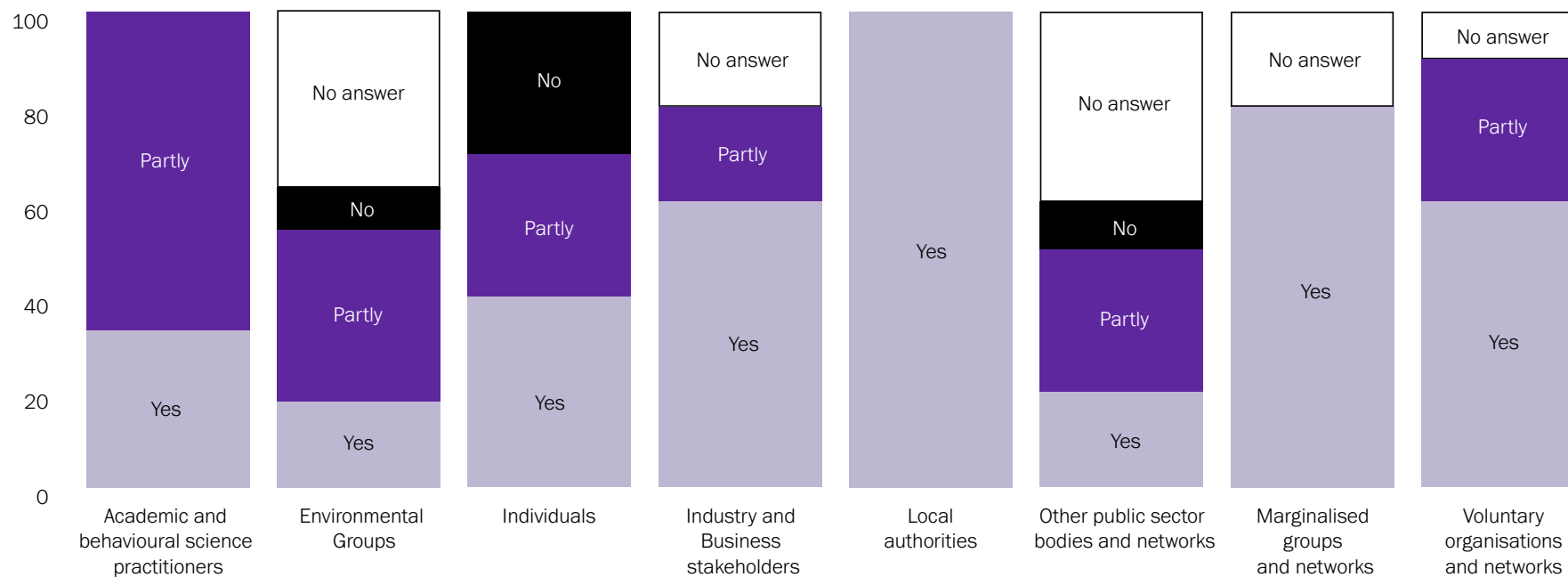

Groups who disagreed with the approach largely included Individuals, Environmental groups and Other public sector bodies and networks. These groups expressed concerns over the clarity and understanding of the Team Wales approach outlined in the strategy. Additionally, they raised issues regarding the consistency of language used to describe the methods employed for consultation and engagement throughout the document.

## Question 4: Do you find the 'Strategy on a page' useful?

Stakeholders from various groups generally had a positive reception to the 'Strategy on a page' presented in this section. However, some Industry and Business stakeholders, as well as a smaller number of Environmental groups and Individuals, did not find it useful. Their main concerns revolved around the lack of clarity in the document. They suggested that a more concise and impactful approach should be adopted, with fewer written explanations and a greater emphasis on infographics or alternative visual representations.

Question 7: Do you believe our 4 'E's framework approach of 'Exemplify, Engage, Encourage, Enable' provides a useful structure for the design of our public engagement programme?
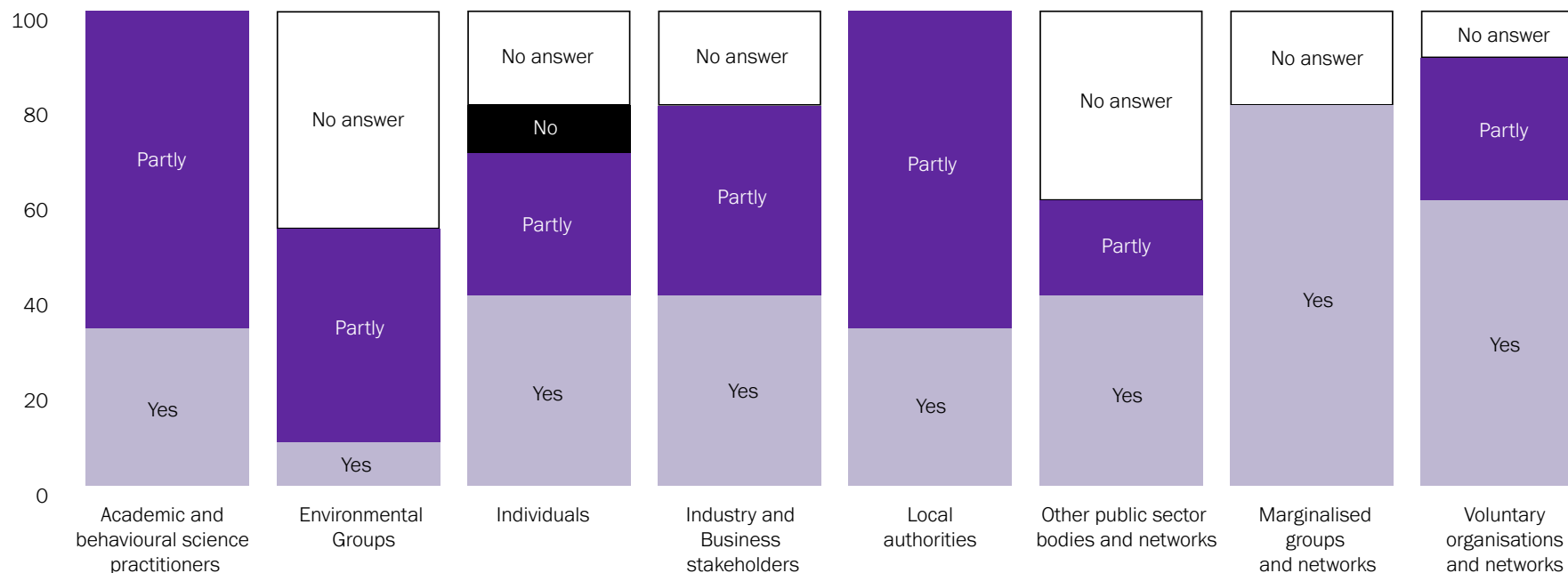

The 4 E's framework introduced in this section ws generally well-received by respondents from different stakeholder groups. The only exception were a few Individuals who held negative views aout the overall strategy, expressing scepticism towards climate change and the policy measures linked to it.

Question 10: Do you think we have missed out any key critical success factors not covered elsewhere in this draft strategy?
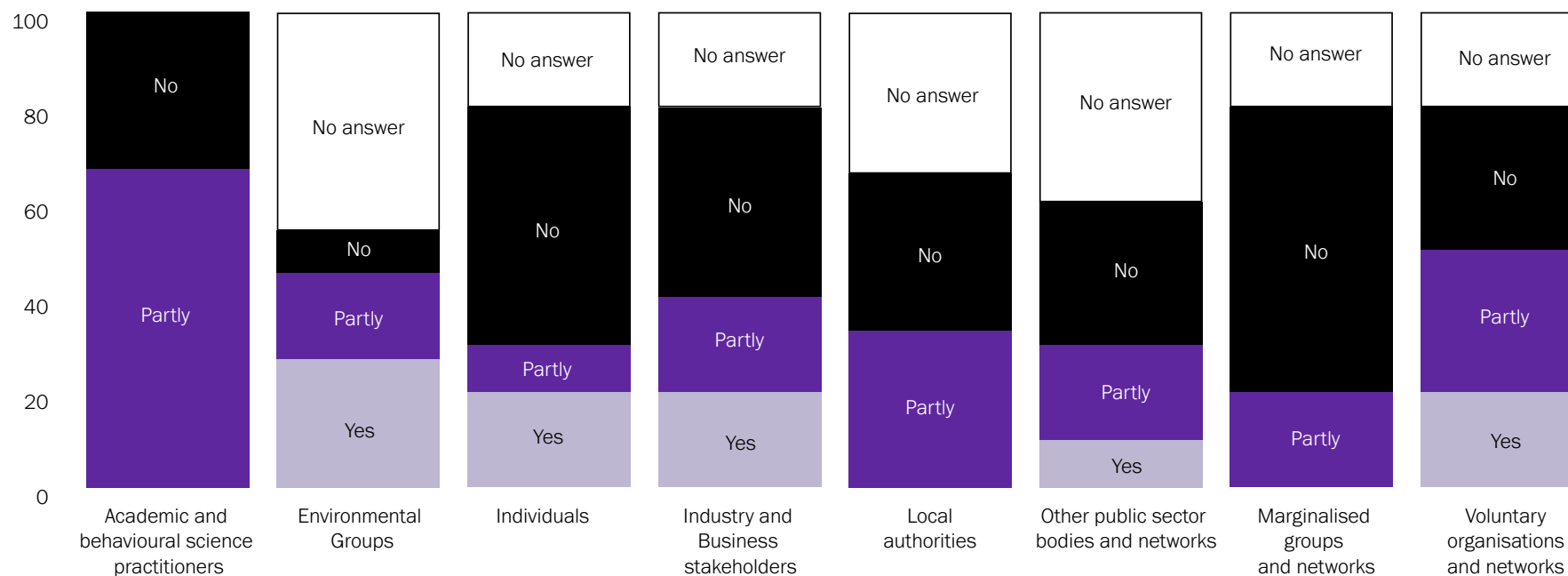

The most prominent negative response to this question came from Marginalised groups, followed by a smaller number from other groups. The key reasons related to lack of measurable outcomes and benchmarks, failure to recognise the necessity of facilitating a just transition and neglected the importance of capacity building. Noteworthy concerns included missed opportunities to address aspects of a just transition, such as engaging with diverse communities and sectors marginalised by their involvement in the fossil fuel economy, agriculture, and the cost-of-living crisis. The significance of capacity building in areas such as community transport, local food production, and social businesses was also raised.

Question 14: Do you think the policy contexts and evidence set out in this section are useful?
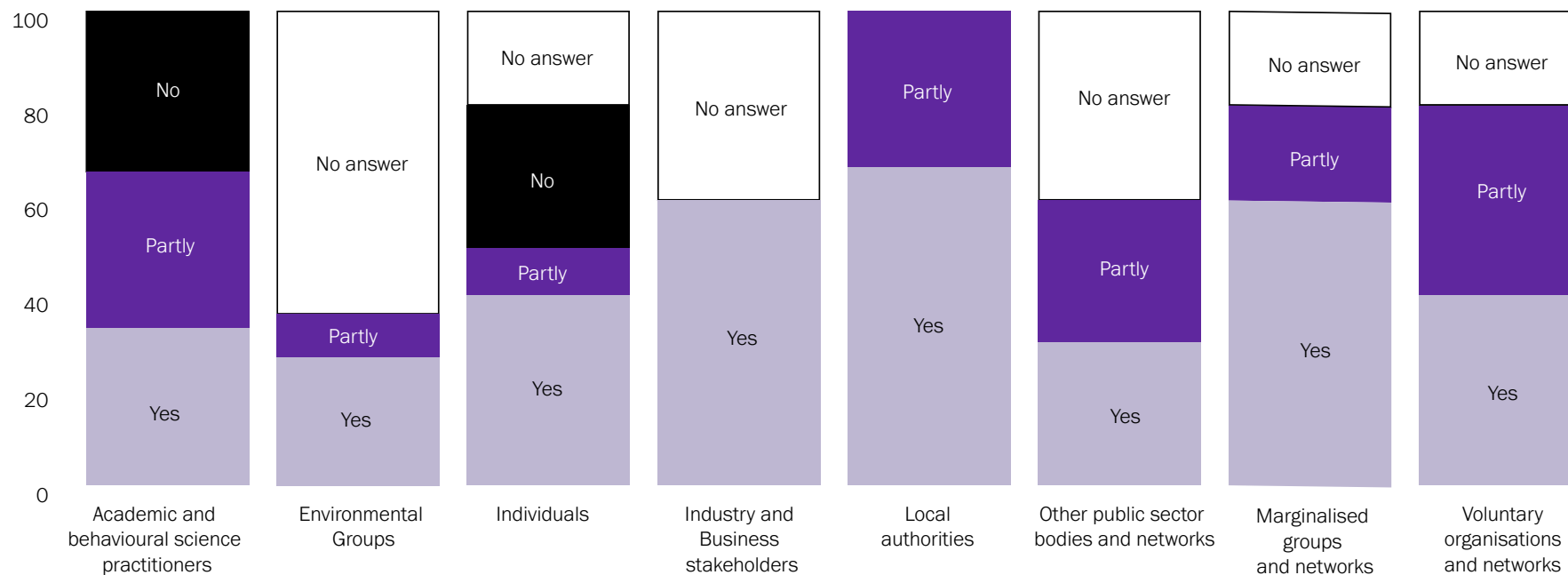

Respondents from various stakeholder groups generally found the evidence and policy context presented in this section valuable. The only exception was a small number of Individuals, who expressed negative views on the strategy as a whole, including scepticism about climate change and the policy actions associated with it.

Question 15: Do you agree with our theory of success and the importance this strategy places on behavioural science?
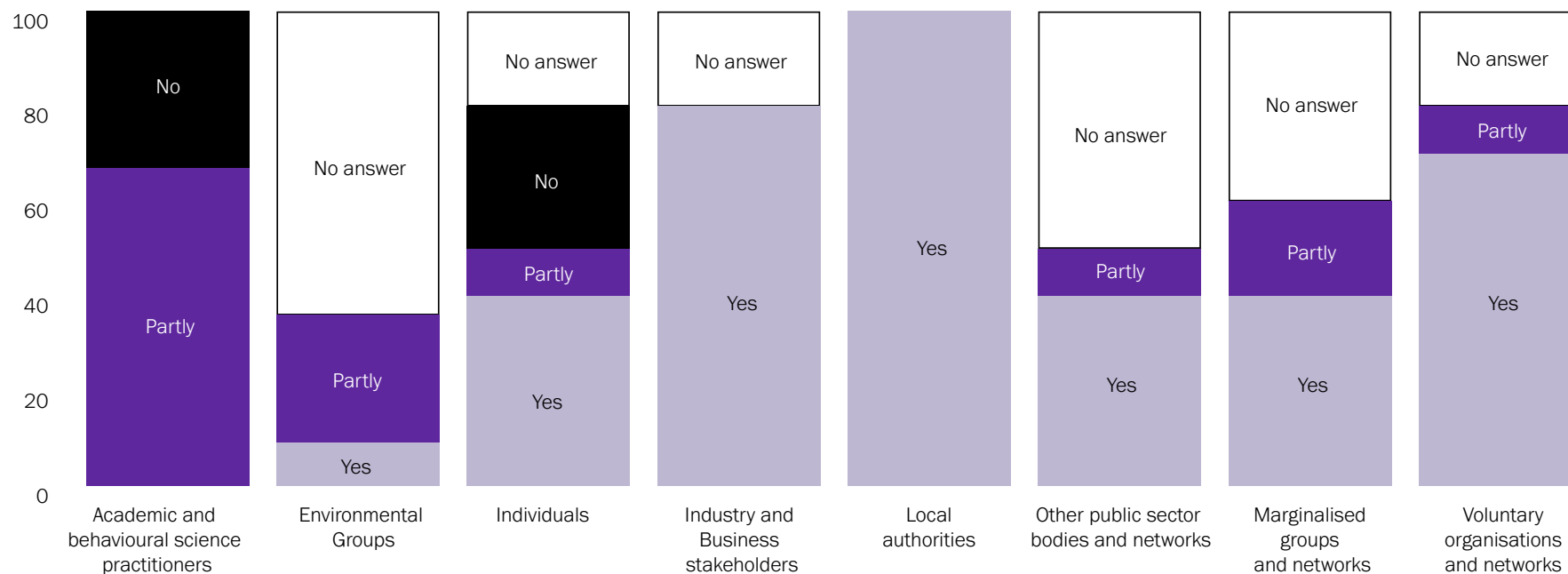
In general, respondents from various stakeholder groups agreed with the theory of success outlined and recognised the importance of incorporating behavioural science. The primary opposition came from a small number of Individuals who expressed negative views on the strategy as a whole.

Question 18: Overall, has this draft strategy met your expectations or do you have any suggestions for improvement?
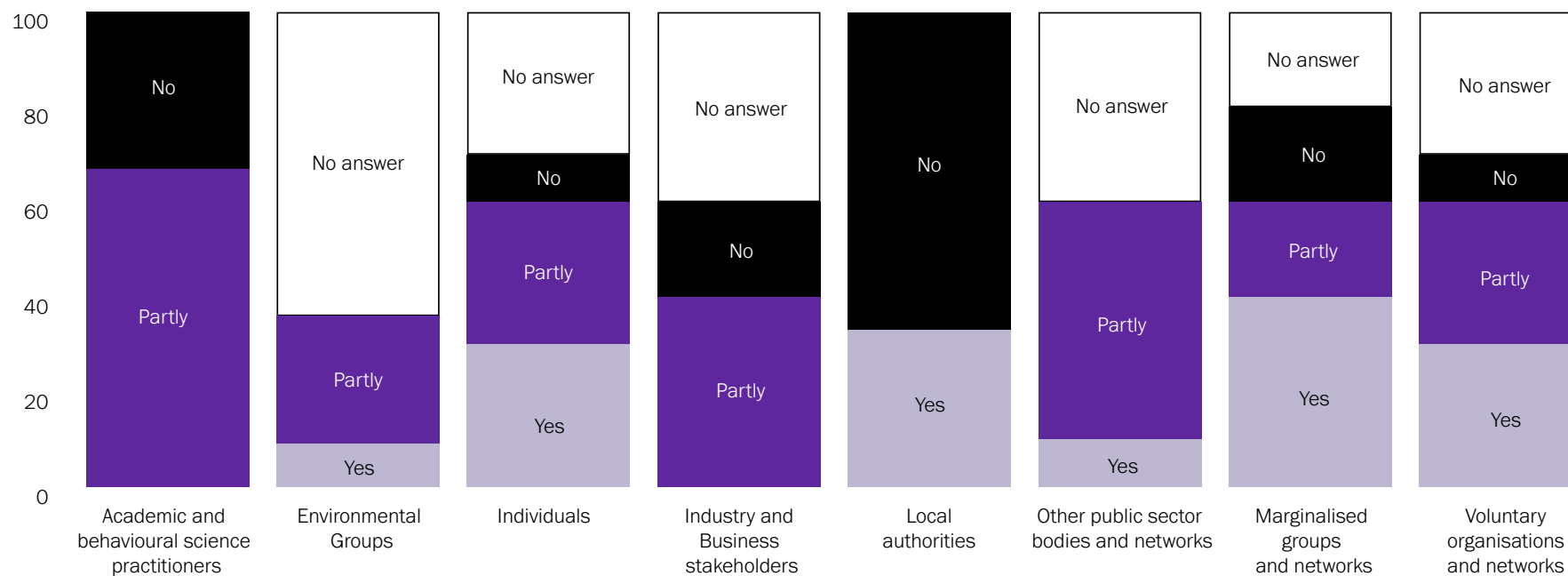
Industry and Business stakeholders, Marginalised groups and networks, and Voluntary organisations and networks were the main groups who felt the draft strategy fell short of expectations. It is important to note that these groups had relatively smaller representation. Industry and Business stakeholders were concerned about the limited focus on education and upskilling for all age groups. Voluntary organisations and networks stressed the importance of community-led action and sought recognition as integral partners in the Team Wales approach. They also called for revising the approach to consider capacity and capability rather than relying solely on incentives and penalties.

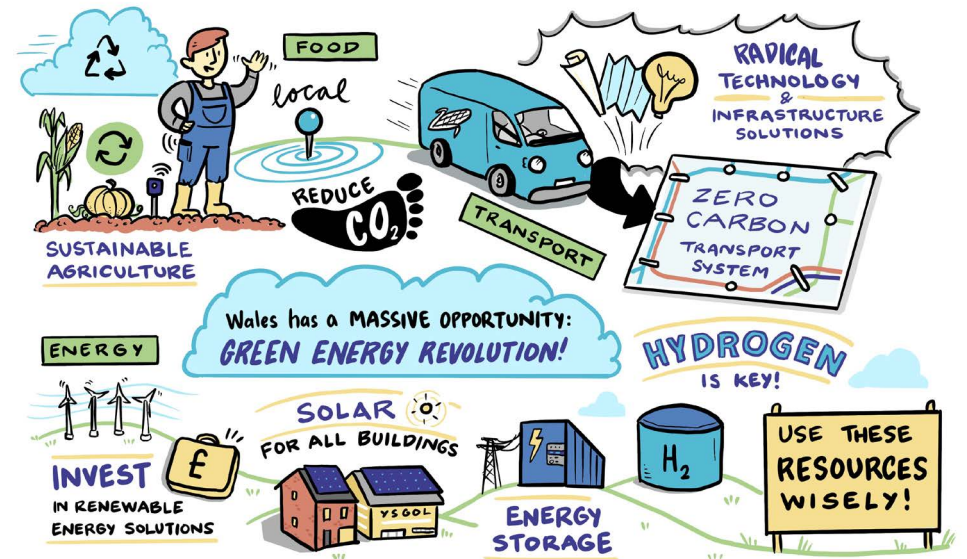# ENGAGING PEOPLE IN SOLUTIONS FOR TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE

Illustration by: LAURA SORVALA

SECTION 3: Qualitative Analysis

Key Themes

Language and communication

Respondents highlighted the importance of accessibility, expressing support for multiple versions of the strategy in different formats and with different visuals to engage diverse groups. This was accompanied by several comments on the need for the strategy to be clearer and more concisely written.

The language used in the strategy's description of the scale of climate change was questioned by an environmental group, who advocated for a clearer recognition of its unprecedented challenge. Public sector and environmental groups emphasised the need for accelerated action to be promoted in the strategy.

Barriers to behaviour change

The consultation highlighted various barriers to behaviour change that need to be considered in the strategy. Inequalities, including affordability and lack of access to infrastructure, were prominently noted. Scepticism towards politicians and limited awareness of climate change science were additional barriers mentioned. The "busy" nature of society, with people focused on work and education was identified as a factor that hinders climate action. Respondents stated that the strategy should address these barriers and offer attainable and beneficial actions alongside more demanding ones that require larger sacrifices.

Policy and infrastructure measures

Consultation responses emphasised the importance of recognising the need for resources in terms of infrastructure, skills and services, while being mindful of the costs of action for individuals. Respondents called for policy change to support and enable a delivery of the strategy, including new legislation and infrastructure improvements.

Just Transition

Respondents to the consultation requested a more explicit recognition of the need for a Just Transition, with some seeking assurances that the benefits of the transition will be realised in Wales. It was suggested that the transition to a low-carbon society presents many opportunities for households, businesses, and the Welsh economy, and this should be better reflected in the strategy's vision. Respondents stated that this must also be accompanied by recognition that a significant green skills gap needs addressing.

Consultation respondents recommended that the voices of those who have the lowest impact on climate change but who may experience the greatest impact should be heard and that any actions taken should not disproportionately impact these groups. Respondents highlighted the need for further evaluation, including how the strategy will benefit those disproportionately affected by climate change. They also called for further detail around the ethos of a Just Transition and environmental justice by ensuring accessibility and further outreach to marginalised groups.

Collaboration and engagement

Respondents expressed the need for more participatory engagement in the strategy and beyond. They also called for improved feedback

processes and a redesign of engagement structures. Collaboration with existing community organisations and the adaptation of democratic processes were recommended. The strategy's intention to work with children and diverse groups was positively received, with requests for more of this.

Regional approach and local action

The consultation highlighted the need to address regional and local contextual differences around particular impacts and requirements, recognising that a "one size fits all" approach to low-carbon lifestyles is not suitable. A recommendation was made to broaden the engagement process with further regional dimensions to reflect the diverse needs of communities and specific regional features. The consultation responses also stressed the importance of utilising existing community strengths, with a call for the strategy to initiate projects and campaigns that support local community action and capacity building. The consultation responses also highlighted that local networks are already in place in many communities and that the strategy should capitalise on this for collaborative regional approaches.

Support for behavioural interventions

The majority of respondents supported behaviour change interventions but requested further information and advocated for the strategy to move away from relying solely on education. The inclusion of behaviour change pilot programmes and stakeholder involvement was positively received.

Although the use of evidence-based behavioural science as a means to tackle climate change was, in general, positively received, a minority of respondents advised exercising caution, expressing concerns about it's potential to be perceived as manipulative. Respondents also flagged the need to consider external factors that may hinder behaviour change interventions, such as inequality and the cost of living. They emphasised that the strategy needs to take an innovative and well-informed approach to behaviour change to effectively engage the public.

Action and transparency by industry and Government

Industry stakeholders emphasised the need for businesses to embrace action on climate change and consider environmental and social impacts in the process. Environmental groups and individuals called for the Welsh Government to lead by example, and respondents from several sectors requested clear commitments from Government.

Nature emergency

Some feedback from the consultation highlighted the need to more extensively acknowledge the overlap between the climate and nature emergencies. Environmental groups called for a clearer declaration of the nature emergency alongside the climate emergency, and a public sector body stressed the need to align with the 30 by 30 goal and the Biodiversity Deep Dive Recommendations.
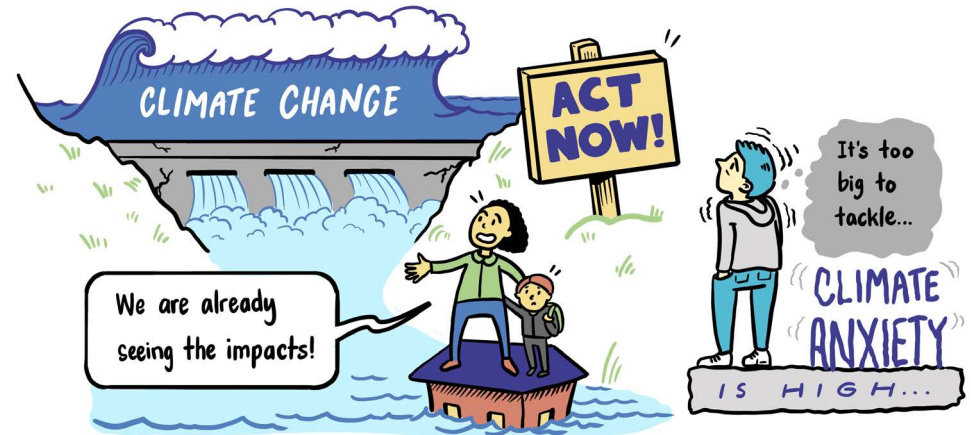
ENGAGING PEOPLE IN SOLUTIONS FOR TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE

ILLUSTRATION BY: LAURA SORVALA

SECTION 4: Wales Climate Week

Qualitative feedback from Wales Climate Week fringe events

Supplementary feedback on the strategy was received from the fringe events held during Wales Climate Week 2022, including some new recommendations and reinforcement of common themes arising from the consultation. Participants expressed anxiety around the emerging impacts of climate change and stressed the need for urgent action to address it before it is too late.

Participants called for more transparency and communication regarding the progress made towards Net Zero targets, as well as highlighting specific activities and initiatives that are making a positive impact in reducing emissions. Additionally, it was noted that policies and commitments at both national and local levels need to be understood and effectively implemented to drive climate action.

The fringe events also elicited a call for strong leadership and action from government and businesses, setting an example to follow. Participants commented that the strategy should be complemented by the integration of climate change considerations across sectors, and the promotion of greener energy practices such as investing in renewable energy technology and supporting sustainable agricultural practices.

Participants identified several barriers to taking action that must be addressed to encourage widespread adoption, such as affordability, cultural factors and lack of awareness. Engagement with communities, education and awareness campaigns were all considered vital to motivating people to take action. They also expressed it is essential to provide incentives and support, and ensure the accessibility of information (particularly for marginalised groups) to empower individuals and communities to participate in combatting climate change.

There was considerable interest from the fringe event participants in being involved in climate action, particularly as they had not previously been included in these conversations. Participants suggested that enthusiasm should be capitalised on to build community power, creating a platform for knowledge sharing and taking on an array of different perspectives.