



**West Sussex County Council Climate Strategy Consultation  
Overall response from the South East Climate Alliance (SECA)**

**Question 4: Considering the whole document, do you agree or disagree that the strategy is clear and easy to understand?**

**Overall response: Agree**

SECA members mostly agree the strategy is clear and easy to understand (82%).

Recommendations are that:

- There is some 'good strong wording we haven't seen from WSCC before', but it needs to convey a greater sense of urgency.
- It needs to be clearer who the audience is.
- The leadership role of the council needs to be articulated better.
- Given the council's strategic lead on education it should reference the role of schools and young people in raising awareness and tackling climate change.
- It needs to spell out much more clearly how it will be followed by a concrete action plan.

**Question 5: The strategy is prepared for County Council officers and members, to lead, enable and inspire in their roles. Do you agree or disagree that the reasons and benefits for 'Lead, Enable and Inspire' are clearly stated?**

**Overall response: Agree**

59% of SECA members (59%) agreed on this point; 21% disagreed.

The main concern was that it lacks detail on how WSCC intends to "lead, enable and inspire". This makes it appear inward looking. For example, it is silent on community engagement and public education.

**Question 6: Is the vision clear?**

**Overall response: Agree**

59% of SECA members agreed on this point, 32% disagreed and 9% were unsure.

The vision should be framed in a more positive way, and be broader ranging so it covers the whole county, not just the Council.

One comment was that the vision was clear but disappointing in that it focuses on a resilient county council organisation rather than a resilient West Sussex.

### **Question 7 Do you agree or disagree that the commitments match the vision**

#### **Overall response: No**

50% of SECA members said No, 35% said yes, and 15% were unsure.

The commitments are seen as good as far as they go. But without concrete action plans and targets they come across as vague. These need to be built in, or follow swiftly. 'We need a roadmap'.

Some high level commitments on areas where the Council has direct responsibilities would be welcomed, notably: education, highways and transport planning, waste and flood management.

Several strongly regretted it made no specific mention of some critical issues, notably aviation, fossil fuel divestment, and hydrocarbon extraction.

Many felt a clearer commitment is needed on how the council will engage with other stakeholders, for example via a citizen's assembly.

The adapt and be resilient section needs strengthening so it more clearly references the ecological crisis as well as the climate crisis.

### **Question 8: Do you agree or disagree that it is clear how the commitments deliver on the vision**

#### **Overall response: Disagree**

Views on this point were evenly split among SECA member: 48% agreed, 52% disagreed.

The biggest request was for more specifics, and several members gave detailed suggestions on how the commitments could be strengthened.

There were calls for steps to bring the public on board through a public education/engagement campaign.

### **Question 9: In the commitments, are the aims too ambitious, just right, or not ambitious enough?**

#### **Overall response: Not ambitious enough**

75% of SECA member felt they were not ambitious enough; 25% though they were just right.

Though the suggested commitments are "very welcome", SECA members are calling on WSCC to be even more ambitious with the strategy. "This is an excellent starting point but WSCC should aim higher and aspire to be a beacon of excellence." "The draft document feels like a framework, not a strategy."

Several urged a clearer focus on supporting the green economy, and the 'Green New Deal' agenda. This includes an explicit focus on the need for a 'just transition' to a low-carbon economy.

One view was that it needs to be more ambitious in relation to the exercising of its planning powers, with a need to upgrade WSCC climate change policy. It should be more explicit in relation to major infrastructure projects which will generate

significant carbon emissions such as Gatwick expansion and roads, particularly proposals for the A27.

**Question 10: Our delivery plan is under development, once the broad direction of the strategy is agreed. Do you expect to see a delivery plan that lists actions for the next 10 years, or should it evolve over the lifetime of the strategy?**

**Overall response: Both**

**Question 11: Is there work your organisation is doing on climate change that is able to be aligned to this strategy, to enable partnership working, better use of resources and wider impact?**

**Overall response: yes**

68% of SECA member said their work could be aligned.

Numerous specific suggestions were given (see supporting document).

**Question 12: Do you have any other comments that you would like to make about the proposed draft strategy?**

SECA members very much welcome the chance to comment on the draft strategy, and see it as important step in the right direction.

Detailed comments are included in the supporting document, with a number of concrete suggestions on how it could be strengthened. For example, here are some quotes:

“We strongly believe that WSCC should be adopting an area-wide climate emergency strategy/plan. This would necessarily need to recognise the limits of council control beyond operations but would include things that are under its control including transport across the county and not only in relation to council operations. This would place the council in the leadership role that it should be taking to address this emergency. We are seriously concerned that by focusing only on its own operations distracts time, attention and resources without addressing the much larger challenges that we are facing in the county and which appear to be being ignored by WSCC.”

“The strategy is correct in saying that the climate crisis "will require radical transformation in how we work and live", but that it not what the document describes. It confirms that WSCC is stuck in a managerial 'problem solving' mindset: it does not lay out a vision of an urgent and fundamental shift in priorities. Transport is very much within the Council's direct control and it is failing big time on climate.”

“Monitoring of progress on implementing the plan should be every 6 months and the 10 year Plan should hit the ground running because the first 5 years will be the most crucial.”

“The strategy needs to be accelerated. Without a planet there will be no economy!”

“COVID 19 has broken the mould; we don't have to go back to how we were .  
Seize this moment.”

“This is a very necessary document & requires target dates on all the action to ensure West Sussex is carbon neutral by 2030. We hope this document will be communicated far & wide to all residents of West Sussex, it's important that it's adopted by everyone.”

“The strategy looks good as far as it goes. The key question is what happens next. It would look much more substantial if it gave details and a timeframe for when concrete action plans and targets will follow.”