



**Rising to the climate change challenge:
The role of housing and planning within
local councils**



tcpa

Research findings and recommendations

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Research that underpins the report

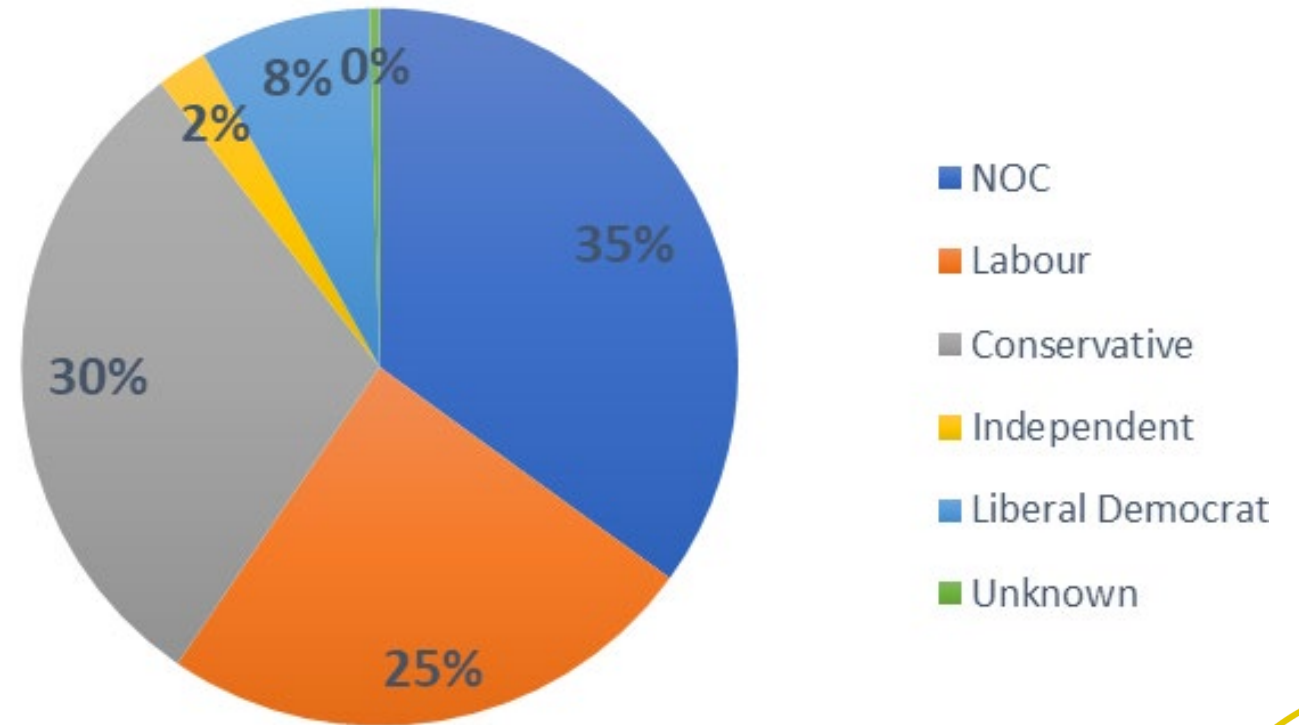
Desk based research and policy analysis

Survey - 220 responses from a mixture of councillors and officers

Roundtable discussion

Five case studies

Political control of respondents' local authorities



Some key stats and themes



Delivering affordable housing

- 2016 – 95% of respondents said need for affordable homes was ‘severe’ or ‘moderate’. 97% in this survey, but ‘severe’ increased from 58% to 69%.
- S106 is slightly less dominant as a model for delivery of affordable housing.

Commitment to tackling climate change

- 85% had declared a climate emergency, with 78% of those saying declaration includes a specific target.
- But, lack of declaration does not mean action is not being taken – 98% have a climate action plan
- Understanding of baseline carbon emissions – 41% said ‘yes’, they understand, while 55% said ‘yes, to some extent’



Figure 6: Policies relating to the mitigation of climate change included in development plan documents (195 respondents)

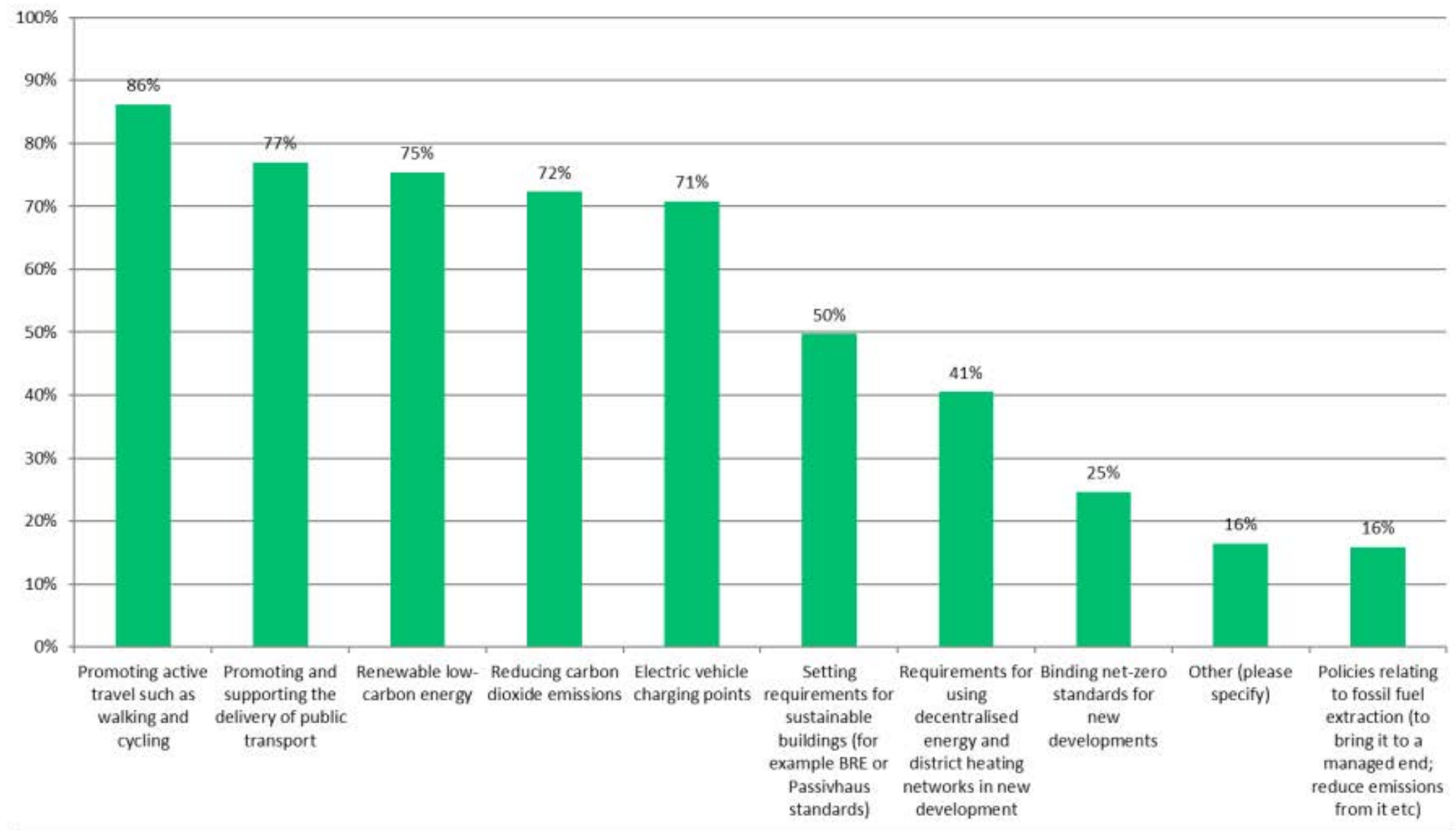


Figure 7: Policies relating to managing/ adapting to climate change included in development plan documents (195 respondents)

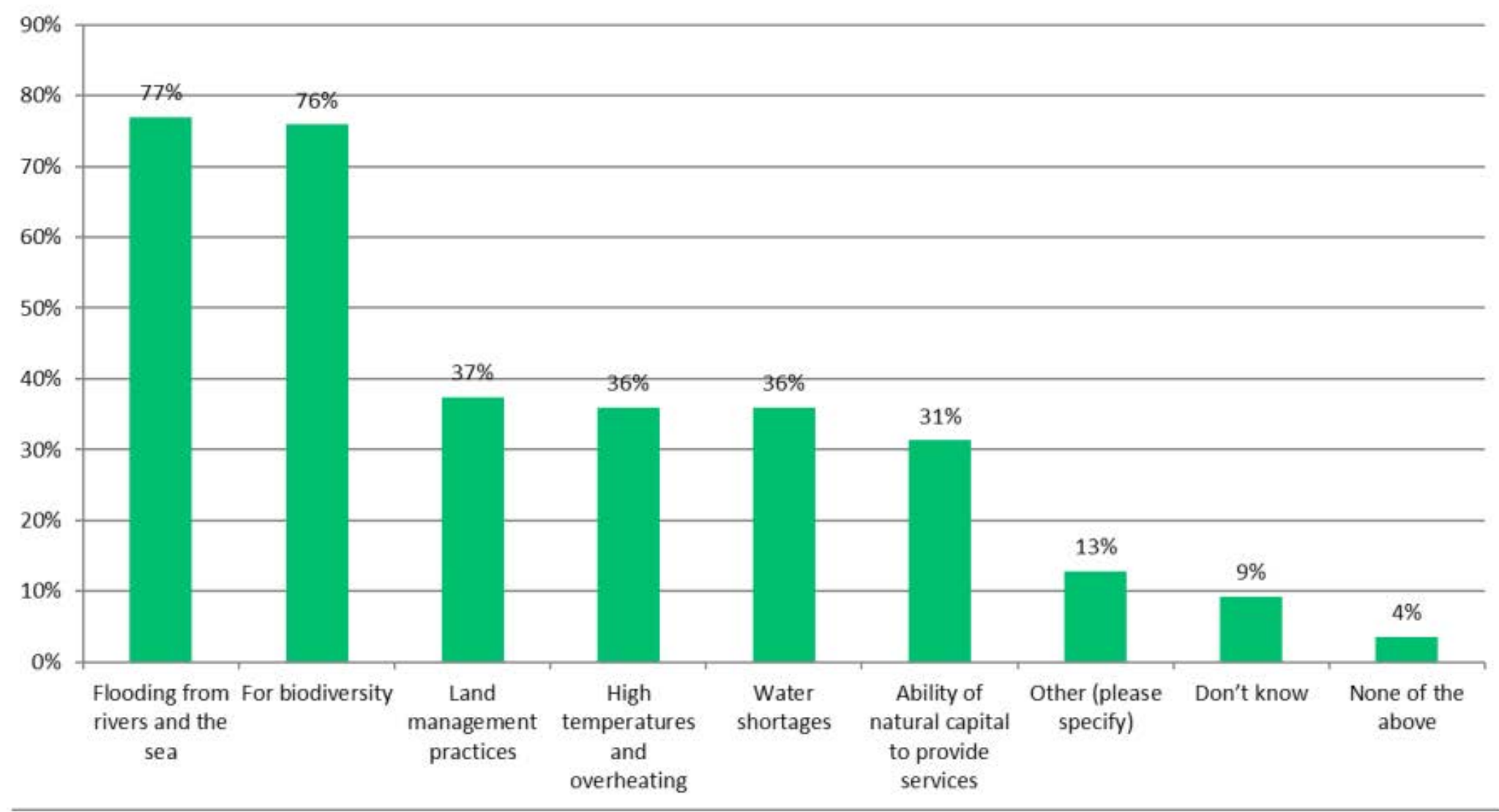


Figure 8: Greenhouse gas emissions, climate change and flood risk carrying weight in decision-making (195 respondents)

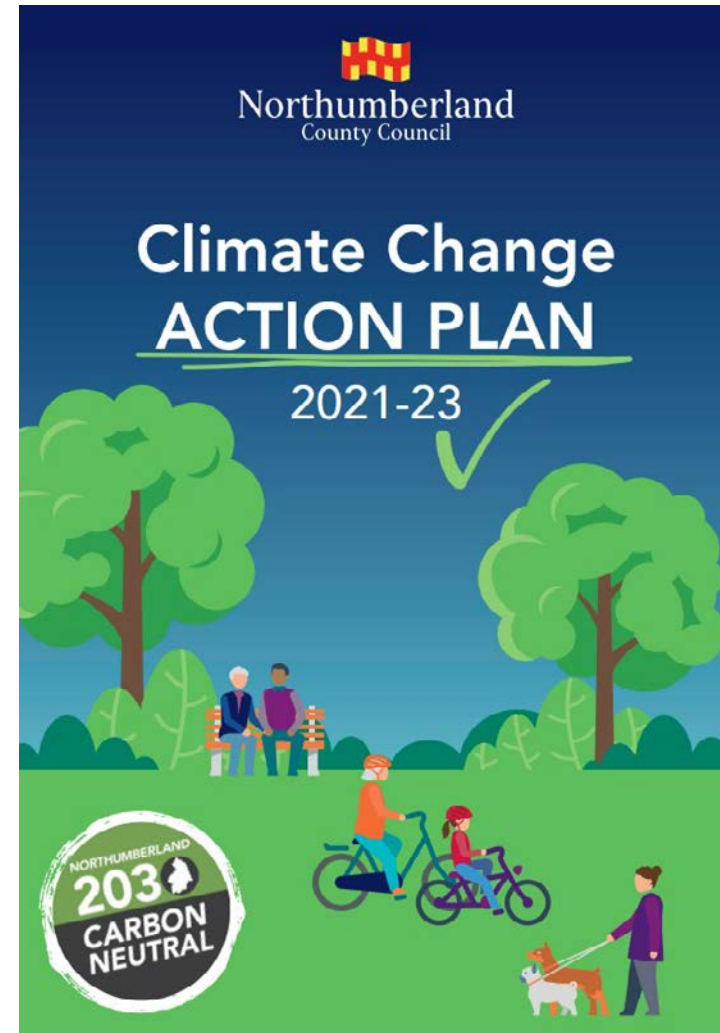
	Strongly agree	Agree to some extent	Neither agree nor disagree/ I'm not sure	Disagree to some extent	Strongly disagree	Weighted Average
A. My local authority recognises greenhouse gas emissions as a material consideration in planning decision-making	29%	51%	14%	5%	2%	1.99
B. My local authority recognises the need to adapt to climate change as a material consideration in decision-making	37%	52%	8%	2%	1%	1.79
C. My local authority always follows the advice from our national environment agency on planning applications, for example in relation to flood risk	46%	37%	13%	3%	1%	1.74

Figure 9: The extent to which under-resourcing is a barrier to effective delivery in each of following planning-related policy topics. 'One' indicates that the factor is not a barrier at all, while 'five' indicates that it is a great barrier (173 respondents)

	1	2	3	4	5	N/A	Weighted Average
Urban design and aesthetics	5%	11%	29%	24%	25%	6%	3.56
Health and wellbeing	6%	16%	30%	27%	17%	4%	3.33
Climate change adaptation	4%	10%	23%	33%	26%	4%	3.7
Climate change mitigation	4%	11%	21%	34%	25%	4%	3.68
Green space/ infrastructure	6%	17%	23%	31%	19%	4%	3.42
Housing delivery (market)	7%	16%	31%	24%	17%	5%	3.28
Affordable and social housing delivery	5%	13%	29%	26%	21%	5%	3.47
Reducing inequality and injustice	7%	20%	31%	16%	18%	8%	3.2
Local sustainable transport	6%	10%	30%	20%	28%	6%	3.58
Housing stock retrofit	6%	13%	22%	20%	25%	15%	3.52
New communities	4%	12%	26%	21%	15%	23%	3.42

Case studies

- **Swansea Council** – building better homes through the ‘Swansea Standard’
- **Glasgow City Council** – Passivhaus retrofit and planning for climate change
- **Salford City Council** – Operating within a cross boundary environmental vision
- **London Councils** – Retrofit London Programme
- **Northumberland County Council** – Delivering a Climate Action Plan in a rural setting



Reflections for local authorities



Holistic approaches are essential

- Planning and housing are important levers – but can't tackle climate change alone!
- Ambitious leadership and collaboration are all important

Adaptation not just mitigation

- Based on responses to the survey, more local plans include a wider variety of policies on mitigation. Adaptation policies also need to be a priority.

Being even more ambitious

- Local plans need to include more challenging policies if net zero is to be achieved and places are to be resilient. For example, binding net zero targets for new development.



Policy recommendations for national governments



1. Local authorities need to be sufficiently resourced.
2. Prioritise and support the development of skills – both in local authorities and relevant industries.
3. Guidance is needed in some specific areas to better support planning for climate change.
4. As is being seen in Scotland, national planning frameworks need to be established that bring together thematic and spatial policies.
5. Climate change mitigation and adaptation needs to be embedded in the Planning Inspectorate, the Planning and Environmental Appeals Division and the Planning Appeals Commission.
6. The role of local authorities on housing and planning should be central to the levelling up agenda and supported as such.
7. In England, powers removed through PDR must be restored to local authorities.

