

Consulting Young People about Cornwall's Local Area Energy Plan



THE CONTEXT

RJ Working was commissioned by the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly (CIoS) Climate Commission to engage young people with key findings from the Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP).

The LAEP report sets out an ambitious plan to decarbonise energy in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, through investing in green infrastructure and renewable alternatives. Development of the Plan included extensive consultation with local residents through online surveys and community drop-in sessions, alongside key consultations with local stakeholders and representatives.

How we source and use energy is one of the four major priorities identified by RJ Working's Youth-led Climate Action Team in their [2025 Report](#).

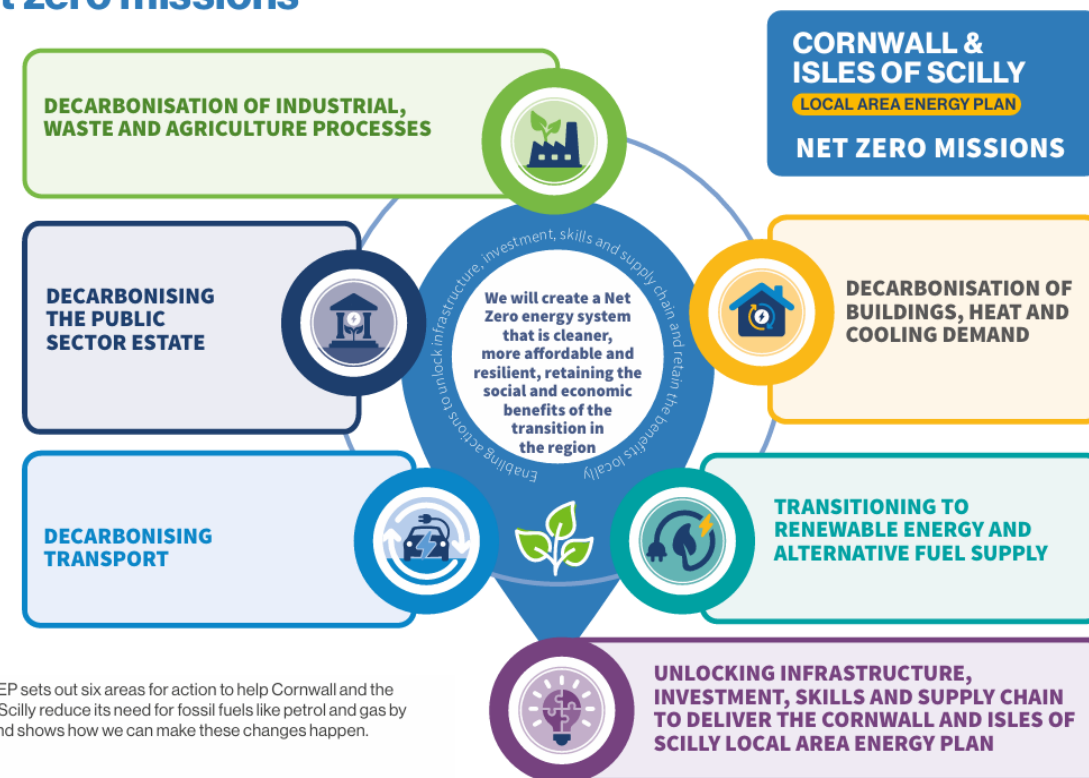
RJ Working conducted a programme of engagement between August 2025 and March 2026, in 8 Schools and Colleges across Cornwall. Contributions were made by Camborne Science and International Academy, Redruth School, Bodmin College, Cornwall College, Truro College, Penwith College, Treviglas Academy, and Saltash Community School.

Within workshops and assemblies, students were shown short films about Cornwall's Green Energy projects and engaged in participatory conversation about Green Careers and the LAEP. Green Skills are a key component of Cornwall Council's [Workforce and Skills Strategy](#). It is vital that young people in Cornwall have an understanding of the skills and careers pathways open to them which are supportive of our environment. We believe that Climate, Nature, and Environment are strong and will become even stronger factors in young people's choices.

The questions in this survey reflect the Net Zero missions detailed in the [LAEP report](#). The questions have been made relevant for young people by offering choices applicable to their positions as individuals, community members, and students. The survey offers pathways for young people to think about their own role in Cornwall's decarbonisation, both through behaviour change and career choices. Additionally, we encourage young people to support systemic change, especially through belonging to a defined community such as a school or college.

All participants came from an enlightened position, having watched a short film or engaged in a workshop or participatory assembly on the LAEP.

Net zero missions



The LAEP sets out six areas for action to help Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly reduce its need for fossil fuels like petrol and gas by 2045 and shows how we can make these changes happen.

CORNWALL & ISLES OF SCILLY

LOCAL AREA ENERGY PLAN

Our future energy system will be cleaner, more affordable and resilient, retaining the social and economic benefits of the transition in the region.

This will enable us to:

Tackle energy inequalities:

Making our homes, businesses and transport greener and more affordable

Improve energy security:

Generating, owning and using our energy locally to reduce bills and reduce our reliance on imported energy sources

Retain the benefits locally:

Growing our economy through unlocking infrastructure, investment, jobs, skills and supply chain.

Delivered through five Net Zero Missions:



TRANSITIONING TO RENEWABLE ENERGY AND ALTERNATIVE FUEL SUPPLY



DECARBONISATION OF BUILDINGS, HEAT AND COOLING DEMAND



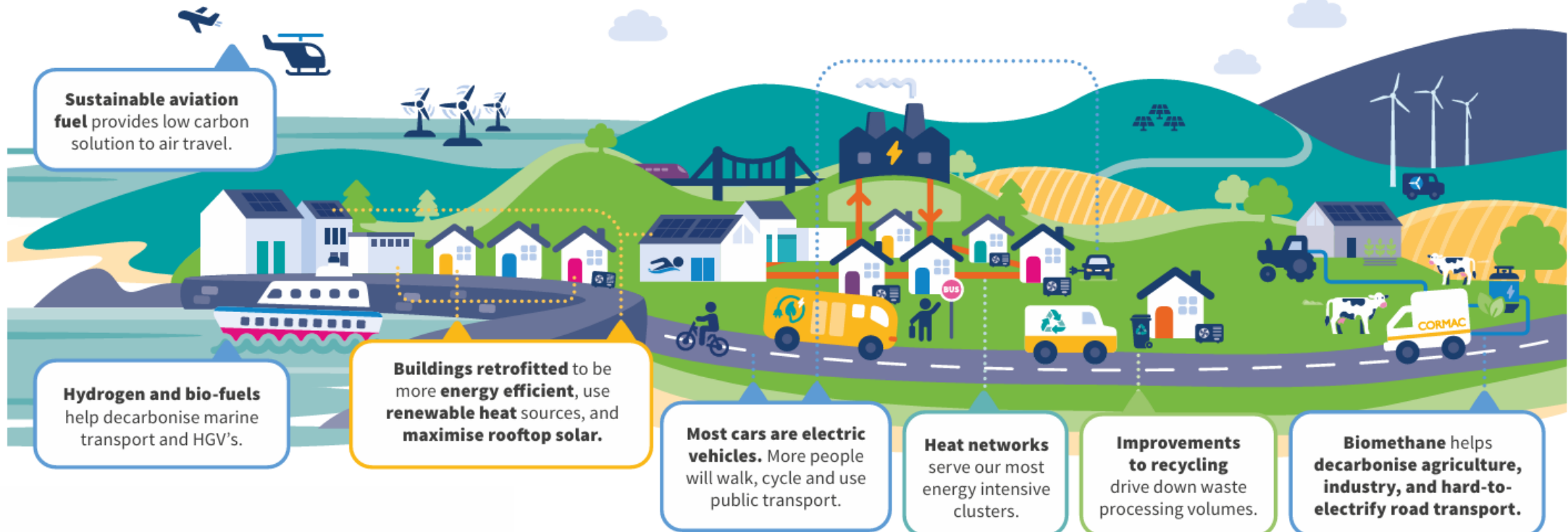
DECARBONISING THE PUBLIC SECTOR ESTATE



DECARBONISATION OF INDUSTRIAL, WASTE AND AGRICULTURE PROCESSES



DECARBONISING TRANSPORT



INTRODUCTION

- This report presents a selection of results from consulting young people about the Climate~Nature crisis and the part played by sourcing energy in different ways: either contributing to pollution or contributing to decarbonization.
- **863 students** completed this consultation between August 2025 and March 2026. This has provided valuable insight into students understandings, motivations and priorities with green energy.
- The survey was created by **RJ Working**, with support from Cornwall Council, in order to grow the climate crisis conversation in a supportive and beneficial way.
- We have used the data collected to highlight key recommendations to support young people's climate energy action going forward.

Key Findings

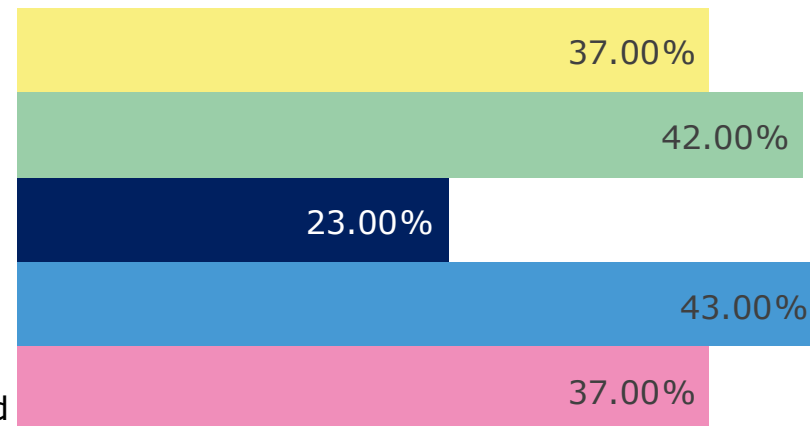
54% of students wanted to learn more about **where our energy comes from**

51% of students stated they were **'Quite'** or **'Very'** worried about the impacts of climate change on nature

59% of students want to learn more about **how to campaign** in their school/college and local community

Green Careers in Cornwall

- Using creativity to inspire positive action for nature and the climate
- Helping make positive changes in the world (e.g. politics)
- Teaching other people about climate issues
- Nature protection and conservation
- Renewable Energy such as solar, wind and offshore technology



Students expressed interest in learning more about career paths that would allow them to protect and conserve nature and make positive changes in the world.

Energy and Motivations

These energy-related solutions would increase students' motivation:	Students take these energy-based steps to remain hopeful:	Students link these energy solutions to ways they feel able to create change:
'Try to use more renewable energy sources' 'To see more change in local policies regarding the environment' 'Paid for using renewable energy' 'Solar panels' 'If there were wind turbines in Lanivet' 'To stop releasing gas and fossil fuels into the air' 'If the school started a geographical campaign about Cornwall's environment' 'Free energy for people and give us money'	'Recycle, not littering, trying to use more renewable energy sources' 'To tell the Government to switch to solar and wind turbines' 'Not wasting water' 'Litter picking and using solar power and do a lot of things outdoors' 'By going out more and walking around places instead of taking the bus' 'I would pick up a piece of litter off the floor when I see any and I would try use only recyclable items and no plastic and use some non-imported foods' 'To try and make less people uses fossil fills'	'Stop littering and stop using as much non-renewable resources' 'Using less energy at home' 'With the amount of electricity we use because we can use the sunlight doesn't cost money' 'Not using fossil fuels and reduce plastic waste. Things in my everyday life.' 'Picking up litter, no fossil fuels' 'By not using a lot of gas'

Student Priorities for Actions and Ways Forward



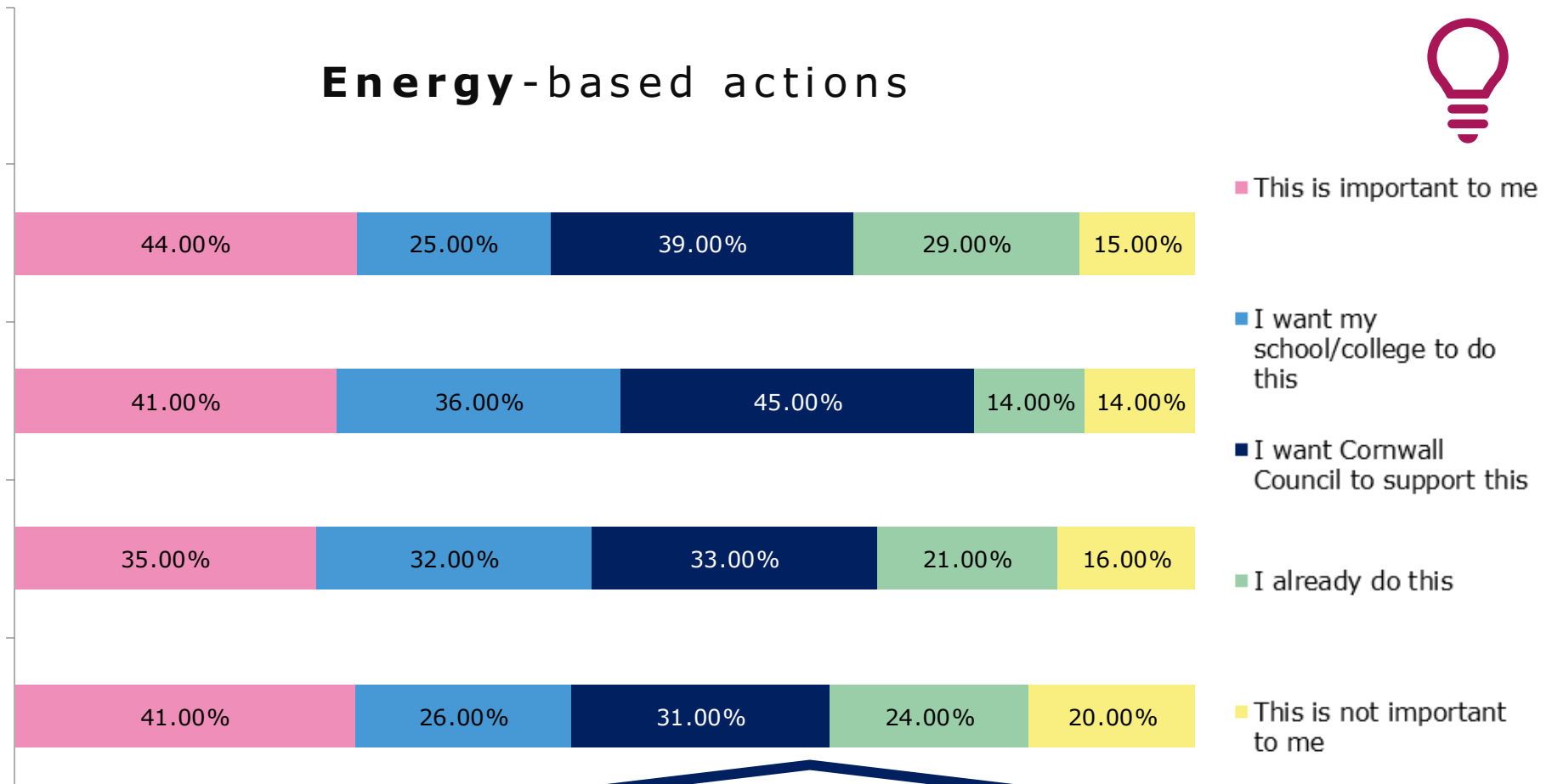
Improving transport options with more opportunities to take the train, bus, walk, or cycle

Transition to renewable energy (e.g. solar panels)

Insulate our buildings

Reduce our energy use

Energy-based actions



The actions outlined above correspond to key LAEP net-zero missions such as decarbonising transport, heating and public sector estates and supporting renewable energy transitions. This graph displays young peoples priorities for taking action, alongside the needed systems changes in their educational setting and Local Authority.



Key takeaways: Young Peoples' Priorities for Solutions and Ways Forward



What's most important to young people

- Better investment into public transport options such as trainlines, bus routes, cycle paths and walkways
- Transitioning to renewable energy, and reducing our energy consumption
- Reduce energy usage

What young people already do

- Reduce energy usage
- Utilise public transport infrastructure where possible
- Talk to their parents and carers about green energy alternatives, as household decision makers

What young people want their school or college to do

- Transition to renewable energy sources for heating and lighting of their buildings
- Support initiatives to improve public transport for students, including trains and buses
- Support the creation of more cycle lanes and walking paths for students
- Insulate school buildings to reduce waste and cost

What young people want Cornwall Council to support

- Improving transport options, with more opportunity to take the train, bus, cycle or walk.
- Invest in a transition towards renewable energy
- Support the insulation of local buildings

Analytical summary

- The findings of this report continue to grow the conversation surrounding youth engagement with **LAEP actions and net-zero missions**. We recognise that the latest Cornwall Council publication addressing these themes is the Climate and Energy Action Plan (Published March 2026)
- Many students called for their schools and local councils to **increase the accessibility** of buses, trains, cycle spaces and footpaths in their local areas. **Energy-based environmental policy** was also important to students, with almost half of all survey participants calling on Cornwall council to **support renewable energy projects** in Cornwall.
- A key theme from student's written responses was the importance of **visible systemic energy transitions**, such as the implementation of solar panels and wind farms, in increasing **hope and motivation** relating to climate change. Many students also described personal actions like **reducing energy and water usage** as a way they felt able to create environmental change. This highlights the tensions in the findings between young peoples' individualised efforts and the potential for system change. Of course, we need both for decarbonisation and transition to clean, renewable energy
- Almost half of all young people surveyed wished to learn about **career options** in nature conservation or social change.

Recommendations

1. Continue to introduce schools to the issues in the Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) and the new Climate and Energy Action Plan
2. Support the creation of more environmental clubs and committees, to give students the space to have their voice heard on energy-related issues
3. Hold student-led focus groups on local transport and renewable energy transitions, to explore different pathways to achieving important changes.
4. Host more climate-education assemblies and workshops, to further educate students on the impacts of climate change and possible routes forward in community.