



Surrey Covid-19 Community Impact Assessment

Environment Findings



Environment

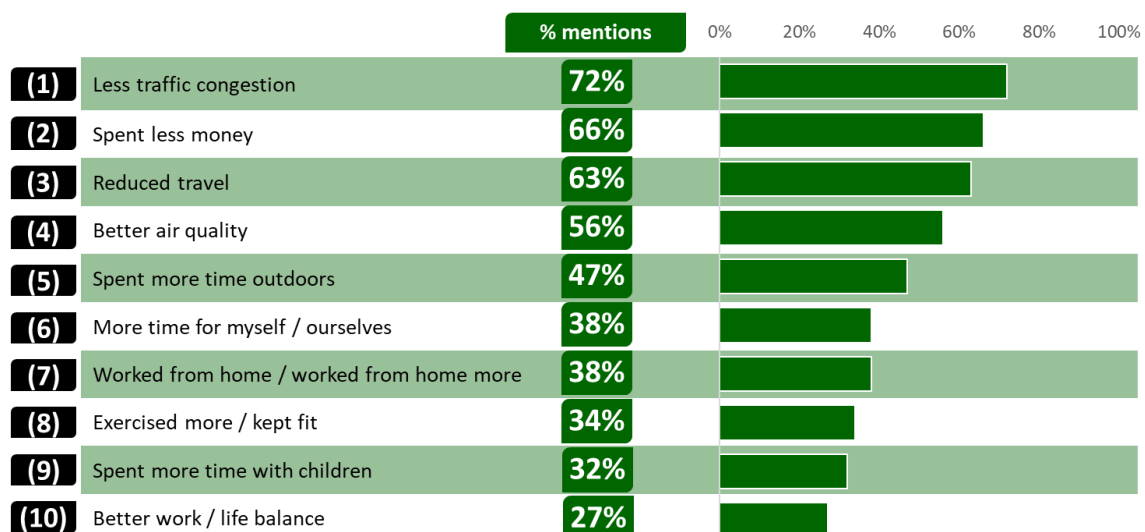
1. Residents have a renewed appreciation for being outdoors and access to green spaces has helped to support a sense of wellbeing

The ethnographic research found that most individuals accessed and appreciated the outdoors more as a result of Covid-19. Many mentioned discovering new cycle routes or places to walk, and one resident explained that, having spent so much time at home over lockdown, “you learn to appreciate the nature of what’s on your doorstep that you just weren’t aware of”. This resident says he has continued to go for an hour walk in his local area every day, even as restrictions have eased, due to his increased awareness of the environment around him. Those living close to the airports also noticed an increase in wildlife, one resident saying that “the wildlife came alive when Gatwick closed”, further adding to their appreciation of their local environment.

These findings are supported by the survey which found that over 50% of residents say that less traffic congestion, reduced travel and better air quality are all positive changes which have come out of lockdown. Nearly half of those surveyed stated that spending more time outdoors was another positive change. These findings were consistent across all demographic groups and show that, not only is there a greater use of outdoors spaces by Surrey residents, but that there is also a greater appreciation for these areas.

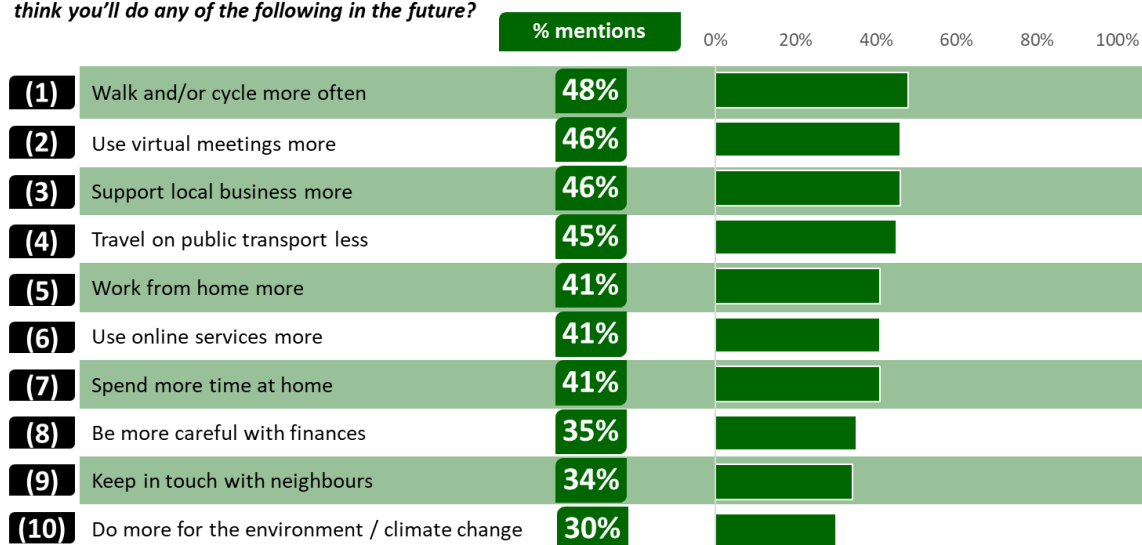
All findings suggested that access to green spaces is crucial for wellbeing. Many residents expressed that in the height of lockdown, their hour of exercise outside was the highlight of their day. Nearly half of surveyed residents believe that they’ll walk and/or cycle more often in the future as a result of Covid-19, and 30% said they will do more for the environment and climate change demonstrating that there is an appetite for innovation in this area. Environmental initiatives are therefore likely to be well-received at this time due to the heightened appreciation and use of the outdoors and natural environment.

What positive changes, if any, have come out of the current situation during lockdown for you and your family?



Base: all answering (2,118)

Do you think the *experience of the coronavirus crisis has changed the way you think about the future and if so, do you think you'll do any of the following in the future?*



Base: all answering (2,004)

Environment - Opportunities for Action

1. Continue the investment and focus on our Greener Futures Strategy to reduce carbon emissions in Surrey and promote sustainability.
2. Continue to develop countryside sites to increase accessibility, conserve and protect biodiversity, and work towards making it financially sustainable.
3. Act quickly to capitalise on increased appetite for walking and cycling through small-scale innovative pilots that promote active travel.
4. Support and encourage walking groups to help reduce isolation and reduce reliance on vehicle transport at local level, especially for older people.