

## **LYDNEY CONSULTATION: INVITED STAKEHOLDER DROP-IN EVENT**

An invited stakeholder drop-in event was held at the Lydney Community Hall, on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2022 between 3-7pm.

The session was attended and facilitated by Vaughan Thompson and James Essery from Place Studio, along with a number of Town Councillors.

Prior to the event, Lydney Town Council sent email invites to known stakeholders.

The event was an informal drop-in session to launch the Neighbourhood Plan Review Process, allowing attendees to stay / engage as appropriate for them. It was structured around 6 key 'Stations' for attendees to move around, set up as follows:

- Welcome and introduction
- Updating Plan Priorities
- What should be treasured and protected in Lydney?
- What needs attention and/or improving?
- Next Steps
- Get Involved

Copies of the display boards and material from the event are available on request.

There were around 20 attendees at the event.

The following pages will show the verbatim responses from the engagement event.

### **Station One: Welcome and Introduction**

The welcome and introduction station provided attendees with a short introduction to the Lydney Neighbourhood Plan and process of a neighbourhood plan review. This station also included a sign in sheet.

### **Station Two: Updating Plan Priorities**

Station two contained a number of tables that separated the existing Neighbourhood Plan priorities into their relevant topic areas and asked attendees to mark three priorities that were the most important to them going forward into the new plan period. Included alongside this were some new priorities developed from the town centre initiative Lydney Forward which was run throughout summer 2021 (a full report and summary of the Lydney Forward initiative is available from Lydney Town Council). In addition to this were some new topic areas and themes were developed from wider contextual changes both at the district and national level that have occurred since the first Neighbourhood Plan was drafted.

Attendees were also given the opportunity to add any priorities which they felt were important but not represented in Neighbourhood Plan 1.

This enables us to understand which priorities are still relevant to the local community. The process also contributes to developing an understanding of which objectives were successful and which need further attention. The tables are shown below.

## 2.1 Environment and Heritage

<b>Existing Neighbourhood Plan Priorities</b>	<b>Tick your Top 3 priorities for environment and heritage</b>
Protecting Lydney's distinct character and heritage	9
Ensuring Lydney's growth does not merge with neighbouring villages	0
Protection and enhancement of Lydney's local built heritage	2
Protecting and enhancing Lydney's habitats and biodiversity	4
Enhancement of the River Lyd green corridor for local wildlife, biodiversity and community leisure	10
Creating green walking, cycling and wildlife corridors	2
Ensuring new development does not make local flood issues worse	6
Protecting the biodiversity and environment of the River Severn	4

## 2.2 Living in Lydney (Housing)

<b>Existing Neighbourhood Plan Priorities</b>	<b>Tick your Top 3 priorities for Living in Lydney (Housing)</b>
Meeting the housing needs for Lydney's older and disabled people	5
Affordable homes for local people	7
Balancing housing growth with community facilities	11

Creating mixed use neighbourhoods with employment space	6
Ensuring new residential developments are in keeping with the character of their surroundings	1
Ensuring new homes are energy efficiency and contribute to carbon zero ambitions	5
New homes development should be served by a superfast Broadband	1
<b>Add anything missing below</b>	
Infrastructure is the most important thing	1

### 2.3 Lydney Community, Health, Wellbeing and Education

<b>Existing Neighbourhood Plan Priorities</b>	<b>Tick your Top 3 priorities for Lydney Community, Health, Wellbeing and Education</b>
Improving community healthcare and wellbeing facilities	10
Building a Lydney Health and Wellbeing Hub	5
Increasing primary and secondary school place capacity	6
Protecting and improving Lydney's open spaces and recreational areas	7
Providing post-16 education and training in Lydney	9
Identifying additional land for use for burials and interments	3

### 2.4 Working in Lydney

<b>Existing Neighbourhood Plan Priorities</b>	<b>Tick your Top 3 priorities for Working in Lydney</b>
Protecting Lydney's existing employment spaces	7
Increased employment opportunities in line with population growth	12

Supporting entrepreneurs with start up space	10
Improving access to Lydney Harbour Industrial Estate	4
Creating a new Lydney co-working and business support hub	5

## 2.5 Getting Around

Existing Neighbourhood Plan Priorities	Tick your Top 3 priorities for Getting Around
Development layout to ensure safety for all highway users flow of traffic within the proposal itself and within the wider highway network.	5
Developments to integrate with the surrounding highway and minimise congestion.	6
Protection and improvement of Lydney's public rights of way network	4
Promoting health and wellbeing with safe and green cycle and walking routes	4
Ensuring Lydney's communities are connected to public transport	5
Making public transport accessible for everyone	8
Improving Lydney bus station	1
Improving connections to Lydney railway station	5
Supporting Lydney's heritage railway	0

## 2.6 Lydney Forward

This station also included a brief summary of the Lydney Forward initiative

Existing Neighbourhood Plan Priorities	Tick your Top 3 priorities for Lydney Town Centre
Protection of existing town centre shops and services	3

Improving the town centre shopping offer	8
Protecting and conserving town centre heritage	0
Supporting Lydney's evening economy	6
Enhancing town centre shopfronts and building quality	3
Reducing traffic and pollution	7
Improving town centre public realm and safety	1
Improving links to the River Lyd and Bathurst Park	2
A new town centre space	7
More town centre greenery	3

## 2.7 Lydney Harbour

<b>Existing Neighbourhood Plan Priorities</b>	<b>Tick your Top 3 priorities for Lydney Harbour</b>
Protection and enhancement of Lydney Harbours special heritage and character	12
Protection of harbour and River Severn wildlife and biodiversity	6
Enhancing harbour tourist and visitor economy	11
Promoting harbour area employment	10
<b>Add anything missing below</b>	
Get rid of illegally sited caravans	1
Move boats that are abandoned	1

## 2.8 New Topics and Themes

<b>Existing Neighbourhood Plan Priorities</b>	<b>Tick your Top 3 new priorities and themes</b>
Climate Change and Achieving Net Zero Carbon	8
Local Green and Renewable Energy Production	10
Impacts of Severn Bridge Toll Removal on Local	3

Housing	
Staycations and Local Tourism	7
Electric cars	3
E-bikes and micro-scooters	0
Internet Shopping and High Street Vitality	1
Covid 19 Impacts and town centre recovery	1
Destination Lydney Harbour Regeneration	3

## 2.9 Overall

For the final table in station one participants were asked to choose their top three categories from the above priority topic areas.

Topic areas	Choose your top three
Environment and Heritage	4
Living in Lydney	8
Lydney Community, Health, Wellbeing and Education	5
Working in Lydney	4
Getting Around Lydney	6
Lydney Forward (Town Centre)	5
Lydney Harbour	1

## Station Three and Four: Likes and Dislikes

Station Three and Four asked attendees to look at a large map of Lydney and highlight or note down the things within Lydney that they felt should be either treasured and protected, or needed attention/improvement. Attendees were given the opportunity to fill in their answer on tables provided or by sticking post-it notes onto the map.

The verbatim notes from the tables will be shown here first, then following that the responses in post-it note form will also be shown.

**What are the things that you value most?**

*Lydney's Natural Environment and Open Spaces*

- River Severn
- River Lyd x2
- Bathurst Park x2
- Recreational field inc. Lake
- Pidcocks Canal
- Centurion Road Dog Exercise Area

*Community facilities and places to live in Lydney*

- Health Centres and Hospital

*Places for Working and Shopping*

- Good local shops
- Diverse shops
- Free Parking x2

*Lydney's Connections*

- Railway Station
- Bus Station

**What are the things that we need to work on?**

*Lydney's Natural Environment and Open Spaces*

- River Lyd to Severn - Access and biodiversity
- River walk Lyd to Harbour
- Designation of rewilding areas
- Rodley road etc. area of town (east) - more parking, less overgrown grass!
- Fire engines cannot get down most roads because of cars parked on both sides.

*Community facilities and places to live in Lydney*

- Hospitals
- Health Centres

- No more uncontrolled development
- More allotments, community orchards and planting

#### *Places for Working and Shopping*

- Investment in Lydney Town Centre shops etc.
- Pine End Works
- JD Norman site near Oakdale (mcdonalds or kfc)
- Leisure
- Tourism
- Shopping
- Affordable premises for startup and community businesses

#### *Lydney's Connections*

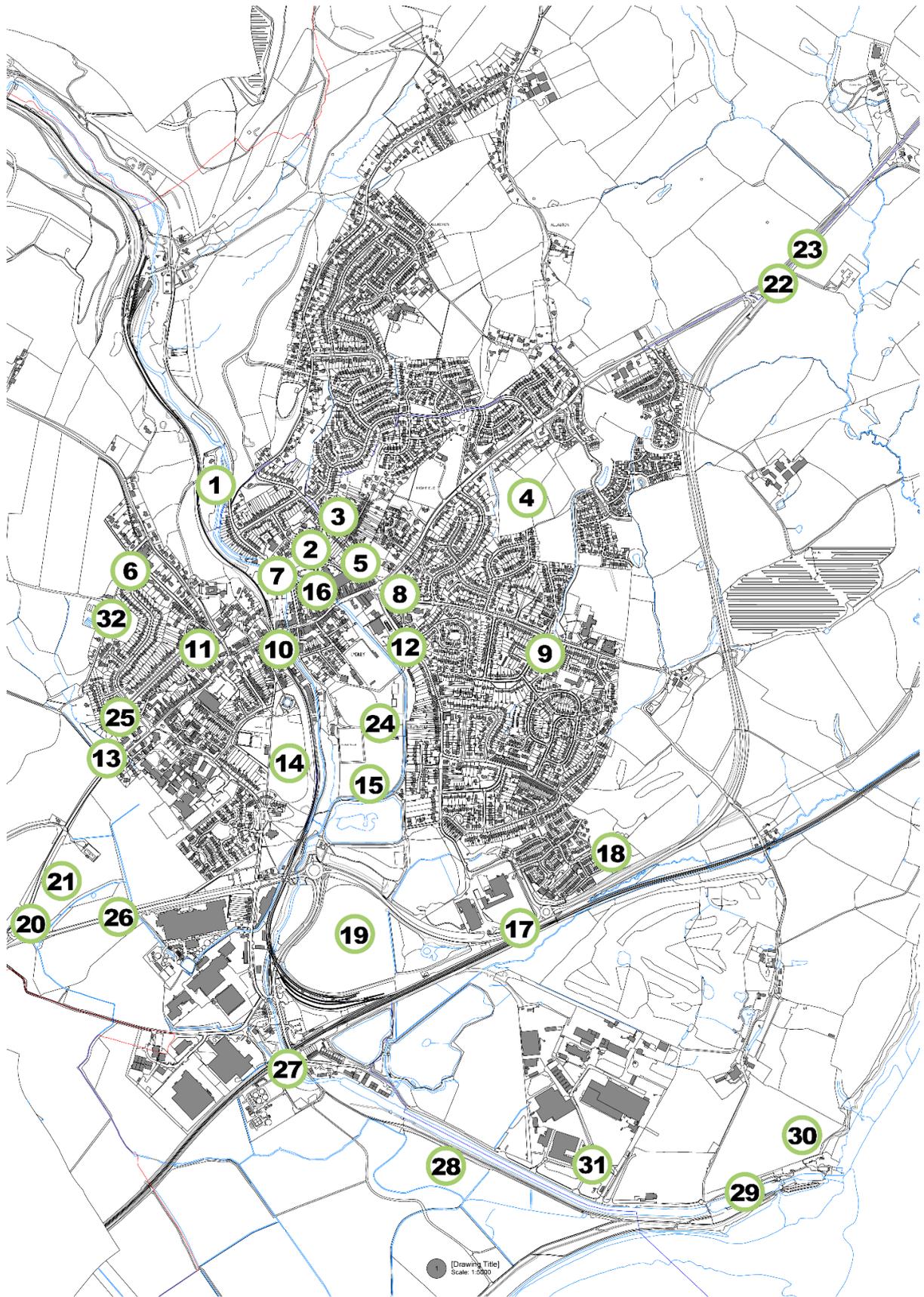
- More connections at Lydney Railway Station
- Transport hub - integrating bus/train/cycle/ev charging/connections to Lydney and The Forest
- 20mph speed limit
- Cycle Lanes
- Too much traffic!
- Taxi rank

#### **Map based post it notes verbatim:**

Below is a list of verbatim responses received in post-it note form on the map at station three and four. The task for this stage was to identify things that are valued in Lydney and things that need improvement. Throughout the exercise many attendees also used this map as an opportunity to express some of their ideas for improvement to the town. Each answer below has a number which corresponds to a number on the map on the following page.

1. Baptist Chapel empty and at risk
2. Newerne Street overflow car park - opportunity to develop?
3. Car Parking Survey
4. Town Centre - Upper floor uses - Explore
5. McDonalds at doctors surgery
6. Car Park at rear of Cavendish Building - opportunity to develop?
7. Co-Op entrance diverted to rear of car park to forest road. Pedestrianise front and more plants and trees
8. Sevenbanks surgery to be developed as old peoples living

9. Eliminate unkempt grass areas and replace with parking. Ambulances unable to drive down most roads.
10. Move fire station out on bypass and sell current location to waitrose
11. Move ambulance depot to bypass and replace with 6th form centre
12. Line of riverside restaurants
13. Traffic calming on high street like a french village street - to high pollution
14. Sensory area in bathurst park
15. Cafe, toilets and wine bar at the lake
16. Purchase Newerne street car park from F.O.D.D.C.
17. New vertical farm is a huge asset
18. Oakdale needs increased access to town and better facilities at lake to support it, cafe restaurant etc.
19. Potential for nature reserve
20. Park and Ride at Taurus Crafts
21. Valued Facilities Taurus Crafts, Bathurst Lido, Leisure Centre
22. Town Gateway
23. Traffic lights at junction too fast
24. Protect and enhance park
25. Employment possibilities at police station
26. Increased burial spaces
27. New path and cycleway link to harbour
28. New road / path on industrial site, watersports on Lyd, increase tourism
29. Car parking problems
30. Protect field from development - public footpath, views, historic setting
31. Smokery development is huge asset (£50m investment)
32. Potential site - withdrawn planning app



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## **Station Five: Next Steps**

Station five contained a brief explanation of what would be happening next with the neighbourhood plan review. The station had information about the context within which the Neighbourhood Plan is being developed for example the Forest of Dean District Local Plan Review that will be taking place alongside the Neighbourhood Plan. It also contained information about the formation of a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and next steps that the town council will be undertaking.

## **Station Six: Get Involved**

Station six thanked the attendees for their time and provided attendees with an opportunity to express interest to be on the steering group or one of the topic groups helping to progress the evidence building and plan drafting.

## **Summary of Feedback**

### ***Environment and Heritage***

Top three priorities:

1. Enhancement of the River Lyd green corridor for local wildlife, biodiversity and community leisure
2. Protecting Lydney's distinct character and heritage
3. Ensuring new development does not make local flood issues worse

There was strong support within the Environment and Heritage category for protecting The River Lyd and its related green and blue infrastructure. Discussion on the day revealed that many felt that the river was an underutilised asset within the town and as evidenced by the voting results there is a strong desire to enhance the Lyd's green corridor and surrounding areas. Results from stations three and four also identified the River Lyd corridor as underutilised with several comments highlighting a desire to see the river made more accessible. Suggestions included a river walk and areas of rewilding to improve biodiversity.

Lydney's distinct character and heritage were also identified as important to the workshop attendees. Voting at station two identified this as the second most important priority. Lydney has seen significant growth in recent years with more housing development to come. Concern that this could erode the character of the town was common amongst the attendees. Comments from stations three and four also identified that there was a sense that recent development had been uncontrolled to the detriment of local character.

Lydney has been subject to several incidents of flooding in recent years and this is reflected in the voting results from station two. It is clear that attendees felt that new development should take care to avoid exacerbating the issue.

## ***Living in Lydney***

Top three priorities:

1. Balancing housing growth with community facilities
2. Affordable homes for local people
3. Creating mixed use neighbourhoods with employment space

Within the “*Living in Lydney*” category there was a clear concern that Lydney’s housing growth was outpacing the capacity of local facilities and infrastructure. This was echoed across the various stations and throughout discussion on the day. When viewing the top three priorities in this category, the results present a clear picture that the attendees felt it is important to ensure housing is delivered alongside employment and facilities to support it. The results also show that a lack of affordability risks fragmenting the local community and there is a clear desire to avoid this.

The sentiment is summed up well by a post-it note left on the “*living in Lydney*” station 2 board simply stating “*when it comes to housing, infrastructure is the most important thing*”.

## ***Lydney Community, Health, Wellbeing and Education***

Top three priorities:

1. Improving community healthcare and wellbeing facilities
2. Providing post-16 education and training in Lydney
3. Protecting and improving Lydney’s open spaces and recreational areas

In line with the conclusions of the “*Living in Lydney*” section of this report it is clear from the results of the “*Lydney Community, Health, Wellbeing and Education*” section that infrastructure and community facilities within Lydney are very important to the respondents. Improving healthcare and wellbeing facilities in Lydney is the top voted priority at station two with the health centres and hospital also being identified as both the most valued facilities and also the facilities that needed to be worked on at stations three and four.

“*Providing post-16 education and training*” is the second most popular priority and one respondent went so far as to identify a potential site for this on the map at station four.

“*Protecting and improving Lydney’s open spaces and recreational areas*” is the third most important priority within this topic area and this is also reflected within the later station three responses, Bathurst Park and the recreational fields are mentioned specifically many times as the most valued open spaces to respondents. Protection and enhancement of these spaces was also highlighted by post-it notes on the large map during the event.

## ***Working in Lydney***

Top three priorities:

1. Increased employment opportunities in line with population growth
2. Supporting entrepreneurs with start-up space
3. Protecting Lydney's existing employment spaces

The “*Working in Lydney*” table from station two showed that there was a desire amongst respondents to balance new housing growth with the necessary supporting employment opportunities. This echoes the previous sections of this report that shows there is a desire for Lydney's employment and infrastructure to grow at a pace that matches the growth of housing development in the area. Within the map element of stations three and four some attendees identified potential locations for employment development.

“*Supporting entrepreneurs with start-up space*” is a priority that was also identified during the Lydney Forward consultation stages in 2021. The desire for affordable business premises was also identified within the station 3 and 4 tables with the lack of affordable business premises noted as one of the issues that need work.

### ***Getting Around***

Top three priorities:

1. Making public transport accessible for everyone
2. Developments to integrate with the surrounding highway and minimise congestion

There were 3 priorities that were tied for 3<sup>rd</sup> place within the getting around category and they are as follows:

- Improving connections to Lydney railway station
- Ensuring Lydney's communities are connected to public transport
- Development layout to ensure safety for all highway users flow of traffic within the proposal itself and within the wider highway network.

With regards to “*Getting Around*” votes across the board were fairly even. Making public transport accessible to everyone was voted to be the most important but this was by a slim margin and many of the other priorities also received a lot of votes, this can be seen in the three way tie for the third most important priority. This highlights a general dissatisfaction with getting around in Lydney with a number of issues requiring resolution.

Within the responses the most important priorities were focussed around two main themes. Ensuring public transport is available and accessible to everyone is clearly the most important priority for respondents to this engagement. Access to rail and bus services is highlighted as important priorities and responses to stations 3 and 4 also highlighted the rail and bus services as cherished assets with potential for enhancement.

Traffic issues are identified as the other main theme in the responses and this

echoes past engagement. It can be seen here that there is a desire to avoid exacerbating this by ensuring developments are well integrated into the wider road network.

### ***Lydney Forward***

Top three priorities:

1. Improving the town centre shopping offer
2. A new town centre space
3. Reducing traffic and pollution

The Lydney Forward objectives were drawn from the 2021 town centre initiative and focus on ways to improve and revitalise the town centre in the face of COVID-19 recovery and the wider trend of declining high streets. There is a strong desire within Lydney to improve the town centre shopping offer and to create a town centre that people want to visit and spend time in.

This is reflected within the results of the station two votes which show a desire to improve the town centre public realm experience by firstly giving the local community a space to meet and hold events and secondly by improving the environment through a reduction in traffic and improved air quality.

### ***Lydney Harbour***

Top three priorities:

1. Protection and enhancement of Lydney Harbour's special heritage and character
2. Enhancing harbour tourist and visitor economy
3. Promoting harbour area employment

Results from the station two voting show a strong support of protecting and enhancing the Harbour and its special heritage and character, while enhancing the visitor and tourism offer. It is also recognised that the harbour has a key role to play in the employment opportunities within the local area.

### ***New Topics and Themes***

Top three priorities:

1. Local Green and Renewable Energy Production
2. Climate Change and Achieving Net Zero Carbon
3. Staycations and Local Tourism

New topics and themes cover issues that have arisen or become more prominent in the years since the previous neighbourhood plan was made. A variety of different areas were included within this topic area and it is clear from the votes received that climate and carbon zero Lydney is a very important priority for the respondents.

There is a clear support for local renewables and an appetite to explore ways to reduce Lydney's carbon emissions.

Tourism and staycations are recognised as another area in which Lydney has potential to enhance and co-ordinate its offer. It is clear that Lydney has much to offer in these areas, the harbour, Taurus crafts and Dean Forest Railway are just a few local facilities that create a draw for tourists. As is mentioned in the current neighbourhood plan there remains a desire to bolster this with improved evening activities.

### **Overall**

The final table for station two asked attendees to choose their top three most important topic areas. The top three were:

1. Living in Lydney
2. Getting Around Lydney

There were two topic areas tied for third most important as follows:

- Lydney Community, Health, Wellbeing and Education
- Lydney Forward (Town Centre)

These results from this launch consultation show a range of priorities that are supported by attendees with a number of topic areas receiving strong support. Top priorities for attendees were primarily focussed around ensuring delivery of the appropriate infrastructure and employment to support the recently and soon to be delivered housing.

Results also show strong support for delivering an improved town centre experience that is welcoming and accessible to all. With a clear focus on delivering reductions in car usage and improvements to Lydney's carbon footprint.