



Local Climate Pacts: A youth-inclusive green future for Sunderland

Sunderland, United Kingdom



EGS inaugural meeting, October 2021 - © Elliott Nichol for Sunderland City Council

IN A NUTSHELL

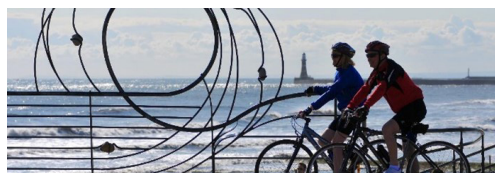
Sunderland has brought city partners together to cooperate in reaching the city's jointly agreed Carbon Neutrality goals and implement the city-wide Low Carbon Framework. The 2030 Shadow Board brings together senior representatives from partners of all sectors across Sunderland as well as representatives from the city's youth climate forum, the Environmental, Green and Sustainable (EGS) Group.

Why a local climate pact?

The path towards building a more sustainable Sunderland has been prioritised for many years. In November 2008, the city signed the Eurocities Declaration on Climate Change, and four months later the European Covenant of Mayors. In 2019, Sunderland significantly increased its commitment and ambitions towards reaching Carbon neutrality. The city declared a climate emergency in March 2019, and committed to reduce city-wide emissions to help the global temperature rise stay below 2.0°C. In November 2019, children and young people identified the tackling of the climate crisis as their top priority at the "Young People's State of the City Debate". Over 10,000 votes were cast.

Following this declaration, the city of Sunderland set up a partnership-wide 2030 Shadow Board, chaired by the Leader of the Council, with representatives from 14 different partner organisations, local entities and councillors representing each of the political groups. Their aim is to ensure a coordinated and strategic approach to cutting carbon across the city. In December 2020, the City Board adopted the Sunderland Low Carbon Framework. It focuses its activities around seven strategic priorities, five of which are thematic areas: the built environment, low-carbon energy generation and storage, low-carbon and active transport, consumption and waste and the green economy. In addition, one of the most important and transversal aspects of this framework is the pivotal role of citizens in supporting the transition – this is why the first strategic priority is 'Our Behaviour'.

SUNDERLAND



Cycling at Seaburn Promenade. © Sunderland City Council 2014.

Population: 280,600	Area: 139 km ²
Signatory to the Covenant of Mayors since: 14/01/2009	Covenant of Mayors GHG emission reduction: 29% by 2030 Carbon neutrality by 2040

Getting to know the main actors of the sunderland 2030 shadow board

The city has a long track record of partnerships via its longstanding Sunderland Partnership. When it comes to climate, the city is following the same approach. As stated in Sunderland's Low Carbon Framework, "no individual or organisation can deliver the city's carbon neutral commitment alone".

The 2030 Shadow Board members meet quarterly to drive forward work, review data, share individual partner actions, exchange examples of good practice, discuss areas of collaboration and develop and agree on future plans. Each partner organisation and all Shadow Board members have committed to developing and publishing their own Low Carbon Action Plans. These set out how and when these actors will decarbonise their individual operations.

Creating youth ownership

The Low Carbon Framework puts people at the centre. It aims to change behaviour and reshape organisational practices, and has set out five thematic work areas to take forward. To this end, the City Council has drafted a Low Carbon Engagement Plan which outlines the need to create Low Carbon solutions to maximise adoption rates. The Engagement Plan identifies the principal target groups and the key activities to take on with each of them. The main audiences are: residents, children and young people, the voluntary community sector, employees, local, regional, national and international partners, and businesses. The plan outlines proposed methods of engaging with each group individually to involve them in decision-making and support them in taking action to limit climate change.

Sunderland understands that the actions they undertake now will have an impact on the next generation. This is why the city has launched dedicated engagement activities with children and young people, from school projects to specially developed local sustainability resources. Environment champions are also being recognised in the city-wide Young Achievers' Awards for Low Carbon activities at youth events.

One key activity the city has developed to enable children and young people to feed into Low Carbon decision-making was the founding by the Shadow Board partners of the EGS Group (Environmental, Green and Sustainable). EGS brings together children and young people from all over the city. These representatives from primary, secondary and special schools, together with the Sunderland Youth Council, young people's minority forums, Sunderland College and the University of Sunderland have taken on the role of representing their peers and setting up an agenda for action.

They have taken forward discussions on local food and community growing as well as on rewilding and tree planting. In the past few months they have worked on single-use packaging, beach cleaning and rubbish collection monitoring in conjunction with the Marine Preservation Society. EGS members are supported to discuss and feed into the city's plans, including sending rotating representatives to sit on the 2030 Shadow Board itself, where they participate fully in every meeting and feed back to their peers.

Although Sunderland exceeded its interim recommended target of a 16.1% reduction of GHG emissions between 2015 and 2020 and is on track to meet its first interim 5-year carbon budget of 5.8 MtCO₂ for 2018–2022 (aligned with the carbon budget of 8.2 MtCO₂ for 2020–2100), the city still has a long way to go.

KEY FIGURES

2030 Shadow Board established in 2019

14 different organisations represented on the 2030 Shadow Board

Low Carbon Framework created by 2030 Shadow Board in December 2020

7 priorities presented in Low Carbon Framework

16.1% GHG emissions reduction target (2015–2020) exceeded

First CDP disclosure 2021, grade A rating (and subsequent A grades in 2022 and 2023).



FINANCING THE PROJECT

+ Contributions from Sunderland Partnership member organisations

USEFUL LINKS

- » www.mysunderland.co.uk/lowcarbon
- » https://www.sunderland.gov.uk/media/22959/Sunderland-Low-Carbon-Framework/pdf/Sunderland_Low_Carbon_Framework1.pdf?m=637461416504170000
- » <https://www.mysunderland.co.uk/article/20627/Environmental-Green-and-Sustainable-Group>



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