

## **Sunderland Adaptation Action Plan 2026-28**

The city's most recent Low Carbon Annual Report (Oct 2025), made clear the extent of the challenge to achieve the two current science-based targets which cover overall carbon emission reductions across the city. While Sunderland City Council continues to strive towards achieving those ambitious targets of being carbon neutral by 2030 (for the Council) and 2040 (across the city), the effects of climate change are already being experienced by residents across the city, effects which are expected to increase in future years. The Council has therefore recognised the need to adapt to these climate changes in parallel to the ongoing commitment to reduce carbon emissions.

The Met Office has produced a Climate Report for Sunderland which can be found here: [Local Authority Climate Report | Sunderland | Report Builder for ArcGIS](#).

Climate adaptation involves making purposeful and planned changes to lessen vulnerability and boost resilience to shifting conditions. The Council's role, alongside city partners is to ensure that communities are resilient to climate change impacts (extreme weather events), that the local economy is resilient to any consequences of these impacts and that the environment and our energy sources are protected.

Sunderland's Climate Change Risk Assessment was developed using the [Third Climate Change Risk Assessment \(CCRA3\)](#), and the [Third National Adaptation Programme \(NAP\)](#) (published in 2023).

[CCRA3](#) assessed 61 risks, which are grouped into 5 themes:

- Natural Environment and Assets
- Infrastructure
- Health, Communities and the Built Environment
- Business and Industry
- International Dimensions

Of these risks, 44 are relevant to Sunderland.

This action plan aligns with Strategic Priority 2 of the city-wide Low Carbon Framework relating to organisational policies and practices and includes a number of actions which have been in delivery for some time alongside new and emerging actions related to access to external funding and national policy. It reflects the need for the Council and its partners to ensure that Sunderland is prepared for, and able to respond to, the changing climate and minimise negative impacts on communities across the city. Existing actions include delivery of the Nature Towns and Cities programme funding through the Connecting through Nature project. This action plan now summarises actions expected to be taken forward during 2026-2028 and will be reviewed annually in line with the Low Carbon Annual Report cycle covering progress in relation to both adaptation and mitigation.

The plan also includes a recommended action to engage on an ongoing basis with residents and stakeholders. to identify and understand more fully specific issues faced by residents (and businesses) in their local communities and neighbourhoods and enable approaches to be co-designed with local communities wherever appropriate. This approach is understood to have worked well in other areas of the UK.

The delivery of the plan will be coordinated by the Council's Sustainable Regeneration Team, working closely with colleagues across the Council including those with responsibility for Business Continuity, Risk Management, Emergency Planning, and Communications. Progress will be reported annually through the Low Carbon Annual report. Actions will be embedded into Service Plans wherever appropriate, co-ordinated through the Low Carbon Task Group, with partnership engagement already embedded into the work of the Sunderland 2030 Shadow Board which includes cross-party representation and meets quarterly.

Risk Assessment Theme	Climate Adaptation Action
<b>Governance</b>	Maximise external funding sourced to support delivery of adaptation measures required, aligning funding sources and collaborating at regional, city-wide or neighbourhood level as appropriate.
<b>Governance</b>	Review the 4th Climate Change Risk Assessment when issued (May 2026 onwards) to consider the risks relevant to Sunderland, ensure these are clearly understood, and identify necessary adaptation measures as appropriate.

<b>Governance</b>	Collate information on an ongoing basis on interventions and projects (in development and in delivery) that are focused on climate adaptation or mitigation (or a combination of both) to ensure outcomes and impact for the city and its residents are maximised.
<b>Governance</b>	Include impacts of climate change in Corporate Risk Register, Business Continuity Planning, and as appropriate within annual service planning arrangements.
<b>Infrastructure and partnerships</b>	Establish the most effective mechanism to share data in relation to impacts on critical infrastructure (including power and water) to ensure all partners are able to understand the impacts of cascading failures and improving collective efforts to support vulnerable communities.
<b>Natural Environment and Assets</b>	Deliver the Connecting Through Nature programme and build in opportunities to ensure green infrastructure provides shading and cooling for buildings and open spaces, supports flood reduction, protects walking and cycling routes, and provides increased opportunities for community food growing wherever appropriate.
<b>Natural Environment and Assets</b>	Assess the resilience of natural capital assets and identify protection strategies for implementation.
<b>Natural Environment and Assets</b>	Identify priority locations for nature-based adaptation interventions including through the Connecting through Nature programme in the context of the city's Local Plan and regional Spatial Development Strategy.
<b>Natural Environment and Assets</b>	Continue to work in partnership with the NE Community Forest on implementing funded tree planting schemes across the city in line with the NECF 5-year Delivery Plan in a strategic and co-ordinated way, identifying priority areas for planting, building in opportunities to deliver shade and cooling effects, flood reduction and improved slope stability of high-risk areas, and ensuring selection of tree species and planting schemes consider future climate appropriately.

<b>Health, Communities and the Built Environment</b>	<p>Continue to assess impacts from weather events and future climate risks in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, with a specific focus on how climate change may widen existing health inequalities. This includes identifying populations and neighbourhoods most vulnerable to heat, flooding, poor air quality and service disruption and targeting appropriate interventions including through the emerging Neighbourhood Health Plan.</p>
<b>Health, Communities and the Built Environment</b>	<p>Identify the most effective approach to equip residents and caregivers for vulnerable individuals with accessible, relevant and timely information, advice and guidance on how to prepare for and respond to an extreme weather event, including mechanisms to support and prioritise vulnerable residents during such events (storms, floods, heatwaves).</p>
<b>Health, Communities and the Built Environment</b>	<p>Ensure the city is able to provide refuge for residents affected by flooding and extreme weather events as part of its Emergency Preparedness approach, and consider the provision of cooling shelters / spaces in the event of a heatwave in addition to existing warm spaces provision.</p>
<b>Health, Communities and the Built Environment</b>	<p>Consider appropriate evidence in development of the new Local Plan in relation to adaptation, for example, the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating from rising temperatures.</p>
<b>Health, Communities and the Built Environment</b>	<p>Ensure all healthcare settings are aware of the Heatwave Plan for England, with particular emphasis on protecting those at greatest risk of heat-related harm, including older people, people with long-term conditions, residents in institutional or supported living settings, and those receiving care at home.</p>
<b>Health, Communities and the Built Environment</b>	<p>Support schools which opt to engage with adaptation, through the Low Carbon School Charter, to complete a climate change risk assessment and develop a school climate adaptation plan, with specific targets, tasks and roles as appropriate.</p>

<b>Health, Communities and the Built Environment</b>	Review adaptation planning in line with Shoreline Management Plan delivery.
<b>Business and Industry</b>	Provide businesses with information on climate risks and adaptation measures via the Green Business Toolkit.
<b>Business and Industry</b>	Work with businesses where appropriate to assist them in developing their climate adaptation approach or plans, including via the Green Business Network.
<b>Business and Industry</b>	Ensure as many businesses as possible, especially those in flood vulnerable areas, sign up to the EA flood warnings service.