

# Sustaining Dunbar, '2025' project: People do want to make change

## Abstract

Sustaining Dunbar is a Community Development Trust and Transition Initiative covering the Dunbar and East Linton Ward of East Lothian. This area includes 5000+ households with a population of about 12,000.

Sustaining Dunbar's '2025' project is a two year programme of action research and community engagement to create a local action plan to bring about the structural changes in the local economy which will be needed to build a low carbon, locally resilient future.

Given the need to face up to the challenges of Climate Change and Peak Oil, the project is asking the questions:

- How would you like this locality to look in 15 years time?
- How will we get there?

The project is founded on the premise that we are all, individually, collectively and as a nation, stuck in patterns of behaviour which depend on cheap and abundant fossil fuels and that, in order to change such patterns of behaviour, four things are necessary:

1. A desire to change i.e. some dissatisfaction with the status quo
2. A vision of how things could be different
3. A clear action plan for the first steps which need to be taken to achieve this vision of a different future
4. Trust in whoever has designed these first steps -i.e. for people to take up the steps in the action plan, they themselves, or people in their peer group, need to have been involved in designing the plan

As a means of engagement and to ensure that any future vision is based on local realities, the project aims are being achieved through a community mapping process which aims to gain a clear understanding of the natural and human resources available in this locality, of the way in which resources currently flow through the area and of how the locality has changed over time. An understanding of how the area has come to be the way it is, not only helps to inform the future vision but also gives the opportunity to learn from a more localised recent past.

A series of awareness raising events and workshops have been followed by community mapping and consultation exercises involving local schools and community groups, door to door surveys and interviews with farmers and businesses. Community mapping will continue and will gradually blend into consultation on a draft vision map over the spring and summer 2010. More detailed visions for future food supply, energy, transport, enterprise and other topics will follow. Once it is clear where we would like to be as a community in 2025, action plans with clear timelines and milestones will be prepared over the winter of 2010/11. The process is attempting to tie into the East Lothian Community Planning process, including the development of the East Lothian Environment Strategy.

Interestingly, the process is showing that most people do already wish to make many of the lifestyle choices and behaviour changes which would lead to a low carbon future, such as purchasing locally grown food, making their homes more energy efficient, walking, cycling and using public transport more -but are facing real (and perceived) barriers to change. Many of these barriers are common across all topic areas and include:

**Cost** (e.g. of energy efficiency measures and energy generation alternatives, of local food and of public transportation, of land for food growing) **Availability** (e.g. of joiners to do draught proofing, of local food, of joined up public transport, of local employment opportunities) **Lack of time** (e.g. to organise getting energy efficiency measures installed, to source local food, to use public transport -because it takes too long and isn't integrated or regular enough) **Lack of ownership** (e.g. of homes -so making energy efficiency measures dependent upon landlords-, of land for food growing or allotments or for community renewable energy projects) **Planning regulations** (e.g. limitations on what the planners will allow in conservation areas in terms of household energy efficiency measures and micro-renewables, lack of suitable planning policies to allow and enable community owned wind turbines, restrictive land use policies in the local plan) .

Whilst awareness of climate change is already high, it is not a particularly strong driver in behaviour change because it is seen as such a large and scary issue that it seems beyond most people's individual control. Awareness of Peak Oil is much lower but is likely to be a much more potent driver in encouraging behaviour change as people can relate to the idea of needing to use less oil year on year and to start thinking about the consequent lifestyle changes required. Most people feel that there is a need for more information about the **local** implications of peak oil and climate change.

The biggest barrier to behaviour change however is the fact that we are all currently locked into a global economic system which depends on unsustainable economic growth for its stability. Most people are recording that things such as family, friends and the quality of the local environment are much more important to their sense of wellbeing than income and material consumption. The '2025' action plan will need to include the creation of a different sort of local economy which provides for local needs whilst enhancing local biodiversity and natural capital.

## Sustaining Dunbar

### Connecting Dunbar, Sustainable Travel Project

#### Abstract

Sustaining Dunbar is a Community Development Trust and Transition Initiative covering the Dunbar and East Linton Ward of East Lothian. This area includes 5000+ households with a population of about 12,000.

Sustaining Dunbar has a very active Transport Group. Over the past few years, members of the group have been instrumental in creating the situation where 95% of Dunbar's nine hundred primary and nursery school pupils now cycle or walk to school.

This has been achieved by a series of measures and actions including:

- Provision of much increased, safe and secure cycle parking
- Competitions such as 'Bling your Bike'
- Walk to School week class competitions
- Introduction of Junoir Road Safety Officers
- Cycle events in town and school
- Introduction of cycling proficiency training and 'Dr. Bike' visits
- 'Get walking' and 'step to it' pedometer events
- Initiatives such as eco-schools, Green Flag schools and Cycle Friendly schools
- Pelican and Toucan crossings on main routes near school

Now, the transport group has launched the 'Connecting Dunbar' project with funding from the Climate Challenge Fund.

This project has two main threads.

1. A programme of surveys to identify current travel patterns and behaviour, particularly with regard to short journeys of less than 5 miles. Barriers to more active travel and use of public transport will also be mapped and used to lobby local and national government, bus and train operators. The programme of surveys, which is due to begin in May, will include:- Map based **household** surveys which will provide information about the household's travel behaviour and problems with current sustainable travel options. **Employer** travel surveys to help local businesses set up green travel plans. **Shopping** surveys to highlight travel problems with shopping in town which can be used to help local High Streets become more attractive shopping destinations. Travel to **school** surveys building on the national "Walk to School" initiative.
2. Preparation of route maps for cyclists, pedestrians and public transport users showing existing routes and timetables. The maps will be published and distributed locally in order to encourage the use of these forms of transport. Interactive web-based maps and timetables will also be introduced through the organisation's community mapping project. Information gathered from the surveys above will also enable aspirational route maps to be produced which will enable meaningful input into the planning process and bring forward a sustainable transport network in and around Dunbar which will benefit all.

Community involvement is vital in this project. Good working relationships are being forged with local government departments, public transport operators, schools, employers and community groups. The surveys will enable local people to have their say and get involved. This is a necessity if travel behaviour is going to change at all.

## **Sustaining Dunbar 'BeGreen' Home Energy Efficiency Project Abstract**

Sustaining Dunbar is a Community Development Trust and Transition Initiative covering the Dunbar and East Linton Ward of East Lothian. This area includes 5000+ households with a population of about 12,000.

Sustaining Dunbar are partners in the BeGreen energy advice project. With an initial focus on domestic energy, the aims of this project are to

- To help people to move out of fuel poverty in the Dunbar Ward;
- To reduce energy consumption by 30%; and,
- To reduce carbon emissions from buildings by 50% over 10 years.

A drop-in energy advice shop was opened in Dunbar in November 2008 and a team of energy auditors (one full time and two part-time) have been employed since April 2009. The project is currently funded by a combination of grants from a local windfarm and the Scottish Climate Challenge Fund. The project has a steering group which includes local councillors and representatives from local schools, community councils and other groups.

This paper will explain the methods used to interview householders, to survey their properties and current energy usage and to encourage energy awareness. The personalised follow up reports and assistance offered will be explained and an initial assessment of the success of the project in changing behaviour and reducing energy consumption will be presented and some of the barriers to change highlighted. The paper will focus in particular on the project's work with one local village where over half the households have been surveyed. The village has been shown to have twice the UK average of carbon emissions from domestic energy and the paper will look at the action which the village is now taking to tackle this issue and to become carbon neutral, including planning the installation of a community owned wind turbine to generate income for carbon cutting measures in their village.

## **Sustaining Dunbar Food Projects Abstract**

Sustaining Dunbar is a Community Development Trust and Transition Initiative covering the Dunbar and East Linton Ward of East Lothian. This area includes 5000+ households with a population of about 12,000.

Food has been a topic of interest to members of Sustaining Dunbar since its inception. The Sustaining Dunbar Food Group has amongst other projects, helped set up Dunbar Allotments Association to progress local provision and management of allotments, has established a community polytunnel project and has spawned Dunbar Community Bakery, a community owned cooperative which is now establishing a bakery and shop on Dunbar High Street. The group has also organised two very successful 'Apple Days' to help revive interest in local apple growing and has plans to establish a community orchard.

With funding from the Scottish Climate Challenge Fund, Sustaining Dunbar's '2025' project is working to build a local vision of a low carbon, locally resilient future. As part of this, over 600 people have been interviewed and have expressed their views about food and their interest in greater availability of locally grown produce.

This paper will explain the results of this community survey and peoples attitudes to local food and will explore the current barriers facing people wishing to source locally grown food. The paper will showcase Dunbar Community Bakery as an example of an innovative community initiative which aims to set up a local supply chain to provide nutritious, wholesome bread products to the local market.