

# SUSTAINABLE VANTAA BELONGS TO EVERYONE

Vantaa's Sustainability Reporting 2023



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Vantaa's Sustainability Reporting 2023

## **vantaa.fi**

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## Greetings from the Mayor

**Vantaa's sustainability work and fight against climate change are part of why our city won the European Rising Innovative City category in the European Commission's European Capital of Innovation (iCapital) Awards in 2021. In the competition, we presented our activities and development work related to carbon neutrality, social innovations and digital solutions. This is a good place from which to continue our journey. Vantaa is one of the five cities in Finland that systematically report their goals to the UN. We have had good experiences, and we encourage others to join in.**



Cities are significant contributors to sustainable development, and their core work is linked to sustainable development goals in many ways. We will not achieve the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) without strong sustainability work by cities and the implementation of the SDGs. Sustainability and the fight against climate change are realised in cities.

In Vantaa, the SDGs have been integrated into the city's strategy in a cross-cutting manner, and their promotion is a shared concern of all departments and units.

Achieving the SDGs requires extensive cooperation both within the city organisation and with many different stakeholders. Together, we can achieve our carbon neutrality target by 2030 and protect biodiversity while increasing the vitality of Vantaa, taking care of the wellbeing of Vantaa residents and reducing and preventing inequality. The task is not easy – it requires commitment and systematic work.

Vantaa's first voluntary local review (VLR) of sustainability was carried out in 2021, and it was decided that the review would be carried out every two years from then on. You are reading the second review, which shows an even stronger connection to the city strategy and strategic themes. Vantaa's sustainability work is being further developed in a more systematic direction, and this review is part of that work.

In recent years, we have faced several crises that have affected the achievement of the SDGs and will continue to affect it for a long time to come, and we must be able to prepare better for any future crises. Vantaa has recovered well from the COVID-19 crisis, but its long-term effects on the wellbeing of young people, for example, will continue to require investments. The war in Ukraine, which started a year ago, brought Ukrainian refugees to Vantaa, and we reacted quickly to their situation. The war has also widely affected people's sense of security in Finland. In 2022, we faced an energy crisis and a rise in food prices. Crisis situations are the

hardest on those who are already in the most vulnerable position, so we must ensure that the needs and situation of all population groups are taken into account as we recover from the present crises and prepare for future ones.

In 2021, Vantaa was selected as Europe's Rising Innovative City for its numerous social innovations and active work towards carbon neutrality. This review includes many examples of new initiatives. However, we need more of them while continuing our long-term work towards the SDGs.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ritva Viljanen'.

**Ritva Viljanen, Mayor**

# CONTENTS

Greetings from the Mayor.....	3
Summary.....	5
Introduction.....	7
Vantaa as a city.....	8
Review implementation and structure.....	10
Cross-cutting themes.....	13
Vantaa builds wellbeing and is socially sustainable.....	19
Vantaa is ecologically sustainable.....	37
Vantaa is vital and brimming with expertise.....	51
Vantaa is international.....	62
Conclusions.....	69



## Summary

Sustainable Vantaa Belongs to Everyone – Vantaa’s Sustainability Reporting 2023 is a voluntary local review (VLR) describing the actions Vantaa takes to promote the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Vantaa works extensively for sustainable development in all departments, and the city is committed to reporting on the progress of the goals every two years.

This review is structured according to the themes of the Vantaa City Strategy. The strategy divides the SDGs under each strategic theme. There are cross-cutting SDGs that should be reflected in all themes. These cross-cutting SDGs are Gender Equality, Climate Action, Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, and Partnerships for the Goals.

Under the themes of ‘Vantaa builds wellbeing’ and ‘Vantaa is socially sustainable’, Vantaa invests in the wellbeing, inclusion and safety of its residents and strives to prevent and reduce inequalities. Vantaa promotes wellbeing extensively and preventively, also now that health and social services have become the responsibility of the wellbeing services county. At the same time, it is important to pay special attention to the groups that are in the most vulnerable position. This work faces challenges caused by the labour shortage and the negative effects of recent crises

on the situation of local residents. Now that the wellbeing services counties have started operations, it is essential to ensure that cross-administrative coordination and cooperation continue and are developed to enable better addressing of the large and complex phenomena that affect wellbeing and inequality.

The implementation of the ‘Vantaa is ecologically sustainable’ theme is guided by the Roadmap to Resource Wisdom, with the help of which Vantaa aims to be carbon neutral by 2030 and to promote biodiversity, resource wisdom, the sustainable use of natural resources and the sustainable activities of residents and communities. It is essential to involve not only the entire city organisation, but also the wider city region in this work. The ‘Vantaa is ecologically sustainable’ theme cannot be viewed in isolation from other themes; environmental sustainability should be taken into account in all activities.

The ‘Vantaa is vital and brimming with expertise’ theme includes actions that Vantaa is taking to increase the vitality of the city from the perspec-

tive of individuals and businesses. For example, city-business collaboration is being developed in various projects that seek new forms of cooperation and also pay attention to ecological sustainability and supporting sustainable business operations. Developing competence and improving the availability of experts, for example by attracting international talent, is very important for Vantaa in terms of both equality and the vitality of the city. The educational level of the population in Vantaa is lower than in other large cities in Finland, and at the same time there is a growing shortage of skilled labour. Continuous learning and the cooperation that goes with it are an essential part of solving this problem. A lot of development work is also being done to support employment, and attention is being paid to supporting people who are at a disadvantage in the labour market. Vantaa has made a good dent in unemployment since the COVID-19 pandemic, but major structural changes in employment management have brought challenges and service backlogs.

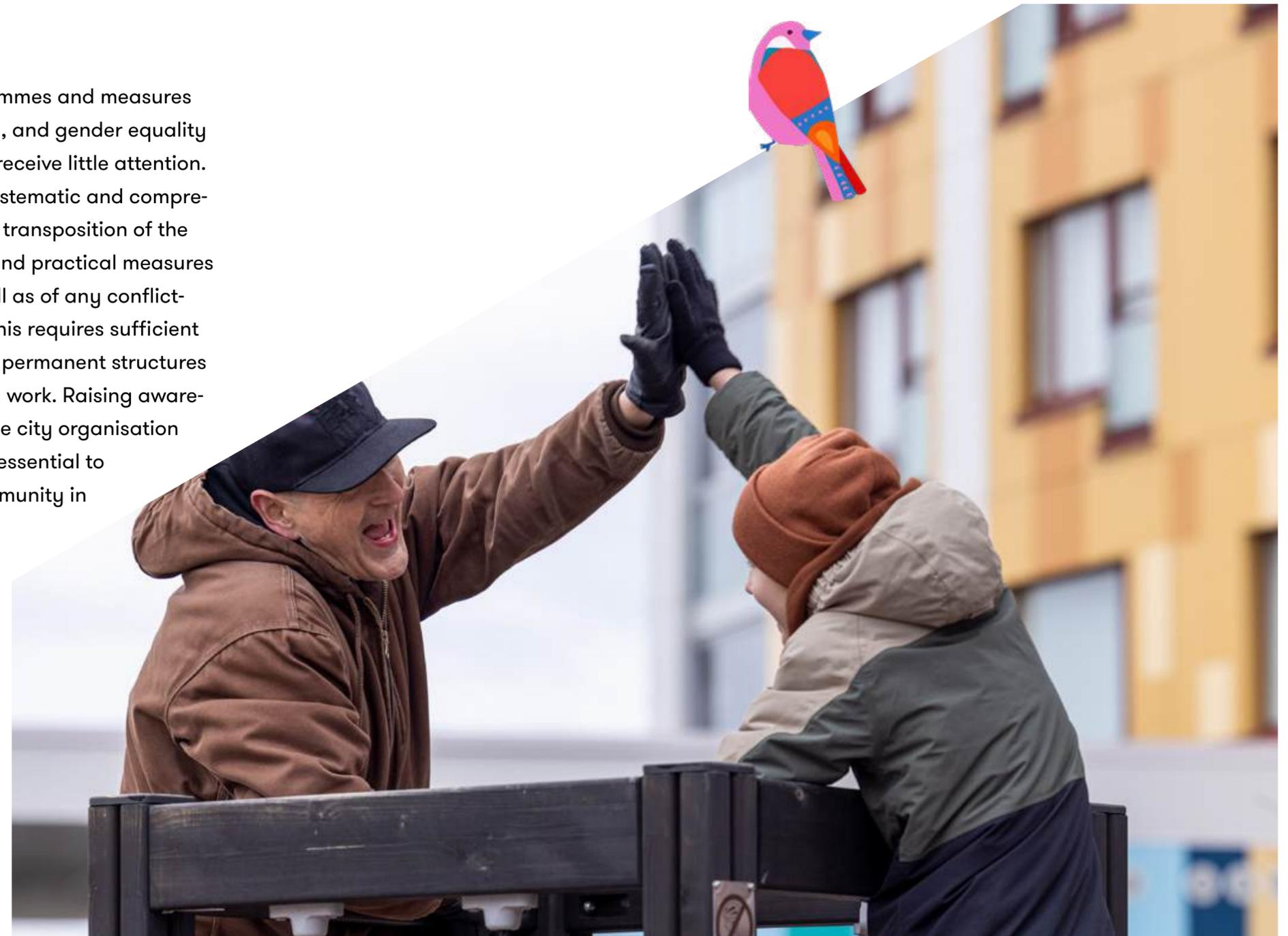
A lot of work is being done under the strategic theme of ‘Vantaa is international’ to promote



integration and equality in Finland's most international city. International cooperation is also important to Vantaa and promotes the implementation of the SDGs. Cooperation takes place through various networks and projects, which opens up new opportunities to influence complex challenges. The city also wants to be an international and equal-opportunity employer, striving to increase the proportion of foreign-language speakers among the city's employees. City communications, which have been developed through various measures, are multilingual and use multiple channels. Multilingual advisory services are provided for the residents of the municipality, and there are always several ongoing projects related to integration. The 'Vantaa is international' theme is closely linked to all other themes addressed in this review.

Vantaa is working extensively towards the SDGs and is actively and flexibly looking for new initiatives. However, there is still a lot of work to be done in cross-administrative coordination, knowledge management and the long-term integration of the SDGs into the city's processes. The cross-cutting SDGs have not been fully

translated into the programmes and measures implementing the strategy, and gender equality in particular continues to receive little attention. There should be a more systematic and comprehensive assessment of the transposition of the SDGs into the objectives and practical measures of the programmes, as well as of any conflicting or negative impacts. This requires sufficient resources, leadership and permanent structures for the city's sustainability work. Raising awareness of the SDGs within the city organisation is important, but it is also essential to involve the entire city community in promoting the SDGs.



## Introduction

Sustainable Vantaa Belongs to Everyone – Vantaa’s Sustainability Reporting 2023 is the second voluntary local review (VLR) describing how Vantaa is promoting the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals. The first review was published in 2021 and, in the same year, the city’s management group decided that the review would be published every two years from then on.

In 2015, the UN agreed on a global action plan for sustainable development, the 2030 Agenda. The aim of the 2030 Agenda is to eradicate extreme poverty and promote sustainable development in the economic, social and environmental dimensions. The 2030 Agenda contains 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) containing a total of 169 targets. The SDGs are to be achieved jointly by all countries by 2030.

The 2030 Agenda brought about significant changes compared to previous sustainable development programmes. Its SDGs are the same for all countries, although different countries place emphasis on different issues. Sustainable development and sustainability are understood as a glob-

al issue that requires cooperation between different regions. The 2030 Agenda emphasises the interdependence of the SDGs. One SDG cannot be promoted without also considering the impact of the measures on the other SDGs, as the effects may be contradictory or negative. A hierarchy has also been defined for the SDGs in the sense that environmental sustainability is the basis for social and economic sustainability, without which they cannot be realised, so environmental sustainability should be taken into account in all activities

Governments are responsible for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Its implementation in Finland is guided by a national implementation plan. Finland also reports regularly on the progress of the SDGs through a voluntary national review (VNR). However, cities are very important actors in sustainable development and, due to their nature, most of the SDGs are most strongly affected at the local or municipal level. That is why New York was the first city to publish a voluntary local review in 2018 and challenged other cities to do their part. Cities have also often defined more ambitious targets than their cen-

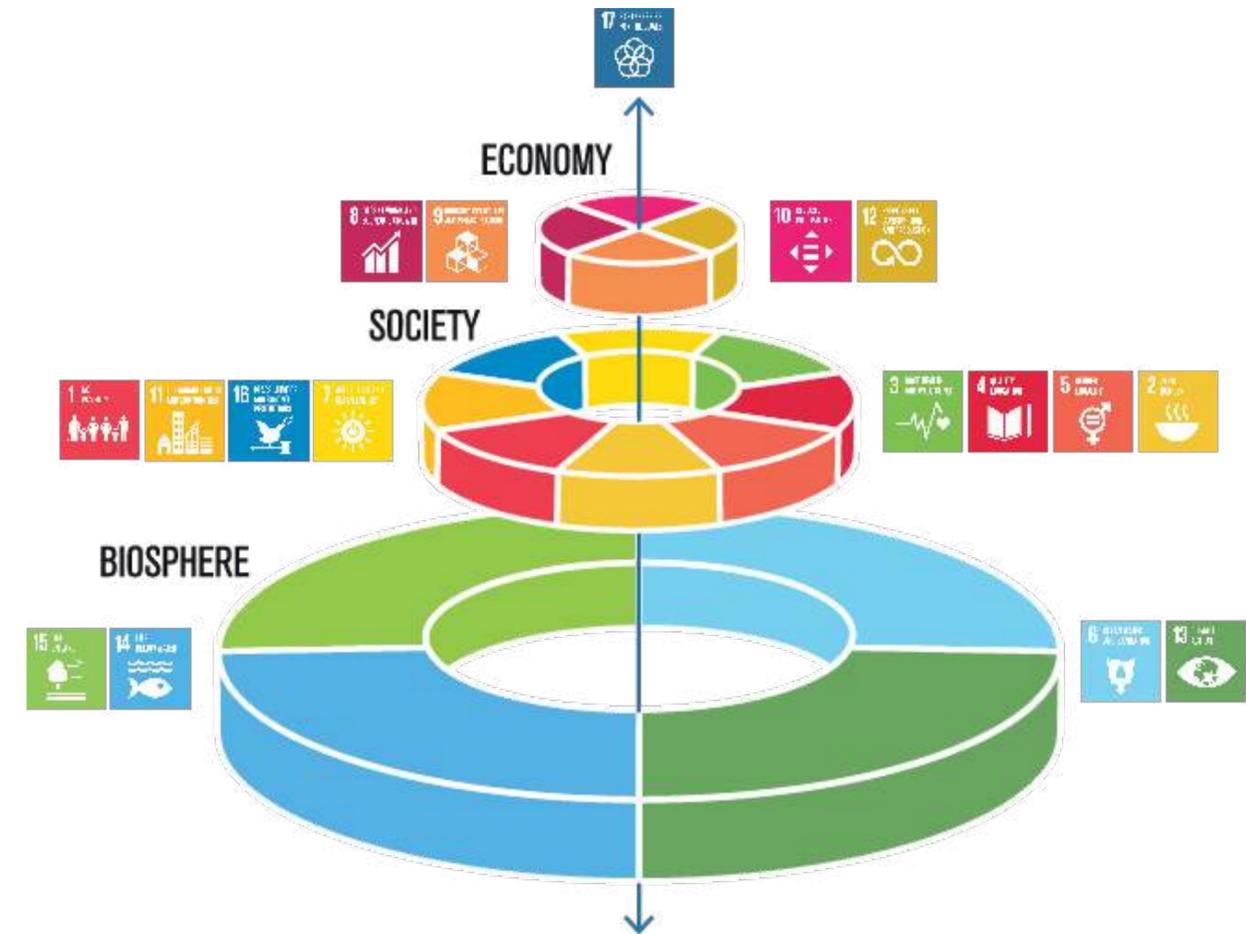


Image: Azote for Stockholm Resilience Centre, Stockholm University CC BY-ND 3.0

tral governments, for example in terms of carbon neutrality, and have the potential to be pioneers in sustainable development.

This review was prepared by an internal working group of the City of Vantaa, with representatives

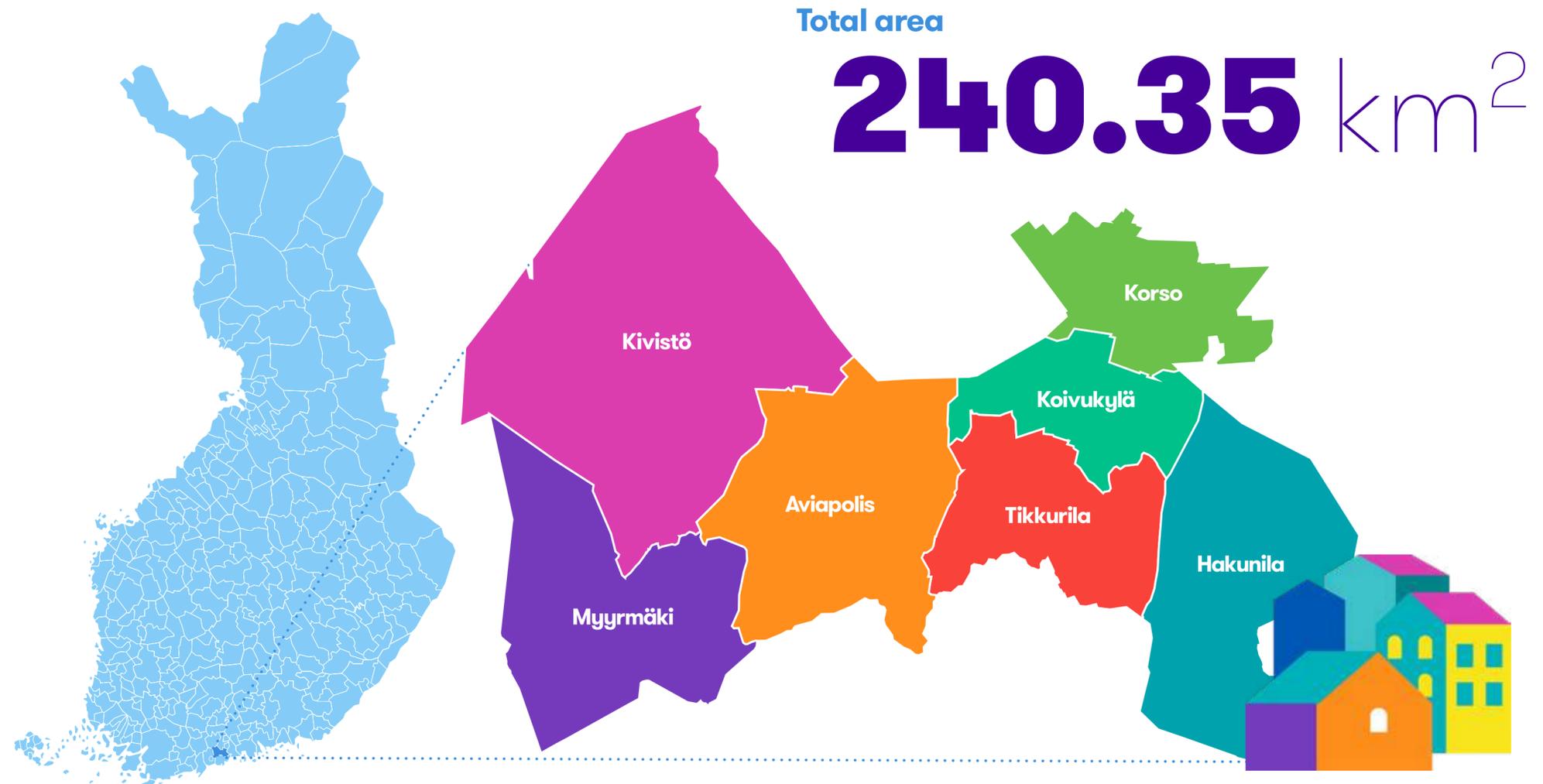
from all city departments. In addition, several other city experts participated in compiling the data and writing the descriptions of measures.

## Vantaa as a city

Vantaa is the fourth largest city in Finland in terms of population and is growing strongly. At the end of 2022, there were 242,917 Vantaa residents. The population of Vantaa is growing mainly due to immigration; Vantaa is the most international city in Finland, with about 23% of the population speaking a foreign language, i.e. a language other than Finnish or Swedish, as their native language.

Vantaa is located in the Uusimaa region and is part of the Helsinki Metropolitan Area. It shares a border with Helsinki, Espoo, Nurmi-järvi, Tuusula, Kerava and Sipoo. The city is divided into seven major districts and 61 city districts. Its administrative centre is located in Tikkurila, but Vantaa has not just one city centre but several. Vantaa is also home to Finland's only international airport. The city has a diverse economic structure and excellent transport connections. In addition to the built environment, Vantaa has extensive green areas, and most Vantaa residents live less than 300 metres from an outdoor recreation area.

Vantaa is innovative, and in 2021 it was selected as Europe's Rising Innovative City. The recognition came after a lot of work on, for example, carbon neutrality and social innovations. In accordance with its vision, Vantaa wants to be a bold and attractive pioneer in sustainability.



Total area

**240.35** km<sup>2</sup>

Land area, km<sup>2</sup>

**238.38**

Water area, km<sup>2</sup>

**1.97**

Population / km<sup>2</sup>, 2022

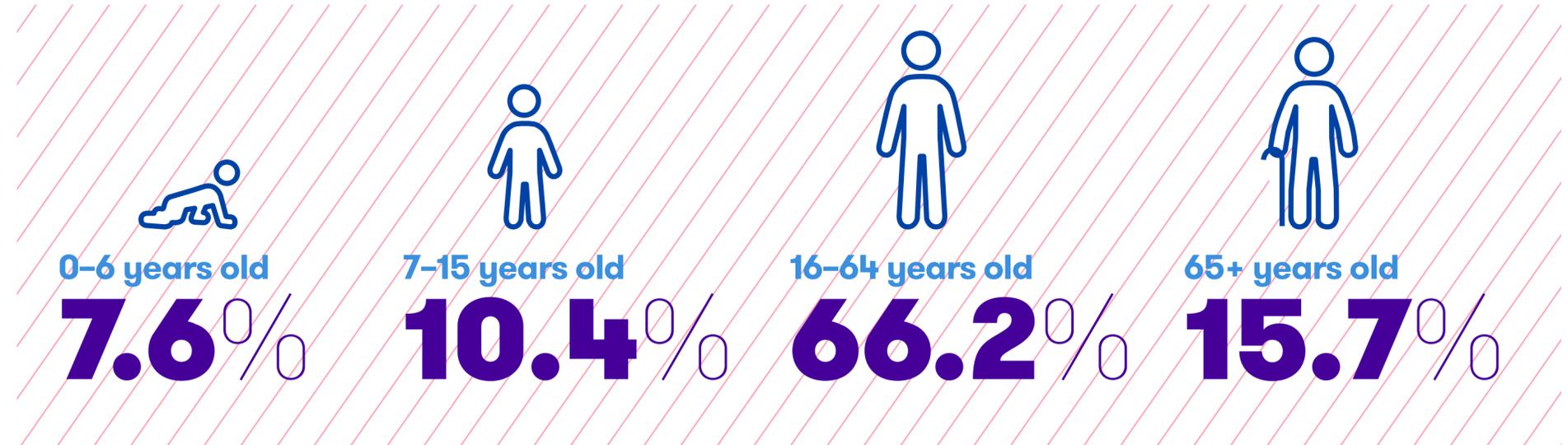
**1,019**

## Population structure (31 December, 2021)

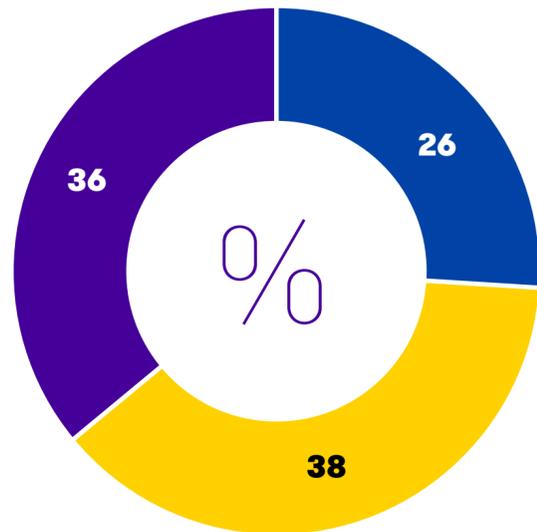
Total population

# 239,206

Source: City of Vantaa



## Education level of residents over the age of 25, 2020



- Up to primary or lower secondary education
- Secondary education
- Tertiary education

Tertiary education can be divided into three levels: 9% have completed the lowest tertiary level, 15% a bachelor's degree or equivalent and 12% a master's degree or equivalent.

## Labour market and economy

Jobs (Dec/2020)

# 110,705

Job self-sufficiency (Dec/2020)

# 102.5%

Unemployment rate (Jan/2023)

# 10.9%



## Review implementation and structure

This review was prepared with the help of a sustainability working group established in the autumn of 2022. The working group had 13 members from different city departments, whose work was coordinated by a sustainability expert. For the data collection of the review, group interviews were organised together with Gaia Consulting, and Webropol surveys were sent to the city's experts. The group interviews were on different topics, and their contents were designed based on the 2030 Agenda roadmap of the National Commission on Sustainable Development and its thematic entities. The review preparation process also utilised the latest programmes, reports and documents describing and guiding the city's operations. For individual measures, additional information and descriptive texts were requested from a number of city experts.

The Vantaa City Strategy 2022–2025 defines six focus areas: Financially sustainable and vital city, good residence-oriented services, preventing inequality, resource-smart and carbon-neutral Vantaa, thriving city centres and meaningful work by active leadership.

In addition to the focus areas, the strategy includes five strategic themes that support the intersectoral implementation of the strategy and provide central guidance for the city's sustainable development work. Individual and cross-cutting SDGs have been defined for each strategic theme. The themes are broad and have been used to define the challenges that each theme seeks to address. In addition, the programmes implementing the strategy linked to each strategic theme have been defined; they are drawn up and monitored in a cross-administrative manner.

The structure of this review follows the breakdown of the strategic themes. In this review, as in the strategy, the SDGs that the theme primarily promotes are listed under each theme. We have also made some additions to the lists of the strategy in regard to the SDGs.

**The themes for the strategy period and the SDGs named under them in the strategy are as follows on the next page.**



### Vantaa builds wellbeing

**Challenge:** Welfare disparities between different population groups in Vantaa are increasing. Vantaa must be able to safeguard the wellbeing of all city residents, taking into account the varying needs of different age groups. It is also important to consider the safety of the city residents. The wellbeing services county reform took place during the strategy period, and it is important to ensure the continuity of services during the transition through good cooperation.

**Sustainable Development Goal:**



### Vantaa is socially sustainable

**Challenge:** Regional disparities are growing in Vantaa. Segregation has progressed, although various efforts have been made to reverse it.

**Sustainable Development Goals:**



### Vantaa is ecologically sustainable

**Challenge:** By what means will Vantaa cut its emissions by 80% from 1990 levels by 2030 and take care of biodiversity in the densifying urban structure?

**Sustainable Development Goals:**



### Vantaa is vital and brimming in expertise

**Challenge:** Creating jobs and increasing employment in Vantaa. Improving attractiveness. The emphasis is on developing the skills of Vantaa residents and increasing the attractiveness of Vantaa from the perspective of both companies and residents.

**Sustainable Development Goals:**



### Vantaa is international

**Challenge:** Vantaa is being developed as an internationally attractive and innovative airport city. The integration of foreign-language speakers must be improved and their participation in society increased. Moving to the city must be easy for both people and international companies

**Sustainable Development Goals:**



**Cross-cutting goals:**

In preparing the review, we have tried to create an overall view of how the City of Vantaa promotes the SDGs and the successes and development targets of this work. Many important activities and development projects also being left out of the review. It is not possible to include all the sustainable development activities of the city in a single review, because the core work carried out in municipalities, such as organising education, taking care of the wellbeing and living environment of residents, etc., is all in line with the SDGs. We have selected actions, mainly ones taken in 2021 and 2022, under each strategic theme. They are highlights and examples of the extensive work that Vantaa is doing for sustainable development. Many of the actions could have been listed under more than one theme and contribute to several SDGs.

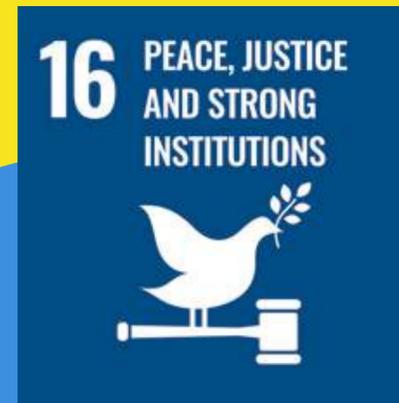
The purpose of this review is not only to describe the actions taken, but also to indicate areas for improvement and to highlight any gaps left, for example between the programmes implementing the strategy. It is important to identify the points where different goals and measures may have contradictory effects when considered in the context of all SDGs.

The review is being used to raise awareness of the SDGs within the city organisation and to create a

basis for the development of sustainability work. With longer-term and more systematic management and coordination, sustainability work can be developed from the perspective of the entire organisation and departments. So far, progress on the SDGs has not been monitored between the reviews, and they have not been sufficiently linked to the processes of knowledge-based management. The coordination and development of sustainability work will be significantly improved in 2023 with the establishment of a new permanent position for a sustainability expert. The SDGs are multifaceted and interconnected, involving various actions in different departments. Coordination and development work across departments requires permanent structures, leadership, sufficient resources and commitment from both management and all departments.



# CROSS-CUTTING THEMES



## Cross-cutting themes

**The city strategy of Vantaa has defined cross-cutting SDGs that should be reflected under all strategic themes and should therefore be taken into account in all development work. These cross-cutting SDGs are Gender Equality, Climate Action, Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, and Partnerships for the Goals.**

This section describes the basis for the equality work of the City of Vantaa, the carbon-neutral Vantaa 2030 targets, sustainable procurements and various forms of cooperation. These themes are not separate from the other sections of the review but are closely linked to all the themes.

### Ensuring justice, non-discrimination, and gender equality

The City of Vantaa's commitment to promoting gender equality and the equality of all people is expressed in the City Strategy in connection with the values of Vantaa:

”Values are shared views on what is important and valuable to us. They guide local decision-making and the activities of the entire organisation. The city's branches may also have ethical principles concerning their own activities in place. The City of Vantaa is committed to promoting fairness, equality and non-discrimination in its operating methods. This requires efforts to ensure equality and non-discrimination in the context of all decision-making and services.”

Gender equality and non-discrimination work refers to conscious, systematic, long-term and continuous efforts to assess the realisation and promotion of equality and non-discrimination in different areas of activity and to implement the necessary changes. Vantaa's equality and non-discrimination work is based on the requirements of the Act on Equality between Women and Men and the Non-Discrimination Act. Decision-making, planning, service operations and assessment must be conscious of the significance of gender and take into account other non-discrimination criteria, such as age, origin, beliefs and family relationships.

Equality and non-discrimination work in decision-making and services is guided by the City of Vantaa equality and non-discrimination plan 2022–2025. The plan contains objectives and measures derived from legislation, which departments and service areas put into practice in the framework of their operations. The priorities of the planning period include the ethical action of elected officials, the use of gender-aware budgeting, mitigating gender segregation in education and working life, developing equality and non-discrimination planning in schools and educational institutions, promoting an anti-racist operating culture,



### Examples of success

Vantaa has developed a process for sustainable procurement, which enables various aspects of sustainability to be taken into account in competitive tendering. With sustainable procurement, the city sets an example and promotes the sustainable operations of companies.

cooperating with interest organisations and developing digital accessibility.

Both legislation and the city strategy carry strong obligations to consider and integrate the gender and equality perspective and non-discrimination criteria (age, origin, disability, etc.). Gender equality and non-discrimination work takes place in various contexts throughout the organisation, but it has not become part of the mainstream of the organisation's operations. The gender perspective is missing even in obvious contexts. The promotion of

gender equality is considered to be a voluntary matter, which is evidenced by the fact that the lack of equality and non-discrimination perspectives does not result in, for example, programmes, plans, projects or reports being returned to preparation during the approval process.

### Carbon-neutral Vantaa 2030

Vantaa has set itself the goal of being carbon neutral by 2030. Achieving this goal requires integrating climate work into all activities. The change requires commitment and action not only from the city organisation, but also from residents, companies and communities.

Although the direct emissions of the Vantaa city organisation make up only about 10% of the emissions generated in the city region, the indirect impact of the city organisation's activities is many times greater, for example through companies belonging to the city group, such as Vantaa Energy Ltd, and through housing and land use control. It is estimated that the city, through its instruments and subsidiaries, can influence at least 40% of the emissions produced in the city region.

The development of the City of Vantaa's environmental sustainability is guided by the city's shared Roadmap to Resource Wisdom, the content of which is described in more detail in the 'Vantaa is ecologically sustainable' section of this report. The environmental perspective and climate action should be reflected



### Examples of success

Vantaa's greenhouse gas emissions have been falling for a long time, although in 2021 they remained unchanged. The decrease in emissions was largely a result of Vantaa Energia's actions, but the city organisation of Vantaa has also succeeded in its reduction measures. The City of Vantaa achieved the total quantitative energy savings target of 12,181 MWh (7.5% of the energy used in 2015) set in the energy efficiency agreement for 2017-2025 in early 2022.

ected in all activities throughout the organisation. The aim of the Roadmap to Resource Wisdom in 2030 is a carbon-neutral Vantaa where the city's planning and implementation will be resource-wise, nature will be diverse, natural resources will be used sustainably and the practices of residents, companies and communities will be sustainable. If implemented, the roadmap's goals will create sustainable wellbeing and strengthen the competitiveness of companies and the vitality of the city.

### Sustainable procurement

More than half of the city's budget is made up of procurements, so the nature of the procurements really matters. Municipalities are also bound by international conventions and objectives: The



### Examples of development areas

The equality and non-discrimination perspective is not yet systematically included in all decision-making and activities throughout the city organisation.

In addition to energy consumption, traffic emissions account for a large part of Vantaa's greenhouse gas emissions. Much still needs to be done to promote sustainable and diverse mobility, and the city cannot influence all of them alone.

UN's Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, EU-level legislation and agreements, national legislation, such as the Local Government Act, the Act on Public Procurement and Concession Contracts, the labour code and special legislation in various fields, as well as the national procurement strategy all require that sustainable development is taken into account in procurements. Citizens' opinions also support sustainability; according to a consumer survey conducted in 2021 (carried out by Kantar TNS agri), 80% of Finns believe that municipalities should set an example with their sustainable procurement.

Vantaa's City Strategy, the Roadmap to Resource Wisdom, the Roadmap to Strategic Procurement and Vantaa's own procurement guidelines also steer procurement in a sustainable direction.

The strategic focus areas identified for procurement are:

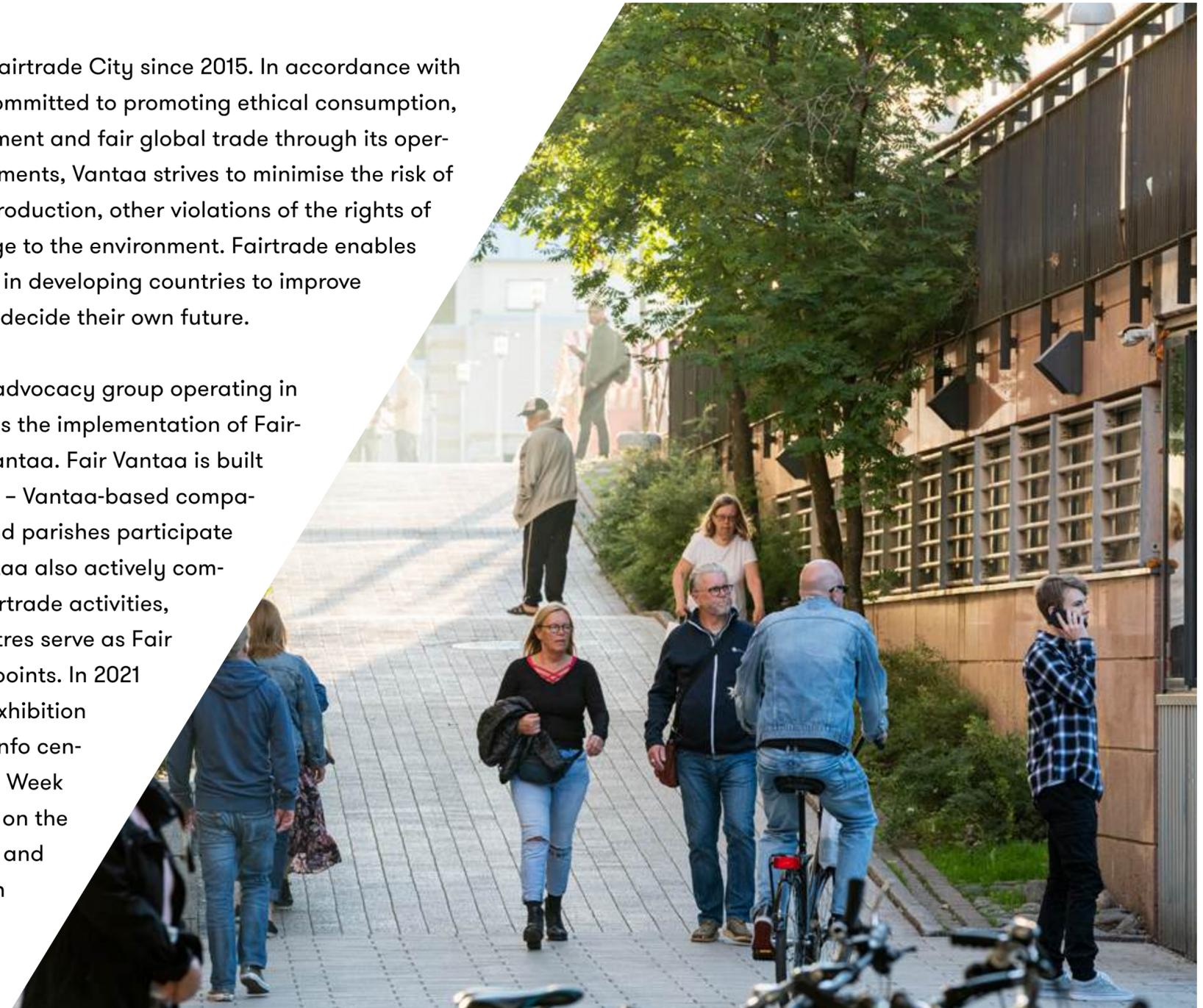
- 1. carbon neutrality,**
- 2. circular economy,**
- 3. innovations,**
- 4. human rights and rights at work in procurement,**
- 5. social perspective of corporate social sustainability,**
- 6. inclusion, and**
- 7. lawfulness and efficiency.**

The procurement service unit has developed a process for sustainable procurement, where procurements to be put out to tender are submitted to an evaluation group, which uses an electronic tool to review which aspects related to sustainable development should be taken into account in the procurement. Tender competitions can take sustainable development aspects into account in a variety of ways: as selection criteria, minimum requirements or contract terms. Procurement can promote, for example, the purchase of low-carbon vehicles, reduction of harmful chemicals in toys or improvement of workers' rights. Vantaa requires suppliers whose company size exceeds 30 people to have statutory equality and non-discrimination plans. When the procurement is deemed suitable, an employment condition is attached to the contract, meaning that the supplier must employ people who are in a difficult labour market position.

## Fair Vantaa

Vantaa has been a Fairtrade City since 2015. In accordance with the title, Vantaa is committed to promoting ethical consumption, sustainable development and fair global trade through its operations. In its procurements, Vantaa strives to minimise the risk of child labour use in production, other violations of the rights of employees or damage to the environment. Fairtrade enables farmers and workers in developing countries to improve their livelihoods and decide their own future.

There is a Fairtrade advocacy group operating in Vantaa that promotes the implementation of Fairtrade principles in Vantaa. Fair Vantaa is built through cooperation – Vantaa-based companies, associations and parishes participate in the activities. Vantaa also actively communicates about Fairtrade activities, and Vantaa Info centres serve as Fair Vantaa information points. In 2021 and 2022, a poster exhibition was held at Vantaa Info centres during Fairtrade Week to share information on the impacts of Fairtrade and working conditions in producer countries.



## Partnerships for the Goals

The City of Vantaa, both at the city level and in the different departments, is involved in numerous international, national and local commitments, networks and cooperation bodies that strengthen sustainable development in its various areas. Cooperation with Vantaa city operators, educational establishments, parishes, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and associations as well as companies is also important. Achieving the SDGs requires extensive cooperation between different actors both regionally and more widely, and cooperation leads to new kinds of solutions to complex challenges when different perspectives are brought together.

Vantaa has many projects that are carried out in networked cooperation with educational establishments, companies, NGOs and other cities, for example. The projects develop new operating models and solutions. However, not all departments and units have the resources to implement projects, as they have not been allocated the self-financed shares that may be required to apply for project funding. City-business collaboration is mainly carried out in business services, and its importance is emphasised under the 'Vantaa is vital and brimming with expertise' strategic theme in this review. However, it is also important to recognise the potential of city-business collaboration in contexts other than employment and industry.

Cooperation with NGOs is a significant channel for the inclusion of the residents of the municipality, and it is carried out in de-

partments and projects. The Joint Services unit, which serves all departments, coordinates the city's cooperation with NGOs and organises events where NGOs can communicate their needs and wishes to the city. Many NGOs provide significant services to the residents of the municipality, and they have a role to play in increasing wellbeing and a sense of community. NGOs often need support, for example in terms of resources and premises, and efforts are made to improve the operating conditions of NGOs. In this review, international cooperation is particularly emphasised under the theme of 'Vantaa is international', and it is actively developed. However, resources for cooperation are limited, so the potential of cooperation cannot be fully exploited.

## Examples of networks and commitments in which Vantaa is involved

### Eurocities

Vantaa operates in the Eurocities network of 190 large European cities, which share good practices in forums and working groups. Vantaa is active in groups focusing on the environment and social issues, in particular.

### Nordic Safe Cities

The network of Nordic cities shares and develops good practices to increase security, reduce confrontation and combat extremism.

### UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities

The network supports and develops lifelong learning practices

in cities through peer learning, and contributes to each of the 17 SDGs.

### Child Friendly Cities Initiative Network

Vantaa is part of UNICEF's Child Friendly Cities Initiative (CFCI) and its international network of 37 countries and hundreds of municipalities. In Finland, around 45 municipalities are participating in the network. The City of Vantaa has collaborated with the CFCI team members and municipal representatives of UNICEF in Lithuania and Poland, as well as with Vantaa's Chinese sister city of Jinan, which is applying for participation in CFCI activities.

### Avia Network and the Green Deal manifesto

The Avia Network is a network of over 30 private, public and third-sector operators focusing on the Helsinki Airport area. The members of the network are interested in the transport, logistics and accessibility of the airport and the Aviapolis area. The Avia Network aims to be carbon neutral by 2030, and the network's joint Green Deal manifesto, published in March 2023, supports this goal. The network wants to be an international pioneer in clean and intelligent mobility, promote sustainable tourism while respecting the environment and create new jobs and wellbeing in the region.

### ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability

ICLEI is a global network of more than 2,500 local and regional governments in more than 125 countries. The network promotes systemic sustainability work in an increasingly urbanised world.

**Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy**

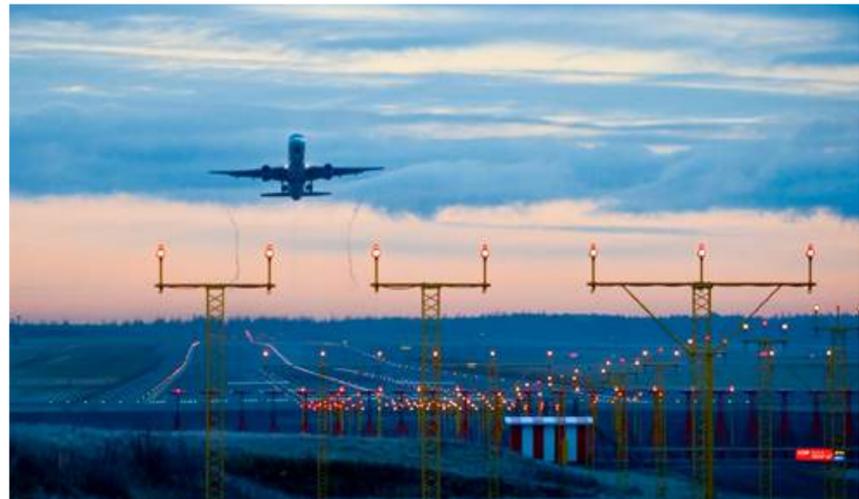
The Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy is a commitment of cities and regions with the European Commission to reduce climate emissions and promote adaptation.

**Green Deals between municipalities and the state**

Vantaa is committed to Green Deals on reduction of harmful substances in early childhood education procurements, emission-free construction sites, and sustainable demolition.

**Towards Carbon Neutral Municipalities (Hinku) climate network**

Hinku is an inter-municipal cooperation network that promotes the achievement of climate goals.



# VANTAA BUILDS WELLBEING AND IS SOCIALLY SUSTAINABLE



## VANTAA BUILDS WELLBEING AND IS SOCIALLY SUSTAINABLE

**Wellbeing is a broad concept that includes different aspects of life. Health, a feeling of inclusion and a sense of community, education and learning, work and livelihood, and a safe and pleasant living environment are all factors that affect a person's perceived wellbeing.**

At the beginning of 2023, municipal healthcare and social welfare responsibilities were transferred to the new wellbeing services counties, of which Vantaa is part of the Vantaa and Kerava Wellbeing Services County. However, taking care of the wellbeing of the residents of the municipality in a broader sense remains an important focus for Vantaa. Work on wellbeing in Vantaa is guided by a wellbeing programme, which views investing in wellbeing as an activity that concerns all residents and helps prevent problems.

It is of paramount importance that work on wellbeing pays special attention to the most vulnerable groups and to direct special support to where it is needed. In Vantaa, the differences between residential areas and regional segregation are not yet as strong as in larger cities, and Vantaa wants to prevent and reverse the trend of segregation. This work is guided by the 'Vantaa is socially sustainable' programme, and the measures set out in the programme extend to all city departments. The programme directs measures and support in particular to areas where, according to certain demographic criteria, there is a risk of a negative trend towards segregation.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a negative impact on the wellbeing of Vantaa residents in many ways. Feelings of loneliness and, for

example, anxiety among young people increased. The strain on health services left behind a large backlog in care. In 2022, the war in Ukraine, the energy crisis and the rise in food prices also aggravated the situation, especially for those who were already in the most vulnerable positions. These crises are reflected in some of the indicators in this review as negative developments. However, Vantaa has conducted a lot of development work and taken measures to mitigate the effects of the crises, and this work continues.

### Safety

Urban safety refers to the comprehensive safety of residents in everyday life, which is the basis for their wellbeing. Vantaa's urban safety is guided by a **safety plan**. The realisation of safety and a sense of security requires cooperation between different operators, and it is affected by many factors, such as a safe living and working environment, equality among the population and traffic planning. Safety planning prevents various problems and creates resilience to cope with crises, which requires up-to-date information and safety management.

In Vantaa, safety challenges have in recent years been largely re-

### Crime rate, Crimes / 1.000 inhabitants, 2021



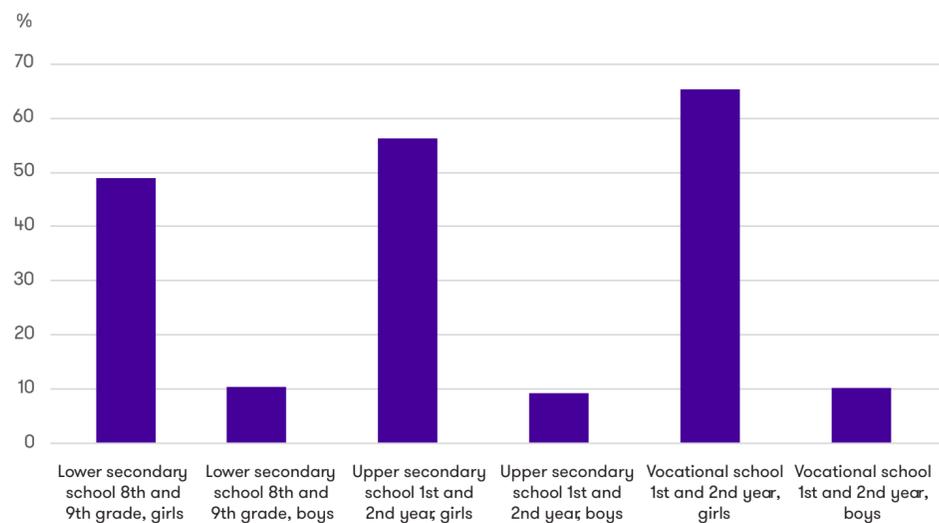
Source: Statistics Finland

### Street safety index, 2020



Source: National Police Board of Finland

## Experienced sexual harassment during the past year, 2021



Source: Statistics and indicators database Sotkanet.fi (THL)

lated to the pandemic and social exclusion. Domestic violence increased during the pandemic, as violent behaviour moved into the home, particularly affecting women and the most vulnerable groups. Violence and disruptive behaviour by young people have been on the rise. People are also concerned and feel unsafe because of substance abuse and drug trafficking. In Vantaa, cross-sectoral safety work focuses on intimate partner violence, substance abuse, youth and safe mobility. In addition, safety management and gender awareness are cross-cutting themes in safety work.

The safety plan includes measures from different departments related to the thematic focus areas of the plan. Often, the best way

to prevent problems is to direct resources and development work to permanent operations and existing services. There have also been new initiatives, for example training professionals working with young people in the early recognition of and intervention in radicalisation and violent extremism.

One way in which Vantaa promotes the residents' sense of security is by adopting **safe space principles** in all city premises. A safe space is one that offers those present a sense of physical, mental and social safety. The aim is to ensure that no one has to face any form of discrimination, bullying, harassment or violence. They are actively prevented, and situations where they occur are dealt with immediately. A safe space must also be reachable and accessible. Safe space principles include respect for others and giving everyone the space to be themselves. When implementing the principles, it is important to consider all the people who use the space and to plan the principles together with them.

The initiative to introduce safe space principles came from the work on the Child Friendly City Initiative. Children and young people spend a lot of time at city premises and events, so the safety of the premises and events is of key importance. However, the safety of the premises applies to all users. A space that is safe for children is safe for everyone.

**Preventing and tackling bullying** is an essential part of the work being done for the safety of children. Vantaa's daycare centres, schools and other educational institutes actively prevent bullying

and tackle situations of bullying at a low threshold. At the beginning of the 2022–2023 school year, a new action plan for preventing and tackling bullying was introduced in Vantaa schools. Every daycare centre, school and educational institute in Vantaa will specify the plan to suit its own activities. The action plan includes nine measures to prevent bullying and to tackle possible bullying situations.

Communal wellbeing is strengthened by supporting the participation of pupils in the planning and development of work on wellbeing. For example, pupils are encouraged to consider how everyone can feel good in school and how the classroom atmosphere can be improved. Vantaa also organises wellbeing-themed event days and weeks. In addition, some schools also use peer-to-peer mediation (Verso) and the Kiva bullying prevention method. A bullying prevention team is elected in each school to work actively on bullying prevention and early intervention in bullying.

Experiences of **sexual harassment** have increased among pupils in lower secondary school (the final level of comprehensive school) and students at upper secondary level. As sexual harassment has also been discussed much more in Finland in recent years than before, it is possible that today's young people are better able to identify inappropriate behaviour, which contributes to the higher figures. However, it is important to pay more attention to preventing and tackling harassment. As in the case of bullying, prevention of sexual harassment is largely related to strengthening a good and trusting atmosphere in schools. Sexuality education also plays an important role in helping children and young

people to recognise and articulate when they encounter harassment. Recognising personal boundaries and respecting others is an important part of sexuality education. Vantaa also pays attention to preventing and tackling bullying, safety skills and holistic sexuality education in early childhood education.

Safety is linked to good governance, municipal democracy and inclusion. In May 2022, the Vantaa City Council approved **ethical principles for appointed and elected officials**. The aim of the ethical principles is to ensure high-quality municipal administration, the trust of local residents in decision-making, and equal treatment of both officials and local residents in official activities. The principles also apply to relations between appointed/elected officials and city employees.

The starting point for the activities of appointed and elected officials is appropriate, equal and respectful behaviour. The goal is a safe space where everyone can safely participate in the official activities as themselves without fear of inappropriate treatment or harassment. There is zero tolerance for inappropriate treatment.

Political debate involves differences of opinions and opposing, sometimes even pointed, views. Nevertheless, everyone must treat others with respect and dignity. Things can be debated and many different views held without offending anyone. Nobody should tolerate inappropriate behaviour from others. If someone feels that they have been treated inappropriately, the matter must be investigated so

that a good atmosphere between the officials can be restored and joint activities continued in an appropriate and respectful manner.

### Inclusion

The inclusion of city residents is an important factor in terms of wellbeing, the transparency of administration and the realisation of democracy. Voting is a fundamental form of participation and a cornerstone of municipal democracy. Voter turnout and its impact on equality is a theme to which particular attention is being paid in Vantaa due to the low turnout in the previous elections. Other forms of inclusion and direct influence are also being actively developed in Vantaa.

When Vantaa was selected as Europe's Rising Innovative City in 2021, the city decided to use €300,000 of the prize money to enable new innovations through an innovation competition. In 2022, an **Urban Inventions of All Sizes innovation** competition was organised, inviting local residents, companies, NGOs and associations to come up with new ideas in the categories of thriving city centres, good everyday services and combatting climate change. Fifteen of the 174 entries submitted were selected for funding. The participants whose ideas will be funded will implement these social innovations of different types and sizes during 2023. The next innovation competition will be held in 2024.

Since 2021, the City of Vantaa has encouraged residents to participate in the development of residential areas through **participato-**

### Voter turnout, county elections 2022

38.1%

Source: SVT, County elections

### Proportion of women on the city council, 2022

55.22%

**ry budgeting.** Participatory budgeting is a method of interaction between residents, where residents have the opportunity to decide on the use of a certain amount of city funds for and participate in planning and decision-making. Residents get a genuine feeling of inclusion, their opinions are heard and their influence leads to concrete actions, which increases wellbeing, sense of community and the comfort of areas.

Participatory budgeting has been used in Vantaa to reduce the welfare disparities between areas and residents in several projects

that have sought to reach diverse groups of residents and inspire them in the participation process. There is also cooperation with local actors, such as NGOs, libraries, schools, daycare centres and youth centres. Participatory budgeting will be extended to the entire city in 2023.

Participatory budgeting is implemented through the **Committed Vantaa service** at OsallistuvaVantaa.fi, which brings together current opportunities for participation and influence in one place. The platform serves as a good channel for interaction between the city and residents, as the service can be used to publish surveys, organise online discussions and communicate about the progress of projects. On the website, residents can familiarise themselves with and participate in projects, plans and the development of residential areas in Vantaa.

The development of Vantaa residents' opportunities for participation and influence is guided by the **Committed Vantaa programme 2022–2025**. The implementation of the programme is coordinated by a cross-departmental working group. Personnel are supported by the Inclusion Services team, which develops and maintains various methods of inclusion, such as resident panels, dialogue methods, an online inclusion environment and participatory budgeting. In addition, Inclusion Services organises training and networking activities for personnel.

Vantaa residents' feeling of inclusion and satisfaction with opportunities to participate and influence things are monitored through

an annual survey. The results of the survey conducted at the turn of the year 2021–2022 show that Vantaa residents' feeling of inclusion had strengthened since the previous annual survey to an average inclusion indicator rating of 78.4. Satisfaction with opportunities for participation and influence had increased slightly; 36% of the respondents were somewhat or very satisfied with them.

In the 2022 county elections, Vantaa had the lowest **voter turnout** in the country at only 38.1%, which is significantly lower than in other previous elections. In particular, the turnout of foreign-language voters was low, and there were significant differences in voter turnout between different areas in Vantaa. Voting is a very important form of participation, and the low turnout is worrying in terms of democratisation. The central election boards of municipalities and cities are responsible for organising elections, and their task is to ensure that elections are conducted legally and are independent. It is important to ensure that all persons entitled to vote feel that voting is genuinely possible.

Vantaa wanted to determine what factors are behind the declining voter turnout, how voter turnout is distributed regionally and demographically, and why some Vantaa residents have abstained from voting. A study was carried out on the subject, making use of Statistics Finland's register and survey data.

The study showed that the nomination of candidates plays an important role in voting or abstaining and that people often abstained because they could not find a suitable candidate. In addition, there



### Examples of success

Adopting safe space principles in all city premises promotes experienced safety and a culture of respect for others.

were shortcomings in access to information; not all foreign-language speakers, in particular, knew whether they were entitled to vote or had been provided with sufficient information on what the elections were about. If more foreign-language speakers stand as candidates, it also promotes the voter turnout of foreign-language speakers. If there are foreign-language speakers among election officials, information will also spread to different communities through them.

In the spring of 2023, parliamentary elections were held in Finland, and Vantaa planned various measures to increase voter turnout. Vantaa drew up its own Government Programme goals, which were presented and promoted together with Vantaa candidates at four 'Vantaudu vaaleille' voting promotion events in February and March. The plan was to take the events to the places that people already frequented. Vantaa also carried out a voter activation campaign, in which information was provided at residential areas by means of an election car. The elections were announced actively and in as many languages as possible. Vantaa works in close cooperation with various immigrant organisations, and elections were also be announced at their events.

The study showed that the placement of advance polling stations in places that residents frequent has an impact on voter turnout. Voting must be easy and effortless so that as many undecided voters as possible decide to vote. The advance polling stations in Vantaa are located in different parts of the city, along good public transport connections and in the vicinity of services in residential areas.

### Children, young people and families

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is in force in Finland as a statutory instrument, i.e. it obliges everyone operating in the municipal sector. The City of Vantaa is committed to increasing the consideration of children, and Vantaa applied for and was accepted into UNICEF's **Child Friendly Cities Initiative** (CFCI) in 2021. CFCI is a tool provided by UNICEF that helps cities to make the right decisions for the wellbeing of children and to ensure that the rights of the child are implemented as well as possible in the everyday life of every child, including those in a vulnerable position.

Vantaa's CFCI activities started with a survey of the current state of affairs that consulted a large number of the city's employees, partners and Vantaa residents, especially children and young people. Based on the survey, a Child Friendly City action plan was prepared, and the City Board approved it in December 2021. The action plan contains five goals and 14 measures. The measures include developing peer-to-peer communication for children and young people, increasing children and young people's interaction with leaders and decision-makers, introducing safe space

### Child poverty, 2021

12.6%

Source: Statistics and indicators database Sotkanet.fi; Tulonjaon kokonaistilasto (Statistics Finland)

principles, and increasing the knowledge of staff and appointed and elected officials about children's rights. If Vantaa succeeds in achieving its goals and promoting the rights of the child in the city, it will receive the recognition of a Child Friendly City in 2024.

**Knowledge-based management**, i.e. systematically collected information and its utilisation at all levels of operations, is of paramount importance in promoting wellbeing. In particular, experiential knowledge collected from local residents is a valuable source of information in the development of services and decision-making. The **School Health Promotion study** conducted by the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare every two years compiles data on the wellbeing, health and inclusion of school-age children and young people in secondary education. The longitudinal study enables long-term monitoring and comparisons of Vantaa's results with other regions and national results. In addition, the responses of children and young people living in Vantaa can be examined by gender and origin. The results of Vantaa's

### Families with children that received income support, 2021

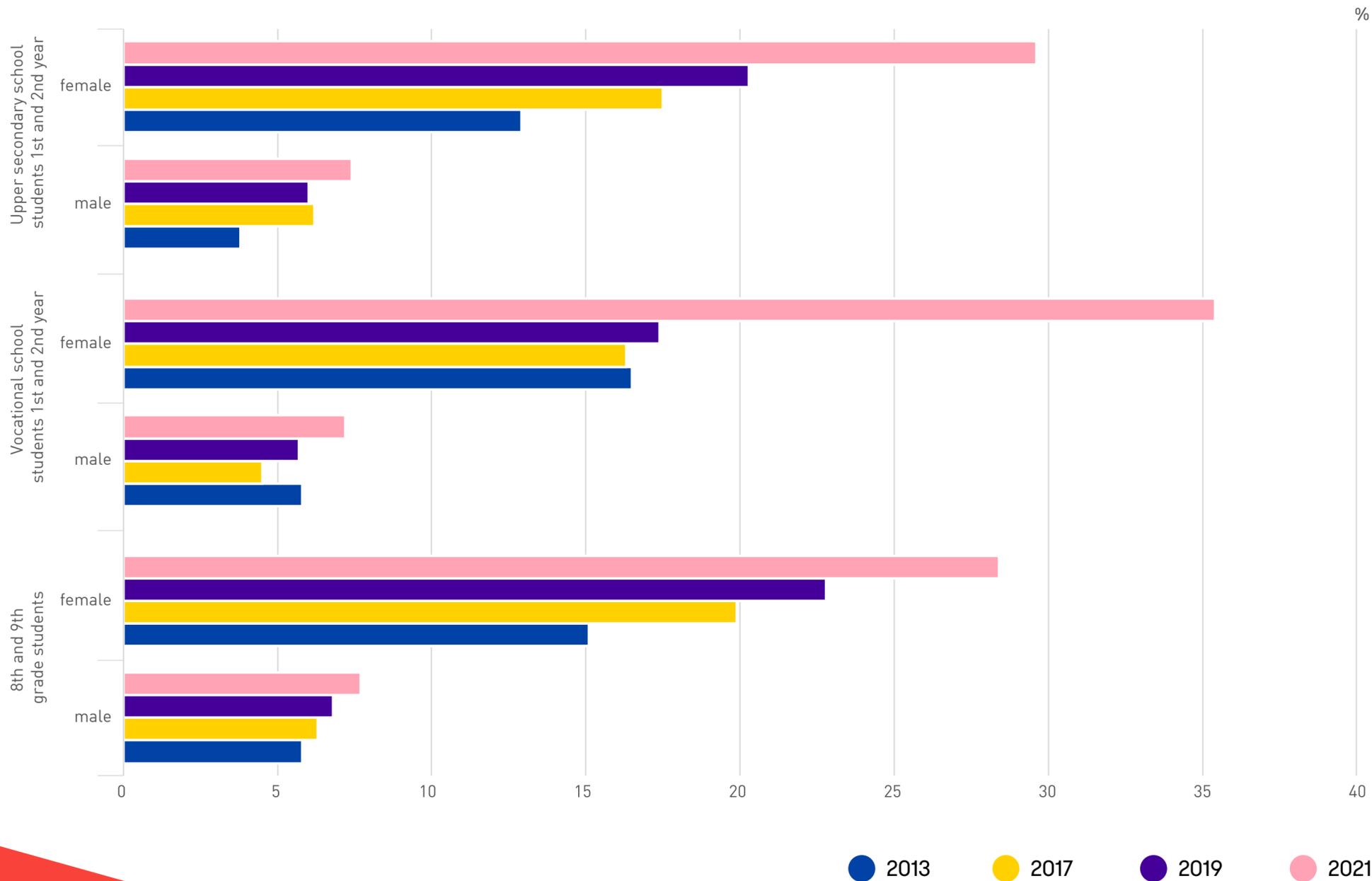
16.9%

Source: Statistics and indicators database Sotkanet.fi

School Health Promotion study are collected in the Power BI platform, which is open to all. At national and municipal level, there is very little systematic information on the wellbeing of **children under school age**. This will be improved once the National Institute for Health and Welfare compiles the FinLapset survey data from school-age children and their guardians in 2024.

**The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic** on the wellbeing of children and young people can be seen in the results of the School Health Promotion study. Children and young people are experiencing widespread anxiety and fatigue, and the situation of girls shows particularly worrying developments. The pandemic has caused a backlog in care as well as a learning deficit, and the transition to distance education had a negative impact on the wellbeing and education of many young people. The challenges have been met by increasing the resources of mental health services for children and young people and of specialised youth work, for example.

## Children who experienced anxiety



Source: School Health Promotion study



### Examples of success:

Expanding participatory budgeting throughout the city increases wellbeing and residents' participation and promotes a pleasant urban environment that meets residents' wishes.



### Examples of development areas

The shortage of skilled labour makes it difficult to carry out work on wellbeing or, for example, provide high-quality and equal early childhood education. Special attention is now being paid to the power of attraction and retention of the city as an employer.

**Youth work** has identified the need to get a real-time picture of the wellbeing of young people in different areas. SOS Children's Village has launched a project to build a data collection model for regional youth work for Vantaa Youth Services. The model under development is based on highlighting young people's experiences and perspectives, and it is being built together with young people using the means of service design.

In addition to the pandemic, the situation of many families has been made more difficult by the rise in food and energy prices.

Child poverty, that is, the share of children under the age of 18 living in low-income households, had already risen slightly compared to previous years according to data from 2021. **The poverty of families with children** is a complex phenomenon with various consequences for the wellbeing, health and inclusion of children and young people. The wellbeing of the whole family is central to the wellbeing of children, and inequality during childhood also has far-reaching effects on the child's entire future. In Vantaa, more attention should be paid to the poverty of families with children, its causes and consequences.

In cooperation between the City of Vantaa and the new wellbeing services county, services for families have been developed to make it easier for residents to receive different services on a one-stop shop basis. A **family centre operating model** is being developed to bring together services used by families, such as child health clinics and mental health services, as well as open meeting places in the same building. The model will intensify cooperation between different actors, and NGOs have been involved in the development work. The aim is to make low-threshold services easily accessible to everyone. The first family centre will be established at the Koivukylä open meeting point in Eastern Vantaa, and the next one is being planned for Myyrmäki in Western Vantaa. Within the framework of the operating model, multi-professional family centre teams will be piloted to be able to respond comprehensively to the service needs of families. In the future, the operations will also include the lending of equipment to families with neuropsychiatric spectrum disorders and the implementation of mental health support methods in local NGOs.

The inclusion and wellbeing of children and young people are also being developed in Vantaa through **leisure activities**. Vantaa wants to offer every child opportunities to have a hobby, regardless of the family's situation. Supporting leisure activities promotes children's wellbeing, inclusion and equality, as they can help children find a community and reduce the risk of social exclusion. **Harrastusten Vantaa** (Vantaa Offers Leisure Activities) is a project that offers comprehensive school pupils in Vantaa equal opportunities to participate in free recreational activities of their preference near their schools and homes. The activities are part of the Finnish Model for Leisure Activities, which combines listening to children and young people's wishes about leisure activities, the coordination of existing good practices and operating methods, and cooperation between schools and activity service providers. In 2023, the model will be established in the Youth Act.

In Vantaa, leisure activities are organised based on requests from children and young people collected through various surveys. To ensure that as many children as possible can benefit from the available activities, more attention will be paid to communication channels and multilingualism in future. In particular, it has been challenging to encourage pupils in lower secondary school to participate in leisure activities.

The **Tempo Orchestra**, which started its operations in Vantaa in 2009, enables music activities at a low threshold. The orchestra was launched by the Vantaa Music Institute at Länsimäki Comprehensive School and Kytöpuisto Primary School. Over the years, lei-



### Examples of success:

Support for education, training and learning, and thereby equality, has been advanced through close multisectoral cooperation.



### Examples of development areas

The COVID-19 pandemic, the energy crisis and rising prices are complicating the everyday lives of the residents of the municipality and challenging wellbeing and equality in many ways. The effects of the pandemic on the wellbeing of children and young people, for example, are long-lasting. We must continue to invest in these matters in intersectoral cooperation, including with the wellbeing services county.

Up-to-date and reliable information is the basis for good and effective decision-making. Structures of knowledge-based management are being developed at the city level as well as in the departments.

sure activities in the Tempo Orchestra have become an established part of the everyday life of schoolchildren and a valuable addition to the educational work of comprehensive schools. The activities are currently offered at six different schools all over Vantaa.

The Tempo Orchestra strengthens the sense of community between young people from different backgrounds. There are no entrance exams for the orchestra, and both the instruction and instruments are provided free of charge. School teachers help the orchestra find young people who will particularly benefit from the activities. Instruction is provided by qualified teachers familiar with the Tempo Orchestra’s operating methods. Schools from areas where low-threshold recreational opportunities have been asked for are involved in the activities. Playing in the Tempo Orchestra has developed friendships and strengthened pupils’ social skills and motivation to attend school.

### Education and learning

Providing early childhood education and training and supporting continuous learning are at the core of municipalities’ basic duties and an important part of promoting the SDGs. In Finland, equal, free-of-charge and high-quality comprehensive school has long been considered a key value and a source of pride. Finland extended compulsory education to the upper secondary level in 2021. Recently, however, there has been worrying news about a decline in learning levels and the differences between different groups in learning and education. Education must be continuous-

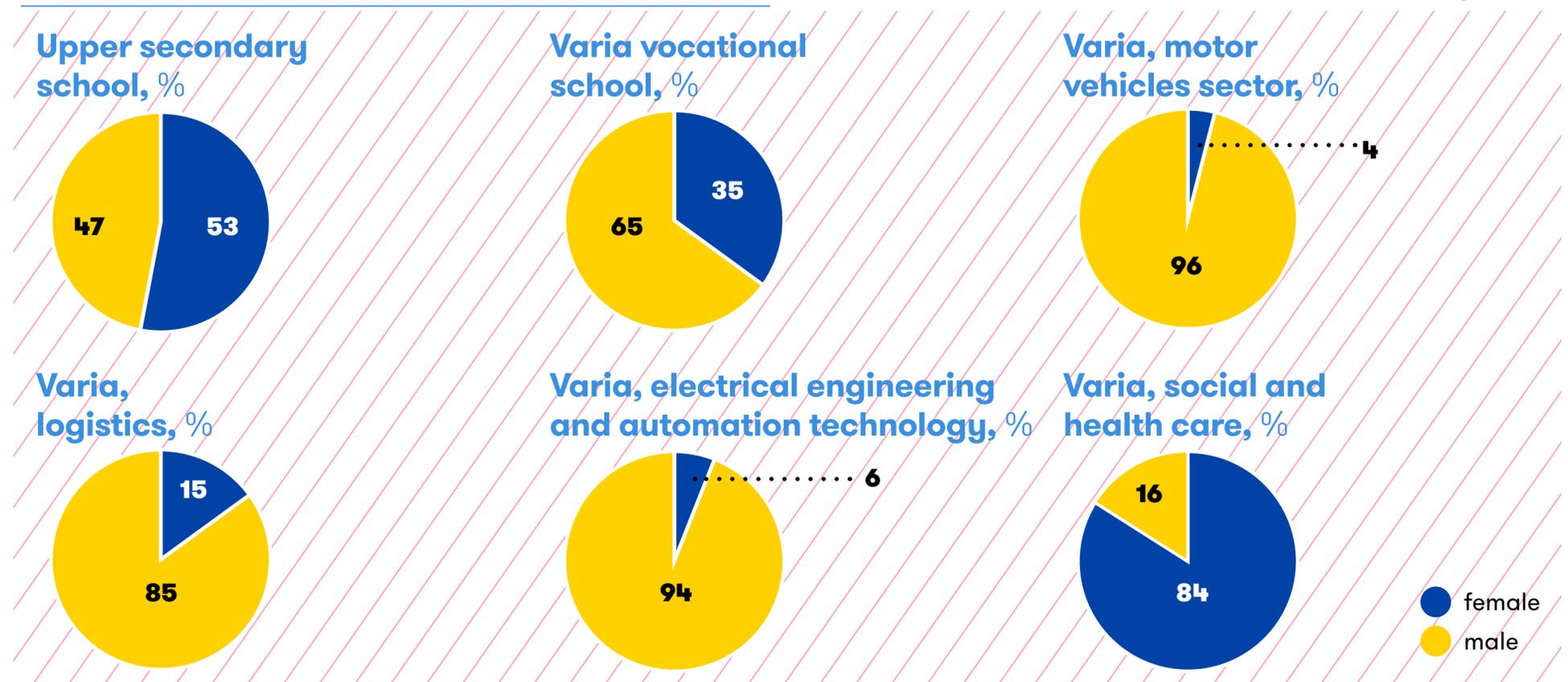
### Young people aged 17-24 who are not enrolled in education, 2021

**12.7%**

Source: Statistics and indicators database Sotkanet.fi

### Gender distribution among students accepted into upper secondary school and Varia vocational school, 2022

Source: City of Vantaa



### Students who skip school meals at least once a week, 8th and 9th grade, 2021



Source: Statistics and indicators database Sotkanet.fi

### Varia graduates who are employed 1 year after obtaining their degree, 2020



Source: Vipunen

ly developed and supported to ensure a high level of learning and equality throughout the study path.

Vantaa wants to invest in continuous learning for all age groups, which is broadly linked to wellbeing, equality, working life and the

vitality of the region. In 2020, Vantaa joined UNESCO’s international **Learning Cities network**. The network of 294 cities around the world shares knowledge, skills and experience in the development of lifelong learning. The work is guided by the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals. Vantaa has established its own **network of lifelong learning** (Aina oppiva Vantaa), which distributes information and supports the members of the network in finding partners for cooperation. The key objective of the network is to promote lifelong learning for all Vantaa residents equally, to support the raising of the level of education and to increase the wellbeing brought by learning.

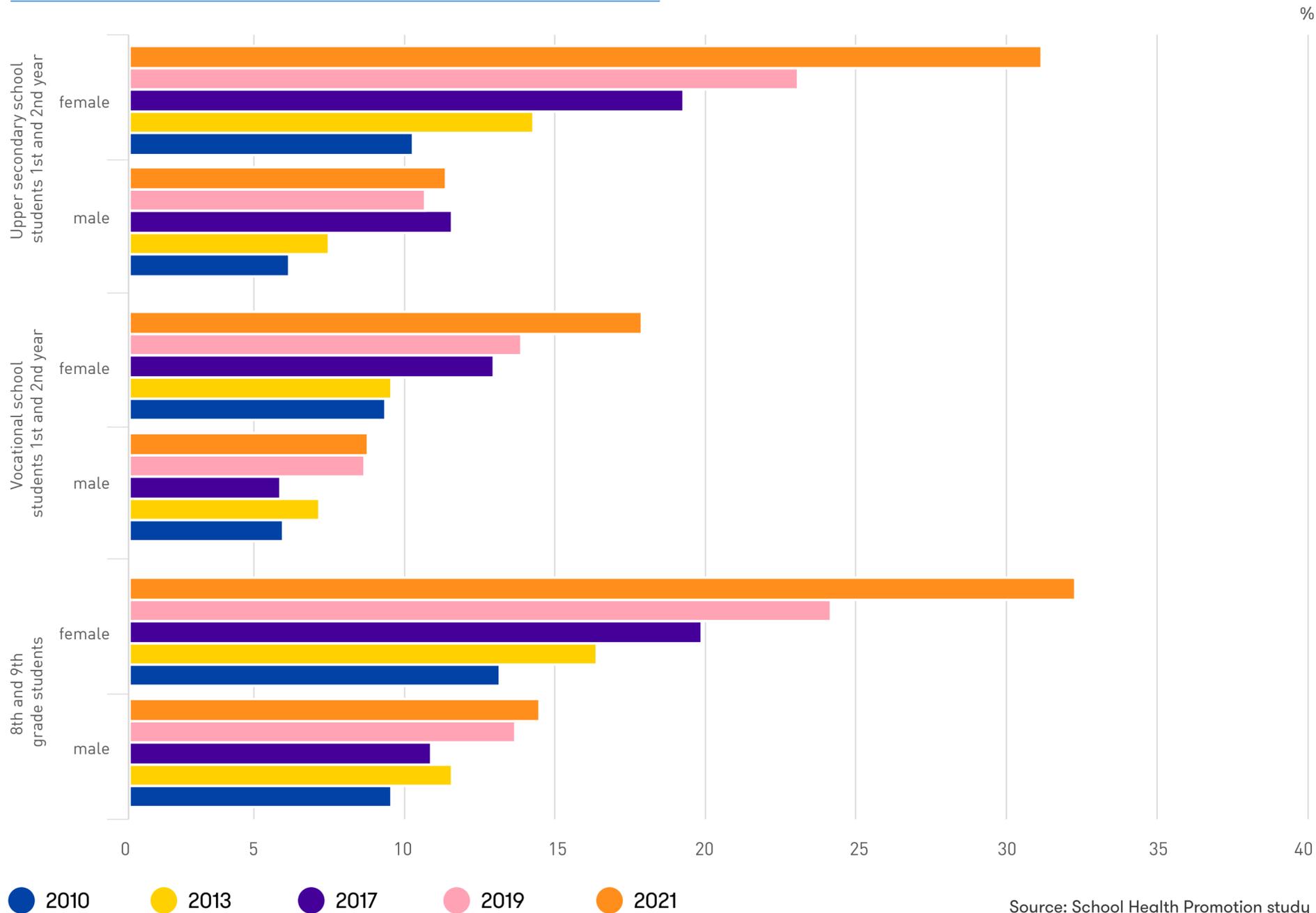
Finnish early childhood education and primary and lower secondary education are committed to the **principles of inclusion**. Inclusion means that all children have the right to early and appropriate support and the realisation of their right to learn as part of a group. Early and appropriate support has a long-lasting positive impact on children’s learning. There has been much public debate in Finland recently about the challenges of inclusion in schools, and the realisation of inclusion does require continuous work by both teachers and the entire work community in early childhood education and schools. In Vantaa, the shared commitment to the principles of inclusion and effective early support are developed, for example, by strengthening staff competence and multi-professional cooperation and by developing the targeting and effectiveness of support.

As part of a package that supports the principles of inclusion, Vantaa’s early childhood education has introduced the **ProVaka** model for supporting social skills by developing the operating cul-

ture of daycare centres, which is a long-term training and guidance package for early childhood education staff. According to studies and Vantaa’s own assessments, the most common support needs of children are related to lacking social and emotional skills, such as difficulties in self-regulation and defiant or aggressive behaviour. It is in these areas that deficiencies in Finnish early childhood education have been identified, and support should be provided more systematically. ProVaka strengthens the competence of staff so that they are better able to support children’s social and emotional skills. In this way, it contributes to a more effective and thorough incorporation of the principles of inclusion into the core activities and operational culture of early childhood education.

Since 2019, four school social workers have been working in Vantaa’s **early childhood education** teamed up with **psychologists** to support parents, children and daycare staff. Providing early support helps prevent the problems of children and families from growing worse. The operating model aims particularly to reach the families that have difficulty seeking help through other channels. For example, language can be a barrier to getting help, and more than half of the clients of the school social workers’ speak a language other than Finnish as their native language. The effectiveness of the service has been monitored through regular surveys. Customers feel that they have received support in parenting, confidence in their own abilities as parents and means for dealing with their child in challenging situations. The staff of daycare centres have received multi-professional support in their own work and in addressing issues with parents.

## Students experiencing burnout

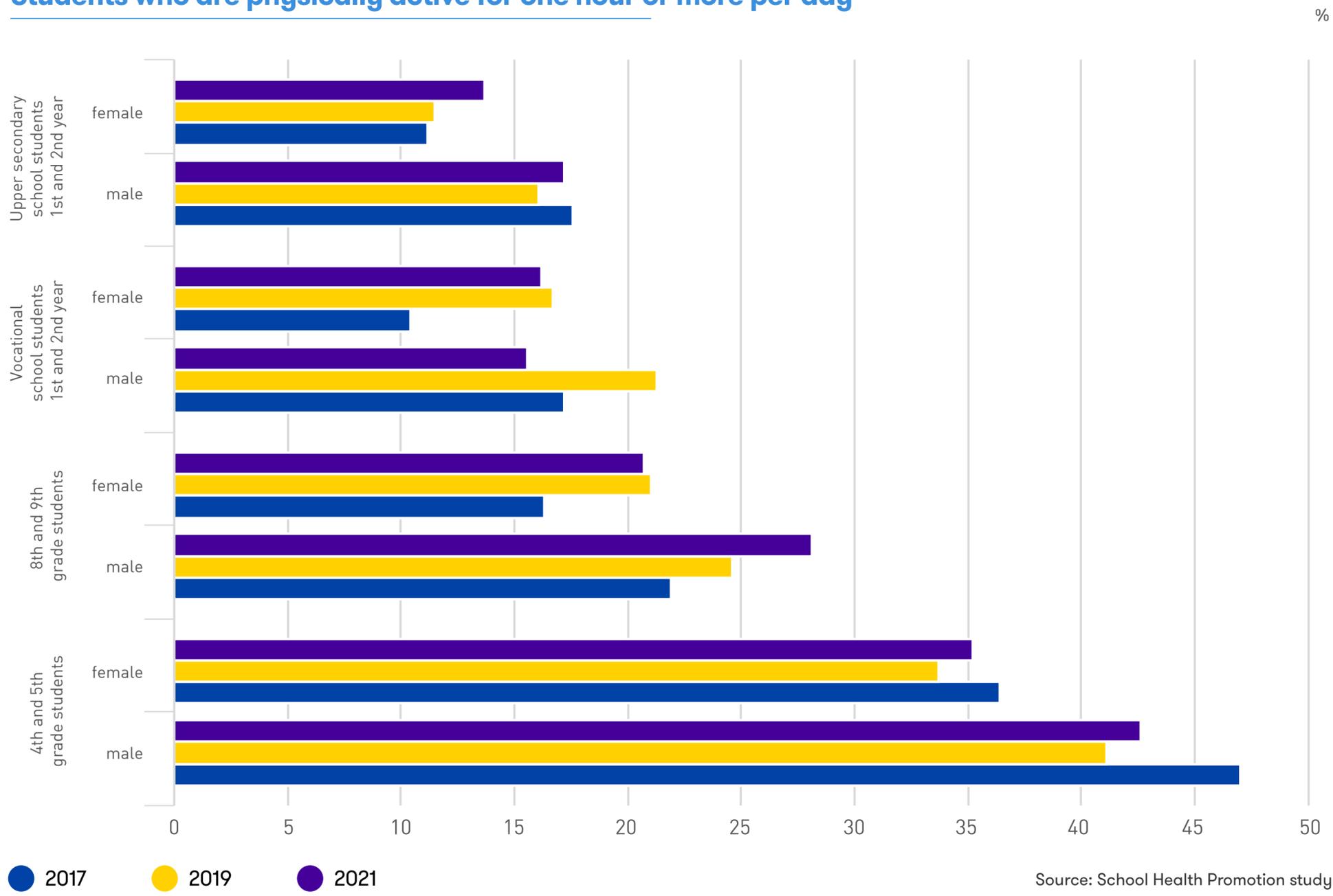


Source: School Health Promotion study

**Regional segregation**, which Vantaa is striving to prevent through measures such as the ‘Vantaa is socially sustainable’ programme, also poses challenges to daycare centres and schools and undermines the realisation of equality. Vantaa applied for and was granted the state’s equality funding, which is being directed to different units to support education according to certain criteria related to the population of the region to reduce the effects of segregation. For example, the funding has been used to hire transversal special education teachers for transitional stages, resource teachers, assistants and multilingual counsellors. The aim is to curb the increase in segregation with the help of a model that reduces school segregation, which is being developed in the **Shared School** (Yhteinen koulu) project. The project aims to create permanent structures for cooperation between the city’s various departments in order to address the multidimensional challenge of segregation in the long term.

Vantaa is the most international city in Finland, and about 23% of the residents of the municipality have a foreign mother tongue. The foreign-language population is considerably younger than the Finnish-speaking population, which is reflected in the schools and early childhood education in Vantaa. Approximately 28% of the pupils study **Finnish and literature as a second language** in separate groups. In Finland, there has recently been some debate about the suitability of these groups for pupils who have a good command of the Finnish language and could participate in the regular mother tongue instruction. There are plans to better specify and guide the selection of the curriculum in Vantaa. The language awareness of all teachers will be increased, for example by

### Students who are physically active for one hour or more per day



means of a network of language awareness officers. The largest language groups in Vantaa’s schools are Russian, Estonian, Arabic, Somali and Albanian, and more than 30 different languages are studied in Vantaa in native language instruction complementing primary and lower secondary education.

Studies show that the learning outcomes and wellbeing of foreign-language pupils in comprehensive school are lower than average, and **multilingual counsellors** have been hired in Vantaa to support them since 2020. The counsellors support pupils in planning their studies, transition phases, goal setting and emotional and interaction skills. They also support families and cooperate with other parties that offer services to young people. The work carried out by the counsellors strengthens the important role of the school in supporting integration and improves cooperation between schools and families. The feedback on the work of the counsellors has been positive from schools, families and pupils alike, and the job description will be further developed to better meet the needs.

Cooperation between families and schools and the wellbeing of pupils have also been developed in the **Engaging School Community Work (SKY) project** coordinated by the Ministry of Education and Culture, in which Vantaa is participating. The aim of the project is to create an operating model that supports pupils’ engagement in the school community and reduces absenteeism. The project has piloted the teaching of emotional and interpersonal skills to pupils in lower secondary school and giving additional training related to emotional skills and positive pedagogy to teachers, and

Source: School Health Promotion study

### Proportion of unfilled vacancies and unqualified teachers and special needs teachers in early childhood education, 02/2023

47%

Source: City of Vantaa

has also supported schools' operating models against bullying. A model for addressing absenteeism has been planned and implemented at the city level.

Long-term cooperation has been carried out in Vantaa for years in connection with **the transition from comprehensive school to upper secondary education**. New preparatory training for education leading to a degree was launched nationwide in 2022, and has started well in Vantaa. Case manager activities have been developed in cooperation between youth services and in basic and secondary education, giving certain young people long-term support through the transition period. Information transfer between basic education (primary and lower secondary education) and upper secondary education has been intensified in Vantaa, and is being developed further. Practices related to information transfer should also be developed nationally in the future. Supporting study paths for students with disabilities has also been identified as a challenge; Vantaa has no study oppor-

tunities for them, and the provision in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area is not sufficient for their needs.

Cooperation between different parties has also been intensified at secondary education institutions. At Vantaa Vocational College **Varia**, concerns about high drop-out rates highlighted the need for **youth workers** on the premises of the educational institute. The operating model, which includes cooperation between the school and youth services, was first developed in a project aimed to reduce the drop-out rate (Keskeyttämisestä kohtaamiseen) project and was made permanent in 2022. A total of eight youth workers work at Varia's various locations, focusing in particular on identifying, supporting and increasing the wellbeing of students at risk of dropping out. Cooperation between comprehensive school and Varia has also been intensified in this context.

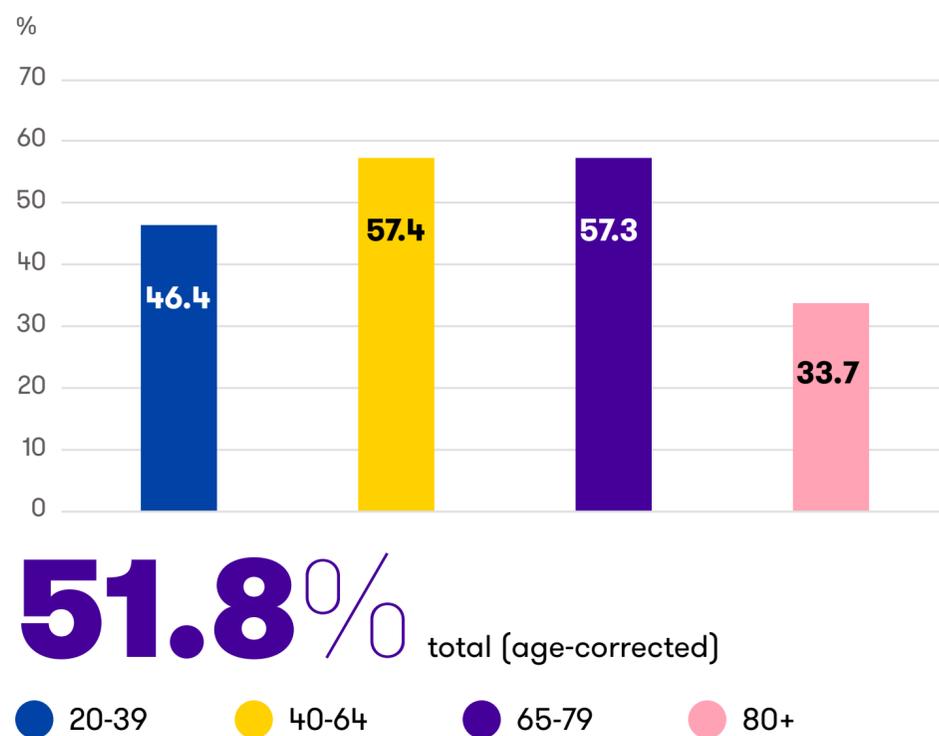
In 2021–2022, in cooperation with Annie Advisor Oy, Varia developed and piloted the **Annie bot**, which provides students with low-threshold support by sending them regular text messages and asking about their need for support. Depending on the nature of the support needed, the bot will direct the student to the right contact person. Varia has seen a significant decrease in the drop-out rate since the service was introduced. The feedback from students has been positive; they have felt that the bot has lowered the threshold for asking for help with various problems, which has helped keep them on track in their studies. Students' wellbeing and ability to cope is enhanced by the knowledge that they are cared about and that support and help are available.



## Shortage of labour challenges for work on wellbeing

Vantaa, like all of Finland, is facing growing challenges in terms of the availability of skilled labour in many sectors. There is a shortage of healthcare and social welfare professionals, early childhood education teachers and special education teachers in Vantaa, which significantly affects the city’s ability to provide high-quality services and ensure the wellbeing of its residents. Vantaa has drawn up an

### Share of adults whose perceived quality of life is good, by age group, 2021



Source: Capital region Health Survey 2021

**employee availability programme for 2022–2024**, which aims to support the power of attraction and retention of the city as an employer. The programme emphasises the development of management as a retention factor and also includes measures to increase the wellbeing of personnel and to develop competence. The city aims to influence national decision-making in order to increase the number of starting places in the fields of study facing a labour shortage.

The labour shortage poses major challenges in **early childhood education**, where unfilled vacancies, non-qualified teachers and special needs teachers already account for 47% of vacancies, compared to 34% in 2021. The shortage poses many challenges in the everyday life of daycare centres; in the worst case scenario, the operating hours of daycare centres may need to be limited. This situation weakens the prerequisites for conducting high-quality early childhood education and has a negative impact on employees’ ability to cope at work. An availability working group established for early childhood education in the autumn of 2022 has planned and implemented various measures to increase staff attraction and retention. The measures include open recruitment, the development of recruitment marketing and competence of existing personnel, qualification paths, for example through apprenticeships, increasing the number of trainee positions and the development of practical training. It is also important to pay attention to the employees’ ability to cope and wellbeing at work.

**Youth work** faces major challenges in the availability of labour despite active recruitment. Nearly one third of youth work vacancies

have not been filled. Various arrangements have been made to hire unqualified youth workers and hourly workers to fill the labour shortage. In spite of this, the city has been forced to reduce the opening hours of youth facilities, close facilities for fixed periods of time and reduce the amount of outreach youth work due to the serious labour shortage.

The shortage of skilled workers also brings challenges to several services that transferred from the City of Vantaa’s sustainability to the Vantaa and Kerava Wellbeing Services County at the beginning of 2023. In **child welfare services**, the shortage of skilled social workers brings major challenges and causes long queues in accessing services. The wellbeing services county will continue the development work started by the City of Vantaa in terms of process and management development and the wellbeing at work of the personnel.

In the **services supporting families**, which were also transferred to the wellbeing services county, the challenges in the availability of personnel are reflected in the occupational groups of psychologists, social workers and physicians, in particular. The shortage has been partly compensated for by outsourcing services or temporary agency work, but this is not possible for all positions. The challenges of staff availability have been reflected in delays in access to services, especially in family counselling services and the services of child welfare supervisors. Processes and services are being continuously developed to meet clients’ service needs despite the challenges posed by the labour shortages.

## Adult population

The wellbeing of the adult population is being increased and inequalities reduced in Vantaa through a number of measures related to health, inclusion and a sense of community. Services are brought close to the residents by establishing them in places people frequent anyway and through outreach work. Targeting services at all residents prevents problems from arising, but at the same time special attention must be paid to the most vulnerable groups.

The phenomena and developments related to wellbeing are based on a wide range of factors that are linked to each other. For example, homelessness is a complex phenomenon where many underlying factors are linked together. In the wake of the transfer of health and social services from the city to the wellbeing services county, it is important to ensure effective cooperation between them and to ensure overall coordination of the wider issues to which the services provided by both parties respond. Attention must be paid to cross-administrative coordination and its structures in order to maintain and promote the overall wellbeing of people.

For the city to be able to support the wellbeing of the residents effectively in the future, it needs to have up-to-date information. The prerequisites for **knowledge-based management** in Vantaa have partly deteriorated since the start of the wellbeing services counties because the Healthy Finland survey of the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL), which measures the wellbeing of the adult population in a broad manner, will only provide Vantaa with information at the level of the wellbeing services county in future.

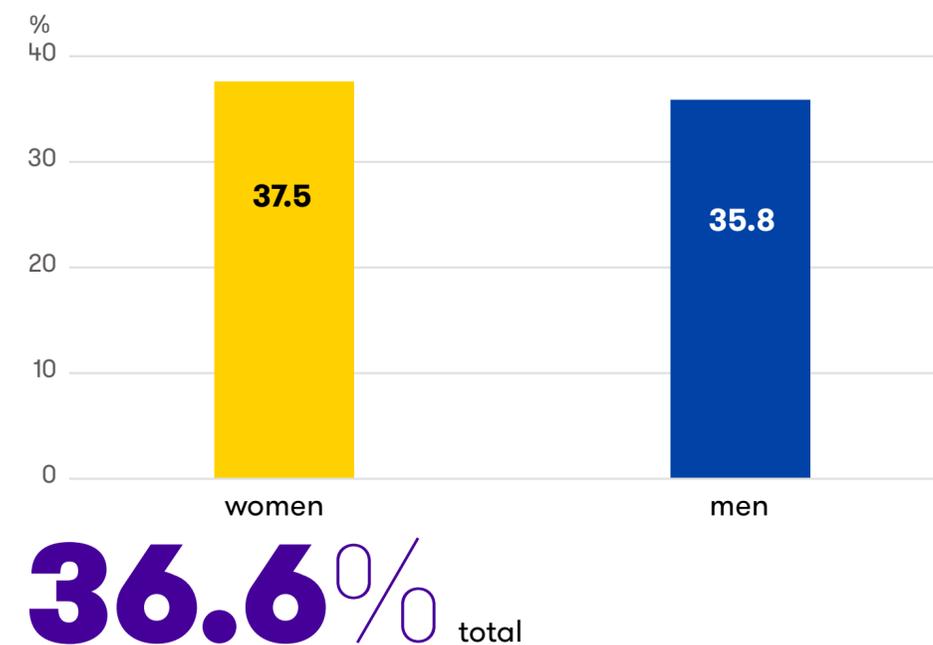
The city's decision not to order municipality-specific information on the survey results weakens the knowledge base on the basis of which measures and development work will be planned and managed with regard to the wellbeing of the adult population.

A **sense of community** is an integral part of wellbeing, and cities play an important role in creating a public space where a sense of community is created and promoted. Such spaces include libraries and community centres, which play a diverse and significant role in supporting wellbeing.

**Libraries** support the continuous learning of all residents and equal opportunities for education and culture. They also promote a broad sense of community and a circular and sharing economy, not only through their core activity of lending books but also by offering various services and meetings. Vantaa has an extensive library network of 11 libraries throughout the city. In addition, a mobile library circulates in areas that do not have their own library. The libraries offer residents a variety of facilities and shared computers. In addition to borrowing books, the libraries have piloted the lending of many other items and, in 2022, the selection was expanded to include rubbish pickers, energy meters, entrance tickets, season tickets, and much more.

The libraries are important meeting places for Vantaa residents, and they organise various activities that increase the sense of community for people of all ages. Activities have been planned together with young people, and four libraries have started offer-

## Share of adults whose perceived health is average or worse, 2021



Source: Capital region Health Survey 2021

ing club activities for children and young people. Book clubs have been organised for adults, such as the Climate Reading Circle in 2022, as well as language cafés and communal language learning activities. Volunteers have delivered books to elderly people at home, organised various clubs and provided digital support, and the libraries also cooperate with NGOs.

Opportunities for different activities and a sense of community are also offered in Vantaa by **community centres**, spaces shared by residents and open to all that host a lot of activities organised

by, for example, NGOs and volunteers. Community centres reduce loneliness and exclusion and offer opportunities for participation. They increase the sense of community and connections between residents, different communities and the city. In recent years, several new community centres have been established in Vantaa. For example, a former library in Koivukylä was renovated into a community centre that offers opportunities for recreational and volunteer activities. The Koivukylä community centre also hosts community meals within the framework of the Shared Table network, which provides waste food assistance.

After the start of the **war in Ukraine, an assistance centre** was established at the Koivukylä community centre together with the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare. The assistance centre provides support, advice and material assistance to Ukrainian refugees. Employees of the City of Vantaa and the Uusimaa District of the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare works at the assistance centre. Other NGOs and companies are also involved. The assistance centre hosts a variety of activities, and people can go there to spend time, have a coffee and chat with others in similar situations. There is a playground for children with Ukrainian or Russian-speaking volunteers present.

Vantaa promotes the **health and wellbeing** of its residents by creating various client-oriented services and making them easily available. **Wellbeing mentoring**, which started in Vantaa in 2020, is a free lifestyle guidance service intended mainly for Vantaa residents over the age of 18. The service aims at permanent lifestyle

### Relative poverty, 2021

10.9%

Source: Statistics and indicators database Sotkanet.fi; Total statistics on income distribution (Statistics Finland)

### Long-term recipients of income support, % of inhabitants, 2021

3.9%

Source: Statistics and indicators database Sotkanet.fi

changes and improving health habits in a client-oriented manner. The service includes regular guidance meetings with the mentor and a health-related mobile application. The programme has achieved significant lifestyle changes and cost savings in health-care expenditure.

**Oral healthcare** organised various low-threshold **resident events** during 2020–2022 with the aim of finding residents who had a great

### Amount of homeless persons, 2022

291

Source: Ara

### Gini coefficient, 2021

26.3

Source: Statistics and indicators database Sotkanet.fi

need for oral health care but did not seek out such services on their own. They were referred to oral health care services and self-treatment for oral health. Another aim was to increase residents' interest in and taking responsibility for their own wellbeing and understanding of the effects of their actions on health.

The low-threshold service was offered to residents at familiar locations, such as open meeting places, youth centres, libraries, neigh-

bourhood clubs and community centres. Pop-up centres provided an individualised assessment of the need for care for people of different ages. A total of 162 group events were held during the project between 2020 and 2022, with more than 3,000 people of different ages participating. In addition, over 8,000 children and young people were reached at a summer food event. More than 500 assessments of the need for care and further appointments were made. The operating model has been integrated into practice as part of the operations of open meeting points and other low-threshold locations, and it will also be continued now that responsibility for oral health care has been transferred to the Vantaa and Kerava Wellbeing Services County.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the sports service module launched a new digital service, virtual exercise sessions, in November 2020. The service is open to all and free of charge, and its use does not require a login. The **virtual exercise sessions** have played a very important role in the continuation of physical exercise – this was especially true for the elderly during the pandemic years. In addition to physical exercise, the virtual exercise sessions promote a feeling of inclusion. In 2020–2021, the sessions had thousands of users each month, at most almost 30,000 completed exercise sessions per month. The virtual exercise sessions are still available for everyone at [Vantaa.fi](#). The website has a large number of recordings and a few weekly live streams.

Vantaa aims to promote the **services and wellbeing for the elderly** in a comprehensive and preventive manner. In Finland, the ageing

of the population will significantly change the structures of society, and the trend will only accelerate in the coming years. A lot of attention must be paid to the wellbeing and full inclusion of older people.

**Age-friendly Vantaa** is a vision of a city where every older person can lead a good life according to their preferences. In September 2021, the City of Vantaa joined the WHO's Age-Friendly Cities and Communities network of 1,363 cities from 47 countries working to improve and promote the living conditions of the elderly population. Vantaa's goal is to promote and develop age-friendly urban construction, accessible services and civil society activities in all aspects of the planning, preparation, decision-making, implementation and monitoring of the city's and wellbeing services county's operations.

One of the objectives of the Vantaa Welfare Plan for the Elderly for 2018–2022 was to prevent the exclusion of the elderly, for example by means of outreach work. The **MEK Focal Points – outreach work for the elderly project** started in 2020 with the aim of creating a model for outreach work for the elderly in Vantaa, finding older people in need of help, developing services for them and supporting meaningful and dignified living at home. The project reached 130 older people at risk of social exclusion or loneliness and supported them in taking control of their own lives. The project launched groups to provide free and continuous activities, support and help for elderly substance abusers in their daily lives. Outreach work with older people supports their independence and increases their wellbeing. Since the project, the work is be-

ing continued by the wellbeing services county, and the development of operations will continue within the framework of the Good Age (Hyvä ikä) project, in cooperation with the wellbeing services county, cities and NGOs.

When it comes to poverty and inequality, as well as overall wellbeing, the importance of one's own home is immeasurable. **Homelessness** has been reduced in Finland using the Housing First principle, where housing is seen as a fundamental right and basis for, not a consequence of, solving the person's life management problems. Finland aims to halve homelessness by 2023 and eradicate it completely by 2027. To achieve this goal, a cooperative programme to halve homelessness has been launched with key city regions, service providers and NGOs.

Vantaa is constantly working to eradicate homelessness. In 2021, more emergency accommodation places were added and the **Homelessness Prevention Project** (Asunnottomuuden ehkäisyhanke) was launched. The Homelessness Prevention Project develops services for the most vulnerable and those in need of multidisciplinary and extensive support, mainly the homeless population and those at risk of homelessness in Vantaa.

The project is developing a multi-professional working method that combines healthcare and social welfare expertise and expertise through experience. The team conducts outreach work with the target group on the streets and on the premises of partners, providing multi-professional service guidance and advice. The aim of

the activities is to ensure that clients get access to the necessary services and to support them in resolving their housing situation.

A team consisting of a nurse and a social worker is developing multi-disciplinary cooperation in the handling of issues concerning homeless target groups and is creating a model for client-oriented and need-based housing consultation. Between February 2021 and September 2022, the outreach team reached 118 people in the project, 39 of whom received housing and 22 of whom gained access to supported housing services. In addition, a solution was found to the homelessness of seven people. In 2022, housing consultation organised a walk-in event attended by 35 clients, 15 of whom received housing and four were helped to retain their housing.

The number of homeless people in Vantaa was 227 in 2020 and 219 in 2021, but in 2022 the number rose sharply to 291. This change is partly explained by the fact that the Homelessness Prevention Project's outreach work also reaches clients who were previously not known to be homeless and who were newly recorded in the statistics and services. Homelessness data has also been compiled more carefully. Long-term homelessness has continued to decline in Vantaa, but short-term homelessness has probably increased despite statistical perspectives. The service backlog in health and social services due to the pandemic and the rise in prices affect this development and further weaken the position of vulnerable groups.

Inclusion and a sense of community are an integral part of wellbeing, and they can also be combined with other SDGs, such as

Reduced Poverty, Zero Hunger and Climate Action. These perspectives are combined in the **Shared Table** activities, which combines food security with reducing food waste and community activities. In Finland, food consumption accounts for an average of 20–25% of a consumer's climate impact. Approximately 650 million kg of food waste are generated in Finland each year, approximately half of which is wasted food. The Vantaa Shared Table network combats food waste by donating it to residents in need of food aid. The network employs long-term unemployed persons and volunteers in logistics, kitchen and storage duties.

Shared Table is a model of food waste utilisation and communal food assistance developed in Vantaa that brings together city operators, the church, the third sector and educational institutes to make use of edible food waste. The network includes more than 50 active donors of food waste (wholesalers, grocery shops, food factories) and 86 NGOs that distribute food aid in different ways. Lutheran parishes and other churches are also involved. Approximately 5,500 people benefit from the food aid every week.

The heart of the operations is a food waste terminal established by the City of Vantaa. The amount of food waste passing through the terminal has decreased sharply since the beginning of the war in Ukraine in 2022, from about 14,000 kg per week to 10,000 kg per week. The reason for this is the decrease in waste generated by food factories. At the same time, the effects of pandemic and the rise in food prices have been reflected in the need for food aid, although not in perfectly straightforward ways. The need for food aid has increased and, on the other hand, some elderly people stopped visiting food aid services during the pandemic, which is concerning. Most of the recipients of food aid are older people, especially women.



# VANTAA IS ECOLOGICALLY SUSTAINABLE



## Vantaa is ecologically sustainable

**Vantaa is contributing to the international objective of limiting global warming to below 1.5°C. The city has set itself the goal of being carbon neutral by 2030, which means that the city will reduce its emissions by 80% from 1990 levels by 2030. In order to achieve carbon neutrality, the Roadmap to Resource Wisdom has been drawn up to support the ‘Vantaa is ecologically sustainable’ strategic theme.**

- In 2021, Vantaa’s greenhouse gas emissions amounted to approximately 872 kilotonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO<sub>2e</sub>), which means that the greenhouse gas emissions remained almost unchanged from the previous year, when the corresponding figure was 871 kt of CO<sub>2e</sub>. In order for the city to be carbon neutral, the emissions in 2030 would need to be 215 kt CO<sub>2e</sub>.

Vantaa’s Roadmap to Resource Wisdom was approved in 2018 and the update for the new council term was approved in February 2022. The goal of the updated Roadmap to Resource Wisdom in 2030 is a carbon-neutral Vantaa where the city’s planning and implementation will be resource-wise, nature will be diverse, natural resources will be used sustainably and the practices of residents, companies and communities will be sustainable.

Vantaa moves towards the goal on the six lanes of the Roadmap to Resource Wisdom: community structure and mobility, carbon-neu-





### Examples of success:

The new local master plan entered into force at the beginning of 2023 and takes into account all the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The local master plan designates significantly more nature conservation areas than before. The future tramway will promote sustainable mobility and create preconditions for reducing regional inequalities.

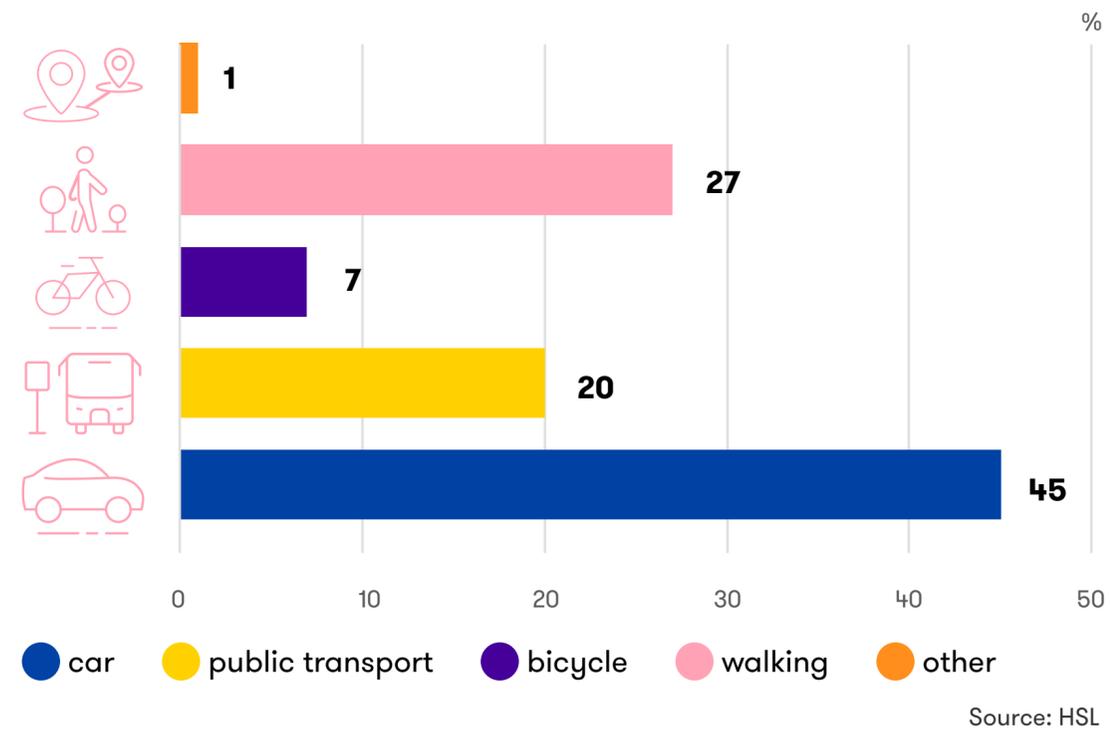
tral energy, life cycle and circular economy of materials, diverse nature, sustainable Vantaa and carbon sinks and offsetting.

A summary of the implementation of the measures of Vantaa's Roadmap to Resource Wisdom is recorded annually in the Environmental Sustainability Report. The report also describes the good examples implemented in the city during the year to advance climate issues and resource wisdom. In the spring of 2023, in addition to the Environmental Sustainability Report, the progress of the measures in the Roadmap to Resource Wisdom can also be monitored at the action level with the Environmental Watchdog application, which is available on the city's website.

### Community structure and mobility

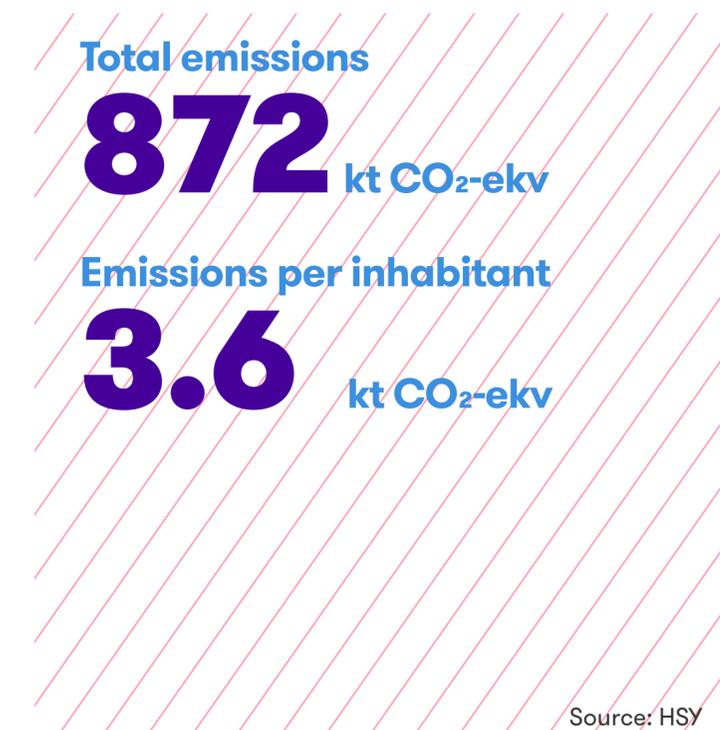
A resource-wise community structure enables Vantaa residents to live a sustainable and low-emission lifestyle, use sustainable

### Modal split of passenger transport, 2018



modes of transport and safeguard natural values. The key to environmental sustainability is to reduce the burden on the environment and invest in green, sustainable and accessible solutions and public spaces, as well as to increase opportunities for participatory, integrated and sustainable community planning. Land use solutions can significantly reduce the greenhouse gas emissions of the Vantaa region, for example by influencing the energy consumption of buildings, the use of renewable energy and transport solutions. The effects are felt with a delay of several years and are long-lasting. At the same time, Vantaa is being

### Greenhouse gas emissions, 2021



planned, built and maintained taking into account the requirements of the changing climate.

Vantaa is located at the intersection of national main roads, an international airport and long-distance and commuter railways. Diverse and comprehensive transport connections enable smooth travel chains within the city and the Helsinki Metropolitan Area, to other parts of Finland and abroad. In the coming years, the transport system in Vantaa will focus particularly on efficient public transport, the development of pedestrian and bicycle traf-

### Private vehicles in use, 2022

**110,817**

Source: Traficom

fic, the streamlining of traffic infrastructure and the promotion of low-emission vehicles. The planned tramway is one of Vantaa’s key projects for the next few years.

The **local master plan** guides construction in the city, and it is the most direct and effective way to promote sustainable construction. Vantaa’s new local master plan, which takes into account all aspects of sustainable development, entered into force on 11 January 2023. The aim is to compact the urban structure in already built environments, mainly relying on rail transport, and to leave space for green areas and growing land. Growth will focus on population centres, especially Tikkurila, Aviapolis and Myyrmäki. The route of the future **tramway** will be the strongest growth area, and the city structure along it will densify. A network of green areas has also been linked to the tram route. The route will better connect areas threatened by increasing segregation to the rest of the city region, creating preconditions for greater regional equality.

### Total energy consumption (GWh), 2021

**5,708**

Source: HSY

The tram route will connect the easternmost parts of the city, in particular, with rail transport. According to a report assessing the planning framework, the urban structure along the tram route will become more mixed and diverse. In many places, the car-centric urban environments will be transformed into a tram-centric and pedestrian city of short distances. As an accessible form of mobility, the tramway will especially improve the mobility opportunities of older people and people with reduced mobility. From a climate perspective, reducing the need for mobility and focusing on sustainable modes of transport are the plan’s particular strengths. The planning framework takes comprehensive account of the natural and aquatic environment and connects green areas to each other with green streets.

In addition to the tram, sustainable mobility will be promoted in Vantaa by ensuring the smooth operation of bus services. To improve the conditions for walking, a walking promotion programme has been drawn up with measures that will improve the

### Community energy consumption (kWh/inhabitant/a), 2021

**23,862**

Source: HSY

comfort and accessibility of the environment. The main cycling routes will be improved, and planning will be guided in the longer term by cycling superhighways marked in the local master plan.

### Carbon-neutral energy

In Vantaa, **energy production and consumption** account for the majority of climate emissions. The floor area of district-heated buildings makes up about 70% of the total floor area in the city region. The aim is to phase out fossil fuels in heating in Vantaa by 2030. Energy efficiency is being systematically improved in city properties as well as in properties in the entire city region. Municipal residents are being encouraged to become active operators in energy production. The key is to ensure affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all in a sustainable, low-emission way.

**Vantaa Energy Ltd** is working decisively to reduce carbon dioxide emissions with its Carbon-negative 2030 project aimed at ensur-



### Examples of success

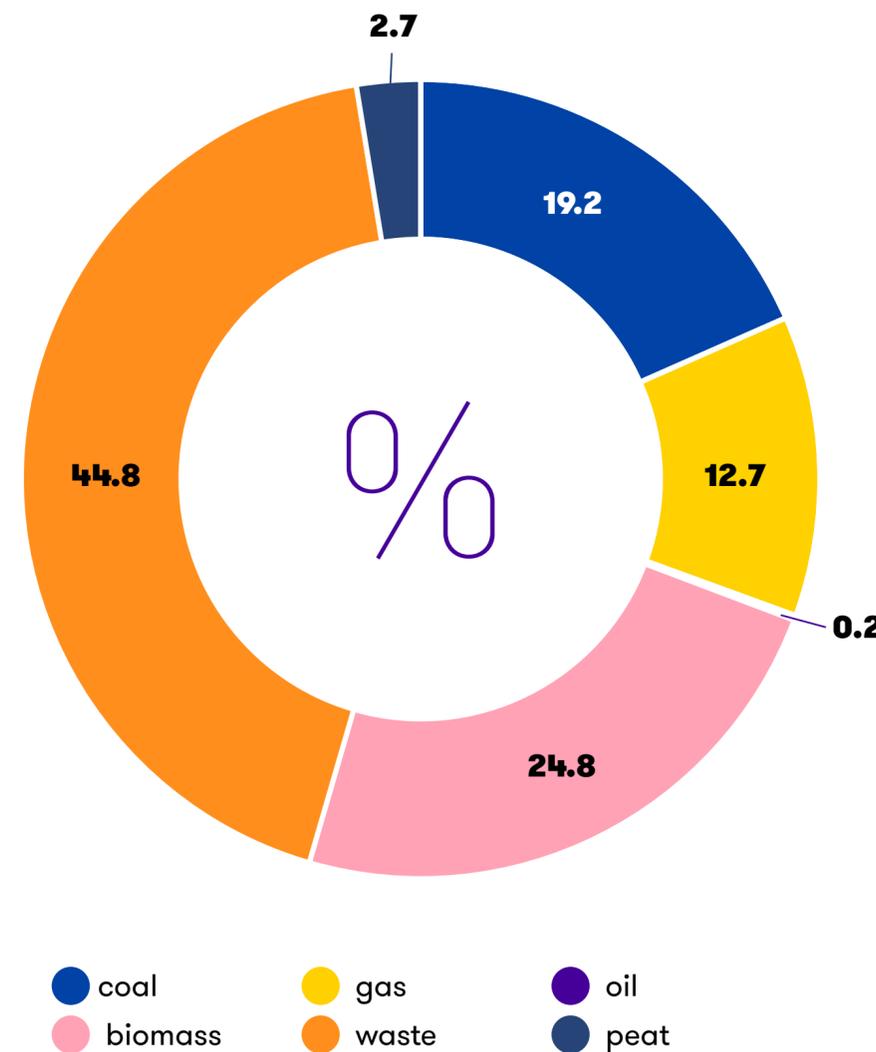
A new lane, diverse nature, has been added to the Roadmap to Resource Wisdom. Vantaa is committed to formulating a long-term strategy to safeguard local nature and biodiversity. In 2023, an overall biodiversity plan will be drawn up in Vantaa to deepen the goals and measures of the 'diverse nature' lane of the Roadmap to Resource Wisdom.



### Examples of development areas

Integrating environmental sustainability aspects into all activities still requires work. For example, economic and urban growth objectives should be systematically assessed from the perspective of ecological impacts, so that growth can be effectively steered in an environmentally sustainable direction.

### Energy sources used for heating buildings, 2021



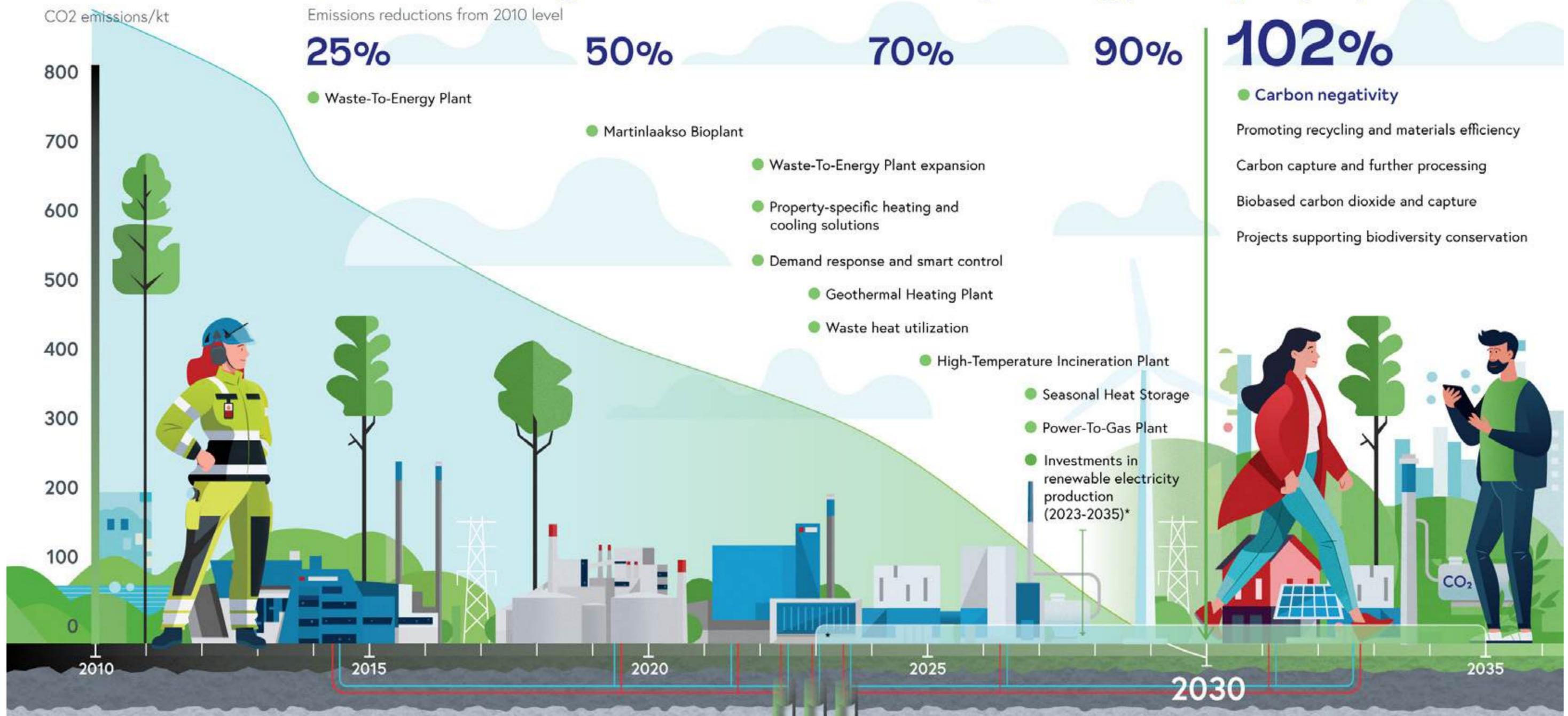
Source: HSY

ing that the company binds more carbon dioxide than it releases into the atmosphere. In this way, the company will move towards carbon negativity in 2030. The City of Vantaa owns 60% of Vantaa Energy Ltd.

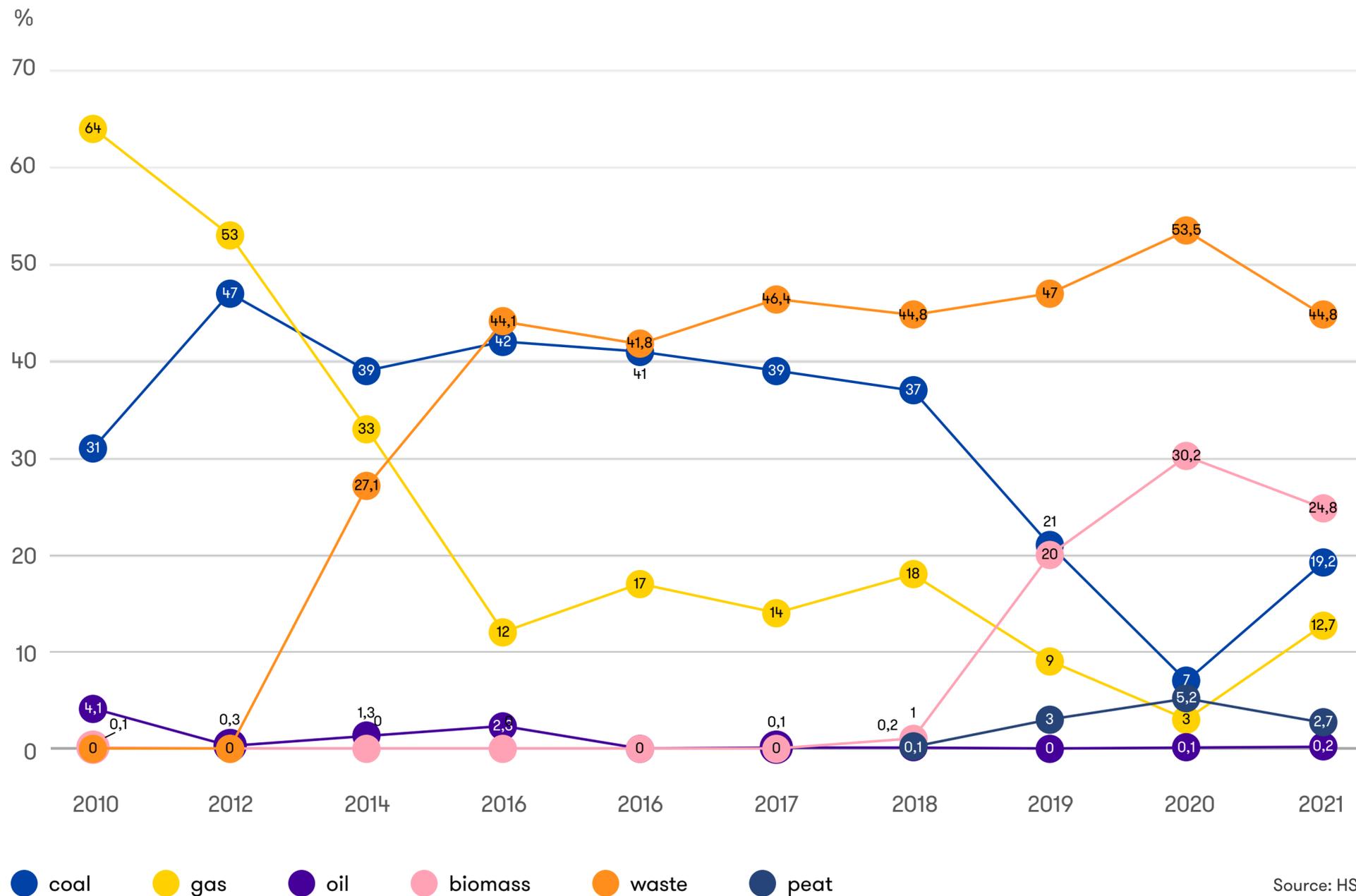
Russia's invasion of Ukraine has changed the energy situation throughout Europe, and the **availability and price of energy** have an impact on Finns' everyday lives. However, there was no shortage of electricity in Finland during the winter of 2022-2023, partly due to the mild weather. Nevertheless, we cannot predict future developments, and it is still important to be prepared for occasional power shortages. The City of Vantaa and the companies in the city group have been carrying out long-term energy saving work for years, which makes it challenging to find new significant energy saving targets in the event of a crisis. For the winter of 2022-2023, a separate **energy saving plan** was drawn up, with measures for adjusting the temperatures of the premises, outdoor lighting and sports facilities.

In its own operations, the **city organisation** of Vantaa has actively **reduced energy consumption** and the emissions caused by it. Oil consumption in city properties has decreased, mainly as a result of a transition to geothermal heat. Carbon footprint calculation has been piloted in planning projects and energy efficiency class A has been required in new plot competitions. Projects in preparations include land transfer competitions that take the city's environmental objectives into account. In addition, pilot work has been carried out on the incorporation of energy efficiency requirements into land use agreements. The self-gen-

# We aim to be a carbon negative circular economy energy company by 2030



### Energy sources of district heating, 2010–2021, %



Source: HSY

eration of renewable energy in electricity and heat has been increased annually in renovation and new construction projects.

The city is involved in a **project developing a low-carbon assessment tool** for detailed plans (AVA), which takes into account the emissions of development projects in terms of pre-construction, infrastructure construction, buildings and plots as well as energy consumption and transport. In addition, the carbon stocks in the soil and vegetation are assessed. The project will last for two years and aims to create an evaluation tool for all municipalities.

**Green Deals** are voluntary agreements between the state and the business sector or, for example, the municipal sector. They are used to find relatively quick solutions to address climate challenges and promote circular economy in Finland. In Vantaa, the climate impact of construction will be reduced by means of a **Green Deal for zero-emission worksites**. The preparation of the project began in 2019, and from the beginning Vantaa was actively involved together with Helsinki, Espoo and Turku. The Green Deal applies to construction machinery, construction site runs and the energy used on the site, and it includes new construction as well as, for example, street maintenance. The goal is fossil-free worksites by 2025, and by 2050, at least half of the machinery and transport vehicles will be powered by electricity, biogas or hydrogen.

In view of the carbon neutrality targets, it is important to also encourage local residents, companies and other stakeholders to act sustainably. Housing companies, for example, play an important

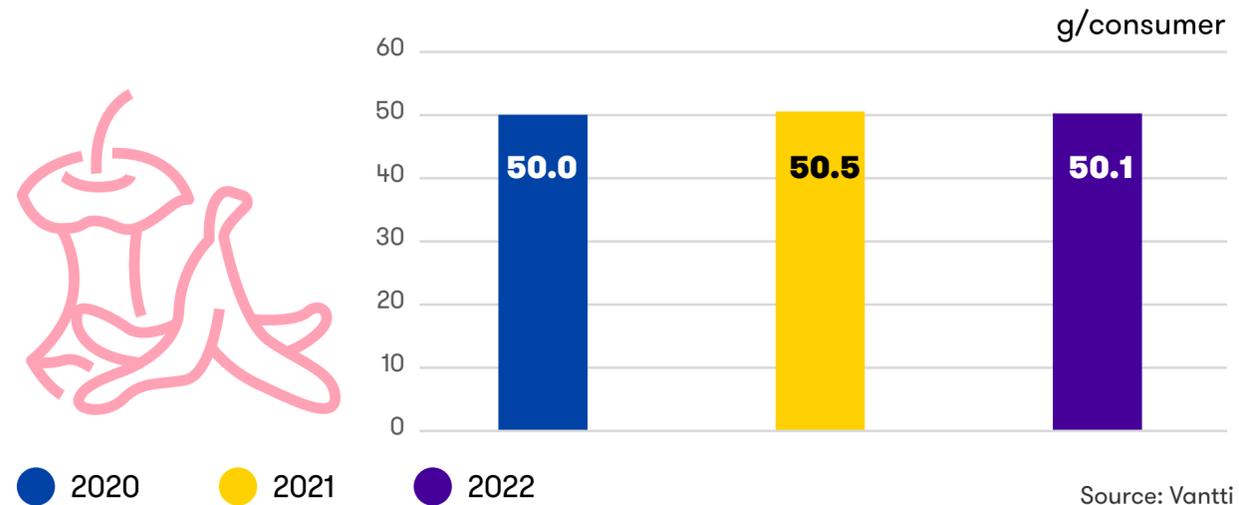
### Waste delivered to the incinerator plant, 2020



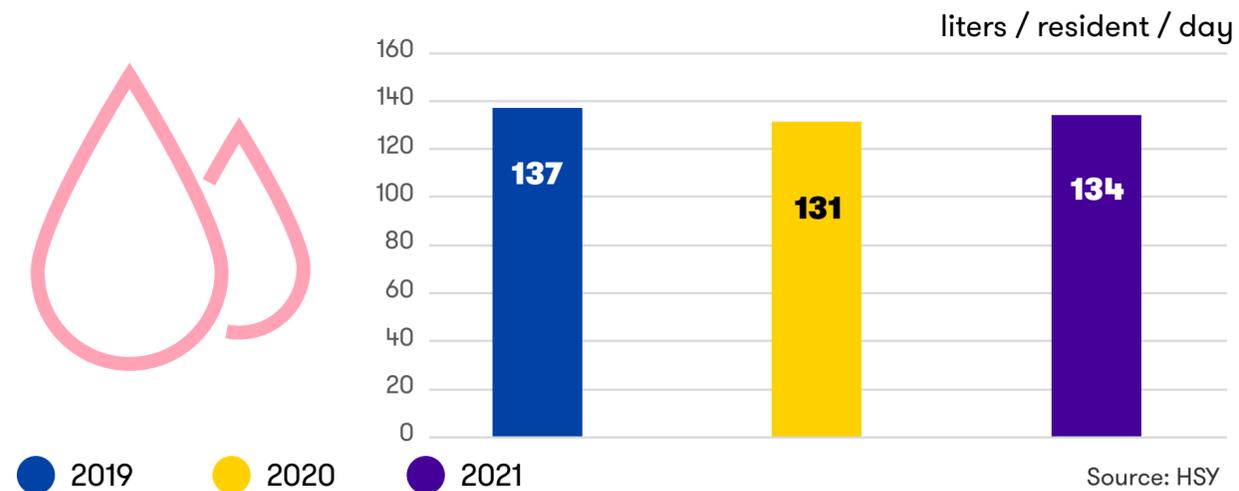
role in energy consumption and promoting energy efficiency. The City of Vantaa was involved in the **Housing Company Club** (Taloyhtiöklubi) project, which developed regional cooperation to promote the energy efficiency of housing companies. The project was implemented together with the cities of Helsinki and Espoo, and its main objective was to support and guide housing companies in energy saving measures and the launching of energy renovations. In the project, nine pilot areas were selected for the establishment of housing company clubs, i.e. cooperation forums for the boards of housing companies in the areas. The clubs provided information on energy efficiency and funding channels and promoted cooperation and information sharing between housing companies. About 300 housing companies participated in the housing company clubs.

The promotion of neighbourhood cooperation and energy efficiency among housing companies will be continued in Vantaa in a **project focusing on the development of cooperation between housing companies and support for residents' climate actions.**

### Bio waste from schools, day care, institutions 2020-2022



### Water usage 2019-2021



### Water leak rate in the sewage system, 2021



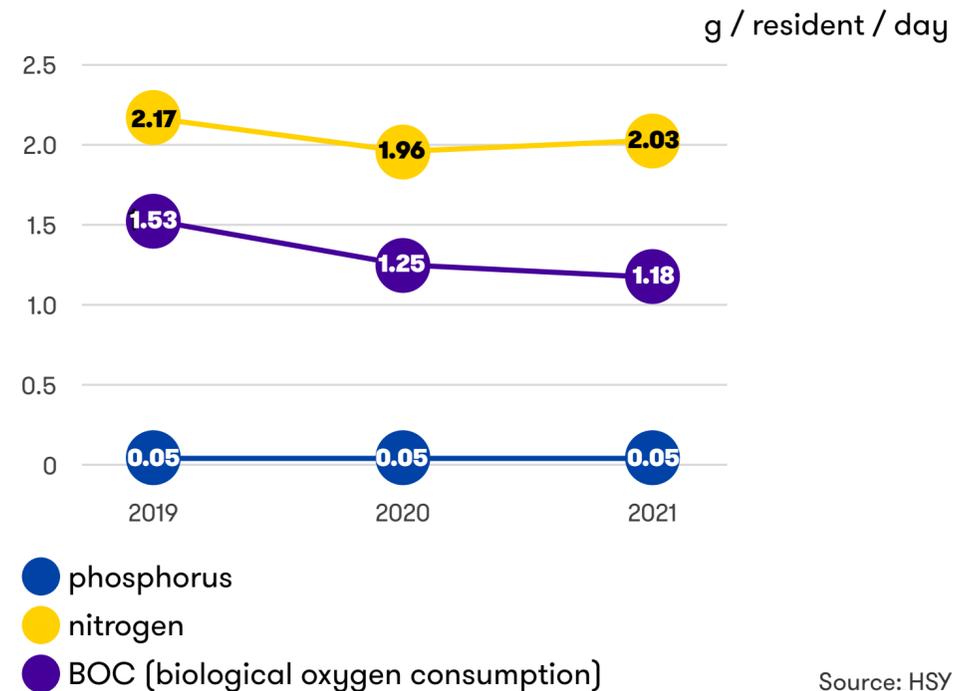
Source: HSY

The project will produce a scalable cooperation model in the form of a handbook for club activities, which will connect residents more closely to the city's climate action and circular economy activities. The aim is also to launch new club areas in accordance with the city's regional development goals.

### Materials life cycle and circular economy

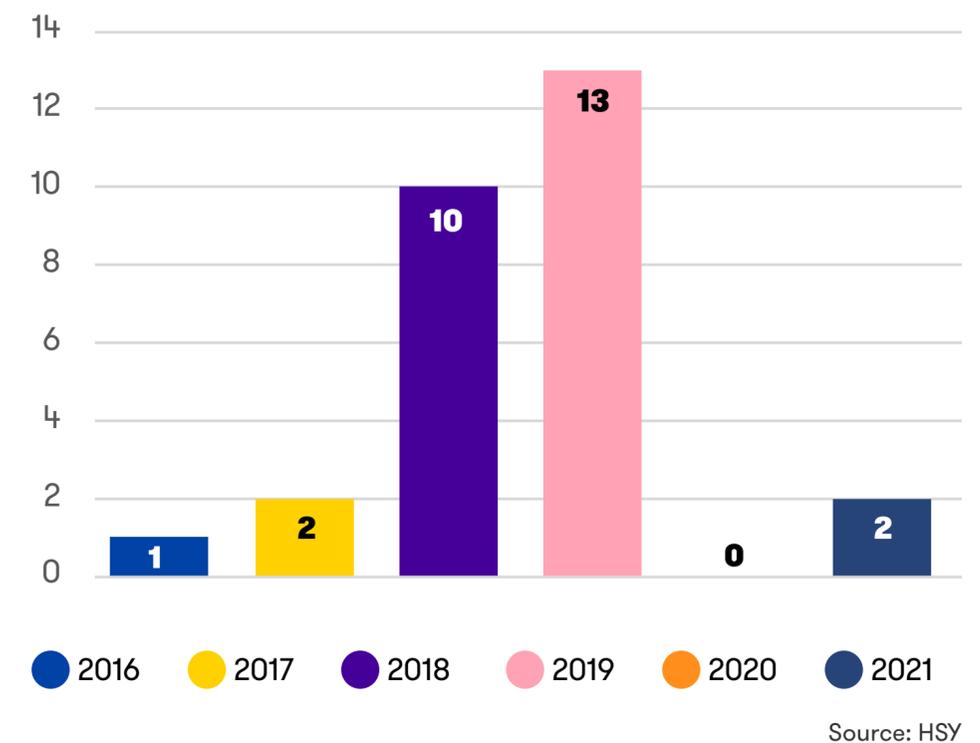
Vantaa is one of the fastest-growing cities in Finland. The built environment plays a crucial role in climate change mitigation, since buildings cause a third of Finland's climate emissions. The share of building materials in greenhouse gas emissions during the life cycle of buildings is significant, and pre-construction also causes emissions. The importance of building materials will continue to grow as the energy efficiency of buildings improves and greenhouse gas emissions during use decrease.

### Total phosphorus and nitrogen loads and BOC



In Vantaa, the use of repurposed materials in infrastructure construction sites has increased. The carbon calculator has also been piloted in infrastructure construction with good results. An electronic procedure for construction and demolition waste reporting has been introduced by the Building Control Department. In addition, Vantaa promotes the circular economy through a **Green Deal for sustainable demolition**. The main objective of the Green Deal is to increase the reuse and recycling of demolition materials. All ren-

### Amount of days on which the limit values for particulate matter (PM10) were exceeded during 2016–2021



ovation and demolition projects carry out a survey of the resulting demolition materials and report them in advance. The Green Deal provides a framework for the systematic development of operations and the planning of demolition processes. It improves information management and increases understanding of the changing of value chains. The Green Deal combines the sustainable construction of premises and the reuse of materials from demolished buildings through the circular economy.

The **Circular Construction in Regenerative Cities** (CIRCuit) project develops and implements best practices to promote the circular economy. The project has assessed and measured the environmental and economic impacts associated with the various options that can be considered for buildings under threat of demolition. Life-cycle calculations show that, in many cases, preserving a building by repairing it or changing its use is both economically and environmentally preferable to demolishing it and building anew. The project has also examined the promotion of flexible construction through procurement criteria and land use steering. The utilisation of demolished buildings as sources of material is one of the solutions examined in the project. Many of the building elements to be demolished would be suitable for use as such in a new building.

One of the objectives of the project is to disseminate and communicate the best practices of the circular economy and to involve city residents. This goal is promoted by the Circularity Hub built in the project, which includes applications that illustrate the circular economy. <https://www.circuit-project.eu/circularity-hub> During 2023, best practices will be implemented through workshops, training and events.

### Diverse nature

Climate change and nature loss are mutually reinforcing crises of sustainable development. Vantaa is committed to safeguarding and promoting biodiversity through many international agreements as well as through EU and national legislation. In



### Examples of development areas

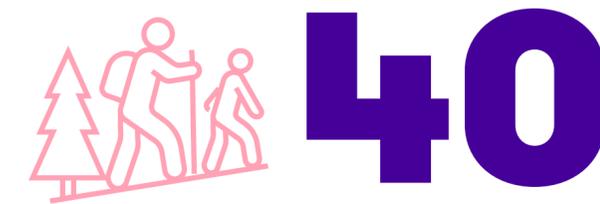
Efforts are still needed to improve the state of Vantaa's aquatic environment. The ecological status of the Vantaa River was satisfactory in 2017, and active measures are needed to improve it.

the Council Agreement covering the years 2021–2023, all council groups also committed to drawing up a long-term strategy with indicators for protecting local nature and biodiversity. In its strategy, the City of Vantaa is committed to ensuring the preservation of biodiversity and monitoring the state of biodiversity.

In 2022, a new lane, diverse nature, was added to the city's updated Roadmap to Resource Wisdom. The objectives and measures of the implementation plans for this lane will function as a biodiversity programme in Vantaa. In 2023, an overall biodiversity plan will be drawn up to support the measures in the lane.

Vantaa's **local master plan** for 2020 safeguards biodiversity and functional ecosystems by strengthening the ecological network. The plan designates 800 hectares of new **nature conservation areas**, which increases the share of conservation areas to 9.3% of the total land area. This is significantly higher than the average for Finnish municipalities (4.7%). The nature conservation areas of the local master plan, other areas of significant natural value (e.g. LUO ar-

### Guided nature walks, 2022



Source: City of Vantaa

### Nature preserves, percentage of total area, 2022



Source: City of Vantaa

### Nature preserve area per inhabitant, 2022



Source: City of Vantaa

ecosystems) and ecological connections ensure the long-term conservation and diversity of species and natural habitats.

Since 2015, Vantaa has organised **theme years for local nature**. During the theme years, special attention has been paid to nature and its important species, and the diverse nature of Vantaa has been made familiar to the city residents through excursions and other guided activities. In 2022, the focus was on birds, and this theme will continue through 2023. During the year, special attention will be paid to many familiar and previously common species becoming endangered. The programme of the theme year includes birdwatching trips for children and adults and birdhouse workshops. Bird-themed excursions have been combined with guided nature excursions in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area, which are open to all. Other events have

### Ecological state of flowing water, 2022

**100%**  
**satisfactory**

Source: City of Vantaa



included a drive against invasive species to eradicate the persistent Himalayan balsam in Vantaa.

Vantaa is a city of **running water**, whose landscape has been significantly shaped by the Vantaa River and its largest tributary, the **Kerava River**. The Vantaa River area is home to two species strictly protected by the European Union, the European otter and the thick-shelled river mussel, the most significant habitat of which in Finland is the Vantaa River. The environmental objective of the Uusimaa water management programme is to achieve the good ecological status of the Vantaa River by 2027. In 2017, the ecological status of the Vantaa River was only satisfactory, so active measures are required to reach the goal.

In addition to the rivers, there are dozens of **streams** in Vantaa, which with their banks serve as ecological connections for fish, birds, insects, mammals and plants. Measures in accordance with the **rehabilitation programme** (2016–2020) have been taken in the streams of Vantaa, and the city's stream caretakers have picked up rubbish and made spawning grounds for trout. The removal of barriers has made it possible for the endangered sea trout to rise into the rivers and streams of Vantaa. Measures are still needed to improve the aquatic environment in Vantaa.



Vantaa’s streams sometimes run through narrow corridors in the middle of population centres, leaving little room for nature. In these areas, too, the vitality of the stream should be improved. When planning new areas, sufficient space must be reserved for stream corridors so that streams can meander and evolve in an organic way.

In 2022, an accessible outdoor route was built in the **Isosuo bog**, one of the most representative raised bogs in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area. The bog, which has been long a site of educational excursions, is now accessible by more people. Work on the restoration of the bog is under way. Peat was extracted from the bog in the 1940s and 1950s, and ditches were dug as late as

the 1980s, which has drained part of the bog. In restoration, the ditches in the bog are being filled to stop the water flowing out of the bog, and moisture is starting returning to the soil. However, it will take several decades for the bog to fully recover.

Vantaa is participating in an **ecological offsetting** project organised by the Finnish Environment Institute. The aim of ecological offsetting is to compensate for the damage caused to biodiversity by human activity by increasing biodiversity. Ecological offsetting is the last resort when detrimental effects cannot be prevented or mitigated. Implemented in 2021–2024, the project is linked to the reform of nature protection legislation prepared by the Ministry of the Environment.

In 2022, a pilot project on ecological offsetting was continued in Vantaa, seeking to offset a forest area reserved for construction in Kivistö. The implementation of the current plan would weaken and destroy some of the area’s nature values. Based on the nature surveys carried out, experts from the Finnish Environment Institute have calculated the need for ecological offsetting. Preliminary searches have been made for areas where the possible deterioration in natural values in the Kivistö area could be offset. Finding offsetting areas has been very challenging.

### Sustainable Vantaa

The ‘sustainable Vantaa’ lane of the Roadmap to Resource Wisdom refers to the involvement of city residents and other stake-

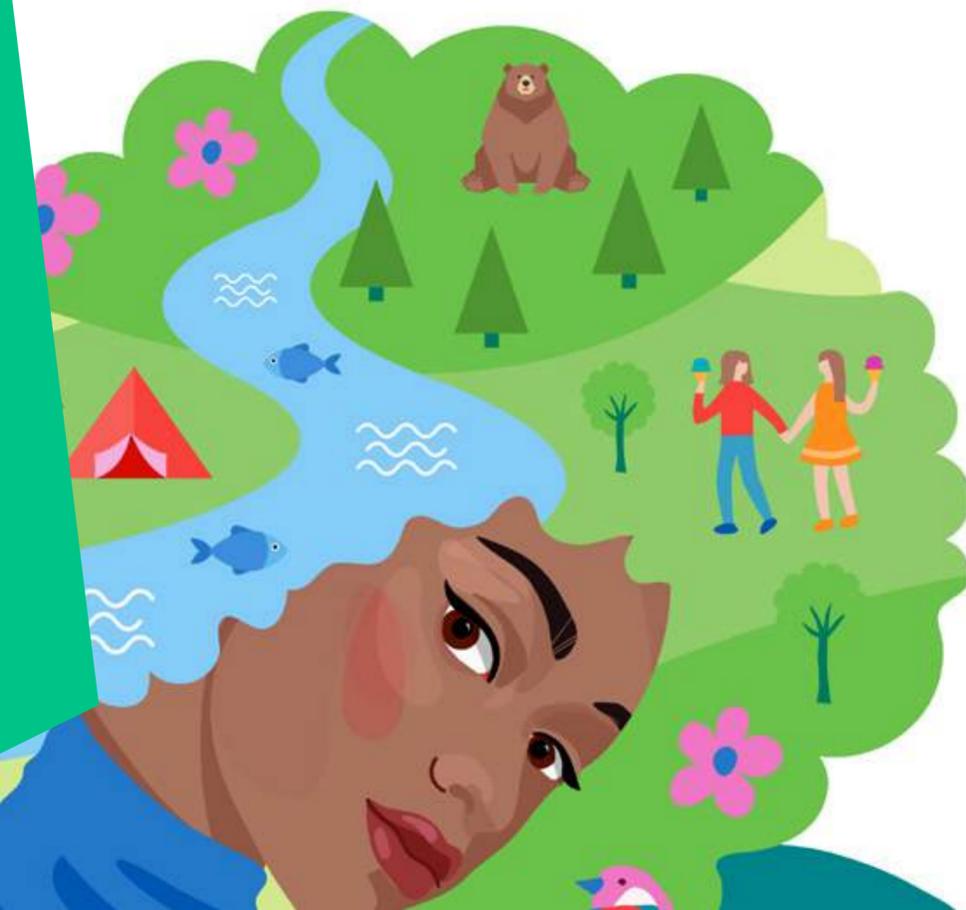
### Public events to remove non-native species, 2022



Source: City of Vantaa

holders in environmentally sustainable operations. The city serves as an example, enabler and messenger to others and also develops various forms of cooperation to promote environmental sustainability. Examples of these actions can also be found in other sections of this report, for example under the theme ‘Vantaa is vital and brimming with expertise’. This section highlights measures to encourage schools, children and young people, in particular, to act for the good of the environment and to make sustainable choices, the effects of which reach far into the future.

For many years, Vantaa has engaged in multidisciplinary cooperation to develop **environmental sustainability and inclusion in food services**. There has been cooperation between the education and learning department, procurement and food service providers. A key objective is to reduce the total carbon footprint of food services. The carbon footprint was calculated for the first time in 2020, and it is monitored every two years. Based on the results of the second calculation conducted in autumn 2022, the footprint





### Examples of success

Children and young people have had the opportunity to participate in the development of school meals in many ways and to consider solutions to reduce the carbon footprint of food and reduce food waste. At the same time, they learn about the significance of environmental actions and their own choices, which will carry far into the future.

has decreased slightly. Approximately 80% of the carbon footprint comes from the food served. Food waste amounts to about 10%. In cooperation with food service providers, measures have been taken to reduce the environmental impact of food. Food waste is constantly being measured, low-carbon and tastier recipes are being developed and the opinions of diners are being heard. To successfully reduce the carbon footprint, the number of people eating low-carbon foods must be increased. Efforts are being made to achieve this, for example, through food education and by improving the appeal of vegetarian foods.

One incentive for choosing low-carbon food options is the **Carbon Deal label** introduced in autumn 2021. The idea of developing the label came from young people's desire to learn more about the environmental impact of food. The purpose of the label is to highlight ecological lunch options and to offer children and young people opportunities to take positive climate action. Meals that earn the Carbon Deal label have a 30% smaller carbon footprint than the average meal. In Vantaa, vegetarian food is available for everyone,



### Examples of development areas

As part of the carbon neutrality goal, Vantaa aims to strengthen carbon sinks and carbon stocks and, through experiments, create a carbon offsetting model.

and it is always the first option on the service line. Non-vegan vegetarian foods also often get the Carbon Deal label if they do not contain a lot of cheese or other dairy. The Carbon Deal label has aroused interest in the food services of several other cities.

In Vantaa, meal service contracts require service providers to arrange inclusive **service packages** for schools and daycare centres. The content of the service packages has been defined in cooperation with service providers. A service package can, for example, bring various food items to be tasted in daycare centres, involve schoolchildren in kitchen tasks or prepare a food-related campaign at a school. These actions have received positive feedback and are expected to increase awareness and appreciation of food and its preparation.

Meal-related inclusion and environmental sustainability are being developed from early childhood education to secondary education in cooperation with stakeholders. Development work is being carried out, for example, in the **Knowhow and Involvement** (Osaamista ja osallistumista) project. The project aims at improving cooperation

and increasing inclusion, creating educational and learning materials to support the Carbon Deal label and to integrate it into education, and developing climate-friendly recipes together with children, young people and food service providers.

In the summer of 2022, **work cards for environmental education** were published with the aim of facilitating environmental education work in early childhood education. The content of the cards is updated as good new environmental education methods are developed. The themes of the work cards are local nature and relationship with nature, sustainable consumption, influencing and inclusion in a sustainable lifestyle, energy saving, food education and a daycare garden. The themes, which come from the National Core Curriculum for Early Childhood Education and Care, support the implementation of the Early Childhood Education Plan and the Roadmap to Resource Wisdom. The work card of each theme contains practical tips for daycare centres' everyday life, such as how to reduce the use of virgin materials at daycare centres or how to involve children in the daycare centre's energy saving efforts. In addition, the cards present pedagogical operating models and technological applications of environmental education. The work cards are a comprehensive set of practical tips for the everyday life of daycare centres, and they can be used to increase and diversify the environmental education carried out at daycare centres.

**Vantaa Vocational College Varia's** vision 2022–2025 is to be a bold builder of sustainable professional competence. One example of Varia's ecologically sustainable development work is its partici-

pation in the **KESTU project, training professionals for a sustainable future**. The KESTU project is a network project of five vocational institutions that develops management, teaching content and staff competence from the perspective of ecological sustainability. In 2022, Varia’s focus was on the planning of instruction. Answers to the following questions, among others, have been sought at sectoral level: How can we minimise the use of natural resources? Where and for what is energy being used? How do we do things energy-efficiently? What are the key supply chains and their significant environmental issues for the sector? What tools and equipment are being used? How can digitality be utilised in an environmentally sustainable and appropriate manner? How could the carbon handprint of the sector be increased, i.e. how can we maximise the positive environmental impact? How do companies and workplaces in the sector develop environmental sustainability now and in the future?

The aim of the sustainable development education carried out by Vantaa **youth work** is to strengthen the way young people think

and work for a more sustainable future. The aim of youth work is to support young people in making informed and sustainable choices in their lives with regard to the environment, the economy and social justice. The youth services created a level description of sustainable development together with the employees during autumn 2021 and spring 2022, and the model was implemented in work communities during autumn 2022. Education for sustainable development and the development of employee skills and workplace activities strengthen employees’ understanding and preconditions for acting in accordance with the principles of sustainable development.

### Carbon sinks and offsetting

Carbon neutrality means that, regionally in Vantaa, the greenhouse gas emissions balance is zero. The carbon neutrality target of Vantaa is to reduce emissions by at least 80% from 1990 levels by 2030. The remaining 20% can be bound in vegetation, soil and wood con-

### Carbon sinks, 2019



Source: HSY

struction or offset by emission reduction measures elsewhere. The consideration of the carbon handprint has also been discussed. If the share of emission reductions exceeds 80%, this reduces the need to obtain offsets.

The goal is to offset emissions in the city region, strengthen carbon sinks and carbon stocks, increase the carbon handprint, promote carbon negativity and offset the city’s own direct emissions. Economically and scientifically sustainable offsetting mechanisms that are useful for Vantaa will be explored by cooperating with other cities, the state, the Finnish Environment Institute and Helsinki Region Environmental Services HSY. Offsetting methods will be introduced through experiments, and experiences of offsetting will be sought from other cities. The aim is to create an offsetting model and to make offset calculation part of the emissions calculation.



# VANTAA IS VITAL AND BRIMMING WITH EXPERTISE



+ cross-cutting goals



## Vantaa is vital and brimming with expertise

**Vantaa is a rapidly growing city with approximately 240,000 residents and more than 120,000 jobs. The number of jobs is increasing, and new jobs are being created especially in the Aviapolis area near the airport. The focus of the ‘Vantaa is vital and brimming with expertise’ strategic theme is to increase the vitality of Vantaa from the perspective of both residents and businesses. The implementation of the strategic theme is guided by Vantaa’s Growth and Viability Programme. Work for vitality creates attraction and retention factors for both residents and businesses.**

Vantaa wants to be an attractive city for companies, and it has excellent logistical preconditions for attracting companies and investments. Vantaa is home to Finland’s only international airport, and access is also facilitated by the ring road and rail connections. The planned tramway will create even better connections and increase the vitality of the areas along its route. The tramway is expected to attract investment and to significantly increase the number of residents and jobs in these areas.

Increasing vitality is closely linked to support for continuous learning and the development of competence. Compared to other major cities in Finland, Vantaa residents have a low level of education. Proactively developing competence is important not only to secure skilled labour for companies, but also to increase the employment and wellbeing of Vantaa residents and to reduce inequality.

### City-business collaboration and business support services

Approximately 2,000 new companies are established in Vantaa every year, bringing many new jobs. Active city-business collaboration is an important part of Vantaa’s work for vitality and, in October 2022, Vantaa gave companies a new **service promise**: when a company contacts the city, the city will respond within 48 hours, the matter will be taken forward and the company will be kept informed of the progress of the matter.

City-business collaboration and services aimed at companies are constantly being developed, for example through various projects. New forms of cooperation are also being developed, and companies get to consider solutions to different challenges together with the city’s operators. **Cluster work** brings together companies in the same sector in network-based cooperation that benefits both the participating companies and the region’s economy and vitality more broadly. Clusters share ideas and experiences and, in the best-case



### Examples of success

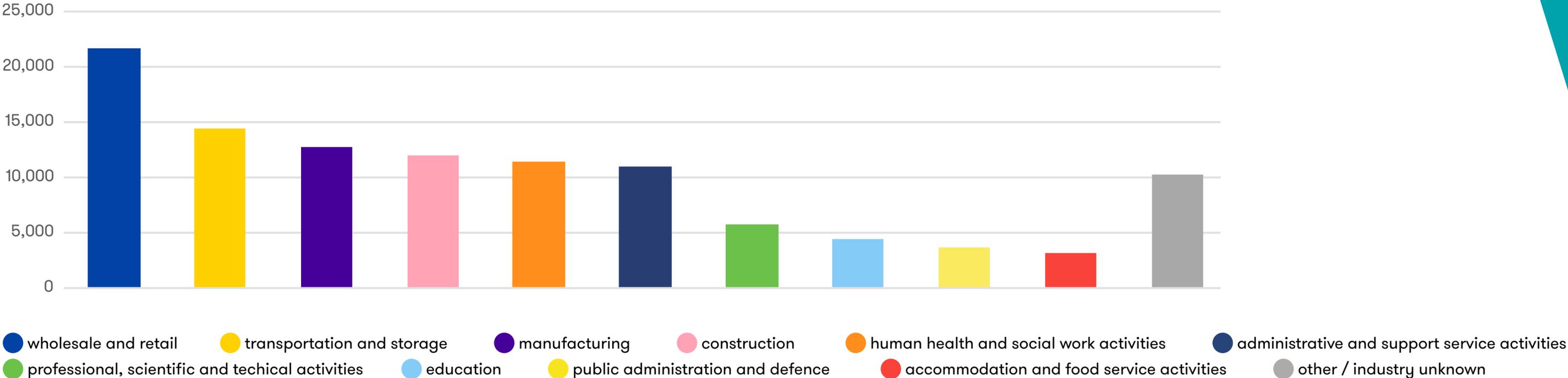
City-business collaboration has been developed through cluster work and several projects that develop new forms of cooperation and support the growth and sustainable operations of companies.

scenario, their discussions create new opportunities for cooperation and innovation. Five key business clusters have been launched in Vantaa, focusing on property, food, air freight, high expertise and the circular economy.

The city is constantly running a large number of projects that develop services for or forms of city-business collaboration. Project-based development allows flexible testing of new types of models, although incorporating the knowledge gained from the projects into the permanent operations of the city is more difficult.

**Sectors employing the largest number of people, 2020**

Source: Greater Helsinki Open Statistical Databases



It is often challenging to get companies to participate in projects aimed at companies; this was emphasised during the COVID-19 pandemic when companies spent their time and resources dealing with acute problems.

It can also be difficult for companies to grasp what the various projects can offer them, and communications about projects strive to move away from project-oriented speech and towards a more holistic idea of a service tray. **The My Business Hub** project in

Vantaa is developing such a service tray model, which also supports companies in the creative sector that suffered during the pandemic, and creates new forms of cooperation and networking. The community platform developed in the project, the Business Vantaa Hub, enables companies, the city and other operators to exchange ideas more closely and effortlessly on an electronic platform. At the same time, it supports the fulfilment of the service promise given by the city, as there are several parties answering questions. The community platform was launched in March 2023.

The operating methods and openings created by the projects support companies' growth and business, generating economic growth and jobs. However, the projects also support companies' own sustainable activities, such as the green transition and ecologically sustainable business. These two perspectives are combined in projects such as Pocoprop, ILPO and Circular Hood Food.

The **Pocoprop** project carried out a preliminary study on transformable space solutions that increase the utilisation rate of properties

## Job self-sufficiency, 2020

102.5%

Source: Statistics Finland

for the planned Jokiniemi campus. The project explored various options for energy solutions for the campus and the needs of companies to have carbon neutrality certifications to demonstrate sustainability. Now that the COVID-19 pandemic has changed working life, different solutions for sharing spaces can have positive effects both in terms of the climate and economy, and such solutions were discussed together with different operators.

The main objective of the **ILPO** project was to support companies in Vantaa in achieving climate goals. Companies were helped to find lower-emission cooperation models, and carbon roadmaps and networks were created for local circular economy centres. The project described a model and climate path for climate-positive business areas. Three experimental service procurements were carried out in Vantaa: streamlining heavy vehicle traffic at the Vantaa waste incineration plant, measuring emissions from construction site machinery and measures to reduce them, and determining the amount and sources of biowaste generated in Vantaa.

The **Circular Hood Food** project found new, concrete ways to promote the circular economy of food and to reduce waste and the environmental impact of food. The project helped increase the awareness and understanding of sustainable food production and the circular economy of food in food companies, restaurants, housing companies and in regional and city planning. During the project, a food cluster of more than 60 operators was built in Vantaa, including educational institutions, large food companies, small-scale vertical farmers and a large number of restaurants in Vantaa.

An urban cultivation experiment was carried out in the housing company of VAV asunnot Oy together with four cluster companies. Tenants were introduced to urban farming and were shown how they can produce the salads and mushrooms they need in their housing company in the future. The project also mapped the need and possibility for a community farm for sustainable and safe urban food production in Vantaa. Based on this study, a new project is being planned for building a modern market hall in Vantaa.

Activities related to the climate and environmental sustainability are being developed in projects, but integrating environmental objectives more widely and comprehensively with vitality objectives would increase their effectiveness and could bind companies in the region more closely, for example, to achieving the carbon neutrality objectives. If environmental aspects are not fully considered in the pursuit of growth, the growth targets of companies and the city may conflict with the reduction of emissions and the protection of the environment. Work for vitality has the potential to play



## Examples of success

Unemployment has fallen despite the challenges posed by the pandemic and structural changes in employment management. Vantaa actively supports the employment of those in the most vulnerable position in the labour market and is looking for new kinds of solutions for this.

a stronger role in achieving environmental sustainability goals as long as the growth goals are channelled through these perspectives. Without environmental sustainability, there can be no long-term economic sustainability.

More extensive integration of gender and equality perspectives into vitality work would increase the effectiveness of promoting equality in working life. The objectives of the Growth and Viability Programme include support for women's entrepreneurship but, for example, gender segregation in sectors and other issues of equality in working life have so far received little attention. In accordance with the Vantaa City Strategy, promoting equality is one of the cross-cutting goals that should be supported in all activities. However, equality cannot be promoted without identifying and actively influencing unequal structures. Vitality work and attracting and supporting companies could also be linked more closely to other structures that produce inequality, seeking to dismantle them, for example by finding points of contact with preventing regional segregation, which is important for Vantaa.



### Examples of development areas

Integrating environmental sustainability perspectives into all the goals of the work for vitality could steer the growth of the city and business in a direction that would create preconditions for promoting all the SDGs. Systematic assessment of all effects, including contradictory effects, is important for the whole.

### Strengthening competence

Companies are increasingly facing a shortage of skilled labour. The availability of skilled labour in Vantaa-based companies weakened significantly during the pandemic, and the current demographic development will not be able to meet future skills needs. Vantaa aims to respond to these challenges by, on the one hand, promoting employment-based immigration and, on the other hand, investing in the development of competence and continuous learning. Measures to promote these objectives also promote equality and sustainable development by promoting diversity and equality in working life and by supporting groups that are in danger of being left behind in the rapid pace of development of working life.

The **Talent Vantaa** project is part of the Government's Talent Boost programme for strengthening employment-based and study-based immigration, attracting experts and getting them to set down roots in Finland in accordance with the Government Programme. The

### Share of population over the age of 15 with secondary education or higher, 2020

71%

Source: Statistics Finland

project has developed training concepts and services for companies and international experts. The project's events and networks offer opportunities for experts and companies. The aim for the future is to get even more companies into the webinars and training offered. Although the topic is considered important, getting companies to sit down and discuss it is challenging at times. Another area of development is finding experts more efficiently and targeting the services created in the project to them. In the future, the goal is to do this work even more strongly in cooperation with the Vantaa Skills Centre and the local government pilot on employment.

Attracting international talent to Vantaa and supporting them in settling down is very important for Vantaa's vitality. In fact, the Growth and Viability Programme includes a goal of establishing Talent activities as part of permanent operations. In addition to attracting talent, companies' readiness to accept international workers and to treat them as equal employees must be supported more than ever.

### Share of population over the age of 15 with higher education, 2020

32%

Source: Statistics Finland

The situation of an international employee's entire family must be taken into account, including the smooth access of their children to daycare and school, and it is important to invest in increasing the English-language education offer in Vantaa.

The **development of competence** is an important part of the City of Vantaa's strategy and vitality work. The challenge in Vantaa is the low level of education compared to other large cities in Finland; one third of the working-age population in the labour market do not have a post-comprehensive-level qualification. Often, those who already have a high level of education are motivated to seek further training, and those with a low level of education are at risk of falling behind. At the same time, changes in working life are causing certain jobs to disappear, which emphasises the importance of acquiring new skills. Solutions to this complex challenge require close and networked cooperation between different organisations, such as the city, educational establishments and companies.

One answer to the challenges of competence development is the **Jokiniemi campus**, which it is planned will be centrally located along the main railway. The new campus will bring together educational establishments, companies and the city's operations and intensify the cooperation between them, forming an ecosystem of continuous learning. The Jokiniemi campus is one of Vantaa's spearhead projects. It will support the continuous learning of Vantaa residents, offer a wide range of services and act as an innovation platform.

The City of Vantaa continuously cooperates closely with educational establishments and develops new solutions to better meet the challenges of knowledge and skills. This cooperation and development is carried out, for example, through projects that offer companies tailored competence development and continuous learning services. The **Urban Growth Vantaa** project supported competence development in SMEs and co-created services with educational establishments, research institutes and companies. The project combined social sustainability with business growth by supporting the formation of a culture of continuous learning in companies and their understanding of the importance of competence management. Successful companies recognise that skilled and motivated personnel are their most important asset, and investing in the development of personnel competence enables them to respond to future competence needs. A corporate culture that supports learning is a retention factor and creates growth for the company. At the same time, it must be recognised that working learners need support and flexible learning opportunities to be able to develop their competence

## Employment

In Vantaa, as in all parts of Finland, unemployment increased strongly during the pandemic. However, Vantaa has done well in reducing the unemployment rate, which is currently around 10%. The aim is to reduce it further.

There have been major structural changes in employment management in recent years, and these changes are continuing. Together with Kerava, Vantaa is participating in a local government pilot on employment, which started in March 2021. In the **local government pilot**, some of the private clients of the TE services became clients of the municipalities. The transition was not without challenges, and Vantaa's employment services were initially heavily backlogged. At first, there was not enough staff, and the service quality suffered. In addition, the service backlog that TE Offices already had from the pandemic transferred to the municipalities with the pilot. These challenges were met by recruiting more personnel for employment services during 2021.

Although the situation in employment management has stabilised, it is important to continue to ensure sufficient resources and well-functioning service paths. The **TE24 reform** will permanently transfer the responsibility for employment management to municipalities. The change is an opportunity to organise employment services better than before, taking into account the needs of the local customer base and connections to other services provided by the municipality, but the reform also involves major challenges. Vantaa, together with other major Finnish

## Employment rate (1/2023)

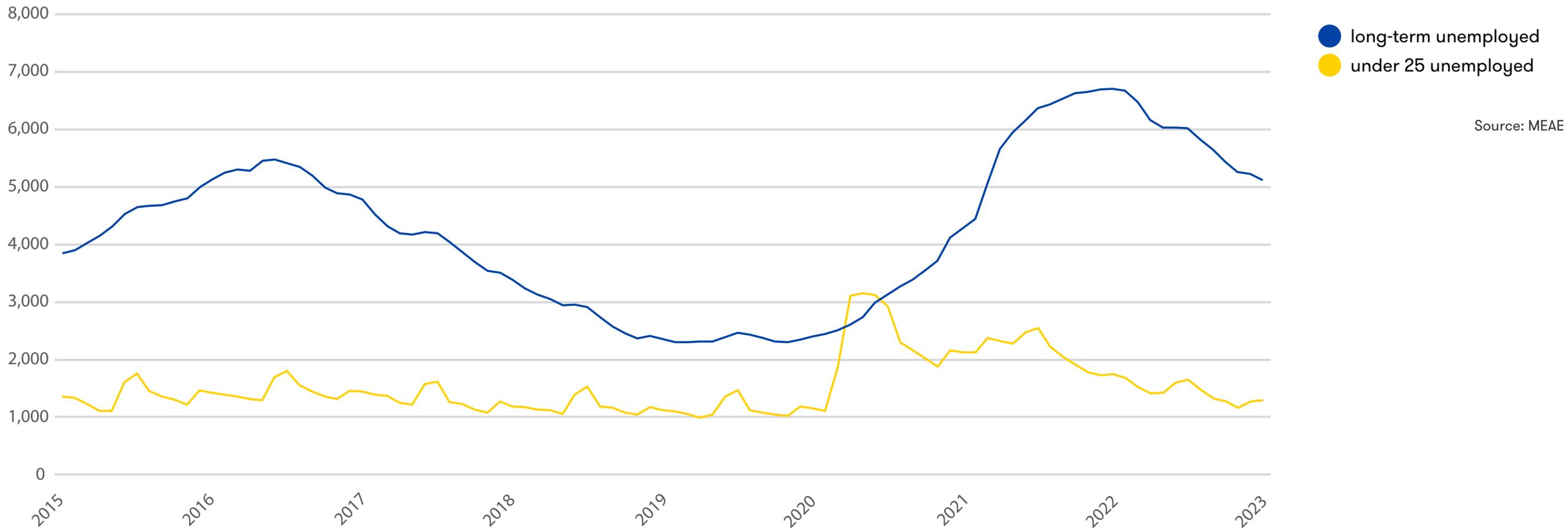
89.1%

Source: MEAE

cities, has taken a stand on the funding model of the reform and emphasised that cities need sufficient funding to be able to serve jobseekers effectively. Large cities are concerned that the funding model does not sufficiently take account of, for example, the large proportion of foreign-language speakers and their special need for support.

The most disadvantaged groups in the labour market, such as foreign-language speakers and young people, need special support to be able to find employment, and Vantaa supports the employment of these groups through permanent activities as well as various projects and experiments. Together with **Barona Oy**, the employment services have built a **service pilot** aimed at foreign-language speakers and young people, with the aim of finding new ways to prevent long-term unemployment. The service is intended for jobseekers who have been unemployed for 100 to 299 days. The clients receive personal assistance in finding employment or training and support in staying in employment or studies so that their unemployment is not prolonged.

### Youth and long-term unemployment 2015–2023



In Vantaa, youth unemployment is still high from the pandemic, and the wellbeing of young people and their risk of social exclusion are serious causes for concern. This concern has been addressed, for example, by the **Decreasing Youth Unemployment Side-by-side** (Rinnalla kulken nuorisotyöttömyys laskuun) project, which tackles the inequality of young people and supports them in finding employment. Launched in 2021, the project is a joint effort of the Vantaa

Youth Services and the Vantaa and Kerava Employment Services. The aim of the project is to provide individualised job search support to 400 young adults aged 18–29 and to prevent inequality. By the end of 2022, the project had provided support to more than 200 people.

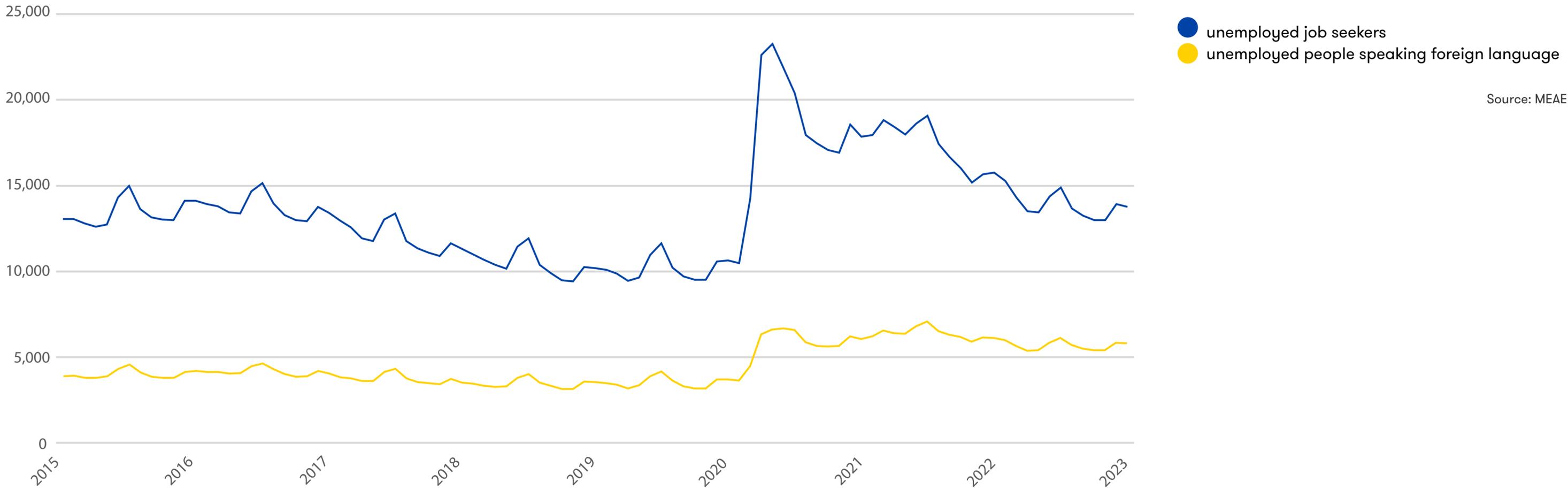
Through the project’s operating model, Youth Services and Employment Services have worked together more closely to offer young



### Examples of development areas

The promotion of equality in working life requires the identification of unequal structures, the integration of gender-disaggregated data in decision-making and active measures to promote equality. These aspects have so far received little attention in the work for vitality.

### Unemployment 2015–2023



adults intensive guidance towards work or studies based on individual needs. Individual flexibility has been found to work, meaning that young adults receive exactly the support and guidance they need for their specific situation. Working with a reliable and supportive employee has strengthened the experience of young people that they can influence their own lives and thus increase their wellbeing,

even for those who have not yet found employment. These impacts on wellbeing can be seen as preventing social exclusion. Continuing the support even after a job or a study place has been found has supported wellbeing and success. The challenge is those young people whose need for support is long-lasting and multidisciplinary, such as the employment of young people with partial work ability. The creation of co-

operation networks and service guidance must be taken into account as part of the work model, so that every young person can receive timely and properly targeted support. The population of Vantaa has a high proportion of foreign-language speakers compared to other cities in Finland, and the im-



## Examples of success

During 2023, the group entities of the City of Vantaa will draw up their own sustainability programmes, a key objective of which is to promote the carbon neutrality goal of the City of Vantaa. Through group steering, the city makes a significant contribution to the sustainable operation of the entire urban area.

Importance of this client group and their need for support are also emphasised in employment management. **Foreign-language jobseekers** receive multidisciplinary services from, for example, the **Vantaa Skills Centre**, which was established in 2019. In recent years, the development of the centre's operations has focused particularly on individual guidance and support for job search and access to education and training. The centre cooperates with other actors; for example, cooperation has been started with the Vantaa Vocational College Varia, where the opportunity to complete **short training at Varia** is combined with city-business collaboration and practical training. The centre is also piloting a **language sponsorship** (Kielikummi) service, which supports both employers and employees in challenges related to language skills or other factors. The employment of foreign-language speakers is often hindered by the fact that the employer considers the applicant's Finnish-language proficiency insufficient. The service examines the recruitment needs and working

environments of companies. It finds a suitable candidate for the company, and the language sponsors support the candidate's language skills during the employment relationship or work trial. The aim is that the employment relationship will continue after the end of the service.

**Employment through procurement** is a way to support the employment of people in a challenging labour market position by including an employment condition in the invitation to tender and contract of city procurements. The employment condition obliges the contracting partner to employ a jobseeker who is at a disadvantage in the labour market. Vantaa has been using employment through procurement for a decade. The **Löytö** (Find) project has developed the process of employment through procurement. The project has trained procurement experts, increased information and consulted service providers about their challenges. The use of the employment condition has increased steadily, and has also been linked to new types of procurement. On the other hand, service providers have expressed concerns that employment conditions may, in some cases, complicate operations and even prevent participation in competitive tendering. Attention must also be paid to the equality of companies when developing the process.

## Sustainability measures of group entities

In addition to the parent city, the Vantaa city group includes approximately 50 entities. This figure includes subsidiaries, associated entities and joint municipal authorities. The City of Vantaa

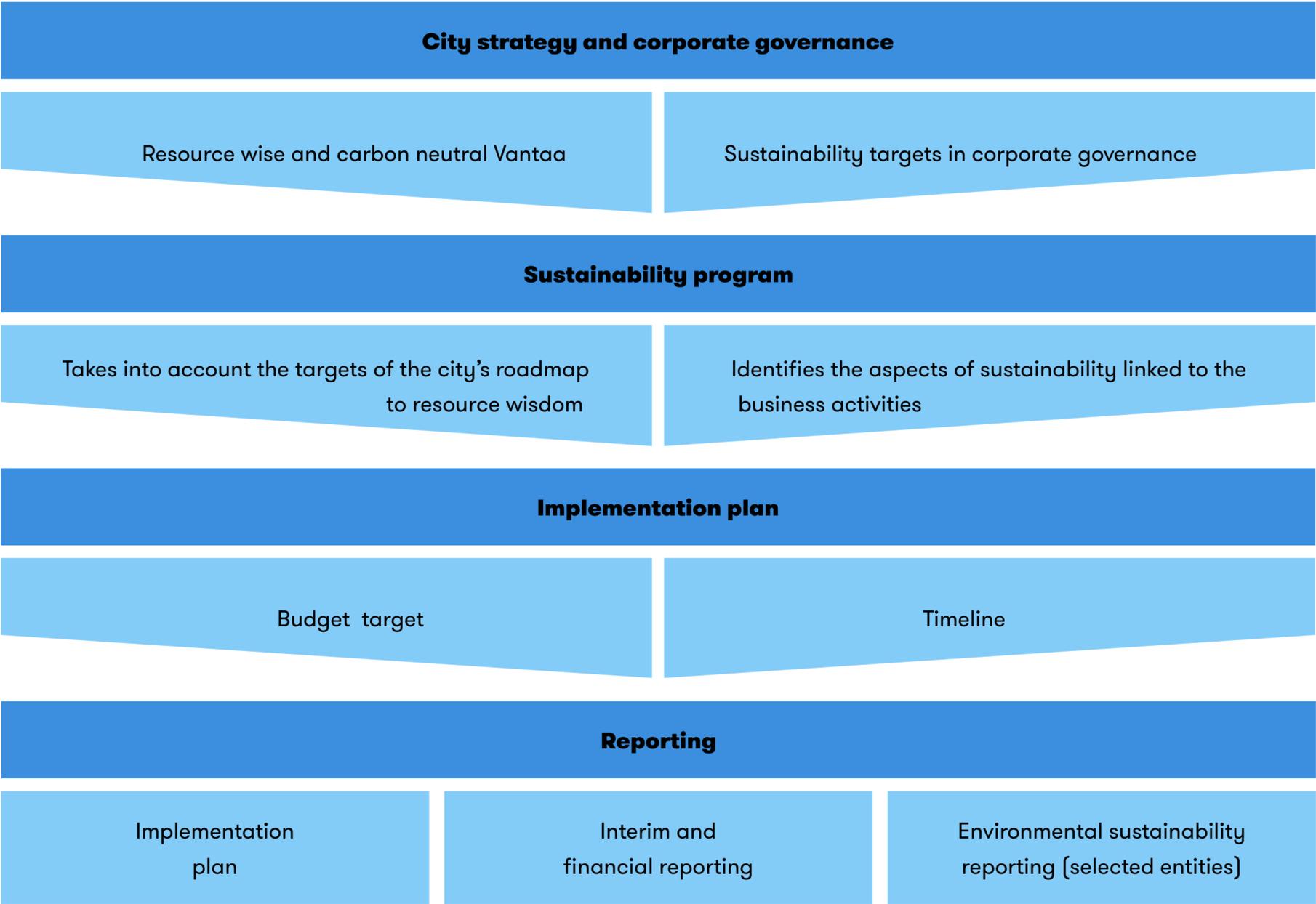
is a sustainable and ethical owner, committed to promoting sustainable development through its companies. The city group has a significant impact on stakeholders through operations, finances, personnel management and procurement. It is worthwhile promoting sustainable business in group entities by means of ownership steering, because the operations of group entities also have a direct impact on the value of the city's ownership.

The promotion of sustainable business in the group entities primarily means that the subsidiaries must identify the environmental impacts of their own operations and act in an economically and socially sustainable manner. Each company has been set a specific sustainability-related theme or goal in the entity-specific ownership policy guidelines, which determines the long-term sustainability goals the city as an owner sets for the companies.

In accordance with Vantaa's City Strategy, the city's large group entities will draw up their own sustainability programmes during 2023, and one of the key objectives of the programmes will be to promote the city's carbon neutrality objective and the goals of the Roadmap to Resource Wisdom. In addition to these common objectives, the different group entities have their own priorities, which are presented in this review for the five largest group entities. The group entities also report on their key sustainability activities in the annual Board of Directors' report of the financial statements.

The figure next page illustrates the implementation and reporting of sustainability targets in Vantaa's group entities.

**Implementation and reporting of sustainability targets in Vantaa’s group entities**



**Vantaa Energy Ltd**, which produces electricity and district heat and sells heating services, is one of the largest urban energy companies in Finland. The group’s goal is to be carbon negative by 2030, to phase out the use of fossil fuels by 2026 and to produce 95% of its electricity in a climate-neutral manner by 2026. Vantaa Energy Ltd plays a key role in achieving the carbon neutrality objective of the entire city. The City of Vantaa owns 60% of the company, while the City of Helsinki owns the other 40%. For Vantaa, the ownership of Vantaa Energy Ltd is a strategic ownership through which the city secures its influence in maintaining and developing the local energy infrastructure. In its operations, Vantaa Energy Ltd helps improve energy efficiency and strongly promotes the circular economy. The group gave up the use of coal in spring 2022. It also expanded its energy-from-waste plant, which was commissioned in autumn 2022.

**Vantaan Tilapalvelut Vantti Oy** is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the City of Vantaa, which supports the city group’s departments and their customers by providing food, cleaning, property, lobby and security services. Vantti plays a key role in reducing the carbon footprint of food services. Vantti has drawn up its own annually updated and evaluated environmental programme. Vantti supports the operations of the Fairtrade City, for example by organising tender competitions for Fairtrade products in wholesale food product agreements, and it also holds the EcoCompass environmental certificate. Vantti’s food services are engaged in active development work in cooperation with the City of Vantaa to reduce food waste.

Vantti is also a significant employer with a total of 870 employees, making it one of the largest municipally-owned companies in Finland in terms of employees. During 2021–2022, Vantti invested in developing the skills of its employees, for example by offering approximately 170 people an opportunity to improve their professional skills through apprenticeship training, and supported the employment of people in a disadvantaged position in the labour market by offering work to approximately 60 people.

The primary purpose of **VAV Group** is to support the housing policy objectives of the City of Vantaa. VAV is a group wholly owned by the City of Vantaa that consists of the parent company VAV Yhtymä Oy and three subsidiaries: VAV Asunnot Oy, VAV Palvelukodit Oy and VAV Hoiva-asunnot Oy. VAV owns and manages rental homes and builds new housing to meet the growing needs of Vantaa residents. In 2022, approximately 19,000 Vantaa residents lived in VAV homes. This means that nearly one in ten residents of Vantaa is a VAV tenant. VAV's rental homes enable affordable housing for low-income and medium-income households in Vantaa. VAV also supports the implementation of the City of Vantaa's strategy to prevent regional segregation and helps prevent homelessness in Vantaa. In late 2022, a Housing First unit of VAV Palvelukodit Oy was completed in Koivuhaka, Vantaa. It enables supported housing for many people suffering from long-term homelessness or undergoing mental health or substance abuse rehabilitation.

The development of sustainable and energy-efficient construction and renovation operations, biodiverse landscaping and a sus-

tainably operating network of service partners play a key role in VAV Group's business operations. However, potentially conflicting goals in different areas create challenges for the sustainability work in the property sector. VAV is constantly weighing the options of rebuilding the old and building anew. During 2022, VAV participated in Motiva's Down a Degree energy saving campaign and invested in energy saving while ensuring that the comfort of living would not suffer. For example, the temperatures in public spaces were lowered and, with the support of resident activists, housing companies' free shared sauna hours were put on hold.

**VTK Kiinteistöt Oy** leases property, buildings and housing to the city and other operators in Vantaa. It also acts as a building and property developer. VTK Group develops sustainable and energy-efficient solutions for its properties and builds and renovates them in a resource-wise manner in line with circular economy. VTK Group has been awarded the EcoCompass environmental certificate. The company's binding target was to achieve an energy saving of 3% in CO2 emissions from 2018 levels by 2022. The achieved energy savings amounted to 17%. The most significant savings came from the utilisation of condensate heat in sports facilities as of the autumn of 2021. VTK Group's properties were fully converted to using recycled heat in autumn 2022, and the lighting of several properties has been converted to LED lights. VTK Group implements the City of Vantaa's energy saving programme 2022–2023 through, among other things, saving measures based on building technology for offices, indoor and outdoor sports facilities and the optimisation of lighting times for outdoor lighting.

**Mercuria Business School** is a limited liability company owned by the City of Vantaa and the Helsingin Kauppiaitten Yhdistys ry association that provides business education for young people and adults. Mercuria plays an important role in preventing the social exclusion of young people, providing sustainability education, supporting students' transition to working life and promoting employment. The challenges in this work include large differences in students' learning skills, students' life management issues and the learning gap caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

During 2021–2022, Mercuria implemented sustainability campaigns and took part in environmental sustainability weeks. It has also participated in numerous projects, such as Tools to Prevent Racism (a method aimed at reducing racism in educational institutions), #vaikutamme yhdessä (#WeInfluenceTogether, developing student committee work and increasing community spirit), Ohjaus tavoittaa (Guidance Reaches, developing study counselling and improving the quality of counselling) and VASKI, a project for sustainable and sustainable vocational education and training.

All the property companies belonging to the Vantaa Group have drawn up a long-term plan and carry out their repairs in a resource-wise manner, taking into account the service life of the building. In addition, property and parking companies are currently mapping the possibilities of increasing the charging infrastructure of electric cars on their properties and will launch projects to increase the charging infrastructure based on the reports.

# VANTAA IS INTERNATIONAL



+ cross-cutting goals

## Vantaa is international

**Vantaa is the most international city in Finland, and approximately 23% of Vantaa residents speak a language other than Finnish, Swedish or Sámi as their first language. The international character of Vantaa also means that the city is being developed as an international and innovative airport city; Finland's only international airport is located in Vantaa. The aim is to attract more international companies and investments to the city, and international cooperation is actively pursued through various networks. The 'Vantaa is international' theme is strongly linked to other themes of this review, such as 'Vantaa is vital and brimming with expertise', which covers, for example, city-business collaboration and services aimed at international experts.**

The population of Vantaa is growing primarily due to immigration, and efforts are being made to make it easier for immigrants to settle in Vantaa. Integration and full inclusion are affected by many factors. The factors related to, for example, schools and employment, are discussed in other sections of this report. An amendment is about to be made to the Integration Act, which will transfer the overall responsibility for integration services in Finland from central government to local governments. Other recent and upcoming structural changes also affect the overall picture. These include the TE24 reform, which will transfer the responsibility for employment services even more strongly to municipalities, and the activation of wellbeing services counties, which transferred the responsibility for health and social services from municipalities to wellbeing services counties. Effective cooperation within the municipality between different functions, as well as between the

municipality and the wellbeing services county, will be key to the development of integration as a whole.

The promotion of equality is central to the 'Vantaa is international' theme. Equality is related to the full inclusion and equal treatment of all Vantaa residents in all areas of life. It also involves the city's activities in, for example, the development of multilingual and plain language communication and the development of multicultural competence in the city's organisation. It is also important that the City of Vantaa is an equal-opportunity employer.

### International networks and cooperation

Vantaa actively participates in international activities that support sustainability. Liaisons report annually on the activities of the

networks, so that the cooperation of the networks benefits the city more widely, and the work done is documented.

#### Examples of international networks that include Vantaa:

##### **Eurocities**

Vantaa is a member of the Eurocities network of approximately 200 large European cities. The network's activities are extensive and promote, for example, carbon neutrality, biodiversity, healthy living environments, the cultural environments of cities, and the participation and inclusion of city residents of different ages and backgrounds. Good practices are shared in the forums and working groups of the network.

### **UNICEF in Child Friendly Cities**

The City of Vantaa cooperates closely with UNICEF Finland and, through it, with the Child Friendly Cities teams in other countries. Vantaa has also presented its own good practices internationally.

### **Nordic Safe Cities**

Vantaa is a member of a network of 20 Nordic cities that share and develop good practices to combat extremism, increase safety and reduce confrontation. The network pays special attention to the activities of young people to promote a safer and more inclusive urban space.

International cooperation is also carried out in Vantaa through projects. In 2021, a **project office** was established under Business Services to support more efficient use of EU project funding. Projects are suitable for the development of an urban city and introduce innovations needed to meet the challenges of the future. The project office aims to increase the number and quality of EU projects. The strengthening of co-creation is also key, which the project office supports by bringing international partnerships to the development and innovation of city departments.

The project office provides project funding opportunities for departments, maintains and identifies efficient utilisation of net-

works suitable for projects, and coordinates the preparation of projects in the city region based on EU funding. It supports partnerships and co-creation between companies, educational institutions, RDI actors and the city. The impact generated by the project office increases cost-effectiveness and helps the city respond to future challenges. The innovative approach required by EU project funding enables things that would not be achieved otherwise. A project portfolio that supports the city strategy strengthens the city's systemic development, and employees learning new things inject strategic capability into the city's operations.

The project office has limited resources; it operates within the limits of one employee's working hours. Increasing its resources would significantly increase its effectiveness, open up new opportunities for expanding cooperation and provide support for ongoing projects. Vantaa is an interesting partner on the international level, especially since its selection as Europe's Rising Innovative City. The networking of the project office also brings communication value to the city.

### **The value of internationality: the city as an employer**

The city plays an important role in promoting equality as an employer. At the end of 2021, the City of Vantaa employed a total of 11,671 people, 7.3% of whom were foreign-language speakers. The share of foreign-language speakers among city personnel has been steadily increasing for several years, reaching 6.5% in 2020.

The numbers vary greatly between departments, and the share of foreign-language speakers has been highest in the Social Services and Health Care department. However, many of the functions and personnel in this department transferred to the wellbeing services county at the beginning of 2023.

The city is constantly striving to increase the proportion of foreign-language speakers among its personnel. To this end, efforts are made to influence supervisors who conduct recruitments, whose awareness is raised through various training courses related to non-discrimination, equality and diversity as part of other recruitment training. Anonymous recruitment is one way to promote equality during the recruitment process, and this tool is also used in Vantaa. The use of anonymous recruitment will be increased in the future.

The language and illustrations of recruitment announcements also affect who applies for the position. The aim is to convey to applicants a picture of Vantaa as a sustainable employer that wants applicants from different backgrounds. In different service areas, cooperation with educational establishments takes the form of apprenticeships, for example, and this improves the employment of foreign-language speakers by the city.

The aim is to increase the competence of Vantaa's personnel in international and multicultural matters, not only with regard to recruitment, but also with respect to interacting with residents and providing services. On the initiative of the International Van-



### Examples of success:

Multilingual, clear-cut and multi-channel communications have been and are being developed actively, and the city's communications are now reaching the diverse population better than before. The Tsemppari model and the opening of multilingual counselling in connection with Vantaa Info centres improve the information available to the residents of the municipality and promote equal inclusion.

taa strategy team, a working group was formed of representatives of the city's various departments to plan and produce an **online training course on linguistic and cultural diversity in Vantaa**, which will be published in 2023.

The aim of the training is to provide the city's employees with information on immigration in the context of Finland and Vantaa, to discuss the importance of equality and non-discrimination, culturally and linguistically aware interaction, and good population relations in interactions with foreign-language Vantaa residents, and to go over the most important services of different departments targeted at foreign-language residents.

### International communication

In an international city, it is important for public actors to communicate in such a way that the messages reach the diverse a popu-



### Examples of development areas

As an employer, the City of Vantaa strives to be as international as the city's population. Various measures are being taken to increase the proportion of foreign-language speakers among the city's employees.

lation as well as possible. Communication supports inclusion and people's awareness of, for example, city services. Accessible communication supports equality and wellbeing, and, during the pandemic, multilingual communication was of paramount importance for the health of the entire population. When developing communication, it is important to use not only multiple languages but also multiple channels in order to reach all population groups, and this need was emphasised during the pandemic. Messages are translated into different languages, but attention is also paid to using plain language in Finnish communications, which also benefits non-native speakers.

In January 2023, the City Board decided that the city's communications will be in Finnish, Swedish, English and plain Finnish. Budget resources for Swedish and English translations have been added to the service areas. For example, news and websites will be increasingly translated into Swedish and English in future.

The redesigned **Vantaa.fi** web service has been built primarily in three structural languages: Finnish, Swedish and English. When the website was rebuilt in 2022, the marking of non-structural languages for content (language attribute) was enabled so that, for example, screen readers and analytics tools can interpret the text in the right language context. In addition, terms for selected languages were added to the taxonomy of keywords in order to create language-specific listings for site visitors.

In order to improve the discoverability of the language versions, technical readiness was produced for a miniature language menu alongside the main language menu (FI, SV, EN). The miniature language menu will also include plain Finnish. In the spring of 2023, an automated machine translation functionality was added to the website, allowing users to translate any page into the language of their choice.

In 2022, the City of Vantaa has organised two **plain language training courses** for its personnel, one of which was aimed at communications experts and the other was open to everyone. Both courses were very popular, and plain language training for city staff will be continued in 2023.

In 2022, Vantaan Sanomat started publishing a **local newspaper in plain language** in cooperation with the City of Vantaa. The pilot project of the paper was launched in October 2022. The monthly newspaper tells Vantaa residents about topical issues, events and people in plain Finnish. The newspaper is the first of its kind in Vantaa.

## Integration

Integration as a whole and its objectives in Vantaa are guided by an integration programme. The new **integration programme** is for 2023–2026, and previous similar programmes were called multicultural programmes. The vision of the integration programme is better integration and inclusion of foreign-language speakers in society. This includes the idea of two-way integration in which integration requires not only the integration and participation of foreign-language speakers, but also the ability of the host society to learn about multiculturalism and diversity, both in working life and in other contexts. The integration programme lays out the city’s role and objectives in relation to multiculturalism and equality as an employer, a provider of services, a purchaser of goods and services, a decision-maker and a promoter of inclusion.

From the perspective of integration as a whole, it is essential to cooperate with many different parties to ensure that services reach those who need them. Immigrants’ own organisations and associations are active operators through which different language groups can be reached effectively. These associations have a lot of linguistic and cultural expertise that the city should make use of, and they also provide complementary services.

Vantaa has developed and intensified cooperation with immigrant organisations through the **Tsemppari work model**. Tsemppari counsellors operating in the organisations’ premises help people with filling in applications and forms, offer support in applying for public services and provide advice in the customers’ own lan-



## Examples of success

The project for including parents in education and work life (Vanhemmat mukaan kouluun ja työelämään) has created a model for integrating stay-at-home immigrant parents into education and working life, which promotes equality in general, wellbeing and gender equality. Immigrant women in particular have benefited from the service.

Established in 2021, the project office supports more efficient use of EU project funding, partnerships and project cooperation.

guage and in Finnish. The Tsemppari model brings public services closer to customers and improves the inclusion and wellbeing of foreign-language speakers. The model increases the expertise of NGOs in supporting integration. The model has been developed in the Tsempataan! project and in previous Tsempataan projects focused on cooperation and employment.

The employment project (Tsempataan töihin), for example, developed a recruitment model in cooperation with Sodexo, in which jobseekers had the opportunity to learn about various tasks in the company by shadowing an employee for two days. This gave the jobseekers an idea of the field and tasks, allowed them to ask questions and consider possibly seeking relevant training, and allowed the employer to get to know potential applicants.



## Examples of development areas

Increasing the resources of the project office would increase impact and create opportunities for new initiatives through international projects. It would also enable better support for ongoing projects.

Major structural reforms will change the whole of integration work and the related responsibilities in Finland. It is important to further promote and develop intersectoral cooperation and interfaces with the wellbeing services county.

The Tsemppari model has increased trust between NGOs and city actors and thus strengthened relations in the population. It has also given rise to several different projects, which NGOs and associations have actively planned and implemented together with the city. The partnership model and networking developed in the Tsemppari model have been relayed and expanded, for example to the Neuvova Vantaa project.

**Neuvova Vantaa** is a development project that develops counselling for immigrants (2020–2023). The project’s clients include all Vantaa residents with a foreign mother tongue and personnel providing counselling and guidance for them in Vantaa. The aim is to support the accessibility and fluency of counselling for foreign-language speakers in Vantaa by establishing multilingual counselling.

The project is funded by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment and the City of Vantaa.

The pandemic highlighted the importance of multilingual information and guidance in a new way. In autumn 2021, under the coordination of the project, **Vantaa's multilingual guidance** was opened in connection with Vantaa Info. Experts in multilingual advisory services provide personal assistance related to the services of the City of Vantaa and various authorities. The service languages are Finnish, Swedish, English, Estonian, Russian, Arabic, Somali, Dari and Farsi. There are multilingual counsellors in the Vantaa Info centres in Myyrmäki and Tikkurila as well as at International House Helsinki. The project is also piloting group-based and outreach counselling and multidisciplinary cooperation.

Schools play an important role in supporting integration, and the section of this review entitled 'Vantaa builds wellbeing and is socially sustainable' deals with multiculturalism and multilingualism in Vantaa's primary and secondary education. Vantaa has developed a model in which parents who have moved to Finland also get to benefit from comprehensive school education while strengthening their attachment to Finnish society. The **project for including parents in education and work life** (Vanhemmat mukaan kouluun ja työelämään) is aimed at immigrant parents and is implemented by the Vantaa Skills Centre, Vantaa's primary and lower secondary education services and Careeria. In the project, parents attend classes in primary and lower secondary education together with schoolchildren for part of the week, and the rest of the week they study in

their own group under the guidance of the project's S2 (Finnish as a second language) coach. Childcare is arranged for the duration of the lessons so that parents of young children can also participate.

The activities strengthen the participants' Finnish language skills and support them in planning further paths and in gaining access to education and employment. At the same time, they receive information about Finnish education and society, which promotes their integration and helps them consider their goals. Parents who might otherwise spend their days at home gain an important peer community and experiences of inclusion. The activities also strengthen cooperation between families and the school and the opportunities of immigrant parents to support their children in school.

The participants take classes for one academic year, and in the spring term they are introduced to Finnish working life through work trials, for example. At the end of the spring term, the participants are found a further path to studies or working life, if possible. The success rate is high; about eight out of ten find a suitable way forward. However, reaching parents at home and getting them to participate, especially when



their Finnish proficiency is often poor, is challenging. It requires a strong commitment from schools, because often the best way to reach parents is through their children.

The project is intended for all immigrant parents, but most of the participants are mothers. Special attention has recently been paid to supporting the employment and integration of immigrant women, for example in connection with the comprehensive reform of the Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration, as the employment rate of immigrant women is lower in Finland than in the other Nordic countries and also lower than that of immigrant men or of women of the original population. In particular, the project supports the learning of the Finnish language, integration and access to education and working life for immigrant women.

## Supporting Ukraine

The City of Vantaa has been supporting Ukraine ever since Russia launched its invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022.

On 28 February 2022, Vantaa City Council decided to support Ukraine with a donation of EUR 150,000. At the same council session, all the council groups issued a joint statement in which they expressed their support for Ukrainians and condemned the Russian invasion. The statement supported sanctions to promote an end to the hostilities. In addition, the City of Vantaa was required to prepare for the continuation of humanitarian aid and the reception of refugees fleeing the war. The statement also noted that ordinary

Russians living in the multicultural city of Vantaa should not be subjected to discrimination or isolation due to the unacceptable hostilities perpetrated by the Russian leadership.

In April 2022, the City of Vantaa established the Ukrainian Help Center together with the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare. The centre's offerings have included support, advisory services, material assistance and interaction. In 2023, the City of Vantaa will also support the Ukrainian Association in Finland in the operations of the Korso Logistics Centre with EUR 60,000, mainly directed at rents on premises. At the end of 2022, there were approximately 1,150 Ukrainian refugees living in Vantaa.

Vantaa has also participated in European cooperation to support Ukraine in the activities of the Eurocities network. In February 2023, as part of the Generators of Hope campaign launched by Eurocities and the European Parliament, Vantaa and the cities of Helsinki and Espoo collected 117 generators, engine-generators, heaters or other devices for Ukraine. They were donated by companies, communities and individuals.



# CONCLUSIONS

## Conclusions

**Vantaa is working hard towards its sustainable development goals. Services and forms of cooperation and inclusion are being actively developed. Development work is being carried out in the city organisation in many different ways, for example through a large number of ongoing projects. As a growing city, Vantaa has a flexible organisation that is willing to boldly try out new solutions. During the pandemic, the city was able to react quickly to changing needs and circumstances. On the other hand, scarce resources throughout the city organisation limit development opportunities and pose challenges in many places.**

The integration of the SDGs into the strategy and the regular voluntary local reviews show Vantaa's commitment to sustainability work and its systematic promotion. However, there is still much room for improvement in the coordination and management of sustainability work, as it is done with limited resources, in a fragmented manner and without permanent structures. Furthermore, the SDGs and people's awareness of them are not being transformed into practical development work, and the work is not being structured through the SDGs even though it actually contributes to them.

Vantaa's sustainability work and its coordination are being further developed. Long-term work on sustainability and the promotion of the SDGs in cross-administrative cooperation requires resources, management structures and commitment from all departments. The understanding of the SDGs and the entirety of sustainability work and its significance must be increased within the city organisation.

So far, the resources and management of intersectoral sustainability work have not been at a level that would enable the development of systematic sustainability work. The main task of the temporary sustainability expert has been to compile the voluntary local review, and the temporary nature of the position may have caused the experience and lessons learned from the review process and its results to go to waste. The situation will be significantly improved in 2023 with the establishment of the position of a new permanent sustainability expert.

The City of Vantaa needs to develop its knowledge-based management both at the city and department level. Functioning and effective knowledge-based management requires increasing a shared understanding, coordination and integrative management, as well as resources. Knowledge-based management structures are constantly being developed. In this development work, it is important to

consider how the SDGs and the related indicators could be better linked to the processes of knowledge-based management.

The SDGs have not been systematically translated from the strategy level to the programmes implementing the strategy. The programmes are different from each other and do not fully communicate with each other. Closer coordination in the compilation of different programmes would help identify overlaps and blind spots and find points where the mutual linking of programmes and objectives could open up new opportunities for cooperation and new ways of approaching major issues and phenomena.

With regard to the programmes implementing the strategy and their objectives, Vantaa should prepare systematic assessments of their impact on the SDGs. This would also enable the detection of negative and contradictory effects. For example, objectives related

to the growth of the city and attracting new companies may conflict with environmental objectives. A comprehensive assessment of these impacts would provide a better overall picture of how the city as a whole contributes to the SDGs and where a change of direction is possible and necessary to achieve all the goals. Better coordination of sustainability work can help with this aim and provide tools for integrating the SDGs into all of the city's operations.

The strategy defines cross-cutting SDGs that should be reflected in all the strategic themes and in all programmes implementing the strategy. There are major shortcomings in the integration of these SDGs into the programmes. For example, gender equality cannot be promoted without identifying the points where unequal structures exist, and planning measures to actively promote gender equality. Equality and non-discrimination are often thought to be realised through the fact that, for example, in services everyone is treated the same without regard to gender or other factors. In this case, however, no analysis has been made as to why not everyone may have actual access to and benefit from services. One important area for equality is working life, and Vantaa should consider more extensively how equality and non-discrimination issues can be taken into account in the work for vitality and how these goals can be promoted.

As regards gender, gender diversity must also be taken into consideration. In general, the programmes and other documents implementing Vantaa's strategy have a binary view of gender, which ignores diversity and thus conceals and even reinforces unequal

structures. The City of Vantaa still has a lot of work to do in integrating the gender perspective and promoting equality. It is important to pay attention to manner of speech and choice of words to ensure we do not exclude diversity from the discussion. For example, the position of gender and sexual minorities must be made visible so that it can be actively improved.

In addition to and in connection with gender, it is important to constantly keep in mind other factors affecting equality, such as age, language, cultural background, socio-economic status, health and family situation. These factors are linked together in complex ways, and women or men, for example, cannot be thought of as a cohesive group. When Vantaa is developing the promotion of equality and the consideration of the gender perspective in all activities, it is important to include an intersectional approach that takes other differences into account.

Project-based development, which is strongly reflected in the measures in this review, may not be the best way to promote the SDGs. It allows flexibility and resources for a certain kind of development, but projects are short in duration and the development work carried out, the lessons learned and the results do not always remain in long-term use. The work carried out in projects is often scattered and not linked to other work carried out by the city in a way that would promote the SDGs in the long term. In Vantaa, projects often recruit temporary project workers who leave at the end of the project, taking with them a great deal of knowledge and lessons learned, which is lost to the city organisation.

The impact of projects would be increased, for example, by better resourcing of the project office and permanent employment relationships, within which the project employees could flexibly move to another project after one ends, keeping their know-how and silent knowledge in the organisation.

This review highlights the efforts of the City of Vantaa to promote the SDGs. In the future, it will be important to increasingly approach sustainable development as a common issue of the entire city region, which is also promoted by companies, educational establishments, communities, NGOs, other parties, as well as local residents. Increasing cooperation and promoting awareness of the SDGs in the entire city region can bring about new solutions and a new kind of commitment to these common goals, and the city organisation serves as an important unifying force, example and knowledge sharer.



**vantaa.fi**

