

Climate Action Plan 2024-2029

Longford County Council

Vision and Mission

Vision

Longford County Council is committed to achieving net-zero emissions by 2050 by delivering services in an environmentally sustainable manner and by working with the community, agricultural and business sectors to deliver on common goals.

Mission

Over the lifetime of this Plan the mission of Longford County Council is to deliver transformative change and measurable climate action in our towns, villages and rural communities through leadership, example and by mobilising action at a local level.

Foreword

We recognise that Longford County Council has a significant role to play in tackling the climate crisis by dealing with the impacts of climate change, curbing its own emissions, providing an example to individuals, businesses, agricultural and other communities and by influencing the people who live, work, and visit the County.

This can be achieved by further focusing on reducing our carbon emissions, promoting low-carbon and sustainable solutions which limit pollution, ensuring resilient infrastructure, helping to reverse biodiversity loss, and supporting communities.

This Climate Action Plan outlines our ambitions, actions, and goals to accelerate change. It addresses our mandated priorities in the Government's Climate Action Plan. It also looks to move beyond this, by showing leadership and commitment to integrate sustainable actions and principles across areas such as buildings, social housing, green space development, transport, procurement, community development, local enterprise, and environment.

Sustainability considerations will be core to our future decisions and will be embedded into our everyday ways of working and culture. Delivering our Plan requires urgent, collaborative, and ongoing efforts to work together with our elected representatives, staff, communities, the public and businesses. All will play a critical role to reduce our collective contribution to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

As Longford County Council delivers its Plan it will measure and report on key metrics and set targets to continually improve our performance. We will also review the Plan annually.



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Colm Murray', written over a horizontal line.

Cllr Colm Murray

Cathaoirleach



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'P Mahon', written over a horizontal line.

Paddy Mahon

Chief Executive

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	7
Section 1 Climate Action Plan - background	8
1.1 Legislative and Policy Background	8
1.2 Overview of Climate Change	10
1.3 Climate Policy International Context	12
1.4 International Climate Change Policy	13
1.5 Climate Policy Irish Context	14
1.6 Local Authority Climate Action Planning	15
1.7 Citizen and Stakeholder Engagement	16
1.8 Climate Action Training	16
1.9 National Dialogue on Climate Action	17
1.10 Community Climate Action Fund	18
1.11 Climate Action Research Activities	18
Section 2 Regional and Local Context	19
2.1 Location and Settlement	19
2.2 Landscape and Biodiversity	19
2.3 Infrastructure and Economy	20
2.4 Culture and Tourism	22
2.5 Governance	22
2.6 Planning and Development Policy	23
Section 3 Evidence Based Climate Action	24
3.1 Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA)	24
3.2 Carbon Emissions in Context	28
3.3 Baseline Emissions Inventories (BEI)	29
3.3.1 Countywide BEI	29
3.3.2 Baseline Emissions Inventory for the Decarbonisation Zone (DZ)	30
3.3.3 Longford County Council Emissions	31
Section 4 Climate Action: Your Council working for you	32
4.1 Longford County Council	32
4.1.1 Climate Adaptation Strategy	32

4.1.2	Climate Charter	32
4.1.3	Corporate Plan	33
4.2	Directorate for Finance and Information Technology	34
4.2.1	Green Procurement	34
4.2.2	Information Technology (IT)	34
4.2.3	Rural Broadband	35
4.2.4	Remote Working Hubs	35
4.3	Directorate for Community, Library and Cultural Services, Corporate and Human Resources	36
4.3.1	Community Section.....	37
4.3.2	Libraries.....	38
4.3.3	Heritage.....	39
4.3.4	County Longford Public Participation Network (PPN)	39
4.3.5	Sports Partnership	40
4.3.6	Training and Human Resources (HR)	40
4.4	Directorate for Infrastructure, Climate Action, and Innovation	40
4.4.1	Major Emergency Management	41
4.4.2	Emergency Services	41
4.4.3	Public Lighting	43
4.4.4	Roads.....	43
4.4.5	Energy Efficiency Improvements of Council Buildings.....	46
4.4.6	Longford Sports and Leisure Centre	47
4.4.7	Electrical Vehicle Charging.....	48
4.4.8	Environment - Waste	49
4.4.9	Environment – Air and Water	49
4.4.10	Environment – Environmental Awareness.....	50
4.4.11	Drainage	50
4.4.12	Regulation of local food producers	51
4.5	Directorate for Housing, Planning, Regeneration and Capital Projects.....	51
4.5.1	New Social Housing and Housing Retrofits.....	52
4.5.2	Active Travel.....	53
4.5.3	Planning.....	54
4.5.4	Regeneration.....	55
4.5.5	Facilities Management.....	56

4.6	Directorate for Enterprise and Ukrainian Humanitarian Response.....	57
4.6.1	Longford Local Enterprise Office	57
Section 5	Climate Actions	59
5.1	Framework of Climate Actions	59
5.1.1	Alignment of Actions with DECA 2030.....	62
5.1.2	Alignment of Actions with the UN Strategic Development Goals	63
5.2	Climate Actions.....	64
5.2.1	Governance and Leadership	65
5.2.2	Built Environment and Transport	69
5.2.3	Natural Environment and Green Infrastructure	76
5.2.4	Communities, Resilience and Transition.....	80
5.2.5	Sustainability and Resource Management	85
5.3	Amendments to Climate Action tasks following Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA):	89
Section 6	Decarbonisation Zone	91
6.1	Introduction.....	91
6.2	Strategic Vision for the Decarbonisation Zone	93
6.3	Actions and Tasks for Longford Town Decarbonisation Zone	94
6.4	Amendments to DZ tasks following SEA and AA analysis:	96
Section 7	Implementation and Reporting	97
7.1	Planning for Implementation	97
7.2	Funding and Partnerships	98
7.3	Tracking Progress through Key Performance Indicators.....	98
7.4	Reporting Requirements and Arrangements	99
7.4.1	Internal Reporting.....	99
7.4.2	Monitoring and Reporting System (M&R)	99
7.4.3.	Sectoral Performance	99
7.4.4	National Climate Action Plan	99
	Attached Documents	100

Executive Summary

This Climate Action Plan takes into full consideration international and national climate change policy and legislation as well as the most up-to-date knowledge on current levels of climate change and its impacts and projections for the future. This Climate Action Plan is set out as follows:

- Sections 1-3 lay out the evidence-base used to inform on climate action within the jurisdiction of Longford County Council, including climate change risks and baseline emissions profiles.
- Section 4 outlines the structure, function, and aspirations with respect to climate change of the County Council. It also details the climate actions currently underway.
- Section 5 outlines the Council's framework for climate action, its Strategic Goals, Objectives, and Actions.
- Section 6 focuses on Longford County Council's Decarbonisation Zone (DZ), Longford Town. It includes the Objectives and Climate Actions tailored specifically to the DZ.
- Section 7 sets out the Council's approach to implementing actions and measuring progress.

Section 1 Climate Action Plan - Background

1.1 Legislative and Policy Background

Longford County Council has prepared this Climate Action Plan 2024-2029, to create a low carbon and climate resilient county. This will be achieved by delivering and promoting best practice in climate action at a local level. This is aligned to the Government's overall National Climate Objective, which seeks to achieve, by the end of 2050, the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy.

The Plan conforms to the requirements of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021. The Act also frames Ireland's legally binding climate ambition to deliver a reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions of 51% by 2030. This will place the country on a trajectory to achieving climate neutrality by the end of 2050. In preparing the Plan, the Council has also taken account of:

- other relevant climate legislation and policy,
- a climate change risk assessment (CCRA) and
- baseline emissions inventory (BEI) assessment.

The CCRA and the BEI are attached to this plan. (Annex A and Annex B)

The Climate (Amendment) Act 2021 requires all local authorities in Ireland to prepare a Climate Action Plan, addressing both mitigation and adaptation measures:

- Climate Change Mitigation relates to changing how we live, move, consume, and manufacture, so to reduce and/or eliminate the production of harmful GHGs, it also includes how we best use our land.
- Climate Change Adaptation refers to dealing with the impacts of climate change and involves taking practical actions to manage risks, protect communities and strengthen the resilience of the economy (e.g., from flooding, sea level rise etc.).

This Climate Action Plan sets a clear pathway for Longford County Council to:

- actively translate national climate policy to local circumstances with the prioritisation and acceleration of evidence-based measures.
- assist in the delivery of the climate neutrality objective at local and community levels; and
- identify and deliver a Decarbonisation Zone (DZ) within the local authority area to act as a test bed for a range of climate mitigation, adaptation, and biodiversity measures through the identification of projects and outcomes that will assist in the delivery of the National Climate Objective.

A range of other plans, including the Council’s Corporate Plan and Longford County Development Plan, also support the Climate Action Plan.

The Plan demonstrates a coherent approach to climate action across the administrative and political structure of the local authority. The Plan is subject to approval by the elected members of the local authority, following public consultation.

The Plan sets out how Longford County Council will be responsible for enhancing climate resilience, increasing energy efficiency, and reducing GHG emissions, across its own assets and services, to which it is fully accountable for, while also demonstrating a broader role of influencing, advocating, and facilitating other sectors, to meet their own climate action targets and ambitions. This is necessary to ensure that the environmental, social, and economic benefits that come with climate action can be fully realised.

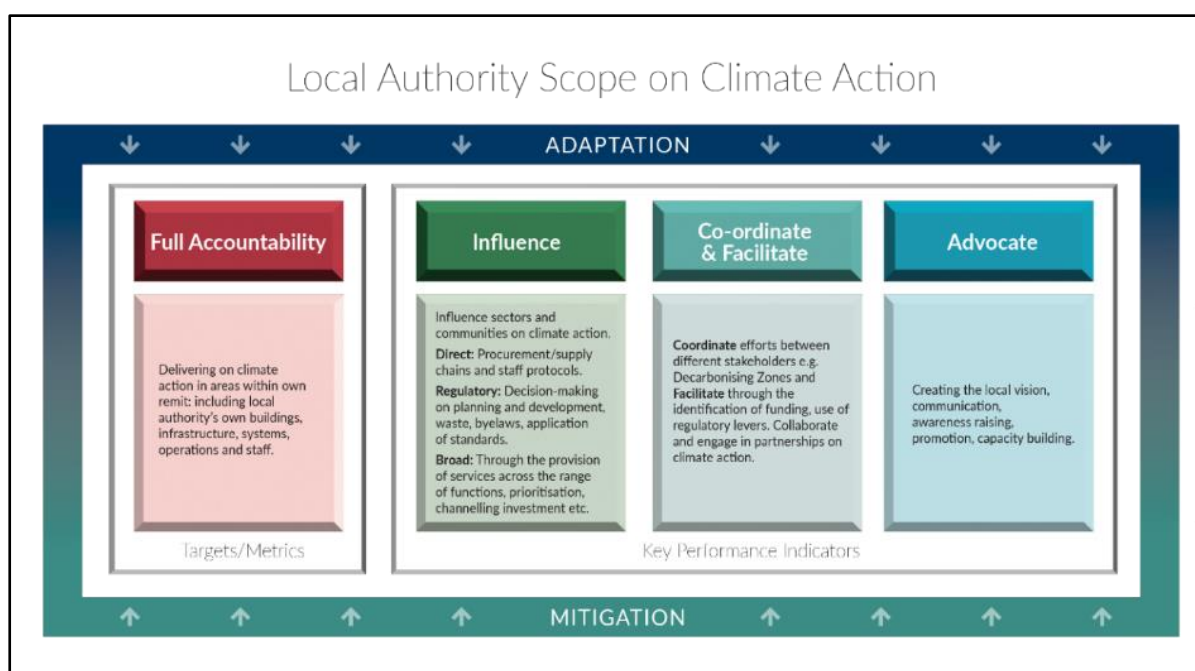


Figure 1: Local Authority Scope on Climate Action (Source: Local Authority Climate Action Plan Guidelines, 2023)

The Council will continue its efforts in rolling out ambitious climate action projects, drawing down available sources of funding and pursuing citizen and stakeholder engagement.

The Council has launched the Climate Action Fund Strand 1 - Building Low Carbon Communities. This is a fund for local authorities across the country, to support and build low carbon communities.

In a changing climate, the aim is to become more resilient to all future possibilities, allowing local communities to thrive and work towards real solutions that are meaningful, inclusive, fair, and accessible for all, thereby prioritising a just transition.

1.2 Overview of Climate Change

Climate change is increasingly understood to be the most critical, long-term global challenge of our time. Its impacts continue to be felt both worldwide and at home. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Working Group 1 Sixth Assessment Report, confirms overwhelming evidence that the climate has changed since the pre-industrial era and that human activities, through GHG emissions, are the principal cause of that change. It states the unequivocal cause of global warming has been human activities, with global surface temperatures reaching 1.1°C above 1850-1900, in the 2011-2020 period.

Ireland's climate echoes the above statement. Figure 2, below, compares the global temperature rise since 1900 to Irish temperatures. Ireland is in line with the global temperature increases, with 2022, being a year of record-breaking extremes, in both temperature and precipitation. Met Éireann stated that 2022 was 'the warmest year on record'. This would see Ireland's temperature above the long-term average for the 12th consecutive year. Furthermore, 2022 saw record breaking temperatures observed in Ireland during the summer, recording the second highest temperature ever recorded in Ireland at 33°C.

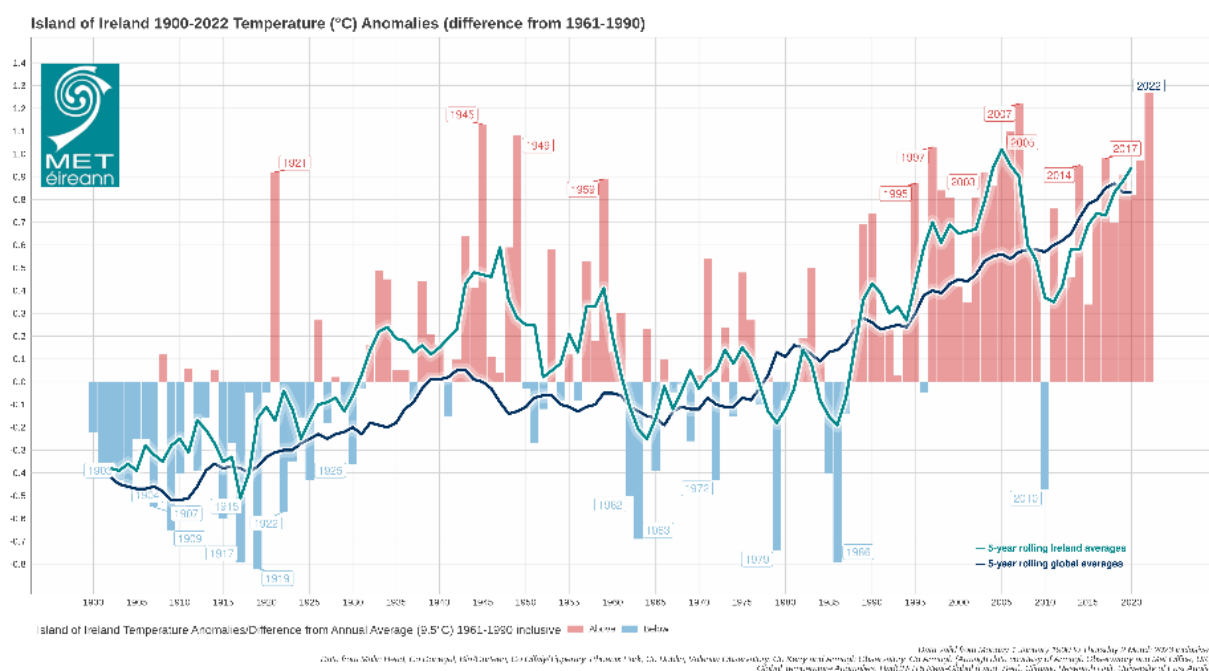


Figure 2: Island of Ireland 1900-2022 Temperature (°C) Anomalies (difference from 1961-1990) (Source: Met Éireann)

This is reiterated in the precipitation observations from 2022, where rainfall was recorded at below the long-term average at most stations. There was variability in rainfall throughout 2022, with extremes being felt in each of the seasons, resulting in a drier spring and summer, and a wetter autumn and winter.

Global mean sea level increased by 20 cm between 1901 and 2018. This increasing trend has been consistently rising since 1901. Ireland has so far seen a similar rise in sea level with an average of 2-3 mm per year. A warming climate has caused a rise in sea level, through the loss of sea ice and thermal expansion (the increase in the volume of water due to heating) resulting from the warming ocean.

Ireland has suffered from adverse climate impacts already and recent extreme weather events have highlighted the vulnerability of individuals, businesses, communities, and infrastructure to climate change. This emphasises the need for urgency on climate action across all sectors of society.

For example, storms such as Arwen and Barra in 2021 left 59,000 homes and businesses without power. The adverse impacts of climate change can often compound wider reaching social, environmental, and economic challenges. This can increase vulnerability and sensitivity to a changing climate and climate extremes.

Based on observed changes in climate and its impacts, Met Éireann, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and other climate scientists, can make robust projections on future climate patterns in Ireland. The EPA, Marine Institute and Met Éireann published 'The Status of Ireland's Climate Report' in July 2021. Future climate projections for Ireland and County Longford can be summarised as follows:

- Climate projections indicate that the climate trends observed over the last century will continue and intensify over the coming decades.
- Temperatures are increasing and are expected to continue to increase across all seasons.
- Significant reductions in average precipitation are expected in Spring and Summer. Projections also indicate the increased occurrence of extreme precipitation events, particularly during Winter.
- Projections show slight change in average wind speed and direction. The frequency of extreme wind conditions is expected to increase, particularly during Winter.
- Increases in the frequency of fluvial (river) and pluvial (surface water) flooding.
- Increases in the frequency and intensity of summer heat waves, extreme temperatures, and drought.
- Reductions in the frequency of frost and snowfall; and
- An increase in the duration of the growing season.

The state of Ireland's climate today and how it may look in the future can be brought together in one simple conclusion. Ireland's climate has changed relative to the 1900s, it has undoubtedly warmed along with global temperatures, bringing about an array of impacts that are associated with a warmer climate and more extreme weather events.

1.3 Climate Policy International Context

Climate action is given impetus by the scientific evidence that supports the findings of human influence on climate change. The most recent legally binding international treaty on climate change is the Paris Agreement 2015. This Climate Action Plan is set within a broader context of international, EU, national and sectoral climate policy. This is represented in Figure 3.

Legislation and Policy Context for the Climate Action Plan

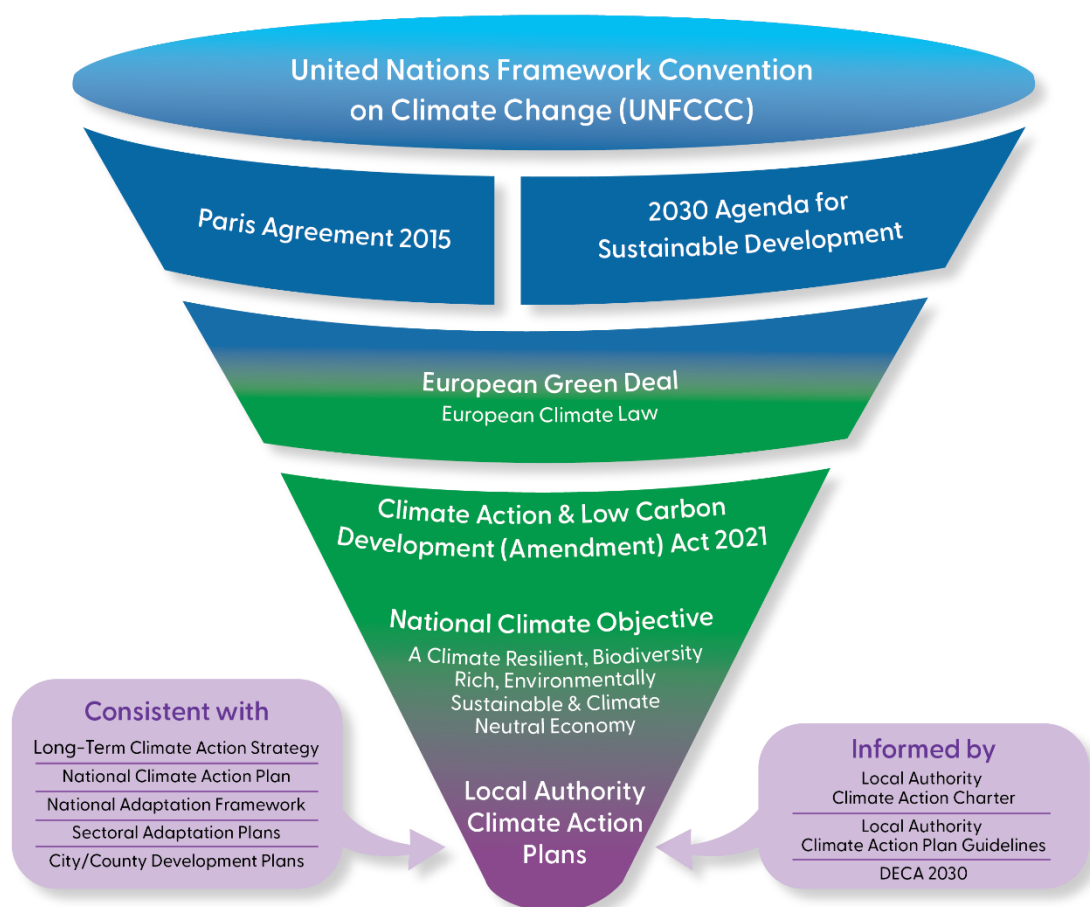


Figure 3: Legislation and Policy Context for the Climate Action Plan (Source: Climate Action Regional Offices)

1.4 International Climate Change Policy

Successfully tackling climate change requires cooperation and ambition on an international level. Since the establishment of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1994, countries have sought to build international cooperation to limit the increase in the average global temperature and deal with the impacts of climate change.

These efforts led to the signing of the Paris Agreement 2015 at the Conference of the Parties 21 (COP21). The Paris Agreement 2015 is a legally binding international treaty on climate change which was signed by all 196 member countries, including Ireland. It entered into force on 4th November 2016. Through two clearly defined goals the Paris Agreement strives for progressive and ambitious climate action to avoid dangerous climate change by:

- i. Holding global average temperature increases below 2°C and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.
- ii. Increasing the ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change and foster climate resilience.

Another International agreement intricately linked with the Paris Agreement is the '2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' which was adopted by UN Member States in September 2015. At the Agenda's core are 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These goals aim to 'end poverty, protect the planet and improve the lives and prospects of everyone, everywhere'. The 17 SDGs contain 169 targets to be achieved by 2030. In 2019, World leaders called for a 'decade of action' to achieve the Goals within this timeframe.



Figure 4: Sustainable Development Goals

The European Commission, in December 2019, announced the European Green Deal aimed at making Europe the first climate neutral continent. The Deal seeks to achieve net zero emissions of GHGs by 2050, to decouple economic growth from resource use, and to leave no one behind. The EU introduced a set of proposals to align the EU's climate, taxation, energy, and transport policies to support this aim. The European Climate Law made these targets legally binding, and includes the requirement to reduce net GHG emissions by 55% by 2030.

1.5 Climate Policy Irish Context

Climate change policy in Ireland now reflects the ambition of the EU. Working towards the National Climate Objective the Climate (Amendment) Act 2021, promotes a sustainable economy and society where GHG emissions targets are set to deliver the required reductions. Through progressive economy-wide carbon budgets, sectoral ceilings, a suite of strategies devised to promote a combination of adaptation and mitigation measures climate policy is working to scale up efforts across all of society to deliver transformative climate action to 2030 and beyond to 2050.

The Climate Action Plan 2023, launched on 21st December 2022, is the second annual update to the States' Climate Action Plan 2019. It is the first to be prepared under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021. Climate Action Plan 2023 sets out a roadmap to 2025 towards taking decisive action to halve emissions by 2030 and reach net zero by the end of 2050, as committed to in the Programme for Government.

Ireland published its first National Adaptation Framework (NAF) in 2018, which sets the context to ensure that key sectors and local authorities assess the key risks and vulnerabilities of climate change, implement climate resilient actions, and ensure climate adaptation considerations are embedded into national, regional and local policy.

Ireland's current long-term strategy on GHG emissions reductions sets out indicative pathways towards achieving carbon neutrality for Ireland by 2050. The strategy builds upon the decarbonisation pathways set by the carbon budgets, sectoral emissions ceilings, and the national Climate Action Plan, to ensure coherent and effective climate policy. It is underpinned by analysis of transition options across each key sector of the economy and provides a crucial link between Ireland's 2030 climate targets and the long-term goal set by Ireland's National Climate Objective and the European Climate Law.

Sectoral Climate Adaptation Plans have been published across government departments, in response to the National Adaptation Framework. Each plan identifies the key risks faced across the sector and the approach being taken to address these risks and build climate resilience for the future. The plans address the following sectors:

- Agriculture, Forestry and Seafood,
- Biodiversity,
- Built and Archaeological Heritage,

- Transport infrastructure,
- Electricity and Gas Networks,
- Communications Networks,
- Flood Risk Management,
- Water Quality and Water Services Infrastructure and
- Health.

The Local Authority Climate Action Charter, signed by Longford County Council in October 2019, represents a commitment to scale up efforts and play a key role locally and nationally in delivering effective climate action. It tasks all local authorities with providing robust leadership in advancing climate action at regional and local levels by adhering to the UN SDGs, in particular Goal 13 Climate Action.

Delivering Effective Climate Action 2030 (DECA 2030) is the local government strategy on climate action published in April 2021. The strategy represents an overarching sectoral commitment to ensuring a coherent approach to climate action across all 31 local authorities. The strategy provides a roadmap for local authorities to deliver the required decarbonisation and adaptation responses to climate change.

1.6 Local Authority Climate Action Planning

Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027 contains a Climate Strategy, which in conjunction with this Longford County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 sets out a vision for the future and key actions towards climate change and sustainable development.

The Longford County Council Climate Action Plan strengthens the links between national and international climate policy and the delivery of effective climate action at local and community levels. The intrinsic value of the Climate Action Plan is that it plays a significant role in reinforcing the commitment by the local government sector to lead on climate action at local and national levels. Over its preparation and implementation, the Council's Climate Action Plan offers an opportunity to bring together critical stakeholders across communities and businesses to build a vision for a climate neutral future.

Longford County Council and other local authorities across Ireland, are well positioned at the forefront of climate action. The Council plays a significant role in terms of delivering adaptation and mitigation measures at local and community levels working through regulatory and strategic functions.

This Climate Action Plan provides a mechanism for bringing together both adaptation and mitigation actions, helping to drive positive climate action and outcomes across the local authority's administrative area. The framework of climate actions set within the Plan delivers a direct line of sight from local actions on the ground to the Plan's high-level vision of achieving net-zero emissions by 2050.

This Plan has been prepared in accordance with the Local Authority Climate Action Plan Guidelines, published by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications in March 2023.

1.7 Citizen and Stakeholder Engagement

Local authorities have extensive experience in engaging citizens and stakeholders. Local authorities are also engaged in existing public participation structures and approaches that are bottom-up, local community centred and are outcome focused. These include Public Participation Networks (PPN), Local Community Development Committees (LCDC), Tidy Towns, Age Friendly Ireland, Sports Partnerships, Sustainable Energy Communities (SECs) and a range of other programmes and initiatives.

The challenges of climate change are not defined by spatial boundaries. Engagement and participation by citizens and stakeholders in climate decisions is considered incredibly important. This ensures climate actions positively and equitably influence the choices made.

Delivering on our climate ambition requires the Government and citizens of Ireland to come together in a strengthened 'social contract' for climate action. The co-creation of real solutions to climate change, which are meaningful, inclusive, fair, and accessible for all will prioritise a just transition (Climate Action Plan 2023).

1.8 Climate Action Training

In partnership with the Climate Action Regional Offices (CARO) and the Local Authority Services National Training Group (LASTNG), climate action training continues to be rolled out for the entire local authority sector including elected members. The training empowers and upskills staff to act as champions of climate action. To date 65% of staff in Longford County Council have been trained in various pillars of climate action. Future training requirements are being assessed on a continuous basis. The Association of Irish Local Government (AILG) has also organised training events and an accredited training course for elected members.

In partnership with the CAROs, 'Let's talk Climate Action' workshops have also been organised across the country, through the network of Age Friendly Ireland coordinators in local authorities.

At a school level, the Council's Environmental Awareness Officer works closely with the An Taisce Green Schools Programme, to continue awareness activities and Green Flag awards in both primary and post-primary schools. An Taisce has also developed new resources for teachers on climate action, to overlap with teaching curriculums.

1.9 National Dialogue on Climate Action

In 2022, the Council continued to support citizen and stakeholder engagement initiatives, including the Government's National Dialogue on Climate Action (NDCA) and local 'Climate Conversations' led by the Public Participation Network (PPN). The Climate Acts 2015-2021 recognise the Public Participation Networks as a key network to consult regarding climate action. The Council has engaged with the Longford PPN in the public consultation of the Climate Action Plan.

Cumulatively, evidence from the 2022 NDCA programme suggests that there is an elevated level of awareness of climate change among the Irish people, and they want to get involved in climate action. The findings of the 2022 engagement programme have also shown that there is a willingness to engage in climate action, but people may not know which actions are most effective or where to start acting. Further enabling citizen and stakeholder engagement can make it possible to realise the opportunities that a transition to a carbon-neutral society and economy presents. Such opportunities include:

- new sustainable careers,
- warmer more energy-efficient homes,
- better travel options,
- more sustainable consumer choice,
- integrated spatial planning,
- cleaner air and water and
- a better environment for future generations.

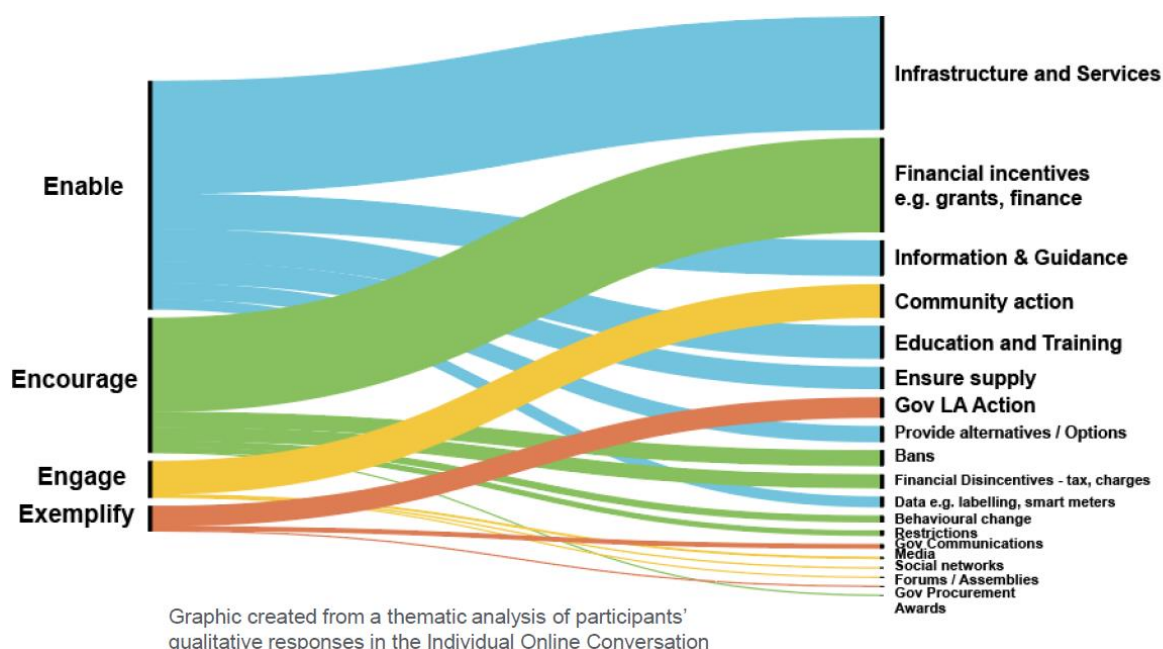


Figure 5: Thematic analysis of participants' responses in the Individual Online Conversation (Source: Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications)

1.10 Community Climate Action Fund

On 3 February 2023, the Minister of the Environment, Climate and Communications, launched the Climate Action Fund Strand 1 - Building Low Carbon Communities. This is a fund of €24 million for local authorities across the Country, to support and build low carbon communities. A further €3 million is being provided to support cross-border and all-island community climate action initiatives. This funding is part of the Community Climate Action Programme, which supports projects and initiatives that facilitate community climate action through education, capacity building and learning by doing.

Strand 1 requires the appointment of dedicated Community Climate Action Officers (CCAO) in all local authorities to guide and support communities from the very start. Longford County Council has recruited a Community Climate Action Officer and it opened the Community Climate Action Fund for applications on 08 December 2023. Community projects eligible for this potential funding will address the following five themes:

- Community/Energy
- Travel
- Food and waste
- Shopping and recycling
- Local climate and environmental action

1.11 Climate Action Research Activities

Longford County Council participates in a range of research projects across different business areas to help inform our response to key work areas such as climate action. Collaborating on research also maintains good working relationships with third level universities and technological institutes, as well as other research stakeholders such as representative bodies like the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA).

Section 2 Regional and Local Context

2.1 Location and Settlement

Longford is a low-lying county situated at the northern reaches of the Shannon Basin, bounded by Counties Roscommon, Leitrim, Cavan, and Westmeath. The population of County Longford was 46,751 in the 2022 census, of which approximately one quarter reside in Longford Town. The remainder of the County has a dispersed settlement pattern, characterised by small towns and villages. The settlement hierarchy is dominated by Granard in the northeast, Ballymahon in the south, Edgeworthstown in the east and Lanesborough in the west.

2.2 Landscape and Biodiversity

The Longford landscape, as it exists today, will influence how climate change impacts the County. Second only to County Leitrim as the smallest County in population terms and as one of the smallest counties in spatial extent, County Longford is nonetheless diverse in terms of its landscape with wide variations from north to south and east to west.

Cairn Hill is the highest point of the county at 279m and is in a drumlin landscape to the northwest where the county boundary is shared with County Leitrim along a string of lakes and rivers that form part of the Shannon catchment. The north-east of the County shares the boundary with County Cavan which includes Lough Gowna. Lough Gowna is part of the Erne catchment. The northern section of the County is more elevated and characterised by poorly drained soils.

The central and south county regions are characterised by significant commercial peatland areas. Extensive areas of raised bog have been intensively harvested and managed over many years by Bord na Móna and others with resultant impacts on drainage, attenuation, water quality and biodiversity in the wider surroundings. Changing policy regarding this activity has implications for climate action policy (both adaptation and mitigation) into the future, with potential innovative opportunities for the County in terms of land use diversification and carbon management.

The River Shannon and Lough Ree form the western county boundary with County Roscommon. The water levels of the Shannon are managed by Waterways Ireland and ESB for navigational and electricity generation purposes. The Camlin flows east to west through the centre of the County passing through Longford Town and entering the Shannon at Cloondara. The eastern boundary with County Westmeath is formed by the river Inny, a substantial tributary of the Shannon, which enters Lough Ree south of Ballymahon.

A high proportion of the County is contained within the Shannon River Basin Management District (RBMD) for the implementation of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) and a small portion in the north of the County is located within the Northwest International

RBMD. These were established for the protection of water quality of rivers and lakes. In terms of flood management, the County is in the Shannon Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management area.

The Royal Canal enters the County at Abbeyshrule and travels north-west towards Cloondara and the Shannon with a spur to Longford town at Killashee. Considered a major tourism asset, the Royal Canal reflects the County's transport past and has received significant resources for blueway development at a national level. The potential for blueways and greenways to be utilised as wildlife corridors to prevent fragmentation of habitats and allow migration of species under climate change pressure is a potential opportunity presented by climate change effects.

The Council has a key role in the protection of significant Natural Heritage Areas, Natura 2000 sites which include Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA) listed below.

National Heritage Area/Proposed NHA	Special Area of Conservation /Proposed SAC	Special Protected Area
Royal Canal	Brown Bog	Ballykenny Fisherstown Bog
Derrymore Bog	Mount Jessop	Lough Ree
Carrickglass Demesne	Lough Forbes Complex	
Mount Jessop	Lough Ree	
Lough Forbes Complex		
Lough Ree		

Figure 6: NHAs, SACs and SPAs

2.3 Infrastructure and Economy

The central position of the County in a national context means that it has a well-developed road and rail infrastructure. Two national primary routes traverse the County from east to west, the N4 from Dublin to Sligo and N5 from Longford to Westport.

Longford town is strategically positioned where the two national roads divide. The national secondary route, the N63 leaves Longford town for Roscommon and the N55 from Cavan to Athlone takes a north-south route through the east of the County, passing through Granard, Edgeworthstown and Ballymahon.

Nine regional routes augment the national routes and are serviced by a network of county roads. There are approximately 1500 km of roads in the County.

The Dublin-Sligo rail line traverses the County from east to west, generally following the line of the N4 and serves Longford and Edgeworthstown stations. There are existing flooding issues with the rail line immediately west of Longford town.

Abbeyshrule Aerodrome is a small private airport located in south-east County Longford, near the village of Abbeyshrule. It is primarily used for leisure flights and is situated between

urban centres such as Athlone, Longford, and Mullingar. The airfield supports several aviation enterprises and has a 600m long tarmac runway.

The Longford economy is dominated by engineering, warehousing, pharma, and agri-food sectors.

Consistently elevated levels of inward investment maintain this economy which is intrinsically linked to its location on high quality transport and communications infrastructure.



Figure 7: Map of County Longford

2.4 Culture and Tourism

The culture and identity of the County is intrinsically linked with its landscape and development. The County as a corridor from east to west has shaped its culture and history with the development of the canal, road and rail and the nature of agriculture, industry, and trade through the years.

Settlement and communication patterns influenced where and how people lived, worked and interacted such as markets, fairs, and festivals. This rich cultural thread running through county life impacts on tourism, recreation, and amenities that Longford has to offer. The development of the all-season destination of Center Parcs near Ballymahon is an illustration of the tourism industry adapting to changeable weather conditions and may provide a model for the development of flexible attractions in response to climate change effects.

2.5 Governance

Longford County Council has 18 County Councillors (also known as 'elected members'). Each Councillor represents one of the County's three Municipal Districts (MDs):

- Ballymahon MD,
- Granard MD and
- Longford MD.

The Council and MDs are each led by a Councillor who takes up the position of Cathaoirleach (Chairperson), and a Leas Cathaoirleach (Deputy Chairperson).

The Council is supported by a Chief Executive and five Directors who are responsible for the following Directorates.

- Finance and Information Technology
- Community, Library and Cultural Services, Corporate and Human Resources
- Infrastructure, Climate Action, and Innovation
- Housing, Planning, Regeneration and Capital Projects
- Enterprise and Ukrainian Humanitarian Response

The corporate structure of Longford County Council was reorganised in early 2022, with a consolidated Directorate for Infrastructure, Climate Action and Innovation being established. This indicates the increasing level of priority of climate action within the organisation and its critical relationship with infrastructure and emergency services.

Climate action is strongly embedded in, and underpins all activities of Longford County Council.

This Climate Action Plan is prepared under the auspices of the Directorate for Infrastructure, Climate Action, and Innovation.

2.6 Planning and Development Policy

A hierarchy of plans has been established that addresses spatial and economic development nationally and regionally for translation and implementation at local level. The Planning Acts have implicitly promoted climate action through the promotion of sustainable development. Longford County Council's County Development Plan 2021-2027 adapts national and regional policies on climate action for implementation in County Longford.

Climate Action Regional Offices (CARO)

Longford County Council is supported by the Eastern and Midland CARO, one of four regional Climate Action Regional Offices established in 2018 in response to Action 8 of the 2018 'National Adaptation Framework (NAF) – Planning for a Climate Resilient Ireland' to drive climate action at both regional and local levels. The Eastern and Midlands CARO is mandated to co-ordinate climate action between local authorities as well support local authorities in the preparation of Climate Action Plans.

Eastern and Midlands Regional Authority (EMRA)

Following on from the enactment of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 several changes were made to the regional structures in Ireland where the eight regional authorities were dissolved. Three new Regional Assemblies came into effect on 1 January 2015, namely the Southern Regional Assembly, the Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly and the Northern and Western Regional Assembly.

The Eastern and Midland Regional Assembly comprises of 38 elected Members nominated by the 12 constituent local authorities within the region and is responsible for the preparation of the Regional Economic and Spatial Strategy which translates the provisions of the National Planning Framework to a regional level.

Section 3 Evidence Based Climate Action

3.1 Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA)

The CCRA attached to this plan (Annex A) was prepared by KPMG on behalf of Longford County Council at the end of 2022. It forms part of the preliminary work necessary to help develop the Council's Climate Action Plan (CAP). It provides an assessment of County Longford's climate change risks to support Longford County Council's efforts to prepare its Climate Action Plan. The CCRA has been conducted in line with the Local Authority Climate Action Plan Guidelines, Technical Annex B which was developed by the Climate Action Regional Offices (CAROs).

The key results are summarised and captured in photos 1 to 5 below:



Photo 1: Flooding at Albert Reynolds Peace Park

Recent experiences of river and pluvial flooding events in 2015, 2016 and 2022 resulted in damage to residential properties, damage to recreational amenities (flooding of Albert Reynolds Peace Park) disruption to transport network, and inundation of farmland.



Photo 2: Fire on peatland in County Longford

County Longford experienced both heatwaves and droughts in 2018, and heatwaves were also recorded in 2021 and 2022. These events have contributed to the development of uncontrolled fire events, the imposition of restrictions on water supply and damage to road surfaces across County Longford. Projected increases in the frequency of heatwaves and drought conditions will mean that events currently experienced on an infrequent basis will become more frequent.



Photo 3: Storm damage in County Longford

Severe windstorms are currently experienced on a common basis in Longford and result in wide-ranging impacts, including disruption to energy supply and transport networks. Projections indicate no meaningful change to this frequency.



Photo 4: Flooding at Fortwilliam Turlough 2016

Longford also experiences occasional groundwater flooding which has resulted in isolation of communities and damage to cultural heritage (for example, Fortwilliam Turlough). Projections indicate no meaningful change to this frequency.



Photo 5: Snow at Carrickboy during Storm Emma in 2018

Recent experiences of cold spells and heavy snowfall events in 2018 demonstrated a wide range of impacts for County Longford. These included disruption to public transport networks, road closures, and closure of public buildings (for example closure of schools during Storm Emma). Projected increases in average temperature and decreases in the frequency of snowfall indicate a decrease in the frequency of cold spells, heavy snowfall, and their associated impacts.

Projected climate risk changes for County Longford are shown in the climate risk matrix below. The directional arrows indicate the change from current to future risk levels.

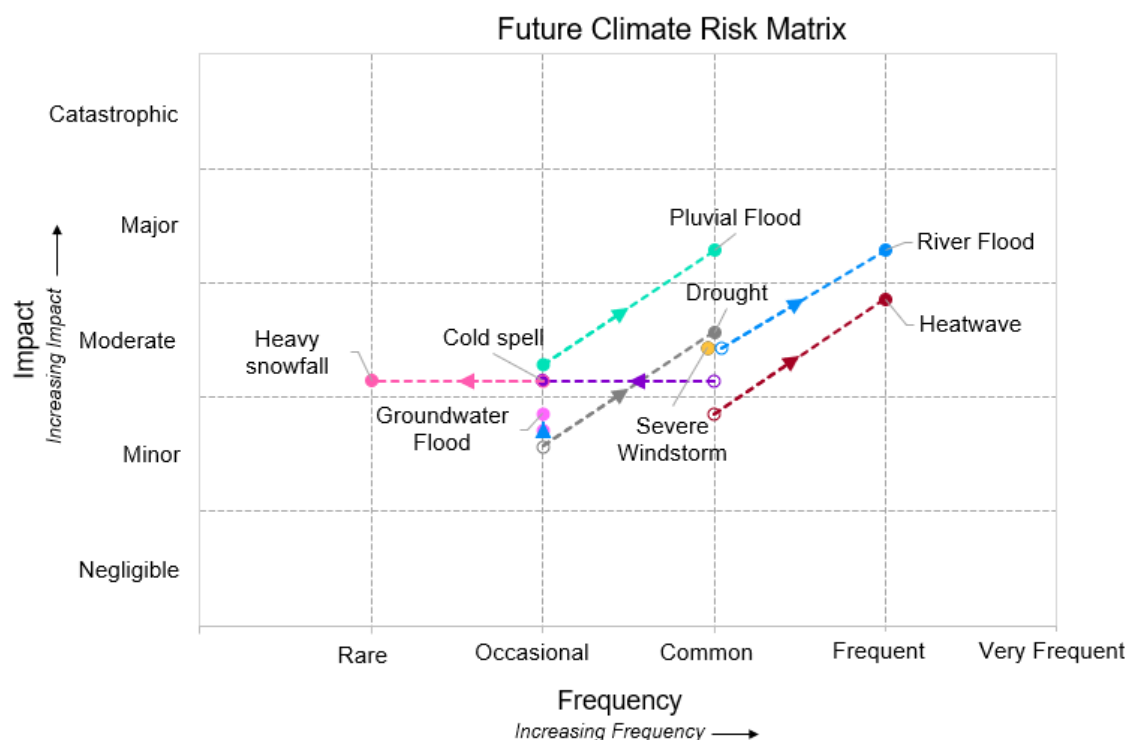


Figure 8: Climate Change Risk Matrix

The projected climate risk impacts are shown in Figure 9 below:

Hazard	Assets		Health and Wellbeing		Environment		Social		Cultural Heritage		Financial		Reputational	
	Current	Future (2050)	Current	Future (2050)	Current	Future (2050)	Current	Future (2050)	Current	Future (2050)	Current	Future (2050)	Current	Future (2050)
Heatwave	Minor	Mod	Minor	Mod	Mod	Major	Minor	Mod	Minor	Mod	Neg	Minor	Neg	Minor
Drought	Neg	Minor	Neg	Minor	Mod	Major	Minor	Mod	Minor	Mod	Neg	Minor	Neg	Minor
Cold Spell	Mod	Mod	Mod	Mod	Neg	Neg	Mod	Mod	Neg	Neg	Mod	Mod	Neg	Neg
Heavy Snowfall	Minor	Minor	Mod	Mod	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Neg	Neg	Mod	Mod	Minor	Minor
Severe Windstorm	Mod	Mod	Minor	Minor	Minor	Minor	Mod	Mod	Minor	Minor	Mod	Mod	Minor	Minor
Pluvial Flood	Mod	Major	Minor	Mod	Minor	Mod	Minor	Mod	Neg	Minor	Mod	Major	Mod	Major
River Flood	Major	Major	Minor	Mod	Minor	Mod	Minor	Mod	Neg	Minor	Mod	Major	Mod	Major
Groundwater Flood	Major	Major	Neg	Neg	Neg	Neg	Neg	Neg	Neg	Neg	Neg	Neg	Minor	Mod

Neg=Negligible Mod=Moderate

Figure 9: Changes in climate risk impacts

To increase resilience, Longford County Council will need to proactively plan for, and adapt to the current and future climate change risks identified through this CCRA.

3.2 Carbon Emissions in Context

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates Ireland's 2022 GHG emissions were 60.76 million tonnes carbon dioxide equivalent (Mt CO₂ eq). ²

Emissions from County Longford account for approximately 1.5% of the national total.

County Longford's annual baseline emissions of 887,098 tonnes of carbon dioxide³ equates to 19 tonnes per capita in 2018. This is notably higher than the EPA's 2022 estimate of 11.9 tonnes per capita for the Country as a whole. This reflects the fact that the population of County Longford is dispersed with heavy car dependency and that most homes are heated using fossil fuels. It also reflects the fact that agriculture and related activities play a significant role in the economy of the County.

For context, one tonne of carbon dioxide emissions is released by driving an average diesel car for 7400 km or by burning 400 litres of home heating oil (kerosene).

Diesel emits approximately 2.7kg of carbon dioxide per litre and kerosene 2.5 kg per litre.

Summaries of the Baseline Emission Inventories (Annex B and Annex C) are given below in section 3.3.

² Source: <https://www.epa.ie/our-services/monitoring--assessment/climate-change/ghg/latest-emissions-data/> 25/08/2023

³ Source: *Annex B County Wide Baseline Emissions Inventory*

3.3 Baseline Emissions Inventories (BEI)

3.3.1 Countywide BEI

The 'Tier 1' Baseline Emission Inventory (BEI) attached to this plan (Annex B) was conducted by Fehily Timoney and Company (FT) for the county of Longford at the end of 2022 on behalf of Longford County Council. It forms part of the preliminary work necessary to help develop the Council's Climate Action Plan.

The report evaluates and determines the baseline greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from various societal sectors in County Longford in the baseline year of 2018. It allows Longford County Council to determine the emission reductions required to reduce GHG emissions by 51% by 2030.

The sectors that have been included in this analysis are:

- residential,
- commercial and industrial,
- industrial processes,
- agriculture,
- transport,
- waste and wastewater, and
- land use, and land use change and forestry (LULUCF).

The BEI report estimates the 2018 baseline emissions for County Longford at 887,098 tonnes carbon dioxide equivalent per year (0.887Mt CO₂eq). The pie chart below shows the breakdown of emissions per sector within the County.

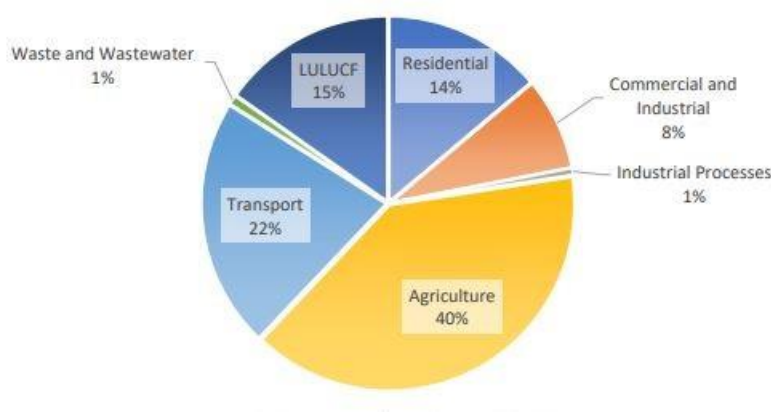


Figure 10: Pie chart showing sectoral emissions for County Longford

Sector	Emissions tCO ₂ eq	Percentage Breakdown	Required reduction by 2030 %	Required reduction tCO ₂ eq
Agriculture	350,851	40%	25%	87,713
Land Use and Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF)	135,356	15%	-	-
Transport	193,351	22%	50%	96,675
Residential	123,190	14%	40%	49,276
Commercial and Industrial	71,551	8%	45%	32,198
Other	12,799	1%	36%(avg)	4,594

Figure 11: showing sectoral emissions of GHGs for County Longford

In total, County Longford must reduce its GHG emissions by 270,456 tonnes of CO₂ eq per year by 2030.

3.3.2 Baseline Emissions Inventory for the Decarbonisation Zone (DZ)

Longford County Council commissioned a detailed baseline emissions inventory to help with developing climate actions specific to the DZ. The full report is available in Annex C. A summary of the results is shown below in Figure 14:

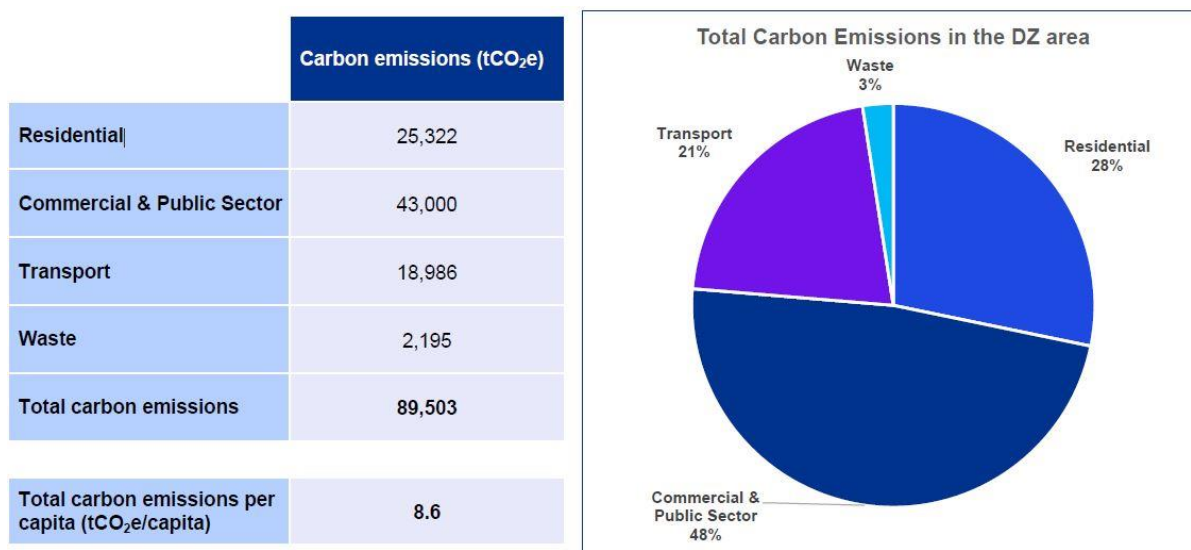


Figure 12 Table showing Sectoral GHG emissions from the DZ

The total carbon emissions for the DZ are estimated at 89,503 tonnes per year which is approximately 10% of the total annual emissions for the County. The estimated per capita emissions per year is 8.6 tonnes which is considerably lower than the per capita emissions for the whole county. This is attributable to the fact that agriculture is almost entirely absent from the DZ.

3.3.3 Longford County Council Emissions

By 2030 Longford County Council must reduce its own energy consumption by 50% from its 2009 baseline and GHG emissions by 51% from its 2018 baseline. The estimated annual GHG emissions for the Council are 2,084 tonnes per year and the breakdown is as follows:

Category	GHG Emission tCO ₂ -eq
Electricity	1,313
Thermal	161
Transport	610
Total	2,084

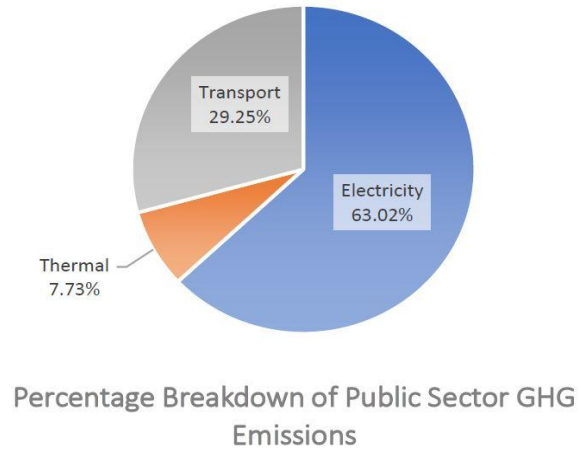


Figure 13: GHG emissions for Longford County Council

Section 4 Climate Action: Your Council working for you

4.1 Longford County Council

There are 18 elected County Councillors in Longford County Council, five elected for North Longford Municipal District (MD), seven for Mid Longford MD and six for South Longford MD.

The elected council is the policy making forum of the local authority; Councillors exercise 'reserved functions' defined in law across a range of legislation. Examples of reserved functions include passing the Council's annual budget and approving strategies and plans such as the Corporate Plan, the County Development Plan, and the Climate Action Plan.

The day-to-day management of the local authority is carried out by the Executive, that is the full-time officials led by the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive has a duty to advise and assist the Councillors in the exercise of their functions.

Elected members also make representations to the executive on behalf of the public in relation to the provision of services.

The elected members of the County Council adopted the Climate Action Plan on 14 February 2024.

After the local elections in June 2024 the new Council will be asked to approve a new 'climate proofed' Corporate Plan and to oversee the implementation of the Climate Action Plan.

Outlined below are the climate actions implemented so far by the County Council.

4.1.1 Climate Adaptation Strategy

In 2019 the elected representatives of Longford County Council adopted the Council's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy.

4.1.2 Climate Charter

On the 11 December 2019 then Cathaoirleach, Cllr Micheál Carrigy, and Chief Executive, Paddy Mahon signed Longford County Council's Climate Action Charter.



Photo 6: Cathaoirleach Micheál Carrigy and Chief Executive Paddy Mahon signing Longford County Council's Climate Action Charter on 11 December 2019

4.1.3 Corporate Plan

The full Council, when it was elected in 2019 adopted the Corporate Plan 2019-2024 which highlighted the need for Climate Action under the theme 'A Greener County'. The high-level objectives set out in the plan are:

- Place climate action, biodiversity, and the environment at the heart of local decision making.
- Lead and provide a planned and coherent response to the effects of climate change.
- Support the transition to a low carbon economy and ensure that policies and practices lead towards low carbon pathways and put in place processes for carbon proofing major decisions, programmes, and projects, moving over time to a near zero carbon investment strategy.
- Protect our natural and built environment.

These objectives and their associated actions are transposed into the Council's Annual Service Plans and other strategies as they are developed and revised.

An extensive training programme for elected members and staff on climate action has been rolled out thereby embedding climate action in all the functions of the Local Authority. Much work is currently underway on climate mitigation and adaptation.

4.2 Directorate for Finance and Information Technology

The Finance Directorate is led by the Head of Finance and is responsible for Financial Planning and Reporting, Financial Governance, Income Generation, Audit and Compliance, and Information Technology.

The directorate also supports the Governance Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) which comprises of elected members and representatives from relevant stakeholders and interest groups.

Over the lifetime of this plan the Directorate is committed to:

- Ensuring the necessary resources are available.
- Undertaking the climate actions specified in this plan.
- Continuing with the roll-out of Green Procurement.
- Assisting with the provision of rural broadband and remote working hubs.
- Enhancing the Council's IT infrastructure to increase its resilience and to develop paperless processes throughout the organisation.

Outlined below are some of the climate actions implemented so far by this directorate.

4.2.1 Green Procurement

Green procurement is the approach being taken by Longford County Council to integrate environmental and social goals into its procurement processes. Since January 2023 green procurement criteria have been included in all competitions for goods and services. A Steering Group has been established to ensure uniform implementation of green procurement across the organisation.

4.2.2 Information Technology (IT)

Longford County Council's IT section has introduced several changes in the past number of years to upgrade the Council's IT systems. These upgrades have resulted in significant energy savings, improved resilience, and security of the IT systems. Improvements include:

- Using 'hyper converged infrastructure' which is a software-defined, unified system that combines all the elements of a traditional data centre: storage, computer networking and management.
- Server room insulation upgrade (reducing reliance on air conditioning).
- Increasing the temperature in the server room by 2°C thereby reducing the amount of cooling required.
- Using a modern cloud-based Disaster Recovery Environment.
- Implementing organisation wide power settings on computers to turn off screens when inactive.
- Moving from the use of desktop computers to laptops which consume significantly less energy.

- Facilitating blended working which frees up office space, reduces energy costs and reduces commuter journeys.
- The innovative use of technology to reduce the time, paper and energy used in repetitive business processes.

Other Climate Action related IT projects completed or underway are:

- Implementation of an electronic document management system (going paperless).
- Using Microsoft Teams as a communication and collaboration tool.

4.2.3 Rural Broadband

The rollout of rural broadband is key for economic development, education, healthcare, and overall quality of life in rural communities. It requires a multi-faceted approach involving government support, investment from telecom operators and community involvement. In Longford the broadband officer (BBO) is the point of contact for National Broadband Ireland (NBI) and the telecom operators for the provision of rural broadband. The BBO coordinates and manages interactions internally across several departments (interdepartmental approach) and externally with all relevant stakeholders.

4.2.4 Remote Working Hubs

Longford County Council has established eight rural working hubs across the county of Longford. Remote working hubs offer individuals, entrepreneurs, students and visitors office spaces with hot desks, printers, smart TVs, privacy booths, high-speed WIFI and many more facilities.

Rural broadband and remote working hubs reduce the number of commuter journeys and carbon emissions from transport.

The facilities are located at:

- Abbeyshrule: Abbeyshrule Airport, Abbeyshrule, Co Longford.
- Ardagh: Ardagh Remote Working Hub, Ardagh Community Centre, Ardagh, Co Longford.
- Edgeworthstown: CO:WORX, 5 Main Street, Edgeworthstown, Co Longford.
- Longford Town: EDI Centre, 11A2 Mastertech Business Park, Athlone Road, Longford.
- Moydow: Moydow Community Centre, Moydow, Co Longford.
- Moyne: Latin School Community Centre, Leggah, Moyne, Co Longford.
- Mullinalaghta: Mullinalaghta Community Centre, Cloonagh, Granard, Co Longford.
- The Yard Hub, Drumnure, Abbeyshrule, Co Longford.

Longford's remote working hubs:

- Offer secure, quiet office spaces for working or studying (or just browsing!).
- Provide high-speed WIFI.

- Are in the heart of the community.
- Have collaboration spaces.
- Put flexibility into your work week, allowing you to work near home.
- Reduce time spent in traffic by cutting the commute.



Photo 7 The Yard Hub, Abbeyshrule.

Broadband Connection Points (or BCPs) are locations where public WIFI is provided. People can make use of the broadband as they require at the following locations:

- Corlea Trackway.
- Colmcille GAA.
- Ballymore Shamrocks GAA.
- Carrickedmond GAA.

Rural broadband and remote working hubs reduce the number of commuter journeys and carbon emissions from transport.

4.3 Directorate for Community, Library and Cultural Services, Corporate and Human Resources

This directorate is led by a Director of Services and is responsible for Community Development, Library and Cultural Services, Corporate and Human Resources. The Corporate section of the directorate has responsibility for the Chief Executive Office, Council Meetings Administration, Electoral Registration and Corporate Governance including Health and Safety, Data Protection, Freedom of Information and Ethics.

The directorate also supports the Placemaking SPC.

Over the lifetime of this plan the directorate is committed to:

- Supporting communities in dealing with the effects of climate change.
- Continuing to use the libraries as resource and outreach centres for climate awareness.
- Continuing to increase the climate resilience of heritage sites within the Council's control.
- Strengthening the Environment Pillar of the Public Participation Network (PPN).
- Encouraging active travel and other climate related activities through Sports Partnership and other cultural services including Arts.
- Continuing with training for elected representatives and staff on Climate Action to ensure that everyone keeps up to date.

Outlined below are some of the climate actions implemented so far by this directorate.

4.3.1 Community Section

The Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) serves as a platform for local community engagement and decision-making in matters related to community development and local services. Currently the LCDC is developing the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2023-2029. The plan has been climate proofed and contains specific climate actions.

As a climate action the Communities Section of Longford County Council has implemented a paperless application system to reduce the amount of paper required in processing government grants, community support grants and Clár funding applications.

Communities applying to Longford County Council for government grants must have regard to the LECP and to its climate actions.

Longford County Council Community Section also administers the Community Support Scheme with each of the three Municipal Districts having €90,000 pa to disperse. Some of these funds are used to support climate and biodiversity projects by Tidy Towns Committees and Local Development Committees.

Clár funding has been used to develop playgrounds, community gardens and parks. Longford County Council, in conjunction with community groups maintains 32 playgrounds in County Longford. A conscious effort has been made to use recycled materials – for example recycled plastic has been used to make park benches and tables, rubber crumb from recycled tyres has been used to make rubber mats for playgrounds.

The Community Section oversees the maintenance of the Albert Reynolds Peace Park in Longford Town where there are several biodiversity initiatives currently underway, for example the Green Parks Initiative, edible garden, urban orchard, pollinator/biodiversity area and willow living sculpture area.



Photo 8: Help our Planet's Environment (HOPE) bench made from 5,000 recycled plastic bottles.

4.3.2 Libraries

Longford County Council Libraries Service champions climate action through its services and programmes, for example:

- In conjunction with an Energy Saving Booklet available at all branches the Library Service also loan out Home Energy Saving kits where citizens can assess their own energy usage and identify energy savings.
- The Library Service loan out a range of climate action themed books covering all aspects weather, environment, and biodiversity.
- The Library Service supports the Longford STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Maths) initiative that includes programmes on climate action and biodiversity throughout the year. The recent Longford Microsoft Dream Space Showcase included a prize category for the best climate action project.
- The Digital Champions showcase for secondary school students in November 2023 will include a prize category for best climate action project.
- The Library Service hosted an Age Friendly Climate Action workshop in Ballymahon on the 26th of June 2023 with over 20 older people in attendance.
- The Library Service is highly aware of the energy used in the libraries and are regularly recording energy consumption in each of the 6 libraries to determine energy savings. Staff are asked to conserve energy where possible. All electrical equipment is turned off every evening.
- Longford Library Service is represented on the national Library Climate Action Strategic Committee.

4.3.3 Heritage

The Heritage Office has completed several projects on national heritage sites owned by Longford County Council to make them more resilient to climate change. A good example is the conservation work on the abbey in Abbeyshrule which was carried out in 2021.



Photo 9: Abbeyshrule Abbey following conservation work in 2021

The Heritage Office has organised 6 biodiversity projects in 2022:

- Monitoring the Quagga mussel invasion in the Shannon.
- Barn Owl Public education project.
- Conservation of Swifts in County Longford.
- Longford Hedgerow Project.
- Plant a pot for pollinators.
- N4 Pollinator Project (multi annual project).

These projects provide a public awareness platform for distinct types of biodiversity in County Longford and highlight the challenges with respect to climate change.

4.3.4 County Longford Public Participation Network (PPN)

Longford PPN is the structure through which Longford County Council involve the community, voluntary, social inclusion, and environmental groups in the local decision-making process.

The main aim of the PPN is to allow the diversity of voices and interests to be facilitated and involved in the decision-making process.

There are 514 community groups associated with Longford PPN, 10 of which are registered in the Environment Pillar.

4.3.5 Sports Partnership

Annually, Longford Sports Partnership organise numerous events to encourage people to take advantage of the great outdoors in County Longford. They organise 'Bike Week' which encourages people, young and old, to consider active travel. In 2023, 11 Bike Week events were organised between the 13-21 May. 1075 people of all ages and abilities took part.



Photo 10: Bike Week 2023 participants at Ballymahon

4.3.6 Training and Human Resources (HR)

In conjunction with CARO, Longford County Council Training Section has, since 2019, organised and continues to organise Climate Action Training for council staff and the elected members. As of 31 August 2023, 247 (65%) of staff and 15 (85%) of the elected members have also completed the training programme. More in-depth training has also been provided for members of the Council's Climate Action Team and Senior Management.

4.4 Directorate for Infrastructure, Climate Action, and Innovation

This directorate is led by a Director of Services and is responsible for Climate Action, Emergency Services, Environment, Roads, Water Services (Uisce Éireann directly manages Water Services in County Longford since July 2023 but Longford County Council staff continue to operate much of the infrastructure within the County), Innovation (primarily focused on bridging the digital divide both inside and outside the organisation) and Veterinary and Animal Control (primarily dogs and horses).

The directorate also supports both the Strategic Infrastructure SPC and the Climate Action and Planning SPC.

This directorate is primarily responsible for developing and overseeing the implementation of the Climate Action Plan across the County Council. It commits to implementing climate actions in relation to all its own activities and particularly to reducing energy and carbon emissions by:

- Completing the upgrade of public lighting to energy efficient LEDs (Light emitting Diodes).
- Decarbonising the Council's fleet of trucks and vans.

It will also ensure that:

- Energy usage of the Council is monitored and reported to Sustainable Energy Authority Ireland (SEAI) and to the other Directorates.
- The Council develops a Biodiversity Plan.
- Green procurement is used for all large infrastructural projects.
- The Emergency Services are equipped and trained to deal with severe weather events and other emergencies resulting from the effects of climate change.
- Roads and drainage systems are constructed and maintained to ensure resilience.
- Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations will be available to all, particularly those without off-street parking.
- Environmental awareness and regulation will be used to increase sustainability across the County.

Outlined below are some of the climate actions implemented so far by this directorate.

4.4.1 Major Emergency Management

Longford County Council has prepared and updated a Major Emergency Plan in accordance with 'A Framework for Major Emergency Management', published in September 2006. The purpose of this plan is to put in place arrangements that will enable the three principal response agencies (An Garda Síochána, the Health Service Executive and Longford County Council) to coordinate their efforts whenever a major emergency occurs. This is achieved through national and regional groups who develop guidance and deliver inter-agency training and exercises for personnel nominated for key roles in coordinating a major emergency response.

In addition to the Major Emergency Plan there are two subset plans specifically tailored to severe weather events. These are:

- Severe Weather Response Plan (excluding flooding).
- Flood Emergency Response Plan.

These plans are regularly updated and consider the effects of climate change.

The Severe Weather Response Plan was activated for Storm Ophelia in 2017 and Storm Emma in 2018.

4.4.2 Emergency Services

Due to the high cost of Fire Brigade vehicles, the Fire Service has looked at ways to make the best use of the resources in the long term after they have finished their normal working life of 15 years. This encompasses the principle of reuse and recycle. This starts at the design stage of the vehicle by examining what can be reused at end of life.

One of the biggest and most expensive parts of a fire engine is the body which is bespoke. There is no reason that the body of a fire engine cannot to be reused when the chassis and engine are obsolete if it is constructed to allow removal and refitting.

Polycarbonate bodies were chosen as they can be relatively easily reworked at the end of life of the vehicles.

All Longford Fire Service vehicles now utilise polycarbonate bodies with the aim of reuse at end of life.



Photo 11: Longford town fire engine with a polycarbonate body

Modern fire-fighting techniques also focus on the more efficient use of water for extinguishing fires as this leads to less harmful effluent being released to the environment during a fire-fighting operation. Because of this some fire engines may be required to carry less water for their normal operational duties. This would lend itself to using smaller and more fuel-efficient vehicles which are also cheaper to manufacture.

Longford Fire Service is currently examining the possibility of replacing some of the larger fire engines with smaller, more fuel-efficient models which will be more resource efficient by using less water and fuel.

4.4.3 Public Lighting

Public lighting represents Longford County Council's single biggest use of energy. In 2022 public lighting used 1,946,899 Kilowatt hours (KWhs) and cost €372,755. Longford County Council is currently responsible for 5,853 public lights and this number continues to grow.

Longford County Council has an annual programme to upgrade its public lighting to energy efficient LED lights. LED lights use half the energy of traditional public lights, and allow for dimming at appropriate times, which can add a further 7% to 26% efficiency. A reduction in energy use means a reduction in harmful CO₂ emissions.⁴

To date Longford County Council has upgraded more than 70% of the public lights it is responsible for.



Photo 12: Public lighting upgrade works at Gleann Riada, Longford

4.4.4 Roads

Longford County Council's Roads Section has several initiatives in relation to roads infrastructure to reduce carbon emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change. For example:

- Recycling of road materials on road restoration projects.

⁴ Source: <https://publiclighting.ie/faq/25> August 2023



Photo 13: Recycling of road materials on Longford Town N4 bypass

- In 2023 the use of warm mix bituminous materials has been trialled on the N63 at Aghnaskea, Killashee. Warm mix asphalt is an asphalt product that is produced at a lower temperature than standard asphalt mix. As a result of the ability to reduce the temperature in the mixing plant, less energy is required to produce and a reduction in carbon emissions of approximately 20% can be achieved. For the N63 Aghnaskea project, 200 tonnes of binder material were used.
- A Green Procurement team has been established to ensure that the best practice green procurement procedures are followed in all tendering processes for the Roads Section.
- In 2018, the Department of Transport introduced a new drainage grant for regional and local roads to be utilised for the alleviation of road drainage and adapt to climate change through new works and remedial projects. Using this fund, Longford County Council has spent €1,800,000 on the County's regional and local road network drainage.
- 13 flood relief/climate adaption schemes funded by the OPW (Small Schemes Fund) have been constructed since the extensive flooding in the Winter of 2015/2016 at a cost of €334,506.
- 16 flood relief/climate adaption schemes Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Works Grant have been completed since 2020 at a cost of €907,643.



Photo 14: Saints Island Road adaptation works

- Approximately €400,000 is spent on bridge rehabilitation each year. In 2023, 4 structures have been strengthened to boost their Climate Resilience.



Photo 15: Newcastle Bridge after strengthening work

- Infrastructural surveys have taken place to help climate proof our roads and bridge networks.
- An efficiency study on the use of the Council's fleet of trucks and vans is currently underway. The possibility of decarbonizing the fleet, driver deployment and driver training is being considered.

4.4.5 Energy Efficiency Improvements of Council Buildings

Longford County Council monitors all its energy consumption using an application called 'Energy Elephant'. This gives up-to-date information on the cost, quantity and carbon emissions of the energy used by tracking all electricity, heating fuel and petrol and diesel used.

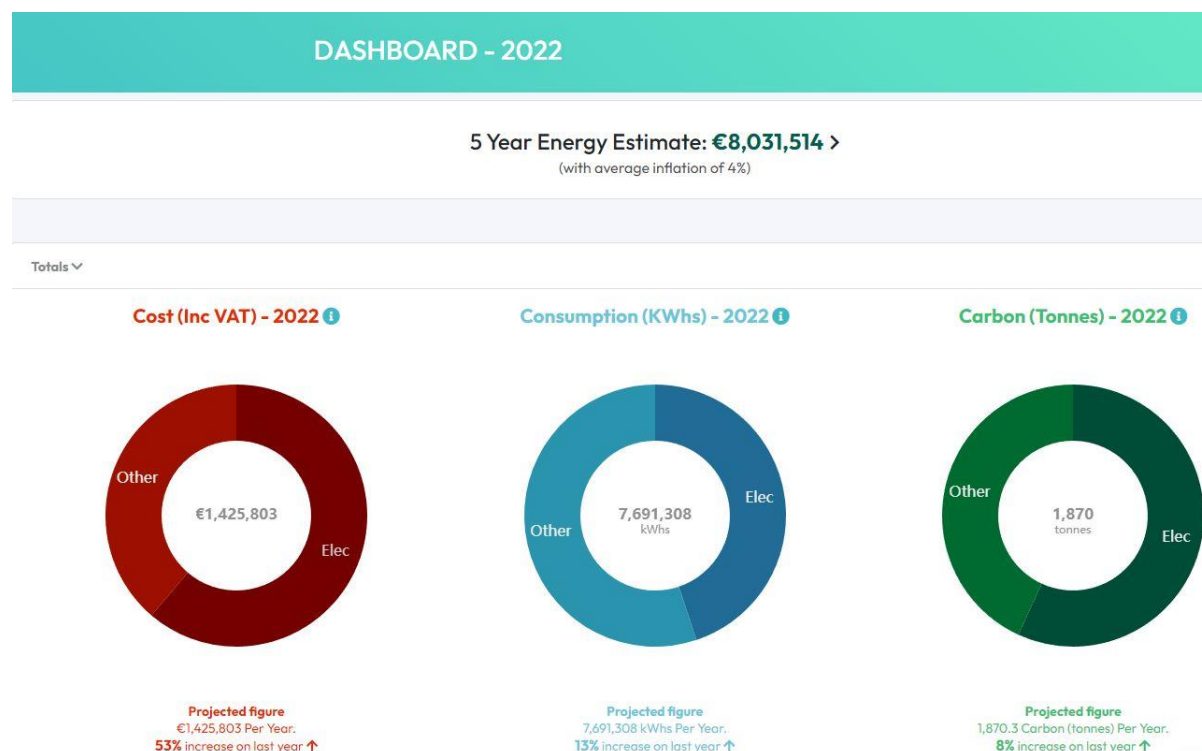


Figure 14: Energy Elephant Dashboard

Using the information gathered in Energy Elephant Longford County Council has completed energy audits of the Longford Sports and Leisure Centre, all offices, libraries, and fire stations. Using SEAI's Gap-to-Target tool the Council has been able to develop an energy upgrade programme.

As part of the Midland Energy Agency, Longford County Council has been able to source €1,000,000 in Pathfinder funding from SEAI to commence upgrade works on the six buildings that use the largest amount of energy – namely:

- Arás an Chontae
- Camlin Court Offices
- Longford Fire Station
- Longford Town Hall Offices
- Longford Library
- County Library HQ

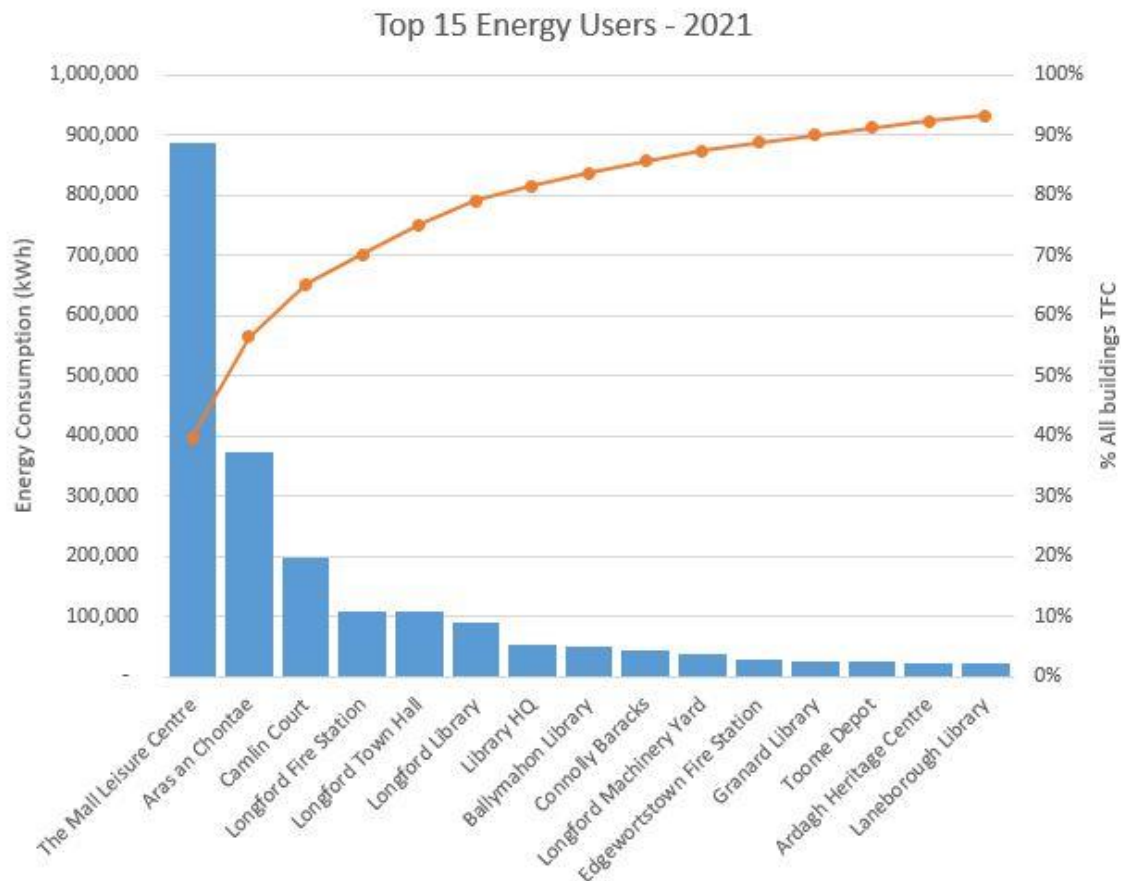


Figure 15: Pareto Analysis of Longford County Council's building energy usage.

4.4.6 Longford Sports and Leisure Centre

After public lighting, the Longford Sports and Leisure Centre in Longford Town is the Council's largest energy consumer. In 2012, Longford Town Council initiated an energy efficiency program which was extended after the amalgamation with Longford County Council. This programme involved the following:

- Conversion of the pool heat system to biomass (i.e., wood pellets and subsequently in 2023 to wood chip).
- Installation of a Building Management System (BMS) to smartly control all heating and ventilation within the centre.
- Installation of Variable Speed Drives (VSDs) on pumps and fans to increase their energy efficiency.
- Changing the filter media to more energy efficient glass beads.
- New controls were installed on the air handling system to allow them to be controlled by the BMS.
- Improvements to the plumbing pipework to reduce energy losses.
- Pool hall lighting was upgraded to energy efficient LEDs.
- 40KW of Solar Photo Voltaic (PV) panels have been installed on the pool roof.

The conversion to biomass reduced the GHG emissions for the pool by 297 tonnes per year.



Photo 16: Solar PV Panel at Longford Sport and Leisure Centre

4.4.7 Electrical Vehicle Charging

Longford County Council, with assistance from Zero Emission Vehicles Ireland (ZEV), is currently developing an electrical vehicle (EV) charging strategy for the County. The strategy will look at en-route, destination, and residential charging requirements.

The Council has already installed charging stations at Árás an Chontae, Great Water Street and at Main Street, Edgeworthstown.

The Council is also working with the private sector to roll out 50KW chargers in Longford, Granard, Ballymahon, Lanesborough and Drumlish.



Photo 17: EV Charging Station at Árás an Chontae, Great Water Street, Longford

4.4.8 Environment - Waste

The Environment Section regulates and encourages waste recycling by permitting of Waste Facilities. Major recycling facilities permitted by Longford County Council include:

- Mimergy Ltd, Mastertech Business Park – Recycles car tyres
- Mulleady Polymers Ltd – Provides a civic amenity site on the Athlone Road, Longford where members of the public can recycle domestic waste
- Cirtex Ltd, Cooleeny, Longford – recycles old mattresses reconstituting polyester foam for reuse in new mattress manufacture
- Longford Auto Recyclers, Lamagh, Newtownforbes – dismantle end of life vehicles for recycling.

By implementing and enforcing waste regulations, Longford County Council's Waste Enforcement Officers encourage waste minimisation and waste segregation in both commercial and residential sectors. Reducing waste of all types is an essential climate action as it reduces resource exploitation and GHG emissions.

Longford County Council operates 23 bring bank centres dotted around the County where the public can bring glass and steel and aluminium cans for recycling. In 2022 the citizens of Longford recycled 24 tonnes of steel and aluminium and 485 tonnes of glass at these bring bank centres.



Photo 18: Bring Bank at Tesco Carpark, Longford

4.4.9 Environment - Air and Water

The Environmental Pollution Officers (EPO) enforce the Solid Fuels Regulations which outlaw smoky fossil fuels that pose a threat to public health. This programme aims to encourage the public to use less polluting renewable fuels.

The EPOs conduct regular water quality sampling of rivers and streams as part of the Water Framework Directive River Basin monitoring. This work is done in conjunction with the EPA.

The EPOs also conduct a range of environmental inspections targeted at reducing diffuse and point source pollution of the waterways. In working with the Local Authorities Waters Programme (LAWPRO), Longford County Council is delivering on the objectives of the River Basin Management Plans.

By improving water quality in our water bodies Longford County Council ensures that there is an available supply of clean drinking water, and it helps biodiversity combat the effects of climate change.

4.4.10 Environment - Environmental Awareness

Longford County Council has implemented an Environmental Awareness Programme for 20 years. The programme focuses primarily on National Schools but also includes community groups throughout the County. Climate Action has been a prominent part of the programme in recent years.

The Environmental Awareness Officer (EAO) has spearheaded biodiversity projects such as the N4 pollinator project where the grass is not cut along the N4 and N5 bypass allowing wildflowers such as dandelions to bloom in early summer.

The EAO also leads a project, running over the last 5 years, to tackle invasive species, primarily Japanese Knotweed, along all road verges in the County. To date, 263 stands of Knotweed have been treated along all road verges in County Longford using stem injection and foliage spraying techniques.

4.4.11 Drainage

The Environment Section oversees an annual programme cleaning some of the main drainage channels in the County. The Council is responsible for:

- 14.3 km of drainage channel in the Rinn and Black Drainage District (DD).
- 4.9 km in the Lough Oughter and River Erne DD.
- 65.8 km in the Camlin DD.
- 2.9 km in the Currygrane DD.
- 40.4 km in the Keenagh DD.

The Council also shares responsibility for 23.4 km of river channels in districts that border Counties Leitrim and Cavan. Other channels are the responsibility of the OPW.

In 2023 Longford County Council cleaned a spur of the Camlin which drains the west side of Longford Town.



Photo 19: Channel cleaning on the River Camlin

4.4.12 Regulation of local food producers

The County Veterinary Officer regulates seven local food producers which produce significant quantities of food of animal origin. While regulating these local producers, Longford County Council ensures that safe, locally produced food with low food miles, is available to local consumers.

4.5 Directorate for Housing, Planning, Regeneration and Capital Projects

This directorate is led by a Director of Services and is responsible for Housing, Planning and Regeneration and Capital Projects. Regeneration and Capital Projects covers rejuvenation of towns and villages in the County through public realm improvements, building acquisition and repurposing, and the development of outdoor recreational amenities.

The directorate also supports both the Strategic Infrastructure SPC and the Climate Action and Planning SPC.

Over the lifetime of this plan the directorate is committed to:

- Constructing new social housing projects to BER A standard.
- Continuing with the social housing retrofit programme.
- Including climate action considerations in all rejuvenation and capital projects.
- Reducing the carbon emissions from Council buildings and reduce the energy consumption in line with SEAI/Government targets.
- Continuing to develop Active Travel throughout the County.
- Using the planning process to ensure that climate considerations are included in all new developments, for example -

- provision of EV charging at apartment developments.
- high insulation requirements in line with the Building Regulations.
- consideration of flood risk management.

Outlined below are some of the climate actions implemented so far by this directorate.

4.5.1 New Social Housing and Housing Retrofits

Over the last few years Longford County Council has been constructing new housing developments to BER A standard. Estates recently completed include:

- St Michaels Court, St Michaels Road, Longford – 14 no. complete.
- Campbells Drive, Longford – 23 no. complete.
- Alderfield, Longford – 48 no. complete.
- Ballinamuck – 22 no. complete.
- Woodland path, Keenagh – 5 no. complete, 4 no. under construction (total 9).
- Rose Cottage Garden, Ballinalee - 6 no. complete.

Estates under construction in 2023 include:

- Connaught Park, Richmond Street, Longford – 23 no. under construction.
- Cluain Ri, Ballymahon – 16 no. under construction.
- Creevaghbeg, Ballymahon - 4 no. under construction.
- Legion Terrace, Longford – 4 no. under construction – (Refurbish 1 no. derelict house and construct 3 no. new houses).
- Congress Terrace – 2 no. under construction – (Refurbish 1 no. derelict house and construct 1 no. new house).
- Colmcille Terrace, Granard, (in conjunction with Tuath AHB)-20 houses are being upgraded as part of Phase 1.
- Forthill, Aghnaccliff - 13 no. under construction.
- Sliver Birches, Stonepark, Longford - 12 no. under construction.



Photo 20: New BER A rated houses at Alderfield, Longford

Under the 'Energy Efficiency Retrofitting Programme for Social Housing' Longford County Council has so far tendered the retrofit of 157 houses of its existing stock. As of August 2023, 97 have been completed raising their 'Better Energy Ratings' (BERs) to B2 or better.



Photo 21: Housing Retrofits – Athlone Road, Longford August 2023

Also, when tenants vacate a council house, Longford County Council retrofits the property to improve its BER rating to B or better before reletting the property. To date 34 houses have been upgraded.

4.5.2 Active Travel

Longford County Council has set up an Active Travel Team to promote walking, cycling, and other forms of sustainable transport throughout the County.

The objectives of Active Travel align with the 'National Sustainable Mobility Policy' which plans to increase sustainable travel trips to 50% by 2030 by investing in new infrastructure and improving cyclist and pedestrian safety.

Longford County Council has a rolling budget of approximately €2.5 million per annum. To date, 10 active travel projects have been completed adding 1,580 metres of cycleways and 1,128 metres of footpaths. 4 schemes will be completed in 2023 and 5 more are at design stage.

Two notable schemes are the Battery Road upper and N63 Ballinalee Road which form part of the Government's 'Pathfinders Programme'. Both schemes are situated in Longford Town.



Photo 22: Ballyminion cycle link between the N63 and the Strokestown Road, Longford.

The Active Travel Team has developed a Local Transport Plan (LTP) for Longford Town. The strategic aim is to deliver further active travel projects, making it easier and safer for people to walk and cycle around Longford Town, and to provide better access to public transport. The Plan is expected to be adopted by the Council by the end of 2023.

4.5.3 Planning

Planning incorporated climate change into the new County Development Plan 2021-2027 (CDP) devoting an entire chapter to it. Climate change considerations permeate all aspects of the plan. Flood risk, which is a serious climate change consideration, informs planning policy and zonings. At the end of each chapter specific climate actions are included.

The CDP also encourages climate friendly methods. For example, policies have been put in place to incentivise renewable energies such as a waiver of development contributions for domestic renewable energy measures. Conditions are also added to planning approvals requiring the provision of EV charging points.

New developments are conditioned to comply with Building Regulations which mandate that developers achieve high energy efficiencies on new dwellings – typically to BER A standard.

Since March 2023, planning applications and submissions can now be made online via the new e-Planning system. The new system aims to modernise the processing and administration of planning applications. By using an e-Planning portal, the public can submit their planning applications and lodge submissions on existing planning applications. e-Planning will improve the efficiency in the planning process. It significantly reduces paper and ink use and eliminates the cost of postage leading to a significant reduction in associated GHG emissions.

Planning is also working on the proposed Lough Ree UNESCO Biosphere Reserve which is a joint venture between Longford, Westmeath and Roscommon County Councils, the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and Waterways Ireland. The project is at an advanced stage. Consultants have been appointed and mapping is being finalised with the UNESCO secretariat. The proposed project is listed in the Programme for Government, the Climate Action Plan, County Development Plans, and the Shannon Tourism Masterplan ('Hidden Heartlands').

The biosphere concept is about building sustainable communities around Lough Ree, where farming, tourism, living and working can all happen in a manner that complements the unique biodiversity of the region.

4.5.4 Regeneration

After the closure of the Lough Ree peat-burning power station the Regeneration Section of Longford County Council availed of the Outdoor Recreation Fund to construct walkways and cycleways on the Bord na Móna cutaway bogs. This work was undertaken in partnership with Bord na Móna. A total of 18 km was constructed on trails at Ballynakill, Cloonbearla and Corlea.

Regeneration Section worked with Waterways Ireland to develop the 42 km cycleway along the Royal Canal and it developed 63 km of local cycleways and walkways spread over the County.

These measures promote outdoor activities leading to a greater appreciation of biodiversity and they encourage people to consider walking and cycling as alternative forms of transport to the car.



Photo 23: New cycleway near Corlea

In the aftermath of the Lough Ree power station closure, Regeneration, using Just Transition Funding, commissioned a report on the feasibility of developing a biogas project to provide renewable energy and to help replace the jobs lost.

4.5.5 Facilities Management

Facilities Management has been working to implement the Government's 'Reduce Your Use' campaign by tightly managing the Council's heating systems in all its main buildings. This led to an 8% decrease in energy usage in Áras an Chontae and Camlin Court office buildings in 2022 compared with 2021. Similar results were achieved in other Council buildings. This was a significant result following the COVID pandemic which greatly impacted office occupancy in 2021.

In 2021 the doors and windows of Longford Library were replaced with energy efficient double glazing. The internal lighting was also upgraded. Facilities Management has a policy of replacing internal lighting with energy efficient LEDs when offices need to be reconfigured or when other opportunities arise.



Photo 24: Longford Library after doors, windows, and internal lighting upgrades

Facilities Management has also instituted a trial using Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) to heat Áras an Chontae. If successful it will reduce the Carbon emissions from the building's heating system by 80% to 90%.



Photo 25: New HVO tank as Áras an Chontae

4.6 Directorate for Enterprise and Ukrainian Humanitarian Response

This Directorate is led by a Director of Services and is responsible for Enterprise (supporting local businesses) and Ukrainian Humanitarian Response.

Over the lifetime of this plan the Directorate is committed to:

- Supporting local businesses in adapting to climate change
- Supporting local businesses with the digital transformation
- Supporting international protection applicants and refugees to integrate into County Longford

Outlined below are some of the climate actions implemented so far by this directorate.

4.6.1 Longford Local Enterprise Office

Longford County Council's Local Enterprise Office administers three grant assistance programmes which assist small and medium businesses adapt to climate change and to adopt climate change mitigation measures.

'Green for Business', offers two days consultancy support, advice, guidance, and technical know-how to businesses interested in introducing green measures.

'Energy Efficiency Grant', is a grant up to €5,000 for investment in green technologies and is open to businesses that have availed of the 'Green for Business' grant (formerly known as 'Green for Micro').

'Digital for Business', provides support to small and medium businesses to develop a digital strategy to help them work towards more streamlined and paperless processes.

To date 18 businesses have availed of consultancy supports under these programmes and 2 applications have been received for the Energy Efficiency Grant.

As of the end of September 2023 Longford County Council was providing support to 846 Ukrainian refugees and is developing accommodation facilities at Connolly Barracks and other locations.

Section 5 Climate Actions

5.1 Framework of Climate Actions

Using the Environmental Governance Principles listed below in Figure 13, Longford County Council has developed a list of 53 Climate Actions to pursue over the lifetime of the Climate Action Plan. Through these actions:

- Longford County Council will lead by example in addressing sectors where it has full accountability, primarily in the Transport, Residential, and Commercial and Industrial sectors. By decarbonising its fleet, retrofitting its properties, and delivering infrastructure and services in a sustainable manner it will lead the way towards Carbon neutrality.
- Longford County Council will influence all sectors by using green procurement, regulatory decision making on planning and development, environmental enforcement, bye laws and application of standards such as the Building Regulations.
- Longford County Council will coordinate efforts between different stakeholders. It will facilitate the move to a greener, more sustainable County through the identification of funding streams (e.g., Just Transition) and by assisting stakeholders to avail of relevant programmes.
- Longford County Council will advocate on the need for climate action by creating a local vision, running awareness campaigns through all forms of media and its environmental awareness programmes and it will advocate on behalf of communities and businesses facing challenges due to the transformations required by climate action.
- Longford County Council recognises the importance of the Agricultural Community to County Longford and to the whole of society. Where possible, Longford County Council will assist the Agricultural Community in its efforts to reach its sectoral targets.

Ref	Environmental Governance Principles
EG1	Promote climate action projects that support and maximise environmental co-benefits, such as biodiversity protection and enhancement; improved air, water, or soil quality; or enhanced recreation, amenity, and cultural heritage value, to ensure win-win benefits are gained.
EG2	Support or facilitate climate action related projects and initiatives which seek to make improvements in soil structure, management, and health by increasing soil organic carbon - which will create the environmental co-benefits of improving flood resilience by enhancing water holding capacity of soils and increasing the level of GHG sequestration associated with land use functions.
EG3	Ensure local authority development underpinned or supported by plan actions is planned and implemented in a manner that appropriately considers the potential for environmental co-benefits, potential environmental impacts, and environmental protection requirements. No local authority climate action related development project that is likely to have significant negative effects on the receiving environment shall be supported.
EG4	Promote - through control or influence as appropriate - the carrying out of flood resilience measures underpinned by plan actions in a manner that supports climate action-biodiversity related co-benefits, and which has due regard for the protection and enhancement of rare, protected, or important habitats and species.
EG5	Promote the carrying out of climate action related projects supported by the plan in a manner that supports climate action-cultural heritage co-benefits, and which has due regard to cultural, archaeological, or architectural features and sensitivities.
EG6	Promote the carrying out of climate action related projects underpinned by the plan in a manner that supports climate action water quality co-benefits, and the achievement of Water Framework Directive objectives.
EG7	Promote climate action projects that support protected trees, hedgerows, and other habitats such as wetlands, flood zones which contribute to green infrastructure.
EG8	Support opportunities to improve ecological connectivity of non-designated habitats and sites to improve overall ecosystem resilience and functioning while supporting climate action within the county.
EG9	Ensure local authority projects supported by plan actions have taken the necessary precautions to identify and manage invasives species, particularly with regard to Schedule III species. No local authority climate action related development project that is likely to cause the spread of invasive species listed in Schedule III shall be supported.
EG10	Support opportunities to promote peatland restoration, rehabilitation and maintenance while achieving climate targets through the implementation of the climate actions within the plan.

Figure 13: Environmental Governance Principles

The Climate Actions are split into 5 thematic areas:

- Governance and leadership
- Built Environment and Transport
- Natural Environment and Green Infrastructure
- Communities, Resilience and Transition
- Sustainability and Resource Management

and have been aligned with the strategic goals of the 'Delivering Effective Climate Action 2030' (DECA 2030) document. This document was produced by CARO and the CCMA. It outlines the local authority sector's vision and mission to help build on existing expertise and skills to maximise its leadership role and impact on climate change, locally, regionally, and nationally. How the individual thematic areas are aligned with the six DECA 2030 strategic goals is shown below In Figure 16.

The climate actions are also aligned with the United Nations Strategic Development Goals. This alignment is shown below in Figure 17.

The timeframe for all the actions extends over the lifetime of the Climate Action Plan.

5.1.1 Alignment of Actions with DECA 2030

Strategic Goals	Strategic Goal 1	Strategic Goal 2	Strategic Goal 3	Strategic Goal 4	Strategic Goal 5	Strategic Goal 6
Thematic Area	Foster governance, leadership, and partnerships for climate action	Achieve our carbon emission and energy efficiency targets for 2030 and 2050	Deliver on climate adaptation and climate resilience	Mobilise climate action in local communities	Mobilise climate action in enterprise and support transition to an inclusive, net zero and circular economy	Achieve a just transition particularly for communities that may be economically disadvantaged by decarbonising projects
1. Governance and leadership						
2. Built Environment and Transport						
3. Natural Environment and Green Infrastructure						
4. Communities, Resilience and Transition						
5. Sustainability and Resource Management						

Figure 16: Alignment of Actions with DECA 2030

5.1.2 Alignment of Actions with the UN Sustainable Development Goals










Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Thematic Area	SDG 6	SDG 7	SDG 8	SDG 11	SDG 13	SDG 14	SDG 15	SDG 16	SDG 17
	6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION 	7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY 	8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH 	11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES 	13 CLIMATE ACTION 	14 LIFE BELOW WATER 	15 LIFE ON LAND 	16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS 	17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS 
1. Governance and leadership									
2. Built Environment and Transport									
3. Natural Environment and Green Infrastructure									
4. Communities, Resilience and Transition									
5. Sustainability and Resource Management									

Figure 17: Alignment of Actions with UN Sustainable Development Goals

5.2 Climate Actions

5.2.1 Governance and Leadership

Strategic Goal: To integrate climate change considerations into all the functions and activities of Longford County Council.

Objective 1: Implement and resource the organisational structures required to deliver and monitor the Climate Action Plan.

Objective 2: Show leadership and ambition in mainstreaming climate action.

Objective 3: Align objectives and actions for climate and biodiversity within Local Authority work programmes.

Action and Action Type		Tasks		Tracking Measure	Action Owner
1	Longford County Council is fully committed to effectively resource climate action. <i>Adaptation and Mitigation</i>	1.1	Complete the formation of the Climate Action Team.	Climate Action KPIs and DECC quarterly and annual Reports.	Management Team
		1.2	Provide an annual budget for Climate Action.		
2	Longford County Council will ensure that climate action is a recurrent standing item on the agenda at County Council, Council Management Team, and relevant Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) meetings. <i>Adaptation and Mitigation</i>	2.1	Use full Council, Management Team, and SPC meetings to promote climate change actions inside and outside the Council.	Minutes of relevant Council, Management Team and SPC Meetings.	All sections

Action and Action Type		Tasks		Tracking Measure	Action Owner
3 (Note 1)	Longford County Council will maintain an active liaison and collaboration with the Eastern and Midlands CARO and adjoining Local Authorities. <i>Adaptation and Mitigation</i>	3.1	Participate with neighbouring Counties in the SEAI Pathfinder Programme to retrofit the most energy intensive Council Facilities.	Minutes of Steering Group and Working Group meetings.	Climate Action
		3.2	Longford County Council will engage the EM CARO and work collaboratively with adjoining Counties.		
4	Longford County Council will align its Climate Policies to the National Climate Policy and the UN Sustainability Goals. <i>Adaptation and Mitigation</i>	4.1	Align the Climate Action Plan (CAP) and Biodiversity Plan and other strategies with national policies and SDGs.	Complete CAP Complete Biodiversity Plan.	All sections
5	Longford County Council fully commits to Climate Action Training for all staff and elected representatives. <i>Adaptation and Mitigation</i>	5.1	Invite employees to attend specific targeted climate action training as set out in the six key training pillars of the Local Authority Climate Action Training plan.	% Of staff trained.	Training Section
		5.2	Engage with staff on the need to save energy and reduce GHG emissions (Powering Change).	% Of elected representatives trained.	

Action and Action Type		Tasks		Tracking Measure	Action Owner
6	Longford County Council is fully committed to the inclusion of all employees in climate action initiatives. <i>Adaptation and Mitigation</i>	6.1	Specify in the terms and conditions of employment that the new employee is required to participate and engage in duties as part of the Council's response to climate change to promote and ensure capacity building, empowering change and delivering action.	Inclusion of climate action in the terms and conditions of all new employees.	Human Resources
7 (Note 2)	Longford County Council will ensure that climate action policy is translated into all functional plans, strategies, and projects throughout Longford County Council. <i>Adaptation and Mitigation</i>	7.1	Embed Climate Action in the -2024 Corporate Plan -Local Economic Community Plan, -County Development Plan -Local area plans -Annual service plans -other plans and strategies.	Assessment of policies, plans and projects and monitor actions against targets.	All sections
8	Longford County Council commits to implementation, monitoring and progress reporting on its climate actions. <i>Adaptation and Mitigation</i>	8.1	Reporting to the Council, CARO and DECC as required.	Climate Action KPIs and DECC annual reporting.	All sections

Action and <i>Action Type</i>		Tasks		Tracking Measure	Action Owner
9	Longford County Council will lead by example. <i>Adaptation and Mitigation</i>	9.1	Connect with -Longford Town First Team -Community Groups -Business Community -Agricultural Community and other relevant stakeholders on Climate Actions.	Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis and DECC annual reporting.	Climate Action
10	Longford County Council will ensure its Major Emergency Plan (MEP) and Local Emergency Plans (LEP) will strongly take the effects of climate change into account. <i>Adaptation</i>	10.1	Maintain: -Climate Risk Register, -Major Emergency Plan -Flood Response Plan -Severe Weather Response Plan.	No. of staff trained.	Emergency Services,
11	Longford County Council will promote smarter working practices through remote working and use of technology. <i>Adaptation and Mitigation</i>	11.1	Use of technology such as MS Teams	% Of employees availing of blended working.	All sections
		11.2	Implementation of blended working		
		11.3	Explore the potential for 'hot desking' to reduce office space requirements	% Of employees using hot desks.	
		11.4	Explore the potential for car pooling	% Of employees that carpool.	
		11.5	Encourage blended working arrangements.		

5.2.2 Built Environment and Transport

Strategic Goal: To increase the climate resilience of infrastructural assets and to ensure that climate change informs Longford County Council's service provision.

Objective 1: To reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase the use of renewable energy and increase energy efficiency throughout the Council's housing, offices infrastructure and transport fleet In line with the national 2030 and 2050 targets.

Objective 2: To champion sustainable development throughout the County.

Objective 3: To promote a 'modal shift' towards sustainable transport.

Action and <i>Action Type</i>		Tasks		Tracking Measure	Action Owner
12 (Note 3)	Longford County Council will incorporate climate action initiatives into all future urban regeneration projects.	12.1	Form a Town First Team for Longford town.	No. of regeneration projects with climate action initiatives undertaken and regular monitoring of same.	Regeneration
	<i>Adaptation and Mitigation</i>	12.2	Ensure Climate Action is considered in Regeneration Projects.		
		12.3	Ensure that green infrastructural options and green solutions are considered as part of regeneration projects.		
		12.4	Support applications to the Just Transition Fund for relevant projects.		

Action and Action Type		Tasks		Tracking Measure	Action Owner
13 (Note 4) (Note 5)	Longford County Council will positively promote active travel and sustainable smart mobility, increase, and improve Local Link travel. <i>Mitigation</i>	13.1	Adopt Longford Town Local Transport Plan.	Active Travel Projects.	Active Travel
		13.2	Construct active travel projects in line with national policy and adopted plans.	Km of cycleways.	
		13.3	Support applications to the Just Transition Fund for projects related to active travel and sustainable smart mobility.		
14 (Note 6) (Note 7)	Longford County Council will actively work to protect built heritage. <i>Adaptation</i>	14.1	Ensure that climate action informs the Local Heritage Plan.	No. of restoration projects on built heritage.	Heritage
		14.2	Carry out condition and risk assessments of heritage sites in public ownership.		
		14.3	Undertake Conservation measures at high-risk sites.		

Action and Action Type		Tasks		Tracking Measure	Action Owner
15 (Note 8) (Note 9)	Longford County Council will energy retrofit its social housing and construct new houses to a Building Energy Rating (BER) A standard. <i>Mitigation</i>	15.1	Ensure that all housing strategies are climate-proofed.	No. of housing retrofits, new builds.	Housing
		15.2	Continue with the housing retrofit programme.		
		15.3	Continue to build new accommodation to high energy efficiency standards.		
16 (Note 10)	Longford County Council will provide EV charging infrastructure at its offices and libraries and will facilitate its installation around the County. <i>Mitigation</i>	16.1	Deliver EV charging at Council offices and libraries.	Completion of EV Charging Strategy. No. of public EV charging points in County Longford.	Climate Action
		16.2	Deliver 50KW fast chargers in all major urban areas.		
		16.3	Complete an EV Charging Strategy.		
		16.4	Support applications to the Just Transition Fund for relevant EV charger projects.		

Action and Action Type		Tasks		Tracking Measure	Action Owner
17	Longford County Council, through the planning process will condition the provision of EV charging infrastructure in all large scale and domestic developments. <i>Mitigation</i>	17.1	Condition the inclusion of EV charging infrastructure in all granted permissions.	No. of developments granted with EV charger conditions.	Planning
18 (Note 11)	Longford County Council will improve urban drainage maintenance to prevent flooding and where applicable, nature based solutions will be used. <i>Adaptation</i>	18.1	Develop a staff training programme for urban drainage.	Annual report on drainage maintenance.	Roads
		18.2	Develop a maintenance schedule for urban drainage networks.	Implementation of a staff training programme.	
		18.3	Implement improvements to drainage networks.		
		18.4	Review network performance after severe weather events.		
19 (Note 12)	Longford County Council will develop a programme for the protection of critical infrastructure. <i>Adaptation</i>	19.1	Risk Assess Critical Infrastructure with respect to vulnerability to the effects of climate change.	No. of risk assessments.	Roads
		19.2	Undertake adaptive improvement works to bridges, roads, storm drainage networks and buildings.	No. of projects.	

Action and Action Type		Tasks		Tracking Measure	Action Owner
20 (Note 13)	Longford County Council will actively collaborate with state infrastructure providers in preparation for climate change impacts on national strategic infrastructure in the County. <i>Adaptation</i>	20.1	Contact major state infrastructure providers to identify mutual interests with respect to infrastructure protection.	Report on collaborations.	Roads
21	Longford County Council will be pro-active in integrating climate considerations into the design, planning and construction of all roads, footpaths, bridges, public realm construction and housing projects. <i>Adaptation</i>	21.1	Climate proof all Council projects at design stage and follow through to implementation/construction.	No. of projects and no. of climate action considerations integrated into each project.	Roads Housing Regeneration
22	Longford County Council will actively identify roads and streets suitable for road space reallocation. <i>Mitigation</i>	22.1	Incorporate road space reallocation requirements into: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Area Plans • Local Transport Plans • Public Realm projects. 	Assessment Report.	Regeneration Active Travel

Action and Action Type		Tasks		Tracking Measure	Action Owner
23	Longford County Council will increase and invest in climate action measures to make the Dog Control Service more sustainable. <i>Mitigation</i>	23.1	Upgrades to the dog shelter.	Progress on upgrade works.	Environment
		23.2	Upgrade dog warden vehicle to electric.	Provision of electric vehicle.	
24	Longford County Council will further invest in the upgrade of all public lighting to be energy efficient and smart. <i>Mitigation</i>	24.1	Continue the public lighting upgrade programme until 99% of all lights have been changed to energy efficient lights.	% of street lighting upgraded to energy efficient LED.	Roads
25	Longford County Council will work to improve the energy efficiency of its trucks, vans, and other vehicles and to replace fossil fuelled vehicles with low carbon emission vehicles where practicable. <i>Mitigation</i>	25.1	Implement a driver behaviour training programme.	SEAI Measurement and Review (M&R).	Roads
		25.2	Conduct a review of the council fleet to rectify inefficiencies.		
		25.3	Develop a low carbon fleet strategy.		
		25.4	Purchase sustainably sourced, low carbon vehicles.		

Action and Action Type		Tasks		Tracking Measure	Action Owner
26 (Note 14)	Longford County Council will increase energy efficiency of council buildings.	26.1	Use SEAI Pathfinder Fund to complete energy upgrades of local authority offices and libraries.	SEAI M&R.	Facilities
		26.2	Continue with the internal lighting upgrades.		
	<i>Mitigation</i>	26.3	Improve building management systems to ensure efficient use of energy.		

5.2.3 Natural Environment and Green Infrastructure

Strategic Goal: Longford County Council will promote biodiversity and nature-based climate solutions across County Longford.

Objective 1: Promote and protect the environment.

Objective 2: Promote green infrastructure.

Objective 3: Protect and restore peatlands.

Action and Action Type		Tasks		Tracking Measure	Action Owner
27 (Note 15)	Longford County Council will pro-actively promote, protect, and preserve our Natural Heritage and Biodiversity. <i>Adaptation and Mitigation</i>	27.1	Appoint a Biodiversity Officer.	Appointment of a Biodiversity Officer.	Climate Action
		27.2	Develop and implement a Local Biodiversity Action Plan.	No of invasive species stands treated.	
		27.3	Continue Longford County Council's invasive species abatement programme.	Development of the Biodiversity Action Plan.	

Action and Action Type		Tasks		Tracking Measure	Action Owner
28	Longford County Council will actively promote green landscaping and nature-based solutions to adapt to the effects of climate change. <i>Adaptation</i>	28.1	Provide natural borders and buffers on roads, housing, and other infrastructure projects.	No of projects using green landscaping or nature-based solutions.	Climate Action
		28.2	Develop native hedgerow and edible landscape projects.		
		28.3	Continue the community based annual native Irish tree planting project.		
29	Longford County Council will continue to ensure the promotion of the transition from solid fuel heating to climate friendly alternatives. <i>Mitigation</i>	29.1	Enforcement of the solid fuel regulations.	Air Quality Measurements.	Environment
30 (Note 16)	Longford County Council will engage, support, and collaborate with the National Parks and Wildlife Service in the review of biodiversity and habitat conservation strategies. <i>Adaptation and Mitigation</i>	30.1	Explore the use of natural flood attenuation.	Progress of the Lough Ree Biosphere Reserve.	Climate Action
		30.2	Development of the Lough Ree Biosphere Reserve and wilderness park using Just Transition and other mechanisms.	Development of biodiversity and habitat and strategies.	

Action and <i>Action Type</i>		Tasks		Tracking Measure	Action Owner
31	Longford County Council will actively work with its Partners to achieve the objectives of the River Basin Management Programme.	31.1	Continue WFD water quality monitoring programme.	EPA's WFD River Water Quality Report.	Environment
	<i>Adaptation and Mitigation</i>	31.2	Continue RMCEI farm and other environmental inspections to reduce diffuse and point source pollution.	National Agricultural inspection programme.	
		31.3	Cooperation with LAWPRO.	Boil water notices.	
		31.4	Keep an up-to-date register of private water supplies and work with operators to protect sources and ensure good quality drinking water.	Misconnections identified and resolved.	
		31.5	Work to reduce wastewater pollution from urban combined sewer overflows and misconnections.		

Action and <i>Action Type</i>		Tasks		Tracking Measure	Action Owner
32 (Note 17) (Note 18)	Longford County Council will continue planned river channel maintenance and flood alleviation measures.	32.1	Continue with climate adaptation drainage measures.	Km of drainage channel maintained.	Environment
	<i>Adaptation</i>	32.2	Implement sustainable drainage channel maintenance programmes in accordance with the Drainage District Acts.	No. of OPW small drainage schemes.	
		32.3	Implement CFRAMS recommendations.	CCFRAMS project.	
		32.4	Implement local flood protection projects.		

5.2.4 Communities, Resilience and Transition

Strategic Goal: Longford County Council will empower communities to become sustainable and resilient through a Just Transition.

Objective 1: Build capacity and readiness in communities to effect transformative climate action.

Objective 2: Ensure that the Emergency Services are equipped to protect communities vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

Objective 3: Implement and support Just Transition actions in County Longford.

Action and Action Type		Tasks		Tracking Measure	Action Owner
33	Longford County Council will continue to actively engage, listen to, and collaborate with citizens and key stakeholders on climate actions. <i>Adaptation and Mitigation</i>	33.1	Continue to use the libraries for climate action and biodiversity outreach programmes (for example, home energy kits).	No. of engagements.	Libraries
		33.2	Strengthen the Environmental Pillar of the PPN.	No. of members of the Env Pillar of the PPN.	Climate Action
		33.3	Raise climate awareness through Longford Town First Team and other forums.		PPN
34	Longford County Council will strongly engage and support community climate action initiatives. <i>Adaption and Mitigation</i>	34.1	Administer the Community Climate Action Fund and other funding streams to facilitate climate action initiatives by communities.	No. of Community initiatives supported.	Climate Action

Action and Action Type		Tasks		Tracking Measure	Action Owner
34 Cont'd	Longford County Council will strongly engage and support community climate action initiatives. <i>Adaption and Mitigation</i>	34.2	Guided by the Memorandum of Understanding between the GAA and CCMA, Longford County Council will engage with the Green Club Programme through a nominated lead. Longford County Council will work with the CARO and GAA in the promotion of projects by participating clubs.	Collection of case study examples of projects supported by the local authority.	Climate Action
		34.3	Nominate a Green Club Lead.		
35	Longford County Council will work towards a just transition for all by greening the economy in a fair and inclusive way. <i>Adaptation</i>	35.1	Support a just transition for communities affected by transformative changes arising from the Green Agenda.	No of initiatives supported.	Enterprise
		35.2	Support applications to the Just Transition Fund.		

Action and Action Type		Tasks		Tracking Measure	Action Owner
36	Longford County Council will support Sustainable Energy Communities (SECs). <i>Mitigation</i>	36.1	Work with SEAI in promoting and Sustainable Energy Communities (SECs) across County Longford.	No. SECs in Co Longford.	Climate Action
		36.2	Longford County Council will fully support initiatives within SECs.	No. of SEC Energy Masterplans completed.	
37 (Note 8) (Note 19)	Longford County Council will seek solutions to energy poverty. <i>Mitigation</i>	37.1	Continue social housing retro-fit programme.	No. of housing retrofits.	Housing
		37.2	Retro-fit void social houses prior to reletting.		
		37.3	Construct new social houses to a BER A rated standard.		
38	Longford County Council will play an active role in supporting and seeking opportunities to promote climate action through the Arts, Culture and Creativity. <i>Adaption and Mitigation</i>	38.1	Work with Creative Ireland on climate related projects.	No. of projects containing a climate action dimension.	Cultural Services
		38.2	Use the Cultural Capital Fund and similar funding streams to support climate related projects.		

Action and Action Type		Tasks		Tracking Measure	Action Owner
39	Longford County Council will align its climate actions with the Local Economic and Community Plan. <i>Mitigation</i>	39.1	Ensure the implementation of climate related actions in the adopted Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP).	Number of climate related actions in the LECP.	Community LCDC
40	Longford County Council will support remote working hubs. <i>Mitigation</i>	40.1	Investigate the provision of EV chargers at remote working hubs.	No. of users of remote hubs supported by Longford County Council.	Information Technology
		40.2	Monitor hub usage.		
41	Longford County Council will identify communities vulnerable to climate change risks as part of its major emergency planning. <i>Adaptation</i>	41.1	Risk-assess communities vulnerable to changes caused by Climate Change.	Completion of climate change risk assessments.	Emergency Services Roads

Action and Action Type		Tasks		Tracking Measure	Action Owner
42	<p>Longford County Council will support local businesses with climate projects and initiatives.</p> <p><i>Adaption and Mitigation</i></p>	42.1	<p>Promote and administer the following schemes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Green for Business Programme, -Energy Efficiency Grant, -Digital Start -Climate Toolkit4Business -other similar funding streams. 	No. of projects supported.	Enterprise
43	<p>Longford County Council will support the regional climate change objectives outlined in the Midlands Regional Enterprise Plan (MREP) with reference to relevant projects in the European Just Transition Fund.</p> <p><i>Adaption and Mitigation</i></p>	43.1	Support projects incorporating climate change objects from the MREP.	No. of projects supported.	Enterprise

5.2.5 Sustainability and Resource Management

Strategic Goal: Longford County Council will play its part in developing an efficient circular economy and establishing sustainable practices.

Objective 1: Support circular economy initiatives in County Longford.

Objective 2: Promote sustainability initiatives in County Longford.

Action and Action Type		Tasks		Tracking Measure	Action Owner
44	Longford County Council will develop, implement, and promote a green procurement policy. <i>Mitigation</i>	44.1	Implement green procurement across the County Council (as per OGP guidelines January 2023).	No. of contracts awarded with green procurement criteria.	All Sections
45	Longford County Council will improve its management of its own waste streams. <i>Mitigation</i>	45.1	Improve waste segregation and recycling in council offices, libraries, and construction projects.	Waste Tonnage.	All Sections
		45.2	Recycle road materials where possible.		
		45.3	Promote waste minimisation through 'paperless office' initiatives.		
		45.4	Staff education and awareness programme on waste minimisation.		

Action and Action Type		Tasks		Tracking Measure	Action Owner
46	Longford County Council will promote the circular economy. <i>Mitigation</i>	46.1	Support the development of recycling businesses and promote the circular economy initiatives.	No. of recycling enterprises permitted by Longford County Council.	Environment
		46.2	Support businesses in their efforts to decarbonise.		
		46.3	Support Producer Responsibility Initiatives (PRIs).	No. of climate related grants issued.	Enterprise
47	Longford County Council will increase the resilience of its information technology. <i>Adaptation</i>	47.1	Increase the energy efficiency and security of Council's IT systems.	Progress Report.	Information Technology
48 (Note 20)	Longford County Council will investigate onsite renewable energy projects. <i>Mitigation</i>	48.1	Use SEAI Pathfinder Fund to develop renewable energy projects for council facilities.	SEAI M&R.	Facilities
		48.2	Use the Climate Action Fund to promote the development of renewable energy projects by communities.		Climate Action
		48.3	Support application to the Just Transition Fund for relevant projects.		Climate Action

Action and Action Type		Tasks		Tracking Measure	Action Owner
49	Longford County Council, through the Planning process will condition compliance with the Building Regulations and other climate related government regulations and policies. <i>Adaptation and Mitigation</i>	49.1	Condition compliance with the building regulations and other policies in granting planning permissions.	No. of A-rated housing planning permissions granted each year.	Planning
50 (Note 21)	Longford County Council will stipulate sustainable urban storm water drainage systems (SUDS) for new developments. <i>Adaptation</i>	50.1	Condition SUDS on new development planning permissions.	No. of developments with SUDS conditions.	Planning
		50.2	Training programme for staff on SUDS.	No of staff trained.	
51 (Note 22)	Longford County Council will investigate clean energy production developments e.g., anaerobic digestion. <i>Mitigation</i>	51.1	Commission a feasibility report on anaerobic digestion.	Completion of feasibility report.	Enterprise
		51.2	Seek to advance recommended projects using Just Transition and other funding streams.	Progress with implementation of recommend-actions.	

Action and Action Type		Tasks		Tracking Measure	Action Owner
52	Longford County Council will regulate and support the safe production of sustainable local food of animal origin. <i>Mitigation</i>	52.1	Regulate the sustainable production of local food enterprises supplying food of animal origin.	No. of local food businesses regulated by Longford County Council.	Environment
53	Longford County Council will support and collaborate on local/regional based research and development projects that explore alternative renewable technologies. <i>Mitigation</i>	53.1	Invite project proposals for research on alternative technologies.	No. of proposals supported.	Enterprise
		53.2	Actively engage with regional stakeholders, including Technical University of the Shannon (TUS) to build up climate change capabilities within local industry to help them adopt more sustainable practices.		

Notes 1-22 are in section 5.3 below.

5.3 Amendments to Climate Action tasks following Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA):

Note 1: Attach the following text to task 3.1: 'having due regard to environmental sensitivities such as local human receptors, European sites and biodiversity, protected species, and the need to appropriately protect and conserve protected structures in accordance with relevant protected structures regulations'.

Note 2: Attach the following text to task 7.1: 'having due regard to planning and environmental protection requirements, and opportunities to promote climate action co-benefits'.

Note 3: Attach the following text to task 12.3: 'having due regard to environmental protection considerations and opportunities to promote climate action co-benefits and environmental enhancement'.

Note 4: Attach the following text to task 13.1: 'whilst having appropriate regard to environmental sensitivities and opportunities to promote climate action co-benefits'.

Note 5: Attach the following text to task 13.2: 'having due regard to opportunities to enhance tourism, recreation and cultural heritage value associated with active travel projects, and environmental sensitivities such as the receiving water environment, local air quality, biodiversity, European sites, and cultural heritage related sensitivities'.

Note 6: Attach the following text to task 14.1: 'having due regard to environmental sensitivities, including protected species and European site related sensitivities, and heritage conservation requirements'.

Note 7: Attach the following text to task 14.3: 'having due regard to protected species, biodiversity, European sites, and the need to appropriately conserve protected structures'.

Note 8: Attach the following text to tasks 15.1, 15.2, 37.1 37.2: 'having due regard to protected species, biodiversity, European sites and the need to appropriately conserve protected structures'.

Note 9: Attach the following text to task 15.3: 'having due regard for environmental sensitivities such as local human receptors, European sites, and biodiversity'.

Note 10: Attach the following text to tasks 16.1, 16.2, 16.3: 'having due regard to environmental sensitivities (such as material assets, the receiving water environment, biodiversity, European sites, local air quality, and cultural heritage)'.

Note 11: Attach the following text to task 18.3: 'During the execution of these works, the Council will continue to have due regard to environmental sensitivities at these locations, including water quality, biodiversity, European sites, riparian corridors and aquatic ecology'.

Note 12: Attach the following text to task 19.2: 'having due regard to the need to appropriately protect and conserve protected structures in accordance with relevant protected structures regulations, and the need to not negatively impinge on any protected species or European sites'.

Note 13: Attach the following text to task 20.1: 'with a focus on follow-up and implementation'.

Note 14: Attach the following text to task 26.1: 'having due regard to environmental sensitivities such as local human receptors, European sites and biodiversity, and the need to appropriately protect and conserve protected structures in accordance with relevant protected structures regulations'.

Note 15: Attach the following text to task 27.2: 'with a focus on use/promotion of native species'.

Note 16: Attach the following text to task 30.2: 'having due regard to environmental sensitivities such as European sites and biodiversity'.

Note 17: Attach the following text to tasks 32.1, 32.2: 'whilst having appropriate regard to environmental protection requirements associated with developing drainage related development'.

Note 18: Attach the following text to tasks 32.3, 32.4: 'having due regard to the need to promote nature-based solutions and Sustainable Drainage Systems, and environmental sensitivities at these locations, including water quality, biodiversity, European sites, riparian corridors and aquatic ecology, visual amenity and recreation and amenity value'.

Note 19: Attach the following text to task 37.3: 'having due regard for environmental sensitivities such as local human receptors, European sites and biodiversity; and the need to appropriately protect and conserve protected structures, during any retrofitting works'.

Note 20: Attach the following text to tasks 48.1, 48.2: 'whilst promoting - through control or influence, as appropriate - project adherence to planning and environmental protection criteria'.

Note 21: Attach the following text to task 50.1: 'whilst ensuring the development projects appropriately have due regard to promoting nature-based solutions, protection of biodiversity and avoidance of habitat fragmentation'.

Note 22: Attach the following text to task 51.1: 'Ensure the study as appropriate regard to planning and environmental protection constraints and considerations'.

Section 6 Decarbonisation Zone

6.1 Introduction

A Decarbonisation Zone (DZ) is a spatial area identified by the local authority in which a range of climate mitigation, adaptation and biodiversity measures and action owners are identified to address local low carbon energy, greenhouse gas emissions, and climate needs to contribute to national climate action targets.

The identification, design, and development of the DZ is motivated primarily to deliver outcomes capable of meeting the national emission reduction targets of 51% by 2030 and net zero by end of 2050, from the baseline year of 2018.

The criteria for choosing a DZ are

- Urban areas and agglomerations with a population not less than 5,000 persons, or
- Rural areas with an area of not less than 4km².
- Other location/areas that can demonstrate decarbonisation at a replicable scale.

Longford County Council nominated Longford Town as its proposed Decarbonisation Zone (DZ). The selected DZ was chosen using the criteria given under Action 165 of Ireland's Climate Action Plan 2019.

Longford Town was chosen as the DZ as it is the only urban area in the County which meets the population requirement.

The boundary of the DZ is shown below in Figure 18.

Using the Environmental Governance Principles listed above in Figure 13, Longford County Council has developed a list of five Climate Actions specifically tailored to the DZ. Longford County Council will pursue these actions, which are listed in section 6.4 below, over the lifetime of the Climate Action Plan.

Longford Town Boundary

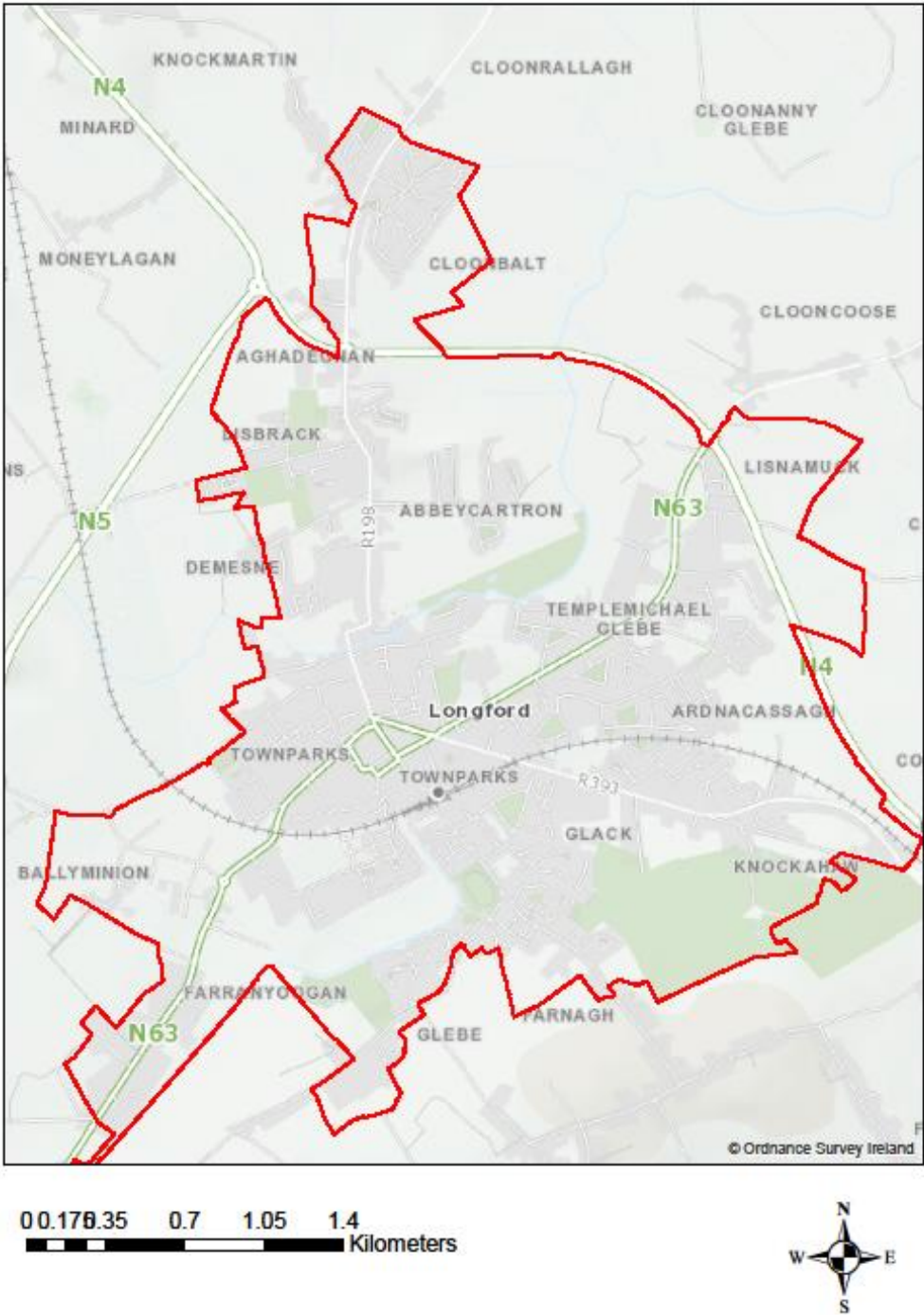


Figure 18: Map of the Longford Town DZ.

6.2 Strategic Vision for the Decarbonisation Zone

To set an example for County Longford by forging and strengthening engagement between Longford County Council, business, communities, key stakeholders from the private sector, energy network operators and others by striving together towards the National Climate Action Target.

6.3 Actions and Tasks for Longford Town Decarbonisation Zone

Action		Task	
1	Develop and nurture strong networks, partnerships and collaboration across government, private sector, and communities in pursuit of local solutions and interventions.	1.1	Longford County Council will work with Central Government, Public Bodies, Agencies, and Public Utilities to expedite the delivery of the Climate Actions (listed in Section 5) within the DZ.
		1.2	Longford County Council will work with the Mid Longford Municipal District, the Town First Team, Business Groups, Tidy Towns committee, social enterprises, and other community groups to expedite the delivery of the Climate Actions (listed in Section 5) within the DZ.
2 (Note 23) (Note 24)	Deliver mitigation measures to reduce the rate of climate change and improve the quality of life within the DZ.	2.1	Longford County Council will investigate the possibility of reallocating street space to pedestrians and cyclists. Longford County Council will prioritise Active Travel Projects recommended in the Longford Town Travel Strategy within the DZ.
		2.2	Longford County Council will investigate the possibility of developing Sustainable Energy Zones and Low Emission Zones in the DZ.
		2.3	Longford County Council will develop a strategy to provide Electric Vehicle charging stations for residents within the DZ that do not have access to off-street parking.
		2.4	Longford County Council will prioritise social housing retrofits within the DZ.

Action		Task	
3 (Note 25)	Deliver adaptation measures to combat the risk of and build resilience to the negative impacts of climate change.	3.1	Longford County Council will advance the delivery of the flood defence measures around Longford Town as recommended by the Office of Public Works (OPW) Catchment-Based Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) report and other drainage related matters affecting the Town.
		3.2	Longford County Council will develop a storm drainage maintenance programme within the DZ.
		3.3	Longford County Council will explore Regeneration opportunities that will deliver on adaptation goals within the DZ.
		3.4	Longford County Council will work to improve air quality in the DZ.
4 (Note 26) (Note 27)	Support, promote and enhance nature-based solutions and biodiversity to increase green infrastructure.	4.1	Longford County Council will continue to support the maintenance of green spaces and to promote and encourage biodiversity within the DZ.
		4.2	Longford County Council will explore options of developing amenity native woodland spaces within the DZ.
		4.3	Longford County Council will explore options for further developing the amenity value of the river Camlin with the DZ.
		4.4	Longford County Council will end the use of toxic weedkiller within the DZ – except where necessary to manage invasive species.
5	Mobilise local, sectoral, and national investment and resources in pursuit of local solutions and interventions.	5.1	Longford County Council will work with Central Government, Public Bodies, Agencies and Public Utilities to source funding and investment for climate actions within the DZ.
		5.2	Longford County Council will work with the Mid Longford Municipal District, the Town First Team, Business Groups, Tidy Towns committee, social enterprises, and other community groups to utilise all available funding and investment for climate actions within the DZ.
		5.3	Longford County Council will seek to mobilise private investment to deliver climate action within the DZ.

Notes 23-27 are in section 6.5 below.

6.4 Amendments to DZ tasks following SEA and AA analysis:

Note 23: Attach the following text to task 2.3: 'having due regard to environmental sensitivities (such as material assets, the receiving water environment, biodiversity, European sites, local air quality, and cultural heritage)'.

Note 24: Attach the following text to task 2.4: 'having due regard to environmental sensitivities such as local human receptors, European sites and biodiversity, and the need to appropriately protect and conserve protected structures in accordance with relevant protected structures regulations'.

Note 25: Attach the following text to the task 3.1: 'having due regard to the need to promote nature-based solutions and Sustainable Drainage Systems, and environmental sensitivities at these locations, including water quality, biodiversity, European sites, riparian corridors and aquatic ecology, visual amenity and recreation and amenity value'.

Note 26: Attach the following text to task 4.3: 'having due regard to environmental sensitivities'.

Note 27: Attach the following text to task 4.4: 'in accordance with relevant good practice guidance'.

Section 7 Implementation and Reporting

7.1 Planning for Implementation

Longford County Council will implement this Climate Action Plan. While the plan requires a whole-of-Council approach, the ownership of the Plan is held within the Directorate of Infrastructure, Climate Action, and Innovation.

In early 2023 a Climate Action Section was established in Longford County Council. This team includes a Climate Action Coordinator, Climate Action Officer, and Community Climate Action Officer. The role of this team is to mainstream climate action into the activities of Longford County Council, monitor the implementation of the actions of the Climate Action Plan and to coordinate the reporting and evaluation of the Plan, following its approval by the Elected Members. The Climate Action Section is supported by the wider core staff across the organisation, which have ownership of actions in the Plan. The Climate Action Section will also be the point of contact for the public to learn about climate action in County Longford.

Longford County Council has established a Climate Action Team chaired by the Director of Services for Infrastructure, Climate Action, and Innovation. This Team comprises the Climate Action Coordinator and Senior Officers from across all sections of the Council.

The establishment of the Climate Action Team provides a solid framework for leading the Council's response to the challenge of climate change across all Council activities.

The Senior Officers are ideally placed to communicate the urgency of climate action across the wider council and specifically to their areas of responsibility. The Climate Action Team will maintain an operational role with a focus on the implementation of actions, delivery of projects, monitoring and reporting on progress.

Longford County Council will work collaboratively and in partnership with a range of key stakeholders to support the delivery of this Plan.

These stakeholders include the

- neighbouring local authorities of Roscommon, Leitrim, Cavan, and Westmeath,
- Eastern Midlands Climate Action Regional Office,
- Midlands Energy Agency,
- Local Authority Services National Training Group,
- Eastern and Midlands Regional Assembly,
- Local Government Management Agency,
- City and County Management Agency,
- Public Participation Network,
- Age Friendly Ireland, and
- Comhairle na nÓg.

Following approval of the Plan, an Implementation Plan will be developed which will set out in detail how each action will be delivered.

7.2 Funding and Partnerships

Longford County Council will continue to pursue new and existing funding opportunities from both European and national bodies for its climate action objectives.

Partnerships are also a key ingredient towards realising low carbon solutions. The private sector is already playing a role towards achieving the National Climate Objective and collaboration can enhance our capabilities in achieving reductions in Ireland's greenhouse gases by 51% by 2030 and becoming climate neutral by no later than 2050.

There are also benefits for the local government sector in partnering with the third level sector. The third level sector can provide research and development expertise to help local authorities implement innovative solutions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change.

These partnerships can help local authorities access funding for climate action projects and initiatives. Longford County Council will encourage and facilitate collaboration with the private sector and third level sector where possible.

7.3 Tracking Progress through Key Performance Indicators

Performance by Longford County Council on the delivery of energy efficiency and emission reductions relating to the Council's infrastructure and assets will continue to be tracked through the established Monitoring and Reporting (M&R) system managed by the Sustainable Authority of Ireland (SEAI).

A key consideration for the local government sector on this strengthened role on climate action is accountability, and in particular the ability to track, measure and report on progress in delivering effective climate action at both local authority and sectoral levels. In this regard, sectoral Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will play a significant role.

The CAROs along with the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA) collect data on an annual basis relating to a range of themes including:

- Climate Action Resources.
- Climate Action Training for local authority staff and elected members.
- Actions delivered.
- Enterprise support for climate action.
- Energy efficiency.
- Emission reductions.
- Active travel measures.
- Severe weather response.

KPIs will continue to be added as necessary by the sector and Longford County Council will contribute relevant information as required, to assist in highlighting the progress of the local government sector on climate action.

7.4 Reporting Requirements and Arrangements

7.4.1 Internal Reporting

To ensure that delivery is timely, the implementation of the Plan will be monitored via an in-house tracking system. The local authority will also facilitate reporting to elected members on an annual basis or as required.

7.4.2 Monitoring and Reporting System (M&R)

Longford County Council will continue to report on their energy performance and emission targets annually to the SEAI.

7.4.3. Sectoral Performance

Longford County Council will report annually on their performance on climate action by way of KPIs (as outlined in Section 6.2) to inform the performance of the local government sector on climate action, as part of the local government DECC 2030 Strategy.

7.4.4 National Climate Action Plan

Longford County Council will in accordance with part 3(w) of the Local Authority Climate Action Charter, report to the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC) on progress on climate action at local level as part of the delivery of the national climate objective. Progress on all actions will be reported via a reporting tool developed by Climate Action Regional Office (CARO).

Attached Documents

- Annex A: County Wide Climate Change Risk Assessment.
- Annex B: County Wide Baseline Emissions Inventory.
- Annex C: Decarbonisation Zone Baseline Emissions Inventory.
- SEA Environmental Report.
- Natura Impact Report.

