

County Longford Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 Progress Review 2024

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Longford County Council
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Introduction

It is just over a year since the adoption of the Climate Action Plan 2024-2029. Longford County Council incorporates Climate Action in all its services to help reach its climate goals, to increase Climate Action awareness and to aid communities in their efforts. This review outlines the major undertakings in 2024 and provides a brief summary with respect to all the actions in the Plan.

1. Climate Action Plan

The Longford County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 was adopted by the full council on the 14 February 2024. The plan contains 53 actions under the following thematic headings:

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

The plan also includes 5 actions for the Longford Town Decarbonisation Zone. Longford Town was chosen as it was the only urban area in the county that met the criteria set out.

Work on many of the Plans' actions was already underway at the time of the it's adoption. Highlighted below are some of the major Climate Action activities of 2024.



Photo - Longford Climate Action Plan Launch, 20 March 2024

2. Climate Action Fund

Longford County Council had €328,000 to disperse under Strand 1 Phase 1 of the Community Climate Action Fund in 2024. Fourteen projects were approved under Strand 1 and one project was successful under Strand 1a which is a shared island project.

Strand 1 Project Name	Total allocated
Ballymahon Tidy Towns	€ 16,560.00
Lus na Greine, Granard	€ 7,807.71
Stonepark Community Group, Stonepark	€ 1,680.44
Radharc na Coille, Cullyfad	€ 14,161.50
Co Worx, Remote Working Hub, Edgeworthstown.	€ 13,490.54
Moyne Latin School	€ 13,346.27
Drumlsh Ballinamuck Area Development CLG	€ 13,731.00
Dromard GAA Club	€ 18,162.00
Rathcline GAA, Lanesborough	€ 15,090.00
Abbeyshrule Tidy Towns	€ 39,728.50
EDI Training Centre, Longford town	€ 23,154.00
Longford RFC	€ 49,586.67
Longford AC	€ 38,770.22
Clonguish GAA	€ 62,731.15
Strand 1a Project	Total Allocated
Ardagh Community Centre	€61,100.90

Table – approved projects

Phase 2 is expected to be announced in early Q3 in 2024. Two of the projects that were completed by the end of 2024 were the Solar Panels for Rathcline GAA and the Community Garden for Lus na Greine in Granard



Photo – Rathcline GAA solar panels



Photo – Community Garden, Lus na Greine

3. New Housing

Longford County Council continues to add new houses to its housing stock of over 2,200 units. New houses are constructed to BER A3 standard. These houses are heated with electric heat pumps and are Near Zero Energy Buildings (NZEB). In 2024 a total of 82 houses were added. 29 in Longford town and 53 at other locations around the County.



Photo – New local authority houses on Connaught Road, Longford

4. Housing Retrofits

As part of its efforts to combat energy poverty and to reduce emissions from its housing stock, Longford County Council has an annual programme to retrofit existing social houses.

The programme aims to bring the houses to as high a Building Energy Rating (BER) standard as possible. In general retrofitting includes external insulation, new doors and windows and an electric heat pump heating system. Solar panels are also installed where appropriate.

In 2024 Longford County Council retrofitted a total of 39 social houses. 27 were upgraded to BER A3 standard, 11 to BER B1 and 1 to BER B2.



Photo – House retrofit Fairgreen View, County Longford.



Photo – House retrofit Ardeevan, Longford-before & after

5. Public Lighting

As of December 2024 Longford County Council has 6,019 public lights spread throughout the county. 82.3% have now been upgraded to energy efficient LEDs. This has greatly helped Longford County Council meet it's energy efficiency targets to date.

In 2024 Public Lighting accounted for 26% of the Council's total energy usage. In total 1,846,844 KWh of electricity was consumed by public lighting at a cost of €386,592. In total, public lighting in County Longford emitted 395 tonnes of CO2 equivalent.

296 lamps were upgraded in 2024, saving a further 89,065 KWh/year and 45 tonnes of CO2.



Photo – new LED light installed in Newtowncashel

6. Active Travel

Active Travel refers to forms of transport that rely on physical activity rather than motorised modes. It primarily includes walking and cycling. Active Travel encourages a healthier and environmentally friendly alternative to car travel. For these reasons Longford County Council is committed to promoting Active Travel throughout County Longford.

In 2024 Longford County Council completed 1,850m of cycle lanes on the Ballinalee Road, Longford and constructed 980m on the Battery Road, Longford. The Battery Road project is scheduled to be completed in Q2 2025.

In addition to cycle lanes Active Travel also completed junction improvements for pedestrians in Drumlish (Main St/Hill St junction) and constructed 740m of footpath in Fisherstown, Clondra.



Photo – opening of cycle lanes on Ballinalee Road



Photo – Cycle lanes on Battery Road

7. Drainage and Bridges

Local authorities are charged with responsibility to maintain Drainage Districts. In Longford the council has responsibility for stretches of the Camlin River, Keenagh River, Currygrane River, Rinn and Black River and the Erne River. In 2024 work was completed on a stretch of the Camlin just west of Longford Town. This work is essential to reduce the effects of flooding and represents a Climate Adaptation measure.

In addition to channel maintenance Longford County Council also has a Bridge Remediation Programme. In the past, notable bridges such as Newcastle Bridge, The Nine Arches bridge at Clynan and Clondra bridge have undergone major repairs aimed at making them more resilient in the face of Climate Action. Longford County Council is responsible for more than 400 bridges ranging from multi arch structures to culverts. In 2024 six bridges were remediated, These were:

- Currygranny- Ballagh (Masonry Stone Arch)
- Liscahill – Gneeve (Masonry Stone Arch)
- Tawnagh – Aghadowry (Concrete Slab)
- Dromard Gaa – Leggagh (Masonry Stone Arch)
- Crott – Smear (Masonry Stone Arch)
- Drummeel – Breaghy (New Box Culvert)

The cost of the programme in 2024 was €433,350.



Photo – rehabilitated bridge at Liscahill-Gneeve 2024

8. EV Charging

In 2024 Longford County Council entered into a partnership with Eir/EasyGo to provide rapid EV chargers in all major centres in County Longford.

EV Chargers were installed in Longford (6no.), Granard (4no.), Ballymahon (2no.) and Lanesborough (2 no.). Longford had previously installed a 50KW charger in Edgeworthstown. Another 4 no. EV chargers were installed by the Housing Section at the new Connaught Road housing estate. These chargers complement installations by other providers such as eCars.

In addition, Longford County Council participated with neighbouring counties in developing a regional EV charging strategy which is scheduled to be finalised in Q2 2025.



Photo – New EV charging station in Barrack Lane carpark, Granard.

9. Fleet

Longford County Council's fleet is the leading contributor to its energy usage at 33% (2024).

In 2024, LCC consumed 209,790 litres of road fuel, of which 89% was diesel.

LCC's fleet inventory consists of 90 vehicles:

Vehicle Type	Quantity
22 Tonne Trucks	7
Pickup Trucks	25
Vans	15
Tractors	3
Lawnmowers	4
Road Sweeper	1
Patching Unit	2
Teleporter	1
Backhoe	1
Fire Service Vehicles	24
Civil Defence Vehicles	7
Total	90

In 2024 a review of the Council's fleet was conducted to investigate the possibility of using biofuels such as HVO which has much less carbon emissions. It also investigated replacing some vehicles with electric. The fleet review also identified a number of vehicles that could be eliminated.

Following the fleet review Longford County Council purchased its first electric van for use by the dog warden service and plans to increase the number of electric vehicles in 2025. There are also plans to run a trial using HVO on some heavy duty vehicles in 2025.

Decarbonising the fleet is the biggest single challenge facing the Council to reaching its Carbon emission targets in the coming years.



Photo – New eExpert Peugeot electric van purchased in 2024 for the dog warden service.

10. Energy

Longford County Council is mandated to reduce energy usage by 50% by 2030. Progress has been measured since 2009 and to date the Council is on course with a 43.8% reduction achieved so far.

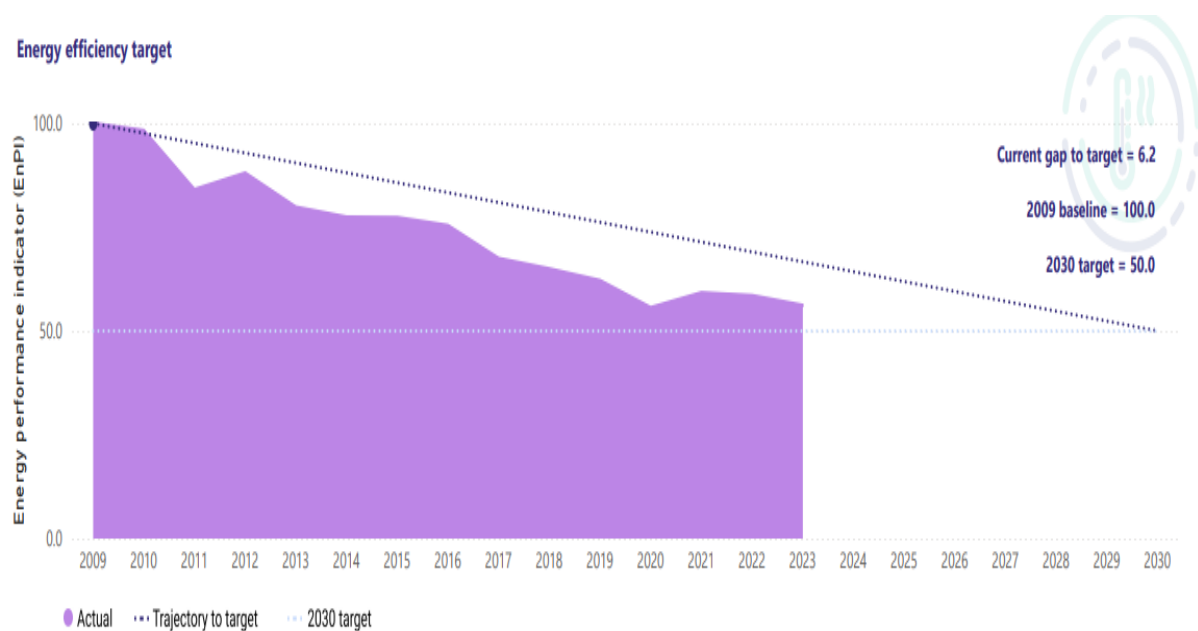
More challenging, is the target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by the same amount. Continuing work on public lighting, the promise of HVO (assuming the above mentioned trial is successful) and the upcoming Pathfinder project to decarbonise the main office buildings should go along way towards the target.

In 2024, in addition to the public lighting upgrades and fleet review, the groundwork was laid for the Pathfinder project. This project aims to decarbonise Aras An Chontae and Camlin Court Offices.

The Council also conducted energy audits on the following buildings:

- Lanesborough Fire Station
- Edgeworthstown Fire Station
- Ballymahon Library

The Council now has up to date energy audits for all its buildings which plot the way for greenhouse gas reductions and improved energy efficiency.



Graphic showing that Longford County Council is on target to meet 50% energy reduction by 2030

Breakdown of energy use by Longford County Council in 2024:

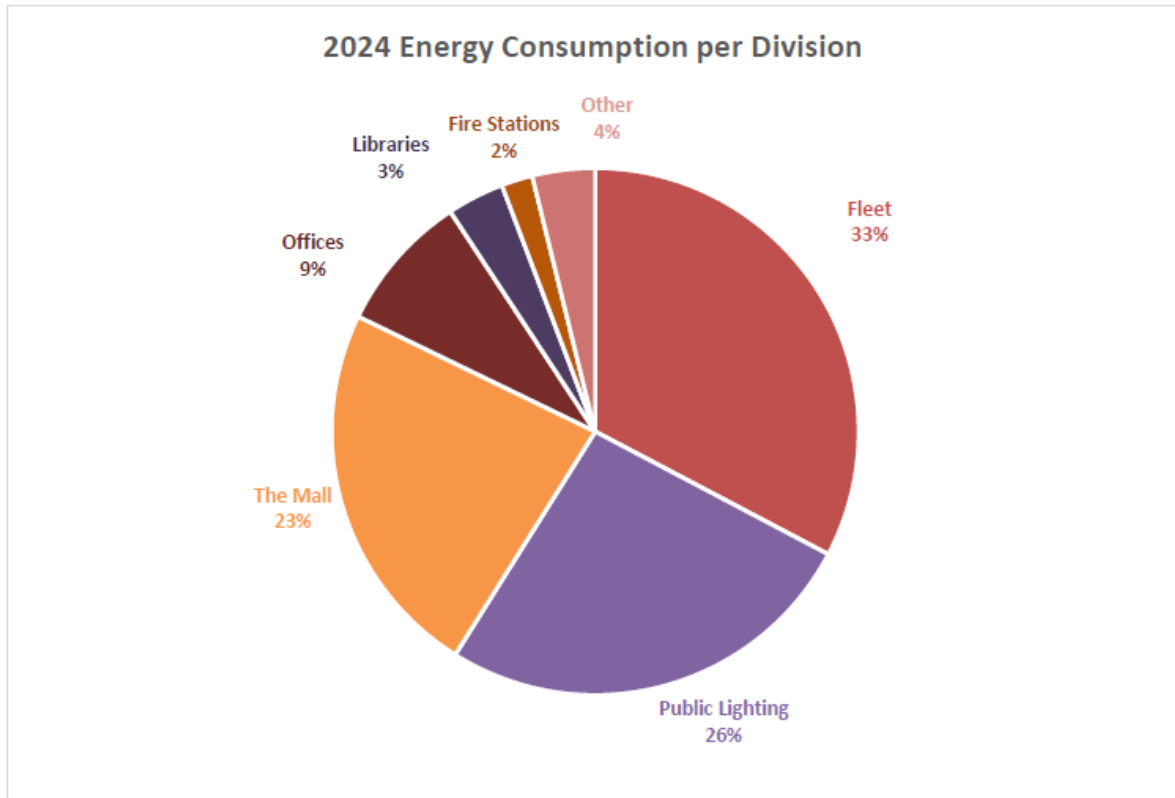


Fig 1: A pie chart of the Council's energy consumption per SEU division in 2024.

Table 1: LCC's Energy Cost, Consumption and Carbon breakdown for 2024.

	Consumption (kWh)	Percentage kWh (%)	Cost (€)	Carbon (Kg CO2e)
Fleet	2,306,109	33	€ 341,552	608,559
Public Lighting	1,846,844	26	€ 386,592	395,560
The Mall	1,640,465	23	€ 149,206	90,475
Offices	601,913	9	€ 108,118	133,554
Libraries	246,912	4	€ 54,543	56,099
Fire Stations	135,247	2	€ 19,525	32,763
Other	271,149	4	€ 36,940	60,250
Total	7,048,638	100	€ 1,096,476	1,377,260

Graphic showing Longford County Council energy use in 2024

11. Decarbonisation Zone

In addition to the ongoing work with active travel, public lighting and housing retrofits, all of which is occurring within the Decarbonisation Zone of Longford Town as in other places a few additional activities in 2024 are worth noting:

At the new Alderfield housing estate, Longford County Council along with LCRL and the local community got together 3/04/2024 to plant 300 tree urban forest on a green area between the housing estate and Longford Golf Club . This urban forest initiative is a boon for Carbon capture, biodiversity and social inclusion through environmental enhancement.



Photo - New Tree Planting at Alderfield

Energy Road Show - Longford County Council hosted the Laois Offaly Educational Training Boards' (LOETB) Energy Roadshow from the 25th to the 29th of November. The roadshow was attended by over 300 people and it focused on energy retrofitting for homes and businesses.



Photo – opening of the LOETB Energy Roadshow at Connolly's Barrack

12. Public Engagements

In 2024 the Climate Team in Longford County Council took part on many public engagements to highlight the need for climate action and help communities with pathways to funding for climate initiatives. Below is a summary of the engagement activities:

- Sustainable Energy Communities : Climate Action has engaged with 4 no. Sustainable Energy Communities (Drumlish, Granard, Longford and Lanesborough on the development of Energy Master Plans.
- Dreamspace: Climate Action has a stand highlighting the Climate Action Biodiversity to primary school children and teachers.
- Longford Community Safety and Welbeing expo:
- Longford Show
- Tidy Towns event in Edgeworthstown
- Climate Action had stands at the above events highlighting Climate Action and Biodiversity Issues.
- Signpost Programme with Teagasc. On the 2nd of October Longford County Council in partnership with Teagasc presented on Climate Action and Environmental issues at a farm walk/talk in Lanesborough.
- Heritage Week The Biodiversity Officer participated in a number of events around the County during Heritage Week:
- Mammal walk & talk Derrycassin.
- Bat walk& talk Newcastle.
- Library Talk in Lanesborough
- Biodiversity Week – The Biodiversity Officer participated in a number of events around the County during Biodiversity Week:
- Hedgerow walk & talk.
- Barn Owl Talk.
- 4 No. Library biodiversity talks (x4).
- Bog talk in Corlea visitors centre
- Longford Community and sports clubs engagement through Community Climate Action Fund.
- Pathways to Funding workshops: The Community Climate Action Officer participated in these workshops in each Municipal District library as part of the public engagement for Community Climate Action Fund
- The Community Climate Action Officer presented to each Municipal District on the Community Climate Action Fund.
- Hedgerow maintenance training: The Biodiversity Officer organised hedgerow maintenance training with Teagasc and Hedgerows Ireland on the 7th, 8th, and 14th of November.
- The Biodiversity Officer gave talks to Active Retirement Longford on the 8th May and Active Age Newtownforbes 12th September.
- The Biodiversity Officer participated in children’s workshops in the libraries on the 15th and 16th of July.
- Post Primary Tech Awards 11/12/2024: Climate Action assisted in the adjudication and presented and prize for the best project with strong Climate Action/Environment elements.

Progress on Climate Action Plan actions

Below is a list on all 53 actions with a note to progress in 2024:

5.2.1 Governance and Leadership

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

Action and Action Type		Progress February 2024 - February 2025
1	<p>Longford County Council is fully committed to effectively resource climate action.</p> <p><i>Adaptation and Mitigation</i></p>	<p>Longford County Council maintained its Climate Team in 2024. The Climate Action Plan was adopted in February. Progress with respect to Climate Actions in the plan are discussed below.</p>
2	<p>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.</p> <p><i>Adaptation and Mitigation</i></p>	<p>Climate Action remains a standing item on the Senior Management Team and SPC meetings, The new Council, elected in June 2024, reformulated the Special Policy Committees. Climate Action is now the responsibility of the Physical Development SPC.</p>

3	<p>Longford County Council will maintain an active liaison and collaboration with the Eastern and Midlands CARO and adjoining Local Authorities.</p> <p><i>Adaptation and Mitigation</i></p>	<p>Through the Midland Energy Agency, which also comprises of the five counties mentioned above, Longford County Council has continued to pursue SEAI Pathfinder funding to retrofit Aras an Chontae and the Camlin Court office block. A tender for detailed design was completed in 2024 with an appointment expected in Q1 2025.</p> <p>Longford County Council continues to work closely with the Eastern and Midlands Climate Action Regional Office (CARO) which is based in County Kildare and with the sub-region of the CARO which comprises of Counties Laois, Offaly, Westmeath, Longford and Roscommon.</p>
4	<p>Longford County Council will align its Climate Policies to the National Climate Policy and the UN Sustainability Goals.</p> <p><i>Adaptation and Mitigation</i></p>	<p>The Climate Action Plan adopted in 2024 is fully aligned with the UN Sustainability Goals.</p> <p>Preparation of the Biodiversity Plan commenced in 2024 and is scheduled to be complete by Q3 2025.</p> <p>Climate Action was also embedded in the new Corporate Plan which was adopted after the election of the new Council in June 2024. The specific objective to "Place climate action, biodiversity and environment at the heart of local decision making" is listed under the strategic objective "Our Place".</p>
5	<p>Longford County Council fully commits to Climate Action Training for all staff and elected representatives.</p> <p><i>Adaptation and Mitigation</i></p>	<p>Climate Action training for staff stalled in 2024 after the successful roll out of training in 2022 and 2023. 15 Councillors (84%) of the elected members and 19 senior staff members attended the "Championing Leadership" training in 2022.</p> <p>The Raising Awareness module was completed by 220 (67%) of all staff by the end of 2024.</p> <p>New CARO training is scheduled to commence in 2025.</p> <p>Longford County Council rolled out the "Powering Change" programme to all staff in Q4 2024 which is focused on energy conservation.</p>

6	<p>Longford County Council is fully committed to the inclusion of all employees in climate action initiatives.</p> <p><i>Adaptation and Mitigation</i></p>	<p>From 2024 new employees are now required to undertake the climate action "Raising Awareness" module as part of their induction.</p>
7	<p>Longford County Council will ensure that climate action policy is translated into all functional plans, strategies, and projects throughout Longford County Council.</p> <p><i>Adaptation and Mitigation</i></p>	<p>All plans produced by Longford County Council are now climate proofed.</p> <p>In 2024 the new corporate plan and the climate action plan are prime examples.</p> <p>Climate Action features strongly in the 2021-2027 County Development Plan.</p>
8	<p>Longford County Council commits to implementation, monitoring and progress reporting on its climate actions.</p> <p><i>Adaptation and Mitigation</i></p>	<p>Currently Longford County Council reports on climate action KPIs to the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA) and also reports annually to SEAI on energy usage and carbon emissions.</p> <p>This report is the first annual review of progress in climate action since the adoption of the Climate Action Plan in February 2024.</p>

9	<p>Longford County Council will lead by example.</p> <p><i>Adaptation and Mitigation</i></p>	<p>Longford County Council is engaged in Climate Action through all of its services. Most notably through the Housing Retrofit Programme, Active Travel, Public Lighting Upgrade and the Pathfinder decarbonisation programme.</p> <p>In addition, the Council administers several community grants programmes which have climate action requirements. More details on all these activities are given later in this report.</p> <p>During 2024 the Climate Action Team conducted extensive outreach programme with communities and the business agricultural sectors on the importance of climate action. Most details of these engagements is given further In this document.</p>
10	<p>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.</p> <p><i>Adaptation</i></p>	<p>Longford County Council's Major Emergency Plan, Severe Weather Plan and the Flood Response Plan are climate proofed. The Plans are regularly updated when new information is presented. There is regular training all for emergency services staff. In addition, in 2024 training on major incident management was provided to council staff responsible for control of operations, information management and Media liaison.</p>
11	<p>Longford County Council will promote smarter working practices through remote working and use of technology.</p> <p><i>Adaptation and Mitigation</i></p>	<p>MS Teams has been rolled out across Longford County Council. This facilitates remote working and also cuts down on the number of in person meetings required by many of the Council's undertakings.</p> <p>Blended working is available to staff with a maximum of 2 days per week remote working allowed. In 2024 176 members of staff are approved for blended working though few avail of the maximum allowed.</p> <p>Hot desking or carpooling were not pursued in 2024.</p>

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>		
12	Longford County Council will incorporate climate action initiatives into all future urban regeneration projects.	<p>"Longford 2040 - a Town Centre First Strategy" was developed in 2024. Longford 2040 envisions "A sustainable town that prioritises climate change adaptation and the regeneration of public spaces and town centre living". Climate change considerations are deeply embedded in the strategy.</p> <p>Similar Plans for Granard and Ballymahon are being developed.</p>
	<i>Adaptation and Mitigation</i>	

13	<p>Longford County Council will positively promote active travel and sustainable smart mobility, increase, and improve Local Link travel.</p> <p><i>Mitigation</i></p>	<p>Longford County Council completed the cycleways on the Ballinalee Road in Longford and at Ennybegs in 2024. Work continued on the Battery Road, Longford and commenced on stretch between Market Street and Barrack Lane in Granard. Planning for cycle lanes on the Athlone Road, Longford was advanced in 2024.</p> <p>Other measures to promote active travel included "Cycle Week" which took place from May 11th to 19th.</p>
14	<p>Longford County Council will actively work to protect built heritage.</p> <p><i>Adaptation</i></p>	<p>In 2024 €104,197 was approved from the Community Monument Fund for three preservation projects at Clondra, Abbeylara Cistercian Abbey and Abbeyshrule Abbey. Funding was also approved for work at Saint's Island but this project has yet to commence. A total of €35,000 was approved under the Historic Structures Fund for Creevaghmore House and Oldtown House. Built Heritage Grants totalling €103,000 were approved for 12 projects in 2024. All of the above projects are aimed as preserving the built heritage and making the structures resilient in the face of climate change.</p>
15	<p>Longford County Council will energy retrofit its social housing and construct new houses to a</p>	<p>In 2024 Longford County Council completed 82 new housing units to A standard and the retrofit programme completed 39 houses.</p>

	<p>Building Energy Rating (BER) A standard.</p> <p><i>Mitigation</i></p>	
16	<p>Longford County Council will provide EV charging infrastructure at its offices and libraries and will facilitate its installation around the County.</p> <p><i>Mitigation</i></p>	<p>Longford County Council joined with counties Laois, Offaly, Westmeath and Roscommon to develop an EV charging strategy in 2024. The development of the strategy is being supported by ZEVl. It is anticipated that the strategy will be complete by Q2 2025.</p> <p>Longford County Council entered into agreement with Eir and Easy Go to install 50kw chargers in the main towns within the County. By the end of 2024 this project has completed charging stations in Granard, Ballymahon, Lanesborough and Longford. Longford County Council had previously facilitated the installation of a 50kw charger in Edgeworthstown. In addition the Housing Section also installed 4 no. 50kw chargers at their new housing development on Connaught Road, Longford. There are now 17 no. 50kw and 4 no. 22kw chargers provided by Longford County Council in the County . Private providers have installed a further 4 no. 50kw and 10 no. 22kw public access chargers as of the end of 2024.</p>

17	<p>Longford County Council, through the planning process will condition the provision of EV charging infrastructure in all large scale and domestic developments.</p> <p><i>Mitigation</i></p>	<p>Longford County Council conditioned compliance with the building regulations in relation to near zero energy building and the provision of ducting and cabling for EV charging on all commercial and housing developments that were granted planning permission in 2024. In total, 85 domestic dwellings were granted full planning permission in 2024.</p> <p>In addition to granting permission Longford Council has building regulations inspection programme and also undertakes planning enforcement where granted conditions are not complied with.</p>
18	<p>Longford County Council will improve urban drainage maintenance to prevent flooding and where applicable, nature based solutions will be used.</p> <p><i>Adaptation</i></p>	<p>In 2024 Longford County Council continued its channel cleaning programme with work on the Camlin River immediately west of Longford Town. It also agreed to participate with Uisce Eireann in developing an integrated surface water management plan for Longford Town.</p>
19	<p>Longford County Council will develop a programme for the protection of critical infrastructure.</p> <p><i>Adaptation</i></p>	<p>Longford County Council has surveyed over 400 road bridges in the County. They range from large culverts to 9 arch masonry bridges. An annual remediation programme is in place to repair and maintain the bridges. In 2024 six bridges were repaired for a total cost of €433,350. An allocation of €463,000 have been made to continue the work in 2025.</p>

20	<p>Longford County Council will actively collaborate with state infrastructure providers in preparation for climate change impacts on national strategic infrastructure in the County.</p> <p><i>Adaptation</i></p>	<p>In conjunction with TII, Longford County Council completed the overlay of the N55 from Carrickboy to Crossea. It also agreed to work with Uisce Eireann on a Integrated Surface Water management programme in Longford Town. This work is scheduled to commence in 2025.</p>
21	<p>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.</p> <p><i>Adaptation</i></p>	<p>As a matter of policy Longford Council integrates climate considerations in all infrastructural projects currently underway or being planned.</p>
22	<p>Longford County Council will actively identify roads and streets suitable for road space reallocation.</p> <p><i>Mitigation</i></p>	<p>"Longford 2040 - a Town Centre First Strategy" was developed in 2024 which identifies cycleway and pedestrian extensions to link the existing schemes. The proposed extensions include Lower Battery Road & Church Street, Bridge St to Earl St, Demense Lane and Lisbrack Road. In addition there are plans for improving civic spaces in the town and public transport.</p>

23	<p>Longford County Council will increase and invest in climate action measures to make the Dog Control Service more sustainable.</p> <p><i>Mitigation</i></p>	<p>In 2024 Longford County Council purchased an electric van for the dog warden and installed an EV charger at the dog pound.</p> <p>Energy efficiency upgrade works for the dog pound are planned for 2025</p>
24	<p>Longford County Council will further invest in the upgrade of all public lighting to be energy efficient and smart.</p> <p><i>Mitigation</i></p>	<p>In 2024 Longford County Council upgraded 296 lights which leads to an estimated saving of 89,000 kwh per year.</p> <p>The cost of the upgrade programme in 2024 was €80,435 and the estimated payback period is 5.5 years.</p> <p>Longford has a total of 6,019 public lights. 82% are now energy efficient LEDs.</p>
25	<p>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.</p> <p><i>Mitigation</i></p>	<p>In 2024 in depth analysis of fuel usage was undertaken by Longford County Council. This has led to more detailed usage reports for line managers which are essential for the fleet review that is currently underway. The review intends to identify savings through work practise changes and rationalisation.</p> <p>Plans for 2025 include a HVO trial for some of the heavy vehicles. This should lead to significant GHG emissions reductions and if successful will be rolled out to all heavy vehicles.</p> <p>There are also plans to increase the Council's electric fleet in 2025 with the addition of 2 new EV vans for Community Wardens.</p> <p>No driver training programme commenced in 2024.</p>

26	<p>Longford County Council will increase energy efficiency of council buildings.</p> <p><i>Mitigation</i></p>	<p>Longford County Council remains on target to hit its obligation to reduce its energy usage by 50% by 2030. This is reflected in SEAI's Measurement and Review annual report.</p> <p>Energy Improvements in Council buildings are ongoing with continuing upgrades to internal lighting, internal awareness programmes and continuous internal energy usage monitoring and reporting using Energy Elephant and telematics on the Council's fleet.</p> <p>The Council tendered out for a detailed designer to undertake energy retrofit works for Aras an Chontae and Camlin Court Office Block. This work is being funded by SEAI's Pathfinder programme.</p> <p>One notable project in 2024 outside the Pathfinder programme was the window repairs undertaken in the Library Head Quarters office. 28 no. tilt and turn windows were repaired which greatly increased air tightness in the building which resulted in a significant reduction in energy usage.</p>
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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 <i>Action Type</i>	
27	<p>Longford County Council will pro-actively promote, protect, and preserve our Natural Heritage and Biodiversity.</p> <p><i>Adaptation and Mitigation</i></p>
	<p>Longford County Council appointed a Biodiversity Officer at the end of 2023. A Biodiversity working group consisting of representatives from Longford County Council elected members, LAWPRO, NPWS, Hedgerows Ireland, Coillte, Teagasc, and Bord na Mona, and Swift Conservation Ireland was set up in early 2024</p> <p>The first meeting of the Biodiversity Working Group was held on the 15th of May and 3 subsequent meetings were held to discuss the development of the biodiversity action plan. 5 main aims for the biodiversity action plan were agreed. These are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conserve, protect, and enhance biodiversity and habitats in Co. Longford 2. Enhance knowledge base on habitats and species present in Longford. 3. Positively promote biodiversity in plans, and strategies for the county. 4. Develop training and monitoring programmes to help track and protect biodiversity in the county. 5. Promote biodiversity awareness and engagement in Co. Longford. <p>The group has contributed to the drafting of the Biodiversity Action Plan will be completed by Q2 2025.</p> <p>Longford County Council continued with its annual invasive Species eradication programme: Work continues on treating 295 stands of Japanese Knotweed on national, regional and local</p>

		<p>road verges. 2024 was year 2 of a four year contract with Knotweed Ireland Services Ltd. Funding for the national roads is being provided by TII and the remainder from Longford County Council. Expenditure in 2024 was € 39,900.</p> <p>Local Biodiversity Action Fund: 10 Biodiversity Projects to the value of €84,705 were completed in 2024 which were 85% funded by the Heritage Council. Details of the projects are outlined elsewhere in the report.</p>
28	<p>Longford County Council will actively promote green landscaping and nature-based solutions to adapt to the effects of climate change.</p> <p><i>Adaptation</i></p>	<p>Longford County Council organised 6 training sessions with Teagasc and landowners on proper hedgelaying in late November, 70 farmers participated.</p> <p>Climate Action in conjunction with LCRL planted 300 trees on the green area in the Alderfield Housing Development, Longford. This is a local authority estate. The planting was done by the community with assistance from Longford County Council.</p>
29	<p>Longford County Council will continue to ensure the promotion of the transition from solid fuel heating to climate friendly alternatives.</p> <p><i>Mitigation</i></p>	<p>Longford County Council hosted the Mount Lucas Energy Roadshow from the 25th-29th November 2024 in the old barracks site in Longford Town. The Roadshow highlighted the many ways to insulate and heat you home in an environmentally friendly way. It also included a number of workshops on the practicalities of retrofitting. Over 300 people visited the roadshow.</p> <p>Longford County Council has an environmental inspection programme of fuel retailers to ensure that only smokeless fuels are sold. 10 retailers were inspected in 2024 and fuel samples were taken from 2 premises for analysis. In addition Longford County Council assists the EPA with its' air quality monitoring station on the Dublin Road in Longford Town.</p> <p>The Council also continued with its own housing retrofit programme in 2024. See Action 15.</p>

30	<p>Longford County Council will engage, support, and collaborate with the National Parks and Wildlife Service in the review of biodiversity and habitat conservation strategies.</p> <p><i>Adaptation and Mitigation</i></p>	<p>Longford County Council opened regular communications with NPWS in 2024 on biodiversity matters.</p> <p>With support from NPWS, Longford Council commissioned an Invasive Species baseline survey, a Barn Owl survey and a woodland bats survey for the county in 2024.</p>
31	<p>Longford County Council will actively work with its Partners to achieve the objectives of the River Basin Management Programme.</p> <p><i>Adaptation and Mitigation</i></p>	<p>In conjunction with the EPA, Longford County Council took part in the 2024 River Monitoring Programme taking 56 water samples from rivers and lakes in the County. This work forms the basis for the EPA's annual report on river quality across the nation.</p> <p>Longford County Council also monitors 16 private water supplies monitored and 2 private group water schemes for drinking water quality.</p> <p>In 2024 Longford County Council conducted 22 farm inspections and 10 Domestic Waste Water Treatment Plant inspections - all part of the Council's programme to maintain and improve water quality in the rivers and streams in County Longford.</p>

32	<p>Longford County Council will continue planned river channel maintenance and flood alleviation measures.</p> <p><i>Adaptation</i></p>	<p>In 2024 Longford County Council undertook channel cleaning on the River Camlin, just West of Longford Town. It also agreed to participate with Uisce Eireann on an integrated surface water management plan for Longford town.</p>
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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 <i>Action Type</i>	
33	<p>Longford County Council will continue to actively engage, listen to, and collaborate with citizens and key stakeholders on climate actions.</p> <p><i>Adaptation and Mitigation</i></p>
	<p>In 2024 Climate Action took part in engagement activities. Major events are listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sustainable Energy Communities : Climate Action has engaged with 4 no. Sustainable Energy Communities (Drumlish, Granard, Longford and Lanesborough on the development of Energy Master Plans. ▪ Dreamspace: Climate Action has a stand highlighting the Climate Action Biodiversity to primary school children and teachers. ▪ Longford Community Safety and Welbeing expo: ▪ Longford Show ▪ Tidy Towns event in Edgeworthstown ▪ Signpost Programme with Teagasc. On the 2nd of October Longford County Council in partnership with Teagasc presented on Climate Action and Environmental issues at a farm walk/talk in Lanesborough. ▪ Heritage Week The Biodiversity Officer participated in a number of events around the County during Heritage Week: ▪ Mammal walk & talk Derrycassin. ▪ Bat walk& talk Newcastle.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Library Talk in Lanesborough ▪ Biodiversity Week – The Biodiversity Officer participated in a number of events around the County during Biodiversity Week: ▪ Hedgerow walk & talk. ▪ Barn Owl Talk. ▪ 4 No. Library biodiversity talks (x4). ▪ Bog talk in Corlea which can be viewed at https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1882644132202050 ▪ Longford Community and sports clubs engagement through Community Climate Action Fund. ▪ Pathways to Funding workshops: The Community Climate Action Officer participated in these workshops in each Municipal District library as part of the public engagement for Community Climate Action Fund ▪ The Community Climate Action Officer presented to each Municipal District on the Community Climate Action Fund. ▪ Hedgerow maintenance training: The Biodiversity Officer organised hedgerow maintenance training with Teagasc and Hedgerows Ireland on the 7th, 8th, and 14th of November. ▪ The Biodiversity Officer gave talks to Active Retirement Longford on the 8th May and Active Age Newtownforbes 12th September. ▪ The Biodiversity Officer participated in children’s workshops in the libraries on the 15th and 16th of July. ▪ Post Primary Tech Awards 11/12/2024: Climate Action assisted in the adjudication and presented and prize for the best project with strong Climate Action/Environment elements.
34	Longford County Council will strongly engage and support community climate action initiatives.	<p>Longford County Council approved 14 projects under the Community Climate Action Fund. 4 of the projects were completed by the end of 2024. The remainder have until the end of 2025 to complete.</p> <p>The value of the approved projects totalled €328,000.</p>

	<p><i>Adaption and Mitigation</i></p>	<p>Green Clubs programme in County Longford did not progress in 2024. Appointment by the GAA of a Green Clubs coordinator is expected in early 2025</p> <p>Our Shared Plate: The Community Climate Action Officer supported a pilot project involving 3 community groups in Longford and same for both Kildare and Laois. Groups included are, Killoe Mens Shed, Old Ardnacassa Community Group and Longford Womens Link. Our Shared Plate is a community based project that unites people and neighbourhoods in a shared commitment to build a greener more resilient future through growing, cooking and eating together. Projects/Workshops completed to date include bread making, willow weaving, building raised beds and veg growing, composting workshop and garden planning for polytunnels. Project is ongoing for 18 months and is run by Neighbourhood Networks with funding coming from Pobal. The idea is that a 'toolkit' will be created from the experiences, which will assist in replication nationally.</p> <p>In 2024 the Community Climate Officer presented at "Pathways to Funding" workshops in each of the Municipal Districts. The workshops outlined funding streams available to communities such as the Community Climate Action Fund.</p> <p>Climate Action in conjunction with LCRL planted 300 trees on the green area in the Alderfield Housing Development, Longford. This is a local authority estate. The planting was done by the community with assistance from Longford County Council.</p> <p>More urban trees were planted in conjunction with the Active Travel section at Alderfield and Newtownforbes. These trees were planted in lieu of trees removed during the construction of cycleways on the Ballinalee Road, Longford.</p>
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35	<p>Longford County Council will work towards a just transition for all by greening the economy in a fair and inclusive way.</p> <p><i>Adaptation</i></p>	<p>The Enterprise Section of Longford County Council administered the Green for Business grant scheme, helping over 20 businesses in 2024 to identify measures to reduce emissions and energy usage. €60,000 of grants were subsequently approved under the Energy Efficiency Grant Scheme. This programme continues in 2025.</p>
36	<p>Longford County Council will support Sustainable Energy Communities (SECs).</p> <p><i>Mitigation</i></p>	<p>Longford County Council signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with SEAI whereby the Council agreed to support Sustainable Energy Communities through bridging finance for the development of their Energy Master Plans. Longford County Council had already provided support to the Granard and Ballinamuck/Drumlisk SECs. The MOU formalises the mechanism for providing the support. In 2024 Longford County Council agreed to support newly formed SECs in Lanesborough and Longford.</p>

37	<p>Longford County Council will seek solutions to energy poverty.</p> <p><i>Mitigation</i></p>	<p>Longford County Council completed 39 housing retrofits in 2024. This ongoing programme seeks to reduce energy costs and ghg emissions from local authority houses. In addition, all new houses purchased by Longford County Council are constructed to a BER A standard. In 2024 Longford County Council added 82 new housing units to its stock of 2200 social housing units.</p>
38	<p>Longford County Council will play an active role in supporting and seeking opportunities to promote climate action through the Arts, Culture and Creativity.</p> <p><i>Adaption and Mitigation</i></p>	<p>The County Longford Arts Strategy 2023-2028 goal 2.1 states that "Longford Arts Services will work with all statutory bodies to implement current climate action and carbon mitigation legislation relevant to the arts in County Longford. "</p> <p>The largest festival promoted by the Longford County Council in 2024 was the Longford Lights Festival which took place from 23/02/2024 to 25/02/2024. 80% of artwork was local and great efforts were made to ensure that sustainable materials were used. For example, the lanterns were made from recyclable materials and are reusable. The 2024 festival reduced the number of diesel generators required from 5 to 1 and plans to investigate the use of renewable fuels in future.</p> <p>In general, the Arts and Culture sector in County Longford is moving towards using sustainable materials and is moving away from plastic and other fossil fuel derived materials.</p>
39	<p>Longford County Council will align its climate actions with the Local Economic and Community Plan.</p> <p><i>Mitigation</i></p>	<p>Longford's Local Economic and Community Plan 2023-2029 was adopted by Longford County Council on the 13/12/2023. The Plan is climate proofed with a strong emphasis on supporting increased resilience and sustainability. Goal 6 states " A sustainable County with a growing Green Economy, fostering climate action and building on Longford's strengths and resources."</p> <p>The Plan became operational in 2024 and will have it's first progress report at the end of 2026. Grants were awarded in 2024 under the CLÁR Programme, with funding from the Department of Rural and Community Development and Longford Co. Council to support communities to carry out energy efficient improvements to their community centres.</p>

40	<p>Longford County Council will support remote working hubs.</p> <p><i>Mitigation</i></p>	<p>Longford County Council continued to support the 8 remote working hubs in 2024.</p>
41	<p>Longford County Council will identify communities vulnerable to climate change risks as part of its major emergency planning.</p> <p><i>Adaptation</i></p>	<p>Longford County Council's Major Emergency Plan, Severe Weather Plan and the Flood Response Plan are climate proofed, taking vulnerable communities into account. The Plans are regularly updated when new information is presented. There is regular training all for emergency services staff. In addition, in 2024 training on major incident management was provided to council staff responsible for control of operations, information management and Media liaison.</p>
42	<p>Longford County Council will support local businesses with climate projects and initiatives.</p> <p><i>Adaption and Mitigation</i></p>	<p>Longford County Council supported 20 local businesses with "Green for Business" assistance in 2024. This scheme provides professional assistance to businesses seeking to improve energy efficiency and resilience.</p> <p>Longford County Council also approved €60,000 in energy efficiency grants to businesses that had used "Green for Business" to identify energy efficiency measures.</p>

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>	<p>In 2024 Longford County Council Enterprise Team made a successful application under the Just Transition Fund to develop a Circular Economy Centre of Excellence in Longford town. This project is scheduled to progress in 2025</p>
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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 <i>Action Type</i>		
44	<p>Longford County Council will develop, implement, and promote a green procurement policy.</p> <p><i>Mitigation</i></p>	<p>Longford County Council is increasingly introducing green criteria to its procurement competitions.</p>
45	<p>Longford County Council will improve its management of its own waste streams.</p> <p><i>Mitigation</i></p>	<p>In June 2024 the Climate Action Team produced a report on all the waste streams being used by the Council. The report establishes a baseline from which progress can be measured with respect to waste reduction and recycling.</p> <p>As part of the "Powering Change" programme, a major drive on recycling within Council Offices has been initiated. Regular recording of waste origin, tonnages and recycling rates has commenced in 2024 so that progress can be tracked.</p> <p>Longford County Council continues to facilitate glass recycling by the general public with the provision of 23 bring banks around the county. In 2024 approximately 756 tonnes of glass was recycled.</p>

		<p>In 2024 the council installed bring banks accessible to all at the Tesco bring bank in Longford.</p> <p>This is an ongoing project and progress will be tracked annually.</p>
46	<p>Longford County Council will promote the circular economy.</p> <p><i>Mitigation</i></p>	<p>Longford County Council has issued waste permits for the following recycling enterprises: Cirtex - recycles mattresses and furniture Mimergy - recycles tyres Emplast - recycles plastics such as election posters Mulleadys - provides a civic amenity site in Longford Town.</p> <p>Longford County Council also operates 23 bring banks and which recycled 750 tonnes of glass in 2024</p> <p>Longford County Council has issued grants under the Community Climate Action Fund promoting the Circular Economy. For example the EDI centre installed a commercial sized composter at their catering training facility in Mastertech Business Park, Longford.</p> <p>Longford County Council supported 20 businesses in 2024 with the Green for Business programme. This programme helps businesses to identify energy and emissions savings. Over €60,000 of energy efficiency grants were subsequently approved.</p> <p>Longford County Council has an annual programme of inspections relating to packaging. Significant packaging producers are obligated to contribute to producer schemes to fund recycling - for example REPAK.</p>
47	<p>Longford County Council will increase the resilience of its information technology.</p> <p><i>Adaptation</i></p>	<p>As part of its programme to increase the resilience of the Council's information technology so that it can withstand events such as severe weather, the IT section migrated the Council's telephone system to the Cloud in 2024. This change also enabled better connectivity for remote workers.</p>

48	<p>Longford County Council will investigate onsite renewable energy projects.</p> <p><i>Mitigation</i></p>	<p>There were no new renewable energy projects undertaken by Longford County Council in 2024.</p>
49	<p>Longford County Council, through the Planning process will condition compliance with the Building Regulations and other climate related government regulations and policies.</p> <p><i>Adaptation and Mitigation</i></p>	<p>Longford County Council conditioned compliance with the building regulations in relation to near zero energy building and the provision of ducting and cabling for EV charging on all commercial and housing developments that were granted planning permission in 2024. In total, 85 domestic dwellings were granted full planning permission in 2024.</p> <p>In addition to granting permission Longford Council has building regulations inspection programme and also undertakes planning enforcement where granted conditions are not complied with.</p>

50	<p>Longford County Council will stipulate sustainable urban storm water drainage systems (SUDS) for new developments.</p> <p><i>Adaptation</i></p>	<p>Longford County Council continued to stipulate SUDS on all new developments in 2024.</p>
51	<p>Longford County Council will investigate clean energy production developments e.g., anaerobic digestion.</p> <p><i>Mitigation</i></p>	<p>In 2023, with the assistance of Just Transition Funding, Longford County Council commissioned a feasibility study on the development of anaerobic digestion and associated circular economic activities. The final report was issued by KPMG in February 2023. In 2024 Longford County Council commenced a search for interested partners in an AD project.</p>
52	<p>Longford County Council will regulate and support the safe production of sustainable local food of animal origin.</p> <p><i>Mitigation</i></p>	<p>Longford County Council's responsibility in regulation of sustainable local food production of animal origin transferred to the FSAI in 2024.</p>

53	<p>Longford County Council will support and collaborate on local/regional based research and development projects that explore alternative renewable technologies.</p> <p><i>Mitigation</i></p>	<p>Longford County Council commissioned a feasibility study on Anaerobic Digestion and is seeking partners to advance the project.</p>
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