

Longford Town Decarbonisation Zone (DZ)

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Longford County Council
Climate Officer - Gary Brady



Rialtas na hÉireann
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Foreword

We are delighted to introduce the Longford County Council Decarbonisation Zone (DZ) initiative, an important milestone in our county's journey towards a more sustainable, resilient, and climate-conscious future.

Climate change presents one of the greatest challenges of our time, requiring coordinated action at international, national, and local levels. As the level of government closest to our communities, Longford County Council has a vital role to play in leading and supporting the transition to a low-carbon society. The establishment of our Decarbonisation Zone demonstrates our commitment to turning ambition into action and delivering meaningful change on the ground.

The Decarbonisation Zone will serve as a focal point for innovation, collaboration, and community engagement, showcasing practical measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions while enhancing the quality of life for those who live, work, and visit the area. Through targeted actions in energy efficiency, sustainable transport, renewable energy, the built environment, biodiversity enhancement, and community participation, we aim to demonstrate how local action can contribute significantly to national climate objectives.

This initiative reflects the strong partnership approach that is central to climate action. Success will depend on the collective efforts of residents, businesses, community groups, public bodies, educational institutions, and other stakeholders working together towards shared goals. By fostering collaboration and embracing innovation, we can create a model for sustainable development that delivers environmental, social, and economic benefits for current and future generations.

Longford County Council is committed to leading by example, and the Decarbonisation Zone provides an opportunity to showcase best practice, test new approaches, and inspire wider climate action across the county. While the challenges ahead are significant, they also present opportunities to build stronger communities, improve energy security, support green enterprise, and create a healthier environment for all.

We encourage everyone to engage with and support the Decarbonisation Zone as we take this important step towards achieving our climate ambitions.



**Chief Executive
Samantha Healy**



**Cathaoirleach
Gerry Hagan**

1. Introduction

Longford County Council has designated Longford Town as its Decarbonisation Zone (DZ) to deliver climate mitigation, adaptation and biodiversity measures.

The vision for Longford Town is:

"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."

Longford Town was selected because of its socioeconomic and environmental characteristics, making it an ideal location to pilot climate actions that can later be replicated across County Longford. The DZ provides a community-focused testbed for implementing practical, scalable and collaborative approaches to achieving national climate targets.

In 2018, Longford Towns baseline emissions were estimated at 89,503 tCO₂e, representing approximately 10% of County Longford's total emissions. Based on the 2022 Census population of 10,952, this equates to 8.6 tCO₂e per person, significantly lower than the county average of 19 tCO₂e due to the absence of agricultural emissions within the urban area.

Longford County Council is delivering a broad range of actions under its Climate Action Plan 2024-2029, including energy-efficient housing, housing retrofits, public lighting upgrades, active travel infrastructure, community climate action supports, EV charging infrastructure, business sustainability programmes and climate-focused arts initiatives.

Section 6.3 of the Climate Action Plan emphasises partnership working across government bodies, businesses, communities and public utilities to accelerate the delivery of climate actions within the DZ.

2. Baseline Emissions Inventory (BEI)

The BEI establishes a snapshot of carbon emissions within the DZ area, allowing for effective planning and monitoring of emission reduction strategies.

The BEI for Longford Town follows a Tier 3, bottom up, spatially led methodology, with 2018 as the baseline year.

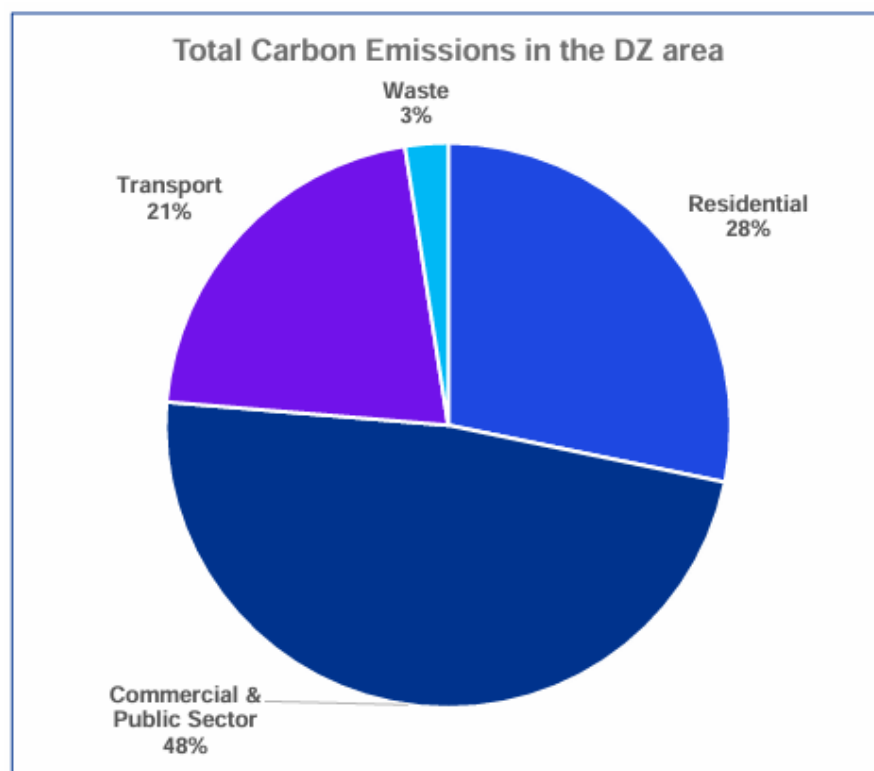
Sector	Carbon Emissions (tCO ₂ e)
Residential	25,322
Commercial and Public Sector	43,000
Transport	18,986
Waste	2,195
Total Carbon emissions per capita	8.6

The DZ accounts for approximately 10% of County Longford's total carbon emissions highlighting its significance as a climate action testbed.

Longford Tidy Towns formed a Sustainable Energy Community (SEC) in 2024. With support from SEAI and Longford County Council it engaged Climate 23 to develop an energy master plan for Longford Town DZ.

An Energy Master Plan serves as a roadmap that enables the SEC to understand its current energy consumption, identify carbon-saving opportunities, and plan community-led energy projects.

The final plan is expected to be published in Q4, 2026.



3. Strategic Objectives

The DZ seeks to support national climate targets through the delivery of energy efficiency measures, sustainable transport initiatives and low-carbon development.

Key objectives are to:

- Reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions across the residential, commercial and transport sectors.
- Increase community participation in climate action.
- Demonstrate practical solutions that can be replicated throughout County Longford.

4. Key DZ Actions and Initiatives

4.1 Residential Sector

New Builds

Longford County Council has reaffirmed its commitment to delivering high-quality, energy-efficient social housing, with a strong focus on achieving A-rated standards. By prioritising sustainable design, superior insulation and renewable energy technologies, the Council aims to reduce household energy costs while lowering carbon emissions.

This approach not only supports Ireland's climate action goals but also ensures that residents benefit from warm, comfortable and affordable homes built to the highest modern standards. Some of the developments undertaken over the past few years include Ard Michael development of 68 no. housing units, Alderfield Estate 24 no. housing units and Connaught Road 42 no. housing units all to BER A2 standard. The development at Ard Michael also includes 25 no. affordable housing units.



New A rated social housing at Alderfield, Longford Town.



Affordable Housing Units at Ard Michael, Longford Town.

Retrofits

Longford County Council has allocated €3.3 million to retrofit social housing stock through targeted upgrades including insulation, high-performance windows and doors, improved heating systems and renewable energy technologies. These measures improve energy performance, lower household energy costs, reduce carbon emissions and create warmer, healthier homes. To date, 55 no. social housing units within the DZ have been upgraded to BER B2 standard.



Housing Retrofit at Athlone Road, Longford Town.

4.2 Regeneration & Active Travel

Overview

Over the last 5 years Longford County Council has achieved major milestones in regeneration and the expansion of the DZ's cycling and walking network. Significant progress was made in heritage-led redevelopment, delivery of inclusive community amenities, enhancement of public realm infrastructure and intensification of efforts to tackle vacancy and dereliction. These initiatives were strongly supported by national funding streams and policy frameworks.

Connolly Barracks Reimagined

Longford County Council secured €7 million under THRIVE Strand 2 to transform the historic Sean Connolly Barracks into a flagship cultural, creative and community hub. The project will deliver a county museum, creative studios, café, performance and training spaces and improved public realm, addressing long-identified deficits in tourism infrastructure including the absence of a museum, conference facilities and training suites.



Architects design for Connolly Barracks Reimagined

"Sunflower" Special Needs Playground

A major achievement in inclusive community infrastructure was the opening of the "Sunflower" Playground in Longford Town. Designed for children with additional needs, it features sensory equipment, accessible swings and a safe cycling loop. The project was funded through the Town and Village Renewal Scheme (€379,000) with additional Council support. The playground is integrated with a new parkland trail linked to the Royal Canal Greenway, enhancing accessibility to local biodiversity and family recreation in the town centre.

Battery Road Cycle & Pedestrian Scheme

June 2025 marked the official opening of the €3.5 million Battery Road Active Travel Scheme, a 1.3 km segregated pedestrian-cycle route connecting Longford Town to the N4 Axis Centre. Delivered under the national Pathfinder Programme, the scheme includes Ireland's first coloured cast-in-situ separator kerbs, signalised junction upgrades, and comprehensive traffic calming. It was praised nationally as a blueprint for rural sustainable transport and is already improving safety and accessibility for schoolchildren, commuters and residents.



Official Opening of Battery Road Cycling and Pedestrian Scheme, Longford Town.

N63 Ballinalee Road Cycling & Pedestrian Scheme

The project on the N63 Ballinalee Road in Longford Town improves pedestrian and cycle links for St Emer's National School, St Mel's College, and Templemichael College and the three large residential housing estates of Ardnacassa, College Park and Ard Michael. It also links up with some of Longford's largest employers.

This project is one of four 'Pathfinder' schemes that establish a radial cycling network along three main approach roads into Longford Town. This section joins up with the previously completed Major Well's Road scheme.

The project was funded through the Active Travel programme and the NTA to a total of €1.8 million and included 1800m of new cycle track, 1850m of new footpath and 87 no. trees.



Opening of the new walking and cycle lanes on the Ballinalee Road, Longford Town.

Works were completed on a new shared path linking from Clonbalt Woods to Aghaduignan along the R198 in Longford Town. These works were funded through Active Travel and delivered in conjunction with Longford County Council's Mid Area Municipal District. The new path which is over half a kilometre in length provides a shared facility for both cyclists and pedestrians. The new widened 3 metre path also has a traffic calming effect with the carriageway width being reduced.

Aghafad Pedestrian & Cycle Link

Construction began in late 2025 on the Aghafad pedestrian-cycle link connecting the industrial estate at Aghafad, Slasher's GAA grounds and the Royal Canal Greenway. The project includes drainage upgrades, watermain replacement, boundary improvements and new public lighting. It is funded by the NTA through the Active Travel Programme and scheduled for completion in 2026.

Footpath connection Farnagh Hill

A missing link in Longford Town's walking network was resolved through the completion of a footpath at Farnagh Hill, enabled through cooperation with private landowners. The project delivers safe and continuous access to schools, shops and town centre services.

These active travel projects improve connectivity, safety and accessibility throughout Longford Town, supporting a shift from private car use to walking and cycling while delivering environmental and health benefits.

4.3 Electric Vehicle Infrastructure

Over the past two years, a comprehensive network of publicly accessible electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure has been delivered across Longford town to support the transition to low-emission transport. This includes the installation of 4 no. 75 kW rapid chargers at Longford Library, 2 no. 50 kW chargers at Ballymahon Street Carpark, 4 no. 50 kW chargers at the Connaught Road housing development, and 2 no. 11 kW chargers at Longford County Council offices on Great Water Street, improving access for residents, visitors, and staff.

In parallel, significant commercial investment has further strengthened provision, with 2 no. 50 kW chargers at the Texaco filling station on Dublin Road, 2 no. 50 kW chargers at LIDL Longford, 2 no. 22 kW chargers on Church Street, 2 no. 22 kW chargers at Market Square, 2 no. 22 kW chargers at Longford Train Station, and a high-capacity charging hub at Longford Axis Centre comprising 4 no. 200 kW chargers and 12 no. 150 kW chargers. Collectively, these installations ensure a mix of standard, fast and ultra-rapid charging options in key town-centre, residential, transport and commercial locations, supporting wider EV uptake and Longford's climate and sustainability objectives.



New 75KW Electric Vehicle Charging Points installed at the Public Library in Longford Town.

4.4 Public Sector Initiatives

Public Lighting Upgrades

Public lighting in Longford Town accounts for 46% of the total public lighting in County Longford. The transition to energy-efficient LED lighting is 84% complete. Since the Climate Plans inception in 2024 Longford County Council has saved on average 12,000 kWh of electricity in Longford Town alone from the retrofitting programme. Public lighting accounts for 24% of Longford County Council's energy usage and 26% of its GHG emissions. This 84% upgrade is a major factor in the council's energy and GHG reductions to date.



Public lighting being upgraded at Gleann Riada, Longford Town.

Longford County Council DZ Organisational Energy Management

Longford's Decarbonisation Zone (DZ) covers a diverse portfolio of energy users, including four principal office buildings, Longford Library, Fire Station, Leisure Centre, community houses, depots and other metered sites. Together, these represent Longford County Councils core sources of building-related energy demand within the DZ, alongside a municipal vehicle fleet operating in the town.

In 2024, total building energy consumption across the DZ amounted to 2.56 GWh, supplied through a mix of renewable and conventional sources. Carbon-neutral wood chip fuel at the Mall Leisure Centre was the single largest contributor, accounting for 49% of total energy use. Electricity represented 31%, while fossil fuel-based heating fuels (kerosene, LPG and gas oil) made up the remaining 20%. Total emissions from electricity and thermal energy use were approximately 296 tCO₂e.

Fleet activity was also a significant emissions source, with 98,459 litres of fuel consumed by 33 vehicles, including vans, pickups and HGVs (three of which are electric). Fleet-related emissions in 2024 were estimated at 264 tCO₂e.

In 2025, the councils electricity and heating demand increased by 9.1% to 2.79 GWh. Electricity use rose by 7.2%, alongside increases in kerosene and wood chip consumption, while substantial reductions were achieved in gas oil (–70%) and LPG (–4.8%), indicating a shift away from higher-carbon fuels. Some of the apparent increase in electricity demand reflected correction of historical metering issues in 2024 and 2025, as well as tighter meter-reading practices and an expansion in the number of active energy users within the DZ. Despite higher overall consumption, total building-related emissions fell to approximately 284 tCO₂e, reflecting improvements in fuel mix and emissions intensity.

Fleet performance improved markedly in 2025. Fuel consumption fell by over 10% compared with 2024, leading to a reduction of 27 tCO₂e in fleet emissions. As a result, total fleet-related emissions decreased to approximately 236 tCO₂e, demonstrating tangible progress in transport decarbonisation.



Solar Panels on Longford Leisure Centre.

Overall, performance between 2024 and 2025 demonstrates continued progress in reducing emissions, particularly through fleet improvements and reduced reliance on high-carbon heating fuels. The data also highlights the importance of accurate metering and monitoring in supporting effective energy management.

4.5 Energy Efficiency Measures on HSE Campus Old Dublin Road Longford Town.

Since the activation of the HSE Green Team in 2018, St Josephs Campus has demonstrated a sustained and practical commitment to energy efficiency, carbon reduction and biodiversity enhancement. Through a combination of building fabric upgrades, low-carbon heating solutions, efficient lighting and improved waste management practices, significant progress has been made in reducing energy demand and environmental impact. The extensive replacement of single-glazed windows, transition from oil to LPG heating and installation of LED and sensor lighting have improved thermal comfort while delivering measurable energy and carbon savings.

These measures have led to a reduction in space-heating demand (kWh/m²) compared with pre-upgrade baselines, improved Building Energy Rating (BER) for upgraded areas, reduced heat loss coefficient (W/K) in retrofitted spaces, improved indoor thermal comfort, replacement of oil-fired heating with LPG, improved insulation through glazing upgrades and lower fuel consumption across the campus.

Equally important has been the strong focus on biodiversity, evidenced by the completion of a Biodiversity Action Plan, large-scale native hedgerow planting, wildflower sowing, and the

creation of wildlife corridors across the site. These initiatives not only enhance the natural environment but also contribute positively to resident wellbeing and ecological resilience.

Looking ahead, the construction of the new 43 no. bedded residential care extension, designed to achieve an A energy rating, reflects a continued commitment to sustainable development and future proofing of St Josephs Campus in Longford Town against energy cost volatility. This new development will help lower operational energy use compared with older buildings, reduced lifecycle emissions and improve compliance with national building and climate standards.

Collectively, these initiatives deliver measurable reductions in energy use, carbon emissions, waste generation and environmental impact, while enhancing biodiversity, comfort and long-term sustainability of the site. The combination of retrofit works, behavioural change and sustainable new development positions the service strongly in meeting public sector climate, biodiversity, and energy-efficiency obligations.



Biodiversity Area St Josephs Campus Old Dublin Road, Longford Town.

4.6 Energy Efficiency Measures in OPW Buildings

Significant energy efficiency and decarbonisation measures have been implemented across OPW-managed buildings in Longford Town, supporting the objectives of Longford County Council's Climate Action Plan and the development of the Longford Town DZ.

A heating system conversion at Longford Court House has delivered an estimated 30% reduction in overall energy usage, substantially lowering associated carbon emissions. Lighting upgrades within the building are achieving annual electricity savings of approximately 4,000–6,000 kWh, while the installation of upgraded building management system (BMS) controls has generated a further 25% reduction in energy consumption through improved monitoring and regulation of heating and building operations.

Targeted energy efficiency upgrades at Longford Social Welfare Offices have also been implemented. Lighting upgrades are delivering estimated annual savings of 4,000–6,000 kWh, reducing electricity demand and operational costs. In addition, the application of foam insulation has resulted in an estimated 25% reduction in heating costs, improving thermal efficiency and occupant comfort.

Collectively, these measures demonstrate strong alignment with local and national climate objectives by reducing energy demand, lowering emissions and improving the sustainability performance of key public buildings within the Longford Town DZ



Longford Court House, Longford Town.

4.7 Energy Efficiency Measures in Longford Westmeath Education Training Board (LWETB) Buildings.

LWETB continues to implement its Climate Action Plan through targeted energy efficiency upgrades, heat decarbonisation and renewable energy integration across its two main sites within the Longford DZ area. These measures support compliance with public sector obligations under the Climate Action Mandate, including reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, energy consumption and reliance on fossil fuels.

Connolly Barracks Site:

Significant progress has been made on the Connolly Barracks Site in transitioning buildings away from fossil fuel-based heating systems. The gym facility has been fully retrofitted and decarbonised, delivering improved energy performance and reduced operational emissions. The former ordnance building has been refurbished to accommodate new offices and training rooms and is now heated using a heat pump system, replacing legacy fossil fuel heating.

Block A has undergone fabric upgrades alongside the installation of a heat pump system. These works are at an advanced stage and nearing completion. A new canteen facility has been developed and is fully heated by a heat pump, ensuring alignment with best practice for low-carbon heat in new and refurbished buildings. 2 no. electric vehicle (EV) charging points have also been installed for staff use. This initiative supports modal shift to electric vehicles and contributes to indirect emissions reductions under public sector transport actions.

These interventions contribute to reduced thermal energy demand, improved BER performance and measurable reductions in scope 1 emissions, consistent with SEAI reporting categories for energy efficiency improvements and renewable heat deployment.



LWETB Refurbished building at Connolly Barracks Site Longford Town

Templemichael College Site

At Templemichael College, a major capital development is underway. A new facility is under construction to enhance educational accommodation and specialist supports for students with Special Educational Needs (SEN). As part of this development, the existing oil-fired heating system is scheduled for replacement with a biomass heating unit. The biomass system is about to proceed to tender, representing a significant step in eliminating fossil fuel use at the site and contributing to renewable heat targets under the Climate Action Plan.

LWETB is progressing the next phase of its Climate Action Plan implementation and decarbonisation plans are currently being developed for the remaining buildings within the school grounds, informed by ongoing assessment of energy performance and SEAI reporting requirements. Proposals include the installation of a sizable photovoltaic (PV) array, which will increase on-site renewable electricity generation, reduce grid electricity consumption and support progress towards public sector renewable energy targets.

The above measures contribute directly to:

- Reduced final energy consumption
- Lower CO₂ emissions (tCO₂eq)
- Increased share of renewable heat and electricity
- Progress against 2030 public sector targets as outlined in the Climate Action Plan

These actions are being developed and tracked to ensure ongoing compliance with SEAI Monitoring & Reporting (M&R) requirements and to support continuous improvement in LWETB's energy performance and emissions profile.

4.8 Energy Efficiency Measures in Industry and Retail

Retail Engagement

Retail businesses in the Longford DZ have implemented a comprehensive range of measures to improve energy efficiency, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and support sustainable resource use. Significant upgrades have been made to lighting systems, with in-store, storage and carpark lighting replaced with energy-efficient LED alternatives, delivering substantial reductions in electricity consumption.

Additional efficiency gains have been achieved through the installation of new refrigeration curtains in cold storage areas, helping to minimise energy loss.

Refrigeration systems have been modernised through the adoption of CO₂-based technology. CO₂ refrigerant has an extremely low global warming potential compared to traditional HFC refrigerants, resulting in a marked reduction in the climate impact associated with cooling operations.

Investment in renewable energy has also been a priority. Large-scale rooftop solar photovoltaic installations (PV) now provide significant on-site electricity generation, with peak output exceeding annual operational demand, supporting reduced reliance on grid electricity and lowering overall carbon emissions.

Waste reduction and circular economy practices are well embedded. All cardboard and plastic waste is segregated and recycled, while food waste is collected and diverted for bioenergy generation or composting rather than landfill. Retailers have additionally invested in the deposit return scheme RE-Turn reverse vending machines to facilitate the recycling of plastic bottles and aluminium cans by customers.

To support the transition to low-emission transport, electric vehicle charging infrastructure has been installed in customer car parks, encouraging the uptake of electric vehicles within the community. Collectively, these actions demonstrate a strong and proactive commitment by the local retail sector to climate action, sustainability and environmental stewardship.

Two good examples of commitment to sustainable actions in the retail sector in Longford Town are SuperValu Longford and ALDI Longford.

SuperValu Longford has committed to making 100% of their own brand packaging recyclable, reusable or compostable by 2025. They have installed Solar Panels on the roof generating 100% of their energy usage at peak times. They have also committed to reducing their carbon emissions to Net Zero by 2040.



Super Valu Longford.

ALDI Longford has replaced all lighting in store with low energy LED lights and has also upgraded their refrigeration systems to CO₂ rather than HFC. ALDI's own brand packaging is now 100% reusable, recyclable or compostable and also contains 30% recycled content. Their energy is sourced from 100% renewable sources.



ALDI Longford.

Industrial Engagement

Six large employers in the Longford Town DZ provided information on their sustainability and climate actions. Some examples are given below.

All organisations demonstrated a strong commitment to sustainability and climate action through a wide range of operational, environmental and supply-chain initiatives. A zero-landfill approach is supported by comprehensive waste segregation across all sites, heightened employee awareness around waste and energy use and robust reporting systems. All food waste is fully segregated and diverted to animal feed, ensuring valuable resources are recovered rather than discarded. Cardboard and plastic materials are recycled, with remaining residual waste directed to energy recovery, delivering measurable carbon savings.

Significant investment has been made to improve energy efficiency and reduce emissions. These measures include upgrading of heat pump technology, installing LED lighting, switching to low-pressure hot water boilers, electrifying steam systems, optimising compressed air infrastructure and embedding energy-efficient design standards into new buildings. A lot of the sites are powered by renewable electricity, with further initiatives underway such as feasibility studies for solar PV and efforts to secure lower-carbon fuel alternatives.

Electric vehicle charging facilities have been installed and digital monitoring systems track energy, fuel, water and waste usage on a monthly basis to inform reduction targets and continuous improvement.

Technimark Longford

Technimark Longford commissioned a very comprehensive energy audit and decarbonisation roadmap report for their manufacturing facility in Longford Town. The report assessed 100% of site energy use, identifies the main drivers of consumption and emissions and sets out practical, costed actions to significantly reduce energy use, carbon emissions and operating costs.

This Energy Decarbonisation Report sets out a practical pathway to reduce energy costs, lower carbon emissions and strengthen long-term energy resilience in the short, medium and long term while supporting corporate sustainability commitments and Irish climate policy. This is a cost-saving programme first, with carbon reduction as a strong co-benefit. The highest-impact actions align well with operational priorities and can be phased to manage capital spend and production risk.

The report prioritises a mix of renewables, electrification, efficiency upgrades and energy management combined with on-site solar PV and strong energy management governance.

The report concludes that the site is well managed and certified (ISO 14001, EcoVadis Gold) and that Technimark's largest decarbonisation opportunities lie in electricity reduction, particularly in process equipment (58% of electricity use), Cleanroom HVAC (22% of energy use) and Refrigeration (6% of electricity usage), while transport fuel and gas oil account for the remaining energy usage on site. Most recommended measures are technically low risk, financially attractive and well aligned with Technimark's corporate sustainability targets and Irish climate policy.



Technimark Longford.

Frame Space Ltd

Frame Space solutions is a leading off-site housing supplier based in Longford Town, specialising in the Design, Manufacture and installation of Light Gauge Steel (LGS) building systems for the Residential & Commercial sectors. The company is demonstrating consistent, measurable reductions in operational energy use, construction waste and embodied carbon-supported by robust data, third-party collaboration, and formal environmental management systems.

The company continues to make strong, evidence-based progress in reducing environmental impact across manufacturing, construction and building operation, while embedding best practice sustainability governance.

Frame Space is in the final stages of achieving ISO 14001 (Environmental Management) and ISO 50001 (Energy Management) certification, providing formal structures for continuous improvement in environmental performance and energy use. The company prides itself on having a zero waste to landfill policy with 92.5% of all on-site waste being recycled and 7.5% going to energy recovery. On average the company produces 1.33 tonnes per household manufactured which is a fraction of waste associated with traditional construction methods.

Recyclable streams include plasterboard, cement board, timber, EPS, steel and mixed dry recyclables. Average waste management cost is €259 per house constructed, reflecting high segregation efficiency and cost control. Building on this performance, the company has been selected as the sole supplier of LGS structures for a government-funded modular village in Mount Lucas, Co. Offaly, where detailed carbon assessments are being undertaken across manufacturing, installation and operational phases.

Frame Space Longford is fast becoming an exemplar in the design, manufacture, installation and delivery of Light Gauge Steel (LGS) building systems for the Residential & Commercial sectors.



Frame Space Longford.

4.9 Schools & Community Engagement

Schools Solar PV programme

Two primary schools in the Longford DZ have installed solar PV systems, delivering significant energy and carbon benefits. St Michael's Boys N.S. installed 18 solar panels in February 2025, which now provide 30% of the school's energy needs and have resulted in a saving of around 8 tonnes in CO₂ emissions since installation. St Joseph's N.S. installed 34 panels in August 2025; these generate 25–30% of the school's energy requirements on average and have already saved the school over 7.5 tonnes in CO₂ emissions.



18 Solar Panels installed at St Michaels Boys N.S. Longford.



34 Solar Panels installed at St Josephs N.S. Longford.

4.10 Community Engagement and Behavioural Change

Significant progress has been made under the Climate Action Plan through the delivery of targeted, community-focused initiatives that support mitigation, adaptation, biodiversity protection and behavioural change. A strong emphasis has been placed on personalised engagement through workshops, pilot programmes and local events, ensuring climate action is practical, inclusive and locally relevant.

Community Engagement, Circular Economy and Waste Reduction

During the reporting period, Longford County Council continued to promote circular economy principles through hands-on reuse and repair initiatives. Toy swap events and reuse and repair workshops were delivered to extend product lifespans, reduce waste and raise awareness of sustainable consumption patterns. The flagship Repair and Reuse Workshop held on May 2025 in Longford Town provided direct, practical support to households while also engaging young people and community groups in climate-positive actions.



Reuse & Repair Workshop Temperance Hall Longford.

Longford Sports Partnership funded the installation of an edible orchard in the Albert Reynolds Peace Park through the “Sports Ireland Participation Nation” programme in November 2025.. The orchard contains 81 no. fruit trees, consisting of apples, pears and plums. There is also an assortment of currant and gooseberry bushes. This project demonstrates that food can be produced locally as well as showing the benefits of locally grown organic produce. It also enhances the tree count in the park with consequential benefits for biodiversity. The cost of the project was €15,000.



Edible Orchard Albert Reynolds Peace Park.

Sustainable Food Systems and Climate Resilience

The ‘Our Shared Plate initiative’, piloted during 2024–2025 in Old Ardnacassa and Longford Womens Link Longford Town, advanced climate action objectives by addressing food security, food waste and social resilience at neighbourhood level. Through community food-growing spaces, workshops and shared meals, the initiative supported behaviour change while strengthening social connections. Participation in this inter-county pilot has generated valuable learning and practical tools that can be easily replicated in other Longford communities.



Our Shared Plate Initiatives Old Ardnacassa and Longford Womens Link.

Community Allotments

Longford Town Allotments Project and Community gardens and allotments support climate action, enhance urban biodiversity and create essential green spaces for residents living in high density accommodation. They provide a social space and facilitate a link between urban and rural. In 2025, Longford County Council secured funding of €40,000 from the Housing Finance Agency Social Fund to develop a 0.6 Ha Allotment site in Aghadegnan, on the outskirts of Longford town. Work commenced in Q4, 2025 to clear the site of scrub vegetation, undertake some enabling works and to import topsoil. With assistance from Longford Community Resources CLG, a community group has been established to take on responsibility to manage the site going forward. A landscape architect has also been engaged to help design a layout for the site.



Longford community garden and allotments site.

Water Quality and Ecosystem Protection

The findings of the River Camlin Catchment and Fish Pass Reports continue to inform Longford County Council's approach to river management and biodiversity protection. These studies provide an evidence base for addressing barriers to fish migration, improving ecological status and supporting climate-resilient aquatic ecosystems. Engagement with relevant stakeholders remains ongoing to progress appropriate nature-based and engineering solutions where feasible.

Energy Awareness and Home Retrofitting Roadshow

A major milestone under the Climate Action Plan was the delivery of Longford's first Energy Roadshow in November 2024 at Connolly Barracks. The event provided free, personalised advice to homeowners and businesses on energy efficiency, home retrofitting, solar PV and available grants and financing options. Delivered in partnership with SEAI and Mount Lucas, the roadshow enhanced local capacity to reduce energy use, cut emissions and address energy costs. Strong public participation demonstrated clear demand for accessible, trusted energy advice at local level.



Launch of the Energy Roadshow Connolly Barracks Longford.

Together, these initiatives demonstrate tangible progress in embedding climate action at community level through education, participation and partnership working. The focus on pilot projects and personalised engagement has allowed the Council to test innovative approaches, build local capacity and gather learnings to inform future scaling.

Future priorities include expanding successful pilot programmes, strengthening monitoring and evaluation of behavioural outcomes and continuing to support communities as active partners in delivering climate action across County Longford.

Community Climate Action Programme Fund (CCAP) Supported Initiatives in Longford DZ

Longford County Council administers the CCAP Fund to support community-led climate action projects within the Longford DZ and wider County. The fund enables local organisations to deliver practical decarbonisation, circular economy and behavioural-change initiatives. Two of the funded projects within Longford DZ demonstrate the impact of this support.

Longford Athletics Club – Renewable Energy Generation Project.

Longford Athletics Club, the county's largest indoor multi-use sports facility and home to the Longford Sports Hub, received €38,770.22 under the CCAP fund to install solar photovoltaic (PV) panels. A 36kW Trina PV system with a 25kW inverter was installed across approximately 600m² of roof space.

The project has delivered an estimated 10 tonnes of CO₂ savings annually and has resulted in a 48–50% reduction in electricity costs, significantly improving the long-term financial and environmental sustainability of this high-use public facility.



Installation of new solar panels on the roof of Longford Athletics Club funded under the CCAP.

Longford EDI Centre – Circular Economy and Food Waste Reduction Project.

The Employment, Development and Information (EDI) Centre, a long-established training, education and circular economy social enterprise, received €23,154 in CCAP funding to install a food waste biodigester. The system converts food waste into a soil-enriching additive within 24 hours.

To date, the project has diverted over 1,840kg of food waste from landfill. The resulting soil additive is used to fertilise raised beds for growing vegetables and herbs that supply the Centre's catering training kitchen and community café. Surplus product has also been distributed free of charge to local Tidy Towns groups, Residents Associations and environmental CE schemes.

In addition to the environmental benefits, the project has delivered strong educational and behavioural impacts, increasing awareness among staff, trainees and the wider community of practical food-waste reduction and circular economy principles.



Photo of the Biodigester and soil enrichment by-product.

Overall Impact

These projects highlight how targeted CCAP Funding investment within the DZ is enabling community organisations to reduce emissions, cut operating costs, embed circular economy practices and deliver meaningful climate action at local level.

These initiatives demonstrate how community participation can support climate action through practical projects, education and partnership working. Future efforts will focus on expanding successful programmes and strengthening the measurement of environmental and behavioural outcomes.

5. Conclusion

The Longford Decarbonisation Zone demonstrates how coordinated action across housing, transport, energy, business, public services and community sectors can contribute to national climate objectives at local level. Significant progress has been achieved through energy-efficient housing, active travel infrastructure, public sector decarbonisation, renewable energy projects and community-led initiatives.

The collaborative approach adopted by Longford County Council, public bodies, businesses and local communities provides a strong foundation for continued emissions reductions while delivering wider social, economic and environmental benefits. As projects continue to progress and new initiatives are implemented, the Longford DZ will serve as a valuable model for climate action across County Longford and beyond.

