COMHAIRLE CONTAE AN CHLÁIR
CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL

CLIMATE ACTION PLAN
2024-2029

LOCAL AUTHORITY CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

Foreword

Clare County Council's first Climate Action Plan represents a blueprint for a sustainable and resilient future for County Clare. The plan sets out 120 climate actions across the areas of governance and leadership, built environment, transportation, communities and partnerships and the natural environment. The plan recognises that climate action is a collective responsibility that affects every aspect of our lives and will involve public bodies, individuals, communities and businesses throughout the county.

Ireland's national climate objective is of a climate resilient and climate neutral economy by the end of the year 2050. Through this Climate Action Plan, Clare County Council is setting out its roadmap for 2024 – 2029 which will enable us to begin the climate journey towards achieving this objective. The Elected Members of Clare County Council are fully committed to providing a leadership role in addressing climate change and are determined to support the implementation of the Climate Action Plan in every way possible.

Crucially, this plan is for everyone in County Clare, encompassing urban and rural communities alike. We recognise the unique challenges faced by different sectors, and Clare County Council is committed to ensuring that all residents have the opportunity to participate in and benefit from these transformative actions.

Joe Cooney
Cathaoirleach
Clare County Council

This Climate Action Plan demonstrates Clare County Council's ongoing commitment to climate action through the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, conserving resources, and fostering sustainable practices.

Clare County Council understands that we must lead by example. The target of a 51% reduction in Clare County Council's own emissions and a 50% energy efficiency increase by 2030 represents significant challenges to this organisation, challenges we are prepared to meet.

At community level, we will endeavour to create environments in which behavioural change can thrive, through active travel infrastructure, social housing retrofitting and circular economy actions. Whilst this plan focuses on environmental stewardship, it also aims to secure a better quality of life for residents of County Clare.

As we transition to a low-carbon economy, Clare County Council will enable the creation of green jobs, enhance public transportation, and bolster our resilience to climate-related challenges.

I encourage all Clare residents to join us in this vital endeavour. Together, we can work to address climate change, protect our natural heritage and biodiversity, and build a brighter future for generations to come.

Pat Dowling
Chief Executive
Clare County Council

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1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose of Climate Action Plan

Climate change has become one of the most pressing global public policy challenges facing governments today.

International organisations, national and local governments are increasingly compelled to take ambitious action to decrease greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change (mitigation) and enhance resilience to climate change impacts and risks (adaptation).

'Local Authorities have a key role in the delivery of both climate mitigation and adaptation'.

- ***Climate Action Plan 2023***

The importance of place-based approaches and the role of Clare County Council and other Local Authorities across Ireland is highlighted in the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021, which stipulates that "*each local authority shall prepare and make a plan relating to a period of five years (in this section referred to as a 'local authority climate action plan') which shall specify the mitigation measures and the adaptation measures to be adopted by the local authority.*" The Local Authority Climate Action Plans (LACAPs) will define a clear pathway towards reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions at the local level through the implementation of mitigation measures and reduce the risks posed to our communities by climate change through adaptation measures.

"…clear target setting with deadlines and assigned responsibilities combined with regular review and adjustment is essential to achieve these goals. An agile approach with focus on action and delivery is crucial."

- ***Pre-Draft Consultation Feedback***

The Climate Action Plan will strengthen the alignment between national climate policy and the delivery of effective local climate action.

Clare County Council is responsible for reducing greenhouse gas emissions from across its own assets and infrastructure, whilst also taking on a broader role of influencing and facilitating others to meet their own targets. This is necessary to ensure that the environmental, social, and economic benefits that come with climate action can be fully realised.

The strategy is not a standalone document, and its goals and objectives will be incorporated into future plans and policies of Clare County Council to ensure climate change is at the forefront of its service delivery.

Vision Statement

Clare is a national leader in Climate Action supporting a sustainable low carbon economy and climate resilient, biodiverse communities and businesses.

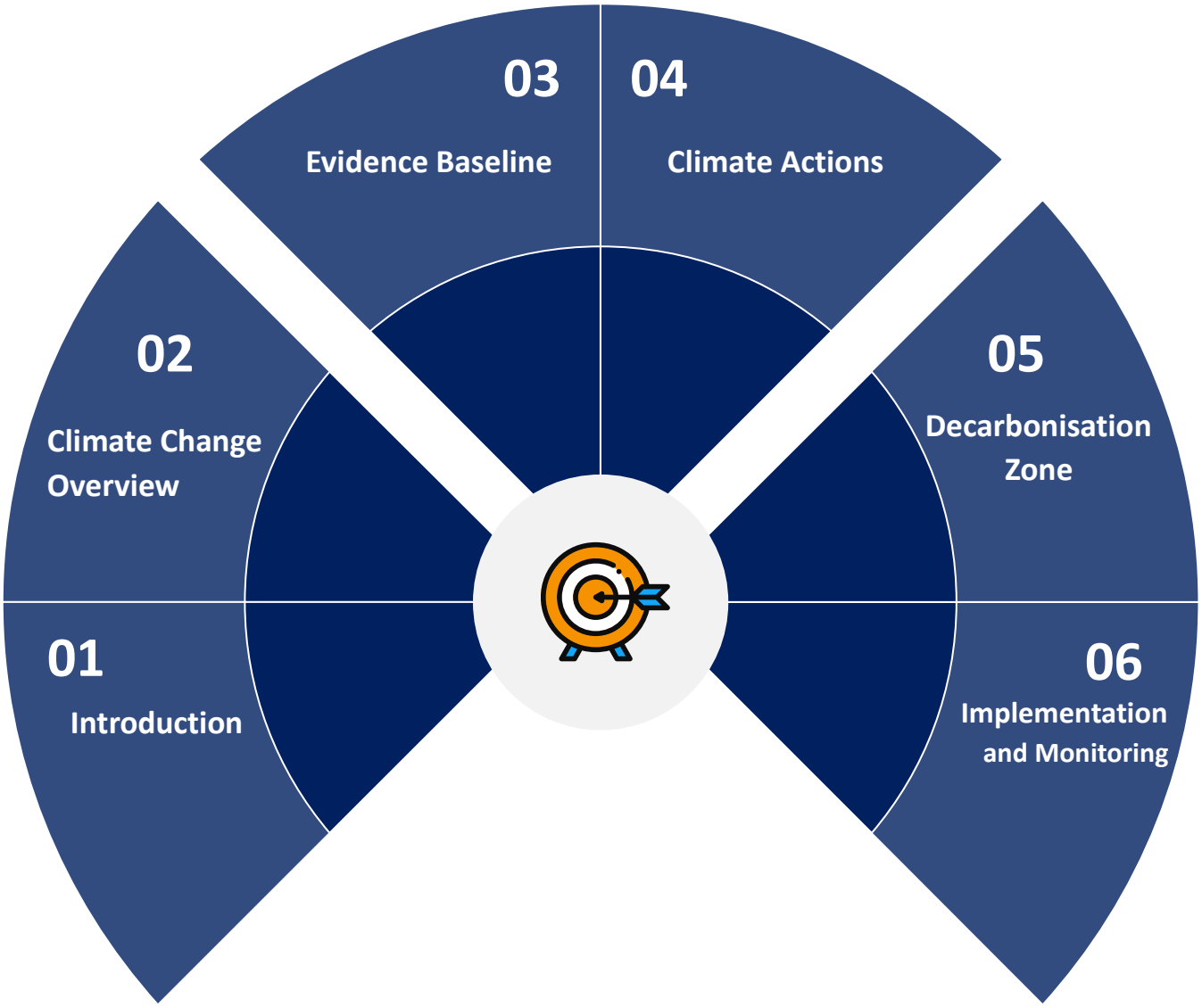
Mission Statement

Deliver and enable climate action for a just transition to a low carbon and climate resilient future within County Clare which results in sustainable growth, a high quality of life, inclusivity, and service accessibility.

1.1.1 Structure of Climate Action Plan

The Clare Climate Action Plan forms part of longer-term effort that requires a sustained and planned response to support the delivery of the climate neutrality objective at local and community levels.

This Climate Action Plan provides a mechanism for bringing together both adaptation and mitigation actions to help drive positive climate action and outcomes across the local authority and its administrative area. The framework of climate actions set within the plan, configures the arrangement of climate actions within a defined structure that ensures alignment between on the ground actions and the high-level vision that the plan aspires to deliver. The Climate Action Plan is set out in six key Chapters.



1.2. Opportunities of Climate Action

Implementation of the Climate Action Plan for County Clare will require new investments that provide multiple co-benefits, such as improved wellbeing and quality of life, and new business and job opportunities.

Many of the proposed actions not only reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase climate resiliency, they also synergistically support other Clare County Council objectives, such as improved economic development, service delivery and social inclusion. The Climate Action Plan also supports the efficient and effective use of available resources to provide a quality service, whilst ensuring value for money and the provision of clear, effective, democratic, and civic leadership.

Maximising the co-benefits and opportunities of climate action can be accomplished in tandem with implementation of the Climate Action Plan. The first step to empowering communities to achieve greater access to opportunity is to understand the co-benefits and opportunities most important to them and use this information to directly influence the development and implementation of the Climate Action Plan. Each of the strategic goals contained within this plan set out co-benefits that can also be achieved in addition to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and increase climate resiliency. Some of these co-benefits are outlined below, however this list is not exhaustive and there are multiple additional co-benefits that can emerge from the effective implementation of climate action.

1.2.1 Case Studies: Climate Action Innovation in Clare

CASE STUDY

Social Housing Sustainability

Cúinne an Bhroic in Tulla is a Clare County Council social housing scheme made up of 25 units that was completed in June 2022. The development has enhanced thermal performance and insulation standards, thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions due to lower energy requirements.

A "fabric first" approach was used by specifying high performance materials and air tightness membranes allied to smart ventilation systems, minimising the energy needed to heat and cool the dwellings. A high-quality thermal envelope, good detailing, insulation, and air tightness follows this fabric first process to meet NZEB standards. The design on opposing street sides sought to maximise the solar gain, and windows are high performance low energy to meet NZEB.

With A2 Building Energy Ratings (BERs), the energy savings for this scheme are significant. In relation to design for environmental sustainability. Grasscrete and permeable gravel paths were provided in lieu of hard surfaces where possible. Earthen embankments were created to the front and side of the development, which have been planted with wildflower/insect friendly seed to encourage biodiversity.

1.3. Profile of County Clare

Given the size and geographical features of the County, as well as the infrastructure assets and responsibilities of Clare County Council, the negative impacts of climate change pose a significant risk to residents, the economy, the environment, and the delivery of local government services into the future.

It is therefore imperative to introduce climate adaptation and climate mitigation measures in a planned and co-ordinated approach across the county that is tailored for the unique context of County Clare.

County Clare is situated on the west coast of Ireland, in the province of Munster. It is approximately 3,450km^2 and covers an area of 318,784 hectares (787,715 acres). It is bounded by the counties of Galway to the north, Tipperary to the east and Limerick to the south. Its natural boundaries comprise of Galway Bay to the north, the River Shannon and Lough Derg to the east, and the Shannon Estuary to the south.

The county's coastline is 360km in length and faces into the Atlantic Ocean on its western coast. County Clare has a diverse topography, varying from bare limestone pavement to estuarial mudflats and from high Atlantic cliffs to inland lakes and waterways. Over 20% of County Clare is designated for nature conservation, with 47 Natura 2000 sites in the County, including 37 Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and 10 Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated for nature conservation. The Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark is internationally recognised as an area with unique geology, landscapes, history, and culture.

1.3.1 Population & Infrastructure

The Census 2022 reported that County Clare has a population of 127,419, which represents a growth of 7.2% (8,602) from the 2016 Census population figure of 118,817. Ennis is the main town in County Clare, and the 6th largest town in Ireland, with a population of 27,923, with Shannon, situated in the south of the county, as the next largest town with a population of 10, 256 (Census 2022 population figures).

127,149

Total Population (2022)

3,450

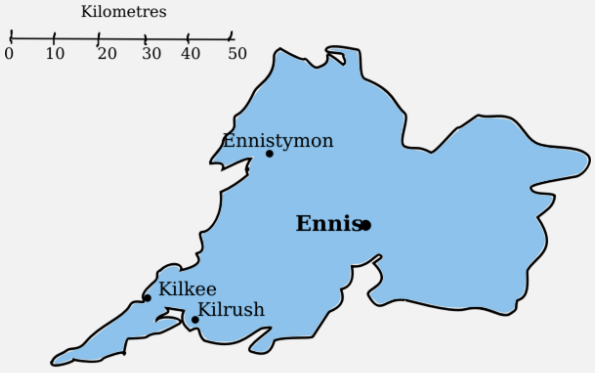
Total Square Kilometres

47

Geological Heritage Sites

20%

Of Clare Designated for Nature Conservation



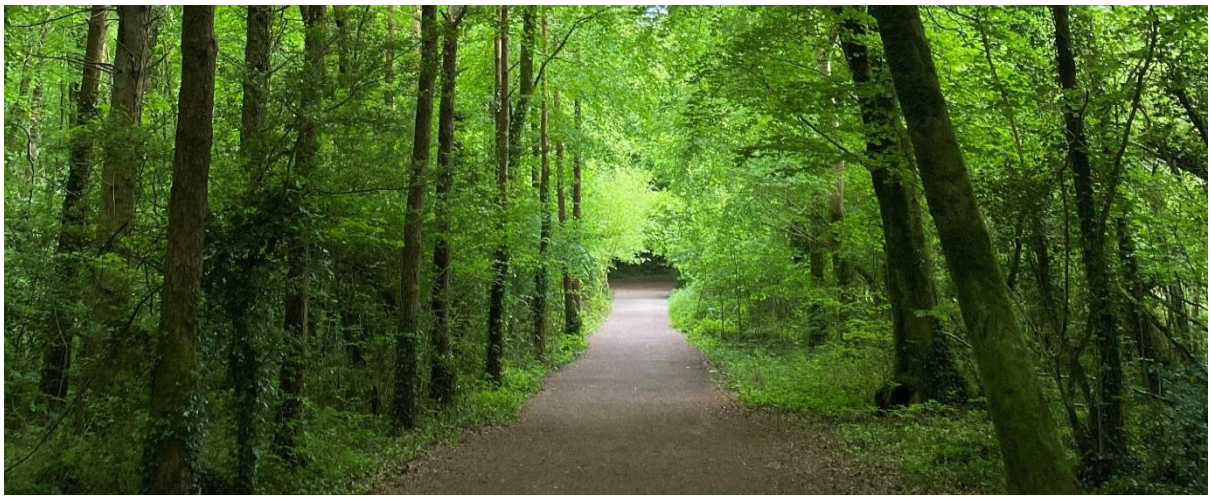
Elsewhere in the county, the towns of Kilrush in the west, Ennistymon in the north, and Scarriff in the east, function as service centres for their surrounding hinterlands, supported by a network of multiple towns and villages. County Clare has air, road, rail, and marine transport facilities that provide strategic connectivity and infrastructure that are unique in the region. Shannon International Airport, with full US Customs and Border Preclearance facilities, caters for almost two million passengers per annum providing direct flights to the UK, USA, and Europe, providing worldwide connectivity. The county is well served by strategic road access with the M18, which dissects the county, linking with Limerick, Galway, and other nationwide road networks. The Western Rail Corridor provides regular commuter rail transport between Galway, Ennis, Sixmilebridge, and Limerick and provides national connections linking Clare with serviced towns and cities.

Marine access and transport are provided for at Moneypoint, Killimer, and harbours along the Atlantic coastline. The Shannon Estuary is a tidal estuary stretching from Limerick City to Loop Head. It is known for its rich biodiversity and ecological significance. The estuary also plays a leading role in the region's economy by facilitating major shipping and trading.

1.3.2. Tourism

The county's tourism sector is a key component and driver of the local economy. In 2018, the tourism industry generated €244 million and supported 6,600 jobs, with 769,000 tourists visiting Clare in 2018, which was 8% of all overseas visitors to Ireland. The Cliffs of Moher Visitor experience reported that over 1.1 million visitors had visited the natural attraction in 2022. Other significant tourism landmarks in County Clare include The Burren, Lough Derg, Loop head, and Bunratty Castle and Folk Park. Projected increased overseas and domestic visitor number and increased domestic use of amenities such as beaches, lakes, rivers, trails, parks, natural and heritage sites indicate that services and infrastructure will need to be enhanced significantly to cater for this growing demand.

County Clare has diverse geographical characteristics and indeed has a growing population. Services and Infrastructure will need to increase over time to cater for this growing need. It is imperative therefore that the Local Authority positions itself to lead on Climate Action and sustainable practices to ensure that the county has a resilient future.



1.4. Local Authority Scope on Climate Action

1.4.1. Clare County Council Climate Influence

Local authorities are key drivers in advancing climate policy at the local level.

The Climate Action Plan will help to address, in an integrated way, the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions, implement climate change adaptation measures, and strengthen the alignment between national climate policy and the delivery of effective local climate action. Clare County Council will need to apply an inward (organisational) and an outward (community) focus on building resilience to the negative impacts of climate change and in tackling the causes of climate change.

Local authorities are responsible for approximately 11% of all public sector emissions. Clare County Council is accountable for and has authority over the management and reduction of these emissions, in line with the 51% target prescribed to 2030 and the trajectory towards the goal of climate neutrality by 2050.

This Climate Action Plan also looks to the broader role of influencing and facilitating others to meet their own targets. The figure below illustrates Clare County Councils sphere of influence with regards to climate action.

75%

Of pre-draft consultation survey respondents believe that Clare County Council has a strong role to play in relation to climate change in the county

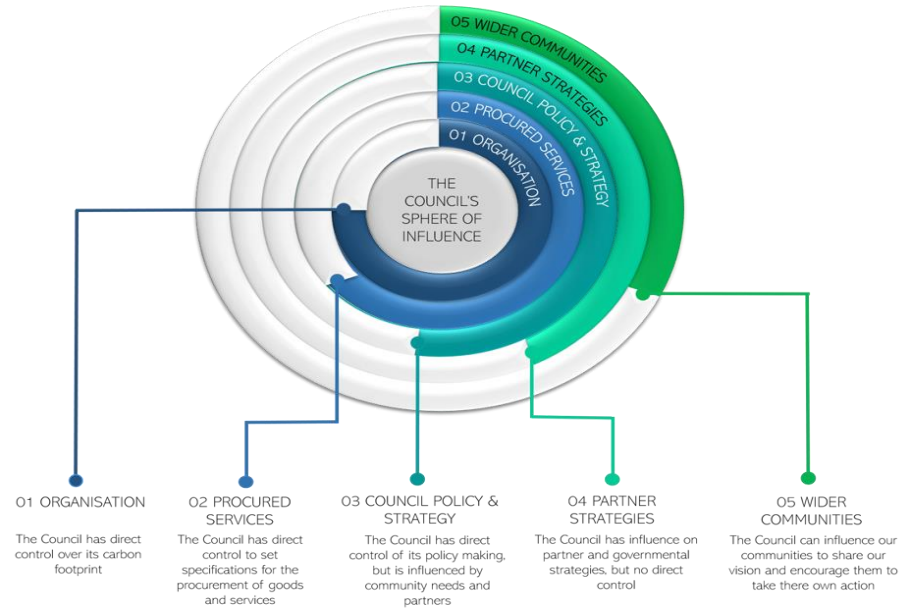


Figure 1: Clare County Councils sphere of influence with regards to climate action

1.4.2. Clare County Council Climate Role

This Climate Action Plan specifies actions that Clare County Council will implement to meet its public sector commitments and contribute towards the national climate objective.

The Climate Action Plan adopts a four-pronged approach, illustrated below, by adopting an inward (organisational) and an outward (community) focus on building resilience to the negative impacts of climate change and in tackling the causes of climate change. While the Climate Action Plan will be ambitious to reflect the leadership role of local government on climate action, the Plan will not include actions whereby their implementation and achievement fall outside the role, remit, and governance of the local authority.

Full Accountability

Managing and reducing greenhouse gas emissions across the local authority organisation

Influence

Influencing sectors, business, communities, and individuals in the delivery of local climate action by provisions of services and infrastructure

Advocate

Advocating for climate action by raising awareness, communicating, and engaging on climate related issues and responses

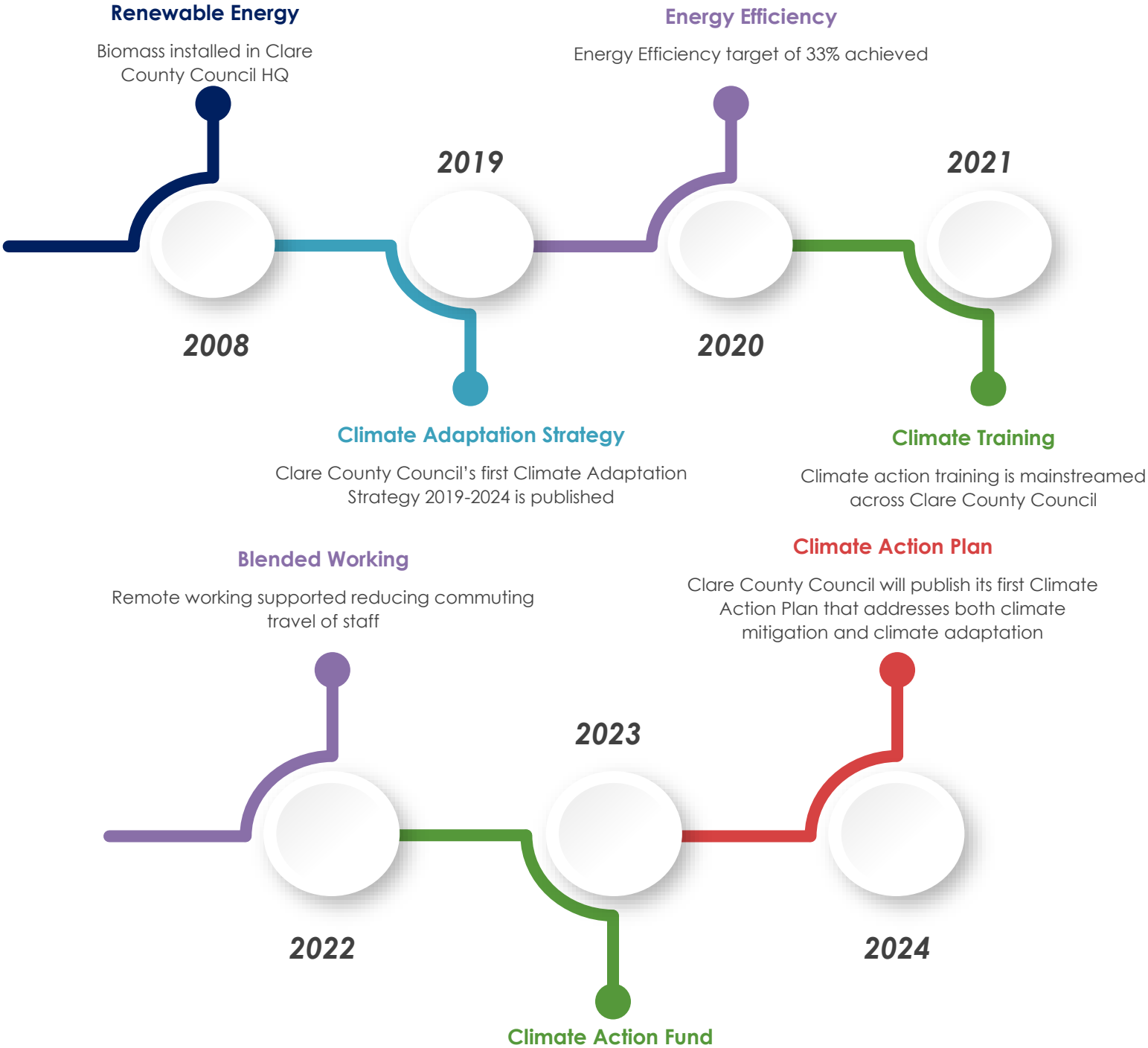
Coordinate

Coordinating and working in partnership with other stakeholders to facilitate and enable the delivery of climate action

1.5. Climate Action by Clare County Council to Date

Clare County Council has delivered adaptation and mitigation measures at local and community levels and intends to accelerate this work through the Climate Action Plan.

Clare County Council has made significant strides to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from its own operations, promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy, and support sustainable transportation options throughout the county.



1.6 Supporting a Just Transition for Clare

An important insight from the pre-draft public consultation was the importance of protecting livelihoods and lives most at risk from climate-related policies and actions.

Therefore, supporting a just transition is a core element throughout the Climate Action Plan from the high-level mission statement through to the specific actions.

While there is no single internationally agreed definition of a 'just transition', a just transition can mean new jobs, new skills, new investment opportunities, and the chance to create a more productive and resilient economy (Climate Action Plan, 2023). The National Economic and Social Council have defined a Just Transition as:

'one which seeks to ensure transition is fair, equitable, and inclusive in terms of processes and outcomes'.

- NESC (2020) Addressing Employment Vulnerability as Part of a Just Transition in Ireland

A just transition can also be defined as one which ensures the deliberative participation of affected and vulnerable communities in the transition to a carbon neutral society, so ensuring that people's livelihoods, safety, socio-economic rights and wellbeing are protected through the transition.

Due it's critical importance, supporting a just transition is reflected throughout this Climate Action Plan. Both the mission statement (*'Deliver and enable climate action for a just transition…')* and principles underpinning the plan development and implementation (*'Ensure that a just transition is at the heart of our approach, and it is inclusive of everyone young and old'*) confirm supporting a just transition plays a central role.

To support this Clare County Council will utilise established stakeholder engagement mechanisms, such as Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs), to enable communities and sectors to engage and input their perspectives regarding climate-related matters.

Other key actions included in the plan that will support a just transition include actions that will advance the retrofitting of the social housing stock, increase resilience to the effects of climate change, improve access to public transport and support green skills development.

The transition of the energy system to renewables can also present opportunities for job creation that supports a just transition. For example, Clare County Council supports the ESB's 'Green Atlantic' project for the redevelopment of the Moneypoint power generation station site as a green energy hub.

The findings and recommendations of report 'Fair Clare' delivered as part of a collaboration between Clare PPN, Clare County Council, Clare Local Development Company (CLDC) and the Limerick Clare Education & Training Board (LCETB) will be reviewed with the intention of supporting a just transition for all residents of County Clare. Clare County Council are committed to working with partners and communities to support a just transition that results in a greener, healthier and more prosperous future for the residents of Clare.

1.6.1 Case Studies: Climate Action Innovation in Clare

CASE STUDY

Innovative Enterprise Sustainability

Torpey is a leading brand of premium hurleys for the sport of hurling based in East Clare. In 2020, Torpey launched their ground-breaking sustainable BAMBÚ hurley to the marketplace.

BAMBÚ has won numerous awards including the 'Best Consumer Product' from the Institute of Designers of Ireland in 2020, and National Enterprise Award in 2022 and has been used by many elite players across the sport. Support from the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) has been fundamental to its success in the marketplace with support including the Business Expansion Grant, Green For Micro and Lean Start schemes.

As part of their latest engagement with Clare LEO, Torpey have independently verified that the carbon footprint of Bambú is lower than an Ash hurley made from imported material. This is a significant achievement for the company as almost 90% of the ash material used for hurleys is imported.

CASE STUDY

Regenerative and Sustainable Farming

Kilkee and the Loop Head Peninsula, Clare's designated Decarbonisation Zone, has been a source of multiple innovative climate action initiatives.

In January 2023 it was named winner of the IPB Pride of Place Climate Action Special Award for a regenerative farming experiment named Hemp4Soil.

This project explored the potential to improve soil quality and biodiversity while also creating alternative sustainable income streams for farms on the Loop Head Peninsula.

The project involved ten local farmers who, in conjunction with the Department for Agriculture, Fisheries and the Marine, and local scientific and biodiversity experts, explored how growing hemp on the land could not only improve the overall quality of the soil and benefit local biodiversity, but could also provide sustainable income streams to the farmers in the future.

2. Climate Change Overview

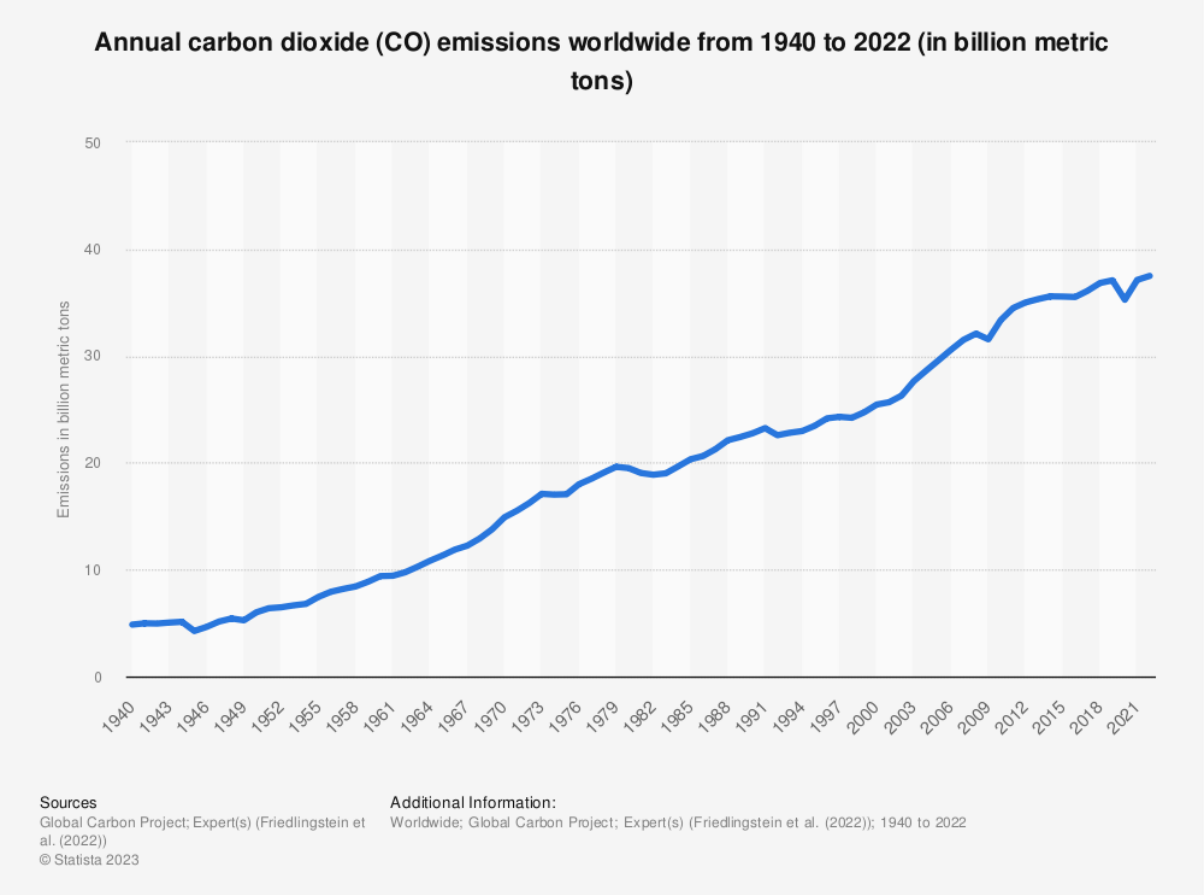
2.1. Scientific Context of Climate Change

2.1.1. Global Climate Changes

Climate change, and its impacts, are recognised as a significant challenge that requires action to be taken at global, national, and local scales.

While climate change is a global issue that affects all of society in some shape or form, its impacts are felt on a local scale. Therefore, local government is uniquely positioned at the frontline of tackling climate change at both a national and local scale and being in the position to play an influential role to promote and support the undertaking of climate action measures.

It is becoming increasing apparent that observed changes in global climate is influencing observed climatic changes documented in both the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events such as accelerated melting of Arctic and Antarctic sea ice, retreat and collapse of glaciers, rising sea levels, ocean warming and marine heatwaves, droughts, heatwaves, extreme rainfall, and flooding.



Carbon dioxide (CO_2) is considered the most influential greenhouse gas (GHG) that is driving climate change today. CO_2 primarily originates from the burning of fossil fuels, such as coal, oil, and natural gas, for electricity generation,

transportation, and industrial processes. Additionally, deforestation and land-use changes contribute to CO_2 emissions as forests act as carbon sinks when intact but release stored carbon when cleared or degraded. The concentration (measured in parts per million (ppm)) of CO_2 in the atmosphere has increased by around 50% since pre-industrial times (from about 280 ppm to 420 ppm), and CO_2 concentration is currently increasing at a rate of about 2 ppm per year.

2.1.2 Climate v Weather

Climate relates to the average recorded weather over a period of time, which is typically measured over a 30-year period, whereas weather relates to short term changes in atmospheric conditions and can change from minute-to-minute, day-to-day and season-to-season.

Each of the last four decades have been observed as consecutively warmer than any decade that preceded it since instrumental records began in 1850.

The most recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Assessment Report, Assessment Report 6 (AR6), shows that global average temperatures have increased by 1.1°C in the period 2011-2022 when compared with pre-industrial conditions (1850-1900). According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Ireland's climate has been changing in a similar fashion to the current global trends.

2.1.3 Climate Projections for Ireland

Climate projections indicate that observed changes in Ireland's climate will continue, and likely intensify into the future.

It is expected that Ireland's climate will become warmer and drier, sea levels will continue to increase, and that extreme weather events will occur more frequently. Even if climate mitigation actions are taken over the next 30 years, a level of projected changes are locked in for the foreseeable future as a result of historical GHG emissions.

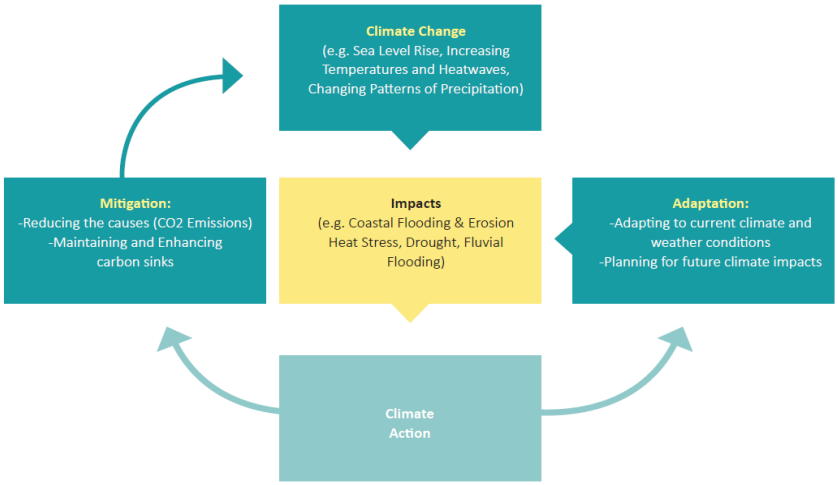
- By 2050, average annual temperatures are expected to increase by up to 1.6°C under a high emissions scenario.
- The frequency and intensity of heatwave events are projected to increase.
- During winter and autumn months, there is expected to be an increase of up to 19% in the occurrence of heavy precipitation events.
- Projections of severe windstorms show a high degree of uncertainty with some projections indicating an increase in very severe windstorms.
- Projections indicate that the Irish Sea could warm by a further 1.9 °C before the end of the 21st Century.

2.2. Climate Mitigation/Climate Adaptation Overview

In response to the many different and complex challenges being posed by climate change, there are two different approaches that can be adopted to tackle climate change: Climate Mitigation, and Climate Adaptation.

Climate mitigation focuses on limiting the speed and scale of climate change by limiting the levels of GHGs in the atmosphere. Mitigation could also encompass the attempts to remove GHGs from the atmosphere by using geo-engineering methods, such as developing and using carbon capture utilisation and storage (CCUS) technologies to store CO_2. The aim of climate mitigation is to avoid significant interference occurring to the global climate. Mitigation is achieved either by preventing GHG emissions from entering the atmosphere, reducing GHG emissions at the sources of these emissions (e.g., by increasing the share of electricity generated and heating/cooling of buildings from renewable energy systems, establishing cleaner mobility systems by promoting the use of electric vehicles, greater access to public transportation systems, etc.), or by enhancing the storage of GHGs by using nature-based solutions (e.g., increasing the size of forests and implementing forestry conservation measures, increasing conservation measures of wetlands, improving soil health and soil biodiversity, etc.). In essence, climate mitigation is a human intervention with the goal of reducing the sources of GHG emissions and/or enhancing natural GHG sinks.

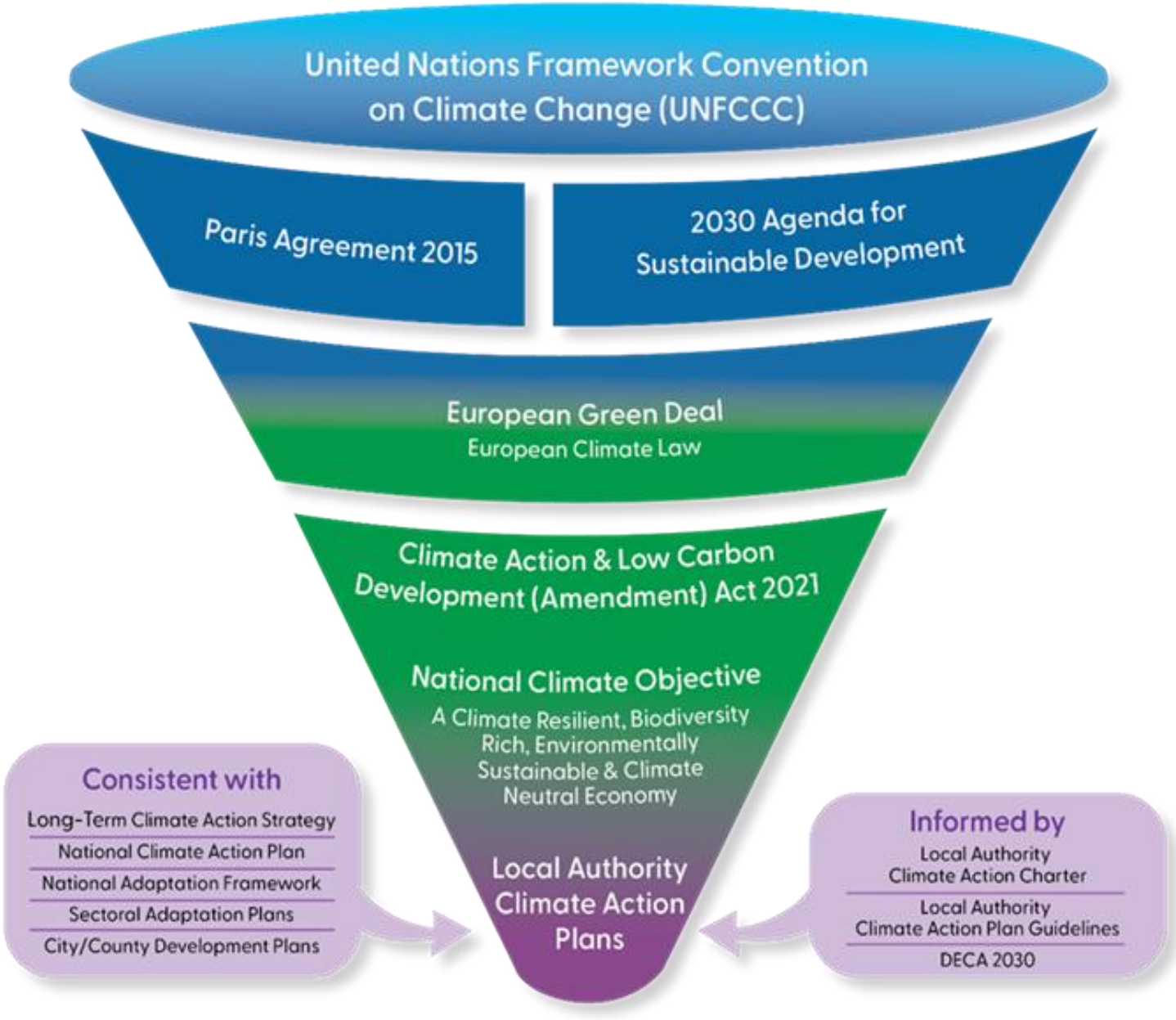
Climate adaptation is about anticipating the adverse effects of climate change and taking appropriate actions to prevent or minimise the impacts and damage they can cause. The aim of climate adaptation is to reduce the risks from the harmful effects of climate change on our society (such as sea-level rise, coastal erosion, coastal and fluvial flooding, more intense extreme weather events, food insecurity, etc.). The Coastal Rock Armour works at Lahinch and the Embankment works at Springfield, Clonlara are examples of local adaptation measures carried out to protect against these risks. In essence, climate adaptation is about implementing climate action measures for adjusting our society's resilience to the current and future impacts of climate change on our society.



2.3. Legislative and Policy Context

The seriousness of the potential impacts and risks associated with climate change is reflected in the vast quantity of legislation that has been introduced to mitigate and adapt those impacts and risks.

This Climate Action Plan has taken into full consideration international and national climate change policy and legislation, utilised the most up-to-date knowledge on current levels of climate change, as well as its impacts and climate projections for the future. Clare County Council are committed to considering and appropriately integrating relevant updates to the national Climate Action Plan and National Planning Framework over the lifetime of the Climate Action Plan. Additionally, Clare County Council will take account of the relevant recommendations of the EPA State of the Environment Report 2024.



2.3.1. Global

Paris Agreement

The Paris Agreement is a legally binding international treaty which aims to limit global warming to well below 2°C, and preferably to 1.5°C, in comparison to pre-industrial levels. The Agreement was ratified by its signatories in November 2016. The framework objective of the Agreement is: "to stabilise greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system." Ireland ratified the Paris Agreement on the 4th of November 2016. The Agreement also aims at building the resilience and increase the abilities to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development

The *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* document underscores the key role that local authorities hold in scaling up climate action, effecting change and securing sustainable human settlements across the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to which Climate Action is part (Goal 13).

2.3.2. European

European Union Green Deal (2020)

The European Green Deal is an ambitious package of measures ranging from significant reductions in GHG emissions, scale up on climate adaptation measures, and concerted efforts to preserve Europe's natural environment. The areas of focus in the European Green Deal broadly cover eight policy areas - biodiversity, sustainable food systems, sustainable agriculture, clean energy, sustainable industry, building and renovating, sustainable mobility, eliminating pollution and climate action.

European Climate Law

In June 2021, the European Union (EU) adopted a legislative proposal for the European Climate Law which aims to frame the climate neutrality objective by 2050 across the EU with an intermediate target of reducing net GHG emissions by at least 55% by 2030. The law aims to ensure that all EU policies contribute to this goal, and that all sectors of the economy and society play their part towards meeting the targets.

EU Fit for 55

EU Fit for 55 is a package that aims to bring the EU's climate and energy legislation in line with the 55% GHG emission reduction target set by the EU for 2030.

2.3.3. National

Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021

The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 frames Ireland's legally binding climate ambition to delivering a reduction in GHG emissions of 51% by 2030, and to achieve climate neutrality by the end of 2050. The Act aims to provide for the approval of plans by the Government in relation to climate change for the purpose of pursuing the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich and climate neutral economy by no later than the end of the year 2050. The Act enshrines the National Climate Objective to "pursue and achieve, by no later than the end of 2050, the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy."

Local Authority Climate Action Plans

A key element of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act (Amendment) 2021 relevant to all local authorities is the requirement for all local authorities to prepare an individual Local Authority Climate Action Plan (LACAP) for their functional area. The purpose of the LACAP will be to deliver effective climate mitigation and climate adaptation actions at local authority and community levels. Local Authority Development Plans must also be aligned with their LACAP.

National Climate Action Plans

The 2023 Climate Action Plan outlines the challenges across key sectors including electricity, transport, built environment, industry, and agriculture. The Plan outlines the final agreed emissions reduction targets for each of the key sectors. The GHG emissions reduction targets in the 2023 Plan include: 75% reduction from electricity generation, 40% reduction from the residential sector, 45% reduction from commercial/public sector, 50% reduction from the transport sector, 25% reduction from the agriculture sector, 35% reduction from industry. A reduction target for land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF) has yet to be determined.

Public Sector Targets for 2030 (Energy Efficiency and Emissions)

The 2023 Climate Action Plan reaffirmed two high-level targets for public bodies that had been originally introduced in previous iterations of the National Climate Action Plan:

- The public sector must improve its energy efficiency by 50% by 2030, based on a 2009 baseline.
- The public sector must reduce its GHG emissions by 51% by 2030, based on a 2018 baseline.

National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy

The National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy has been prepared by the Local Government Sector arising from its obligations under the Waste Management Act. The Plan sets out a framework for the management of waste for the period 2024 – 2030 and adopts the Ambition of 0% Waste Growth for every individual each year for the lifetime of the plan. The Plan sets out targets for the reduction of waste from households, businesses, and the construction sector and includes targets for improved compliance on the segregation of waste and the reuse and repair of materials.

2.3.4 Sectoral

Delivering Effective Climate Action 2030

Delivering Effective Climate Action 2030 (DECA 2030) is the local government strategy on climate action published in April 2021, it represents an overarching sectoral commitment to ensuring a coherent approach to climate action is being taken across the administrative and political structures of all 31 local authorities, across 6 Goals outlined below. The strategy represents a top-level consensus on the approach to climate action and a strong commitment to the prescribed leadership role within the sector.

Goal 1: Foster governance, leadership, and partnerships for climate action
Goal 2: Achieve our carbon emission and energy efficiency targets for 2030 and 2050
Goal 3: Deliver on climate adaptation and climate resilience
Goal 4: Mobilise climate action in local communities
Goal 5: Mobilise climate action in enterprise and support transition to an inclusive, net zero and circular economy
Goal 6: Achieve a 'just transition' particularly for communities that may be economically disadvantaged by decarbonising projects

Climate Action Charter

The Climate Action Charter was signed by all local authorities in October 2019 and provides for a commitment to monitor, evaluate and report annually on the implementation of activities in the charter, including the implementation of climate mitigation and climate adaptation measures.

Climate Action Regional Offices

The Climate Action Regional Offices (CAROs) were initially established in 2018 to support the preparation and delivery of the Local Authority Climate Change Adaptation Strategies, to enable engagement across sectoral climate adaptation plans, and to coordinate climate action undertaken by the sector. The CAROs provide guidance, advice, and support to local authorities to leverage the capability, reach, and resources of the sector to effectively address climate change across Ireland. Clare County Council is part of the Atlantic Seaboard South region, along with Cork City Council, Cork County Council, Kerry County Council, and Limerick City and County Council.

Clare County Development Plan

The Clare County Development Plan sets out the overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the County over a 6-year period. The Development Plan includes numerous objectives on sustainability and climate within, as well as strategies such as:

- Volume 5 Clare Renewable Strategy-Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029
- Volume 6 Clare Wind Energy Strategy-Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029

The Clare County Renewable Energy Strategy's (RES) vision, consistent with that of the Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029, is to position the County as the national leader in renewable energy generation, supporting energy efficiency and conservation, and which achieves balanced social and economic development throughout the County and assists in achieving national climate change mitigation targets.

Local Authority Climate Change Adaptation Strategy

This strategy was developed in accordance with the 2018 Local Authority Climate Adaptation Strategy Development Guidelines which set out a road map to ensure a consistent approach is being taken by each local authority. The strategy is focused on undertaking climate change adaptation measures and aims to identify Clare County Council's vulnerabilities, and the major climate risks facing the county.

2.4. Sustainable Development Goals

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future.

At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership. They recognise that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests. Each action within this Climate Action Plan is aligned at least one SDG.

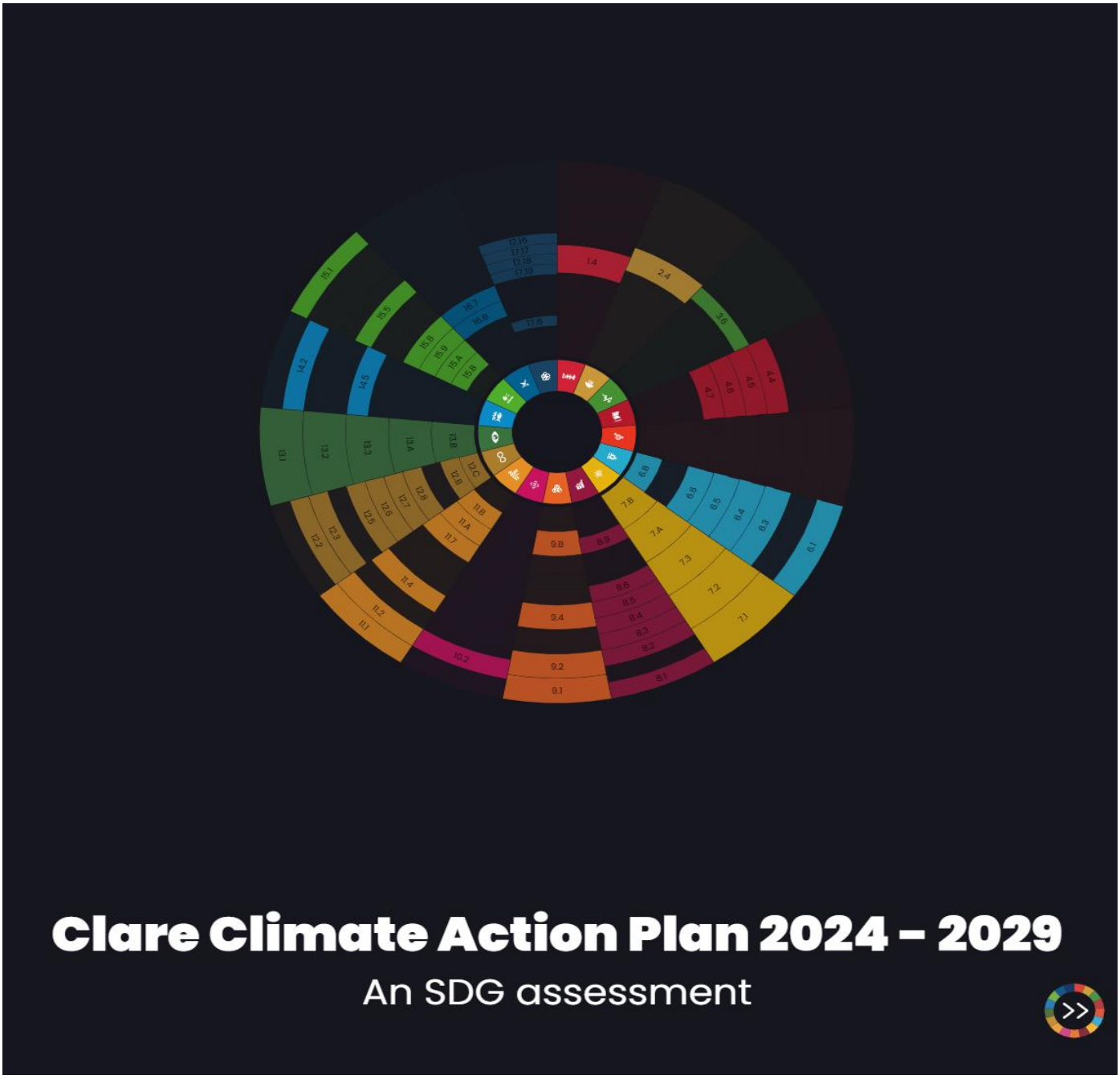
CASE STUDY

SDG Champion

Clare County Council has been selected as one of 26 organisations to participate in the Sustainable Development Goal Champions Programme 2023-2024. As an SDG Champion, Clare County Council's role is to act as an advocate and promoter of the SDGs and a good practice example of how an organisation can contribute to the SDGs and integrate them into its work and activities.

2.4.1 Climate Action Plan Mapping to SDGs

In its role as an SDG Champion, Clare County Council has committed to embedding the SDGs further into its work programmes. To understand and maximise the alignment between the Climate Action Plan and the SDGs, a mapping assessment was conducted using the Accelerating Action tool. This assessment mapped the final actions of the Clare Climate Action Plan to the SDGs. This will support communicating just how the Climate Action Plan can deliver benefits beyond climate action including, for example, benefits to livelihoods, economic growth, gender equity, and health and well-being. The output of this exercise is depicted below and maps the SDGs positively supported by the Clare Climate Action Plan. Further mapping will take place, where relevant, across other Clare County Council policies and program.



2.5. Climate Action Plan Guiding Principles

Key guiding principles were considered in the development of the objectives and actions that comprise the Clare Climate Action Plan to ensure alignment with established guidance, strategies, and stakeholder priorities with regards to climate action.

Each local authority is provided the flexibility to deploy its own approach with respect to the style and structure of their Climate Action Plan, however all plans should demonstrate alignment with the key principles of the Local Authority Climate Action Plan Guidelines. Additionally, the local authority sector's climate strategy, *Delivering Effective Climate Action 2030*, contains key principles that can support climate action measures from a local authority perspective.

As a result of the stakeholder engagement process with communities, it was evident that complementary principles should underpin the design of climate objectives and actions within the Climate Action Plan.

Collectively these principles served as a benchmark for Clare County Council in the development of the Climate Action Plan and supported to ensure that the plan met best practice guidance, strategic objectives, and stakeholder expectations.

Ambitious

Reflect and realise the leadership role of Clare County Council on climate action and deliver on the national climate objective

Delivery

Ensure actions achieve mitigation and adaptation objectives and reflect Clare CoCo responsibilities at organisational and community levels

Evidence

Ensure that actions are informed by up-to date scientific information, emissions and climate risk data and other empirical evidence

Participative

Ensure inclusion, coordination and collaboration throughout the climate action planning process that involves a range of diverse stakeholders

Transparent

Ensure the climate action planning process is open and clearly communicated upon and monitor and report progress publicly

Supportive

Ensure communities are supported and incentivised to engage in climate actions and provided with clear communications

Mainstream

Ensure that local authority decisions are climate-proofed and seek opportunities to address climate change across the full range of services

Just

Ensure that a 'just transition' is at the heart of our approach and it is inclusive of everyone, young and old

3. Evidence Baseline

3.1 Stakeholder Engagement

The challenges of climate change, which are far reaching across society, are not defined by spatial boundaries and therefore require holistic and collective responses.

Engagement and participation by residents and stakeholders in climate decisions and measures that involve them is considered very important. This ensures climate actions positively and equitably influence the choices they make. Clare County Council is also engaged in existing public participation structures and approaches that are bottom-up, local community centered and are outcome focused.

These include Public Participation Networks (PPN), Local Community Development Committees (LCDC), Tidy Towns, Age Friendly Ireland, Sports partnerships, Sustainable Energy Communities (SECs) and a range of other programmes and initiatives.

284

Pre-Draft Submissions

749

Consultation Webpage Visits

70%

Respondents Worried About Climate Change

"The best way for the council to support communities is to enable positive change."

"Educating the community, holding workshops and giving simple practical advice."

"Involve communities in the preparation of integrated Climate Action Plan for County Clare."

"Putting climate resilience at the heart of every decision."

"Hold information sessions, workshops, create videos for promotion on social media."

3.1.1. Stakeholder Engagement Process and Findings

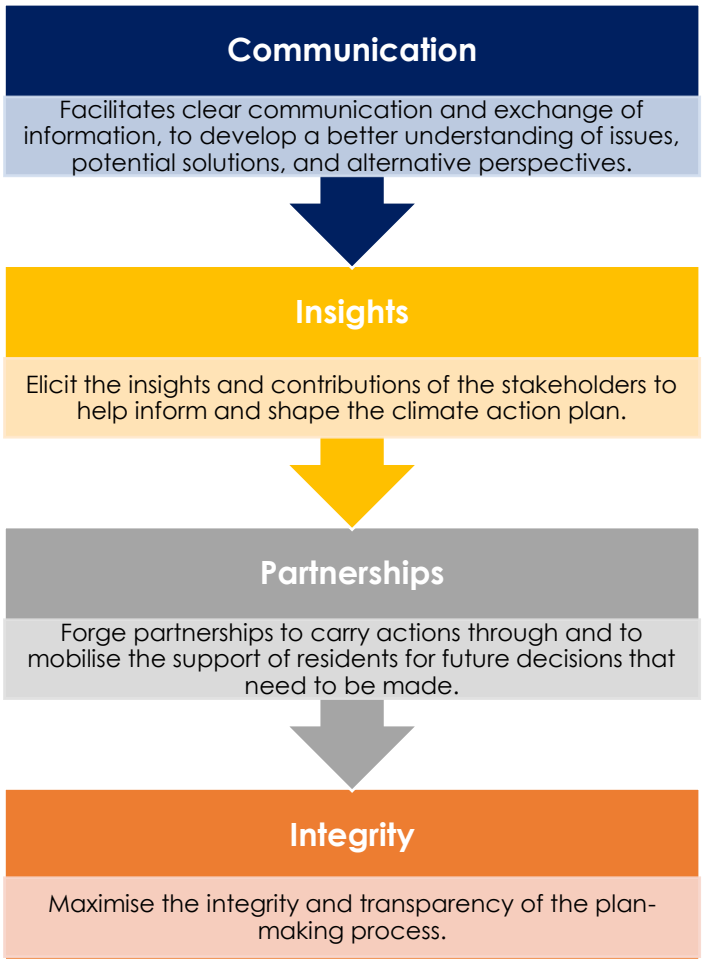


Figure 2: Objectives of Stakeholder Engagement

Clare County Council recognises the importance of public and stakeholder engagement in the development of the Climate Action Plan.

The objectives of engagement with stakeholders early in the plan-making process are outlined in the Figure 5. Two rounds of public consultation were undertaken to inform the development of the Climate Action Plan. This included both a Pre-Draft Public Consultation and Draft Consultation.

The process for engaging stakeholders in the development of the plan has been informed by the resource '[A Guide for Inclusive Community Engagement in Local Planning and Decision Making]'.

Over 400 items of feedback were received from individuals and community groups, businesses and governmental agencies and departments via the various means of engagement during these two phases of public consultation for the Climate Action Plan.

Section 16 of the Climate (Amendment) Act 2021 outlines the provisions for consultation with respect to the development of the Local Authority Climate Action Plan. This includes:

- Publish a draft of the proposed Climate Action Plan
- Consult and co-operate with adjoining local authorities
- Consult with the Public Participation Network (PPN)
- Publish a notice on the internet, and in at least one newspaper inviting public submissions
- Have regard to any submissions made with respect to the completion of the Climate Action Plan

The Chief Executive Report on Submissions outlines, in detail, the process followed for the Draft Public Consultation and summarises all submissions received during this period and the updates made to the Climate Action Plan as a result. The consultation process also included a number of briefings to Elected Members and engagements with staff of Clare County Council to support the Climate Action Plan's development.

70%
Respondents Concerned About Climate Change

76%
Respondents Believe They Have a Role To Play

67%
Respondents Believe Their Actions Can Make A Difference

3.2. Youth Engagement

Climate change is a global challenge that will have significant long-term impacts, and young people will inherit the consequences of decisions made today. Engaging youth in climate planning ensures that their future interests and well-being are taken into account.

A short Climate Action Plan Youth Consultation Survey was developed which was tailored for students to provide their insights and recommendations for consideration in the Climate Action Plan.

The survey gained feedback from students on the key drivers, barriers, and recommendations for climate action. The main findings are summarised below, with the full set of findings available in the Stakeholder Engagement Report.

From the feedback provided in the survey, it is evident that students are more worried about climate change than the general public, however it is positive to see that they are more confident of their ability to take actions that will deliver change.

91
Students Participated in the Consultation

84%
Are Worried About Climate Change

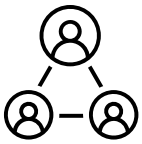
75%
Respondents Believe Their Actions Can Make A Difference

Key Drivers to Climate Action

1

Information on Climate Change

2



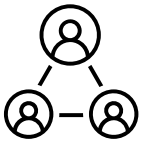
Appreciation of the Environment

Key Barriers to Climate Action

1

Lack of Skills and Knowledge

2



Lack of Opportunities to Engage

Recommended Climate Actions

- Increase nature restoration and rewilding
- Create more cycle lanes in towns and villages
- Increase the number of public electric vehicle charging stations
- Operate more public transport routes across the county
- Increasing the use of renewable technologies
- Providing more opportunities to learn about climate change in school
- Increase recycling of materials and community clean-up events
- Implement the use of electric school buses

3.3. Partnerships

3.3.1. Delivery through Partnerships

Developing strong partnerships and capitalising on opportunities to advocate for Clare's priorities is necessary for transformational change. Clare County Council does not always have direct control however, there are many spaces where the Council can advocate for the reform necessary to protect Clare's environment and bring about air quality improvements, economic resiliency, just transition for our people, and public health outcomes that are of significant importance to our communities. Social enterprises across County Clare are working to advance climate action across multiple areas and are recognised as a key partner in enabling transformative change.

"Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships."

- ***Sustainable Development Goal 17 (Target 17.17)***

Figure 3: Bishop's Quarter Beach, Ballyvaughan

3.3.2. Core Delivery Partners

To advance innovation and increase capacity, Clare County Council will create, facilitate, and encourage partnerships with businesses, institutions, industries, and organisations to develop and implement climate actions and projects. Some of our core partners for delivery are included below, this list is not exhaustive and Clare County Council welcome interested parties to engage in the delivery of the Climate Action Plan. It is also clear that climate change is a transboundary challenge; it does not stop at political and geographical borders. As such, a regional approach has been agreed by the local authorities in the Atlantic Seaboard South CARO whereby they can collaborate closely on the implementation of the Climate Action Plans. These partnerships can provide opportunities for collaboration on projects, shared learnings, technical support and leveraging of funding opportunities during the implementation of actions in the plan. Clare County Council's efforts in citizen and stakeholder engagement will continue to be supported by the CAROs, the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Dialogue on Climate Action, and other partners.

3.4. Climate Change Risk Assessment

3.4.1. Purpose of Climate Change Risk Assessment

The aim of climate adaptation is to reduce the risks posed by climate change to County Clare's environment, society, economy, and increase resilience to the impacts associated with climate change. In order to understand how County Clare needs to adapt to observed and projected changes in climate, KPMG supported Clare County Council to build the adaptation baseline. This involved the development of a climate change risk assessment (CCRA). This Climate Change Risk Assessment has been undertaken in accordance with Technical Annex B of the Local Authorities Climate Action Plan Guidelines and provides a qualitative assessment of climate risk for County Clare. In assessing climate change risk, the risk assessment framework of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was adopted. This framework identifies three key components of climate risk: hazard, exposure, and vulnerability. Details of the framework are explained in the figure below.

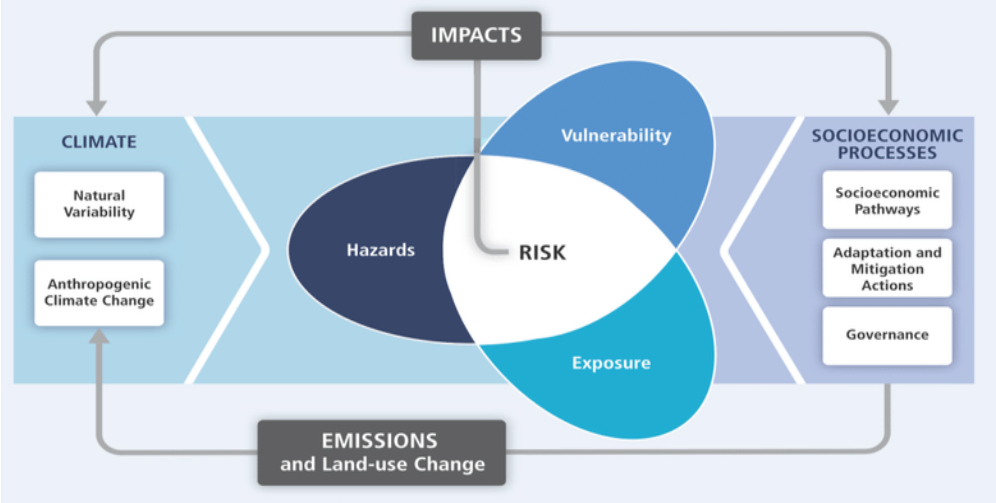


Figure 4: Framework for climate risk proposed by the IPCC WGII-AR5 (2014)

3.4.2. Climate Change Projections

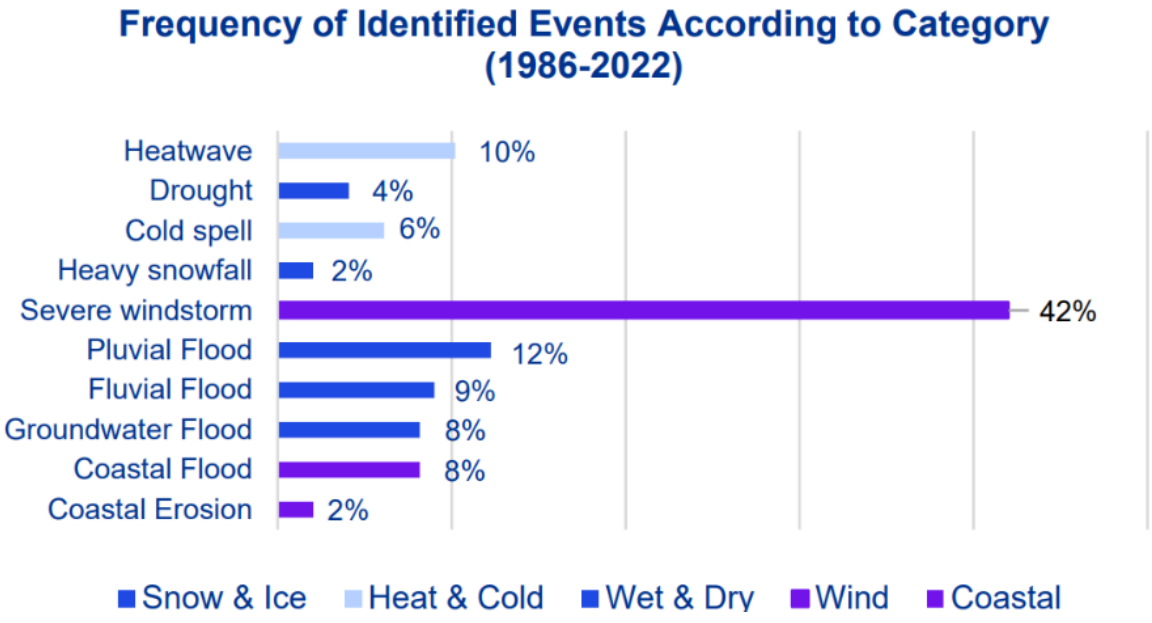
Projecting future climate change involves assessing a number of different uncertainties. Scenarios, called Representative Concentration Pathways (RCPs) have been developed to simulate how the climate might change in the future in response to different levels of greenhouse gases. In assessing climate change risk for County Clare, information for two future climate scenarios were employed, RCP4.5 and RCP 8.5. The RCP8.5 scenario was used as it represents a 'worst-case' scenario which allows for a conservative risk assessment approach.

RCP4.5
Represents an 'intermediate emissions' scenario with an average global warming of 1.4°C for the 2046-2065 period.

RCP8.5
Represents a 'very high emissions' scenario with an average global warming of 2°C for the 2046-2065 period.

3.4.3. Observed Changes and Impacts of Clare's Climate

In line with global trends, the climate of Ireland and Clare is changing, temperatures are increasing, and patterns of precipitation are changing. These changes are projected to continue and intensify with a wide range of impacts for Clare and Clare County Council. A summary of key climate and weather-related changes already observed for County Clare are detailed below. The Shannon Airport long term weather station was used for baseline 30-year average figures. Based on the climate hazard baseline, severe windstorm events have impacted upon County Clare most frequently over the period 1986-2022, with heatwaves, flooding events (river, pluvial, groundwater, and coastal) and cold spells also affecting the County on several occasions. Coastal erosion, heavy snowfall, and droughts have also impacted Clare in the time period but have occurred less frequently. An overview of the frequency of the climate hazards is presented below. A comprehensive summary of the information that underpins the exposures, vulnerabilities and impacts for the hazards that exist within County Clare was detailed in the Climate Change Risk Assessment Technical Report.



3.4.4. Projected Changes and Impacts on Clare's Climate

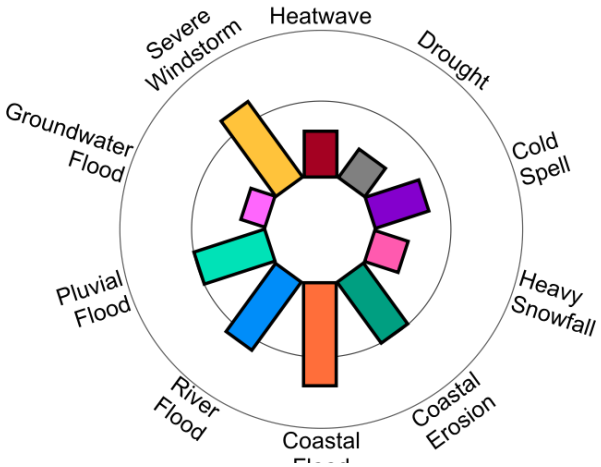
Having identified and assessed the range of climate hazards already experienced in Clare, the projected changes in the frequency and intensity of climate hazards was assessed to understand how existing climate impacts and risks faced by Clare County Council may be exacerbated. The risk of existing hazards such as river, pluvial, and coastal flooding and coastal erosion is likely to increase in the future because of changes in both hazard frequency as a result of climate change and impact due to changes in exposure and vulnerability.

Heatwaves and droughts although already experienced in County Clare, are expected to occur more frequently due to climate change and with a greater impact on County Clare in the future. These hazards can therefore be considered as emerging risks for the region. Although the frequency and impact of severe windstorms is thought to be unchanged in the future, these events will remain a risk for County Clare.

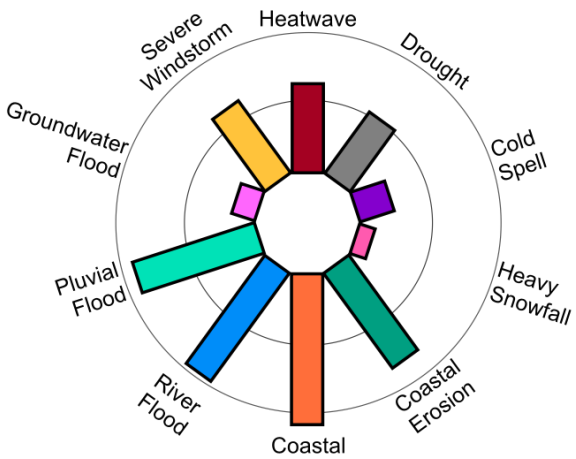
"The climate projections for the next century indicate that observed climate trends will continue and intensify over the coming decades. Adaptation refers to actions taken to reduce vulnerability and exposure to climate change impacts. The more we reduce global emissions, the less adaptation to the consequences of climate change will be required. However, some impacts are already unavoidable."

- **Environmental Protection Agency**

The risk of groundwater flooding is also unchanged in the future, however, there is uncertainty associated with how climate change will impact the occurrence of this hazard. The impact of heavy snowfall and cold spells on County Clare remains constant, however, due to the potential decrease in hazard frequency, the overall risk of these hazards is likely to reduce in the future, resulting in less risk. Climate change not only means changes in the average climate such as temperature but also changes in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather and climate events throughout the county. Though climate change projections, like all projections of the future, are subject to uncertainty, the latest climate modelling projections for County Clare are in broad agreement with previous research and are detailed below for the most significant hazards.



Current Risk
The level of risk represented by the size of the bar



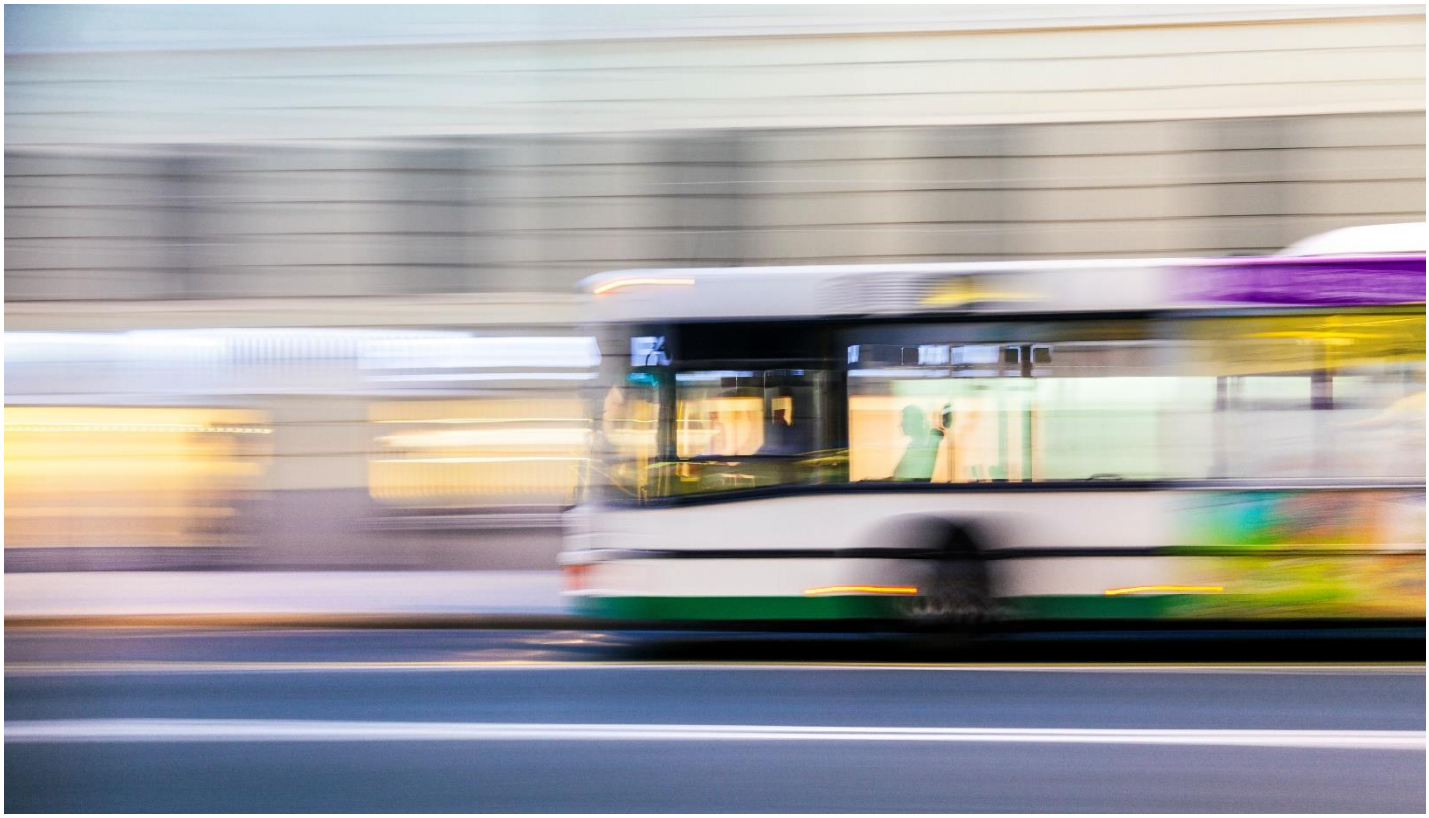
2050 Risk
The level of risk represented by the size of the bar

3.5. Baseline Emissions Inventory

3.5.1. Purpose of Baseline Emissions Inventory

To enable Clare County Council to meet its targets and to help enable the meeting of sectoral targets across the county, we must understand and reduce our contribution to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the atmosphere. The benefits attributed with doing so goes well beyond addressing a global challenge. Perhaps more importantly we build a safer, cleaner, and healthier Clare for all. As part of the Climate Action Plan planning process, a baseline GHG emissions inventory was carried out to understand our starting point and how our actions could impact that. The report evaluates and determines the baseline GHG emissions from various societal sectors in the county and for the local authority organisation in 2018.

The year 2018 was selected nationally as the baseline year to inform this Climate Action Plan. Clare County Councils emissions going forward will be measured against this baseline. This allows Clare County Council to measure the emission reductions required to contribute towards the national emission reduction target of reducing GHG emissions by 51% by 2030. This baseline also aims to raise awareness of climate change and the impact that different sectors within the county have on Ireland's overall GHG emissions. Chapter 4 of The Clare Renewable Energy Strategy (Volume 5 of the County Development Plan 2023-2029) provides a summary of renewable potential, resource and targets.



3.5.2. Emissions Baseline – County Clare

The sectors included in the county wide analysis are: residential, commercial and industrial, industrial processes, agriculture, transport, waste and wastewater, and land use land use change and forestry (LULUCF).

The methodology is based on the Tier 1 'Top-down' Approach defined in Technical Annex C of the Local Authority Climate Action Plan Guidelines. This provided Clare County Council with a 'helicopter' overview and breakdown of where emissions are coming from in the county and what sectors are contributing most. The GHG emissions calculations that inform this report are based on data from MapEire and Ireland's National Emissions Inventory 2021.

Emissions Sources

58%

Of GHG emissions from the transport sector are from passenger cars

67%

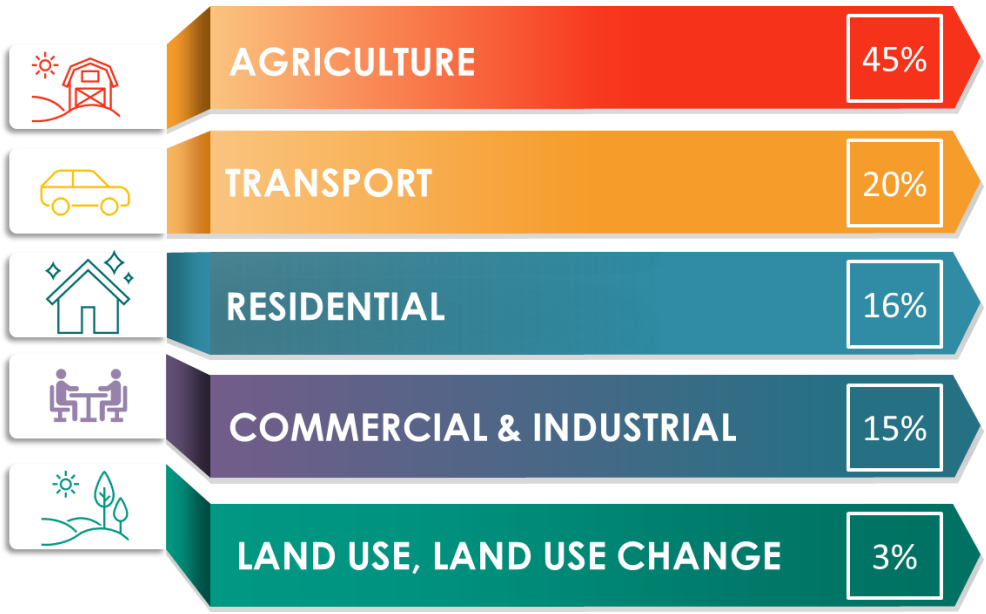
Of GHG emissions from the residential sector are from hot water and space heating

62%

Of GHG emissions from the agriculture sector are from enteric fermentation of cattle

3.5.3. Emissions Profile Summary

Overall, the GHG emissions generated from all the analysed sectors in the county equated to 1,905,730 tCO_2-eq in the baseline year. The top three sectors in the county in terms of total GHG emission were Agriculture, Transport, and Residential producing 45%, 20%, and 16% of the total GHG emissions in the county. This is broadly in line with National GHG emissions data.



3.5.4. Emissions Baseline – Clare County Council Operations

Clare County Council, along with all public sector entities, must reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 51% by 2030, from the baseline year of 2018.

The total target is a 51% reduction of direct energy-related emissions (thermal and transport consumption), plus projected supply side reductions in indirect energy-related emissions from electricity. To track progress on meeting the target, Clare County Council is required to measure and report its GHG emissions data annually. Assessing local authority organisational GHG emissions will facilitate a local authority in understanding the aspects of its organisation that contribute the most in terms of GHG emissions, and the optimum areas to target to successfully reduce their organisational GHG emissions in line with climate action planning requirements.

13%
Reduction in total GHG emissions from Clare County Council Operations since 2018

6,205 tCO2e
Total GHG emissions from Clare County Council Operations

350,000 kwh
Of renewable energy produced from biomass in Clare County Council HQ annually

Emissions Profile Summary

Electricity usage related GHG emissions for the local authority are a result of building and facility electricity usage and public lighting electricity usage. Thermal GHG emissions for the local authority are a result of building and facility space heating. Transport GHG emissions for the local authority are associated from the diesel and petrol usage among the local authority's vehicles and plant fleet. In 2018, the Council's total GHG emissions amounted to 6,205 tonnes of CO_2e. Transport was the highest contributor, accounting for 64% of total GHG emissions. Transport related GHG emissions for the local authority are relatively high by comparison to electricity and thermal related GHG emissions, and by comparison to many other local authorities across Ireland. This was followed by thermal, contributing 24% of total GHG emissions, with electricity contributing 12% of total GHG emissions respectively.

Electricity

12%

Thermal

24%

Transport

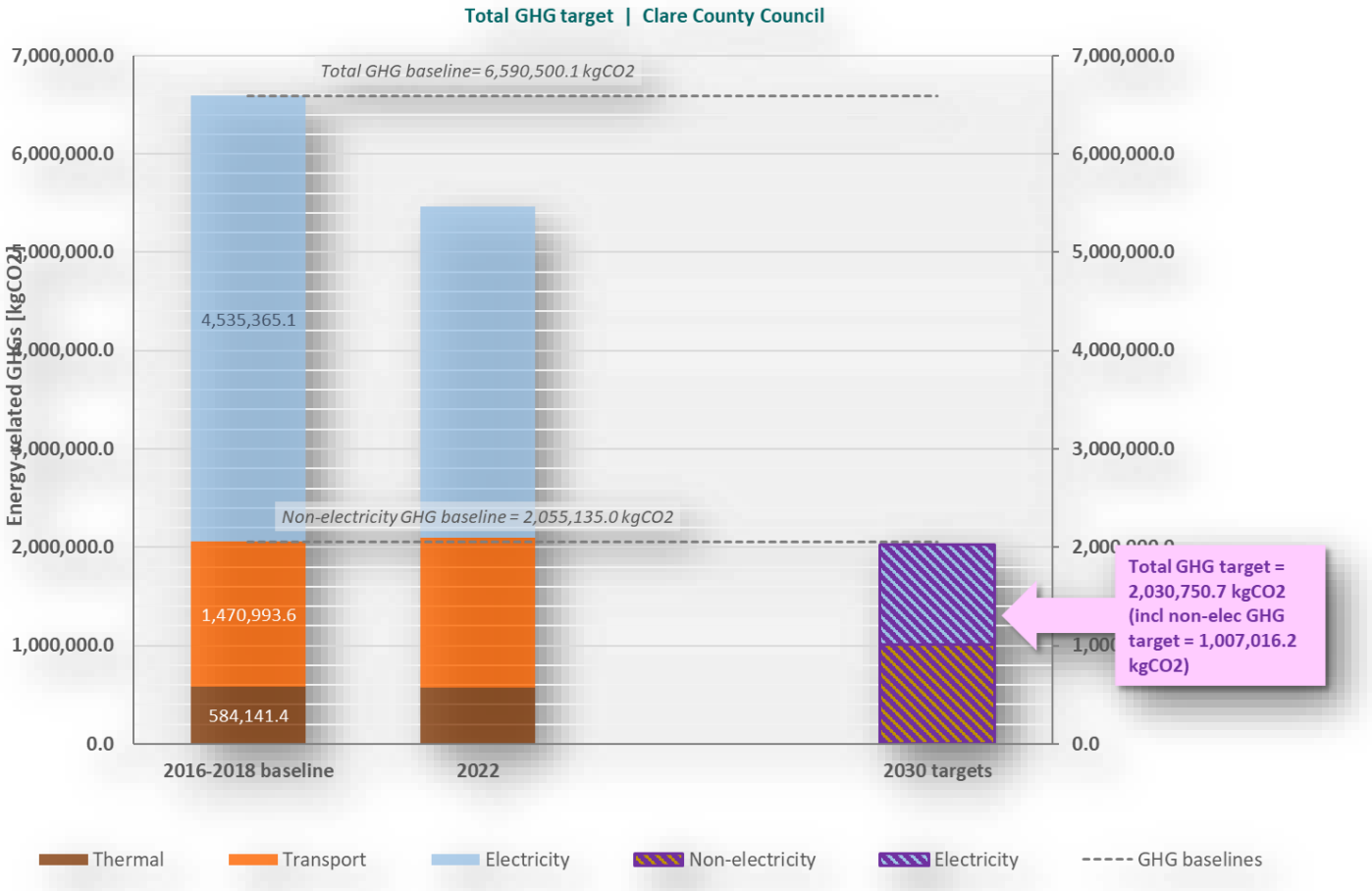
64%

3.5.5. Clare County Council Targets

Clare County Council, along with all public bodies, must improve its energy efficiency by 50% by 2030. This target builds on the previous 33%-by-2020 energy efficiency target. Clare County Council must also reduce its GHG emissions by 51% by 2030. The target is a 51% reduction of direct energy-related emissions (thermal and transport consumption), plus projected supply side reductions in indirect energy-related emissions from electricity. A summary of the gap to meeting the 51% greenhouse gas emissions reduction target, and graphical representation of the workload required, to achieve the 2030, 51% target is outlined in the figure below. The overall projection is for a reduction of 4,559,750 kg of CO_2e when compared to the 2016-18 baseline. Since then, Clare County Council has reduced its emissions by approximately 1,190,500 kg of CO_2e as of 2022. A significant proportion of this reduction is due to public lighting upgrades which has reduced emissions by approximately 250,000 kg.

The requirements for public sector bodies is to lead by example in the Climate Action Plan, and a commitment by local authorities to monitor, evaluate and report annually on the implementation of activities contained in the Local Authority Climate Action Charter, means that there is a need to measure, demonstrate and improve climate action performance to support national climate ambitions to 2050.

The following chapter will identify climate actions focused at achieving Clare County Council's Climate targets.



4. Climate Action

4.1. Framework of Climate Actions

The Climate Action Plan provides a mechanism for bringing together both climate adaptation and climate mitigation actions to help drive positive climate action and outcomes across the local authority and its administrative area. The framework of climate actions set within the plan configures the arrangement of climate actions within a defined structure that ensures alignment between on the ground actions and the high-level vision that the plan aspires to deliver.

To ensure alignment between potential on-the-ground actions and the vision that the plan aspires to deliver, actions will need to be arranged within a defined structure, comprising of:

1. An overarching **Vision** that reflects the shared perspective of a climate resilient and climate neutral future for County Clare.
2. A plan **Mission** that speaks practically to the grounded purpose of the local authority in delivering effective climate action in County Clare.
3. **Strategic Goals** that set the context for the climate actions and establish a structured or thematic arrangement of actions.
4. **Objectives** that support the delivery of the strategic goals whilst framing the appropriate emphasis of the actions.
5. **Actions** that are specific, realistic, action-focused, time-bound, and measurable reflecting a scaling up of ambitious local level climate action. Some actions will include references to notes which are specified in the Appendix, these notes refer to additional environmental considerations associated with these specific actions.

Vision Statement

Clare is a national leader in Climate Action supporting sustainability & low carbon, climate resilient and biodiverse communities and businesses.

Mission Statement

Deliver and enable climate action for a just transition to a low carbon and climate resilient future within County Clare which results in sustainable growth, a high quality of life, inclusivity, and service accessibility.

4.1.1. Strategic Goals

The strategic goals reflect the themes emerging from the evidence base, stakeholder engagement & consultation carried out with other local authorities. In addition, they have been tailored in both number and emphasis to suit the context of Clare County Council and to maximise the approach to implementation. The identification and development of strategic goals played a combined role to support the overarching plan vision and mission whilst establishing a structured approach to the arrangement of climate actions to be addressed.

4.1.2 Timeframes

Each action is assigned a timeframe for delivery. The timeframes are divided into:

- Short-term (implementation by 2025)
- Medium-term (implementation by 2027)
- Long-term (implementation by 2029)

4.1.3 Environmental Governance

Environmental governance plays a pivotal role in safeguarding our ecosystems and natural resources. Clare County Council will ensure that its policies, regulations, and decisions regarding the environment are made with sustainability in mind, balancing its communities needs with the protection of the environment.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA) processes are important mechanisms to ensure that environmental protection and nature conservation management considerations are integrated into the development and implementation of the local authority climate action plan. Clare County Council are committed to implementing the mitigation measures as outlined in the Strategic Environmental Assessment in response to climate actions considered to have potentially significant environmental effects.

EU Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive

The Local Authority Climate Action Plan is subject to compliance with the SEA Directive (Directive 2001/42/EC) on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment. SEA is the process by which environmental considerations are required to be fully integrated into the preparation of plans and programmes developed by public authorities, prior to their adoption. SEA is the formal and systematic evaluation of the likely significant effects of implementing any plan or programme on the environment.

The European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (S.I. No. 435 of 2004), as amended by S.I. No. 200 of 2011, gives effect to the transposition of the SEA Directive into Irish law.

For the purposes of compliance with the SEA Directive, each local authority as the 'competent authority' is required to carry out an environmental assessment of the likely significant effects on the environment of implementing the climate action plan in accordance with the provisions of the above-mentioned regulations. The SEA report accompanies this Plan.

EU Habitats Directive-Appropriate Assessment

The local authority climate action plan is also subject to Appropriate Assessment under Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC) to determine if its implementation is likely to have significant effects on any Natura 2000 sites. Local authorities, as the prescribed 'competent authorities', may only adopt the plan after having ascertained that it will not have a significant impact on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site on its own, or in combination with other plans or projects.

The directive provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance through the establishment of the Natura 2000 network. The Natura 2000 network includes sites designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) under the Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated under the EU Birds Directive (Directive 79/409/EEC, amended by Directive 2009/147/EC).

4.1.4 Governance Principles

Clare County Council have integrated six guiding principles to sit alongside the actions developed within the plan.

These principles define the commitment of Clare County Council to mainstream Environmental Governance into its culture and across all its service areas.

Governance Principle 1 Promote climate action projects that support and maximise environmental co-benefits, such as biodiversity protection and enhancement, improved air, water or soil quality, well managed and enhanced recreation, amenity and cultural heritage attractions, to ensure win-win benefits are gained.	**Governance Principle 2** Support or facilitate climate action related projects and initiatives which seek to make improvements in soil structure, management, and health by increasing soil organic carbon - which will create the environmental co-benefits of improving flood resilience by enhancing water holding capacity of soils and increasing the level of GHG sequestration associated with land use functions.	**Governance Principle 3** Ensure all development underpinned or supported by climate action is planned and implemented in a manner that appropriately considers the potential for environmental co-benefits, potential environmental impacts and environmental protection requirements. No climate action related development project that is likely to have a significant negative effect on the receiving environment shall be supported.
Governance Principle 4 Flood and coastal defence projects, or related maintenance works, shall be carried out in a manner that promotes climate action-biodiversity related co-benefits, and shall have due regard for the protection and enhancement of rare, protected, or important habitats and species.	**Governance Principle 5** Ensure climate action related projects are carried out in a manner that promotes climate action-cultural heritage co-benefits, and do not result in unauthorised physical damage to cultural, archaeological, or architectural features, or unauthorised or inappropriate alteration of the context of sensitive cultural heritage features.	**Governance Principle 6** Ensure climate action related projects are carried out in a manner that promotes climate action water quality co-benefits, and align with the provisions of the Water Framework Directive and relevant River Basin Management Plan.

4.2. Objectives and Actions

4.2.1. Governance and Leadership

Climate Action Charter for Local Authorities.

This Charter sets out a list of 24 commitments that underlines the leadership role of local authorities in delivering effective climate action. Clare County Council is a signatory to the Charter which aims to ensure that every local authority embeds decarbonisation, sustainable development, and climate resilience into every aspect of the work they do.

Effective governance and leadership at Local Authority level requires the formulation and implementation of policies, regulations, and strategies to ensure a clear pathway towards our climate objectives. This Plan will align all services, policies, and projects of Clare County Council with existing international, national, and regional Climate policy, and will further mainstream climate thinking into the culture of Clare County Council.
Leadership in climate change requires long-term vision and planning whilst recognising the framework within which the Local Authority functions. In that regard, seeking to create collaborations with other public bodies and stakeholders is crucial to enabling other sectors within County Clare to meet their climate objectives.

In dealing with severe weather events in recent years, Clare County Council has demonstrated its ability to pivot to deal with these challenges. As we move into a more uncertain weather-related future, this Plan aims to ensure the Local Authority will remain responsive and resilient to the needs of our communities.

Clare County Council will endeavour to foster innovation and seek investment over the course of this Plan. We will work to ensure that the appropriate resources, both human and financial, are secured to enable positive climate action to take place.

CASE STUDY

Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project

Meeting our GHG emissions objectives will require the clear commitment of Clare County Councils Senior Management going forward. This commitment has already been signalled by the provision of an €8.5 million budget to convert its public lighting stock to energy efficient LEDs. The PLEEP (Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project) is currently underway in the southwest region. This a regional project where public lights are being retrofitted with energy efficient LEDs in counties Cork, Clare, Kerry, Limerick, and Waterford, with Cork County Council as the lead. The benefits of the project are as follows:

- LEDs can use up to 50% less energy which will result in a reduction in energy usage & carbon emissions.
- The target energy savings for LED retrofits is 3,444,000 kWh.
- A full-condition survey of the public lighting stock is being undertaken. This asset management information will enable better management of our public lighting network.
- Reduction in future maintenance costs.

Objectives

Objective GL1

Establish processes that facilitate the integration of climate into decision making and enable climate action transparency and accountability

Objective GL2

Mainstream climate action throughout all of Clare County Council's strategic, financial, and operational planning

Policy Alignment

Sustainable Development Goals[1]

Delivering Effective Climate Action[2]

Co-Benefits

Enhanced Governance

Civic Engagement

Staff Engagement

Improved Service Delivery

[1] For more information on SDG Alignment see Section 2.5
[2] For an overview of the Delivering Effective Climate Action 2030 (DECA) Goals see Section 2.3.4
Some actions will include references to notes which are specified in the Appendix, these notes refer to additional environmental considerations associated with these specific actions.

Governance and Leadership Actions

Objective GL1

Establish processes that facilitate the integration of climate into decision making and enable climate action transparency and accountability

No	Action	KPI	Lead	Timeframe	Area
G1.1	**Establish a Climate Action Steering Committee within Clare County Council**	Number of Meetings	Physical Directorate	Short-term	Both
G1.2	**Develop annual Climate Action Implementation Plans to support delivery of Climate Action Plan**	Plan developed	Physical Directorate	Short-term	Both
G1.3	**Develop Climate Communications Plan to report climate action progress and promote climate action**	Communications Plan Developed / Actions Implemented	Corporate, Physical Directorate	Short-term	Both
G1.4	**Monitor national and regional climate-related policy and legislation developments to support meeting national climate objectives**	Number of policy and legislative reviews conducted	Physical Directorate	Medium-term	Both
G1.5	**Join the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy**	Successful integration into Global Covenant of Mayors	Physical Directorate	Short-term	Both
G1.6	**Develop strategy/resources to ensure all council-owned buildings are included under a broadened Facilities Management System to facilitate upgrading, retrofitting, and increased sustainability of all such buildings**	Strategy developed / System in place	Physical Directorate	Long-term	Both

Objective GL2
Mainstream climate action throughout all of Clare County Council's strategic, financial, and operational planning

No	Action	KPI	Lead	Timeframe	Area
G2.1	**Advance the implementation of climate-related objectives in the County Development Plan** Note 1	CDP Climate Actions Progressed	Council-wide	Short-term	Both
G2.2	**Mainstream climate mitigation and adaptation as integral considerations in the development of the Clare County Council Corporate Plan 2024 – 2029**	Climate Action integrated into Corporate Plan	Management Team, Corporate, Physical Directorate	Short-term	Both
G2.3	**Develop synergies with other public bodies operating in the county and region working towards advancing climate action**	Number of Engagements with Partners	Physical Directorate	Short-term	Both
G2.4	**Implement an annual staff engagement and training programme to advance climate action in the workplace**	Annual Programme Complete / Number of interventions	Physical Directorate	Short-term	Both
G2.5	**Develop Green Public Procurement (GPP) Strategy to ensure GPP is mainstreamed through all sections of Clare County Council**	GPP strategy developed	Finance	Medium-term	Both

4.2.2. Built Environment

To ensure that key assets such as the natural and built environment are protected and enhanced, and that the Council ensure the resilience to climate change of infrastructural assets. All future investment decisions and development proposals to be informed by climate change issues.

- Clare County Development Plan (2023-2029)

The Built Environment plays a significant role in how people interact. It is constructed to meet the needs of communities and individuals providing spaces for living, working, transportation, recreation, and other activities. Consequently, the Built Environment has implications for society as the design and operation of the built environment can influence energy consumption, resource use and GHG emissions. Clare County Council will focus on reducing the level of emissions from its built assets by 51% by 2030, from a 2016-2018 baseline, and also increase energy efficiency by 50% by 2030, from a 2009 baseline.

The challenge facing society is to move from the intensive use of fossil fuels towards using cleaner and renewable sources of energy to heat our homes and businesses, but also to retrofit our assets to a level that creates a more frugal and efficient use of energy. The actions within the Built Environment thematic area support the integration of climate considerations in new build design and construction. Clare County Council will also support efforts to tackle energy poverty through measures such as accelerating home energy efficiency upgrades and providing guidance on energy efficiency and energy support measures.

Through the Climate Change Risk Assessment undertaken in the development of this Plan, it is evident that already 'locked in' climate change will result in greater levels of precipitation, and greater probability of prolonged dry spells in the coming decades. Through the identification of vulnerable areas and communities, Clare County Council will work to provide the necessary upgrades and projects to ensure that all communities are resilient to these threats.

CASE STUDY

Áras Contae an Chláir

Áras Contae an Chláir uses electrical and thermal related energy to maintain its operations, with electricity, biomass woodchip and natural gas the primary energy sources utilised. The biomass woodchip is being sourced locally within a 3-kilometer radius and is enabling GHG emissions reductions while adding local economic value to the supply chain. The biomass woodchip produces around 350,000 kilowatt-hours (kWh) of clean energy annually at Áras Contae an Chláir, at around half the cost of fossil fuels.

Additionally, Clare County Council has a formal certified Energy Management System (ISO50001: 2018) in place, and are monitoring and reporting energy usage on an annual basis using the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland's Monitoring and Reporting System. Over the past ten years, Clare County Council has managed its energy profile and has reduced its energy intensity by 36.9%, with Áras Contae an Chláir being influential in achieving, and surpassing the 33% target-by-2020 set.

Objectives

Objective BE1

Implement effective energy management and energy efficiency/generation projects across Clare County Council assets aligned with 2030 targets and net zero trajectory

Objective BE2

Ensure the integration of climate action in spatial planning to enable County Clare to transition to a low carbon and resilient society

Objective BE3

Ensure an effective and sustainable approach to climate adaptation as part of emergency, flood risk, and coastal erosion management

Policy Alignment

Sustainable Development Goals

Delivering Effective Climate Action

DECA 2

DECA 3

DECA 4

DECA 6

Co-Benefits

Job Creation

Local Development

Greater Resilience

Reduced Costs

Some actions will include references to notes which are specified in the Appendix, these notes refer to additional environmental considerations associated with these specific actions.

Built Environment Actions

Objective BE1

Implement effective energy management and projects across Clare County Council assets aligned with 2030 targets and net zero trajectory

No	Action	KPI	Lead	Timeframe	Area
BE1.1	**Conduct Energy Audits across Clare County Council's Significant Energy Users (SEUs) to inform creation of Gap to Target analysis, with a focus on following-up on targets set**	Energy Audits Complete	Energy Management Team, Economic Directorate	Short-term	Mitigation
BE1.2	**Maintain ISO 50001 Energy Management Standard for Clare County Council**	ISO 50001 Maintained	Energy Management Team	Short-term	Mitigation
BE1.3	**Complete annual energy consumption reporting to the national energy monitoring and reporting system operated by Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI)**	M&R Reporting Complete	Physical Directorate	Ongoing	Mitigation
BE1.4	**Completion of Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project, while ensuring the lumen levels and spectral range are maintained or reduced/controlled to avoid effects to biodiversity**	Energy Reduction (kWh)	Physical Directorate	Short-term	Mitigation
BE1.5	**Undertake deep retrofitting of Clare County Council facilities through the Pathfinder Programme** Note 2	Number of Pathfinder Projects	Energy Management Team, Economic Directorate, Physical Directorate	Long-term	Both
BE1.6	**Develop and Implement energy efficiency projects in Clare County Council owned and operated buildings/assets that deliver on 50% energy efficiency and 51% emissions targets** Note 3	Energy Reduction (kWh)	Energy Management Team, Economic Directorate, Physical Directorate	Ongoing	Mitigation
BE1.7	**Social Housing Stock - Advance retrofitting programme subject to Dept funding, having due regard to protected species, biodiversity, European**	Number of houses retrofitted	Social Directorate	Ongoing	Both

	sites and the need to appropriately conserve protected structures				
BE1.8	**Implement renewable energy projects in Clare County Council buildings/locations that deliver on energy efficiency and emissions targets** Note 4	kW of installed renewable energy	Energy Management Team, Economic Directorate, Physical Directorate	Long-term	Both
BE1.9	**Undertake a county wide review of built facilities (e.g. trails, car parks, bus stops, public toilets, interpretative centres) enabling visitor and community access to our cultural and natural assets to form the basis for a development plan for the enhancement, monitoring, and adaptive management of such facilities to ensure the sustainable management of the projected increase in demand for access to these assets**	Review completed	Tourism	Medium-term	Adaptation

Objective BE2

Ensure the integration of climate action in spatial planning to enable County Clare to transition to a low carbon and resilient society

No	Action	KPI	Lead	Timeframe	Area
BE2.1	**Support the development of renewable energy infrastructure and ancillary facilities in order to meet national, regional and county renewable energy targets through planning policy and land use objectives** Note 5	MW of Renewable Energy Submitted for Planning Approval	Economic Directorate	Ongoing/ Long-term	Both
BE2.2	**Support new developments and major renovations to integrate climate into design through the development management process** Note 6	Number of interventions supporting climate integrated design	Economic Directorate, Social Directorate	Ongoing/ Long-term	Both
BE2.3	**Ensure Ennis Local Area Plan and Shannon Local Area Plan integrate and advance climate action in a manner that maximises climate action co-benefits and ensures appropriate environmental protection**	Climate Action (inc. Green Infrastructure, SUDS) Policies Integrated	Economic Directorate	Medium-term	Both

BE2.4	**Support the implementation of the Shannon Estuary Taskforce Report (including development of Maritime Training Centre of Excellence in Kilrush)** Note 7	Number of supporting interventions	Economic Directorate	Long-term	Both
BE2.5	**Support upgrade of existing residential and commercial properties to promote sustainable compact growth and regeneration having due regard to protected species, biodiversity, European sites and the need to appropriately conserve protected structures**	Number of engagements with owners regarding schemes	Economic Directorate, Social Directorate	Ongoing/ Long-term	Both
BE2.6	**Develop feasibility reports into District Heating for Ennis & Shannon ensuring such a report as appropriate regard to planning and environmental protection considerations**	Feasibility Report Complete	Energy Management Team, Physical Directorate, Economic Directorate	Long-term	Mitigation

Objective BE3

Ensure an effective and sustainable approach to climate adaptation as part of emergency, flood risk and coastal erosion management

No	Action	KPI	Lead	Timeframe	Area
BE3.1	**Review Major Emergency Plan and other relevant risk management plans to ensure incorporation of up-to-date climate risk information**	Plan Updated	Physical Directorate	Short-term	Adaptation
BE3.2	**Develop updated risk assessment of coastal erosion for Clare to manage vulnerability arising from climate impacts**	Assessment Complete	Physical Directorate	Medium-term	Adaptation
BE3.3	**Undertake bridge repair programme to safeguard against climate impacts** Note 8	Number of Bridges Upgraded	Physical Directorate	Ongoing	Adaptation
BE3.4	**Carry out condition survey of Clarecastle Flood Barrage to inform short, medium, and long-term decision making on future flood strategy** Note 9	Survey Completed	Physical Directorate, Economic Directorate	Medium-term	Adaptation

BE3.5	**Implement the recommendations of the Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Study (CFRAMS) programme as it relates to County Clare and to ensure that flood risk management policies and infrastructure are progressively implemented** Note 10	Number of flood schemes commenced/delivered	Physical Directorate	Long-term	Adaptation
BE3.6	**Municipal Districts to identify areas of concern within the Arterial Drainage network and Surface Water network that result in flooding of roads, properties and public assets with a view to creating a programme for maintenance of specific areas**	Areas identified and programme in place	Municipal Districts	Medium-term	Adaptation
BE3.7	**Carry out review of the flood mapping for the Ennis area to identify areas of risk**	Review Complete	Project Management Office	Medium-term	Adaptation

CASE STUDY

DeValera Clare County Library

The new DeValera Clare County Library is currently under construction at Causeway Link, Ennis. The completed project, (2,300 sqm of floorspace), will be a new cultural hub for the town and region, the building will include: a new library, library service headquarters, local studies centre, and an art gallery exhibition space. The contemporary design response will be accessible, user friendly, energy efficient, and flexible for library and community use. The completion of the main construction works is expected in December 2023, followed by building fit-out and opening in 2024.

The building's space heating is a low temperature hot water system operating from a mix of radiators, trench heaters and radiant heat panels. It is fed from a series of air sourced heat pumps which generates the heat to pass into the heating system, providing all of the building's heating hot water and domestic hot water needs. Where possible, there is a high degree of building fabric thermal mass to maintain a stable internal temperature.

A Building Management System will automatically control the building's heating, ventilation, electrical, lighting, shading, access control, and security systems. The completed building will be fully NZEB compliant and achieve a BER A2 energy band/grade equivalent.

4.2.3. Transport

Land-use and transportation are intrinsically linked in planning for our town and village centres and the Council is committed to enabling more sustainable travel options in the county. The County Development Plan facilitates and supports climate change mitigation measures such as the electrification of mobility systems, the promotion of a modal shift to active travel and use of public transport, the integration of land use planning and public transport, and effective land use management to address the issues currently arising from the transport sector.

- Clare County Development Plan (2023-2029)
-

Transitioning towards more sustainable transport systems is one of the major challenges facing Irish society. Approximately 18% of Ireland's GHG emissions are associated with transport, the figure for County Clare is similar at 20%. The primary source of the transport sector's GHG emissions come from the burning of diesel and petrol in combustion engines. There is a high dependence on private passenger cars, which are responsible for the largest share of transport GHG emissions in County Clare at approximately 58%, followed by heavy duty vehicles (includes buses) with 26%, then light duty vehicles with 14%.

The transport-related actions within this Plan will support the uptake of active travel and public travel options, enable the development of electric vehicle charging infrastructure across the county and reduce the GHG emissions associated with the business and commuting travel of Clare County Council. Active and public transport are priority areas to encourage modal shift to more sustainable modes of transport. Active travel in the context of this Climate Action Plan includes walking, wheeling, and cycling or the use of self-powered, non-motorised scooters as part of a purposeful journey. For example, walking to school and cycling to work are both considered forms of active travel. Additionally, the promotion of sustainable travel and road safety initiatives can improve the safety of the roads and improve air quality in towns and villages throughout Clare.

CASE STUDY

Advancing Active Travel

Clare County Council has received Active Travel grant funding from the National Transport Authority (NTA) to increase walking and cycling throughout the county. Projects initially focused on the construction of footpaths, (together with associated works such as public lighting), within rural villages. The NTA is now keen for the grant funding to be primarily used in urban areas to deliver safe, segregated and continuous cycling infrastructure, and in the delivery of their Safe Routes To School programme. The Safe Routes To School programme is developed in consultation with An Taisce to whom schools apply for inclusion in the programme. Its purpose is to improve walking and cycling routes to the selected schools by making targeted interventions to ensure students can choose those modes to journey safely, thereby encouraging an uptake in the number of students choosing walking and cycling and consequently reducing car dependency. The Active Travel team within Clare County Council will continue to deliver the schemes that have been afforded Active Travel grant funding by the NTA.

Objectives

Objective T1

Increase active travel and electric vehicle infrastructure across County Clare towards the advancement of sustainable, accessible, and safe mobility

Objective T2

Reduce emissions across Clare County Council operational, business, and commuting transportation through electric vehicles, sustainable fuels, and behaviour change

Policy Alignment

Sustainable Development Goals

Delivering Effective Climate Action

Co-Benefits

- Better Air Quality
- Sustainable Tourism
- Public Health
- Improved Mobility

Some actions will include references to notes which are specified in the Appendix, these notes refer to additional environmental considerations associated with these specific actions.

Transportation Actions

Objective T1

Increase active travel and electric vehicle infrastructure across County Clare towards the advancement of sustainable, accessible, and safe mobility

No	Action	KPI	Lead	Timeframe	Area
T1.1	**Deliver active travel projects in towns and villages across the county** Note 11	Number of projects commenced/delivered	Physical Directorate	Ongoing	Both
T1.2	**Advance the delivery of the West Clare Railway Greenway** Note 12	Progression through statutory and construction phases	Physical Directorate	Long-term	Both
T1.3	**Complete development of Ennis/Tulla Road, St Flannan's and Lahinch Road active travel projects** Note 13	Project complete	Physical Directorate	Medium-term	Both
T1.4	**Develop and adopt an Electric Vehicle Strategy for County Clare** Note 14	Adoption of Strategy	Physical Directorate	Short-term	Mitigation
T1.5	**Support implementation of Electric Vehicle Strategy to increase electric vehicle charging infrastructure** Note 15	Quantity kW EV Charging installed	Physical Directorate	Long-term	Mitigation
T1.6	**Complete Ennis Local Transport Plan, Shannon Local Transport Plan and North Clare Integrated Transport and Traffic Plan** Note 16	Completion of Plans	Economic Directorate, Physical Directorate, Social Development	Medium-term	Both
T1.7	**Expand 30 km/h speed limit zones to more areas of the County**	Number of roads with 30 km/h speed limit	Cross-departmental	Medium-term	Mitigation
T1.8	**Support the delivery of an efficient and reliable public bus system for Ennis** Note 17	Completion of bus service	Ennis Municipal District	Medium-term	Mitigation

T1.9	**Advance the installation of bus shelters at bus stops throughout the county** Note 18	Number of bus shelters/stops developed/upgraded	Physical Directorate	Ongoing	Both
T1.10	**Support the implementation of the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (LSMATS)** Note 19	Number of interventions supported	Cross-departmental	Long-term	Both
T1.11	**Engage with public transport providers to support enhanced public transport (bus and rail) outcomes including rural bus service expansion and service interconnectivity** Note 20	Number of engagements	Physical Directorate	Long-term	Both
T1.12	**Support the introduction of interventions that enable the uptake of sustainable transportation in communities across Clare** Note 21	Number of interventions supported	Cross-departmental	Long-term	Both
T1.13	**Undertake research, including engagement and mapping, into best practice street space allocation to support sustainable mobility in Ennis**	Research and engagement completed	Cross-departmental	Short-term	Both
T1.14	**Collaborate and support Irish Rail and all stakeholders towards resolving the flooding issue at Ballycar**	Number of engagements	Physical Directorate	Medium-term	Adaptation
T1.15	**Support and facilitate the opening/reinstatement of railway stations on the Western Railway Corridor within County Clare, and in particular at Crusheen**	Number of engagements/ interventions	Killaloe Municipal Districts	Long-term	Both
T1.16	**Advance the remediation/development of footpaths across the county to include remediated footpaths and new build footpaths**	Metres of footpath remediated/built	Physical Directorate	Long-term	Both

Objective T2 Reduce emissions across Clare County Council operational, business, and commuting transportation through electric vehicles, sustainable fuels, and behaviour change					
No	**Action**	**KPI**	**Lead**	**Timeframe**	**Area**
T2.1	**Develop a Vehicle Usage Policy for Clare County Council aligned with sustainability best practice and business requirements**	Vehicle Usage Policy Developed	Physical Directorate	Short-term	Mitigation
T2.2	**Increase procurement of electric light good vehicles in Clare County Council vehicle fleet while ensuring sustainability criteria is appropriately considered during procurement processes and appropriate end-of-life vehicle management practices are in place**	Number of Electric LGV's Procured	Physical Directorate	Ongoing	Mitigation
T2.3	**Conduct feasibility study and integration of renewable alternative fuel options for Clare County Council vehicle fleet ensuring appropriate regard is had to the sustainability of sourced alternative fuels**	Completion of Assessments	Physical Directorate	Short-term	Both
T2.4	**Reduce transportation emissions through driver training, enhanced practices, reduced idling, and optimised fleet**	Reduction in litres/100km	Physical Directorate	Short-term	Mitigation
T2.5	**Enable staff to utilise practical lower-carbon options for undertaking business travel through provision of electric bikes and vehicles, carpooling, etc**	Suite of options available	Physical Directorate	Short-term	Mitigation
T2.6	**Support the uptake of remote working and online conferencing tools to reduce commuting and business travel**	% of staff in suitable roles working remotely	Physical Directorate	Ongoing	Mitigation

4.2.4. Communities and Partnership

"Thinking and acting at a local level helps communities fight climate change and build resilience to climate impacts"

- (UNFCC, 2023)

Climate action is growing across different sectors of Irish society as Ireland strives to become carbon neutral. Local communities and partnerships are key stakeholders in achieving County Clare's GHG emissions targets and the objectives of the Clare Local Authority Climate Action Plan. Community partnerships can facilitate communities to become more resilient and more effectively manage future environmental challenges. Creating opportunities for community engagement and partnerships are essential in generating new and impactful climate action projects and initiatives. A significant objective of this climate action plan is to create community awareness, engagement, and motivation to act in relation to the challenges presented by climate change.

The community and partnerships actions identified in this Climate Action Plan promote community engagement in a manner that promotes mutual learning and establishes meaningful opportunities to find new ways to adapt to and mitigate against the challenges posed by climate change and build awareness of the impacts of climate change and the consequences of inaction. By setting an objective with specified climate actions to promote awareness and facilitate engagement on climate related issues, this Plan aims not just to inform about probable futures relating to climate change but also to enable, empower, and support communities to take positive climate action in a way that is inclusive, fair, and equitable. Supporting an improved public understanding of the impacts of climate change on our seas and oceans is also a key area for consideration.

By recognising different capacities and starting points, the community and partnerships actions aim to develop knowledge and build capacity to accelerate processes of change by supporting and empowering communities, enterprises, and individuals to develop new skills and access the resources necessary to partake in climate action. Clare County Council will also ensure that mechanisms are in place to include disadvantaged and marginalised groups in participatory processes relating to climate action.

CASE STUDY

COMHAIRLE CONTAE AN CHLÁIR
CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL
Libraries

Artists Supporting Climate Awareness

In May 2023, Clare Libraries in collaboration with the Glucksman Art Library launched Green Lines: Irish artists that respond to themes of Climate Change, The Environment, and Sustainability. The exhibition was courtesy of the University College Cork Art Collection and is funded by the Arts Council of Ireland.

Green Lines was an education programme for children that explored themes of climate change and sustainability through art and words. It featured Irish artists that respond to themes of climate change, the environment and sustainability and was available for public viewing during Summer 2023 at Seán Lemass Library, Shannon. Green Lines showcased the works of five artists who outline the beauty and diversity of our natural environment and the importance of biodiversity and wildlife protection.

In conjunction with the Green Lines exhibition, Clare Libraries also developed a series of workshops exploring the themes of climate change, the environment and sustainability using foraging, printing, creative writing, and visual art.

Objectives

Objective C1

Promote awareness and facilitate engagement on climate-related issues in County Clare

Objective C2

Support communities, enterprises, and individuals to access the capacity, skills, and investment necessary to accelerate climate action

Policy Alignment

Sustainable Development Goals

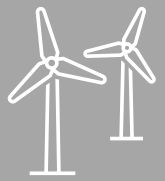
Delivering Effective Climate Action

Co-Benefits

Social Inclusion

Youth Engagement

Education and Awareness



Skills Development

Some actions will include references to notes which are specified in the Appendix, these notes refer to additional environmental considerations associated with these specific actions.

Communities and Partnerships Actions

Objective C1
Promote awareness and facilitate engagement on climate-related issues in the County

No	Action	KPI	Lead	Timeframe	Area
C1.1	**Support climate-related information sharing, events, workshops, cultural and creative initiatives through supports and facilities available to Clare County Council**	Number of Initiatives Supported	Rural Directorate, Physical Directorate	Short-term	Both
C1.2	**Publish written climate-related guidance and support through Clare County Council communication channels**	Number of events/campaigns/published guidance	Physical Directorate	Short-term	Both
C1.3	**Develop mechanism to capture, quantify, map, and promote individual and community-based climate action**	Number of actions recorded once the Reporting Tool is developed and rolled out	Physical Directorate	Short-term	Both
C1.4	**Utilise mechanisms of engagement between Clare County Council and communities/sectors, in particular youth representatives, with respect to climate action policy and project development**	Engagement Mechanisms Established, Number of Engagements	Physical Directorate	Medium-term	Both

Objective C2

Support communities, enterprises, and individuals to access the capacity, skills, and investment necessary to accelerate climate action

No	Action	KPI	Lead	Timeframe	Area
C2.1	**Through the implementation of the Community Climate Action Fund, engage communities in localised Climate Action Projects** Note 22	Number of funding applications submitted/awarded	Physical Directorate	Ongoing/Short-term	Both
C2.2	**Support small enterprises with investment in energy efficient technologies and equipment through the Energy Efficiency Grant**	Number of Businesses Supported	Economic Directorate	Ongoing/Short-term	Both
C2.3	**Support businesses with consultancy services towards the development of sustainability management plans**	Number of Businesses Supported	Economic Directorate	Ongoing/Short-term	Both
C2.4	**Support an increase in the number of farmers partaking in the Teagasc Signpost Programme**	Number of Farmers Participating	Physical Directorate	Medium-term	Both
C2.5	**Support an increase the number of Sustainable Energy Communities established in Clare where specific supported energy efficiency and renewable energy projects will not lead to unintended negative environmental effects in a local community**	Number of SECs established	Physical Directorate	Ongoing/Long-term	Both

C2.6	**Supporting County Clare in transitioning to a more sustainable tourism destination as actioned in the Clare Tourism Strategy 2030 through the measurement and monitoring of sustainable indicators** Note 23	Measurement and monitoring of sustainable indicators / Number of third party certified sustainable tourism enterprises / Co. Clare Destination Certification performance	Tourism Directorate	Long-term	Both
C2.7	**Supporting the engagement of tourism businesses in North Clare with the Geopark Code of Practice for Sustainable Tourism Businesses through the implementation of the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark's Management Plan 2024-2029** Note 24	Measuring and monitoring the number of tourism businesses developing environmental action plans / Measurement and monitoring of the cumulative biennial CO_2 footprint calculation for the B.E.N	Tourism Directorate	Long-term	Both
C2.8	**Support Wetland project within the Ennis 2040 Strategy aimed at increasing biodiversity and sustainability** Note 25	Number of climate-related developments	Economic Directorate	Long-term	Both
C2.9	**Support the uptake of green skills development and educational opportunities by individuals**	Number of promotions of education/training	Physical Directorate	Medium-term	Both
C2.10	**Support the uptake of Digiclare digital hub facilities that enable remote working/co-working across Clare**	Number of Desks/ Meeting Rooms booked	Tourism Directorate	Medium Term	Mitigation
C2.11	**Identification of co-benefits associated with climate action in the development of the Climate Action Implementation Plan and where feasible quantification of co-benefits**	Co-benefits identified and quantified	Physical Directorate	Short-term	Both

4.2.5. Natural Environment

To protect and promote the sustainable management of the natural heritage, flora and fauna of the County, both within protected areas and in the general landscape through the promotion of biodiversity, the conservation of natural habitats, the enhancement of new and existing habitats, and through the integration of Green Infrastructure (GI), Blue Infrastructure and ecosystem services including landscape, heritage, biodiversity and management of invasive and alien species into the Development Plan

- Clare County Development Plan 15.12

Biodiversity and natural habitats in County Clare are vulnerable to the effects of climate change. However, they also have an important role to play in building adaptive capacity. The declaration of a climate change and biodiversity emergency by Dáil Éireann in May 2019 recognises the urgency to act on these interconnected global crises. It is therefore critical to protect, restore, and enhance biodiversity and natural habitats in County Clare in order to increase the resilience of natural and human systems to climate change. Increasing the climate resilience of our built heritage will ensure that it continues to make a significant contribution in creating a sense of place, culture and in strengthening County Clare's unique identity. Climate change is causing fundamental changes to our marine environment, the conservation, protection and recovery of marine biodiversity is a critical issue.

There is consensus that climate change has direct and indirect effects on biodiversity, and that by the end of the 21st century it is likely to become one of the most significant drivers of biodiversity loss. The actions in this section aim to protect against these effects by protecting, conserving, and enhancing County Clare's biodiversity and heritage, ensuring a safe and healthy environment that is resilient to the effects of climate change. Actions are also focused on implementing effective waste management and will support the reduction and management of construction waste and reuse of building materials where possible. The actions listed below are not exhaustive of all planned climate-related actions with respect to biodiversity and heritage, the forthcoming Biodiversity Plan and Heritage Plan will provide a more comprehensive and co-ordinated viewpoint of these areas.

CASE STUDY

Shanakyle Bog Restoration

The Shanakyle Bog Restoration project, which commenced in August 2021 and was completed in September 2022, was the first raised bog restoration and rewetting project carried out in County Clare. The project was carried out by Shanakyle Bog Restoration Group and funded by the Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine (DAFM) under the locally led EIP (European Innovation Partnership) scheme. The Shanakyle Bog Restoration is one of only a handful of peatland restoration projects carried out on privately owned land in Ireland.

The actions undertaken in the project included: rewetting and restoration work on 30 acres (12 hectares) of raised bog habitat, management of 10 acres (4 hectares) of grassland to create wildflower meadows, installing over 30 bird nest boxes for endangered and threatened species, removal of invasive species, etc. The restoration of peatland habitats provides a range of ecosystem services such as: improving water quality of surrounding watercourses, alleviating flooding by retaining water within the bog, and seen positive effects on threatened and endangered bird species.

Objectives

Objective N1

Protect, conserve, and enhance County Clare's biodiversity and heritage

Objective N2

Ensure a safe and healthy environment that is resilient to the effects of climate change

Objective N3

Support communities to reduce waste and lead by example in Clare County Council's waste management

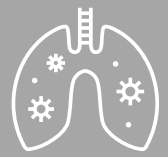
Policy Alignment

Sustainable Development Goals

Delivering Effective Climate Action

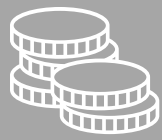
Co-Benefits

Water Quality



Air Quality

Nature Restoration



Circular Economy

Some actions will include references to notes which are specified in the Appendix, these notes refer to additional environmental considerations associated with these specific actions.

Natural Environment Actions

Objective N1

Protect, conserve, and enhance County Clare's biodiversity and heritage through the implementation of effective climate-related actions

No	Action	KPI	Lead	Timeframe	Area
N1.1	**Develop and implement an Updated Clare Biodiversity Action Plan to protect and enhance local biodiversity ensuring climate change is factored into the Plan's development**	Local Biodiversity Action Plan adopted every 6 years and actions implemented	Economic Directorate	Short-term	Both
N1.2	**Identify potential biodiversity opportunities for tree planting and woodland creation within Clare County Council landbanks**	Sites identified and sites planted	Physical Directorate	Medium-term	Both
N1.3	**Support and engage with locally and nationally led European Innovation Partnership (EIP) and Priority Action Areas projects in County Clare with biodiversity, climate, and community benefits**	Number of EIP projects supported	Council-wide	2029	Both
N1.4	**Integrate biodiversity principles into the design and development of social housing**	Development of Policy	Social Directorate	Medium-term	Both
N1.5	**Develop interventions to address Invasive Alien Species through education and awareness**	Education and/or awareness programmes designed and in place as appropriate	Economic, Rural and Physical Directorates	Short-term	Both
N1.6	**Support citizen science projects to target climate sensitive species**	Number of projects supported	Economic Directorate, Physical Directorate	Medium-term	Adaptation

N1.7	**Undertake a county-wide wetland inventory survey to identify and map the wetland resource in County Clare**	Completion of Wetlands Survey	Economic Directorate	Medium-term	Both
N1.8	**Support and work with landowners to undertake a peatland restoration project** Note 26	Project developed	Economic Directorate	Long-term	Both
N1.9	**Support integration of Clare County Council Biodiversity Manual Best Practice Guidelines into the work practices of Clare County Council**	Number of capacity, training and awareness interventions held	Council-wide	Short-term	Both
N1.10	**Develop and implement a policy for the use of chemical pesticides and herbicides across all Clare County Council assets ensuring these substances are only used to a degree that does not cause significant effects on the receiving environment, such as the receiving water environment, biodiversity or European sites**	Policy complete and adopted through relevant process	Council-wide	Short-term	Both
N1.11	**Develop and implement a Heritage Plan to record, conserve, and raise awareness of all aspects of built, natural, and cultural heritage in the County, ensuring that climate change is factored into the Plan's development**	Local Heritage Plan adopted every six years which factors in climate change	Economic Directorate	Short-term	Both
N1.12	**Resource and implement relevant actions of the Heritage Plan 2023-2029**	Relevant actions BHA CCSAP identified (2023) and implemented (annually to 2028)	Economic Directorate, Social Directorate	Long-term	Adaptation
N1.13	**Continue to build climate resilience in local architectural heritage through management and administration of the Built Heritage Investment Scheme, Historic Structures Fund, and any other relevant funds introduced** Note 27	Number of structures per year funded through the scheme	Economic, Physical, and Social Directorates	Long-term	Both
N1.14	**Research sites of high cultural and natural conservation value along the Clare coast to fully understand the implications of climate change and sea level rise and the potential approaches to**	Research complete	Economic Directorate, Social Directorate	Long-term	Both

	mitigation, adaptation and building resilience, with an initial focus on the area of the Loop Head Peninsula which has been identified as a Decarbonisation Zone (DZ)				
N1.15	**Prioritise vulnerable heritage sites that are identified as being most at risk and determine key actions for their protection through the preparation of Conservation Management Plans**	Conservation Management Plans complete	Economic Directorate, Social Directorate	Long-term	Adaptation

Objective N2
Ensure a safe and healthy environment that is resilient to the effects of climate change

No	Action	KPI	Lead	Timeframe	Area
N2.1	**Meet annual targets for domestic wastewater treatment systems inspections across County Clare per the EPA National Inspection Plan with a focus on compliance**	Number of Inspections	Physical Directorate	Short-term	Adaptation
N2.2	**Undertake inspections to ensure compliance with discharge license requirements**	Number of Inspections	Physical Directorate	Medium-term	Adaptation
N2.3	**Undertake pre-season awareness campaign to the effects of runoff on bathing water quality**	Number of campaigns	Physical Directorate	Medium-term	Adaptation
N2.4	**Meet annual inspection targets as per the EPA National Agriculture Inspection Plan**	Number of Inspections	Physical Directorate	Short-term	Both
N2.5	**Work with Irish Water and LAWPRO (Local Authority Waters Programme) to identify the impacts of critical and vulnerable receptors in accordance with the River Basin Management Plan and Water Framework Directive and support the implementation of all relevant remediation and mitigation measures**	Number of Engagements	Physical Directorate	Medium-term	Adaptation

	required to maintain or achieve good or high quality water status in the County				
N2.6	**Enable improvements in air quality through inspections of fuel suppliers to address unauthorised sale of unapproved solid fuels**	Number of Inspections	Physical Directorate	Short-term	Both
N2.7	**Undertake and expand upon air quality monitoring capabilities in accordance with the National Ambient Air Monitoring Programme as well as implementing all relevant recommendations**	Number of air quality monitors	Physical Directorate	Medium-term	Both
N2.8	**Support the National Parks and Wildlife service (NPWS), communities and other stakeholders in the creation of an MPA network and the designation of specific MPAs off the Clare coastline**	Development of MPA network	Economic Directorate, Physical Directorate	Medium-term	Adaptation

Objective N3
Support communities to reduce waste and lead by example in Clare County Council's waste management

No	Action	KPI	Lead	Timeframe	Area
N3.1	**Implement measures to reduce waste generated from Clare County Council's operations, as well as increase the proportion of waste that is recycled or repurposed**	Number of waste management measures	Economic Directorate, Physical Directorate	Ongoing/Long-term	Mitigation
N3.2	**Investigate the development of suitably located composting centres to promote circularity of green waste and support development of community gardens and allotments** Note 28	Number of locations identified/supported	Physical Directorate	Long-term	Both
N3.3	**Support festivals and casual traders to integrate sustainability into their practices**	Number of festivals/traders who integrate sustainability	Physical, Economic and Rural Directorates, Municipal Districts	Short-term	Both

N3.4	**Support the Green Schools initiative and enable an increase in the number of schools actively participating**	Number of supporting interventions / Number of Schools	Physical Directorate	Ongoing/Long-term	Both
N3.5	**Continue to support circular economy and waste-management community-based schemes**	Completed on an annual basis	Physical Directorate, Municipal Districts	Ongoing/Long-term	Both
N3.6	**Support the development of smart water stations across the county to reduce plastic bottle waste**	Number of smart water stations	Physical Directorate, Municipal Districts	Medium-term	Both

5. Decarbonising Zone

5.1 Identification of Decarbonisation Zone

5.1.1. Definition

A Decarbonisation Zone (DZ) is defined as a spatial area, identified by each local authority in Ireland, in which a range of climate mitigation measures are identified to contribute towards meeting the national climate action targets.

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

Kilkee/Loop Head Peninsula has been designated as the Decarbonisation Zone (DZ) for Clare County Council. A DZ is a spatial area identified by the local authority, in which a range of climate mitigation, climate adaptation, and biodiversity measures and action owners are identified to address local low carbon energy, GHG emissions, and climate needs to contribute towards meeting national climate action targets.

The DZs are a demonstration and testbed of what is possible for decarbonisation and undertaking climate action measures at a local and community level. Through a feedback loop of experimentation and evaluation, the DZ enables a flexible, incremental, and community-driven approach to ensure that its objectives are delivered. Technical Annex D of the Local Authority Climate Action Guidelines supports local authorities in the development of their decarbonising zone.

5.1.2. Process

The stages involved in developing the framework for the DZ is informed by the place-based and systems-thinking approach to generate locally tailored policy and assist in the delivery of effective climate action. These approaches aim for continuous learning and improvement overtime, highlighting engagement, and collaboration with stakeholders as being crucial. The five key stages in developing the DZ, as outlined below, are informed by these approaches.

1	**Identification** • Identify and define the Decarbonisation Zone (DZ) area. • Identify a clear overarching vision and objectives.
2	**Baseline and Scoping** • Establish the Baseline Emissions Inventory • Explore policy context and alignment. • Identify and map stakeholders.
3	**Register of Opportunities** • Compile a portfolio of actions, projects, technologies, and interventions.
4	**Action** • Set out actions to be delivered over the lifetime of the plan.
5	**Implement** • Devise a strategy for implementation.

Figure 5: Stages in developing the DZ

5.1.3. DZ Designation

The Loop Head Peninsula has been designated as the DZ for Clare County Council and is shown in the map below. The Kilkee and Loop Head Peninsula's socio-economic and physical environmental characteristics have been reviewed and identified as an appropriate fit for the defined DZ criteria. The Kilkee/Loop Head Peninsula DZ includes the 10 electoral districts of the three most western parishes of County Clare – Kilballyowen, Carrigaholt and Kilkee. The DZ area has a population of 2,893, as per 2016 Census figures. The peninsula is part of the West Clare Municipal District (West Clare MD), which is the largest MD in County Clare. The Kilkee/Loop Head Peninsula is considered to be an appropriate demonstration area, and testbed for undertaking rural decarbonisation measures to be adopted in other rural areas as well as scaled up across County Clare.

Figure 6: Image of Kilkee Loop head Decarbonisation Zone (DZ) Boundary

5.2 Baseline & Scoping

5.2.1. Overview

The development of the Decarbonisation Zone register of opportunities was to be informed by a Baseline Emissions Inventory (BEI) that would provide an estimation of the sources and quantity of GHG emissions, and a process of stakeholder engagement to determine the context and desired outcomes of the community located in the DZ.

Emissions Baseline

The Baseline Emissions Inventory (BEI) for the Kilkee/Loop Head Peninsula DZ area was informed by the guidance document Technical Annex C and Technical Annex D of the Local Authority Climate Action Guidelines. These guidance documents support a robust approach to the assessment and reporting of baseline energy and carbon emissions for all local authorities. The BEI assessment for Kilkee/Loop Head Peninsula DZ followed a Tier 3 approach which is a bottom-up, spatially led approach to BEI development. 2018 was used as the baseline year for the BEI assessment, and this year has been purposefully chosen to align with Ireland's national targets which are set against a 2018 baseline year. Further information on the BEI methodology is available in the Technical Report.

GHG Emissions Overview

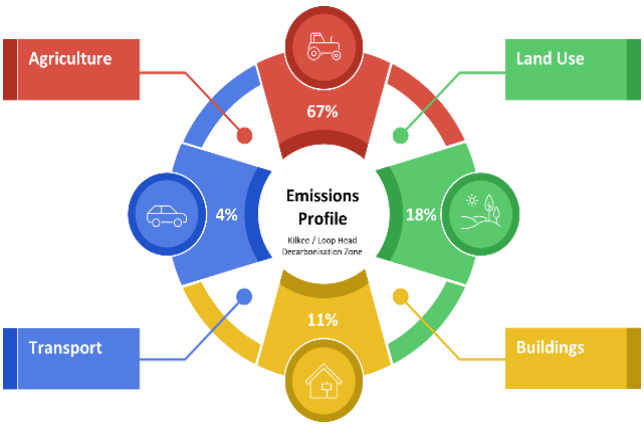


Figure 7: DZ Emissions Profile

The total GHG emissions within Kilkee/Loop Head Peninsula DZ for 2018 equate to approximately 136,185 tCO_2e. The main sources of GHG emissions within the Kilkee/Loop Head DZ area are: agriculture (67%), land use (18%), buildings (residential, commercial, and public) (11%), and transport (4%). Waste accounted for 0.4% of the GHG emissions within the DZ. Although agriculture inherently represents the largest share of GHG emissions in the DZ, it is imperative that focus is also placed on reducing the GHG emissions from all sectors, while ensuring that both the social and economic benefits of climate action are maximised in the locality.

5.2.2. Stakeholder Engagement

Engagement Process

The purpose and specific place-based focus of DZs demands collective buy-in, support and partnerships and encourages a system's thinking approach. A stakeholder engagement plan was developed, and is summarised in the image below, to maximise deliberate participation in the plan making process and to elicit insights and contributions that shape the plan. It was also hoped that engagement would also sustain the involvement of stakeholders as part of the longer-term implementation stage.

Figure 8: DZ Stakeholder Engagement Process

Community Workshops were held with representatives of Loop Head Together, a community partnership of multiple local organisations and initiatives in the DZ area. These workshops were followed up with an Online Consultation to capture the feedback of the broader Kilkee / Loop Head Peninsula. A regional workshop was held with other local authorities across the country to support the development of DZs across the country. Collectively these engagements, described in more detail in the Feedback Report, resulted in the development of the Register of Opportunities, as outlined below, which has been published for Public Consultation and will be the subject of a second Community Workshop with Loop Head Together.

"It is very important to take the views of the locals into account, as a small remote community, we need people working well together. With such huge depopulation in recent years, it is important to create employment and incentives for people to come and live and work in West Clare."

- ***Pre-Draft Consultation Feedback***

54
Respondents from Kilkee / Loop Head Peninsula

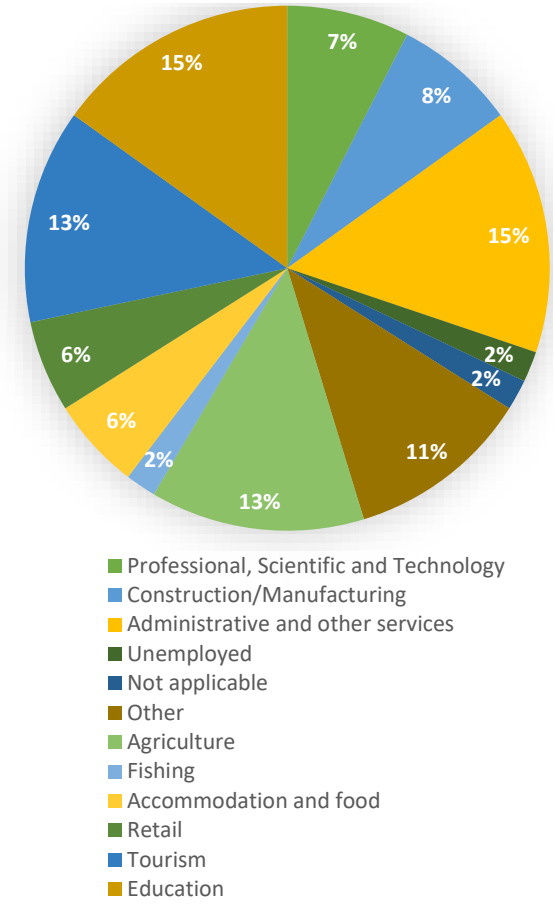
60
Recommendations Provided

33
Potential Climate Actions Reviewed and Prioritised

Opportunities of Climate Action in DZ

The survey was responded to by a diverse set of stakeholders across the Kilkee / Loop Head Peninsula, as represented in the chart to the right. These stakeholders provided qualitative feedback on the key opportunities to be considered in the development of climate actions for the Kilkee/Loop Head Peninsula included:

- Better infrastructure for active travel (cycling, walking)
- Generating employment
- Supporting sustainability in agriculture
- Developing renewable energy (primarily solar PV and offshore wind)
- Improvement in water quality
- Localisation of food production
- Advancing sustainable tourism
- Improved public transport (powered locally from renewable energy)
- Electric vehicle charging points
- Biodiversity enhancement (including reforestation and rewilding projects)



Vision and Objectives for DZ

Technical Annex D of the Local Authority Climate Action Guidelines, which supports local authorities in the development of Decarbonisation Zones, recommends the development of a vision statement. The vision statement serves to simultaneously support the achievement of the existing mission established by Loop Head Together Community Partners and the additional vision established for the wider county for the Climate Action Plan:

"Creating a viable and vibrant future for everyone across the Loop Head Peninsula through transformative and equitable climate action."

CASE STUDY

Kilkee Green Business Hub

Kilkee in Co. Clare was selected as one of Ireland's first My Waste Green Business Hubs. By becoming a Green Business Hub, it will make it easier for both businesses and visitors to Kilkee to take the necessary steps to protect and improve our environment. The aim of the Green Business Hub is to work with businesses and support staff, as well as customers, to firstly prevent and reduce waste generated, including food waste, as well as to separate waste into general waste, recycling, and food waste.

5.3. Register of Opportunities

5.3.1. Prioritisation of Climate Actions

A list of potential climate actions for development in the DZ was developed as part of the Community Workshop. These actions were shared in the Online Consultation with respondents requested to select their highest priority actions across energy, transport, community, economy, and the natural environment. The three key actions for each area, and the quantity of respondents who selected the actions, are outlined in the figure below.

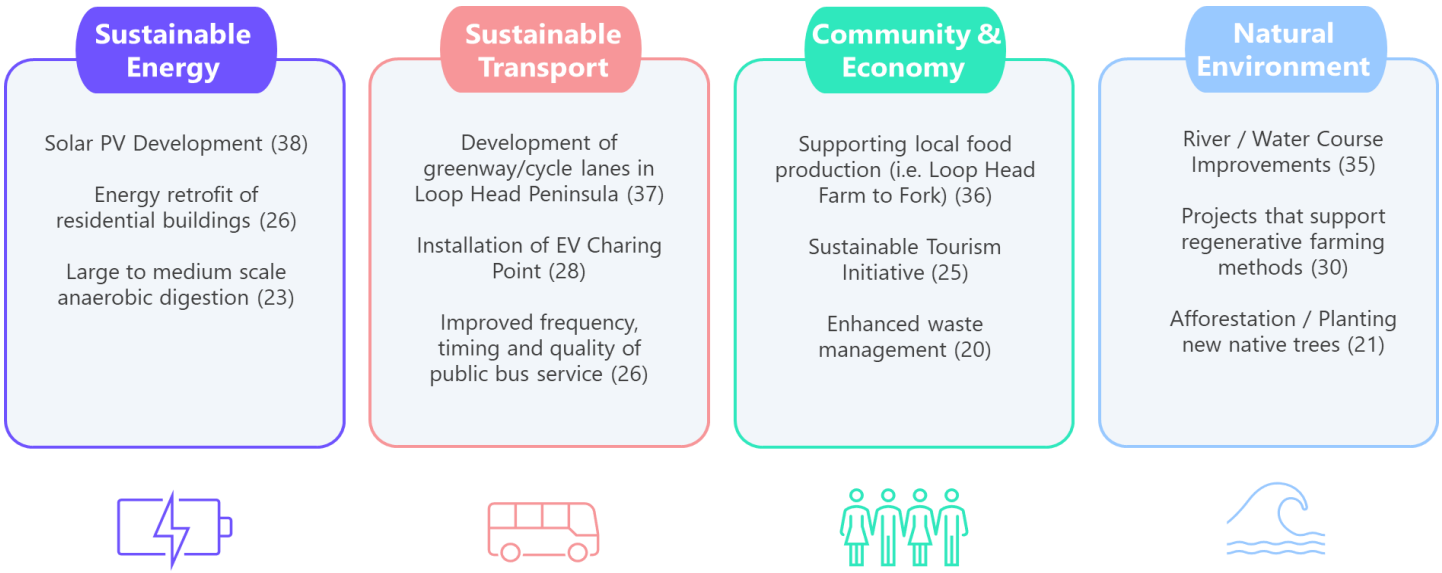


Figure 9: Key climate actions for each thematic area

CASE STUDY

Remote Working in Kilkee and the Loop Head Peninsula

In June 2021, Cross Village, on the Loop Head Peninsula, welcomed a brand-new digital hub and community meeting space to the old national school building in the heart of the village.

The 'Cross Digital Hub' provides remote working space, co-working spaces, a meeting room, and a training room, all with high-speed, fibre broadband, and locker and printing facilities. The building also houses a comfortable communal space for groups to meet or small local gatherings to come together on a regular basis.

Additionally, remote working facilities are available in Kilkee at the Elliot Centre, Smyth Gardens. This modern facility can accommodate remote workers who wish to hot desk along with a conference and events space.

5.4. Decarbonisation Zone Climate Actions

Some actions will include references to notes which are specified in the Appendix, these notes refer to additional environmental considerations associated with these specific actions.

Built Environment Actions

No	Action	KPI	Lead	Timeframe	Area
DZ-BE1	**Support the development of a feasibility study for an anaerobic digestion system to produce biogas and organic fertiliser** Note 29	Feasibility Study Complete	Loop Head Together	Medium-term	Mitigation
DZ-BE2	**Flood Risk: Completion of the Kilkee Flood Relief Scheme** Note 30	Progression through statutory and construction phases	Clare County Council	Long-term	Adaptation
DZ-BE3	**Incorporate into county assessment the risks associated with coastal flooding and coastal erosion in the DZ**	Assessment Complete	Clare County Council	Long-term	Adaptation
DZ-BE4	**Advocate for a suitably located and designed WWTP in Kilkee**	WWTP Advanced	Clare County Council	Long-term	Adaptation
DZ-BE5	**Support Kilkee Waterworld in the implementation of phase 1 and 2 of energy efficiency and emissions reduction solutions**	Energy/Emissions Reduction	Kilkee SEC	Medium-term	Mitigation
DZ-BE6	**Advance the installation of private and community solar PV systems on agriculture, residential, commercial and/or public locations** Note 31	kW of Solar Installed	Clare County Council / Kilkee SEC / Loop Head Together	Long-term	Adaptation

DZ-BE7	**Undertake energy audit of Culturlann Sweeney to identify energy efficiency opportunities to contribute towards LA targets** Note 32	Number of measures implemented	Clare County Council	Medium-term	Mitigation
DZ-BE8	**Undertake energy retrofitting of social housing stock across the DZ** Note 33	Number of Retrofits Undertaken	Clare County Council	Ongoing	Mitigation
DZ-BE9	**Support implementation of energy, biodiversity and climate projects in the DZ via Community Climate Action Fund**	Number of projects supported	Clare County Council / Loop Head Together / Kilkee SEC	Medium-term	Mitigation
DZ-BE10	**Advance coverage of Sustainable Energy Communities initiative across all the DZ**	% Of DZ that is SEC	Clare County Council / CLDC	Short-term	Mitigation

Transportation Actions

No	Action	KPI	Lead	Timeframe	Area
DZ-T1	**Advance the delivery of the West Clare Railway Greenway** Note 34	Progression through statutory and construction phases	Clare County Council	Long term	Mitigation
DZ-T2	**Deliver active travel projects across the DZ having due regard to environmental sensitive such as local sensitive human receptors, biodiversity or European sites**	Number of projects commenced/delivered	Clare County Council / Loop Head Together	Ongoing	Mitigation
DZ-T3	**Support the installation of electric vehicle charging points across the DZ including Kilkee, Loop Head Lighthouse, Kilrush and Vandeleur Walled Gardens** Note 35	Number of EV Charging Points	Clare County Council / Loop Head Together	Medium term	Mitigation
DZ-T4	**Support the installation of community-led electric vehicle charging points across the DZ** Note 36	Number of EV Charging Points	Loop Head Together	Medium term	Mitigation
DZ-T5	**Engage with public transport providers to support enhanced public transport services in the DZ**	Number of engagements	Clare County Council / Loop Head Together	Long term	Both

Communities and Partnerships Actions

No	Action	KPI	Lead	Timeframe	Area
DZ-C1	**Support the development of local food production and farm enterprises in the DZ (e.g., Loop Head Farm to Fork)** Note 37	Number of Initiatives Supported	Loop Head Together	Medium-term	Both
DZ-C2	**Promote remote working and uptake of Clare Digi Hubs in the DZ**	Level of Uptake of Digi Hub Locations	Clare County Council	Short-term	Mitigation
DZ-C3	**Support micro and small enterprises (1-50) in the DZ access investment and support to advance energy efficiency and sustainability through the Green for Business program**	Number of Businesses Supported	Clare County Council	Ongoing/Short-term	Both
DZ-C4	**Support businesses to prevent, reduce and separate waste generated through Kilkee Green Business Hub**	Number of Businesses Participating	Clare County Council	Ongoing/Short-term	Mitigation
DZ-C5	**Support through promotion an increase in the number of farmers in the DZ partaking in the Teagasc Signpost Programme**	Number of Farmers Participating	Clare County Council / Teagasc	Medium-term	Mitigation
DZ-C6	**Partner with Green Schools to promote climate actions within schools in the DZ**	Number of engagements with schools in DZ	Clare County Council / An Taisce	Short-term	Both

Natural Environment Actions

No	Action	KPI	Lead	Timeframe	Area
DZ-N1	**Support innovative projects and/or research that advance regenerative farming (i.e., Hemp4Soil or similar)**	Projects and/or Research Supported	Loop Head Together / Clare County Council	Medium-term	Both
DZ-N2	**Support the development of a biodiversity walking and cycling route to enhance and raise awareness of local biodiversity** Note 38	Biodiversity Project Developed	Loop Head Together / Clare County Council	Medium-term	Both
DZ-N3	**Support LAWPRO in the development of water quality projects for the DZ** Note 39	Number of Projects	LAWPRO / Clare County Council / Loop Head Together	Medium-term	Both

6. Implementation, Monitoring and Reporting

6.1. Implementation

This Climate Action Plan will be implemented by Clare County Council. Whilst the plan requires a whole-of-Council approach, the ownership of the plan is held within the Physical Directorate. A Climate Action Team was established in Clare County Council in 2023. This team includes a Climate Action Co-Ordinator, Climate Action Officer, Community Climate Action Officer, and Graduate Climate Action Officer. The role of this team is to mainstream climate action into the activities of Clare County Council, monitor the implementation of the actions of the Climate Action Plan and to co-ordinate the reporting and evaluation of the Plan. The core Climate Action Team is supported by colleagues and departments across the organisation that have ownership of particular actions in the Plan. The core Climate Action Team will also be the point of contact for the public to learn about climate action in the County.

The Clare Climate Action Plan sets out a series of actions that will be delivered over the short-, medium-, and long-term to achieve the strategic goals and objectives set out in the plan. Given that the delivery of these actions will be over a number of years into the future it is important to set out a process for the monitoring, implementation and reporting of progress (see the figure below for illustration of the process and accompanying process numbers explained below).

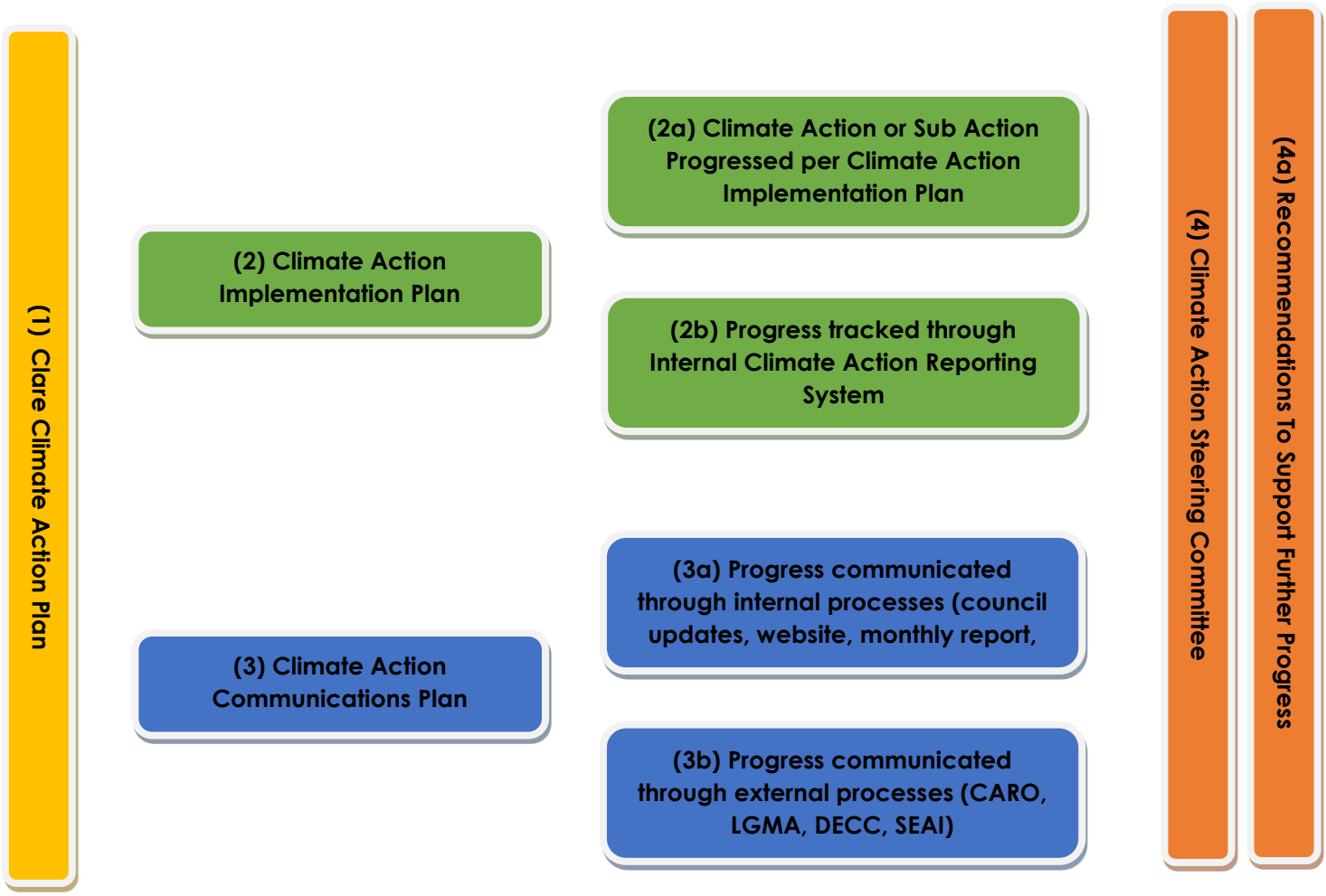


Figure 10 Process for the monitoring, implementation and reporting of progress

Climate action planning is an iterative process and has not concluded with the publication of the Climate Action Plan. An annual Climate Action Implementation Plan (**2**) will set out the detailed activities intended for implementation over the subsequent 12-month period. Clare County Council will continue to work to identify available stakeholders and funding opportunities to advance climate action and delivery.

6.2. Monitoring and Reporting

Each action within the Climate Action Plan has at least one associated key performance indicator (KPI), the KPIs are a central component in progress monitoring and will be tracked throughout the Plan's lifetime as actions are progressed and implemented (**2a**). A key consideration for the local government sector on this strengthened role on climate action is accountability, and in particular the ability to track, measure and report on progress in delivering effective climate action at both local authority and sectoral levels. In this regard, KPIs will continue to play a significant role.

An internal Climate Action Reporting System (**2b**) will be developed which will enable departments and sections to report progress made against the actions they are leading on. The reporting system will be managed by the Climate Action Team and all information reported will be collated by the team for the purposes of evaluation and reporting.

A Climate Action Communications Plan (**3**) will set out in further detail how climate action will be reported and promoted in a consistent and considered manner. Internally (**3a**), progress will be reported to and reviewed by the Climate Action Steering Committee (**4**) with recommendations originating from the committee to support further progress (**4a**). On an annual basis progress will be communicated to the elected officials of the Council. Additionally, where relevant, progress on key actions will be reported through the various methods available to the council for example through the Monthly Management Report, Clare County Council website and social media to increase transparency and foster collaboration.

Externally, (**3b**) performance by Clare County Council on the delivery of energy efficiency and emission reductions relating to the Council's infrastructure and assets, as prescribed by national climate obligations, will continue to be reported through the established Sustainable Authority of Ireland Monitoring and Reporting (SEAI M&R) System. It is anticipated that the CAROs along with the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA) will continue to collect climate-related data through the LGMA Climate Survey on an annual basis and Clare Country Council will continue to report against these indicators. It is envisaged that a national mechanism for the reporting of Local Authority Climate Action Plan progress will be established and as such Clare County Council commits to reporting progress in line with the reporting requirements.

Appendix

Appendix 1: Accompanying Notes for Climate Actions

As noted in Section 4.1 'Framework of Climate Actions' certain actions include references to notes which are specified in this section below. These notes refer to additional environmental considerations associated with these specific actions.

Notes	Action	Environmental Consideration
Note 1	*G2.1*	Having due regard to environmental sensitivities such as archaeology, European sites, biodiversity and amenity value.
Note 2	*BE1.5*	where it is confirmed through appropriate environmental assessment that associated renewable energy development will not have any significant environmental effect.
Note 3	*BE1.6*	Having due regard to environmental sensitivities such as local human receptors, protected species, European sites and biodiversity, and the need to appropriately protect and conserve protected structures.
Note 4	*BE1.8*	where it is confirmed through appropriate environmental assessment that associated renewable energy development will not have any significant environmental effect.
Note 5	*BE2.1*	whilst advocating and exerting influence to ensure such projects promote climate action co-benefits and do not contravene relevant environmental protection criteria or cause significant negative environmental effects.
Note 6	*BE2.2*	having due regard to ensure appropriate environmental protection, including protection of European sites, during the development planning process.
Note 7	*BE2.4*	whilst advocating and exerting influence to ensure supported projects promote climate action co-benefits and do not contravene relevant environmental protection criteria or cause significant negative environmental effects.
Note 8	*BE3.3*	having due regard to the need to appropriately protect and conserve protected structures in accordance with relevant protected structures regulations, and the need to not negatively impinge on any protected species or European sites.
Note 9	*BE3.4*	having due regard to the need to appropriately protect and conserve protected structures in accordance with relevant protected structures regulations, and the need to not negatively impinge on any protected species or European sites.
Note 10	*BE3.5*	Having due regard to the need to promote nature-based solutions and Sustainable Drainage Systems, and environmental sensitivities at these locations, including water quality, biodiversity, European sites, riparian corridors and aquatic ecology, visual amenity and recreation and amenity value.
Note 11	*T1.1*	Having due regard to climate resiliency, environmental sensitivities such as the receiving water environment, biodiversity, European sites local air quality, cultural heritage

Note 12	*T1.2*	Having due regard to climate resiliency, opportunities to enhance tourism, recreation and cultural heritage value associated with the route, and environmental sensitivities such as the receiving water environment, local air quality, biodiversity, European sites, and cultural heritage related sensitivities.
Note 13	*T1.3*	Having due regard to environmental sensitivities such as the receiving water environment, biodiversity, European sites local air quality, cultural heritage
Note 14	*T1.4*	Having due regard to environmental sensitivities such as the receiving water environment, biodiversity, European sites local air quality, cultural heritage
Note 15	*T1.5*	Having due regard to ensuring disabled access to EV charging, and environmental sensitivities such as the receiving water environment, biodiversity, European sites, local air quality, cultural heritage.
Note 16	*T1.6*	whilst advocating and exerting influence to ensure such projects promote climate action co-benefits and do not contravene relevant environmental protection criteria or cause significant negative environmental effects.
Note 17	*T1.8*	whilst advocating and exerting influence to ensure such projects promote climate action co-benefits and do not contravene relevant environmental protection criteria or cause significant negative environmental effects.
Note 18	*T1.9*	Having due regard to environmental sensitivities such as the receiving water environment, local air quality, biodiversity, European sites, cultural heritage .
Note 19	*T1.10*	whilst advocating and exerting influence to ensure projects promote climate action co-benefits and do not contravene relevant environmental protection criteria or cause significant negative environmental effects.
Note 20	*T1.11*	whilst advocating and exerting influence to ensure such projects promote climate action benefits and co-benefits, and do not contravene relevant environmental protection criteria or cause significant negative environmental effects.
Note 21	*T1.12*	whilst advocating and exerting influence to ensure such projects promote climate action benefits and co-benefits, and do not contravene relevant environmental protection criteria or cause significant negative environmental effects.
Note 22	*C2.1*	Having due regard to environmental sensitivities such as the receiving water environment, biodiversity, European sites local air quality, cultural heritage.
Note 23	*C2.6*	Having due regard for sensitivities including biodiversity, European sites, cultural heritage, and amenity value.
Note 24	*C2.7*	Having due regard for sensitivities including biodiversity, European sites, cultural heritage, and amenity value.
Note 25	*C2.8*	Support Wetland project within the Ennis 2040 Strategy aimed at increasing biodiversity and sustainability
Note 26	*N1.8*	whilst advocating and exerting influence to ensure such projects promote climate action co-benefits and do not contravene relevant environmental protection criteria or cause significant negative environmental effects.

Note 27	*N1.13*	Having due regard to the need to appropriately protect and conserve protected structures in accordance with relevant protected structures regulations, and the need to not negatively impinge on any protected species.
Note 28	*N3.2*	Having due regard to environmental sensitivities such as the receiving human environment, local air quality, biodiversity, European sites, and the existing traffic and transport environment.
Note 29	*DZ-BE1*	whilst ensuring the study as appropriate regard to planning and environmental protection constraints and considerations. The potential effects of nitrogen deposition on biodiversity will be considered, as appropriate, during the planning consent process for any Anaerobic Digestion facilities.
Note 30	*DZ-BE2*	Having due regard to the need to promote nature based solutions and Sustainable Drainage Systems, and environmental sensitivities at these locations, including water quality, biodiversity, European sites, riparian corridors and aquatic ecology, visual amenity and recreation and amenity value.
Note 31	*DZ-BE6*	where it is confirmed that such solar development will not have any potential impact on sensitive receptors, or otherwise, where it is confirmed that such solar development constitutes exempted development under the Planning and Development Regulations by virtue of its size or location outside a Solar Safeguarding Zone.
Note 32	*DZ-BE7*	Having due regard to the need to appropriately protect and conserve protected structures in accordance with relevant protected structures regulations, and other environmental sensitivities such as Biodiversity or European sites.
Note 33	*DZ-BE8*	Having due regard to environmental sensitivities such as local human receptors, European sites and biodiversity, and the need to appropriately protect and conserve protected structures in accordance with relevant protected structures regulations.
Note 34	*DZ-T1*	Having due regard to opportunities to enhance tourism, recreation and cultural heritage value associated with the route, and environmental sensitivities such as the receiving water environment, local air quality, biodiversity, European sites, and cultural heritage related sensitivities.
Note 35	*DZ-T3*	Having due regard to ensuring disabled access to EV charging, and environmental sensitivities such as the receiving water environment, biodiversity, European sites, local air quality, cultural heritage.
Note 36	*DZ-T4*	Having due regard to ensuring disabled access to EV charging, and environmental sensitivities such as the receiving water environment, biodiversity, European sites, local air quality, cultural heritage.
Note 37	*DZ-C1*	Whilst advocating and exerting influence to ensure such projects promote climate action co-benefits and do not contravene relevant environmental protection criteria or cause significant negative environmental effects.
Note 38	*DZ-N2*	Having due regard to environmental sensitivities including water quality, protected species, biodiversity and European sites.

Note 39	*DZ-N3*	Having due regard to environmental sensitivities including water quality, protected species, biodiversity and European sites.