Louth County Council

Climate Action Plan 2024 - 2029

Lugh sáimh-ioldánach

"Climate change is a fundamental problem that we must solve and not merely pass on to the generations to come...We can't let our children and grandchildren look back on this critical period in time and say that we failed them."

–Mary Robinson

Chief Executive

Message from Joan Martin CE

Climate change is real and is happening now. People throughout Co. Louth have already experienced firsthand the potential impact of climate change, particularly through floods and storms and the damage that can ensue. Events like these, and the expected increase in their frequency, highlight the need for action to reduce our impacts and to prepare for the resulting challenges ahead.

Climate change presents very significant challenges for the organisation, both in terms of mitigating our emissions and achieving national binding targets, as well as adapting to the effects of a changing climate. Louth County Council is fully committed leading by example.

We will also use our position at the heart of the community to advocate for all sectors of society to join our effot.t

We have a vision of Co. Louth with a sustainable, thriving county, where we grasp the opportunities of this new normal and no-one is left behind.

This plan presents the actions which Louth County Council will take over the next 5 years, to set a trend towards a net zero county by 2050.

Joan Martin

Chief Executive

Cathaoirleach

Message from Cathaoirleach Paula Butterly

I am delighted to present this Climate Change plan for Louth. Climate change is a local and global challenge which Louth County Council plays an important local role in adapting to climate change along with providing mitigation solution for this county.

Louth County Council has an important role in delivering climate change adaptation and mitigation actions. We have acknowledged the climate change is happening and have embraced climate action.

We have put in place Energy and Climate Teams, whose sole focus is on help Louth achieve the ambitious national targets.

The actions presented in this plan with guide County Louth as we prepare for, respond to, and adapt to the impacts of climate change and facilitate a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. The delivery of the short, medium and long term actions will enable the Council to become climate resilient going forward.

Louth County Council will continue to work with key stakeholders to influence and support carbon reduction and climate resilience across the County, while ensuring a just transition to a more sustainable Louth.

Paula Butterly

Cathaoirleach

Table of Contents

Table of Annexes

1. What is the Louth County Council Climate Action Plan?

This document outlines Louth County Council's Climate Action Plan (CAP). It is generated as a result of the enactment of Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Bill (2021).

> *"14B (1) Each local authority shall prepare and make a plan relating to a period of five years (… referred to as a 'local authority climate action plan') which shall specify the mitigation and the adaptation measures to be adopted by the local authority'"*

This legislation was drafted in response to the declaration of a climate and biodiversity emergency by Government on 9th May 2019. The Bill aims to support Ireland's transition to Net Zero and achieve a climate-neutral economy by no later than 2050.

This plan is a five-year plan to outline the actions which will be taken by Louth County Council to support the national policy. The plan will guide the Council in how it works across its services and functions and our partnerships with government agencies, businesses, communities, public sector, and other stakeholders, to help deliver on national climate obligations at the local level.

Part of the Plan will focus on public responsibility and highlight areas where the individual, groups and businesses can play their own significant part.

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

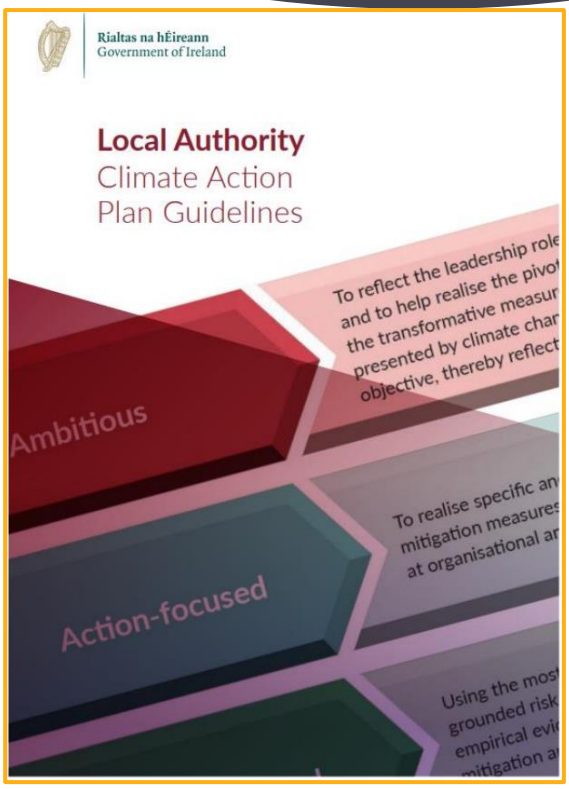


Figure 1.1: Climate Action Guidelines

The Louth County Council CAP has been developed to answer the following questions in relation to a Climate Action for Louth?

- Why are we doing it?
- Where are we starting from?
- Where are we going to?
- How are we going to get there?

In order to answer these questions and to understand the significance of this plan and how it relates to the lives of the people and the economy of Louth, the next sections of the report look at what exactly is Climate Change and what are Climate Actions?

1.1 What is Climate Change?

Climate change refers to long-term alterations in global or regional weather patterns, primarily driven by human activities, such as the burning of fossil fuels, deforestation, and industrial processes. The primary driver of

climate change is the increase in greenhouse gases, like carbon dioxide and methane, in the Earth's atmosphere. These gases trap heat, leading to a gradual rise in global temperatures, a phenomenon known as global warming. This trend has been apparent since the industrial revolution, but has accelerated in recent years,

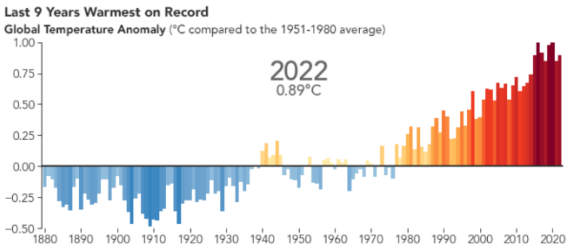


Figure 1.2: Global Temperature Trend

1.1.1 Global Warming - So what?

The consequences of climate change are far-reaching and include rising sea levels, more frequent and severe extreme weather events, such as intense rainfall, droughts, colder winters and disruptions to ecosystems and biodiversity. The impacts are not limited to the natural environment; they extend to human societies, affecting food and water security, health, and economic stability.

We have seen indications of Climate Change in recent years, with records broken for temperature, rainfall and drought.

> *MET Eireann Summer Statement "Summer 2023 saw the warmest June on record on land and at sea, the wettest July on record with 17 stations having over 200% of their Long-Term Average (LTA) monthly rainfall and finished with two named storms in August that downed trees and caused flash and coastal flooding."*

Intense Rainfall

Ocean warming, driven by climate change, accelerates evaporation, leading to increased atmospheric moisture. This, in turn, intensifies rainfall events worldwide. Rising sea surface temperatures fuel more energetic storms, contributing to extreme precipitation. Such intense rainfall poses serious threats, including flooding, landslides, and heightened risks for communities and ecosystems vulnerable to these impacts.

Drought

In 2018, parts of Ireland recorded their worst drought event on record when compared to the long-term average*.

This pattern was mirrored in the period up to the end of June 2023, which was quickly followed by the wettest July on record.

** Citation: Falzoi, S., Gleeson, E., Lambkin, K., Zimmermann, J., Marwaha, R., O'Hara, R., Green, S. and Fratianni, S. (2019), Analysis of the severe drought in Ireland in 2018. Weather, 74: 368-373. doi:10.1002/wea.3587*

Last month 'the wettest March on record in Ireland', provisional data shows

Date from the March Climate Statement, released on Tuesday, found an average of 173.3mm of rain falling last month. Picture: Denis Minihane.

TUE, 04 APR, 2023 - 13:54

MAIREAD SHEEHY, MICHELLE MCGLYNN AND MATILDA HEAD

Last month saw "provisionally the wettest March on record in Ireland", according to new data Met Éireann.

Warmest September on record as 'gobsmacking' data shocks scientists

6 days ago · Comments

COP28

EPA

By Matt McGrath & Mark Poynting

BBC Climate & Science team

The world's September temperatures were the warmest on record, breaking

RTÉ NEWS SPORT ENTERTAINMENT BUSINESS LIFESTYLE CULTURE PLAYER TV RADIO

NEWS ▸ WEATHER ▸ Latest Weather Weather Team Photo Competition

2023 'virtually certain' to be warmest in 125,000 years - EU scientists

Updated / Wednesday, 8 Nov 2023 20:51

A heat advisory sign during a heat wave in Death Valley National Park, California, on 16 July 2023

2023 is "virtually certain" to be the warmest in 125,000 years,

LEAH FARRELL/ROLLINGNEWS.IE

WHAT THE FLIUCH

Last month was Ireland's wettest July on record

July of this year had more than four times the amount of rain observed in July 2022, provisional data shows.

16.6k 66 Aug 1st 2023, 12:38 PM

LAST MONTH WAS Ireland's wettest July on record, according to provisional data from Met Éireann

Irish Independent News Opinion Business Sport Life Style Ent

News Sport Business Lifestyle Drogheda & South Dundalk & North

Record rainfall brings devastation to north Louth with fears of more to come

Flooding at Jenkinstown, north Louth

Margaret Roddy

The Argus

Tue 31 Oct 2023 at 16:30

Fire crews continue to fight gorse fires in the Cooley Mountains

All LMFM News

Thursday, 4 June 2020 08:20

By Ruth O'Connell

The local community has been thanked for the support they've given fire fighters

Fire crews are continuing to fight gorse fires in the Cooley mountains.

They spent the night monitoring the blaze which travelled over Lordship village to Slieve na gCloch and also checked on houses in

Sea Level Rise

As a low-lying coastal county, Louth must be particularly attentive to the prospects of Sea Level Rise.

Global average sea levels have risen faster since 1900 than over any preceding century in the last 3,000 years. The global ocean has warmed faster over the past century than at any time in the past 11,000 years.

The rate of sea level rise has doubled since 1993. It has risen by nearly 10 mm since January 2020 to a new record high in 2022, according to WMO's provisional State of the Global Climate in 2022 report. The past two and a half years alone account for 10 percent of the overall rise in sea level since satellite measurements started nearly 30 years ago.

**"Global Sea-Level Rise & Implications -Key facts and figures"*
World Meteorological Organization 2023

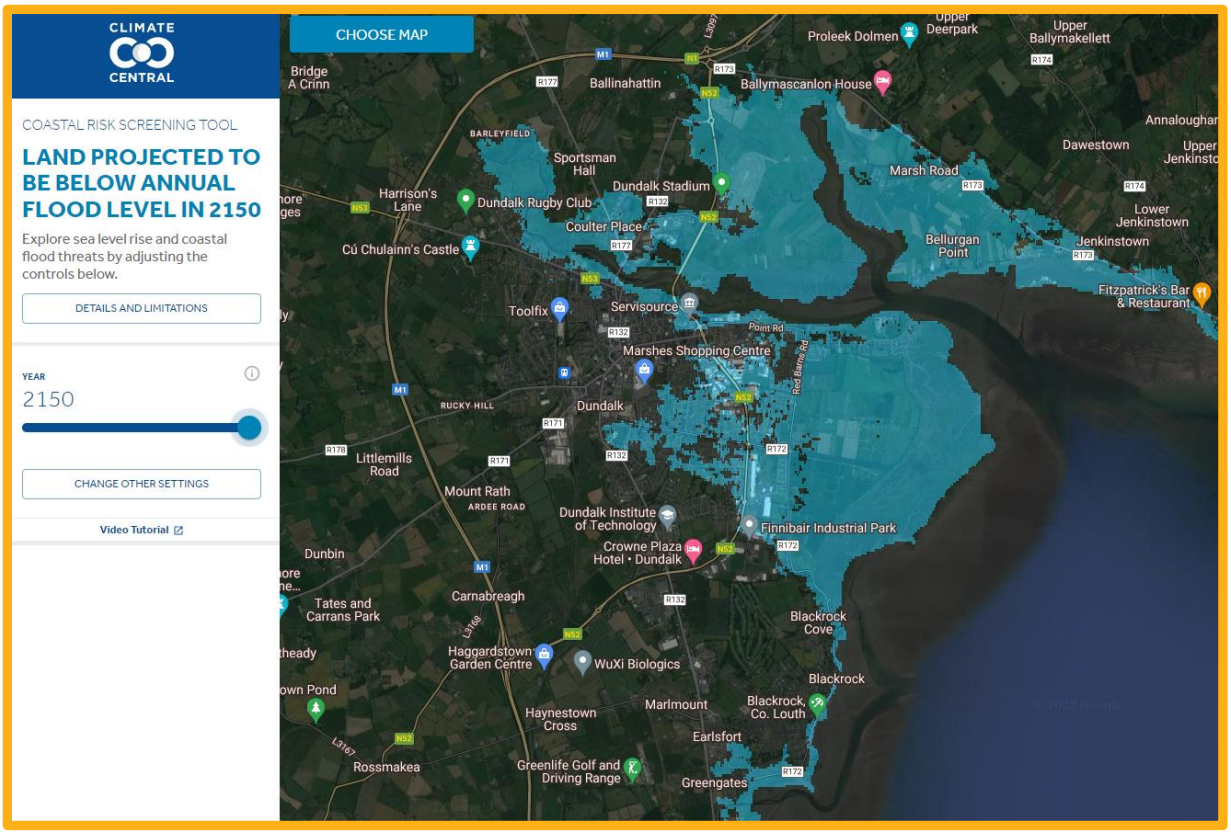


Figure 1.3: Dundalk Flood Risk Map reproduced from Climatecentral.com

All scientific evidence shows that our climate is changing. As an overall society we have decided that we must do something to slow this change and also adapt to these new challenges.

"Climate change is the single greatest threat to a sustainable future but, at the same time, addressing the climate challenge presents a golden opportunity to promote prosperity, security and a brighter future for all." –Ban Ki-Moon, Former Secretary-General of UN

1.2 What is Climate Action?

Climate action refers to a wide range of efforts taken by individuals, communities, organizations, and governments to address climate change and its impacts. It involves measures aimed at both mitigating the causes of climate change and adapting to the changes that are already occurring. Climate action encompasses various strategies and initiatives designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and build resilience in the face of a changing climate.

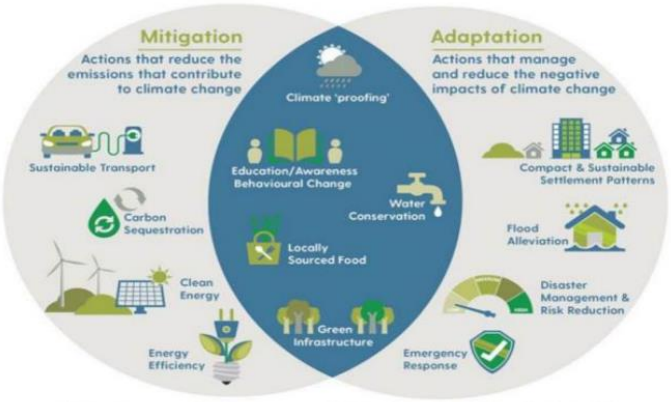


Figure 1.4: Adaptation & Mitigation

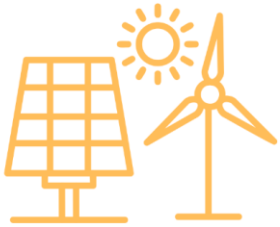
Mitigation efforts include transitioning to renewable energy sources, improving energy efficiency, adopting sustainable land-use practices, and promoting eco-friendly transportation methods. These actions are essential for curbing the rate of global warming and minimising its adverse effects.

Adaptation to climate change involves making changes and preparations to minimize the negative impacts of shifting weather patterns, such as developing climate-resilient infrastructure, implementing water management strategies, and promoting sustainable agriculture practices. It also includes raising awareness and educating communities about climate-related risks.

1.3 What's in it for me?

There are a range of co-benefits which will accrue by talking positive Climate Actions in Louth. Co-benefits such as:

Renewable Energy Transition



Investing in renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, and hydroelectric power creates job opportunities, reduces dependence on fossil fuels, and contributes to a cleaner environment.

Green Jobs

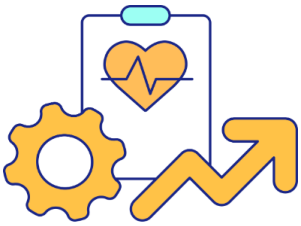
The transition to a low-carbon economy generates a demand for skilled workers in industries such as renewable energy, energy efficiency, sustainable agriculture, and ecosystem restoration, fostering job creation and economic growth.

Innovation and Technology Advancements

Climate action drives research and development in clean technologies and sustainable practices, fostering innovation and technological advancements that can have

widespread applications beyond environmental conservation.

Improved Public Health



Reducing air pollution, promoting sustainable transportation, and minimizing exposure to harmful chemicals can lead to improved public health outcomes, resulting in lower healthcare costs and a higher quality of life.

Enhanced Resilience to Climate Change

Investing in infrastructure that is resilient to extreme weather events and other climate impacts can protect communities and economies from the adverse effects of climate change, ensuring long-term stability.

Biodiversity Conservation

Climate action often involves protecting and restoring ecosystems, which not only helps mitigate climate change but also preserves biodiversity, supporting essential ecosystem services and maintaining a healthy balance in natural environments.

Resource Efficiency

Adopting sustainable practices and technologies promotes resource efficiency, reducing waste and minimizing the environmental footprint of production and consumption patterns.

Community Engagement and Social Equity

Climate action provides an opportunity to engage communities in decision-making processes, ensuring that the benefits and burdens of environmental policies are distributed equitably and that vulnerable populations are adequately supported.

Global Collaboration and Diplomacy

Climate change is a global challenge that requires international cooperation. Climate action fosters collaboration between nations, encouraging the sharing of knowledge, technologies, and resources to address a common threat.

Economic Diversification

Shifting towards a green economy can diversify economic sectors, reducing reliance on industries that contribute significantly to greenhouse gas emissions. This diversification can make economies more resilient to global market fluctuations and environmental changes.

These opportunities highlight the interconnectedness of climate action with various aspects of societal well-being, demonstrating that addressing climate change can bring about positive and transformative changes across multiple facets of life in County Louth.

1.4 What can County Louth do?

County Louth is profiled in Appendix A, it can be seen that we are a small, low-lying coastal county, with a population of 140,000. There are two large urban centres and a significant rural population.

In the face of this global emergency, it begs the question:

"Louth is so small can we do anything to make a difference?"

Climate action often involves international cooperation and agreements, such as the Paris Agreement, in which countries commit to reducing emissions and enhancing their resilience. At the local level, Louth County Council, through its unique position in the community, can support individuals to participate by reducing their carbon footprint, supporting clean energy initiatives, and advocating for policies that prioritise sustainability.

The actions outlined in this plan contribute to overall local, regional, national and global efforts. Figure 1.5 shows how the policy context leads all the way from the United Nations down to the local level. If everybody does their part, a huge impact can be made. A deeper look at the legislative and policy background is contained in Appendix B.

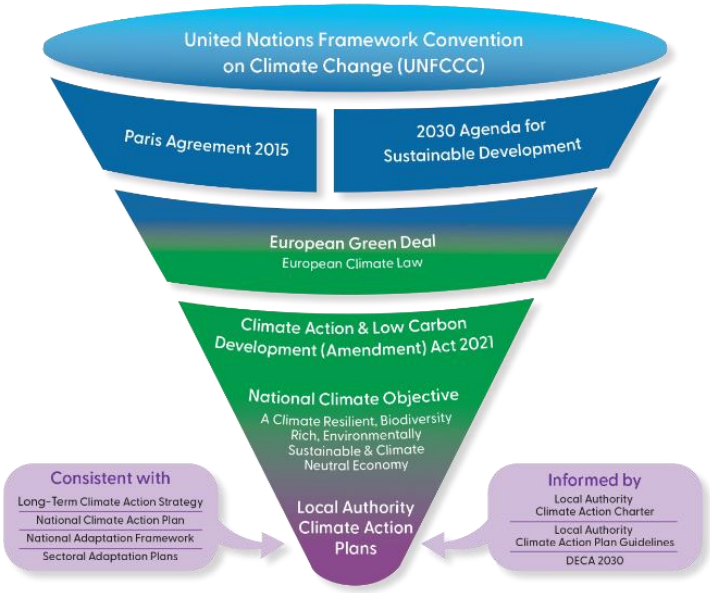


Figure 1.5: Policy Context

1.5 What can Louth County Council do?

Louth County Council is uniquely positioned to lead when it comes to climate action. We are close to our communities, and our 1,000-plus services put us in constant contact with the public. By taking affirmative action, we can have a positive influence over our localities.

Figure 1.6 outlines the model by which Louth County Council will provide this leadership. We will do our part; we will use our position of influence and we will be strong advocates for making positive changes.

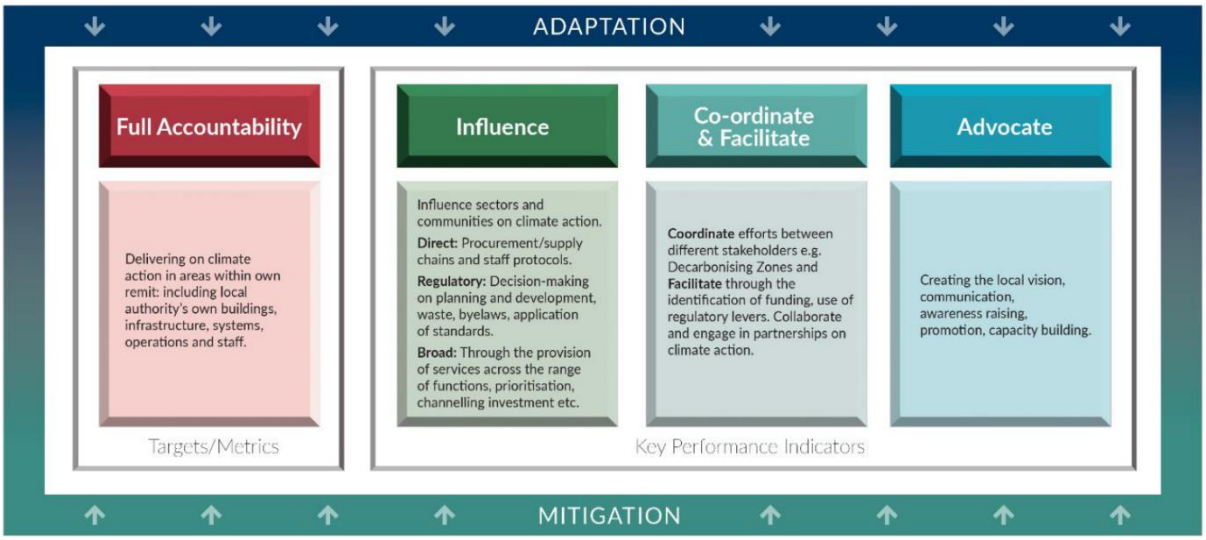


Figure 1.6: Local Authority Intervention Model

Louth County Council has already begun to take action to combat climate change. From retrofitting housing stock to improving energy efficiency of public buildings.

Figure:1.7 Louth County Council Tree Planting

Figure:1.8 Staff Energy Event

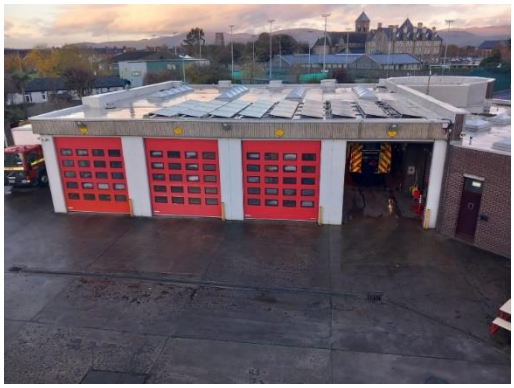


Figure:1.9 Solar Installation on Fire Station

Figure:1.10 Electrification of Fleet

Figure:1.11 Smarter Travel Charter

Figure:1.12 FASTER EV Car Charger Project

1.6 What can one person do?

Individuals play a crucial role in combatting climate change by adopting sustainable practices and advocating for broader change. Here are several actions that individuals can take to make a positive impact:

- Reduce Carbon Footprint: Minimize energy consumption by using energy-efficient appliances and lighting, and turn off devices when not in use. Consider using public transportation, carpooling, biking, or walking to reduce personal vehicle emissions.
- Renewable Energy: Support and use renewable energy sources, such as solar panels, where feasible, and choose green energy options from utility providers.
- Reject, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle: Minimize waste by choosing the least resource intensive option, reducing consumption, reusing items, and recycling to decrease landfill waste and associated emissions.
- Conserve Water: Use water-saving fixtures and practices to reduce water consumption, which also saves energy used for water heating.
- Sustainable Diet be conscious of the carbon footprint of your diet, support local.
- Reduce Single-Use Plastics: Minimize plastic waste by using reusable bags, containers, and water bottles.
- Support Sustainable Products: Choose products with low environmental impact and support companies with strong environmental commitments.
- Advocate for Change: Speak out on climate issues, vote for leaders with strong climate policies, and engage in advocacy efforts to influence policies at local and national levels.
- Reduce Air Travel: Consider flying less or supporting carbon offset programs for air travel.
- Educate Yourself: Stay informed about climate change and its impacts, encouraging ongoing learning and awareness.
- Energy-Efficient Home: Insulate your home, use a programmable thermostat, and seal drafts to reduce energy consumption.
- Tree Planting and Green Spaces: Participate in or support tree-planting initiatives and community gardens to increase green spaces and biodiversity.

Every individual's efforts, when multiplied across society, can significantly contribute to the fight against climate change and create a more sustainable and resilient future.

1.7 What can community groups do?

Community groups play a vital role in combatting climate change by engaging people at the grassroots level and driving local action.

Here are several ways community groups can contribute to climate action:

- Education and Awareness: Community groups can raise awareness about climate change, its impacts, and the importance of sustainable practices through workshops, seminars, and information campaigns.
- They can collaborate with local and national government to implement climate-friendly policies and initiatives and urge members and businesses to reduce emissions and invest in sustainable practices.
- Energy Efficiency: Community groups can promote energy-efficient technologies and advocate for reduced energy consumption in their area.
- Renewable Energy: They can advocate for and invest in renewable energy sources, such as community solar or wind projects, to reduce reliance on fossil fuels.
- Sustainable Transportation: Promoting public transportation, cycling, and carpooling can reduce carbon emissions, as can initiatives to improve pedestrian infrastructure.
- Waste Reduction: Encourage waste reduction, recycling, and composting programs within the community to minimize landfill waste and associated emissions.
- Local Agriculture: Support local, sustainable agriculture and community gardens, reducing food transportation emissions.
- Resilience Building: Create initiatives to increase community resilience to climate impacts, such as extreme weather events, by promoting flood-resistant infrastructure or disaster preparedness.
- Tree Planting: Organize tree-planting events to increase green spaces and combat urban heat islands.
- Community Engagement: Involve community members in decision-making processes and empower them to take climate action, fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility.

Community groups can make a significant impact by mobilizing people, influencing local policies, and fostering a collective commitment to combat climate change at the grassroots level.

1.8 What can the business community do?

Louth is characterised by a vibrant small business sector, who will have an enormous role to play in combatting climate change.

Small businesses can make a positive impact in the fight against climate change by implementing sustainable practices and reducing their environmental footprint. Here are several actions small businesses can take:

- Energy Efficiency: Invest in energy-efficient lighting, heating, and cooling systems. Encourage employees to turn off lights and equipment when not in use.
- Renewable Energy: Consider transitioning to renewable energy sources like solar or wind power, either on-site or through green energy purchasing agreements.
- Sustainable Transportation: Promote carpooling, biking, walking, or the use

of public transportation among employees. Offer incentives for those who choose eco-friendly commuting options.

- Waste Reduction: Implement recycling and composting programs in the workplace. Reduce paper usage by going digital and print double-sided when necessary.
- Supply Chain Management: Work with eco-conscious suppliers and prioritize products with low environmental impact.
- Green Products: Offer and promote green and sustainable products or services to your customers.
- Telecommuting and Remote Work: Encourage telecommuting and remote work options to reduce commuting emissions and lower the need for office space.
- Efficient Inventory Management: Reduce excess inventory and minimize waste in the supply chain.
- Employee Engagement: Raise awareness and engage employees in sustainability initiatives, such as green teams, training, and incentives.
- Carbon Offsetting: Consider investing in carbon offset programs to compensate for your business's unavoidable emissions.
- Advocacy and Partnerships: Join or support industry associations and initiatives focused on sustainability and climate action. Advocate for policies that support climate-friendly practices.
- Environmental Reporting: Publish annual sustainability reports to track and communicate your efforts and progress in reducing your carbon footprint.

Small businesses can contribute to the global effort to combat climate change by adopting these measures, while also often enjoying cost savings, improved reputation, and a competitive advantage in a growing eco-conscious market.

1.9 The Agriculture Sector

The Agriculture sector are the custodian of the vast majority of Irish Land and have a unique opportunity to contribute to the Climate Action fight. From Carbon capture to reduced emission farming practices, to floodplain management, the potential for impact is enormous.

Climate change is also challenging for Irish agriculture both in the context of greenhouse gas emissions and the need for adaptation of farming practices to be more resilient to the impacts of climate change.

In Ireland, the Agriculture sector was directly responsible for 38.4% of national Greenhouse Gases (GHGs) emissions in 2022, mainly methane from livestock, and nitrous oxide due to the use of nitrogen fertiliser and manure management. (EPA)

The agriculture sector has produced its sectoral climate action plan and the farming community is being guided by the Department of Agriculture and Teagasc.

Louth County Council will advocate, advise and collaborate with the agriculture sector with a view to achieving the common national goals.

2 Why are we making this Action Plan?

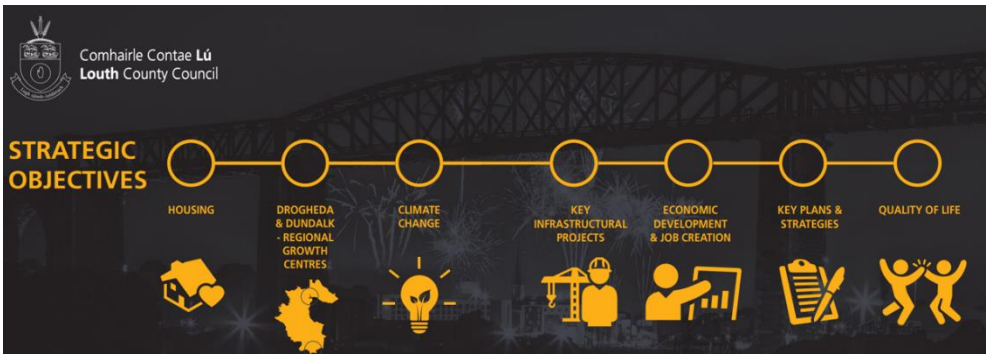
The process of 'How?' this plan was made is outlined in Appendix C. This Chapter asks the question 'Why?' are we making this plan.

Corporate Objective

The Louth County Council management team recognise and are committed to the importance of this issue, as demonstrated by the fact that addressing Climate Change is one of seven key strategic objectives captured in the Louth County Council Corporate Plan 2019-2024.

Climate Action Charter (CAC)

In 2019 Louth County Council signed CAC, the full text of which can be seen in Appendix D. This document outlines the strong commitment of Louth County Council by acknowledging that Climate Change is happening and that actions must be taken to mitigate and adapt to our changing climate. We as a Nation must be more sustainable in our actions and ensure that Climate Action is at the heart of all our national, regional and local strategies, policies, plans and decisions. This Climate Action Plan must be read with this Climate Action Charter at its core. The actions detailed in the Charter underpin all objectives and actions of this plan and all other strategic plans whether they are local, regional or national.



Mandated by Legislation

Louth County Council is mandated by the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Bill 2021 to create and implement this plan.

It is the right thing to do!

More importantly than the preceding reasons, Louth County Council must show leadership in the way we serve the community of Louth. We embrace the reality of Climate Change and endeavour to hit the challenges presented head-on.

This will enable Louth to grasp the opportunities which will present themselves as we move towards this new normal way of living.

2.1 Plan Strategy

This plan has been developed based on the following Framework for Climate Action.

This Framework provides a structure whereby the local actions outlined can all be shown to contribute to the overall Vision & Mission.

The Louth County Council climate action plan provides a mechanism for bringing together both adaptation and mitigation actions to help drive positive climate action and outcomes across Louth.

During the early phase of plan development a Vision and Mission were developed. These statements can be revisited when decisions are being made, to ensure that we continue to contribute to the stated goals.

2.2 Vision

A unified vision is one that reflects a desired and shared perspective of the future in a climate resilient and climate neutral society that will unite all of the key stakeholders and inspire action.

2.3 Mission

The mission statement should take an action-oriented focus, speaking to the grounded purpose of the local authority in delivering and mainstreaming effective climate action across all services and functions with voluntary organisations and work in partnership and collaboration with local, national and EU partners to realise the actions of the plan.

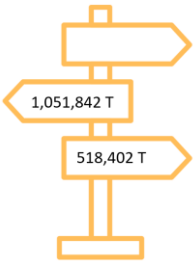
Plan Vision

- **Louth will be on target to be a net zero county by 2050**
- **Louth will take advantage of opportunities which arise from this new normal**
- **The people and businesses of Louth will rise to this challenge**
- **No-one will be left behind**

Plan Mission

Louth County Council will enable Louth people and businesses to grasp all opportunities in making our collective contribution to the climate change fight

3 Where are we starting from?



In order to measure the impact of any actions taken it is important to know where you're coming from. To this end, Louth County Council has engaged in a three-pronged approach:

- Development of a data driven Baseline Emissions Inventory to establish what we are emitting and where it is coming from.
- Baseline Risk Assessment, to highlight vulnerabilities in Louth.
- Completion of a pre-draft stakeholder consultation. to understand what stakeholder concerns are and any ideas they would like to contribute.

3.1 Baseline Emissions Inventory (BEI).

A full BEI report is contained in Annex 1 to this report, a summary is presented here. The BEI tells us how much greenhouse gas emissions Louth, as a county, was producing in 2018. This figure is 1,051,842 Tonnes. This is the baseline against which all progress will be measured.

The BEI is an in-depth look at greenhouse gas emissions from all sources in the county and is presented in Tons of CO_2 (tCO_2) Equivalent.

The following non-exhaustive list shows some of the data sources consulted in this approach:

- Central Statistics Office's household Census, Agricultural Census and Transport Omnibus.
- SEAI's latest Energy in Ireland Report, emission factors for fuels and grid electricity (REF). M&R system and National Building Energy Rating Database (REF).
- Valuation Office data on commercial buildings.
- CIBSE Energy Benchmarks (Guide F and TM46).
- Agricultural energy and emissions benchmarks from sources such as Teagasc, Dept. Agriculture, Food and Marine, and The Carbon Trust.
- EPA's Pollutant Release and Transfer Register (PRTR).

The baseline emissions study results show the following (Figure 3.1):

- Agricultural sector has the highest emissions at 29% (317479 tCO_2)
- Second largest emitting sector is the Residential sector at 21% (234189 tCO_2).
- The third largest emitting sector is the Industrial sector at 17% (180449 tCO_2).
- The next largest sector is the Commercial sector at 17% (179925 tCO_2).
- Followed by transport at 11% (124970 tCO_2) of all emissions.
- Social Housing and Municipal both accounted for 2% (17897 tCO_2) (17760 tCO_2) of all emissions.
- Waste and Wastewater made up the remaining 1%).
- Local authority was the sector with the least emissions at below 1% of all emissions in County Louth.

-

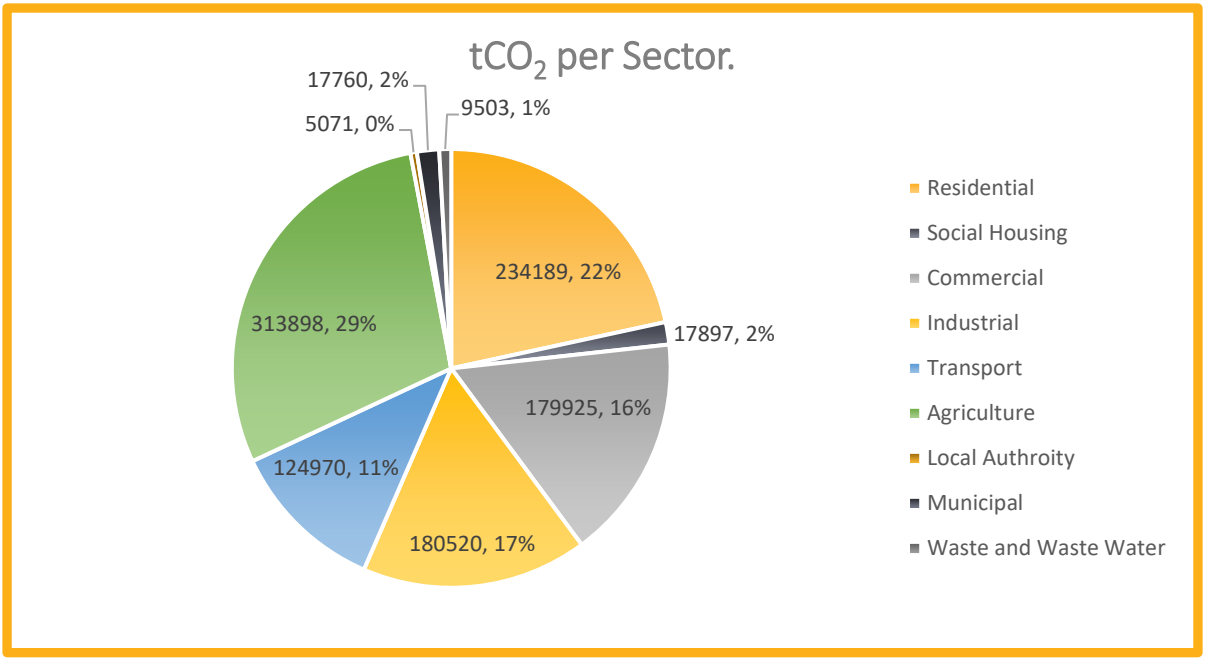


Figure3.1: A breakdown of greenhouse gas emissions in 2018 in tCO_2 for each sector measured in County Louth.

Industrial emissions

Emissions data from industrial uses shows that 67% (100800 tCO_2) comes from Drogheda (Figure 3.2). The remaining 33% (48894 tCO_2) of industrial uses emissions comes from Dundalk. The industry sector is a significant emitter at 17% of the county's total.

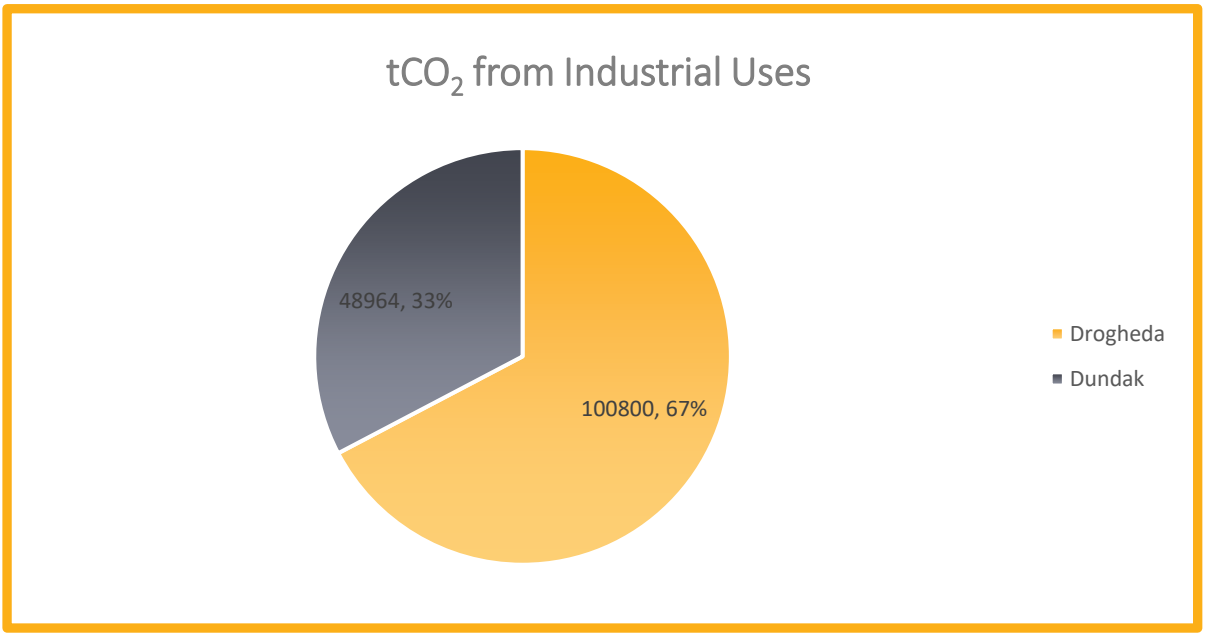


Figure 3.2:. Total Emissions from Industrial Uses in Drogheda and Dundalk for 2018 in tCO_2.

Transport Emissions

Emissions from the Transport sector in Louth show that 63% (71698 tCO_2) comes from Private Car use (Figure 3.3). 24% (26933 tCO_2) of emissions come from Good Vehicles, 11% (12910 tCO_2) comes from public transport with the remaining 2% (2759 tCO_2) comes from PSV/Taxi's.

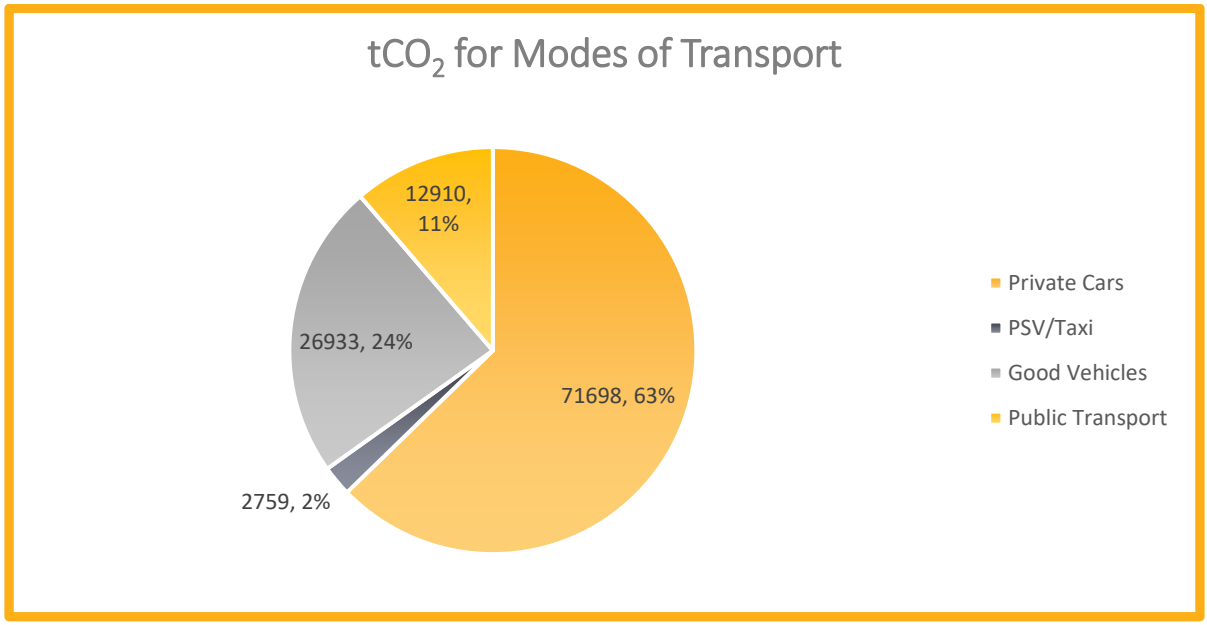


Figure 3.3. A graph of the emissions from four main modes of transport in County Louth. Private car use is the main transport emission within the county at 63% of total emissions.

Louth County Council Emissions

Emissions from the Local Authority are split into electricity which accounted for 56% of emissions, and gas which accounted for 27% of emissions with the transport fleet accounting for almost 17% or all emissions in the Local Authority. The remaining 1.2% of emissions was from Heating Oil.

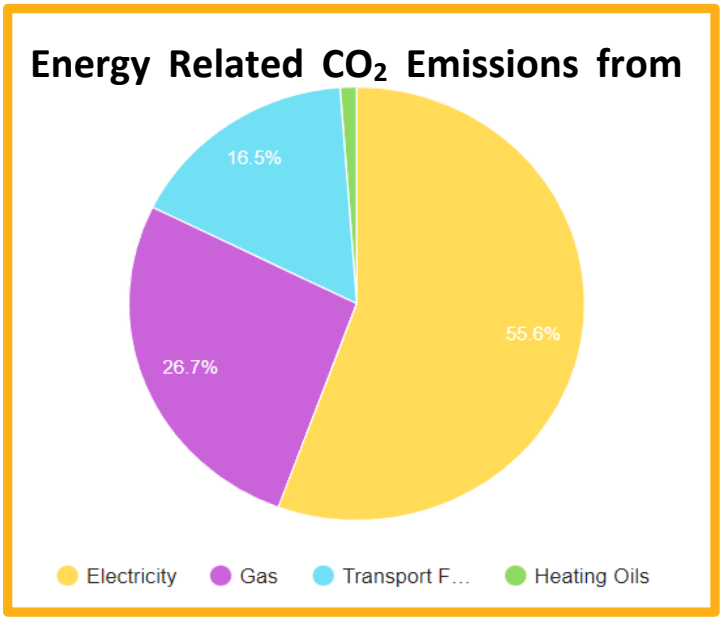


Figure 3.4. Energy related CO_2 emissions from the Local Authority. Each of the main fule types is highlighted as part of the total. Data from SEAI.

The Bar Chart below (Figure 3.5) shows the amount in t(CO_2) which we need to decarbonise by across a number of sectors County Louth.

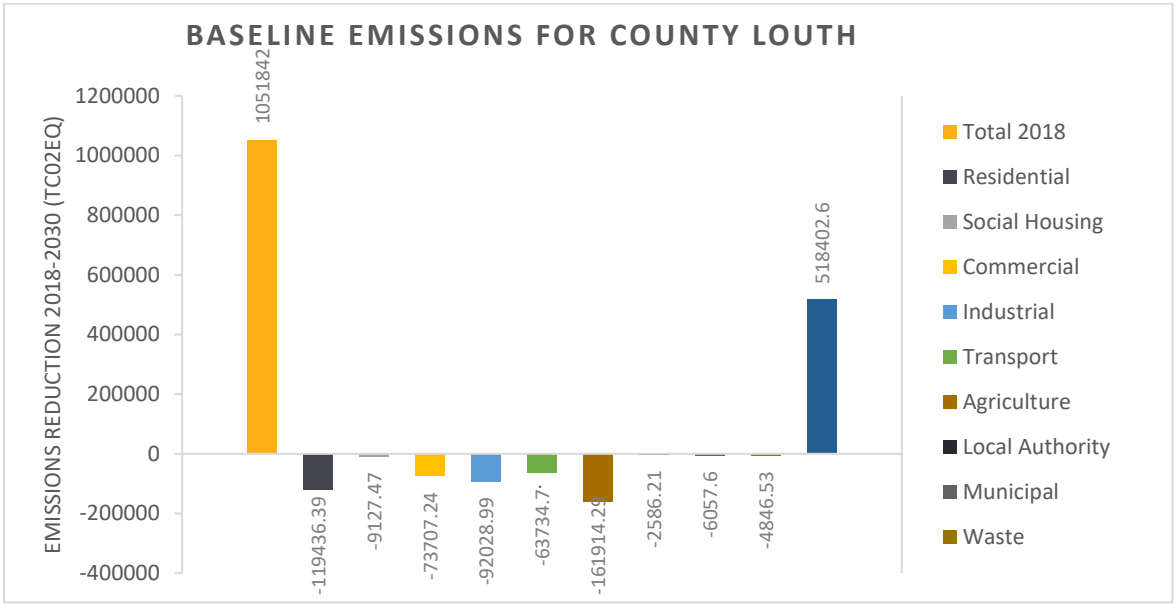


Figure3.5. County-Wide Total Gap-to-target in tones CO_2. The Bar Chart above in the amount in which we need to decarbonise by, across a number of sectors.

- Agricultural sector has the highest emissions at 29% (317479 tCO_2)
- Second largest emitting sector is the Residential sector at 21% (234189 tCO_2).
- The third largest emitting sector is the Industrial sector at 17% (180449 tCO_2).
- The next largest sector is the Commercial sector at 17% (179925 tCO_2).
- Followed by transport at 11% (124970 tCO_2) of all emissions.
- Social Housing and Municipal both accounted for 2% (17897 t CO_2) (17760 tCO_2) of all emissions.
- Waste and Wastewater made up the remaining 1%).
- Local authority was the sector with the least emissions at below 1% of all emissions in County Louth.

Any emissions reductions for county louth must be viewed in the context of the National Sectoral Carbon Budgets and their targets for the country (Figure 3.6.) With Agriculture being the largest emitting single sector in the county, it is subject to a national decarbonisation target of 25%, which will be led out by the Department of Agriculture.

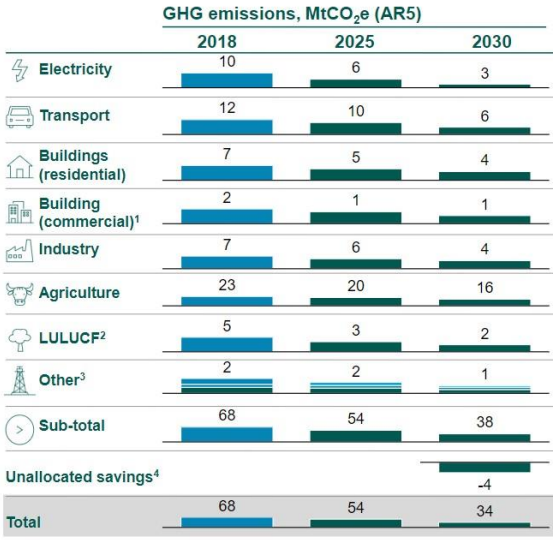


Figure 3.6. The decarbonisation targets for each of Ireland's sectors for each of the 5-year carbon budget periods. Graph from DECC.

3.2 Baseline Risk Assessment

In 2019, Louth County Council prepared a Climate Adaptation stratagy 2019 – 2024. This document set out the key risks and vulnerabilities for the county. This document was used to inform this plan. Appendix E contains more detail about the risks considered.

Figure 3.6. Flooding in Dundalk, October 2023.

Understanding the extreme weather events that have negatively impacted on county Louth in the past is an important step in identifying future climate change trends. The Table below outlines some major weather events in recent history, which have had significant impacts on Co. Louth (Table 3.1).

Figure 3.7. Storm Damaged Tree, October 2023

Table 3.1. Summary of extreme weather events for Louth and nationally.

Year	Date	Event Type / Name	Outline Description
2023	All year	Climate change	Hottest year globally recorded
2023	13th November	Storm Debi	Red Wind Warning, Schools closed, intense brief storm
2023	1st November	Storm Ciaran	Extreme rainfall across the county with travel disruptions. Rail disruption. Road flooding and erosion in North County Louth.
2023	June	Warmest June on record	Extended heatwave and absolute drought in Ireland with a focus on the east coast
2023	March	Wettest March on record	Wettest march on record
2022	July	Highest Temperature Recorded in Ireland since 1887	Extreme high-temperature event across the island of Ireland
2022	18th February	Storm Eunice	Multi-impact storm with high winds and snow
2021	7th December	Storm Bara	17 trees removed from roads, localised flooding. Sandbags provided.
2020	19th August	Storm Ellen	Set record for highest August windspeed in Ireland
2018	11th October	Storm Callum	Orange wind warning – gale force winds up to 130km/hr- A lot of fallen trees disruption to power lines, roads, business, infrastructure, travel
2018	September	Storm Ali	Orange Wind Warming – gale force winds of up to 120km/h, stormy conditions
2018	Summer	High Temperatures, Heat waves & Drought	High Temperatures, Heat waves and drought – distribution to water supply, issues with road maintenance etc...
2018	February / March	Storm Emma & Beast from the East	Blizzard / Heavy Snowfall / widespread heavy snow drifting. Disruption to business, emergency services, power cuts etc...
2017	16th October	Storm Ophelia (Ex-Hurricane Ophelia)	Red warning – gale force winds, heavy rain and storm surges along some coasts (flooding). Disruption to business, power cuts etc and a fatality in County Louth...
2016	January	Heavy Rain	Wettest January of record – 126% of monthly long-term average
2014	12th February	Storm Darwin	Orange warning for strong winds – classified as a 1 in 20-year event
2013/14	Winter	Winter Storms	Winter storms – serious coastal damage and widespread, persistent flooding
2010	Nov / Dec	Winter Cold Spell	Lowest temperatures on record in Dublin Airport (-8.40C) and Casemont Aerodrome (-9.10C)
2009/10	Winter	Winter Cold Spell	Coldest winter in almost 50 years (Met Éireann)
2009	November	Severe flooding	Rainfall totals were the highest on record, and extensive flooding
2008	August	Heavy Rain and Flooding	Heavy rain and extensive flooding
2006	Summer	High Temperature / Heat Wave	Warmest summer since record-breaking 1996 (may have been exceeded by 2018)
2002	1st February	Coastal Flooding	Eastern and southern coasts – highest tide in 80 years
1997	24th December	Windstorm	Windstorm
1995	Summer	High Temperatures, Heat wave & Drought	Warmest Summer on record. Mean temperatures over 20C above normal. Temp rises to 30^{O}C over a number of consecutive days
1993	11th November	Severe Flooding	In excess of 100mm of rain in 24 hour period in eastern and midlands
1987	12-13th January	Heavy Snowfall	12-19cm snow in the east and midlands
1986	August	Hurricane Charley	Strong winds and rain, worst flooding in 100 years

Future projections for County Louth climate are based on Representative Concentration Pathway (RCP) 4.5 as adopted by the IPCC.

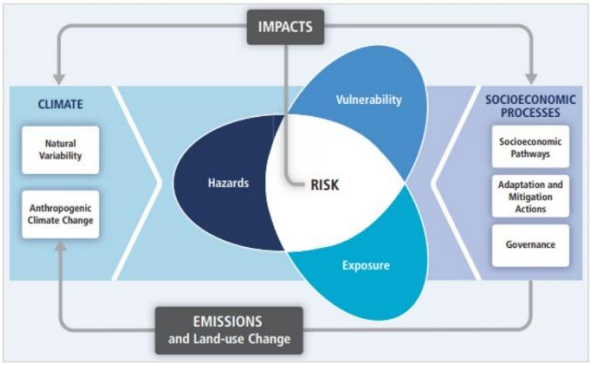


Figure 3.7. Methodology from Climate Risk Assessment from The Ministerial Guidelines Annex B.

3.2.1 Current Climate Risk Assessment

The current trend of climate change impacts in Ireland has been well documented. We are now in a position where weather patterns and climate events are more extreme. The first half of 2023 contained an excellent example of this. March was the wettest March recorded in Ireland (Figure 3.8). We then immediately entered and extended dry spell that developed into an absolute drought (Figure 3.9). Sections of Ireland's east coast experienced extended periods of absolute drought for more than 20 days.

Figure 3.8. Rain flood damage in County Louth 2023.

Figure 3.9. Screen grab of RTE news report on March as the wettest ever recorded in Ireland.

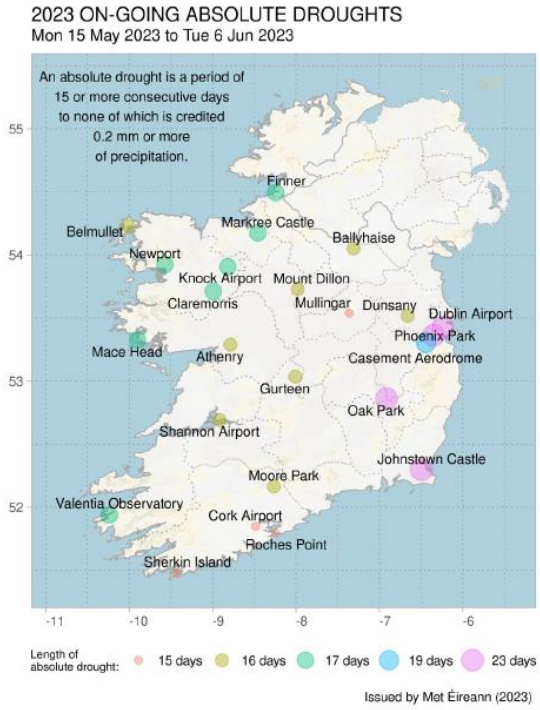


Figure 3.10. Outline of the drought conditions in Ireland for May and June 2023. Data from Met Éireann.

Graph of Current Climate Hazards (Figure 3.10) outlines the exposure to extreme weather events in county Louth.

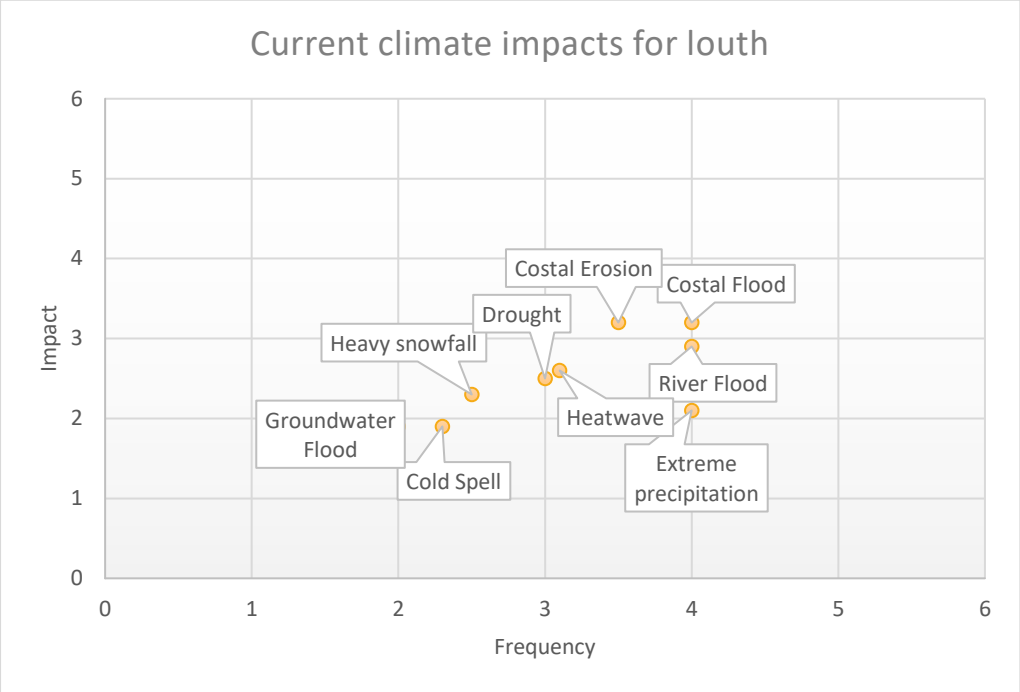


Figure 3.11. The current impacts of extreme weather events for County Louth. Each weather event is presented on an Impact v frequency basis.

3.2.2 Future Climate risks and impacts

In order to better understand future climate risks and potential impacts of climate change in County Louth, accurate projections are needed. The Climate Ireland Data tool was used to produce projected climate variables. These data are for the period 2041 -2060 and are based on change of the baseline period relative to 1981 – 2022. These represent likely climatic conditions for the county under the current IPCC projected RCP 4.5.

Climate Variable	Projected variables in Louth 2041 - 2060			
	Winter	Spring	Summer	Autumn
Annual Average Temperature (^{O}C)	+1.01	+0.94	+1.13	+1.35
Heatwave (N. of Events)	+6.5			
Frost Days (%)	-70.98			
Ice days (%)	-84.88			
Precipitation (%)	-0.47	-0.74	-3.11	-3.51
Wet Days (>20mm) (%)	+12.34			
Very wet Days (>30mm) (%)	+26.86			
Snowfall (%)	-62.72			
Dry Periods (%)	+16.08			
Wind Speed (%)	-1.90	-1.29	-1.76	-2.44
Wind Energy (%)	-3.99	-3.59	-5.29	-4.51

Table 3.2. The projected future climate variable values for County Louth for 2041 – 2060 as produced from the Climate Ireland Data Tool.

When these projections are analysed, a number of trends become evident. An increase in **Very Wet Days (>30mm) of +26.86%** is projected to lead to greater levels of river flooding in the county. The overall level of rainfall will decrease across all seasons, with **Summers getting -3.11% less precipitation on average,** combined with a on average **6.5 more Heatwave events** will place greater stress on water infrastructure.

Detailed mapping of likely heavy rainfall for the years 2041- 2060 from the ClimateIreland mapping site (Figure 3.12) The map shows % increase in **Very Wet Days (>30mm)** for different areas within the county.

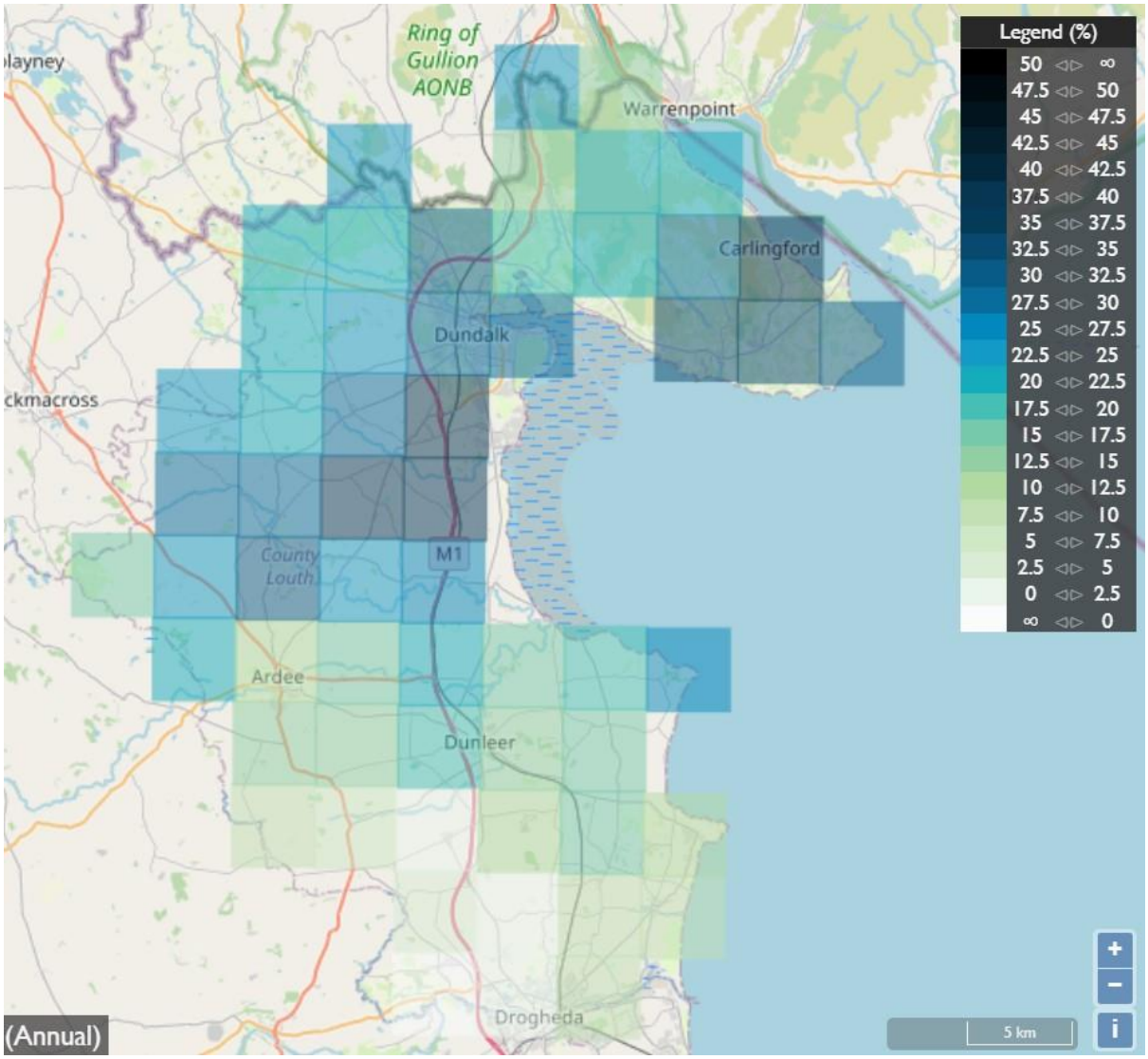


Figure 3.12. The % increase in **Very Wet Days (>30mm)** for county Louth for the years 2041 – 2060. Produced from https://www.climateireland.ie/.

3.2.3 Table of projections

Weather patterns and hazards caused by extreme weather events are being magnified and changed as a result of manmade climate change. In order to plan for future climate impacts, current models and projections were used to identify what the future of Louth's climate will look like. These data were collected from the Climate Ireland Data Tool.

This tool was developed by a number of state agencies and research partners in Ireland. It uses a detailed dataset of Ireland's climatic trends and allows for these to be projected both nationally and at a county level. The tool gives projections for the years 2041 – 2060 and is compared to the baseline years of 1981 – 2022. Table 3.3 outlines the future projected climate impacts for county Louth.

Table 3.3. Outline of projected changes in climate impacts for County Louth for 2041 – 2060.

Hazard	Projected Change in Frequency	Climate Projections
Heatwaves	Increase ↑	Overall temperature for Louth is projected to increase by 1.01 to 1.35 RCP 4.5
Droughts	Increase ↑	With an increase in heatwave events and a reduction in summer rainfall, droughts are expected to increase.
Cold Spell	Decrease ↓	Cold spells are set to decrease with a reduction in frost days and ice days.
Heavy snowfall	Decrease ↓	Cold spells are set to decrease with a reduction in frost days, ice days and snowfall.
Severe Windstorms	No Change –	average wind speeds are set to drop a small amount for Louth, but the projection for extreme wind speed events contains a high level of uncertainty.
Coastal Flooding	Increase ↑	With a projected increase in sea levels of .24 meters by 2050, coastal flooding is set to be magnified and become more frequent.
Coastal Erosion	Increase ↑	Coastal erosion will increase with the rising sea levels and increasing coastal flooding.
River Flooding	Increase ↑	With the number of Very Wet Days (>30mm) set to increase, river flooding will also increase.
Surface Water flooding	Increase ↑	With the number of Very Wet Days (>30mm) set to increase, Surface water flooding will also increase.
Groundwater Flooding	Likely increase ↑	There is uncertainty for groundwater flooding projects. But with an increase in very wet days events, it is likely there will be an impact on groundwater reserves.

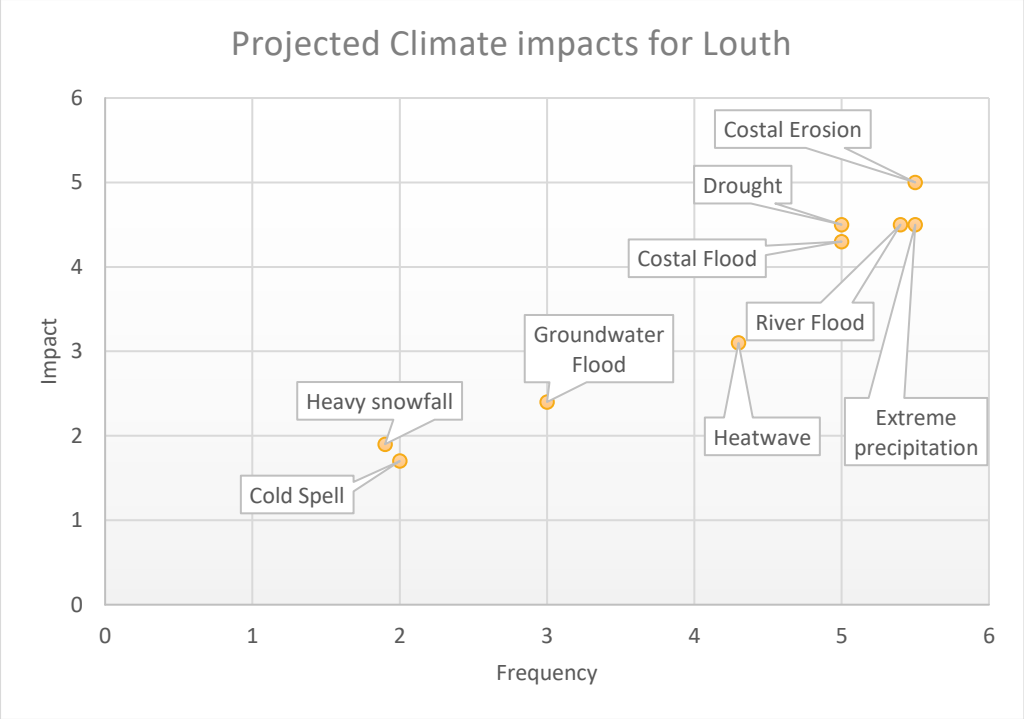


Figure 3.13. The future projected impacts for extreme weather events for County Louth. Each weather event is presented on an Impact v frequency basis.

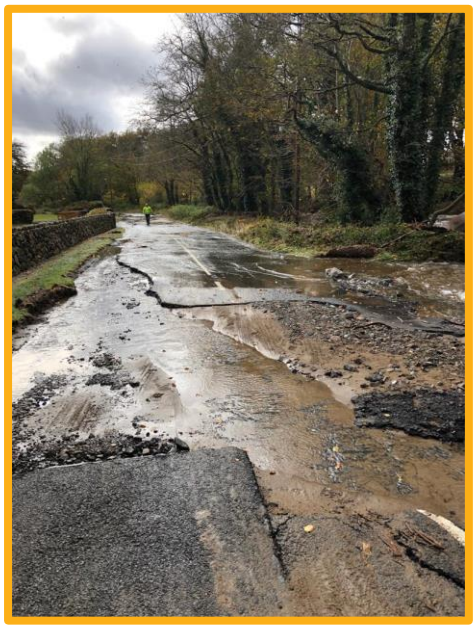


Figure 3.14. Road damage as a result of extreme rain, Louth 2023.

Figure 3.15. Sandbags provided to members of the public by Louth County Council during extreme rain events.

3.3 Pre-Draft Consultation

The preceding sections have outlined that all areas of society can have an impact and it is therefore self-evident that all sectors should have their say in the production of this plan. This is a challenge faced by everyone and only a combined concerted effort will achieve results; with this in mind Louth County Council has engaged with stakeholders throughout this plan development process.

It is essential for the success of this plan that everyone has their say and feels ownership. To ensure that the Plan produced is comprehensive but realistic in its objectives, but most importantly, to ensure that it will form a good framework for meaningful climate action in Louth.

To direct and inform the writing of Louth County Council's climate action plan, a range of consultations were undertaken. A summary of this consultation process is presented below.

3.3.1 Pre-draft public consultation

Opinions and views on where the main focus for the climate action plan should lie were sought from the public.

An online information evening was held on Thursday, the 10th of August at which the views of the attendees were recorded.

A consultation form was hosted on Louth County Council's website, and members of the public and interested parties could reply either by post or email.

Five submissions were received and these replies were collected and used to inform the decision-making for the report.

3.3.2 Internal Louth County Council consultation

Engagement workshops with internal sections of Louth County Council was conducted to identify which operational constraints and opportunities exist.

3.3.3 CARO-led sectoral stakeholder engagement workshops

CARO facilitated a number of sectoral stakeholder workshops.

Table 3.4 CARO-led sectoral Engagement workshops and dates

Theme	Date
Heritage and Biodiversity (in conjunction with the Heritage Council)	**25th April 2023**
Transportation	**22nd May 2023**
Built Environment and Land Use Planning	**23rd May 2023**
Community Development and Enterprise	**30th May 2023**
Land use Change (inc. Agriculture and Water)	**31st May 2023**

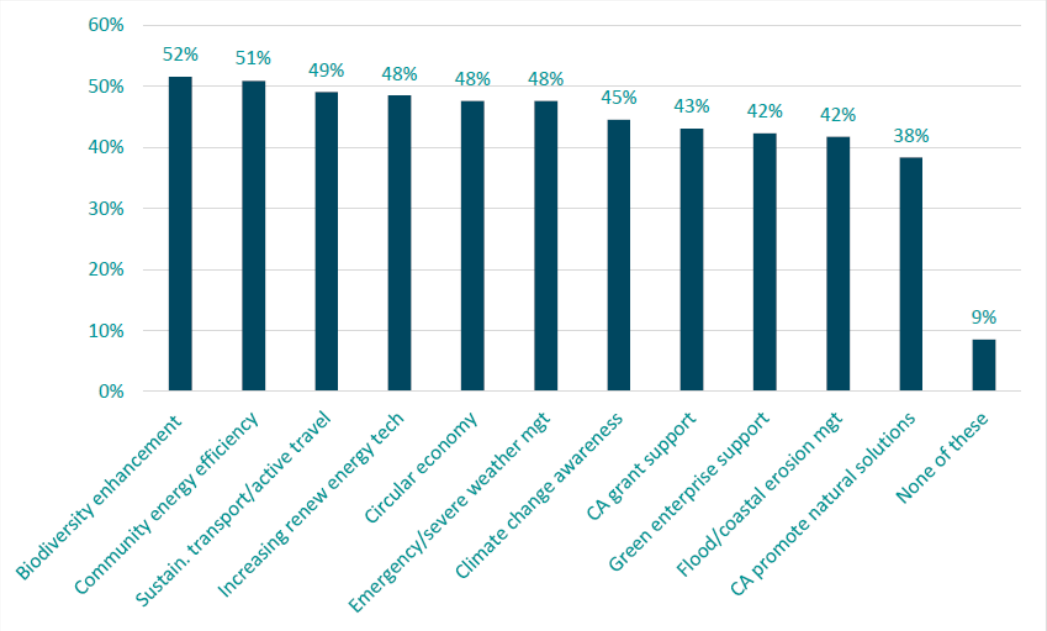
The stakeholders involved in these workshops included:

- Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC)
- Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD)
- Department of Transport (DoT)
- Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH)
- Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports, and Media (DTCAGSM)
- Department of Agriculture, Food, and the Marine (DAFM)
- Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR)

- National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS)
- National Transport Authority (NTA)
- Zero Emission Vehicles Ireland (ZEVI)
- Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII)
- Arts Council of Ireland
- Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI)
- Office of Public Works (OPW)
- Local Government Management Agency (LGMA)
- Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI)
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- Inland Fisheries (IF)
- Mét Éireann (ME)
- Uisce Eireann
- Regional Assemblies, represented by Southern Regional Assembly (SRA)
- Climate Action Regional Offices (CARO)
- Local Enterprise Office Network (LEO)
- Local Authority Waters Programme (LAWPRO)
- Local Authority Services National Training Group (LASNTG)
- Electric Ireland Superhomes
- The Heritage Council
- Office of the Planning Regulator
- Accelerating Change Together (ACT)

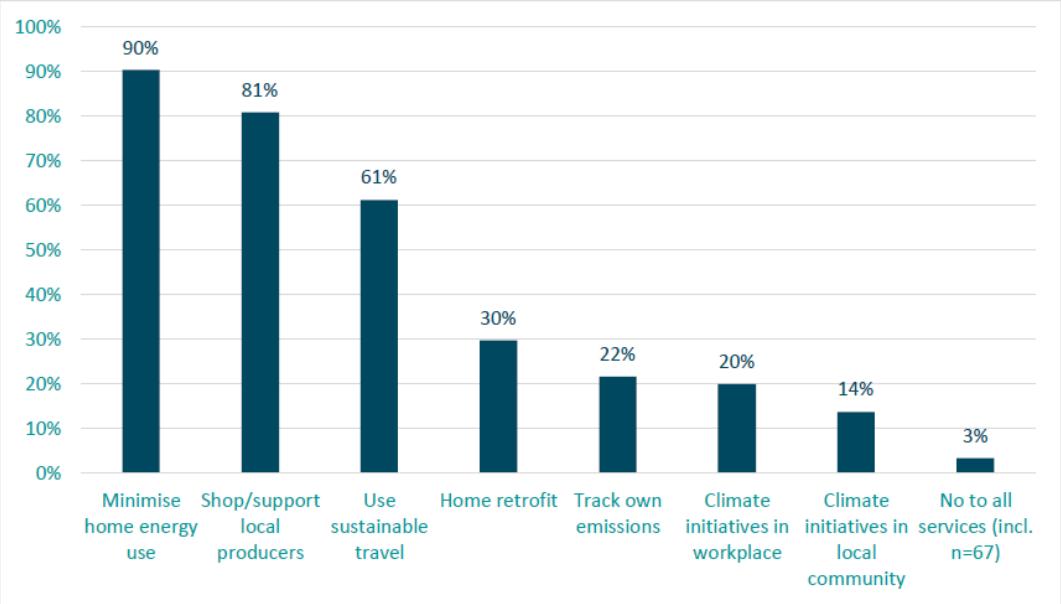
The authors were also cognizant of the outcomes of the 2023 Local Government Services Survey Special Theme: Climate Action, which show both the concerns and the actions being taken by the public.

Figure 3: Initiatives local authority should be more involved in



Source: 2023 Local Government Services Survey Special Theme: Climate Action

Figure 4: Respondent activism in climate action



Source: 2023 Local Government Services Survey Special Theme: Climate Action

4 Where are we going to?

The goal of this plan is to set Louth County on a trajectory to hit targets of a reduction of 51% of greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and ultimately to become a net zero county by 2050, while creating a **resilient economy, environment and a just transition**.

It is vital that this plan creates an environment for the continued growth of the county and does not stifle progress.

Table 4.1 shows that Louth is expected to grow significantly over the coming decade and this is recognised by the nomination of Dundalk & Drogheda as growth centres in the National Development Plan to 2040.

Table 4.1: Population in Louth

Population Projections for Louth		
2016	2026	2031
129,000	139,000 – 144,500	144,000 – 151,500

Louth County Council (in co-ordination with all other local authorities, through CARO) has identified 5 thematic areas for Climate Action.

These thematic areas provide structure to the actions which are proposed and a common framework for all local authorities to work to. The sector has been tasked with setting local objectives under these themes, to direct us towards our vision for Louth.

.

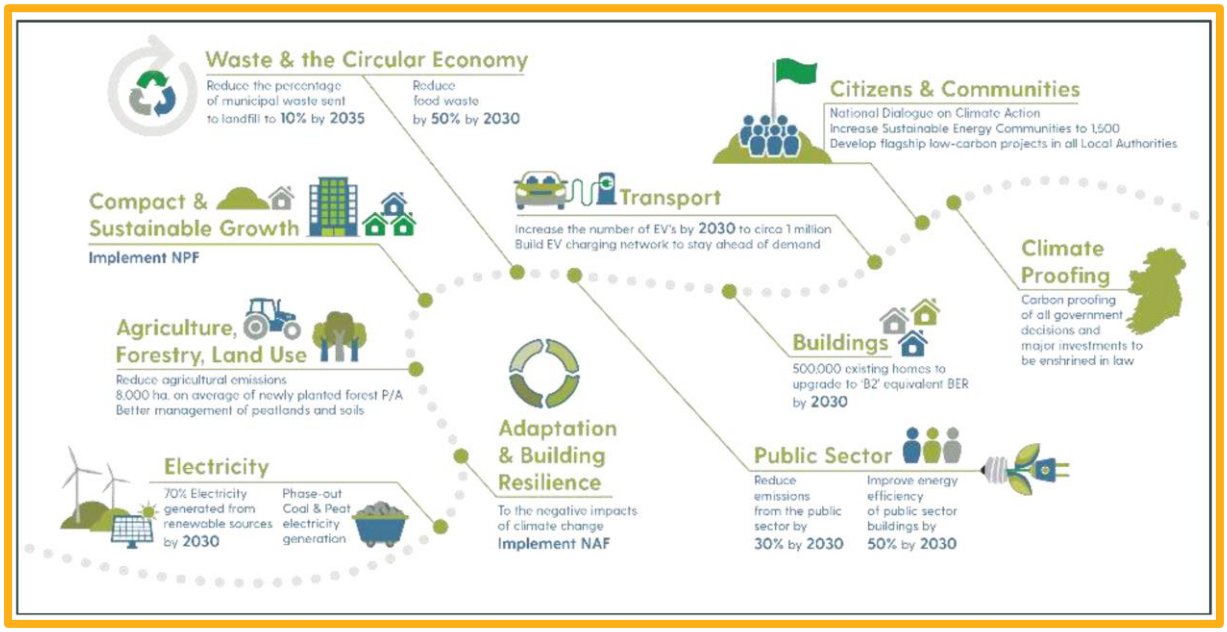
Objectives of Louth County Council Climate Action Plan				
	Integrate Climate Action into the decision-making process throughout Louth County Council	Show leadership by achieving our ambition Climate Action Targets	Louth County Council will show transparency and accountability through our monitoring and reporting on progress against Climate Actions	Louth County Council will deliver on our Commitments under the Climate Action Charter
	Louth County Council will commit to decarbonising its operations and implementing energy efficiency projects across the organisation	Support the population of Louth to enhance the energy efficiency of the private housing and business premises stock	Empower the population of Louth to shift from private car use by providing best-practice active travel projects and private car alternatives	
	To adopt and lead out on including green solutions into the functions of the local authority	To fully implement the Local Authority actions outlined in Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) to halt and reverse the decline in biodiversity	Invest in the green infrastructure needed to climate-proof County Louth's residents, natural heritage and built spaces	
	Mainstream climate action into emergency planning and preparedness to protect our assets from extreme weather events	Louth County Council will work collaboratively to enhance and build the growing culture of community climate action, allowing our county to significantly increase its climate resilience	Work with and foster partnerships with all our stakeholders, such as academic institutions, businesses and community groups, to drive local-level and place-based climate action	Louth County Council will strive to ensure the transition to a new more sustainable way of living, is an equal and just one for all of the people of Louth
	Support and fully implement the Local authority actions contained within the upcoming National Waste Action and Management Plans for a Circular Economy	Promote and facilitate circular economy initiatives within the county, such as libraries of things, bring centres and repair hubs	Support renewable energy generation and energy efficiency within County Louth	

5 How are we going to get there?

In this section of the report, we outline the actions which Louth County Council will take in order to best achieve our Climate Action vision for Louth. These actions have been developed to make a contribution to an overall national effort.

5.1 Nationally

The Climate Action Plans 2019,2021,2023 have set a road map for delivering national goals. These goals have been framed through the lens of Local Authority influence by CARO and presented as in Figure 5.1. The Climate Action team in Louth have interpreted these goals to develop local actions.



5.2 Local Actions

In this section of the report we outline the actions which Louth County Council will take in order to best achieve our Climate Action vision for Louth.

These actions have been tailored for Louth to reflect local conditions and respond to local impacts. This is done with the ambition to accelerate local level climate action commensurate with the ambition of the national climate neutrality objective. In order to support these aims the actions have been devised to be SMART.

Specific -

Define the action as clearly as possible to avoid ambiguity and to set up for measurement more readily.

Measurable –

Clarify the action and emphasise in a manner that enables the action to be

measured.

Where a direct measure of an inaction is impractical, a proxy tracking measure is used, which is strongly correlated with progress on delivering the action.

Achievable –

Actions need to be carried out by someone. It is therefore crucial to assign each action to a lead department that can be held accountable for timely implementation of the action. This makes follow-up easier and provides clarity where more than one department of the local authority is required for implementation to deliver the action.

Realistic –

Setting vague or impossible actions will distract from the progress of implementation. Ensure that actions are ambitious but realistic.

Timebound –

Set a time scale for the completion of each action. This will be linked to implementation and progress reporting.

The actions below are group thematically in line with the Strategic goals outlined in Chapter 4.

Strategic Goal 1: Governance and Leadership				
Context 	Corporate governance in Louth County Council ensures transparency, accountability, and effective decision-making. Leadership within the council must balance the diverse needs of the community, aligning strategic goals with public interests. Elected officials and the Executive play key roles in fostering a culture of ethical conduct, risk management, and financial responsibility. Robust governance frameworks are required to maintain public trust and confidence. Collaborative leadership ensures that Louth County Council can address complex challenges, promote civic engagement, and deliver essential services efficiently. Striking a balance between public input and decisive action is essential for the sustained well-being of the community and the delivery of quality outcomes, in the area of Climate Action.			
Associated Risks	Louth County Council has many competing priorities, with important and ambitious work programmes to be delivered. Climate Action must remain a key focus in decision making. Many Climate Actions require significant resource input, with benefits accruing over longer periods, so business case justifications must reflect that.			
Associated Emissions	Louth County Council will demonstrate leadership by achieving energy efficiency and emissions reduction targets in our own operations and in our advocating and influencing others to do so			
Benefits/ Opportunities of Actions	Providing robust leadership in this area will energise the community to deliver on Climate Action. This will create momentum for Louth County to move towards Net Zero by 2050			
Objectives	Integrate Climate Action into the decision-making process throughout Louth County Council	Show leadership by achieving our ambitious Climate Action Targets	Louth County Council will show transparency and accountability through our monitoring and reporting on progress against Climate Actions	Louth County Council will deliver on our Commitments under the Climate Action Charter

	Action	Adaptation/ Mitigation	Tracking measure	Lead Dept	Partners	Time
GL 1	Louth County Council will Maintain a Climate Action Steering Group which will guide implementation of the Climate Action Plan	Combined	6 meetings per year	Management team	CARO	2024-2029
GL 2	Louth County Council will maintain a Climate Action Team for the duration of this plan	Combined	Fully resourced team in place review twice yearly	Organisational Development	CARO	2024
GL 3	Louth County Council will fully embrace this plan as a route to meet its 51% reduction in carbon emissions by 2030. This will be achieved by ensuring the organisational structures within the local authority allow all directorates to incorporate the appropriate climate action required into their team plans and PDPs.	Combined	% of team plans with Climate Action Specific Goals	Seniors	All Stakeholders	2024
GL 4	Louth County Council will fully incorporate the 51% reduction in carbon emissions, as required under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (amendment) Act 2021, into the corporate plan, Annual Service Delivery Plan, Municipal district plans and Local area Plans.	Combined	Achieve annual Gap-to-target improvements	Seniors	All Stakeholders	2024 - 2029
GL 5	Establish robust reporting on all climate national action targets applying to Louth County council and internal targets generated through the Local authority Climate Action Plan process.	Combined	Quarterly implementation & progress report to Director of Service	Sustainability	CARO	2024-2029

	Action	Adaptation/ Mitigation	Tracking measure	Lead Dept	Partners	Time
GL 6	Using Louth County Council's robust network of community engagement mechanisms foster a stronger awareness of climate action within the county.	Combined	Four Climate Specific Community engagement workshops per year	Organisational Development	Tidy towns groups, community groups, elected members	2024 - 2029
GL 7	Develop robust Green Public Procurement practices specific to Louth Council and incorporate these into all procurement exercises carried out by the local authority.	Mitigation	The percentage of procurement exercises that include a GPP qualification criteria	Finance section, Procurement Section,	OGP Funding Agencies	2024-2029
GL 8	Incorporate UN sustainability goals into the workings of Louth County Council. These 17 goals will enhance the climate ambitions of Louth County Council.	Combined	Staff awareness increased through deploying SDG awareness displays in 8 public buildings operated by Louth County Council	Management team	Facilities	2024 - 2029
GL 9	Establish a mechanism to update Louth County Council's Major Emergency Management plan to incorporate the latest climate-related extreme weather predictions. This will lead to the plan being a living document.	Adaptation	Annual Workshop to review Climate Trends	Major Emergency Team	All departments	2024 - 2029

	Action	Adaptation/ Mitigation	Tracking measure	Lead Dept	Partners	Time
GL 10	Fully engage with the EU Mission, adaptation to Climate Change and be an exemplar region within the EU for climate adaptation	Adaptation	% Number of Meetings Attended. Number of staff trained.	Sustainability	EU Mission Partners	2024 - 2029
GL 11	Develop a full spatially led tier three climate risk assessment and adaption plan for County Louth.	Adaptation	Delivery of plan	Sustainability	CARO	2025
GL 12	All Staff and Elected Member to receive Climate Action training relevant to their role.	Combined	% of people trained	HR, Climate Team	All departments	2024
GL 13	Increase participation in SEAI Pathfinder programme for public sector whilst promoting - through control or influence, as appropriate - project adherence to planning and environmental protection criteria.	Mitigation	Number of projects funded	Sustainability	SEAI	
GL 14	Implement plan for Dundalk & Blackrock as a Decarbonising Zone	Mitigation	Number of actions delivered	Sustainability	All Stakeholders	2024-2029
GL 15	Encourage online meetings and training to reduce business milage	Mitigation	% of training carried out online	HR	All departments	2024-2029
GL 16	Develop a communications strategy for Climate Action for Louth County Council	Combined	Strategy Document Produced	Sustainability	CARO	2024

	Action	Adaptation/ Mitigation	Tracking measure	Lead Dept	Partners	Time
GL 17	Adhere to commitments in the Local Authority Climate Action Charter	Combined	% of commitments delivered upon per annum	Climate Action Steering Group	All departments	2024-2029

Strategic Goal 2: Built Environment & Transport			
Context 	Louth is characterised by two large urban centres, with important local towns such as Ardee, Dunleer and Carlingford. The county embraces sustainable urban development, enhancing its towns and villages with a mix of heritage preservation and thoughtful modern design. Louth's transportation infrastructure is vital for connecting its communities. With a network of roads and public transport options, including buses, the county ensures accessibility.		
Associated Risks	Weather impacts Impacts on development		
Associated Emissions	The move to sustainable forms of transport will greatly reduce emissions. Embracing best practice in our own building work will yield benefits. Ensure our planning system delivers sustainable development, will have positive emissions impacts.		
Benefits/ Opportunities of Actions	Ensuring a sustainable built environment, will deliver more comfortable and sustainable lifestyles for all An improve public and sustainable transport network will ensure a more equitable future and one with reduced commute times		
Objectives	Louth County Council will commit to decarbonising its operations and implementing energy efficiency projects across the organisation	Support the population of Louth to enhance the energy efficiency of the private housing and business premises stock	Empower the population of Louth embrace active travel projects and private car alternatives

Built Environment & Transport

Number	Action	Adaptation/ Mitigation	Tracking measure	Lead Department	Partners	Timeframe
BEI 1	Demonstrate Leadership in the National Retrofitting Scheme for private homes across the county. By retrofitting our council housing stock, promoting best practice examples from within the county and providing information on accessing funding supports to interested members of the public. Promote the need to adhere to environmental protection requirements during retrofit projects, including the need to appropriately conserve built heritage.	Mitigation	% of council houses retrofitted against target	SEAI, LCC Climate action team	Housing, Community section, Climate Action Team	2024 - 2029
BEI 2	Continued urban regeneration to ensure most efficient use of existing urban land while having due regard to the need to appropriately protect and conserve biodiversity and natural and built heritage.	Mitigation	% Progress of Urban Regen projects vs Target	Urban regeneration	Enterprise Ireland LEO Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	2024 - 2029
BEI 3	Fully Deliver the National Sustainable Mobility Policy's Pathfinder projects for Dundalk and Drogheda having due regard to heritage protection requirements.	Mitigation	Delivery of Pathfinder Projects on time	Active travel	DoT DECC	2024-2029

Number	Action	Adaptation/ Mitigation	Tracking measure	Lead Department	Partners	Timeframe
BEI 4	Deliver additional active travel projects within the county to further develop walking and cycling as an alternative to private car use. Ensure supported active travel development is carried out in a manner that has due regard to environmental sensitivities such as biodiversity, European sites, water quality and hydrology.	Mitigation	Number of active travel projects delivered/ % increase in cycle lanes / urban permeability	Active travel	DoT DECC	2024 - 2029
BEI 5	Develop a fleet usage policy for Louth County Council. This policy is to allow for decarbonising of the LCC fleet by examining options around vehicle usage, fuel types, ownership or hire options, service continuity, and centralised procurement. Sustainably decarbonise the Louth County Council fleet to the maximum allowable level, while maintaining service delivery by enacting the recommendations from the fleet usage policy	Mitigation	% reduction in carbon emissions from fleet	Sustainability	All sections ZEVI	2024
BEI 6	Deliver a housing sustainable policy for Louth County Council. Issues to be considered to include guidance for green construction practises, sustainable urban drainage, biodiversity and resources required to deliver enhanced green ambitions.	Mitigation	Delivery of working policy for housing section	Housing	Management team, The Housing Agency sustainability	2024

Built Environment & Transport

Number	Action	Adaptation/ Mitigation	Tracking measure	Lead Department	Partners	Timeframe
BEI 7	Build on Louth's leading position by decarbonising the public Lighting in County Louth by completing the National Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project while ensuring the lumen levels and spectral range are maintained or reduced/controlled to avoid effects to biodiversity.	Mitigation	Completion of programme	Placemaking	National Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project	2025
BEI 8	Development of EV charging infrastructure plan for Louth. Ensure such development promotes climate action co-benefits and does not contravene relevant environmental protection criteria or cause significant negative environmental effects.	Mitigation	Plan Developed	Placemaking	ZEVI DoT NTA	2024
BEI 9	Develop staff smarter travel plan -- • electric bikes • e-scooters • walking	Mitigation	Plan developed	Corporate	DoT NTA	2025
BEI 10	Climate Impact Risk Assessment on Louth County Council owned heritage sites	Combined	% of site Assessed	Planning	Heritage Council OPW SEAI	2026

Built Environment & Transport

Number	Action	Adaptation/ Mitigation	Tracking measure	Lead Department	Partners	Timeframe
BEI 11	Climate Impact Risk Assessment on Louth County Council owned buildings	Combined	% of sites assessed	Sustainability	SEAI	2025
BEI 12	Complete annual reporting requirements to SEAI through the National Energy Monitoring and Reporting (M&R) systems	Mitigation	% of reports submitted on-time	Sustainability	SEAI	2024-2029
BEI 13	Implement cycling strategies in Louth, Ensure the cycling strategies have due regard to environmental sensitivities such as the receiving water environment, local air quality, biodiversity, European sites and cultural heritage.	Mitigation	% Strategy Actions Completed	Placemaking	NTA DoT Cycling Ireland	2024-2029
BEI 14	Develop a walking strategy for Louth	Mitigation	Strategy Developed	Placemaking	Healthy Ireland	2025
BEI 15	Develop a surface water drainage plan for Louth for agglomerations greater than 500PE	Adaptation	Plan Completed	Placemaking	Uisce Eireann	2029

Built Environment & Transport

Strategic Goal 3: Natural Environment and Green Infrastructure			
Context 	Louth has a diverse natural environment, comprising of Mountains, large rivers, wetlands, raised bogs, estuarine and coastal and a busy agricultural sector. Louth has relatively low forest cover (2.9%) by comparison with the national average (9.5%). Louth has extensive green infrastructure, incorporating parks, beaches, green spaces all displaying excellent environmental quality. Initiatives like tree planting, urban green belts, and eco-friendly design are planned to contribute to biodiversity, climate resilience, and the overall well-being of residents.		
Associated Risks	Weather impacts Impacts on development Flooding		
Associated Emissions	The natural environment offers a significant opportunity for carbon sequestration and flood alleviation, while providing co-benefits for biodiversity and public amenity.		
Benefits/ Opportunities of Actions	Biodiverse environments enhance ecosystem resilience, making them more adaptable to changes such as climate variations. Diverse plant and animal species contribute to ecosystem services like pollination, water purification, and pest control, bolstering agricultural productivity. Improved use of nature-based drainage solutions can reduce runoff, reduce flood risk and enhance water quality by natural filtration. Additionally, these solutions provide aesthetic appeal, create habitat for wildlife, and contribute to overall urban resilience, fostering a healthier and more sustainable environment.		
Objectives	To include green solutions into the functions of the local authority	To fully implement the Local Authority actions outlined in Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) to halt and reverse the decline in biodiversity	Invest in the green infrastructure needed to climate-proof County Louth's residents, natural heritage and built spaces.

Number	Action	Adaptation/ Mitigation	Tracking measure	Lead Department	Partners	Timeframe
NEGI 1	Support the full delivery of the Local Biodiversity Action Plan for County Louth 2021 – 2026	Combined	% actions from this plan delivered vs Target	Sustainability	NPWS, EPA, Heritage Council environmental groups	2024-2026
NEGI 2	Develop a new Local Biodiversity Action Plan for County Louth in line with the new national Biodiversity plan in accordance to the guidelines set out by the Heritage Council. This plan shall have a focus on use/promotion of native species.	Combined	Delivery of a new plan. Implementation of actions	Sustainability and heritage sections	Heritage Council	2026
NEGI 3	Provide support to add value to the green schools program through funding if available and outreach projects.	Combined	% of schools with Green Flag in Louth	Community	an Tasice Schools,	2024-2029
NEGI 4	Enact all local authority relevant actions in Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023 - 2027	Combined	% of relevant Actions completed by LCC	Sustainability	NPWS, DECC Heritage Council	2024 - 2027
NEGI 5	Support existing citizen science initiatives through the National Biodiversity Data Centre biodiversity recording through training of	Combined	Number of citizen science projects supported vs Target	Sustainability	National Biodiversity Data Centre, NPWS	2024 - 2029

Natural Environment & Green Infrastructure

Number	Action	Adaptation/ Mitigation	Tracking measure	Lead Department	Partners	Timeframe
	public/stakeholders and publicising schemes and resources.				Community Group	
NEGI 6	Develop and implement a Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) and integrated rainwater management protocol for both Council and private sector projects. A protocol for NBS will address the following: I. Part 8 and Section 177AE applications for active travel, roads, public realm projects, public housing, footpath upgrades, public and council carparks, greenway/Blueway planning etc. with targets for all. ii. 'Taking in Charge' – put in a plan and resource taking in charge schemes. iii. Plan and resource maintenance iv. Build in education and awareness for public and elected members. v. Application of water sensitive urban design concepts vi. Inland Fisheries Ireland guidance for watercourses to be considered as part of relevant council policy vii. Environmental protection requirements relating to projects involving the development of NBS.	Adaptation	At least two examples (per year) of best practice in NBS to manage surface water runoff in urban spaces	Placemaking	Other Local Authorities	2025

Natural Environment & Green Infrastructure

Number	Action	Adaptation/ Mitigation	Tracking measure	Lead Department	Partners	Timeframe
NEGI 7	Set up and run a Biodiversity and Heritage forum as per the requirements of the Heritage Council to deliver feedback into local authority climate action.	Combined	% of meetings held vs target of four meetings per year	Sustainability and heritage	Heritage Council	2024 - 2029
NEGI 8	Update Fire management plan for Cooley Mountains. Ecological expertise shall be sought during plan updating. The plan shall have due regard to the need to appropriately protect important habitats.	Adaptation	Plan delivered	Fire Service	NPWS Landowners	2026
NEGI 9	Develop a Coastal protection plan for Louth. Ensure the plan has due regard to environmental sensitivities associated with coastal areas such as the receiving marine environment, biodiversity, European sites, recreation and amenity value.	Adaptation	Plan Developed	Placemaking	OPW NPWS Dept. Marine	2025
NEGI 10	Develop a Carbon sequestration plan for Louth whilst taking measures to promote the use of native plant species over non-natives, as appropriate.	Mitigation	% increase	Sustainability	Coillte IFA Public Bodies Tidy Towns	2024
NEGI 11	Progress Flood defence schemes Dundalk-Ardee Flood relief and	Adaptation	Schemes Delivered	Placemaking	OPW	2029

Natural Environment & Green Infrastructure

Number	Action	Adaptation/ Mitigation	Tracking measure	Lead Department	Partners	Timeframe
	Drogheda & Baltray flood relief scheme whilst having appropriate regard to environmental protection requirements associated with flood resilience development.					
NEGI 12	Implement Louth County Council hedgerow and trees policy. Ensure that the policy promotes the use of native species over non-natives and has due regard for water quality and soil stability issues.	Adaptation	Annual report on plan implementation	Placemaking	NPWS TII	2024-2029
NEGI 13	Develop Louth County Wetland Action Plan. This plan shall be developed by a competent ecology team, and shall have due regard to the need to appropriately protect, conserve and enhance important habitats and species and European sites, and support the maintenance and improvement of water quality in line with the aims of the Water Framework Directive.	Adaptation	Plan Developed	Sustainability	NPWS Inland Fisheries Heritage Council	2027
NEGI 14	Ensure Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs) principles are implemented in Louth County Council works and conditioned, as appropriate, in grants	Adaptation	Successful completion of annual audit of a section of	Placemaking & Planning	Developers	2024-2029

Natural Environment & Green Infrastructure

Number	Action	Adaptation/ Mitigation	Tracking measure	Lead Department	Partners	Timeframe
	of planning permission. Having due regard to promoting nature-based solutions, protection of biodiversity and avoidance of habitat fragmentation.		projects and permissions			
NEGI 15	Work with LAWPRO to develop flood risk assessments for Rivers in Louth	Adaptation	% Number of Rivers with flood risk assessments	Sustainability	LAWPRO Inland Fisheries Ireland	2025
NEGI 16	Develop a pesticide use policy & procedure for Louth County Council, ensuring these substances are only used to a degree and an extent that does not cause significant effects on the receiving environment, such as the receiving water environment, biodiversity or European sites.	Adaptation	Policy & procedure in place	Placemaking	Tidy Towns Business Community	2024
NEGI 17	Deliver Ramparts River Rejuvenation project	Adaptation	% of Project Complete	Sustainability	Inland Fisheries Dundalk Tidy Towns NPWS	2026
NEGI 18	Alien invasive species plan for Louth, This plan shall be developed by a competent ecology team, and shall	Adaptation	Plan Developed	Sustainability	NPWS	2025

Natural Environment & Green Infrastructure

Number	Action	Adaptation/ Mitigation	Tracking measure	Lead Department	Partners	Timeframe
	have due regard to the need to appropriately manage and prevent the spread of invasive species.					

Natural Environment & Green Infrastructure

Strategic Goal 4: Communities: Resilience and Transition				
Context  	Louth has significant portions of its population living in low lying coastal communities, which are vulnerable to sea level rise. There is a significant number of people living in rural areas, with scant public transport service. The housing stock of Louth is mixed, with a large number of older, energy inefficient dwellings. Louth has a strong community group sector, which works for the betterment of their localities.			
Associated Risks	Vulnerable communities suffer due changed way of living Lack of buy-in Insufficient speed of adaptation			
Associated Emissions	The Climate Action Effort will ultimately be a community one, so progress will result in emissions reductions			
Benefits/ Opportunities of Actions	Collaborative community efforts and strategic planning ensure a balanced approach, fostering resilience and a thriving, sustainable future for citizens.			
Objectives	Mainstream climate action into emergency planning and preparedness to protect communities in extreme weather events	Louth County Council will work collaboratively to enhance and build the growing culture of community climate action, allowing our county to significantly increase its climate resilience.	Work with and foster partnerships with all our stakeholders, such as academic institutions, businesses and community groups, to drive local-level and place-based climate action.	Louth County Council will strive to ensure the transition to a new more sustainable way of living, is an equal and just one for all of the people of Louth

Number	Action	Adaptation/ Mitigation	Tracking measure	Lead Department	Partners	Timeframe
CRT 1	Access best practice information from the EU Mission, Adaptation to Climate Change, to strengthen Louth County Council's response to extreme weather events	Adaptation	Annual Review of MEP to assess if EU Mission can contribute	Sustainability	EU Mission Partners	2024 - 2029
CRT 2	Energise the creative & arts sector to inspire behavioural change and positive climate action by implementing the Creative Ireland Plan	Combined	1 project funded per annum	Arts team	Sustainability, Creative Community, DECC Creative Ireland	2024 - 2025
CRT 3	Develop an allotments and community gardens strategy for Louth County Council that includes learnings from the Louth Urban Food sanctuary project.	Combined	Delivery and adoption of strategy	Community	Tidy Towns PPN	2024 - 2025
CRT 4	Strengthen the incorporation of Flood Risk Management and Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plans into the spatial planning for County Louth to meet the requirements of the EU Floods Directive and the EU Water Framework Directive and to promote a climate resilient County	Adaptation	Evidence of robust climate adaptation planning in spatial planning	Planning	OPW	2024 - 2029

Communities: Resilience & Transition

Number	Action	Adaptation/ Mitigation	Tracking measure	Lead Department	Partners	Timeframe
CRT 5	Create partnerships with third-level education institutions such as DKIT and the DCU climate change centre to explore and develop novel climate action ideas, specific to county Louth	Combined	Three co-operative meetings per year	Sustainability	Educational institutes	2024 - 2029
CRT 6	To be a focal point and knowledge hub for local communities and citizens of Louth wishing to further their climate actions. Host information material and be available to answer queries and assist where resources allow. Carry out climate literacy events throughout each year	Combined	Three climate literacy events hosted per year.	Community, libraries	Sustainability Sustainable Energy Communities	2024 - 2029
CRT 7	Include 'Sustainability and Climate Change' scoring on relevant grant assessments to ensure that community groups/ stakeholders consider and incorporate Climate Mitigation and Adaptation in all their grant funded activities	Combined	Application forms updated to comply with this objective.	Sustainability to liaise with all Services responsible for grant administration and scoring	Environment and Climate Action PPN/Volunteer Centre/NTDC and STDC	2024
CRT 8	Improve Circular Economy Awareness among the people and business of Louth	Mitigation	Two information campaigns per year	Sustainability	Businesses Communities	2024

Communities: Resilience & Transition

Number	Action	Adaptation/ Mitigation	Tracking measure	Lead Department	Partners	Timeframe
CRT 9	Promote Sustainable tourism initiatives for Louth	Combined	Increase in visitors to sustainable tourism offerings	Strategic Economic Development	Failte Ireland	2024-2029
CRT 10	Create digital hub for Climate Action information and advice	Combined	Digital Hub Created	Sustainability	IT Libraries Other Local Authorities	2025
CRT 11	Support development of Sustainable Energy Communities	Mitigation	number of new SECs vs Target	Sustainability	SEAI PPN	
CRT 12	Promote connectivity to allow for remote working and reduce commuting	mitigation	Household broadband connectivity in Louth	Planning	Communications Companies	2025
CRT 13	Continue LEO Green for Business programme	Combined	Number of successful applications vs Target	LEO	Business Community	2024-2029
CRT 14	Risk assessment to identify communities vulnerable to Climate Impacts	Combined	Risk Assessment Completed	Community	HSE AHBs TII & TFI	2025
CRT 15	Guided by the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the GAA and CCMA, towards	Combined	Three Green Club initiatives	Sustainability	GAA	2024

Communities: Resilience & Transition

Number	Action	Adaptation/ Mitigation	Tracking measure	Lead Department	Partners	Timeframe
	working together on sustainability and climate action projects, engage with the 'Green Club Programme' through a nominated lead, working with the CARO and GAA, in the promotion and support of projects by participating clubs, to meet the objectives, and during key phases, of the programme to 2029		commenced per year			
CRT 16	Develop a 'Just Transition' plan for Louth	Combined	Plan Developed	Community	AHB HSE Sectoral Stakeholders	2025

Communities: Resilience & Transition

Strategic Goal 5: Sustainability and resource management			
Context 	Wind Energy Solar Ireland has one of the highest waste production rates per capita in Europe. Recycling and re-use rates are relatively low Promotion of the circular economy is a priority for the sector		
Associated Risks	Increased cost of circular resource management may lead to more unmanaged waste activity On-shore renewable may lead to a perceived impact on visual amenities		
Associated Emissions	Emission reductions will accrue due to increased renewable energy initiatives. Reuse, recycling and repair, will reduce emissions due to waste disposal and virgin material processing.		
Benefits/ Opportunities of Actions	By prioritizing renewable resources and reducing waste, green resource management aims for a harmonious balance between human needs and ecological well-being, promoting a healthier county. Opportunities for companies in the circular economy will present themselves throughout the life of this plan		
Objectives	Support and fully implement the Local authority actions contained within the upcoming National Waste Action and Management Plans for a Circular Economy	Promote and facilitate circular economy initiatives within the county, such as libraries of things, bring centres and repair hubs	Support renewable energy generation and energy efficiency within County Louth

Number	Action	Adaptation/ Mitigation	Tracking measure	Lead Department	Partners	Year
SRM 1	Apply a protocol to enable a standard for 'Climate Proofing' including "water sensitive urban design" for all local authority led capital plans, purchases and investments for example, projects funded under the Outdoor Recreation Scheme, Active Travel Scheme, Urban Regeneration and Development Fund etc	Both	Suitable Protocol picked for Louth	Sustainability	NSAI Funding Agencies	2025
SRM 2	Produce a Sustainability protocol for Louth County Council events; to ensure climate-proofing.	Mitigation	Delivery of a Sustainability Protocol for LCC corporate events	Corporate section	Sustainability, community Events venues	2024
SRM 3	Deliver a series of energy efficiency and management workshops for small and medium businesses in County Louth to help them meet their sectorial targets under the nation's decarbonising plan	Mitigation	2 workshops held per year	Sustainability	LEO, SEAI SECs	2024 - 2029
SRM 4	Fully support and resource the Louth County Council energy and Facilities team to continue to work towards our 51% carbon reduction by 2030 targets.	Mitigation	Gap-to-target reductions vs annual target	Sustainability	SEAI	2024 - 2029
SRM 5	Ensure that Louth County Council meets the requirements of Directive 2010/31/EU. The energy performance of buildings (recast)	Mitigation	New public buildings from 2027 onwards adhere to the requirements set	Placemaking	All sections	2026 - 2029

Number	Action	Adaptation/ Mitigation	Tracking measure	Lead Department	Partners	Year
			out in Directive 2010/31/EU.			
SRM 6	Develop a Clean Energy Policy for County Louth. This is to define the local authority's role in supporting sustainable green energy expansion and assess the current and emerging technologies	Mitigation	Delivery of Clean Energy Policy	Sustainability	SEAI Energy Stakeholders	2024 - 2025
SRM 7	Support local level renewable energy and micro generation projects within county Louth and cooperate with neighbouring regions where opportunities are identified. Promote - through control or influence as appropriate – project accordance with planning and environmental protection requirements	Mitigation	Additional Green energy on the grid in Louth.	Sustainability	SEAI DECC RESS	2024 - 2029
SRM 8	Support and fully implement the Local authority actions contained within the upcoming National Waste Action and Management Plans for a Circular Economy	Mitigation	Annual Report on Progress produced	Sustainability	WERLA RWPO TFSO NWCPO Waste Industry	2024-2029
SRM 9	Support civic amenity sites to implement best practice circular economy initiatives whilst ensuring all supported initiatives accord with the provision of the Waste Management Act and do not lead to	Mitigation	Tonnes of Material per Annum redirected to reuse	Sustainability	V&W RWPO WERLA	2025

Number	Action	Adaptation/ Mitigation	Tracking measure	Lead Department	Partners	Year
	adverse environmental impacts or nuisance.					
SRM 10	Partner on 'Repairmystuff.ie'	Mitigation	Partnership agreed	Sustainability	Monaghan County Council	2024
SRM 11	Promote resource efficiency in Group Water Schemes	Mitigation	2 Group Water Schemes advised per annum	Sustainability	NGWF	2024-2029
SRM 12	Support and promote 're-turn' scheme	Mitigation	Awareness Campaign run	Sustainability	RE-Turn	2024-2029

6 Leading the Way - Dundalk Blackrock decarbonising zone

Dundalk has a rich history that dates back over a thousand years. It was founded as a Viking settlement in the 9th century, making it one of the oldest towns in Ireland. Throughout its history, it has grown and evolved into a thriving urban centre. Today, Dundalk is a bustling town with a mix of historical and modern elements, and it continues to play a significant role in the cultural and economic life of the region.

It is against this backdrop that Dundalk Blackrock was chosen to be the decarbonization zone for county Louth.

This Decarbonization Zone (DZ) was chosen to demonstrate meaningful climate action, reduce the environmental impact of the town, and inspire other regions to follow suit in addressing the challenges of climate change.

This plan was initially outlined in 2019. This proposal was refined in 2023, against the backdrop of changed legislation and changed national guidelines. This plan is contained in Annex 2, to this plan.

Identifying and outlining a Decarbonising Zone (DZ) for each county came about as a response to Action Number 165 in the National Climate Action Plan 2019.

6.1 What are Decarbonising Zones

A Decarbonising Zone is an area or town within each county that has been identified by a local authority to pilot enhanced climate action measures.

"DZs are a demonstration and test bed of what is possible for decarbonisation and climate action at local and community levels, to help support and realise national climate ambition."

The Ministerial Guidelines Annex D Decarbonising zones.

6.2 The Dundalk Blackrock Decarbonising Zone

Within Dundalk, each ED was examined as a potential DZ, but it was felt that each ED in isolation would exclude at least one significant stakeholder. It was decided that, given the timeframes and ambitions of the National Climate Action Plan 2021 & the Programme for Government, Louth County Council should be equally ambitious in our plans for decarbonisation.

Louth County Council have proposed that the entire population area of Dundalk and Blackrock as a Decarbonising Zone, Figure 6.1.

This area consists of the towns of Dundalk and Blackrock, which has a population of *circa* **45,044** people which is **32%** of the total population of **139,703** for the County of Louth, according to the 2022 National Population Census.

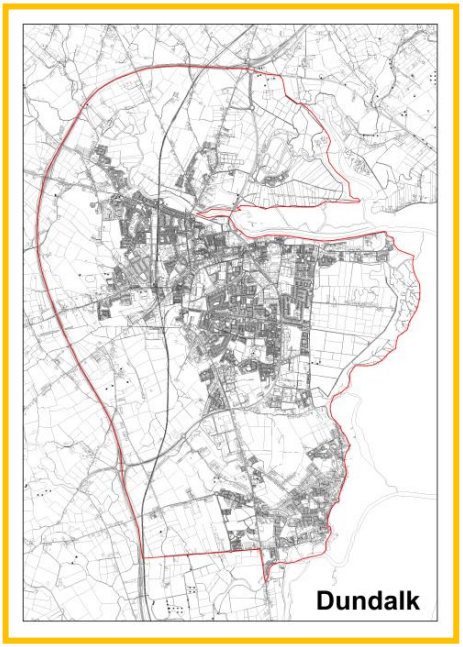


Figure 6.1. The Dundalk Blackrock Decarbonising Zone

6.3 DZ Vision and Objective

6.3.1 The Vision for the Dundalk Blackrock DZ zone is:

"The coastal community of Dundalk Blackrock will lead out on climate action in county Louth in through flexible, incremental and community-driven climate action."

6.3.2 The Objective of the Dundalk Blackrock DZ zone is:

To place Dundalk Blackrock on a part to reaching the national target of 51% carbon reduction by 2030 and net zero by 2050.

6.4 Baseline emissions inventory for Dundalk Blackrock

When the baseline emissions inventory for the Dundalk Blackrock Decarbonising Zone is calculated for 2018, there is a total figure of **209691 (tCO_2e)** across all sectors. Figure 6.2 outlines the details for these sectors. Within the DZ, Agriculture has the largest share at 30%, with residential second behind at 22% and industrial third at 17%.

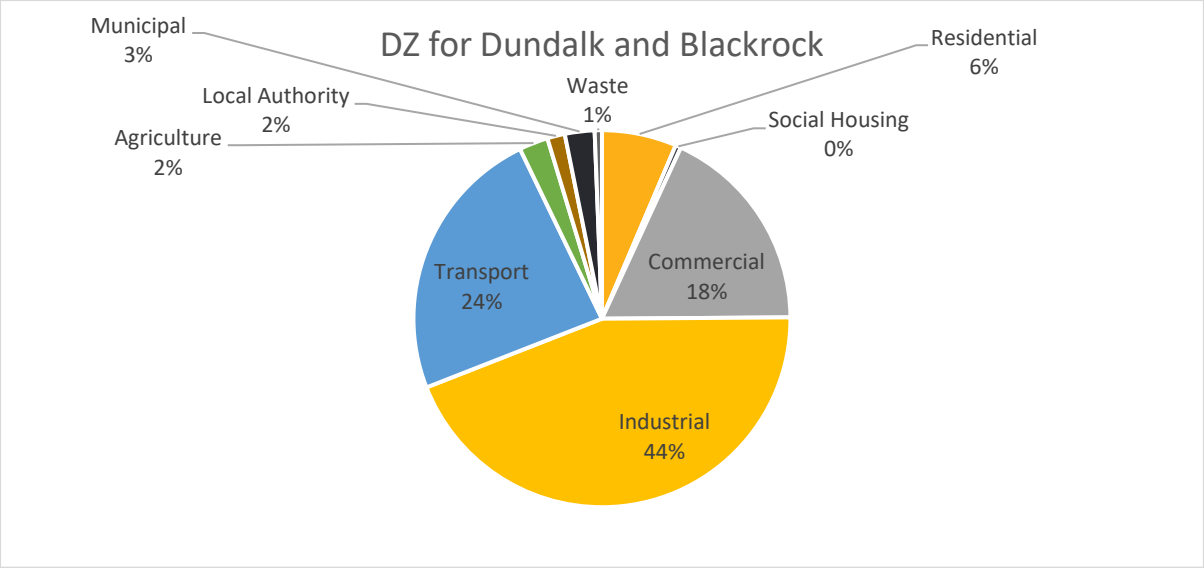


Figure 6.2. The percentage of emissions from each sector within the Dundalk Blackrock DZ.

6.4.1 Scale of the decarbonisation required for the Dundalk Blackrock DZ.

The government announced National Sectoral Emissions ceilings in 2022. This sets a maximum allowable emissions level for each sector by 2030. Each of the different sectors within the DZ must be on a path to meet these ceiling caps by 2029 to achieve the 2030 targets.

In order for the Dundalk Blackrock DZ to meet these targets, all sectors must work together to achieve these national targets. Figure 6.3 outlines the total emission reductions in **(tCO_2e)** based on these national ceilings. By 2030 each of these sectors within the DZ are required to decarbonise by these amounts.

6.5 Implementation of the Dundalk Blackrock Decarbonising Zone actions

The success of the Dundalk Blackrock decarbonising zone will depend on strong collaborative climate action from all stakeholders in the area. Monitoring the actions outlined in this document and reporting on their progress will be the responsibility of the local authority.

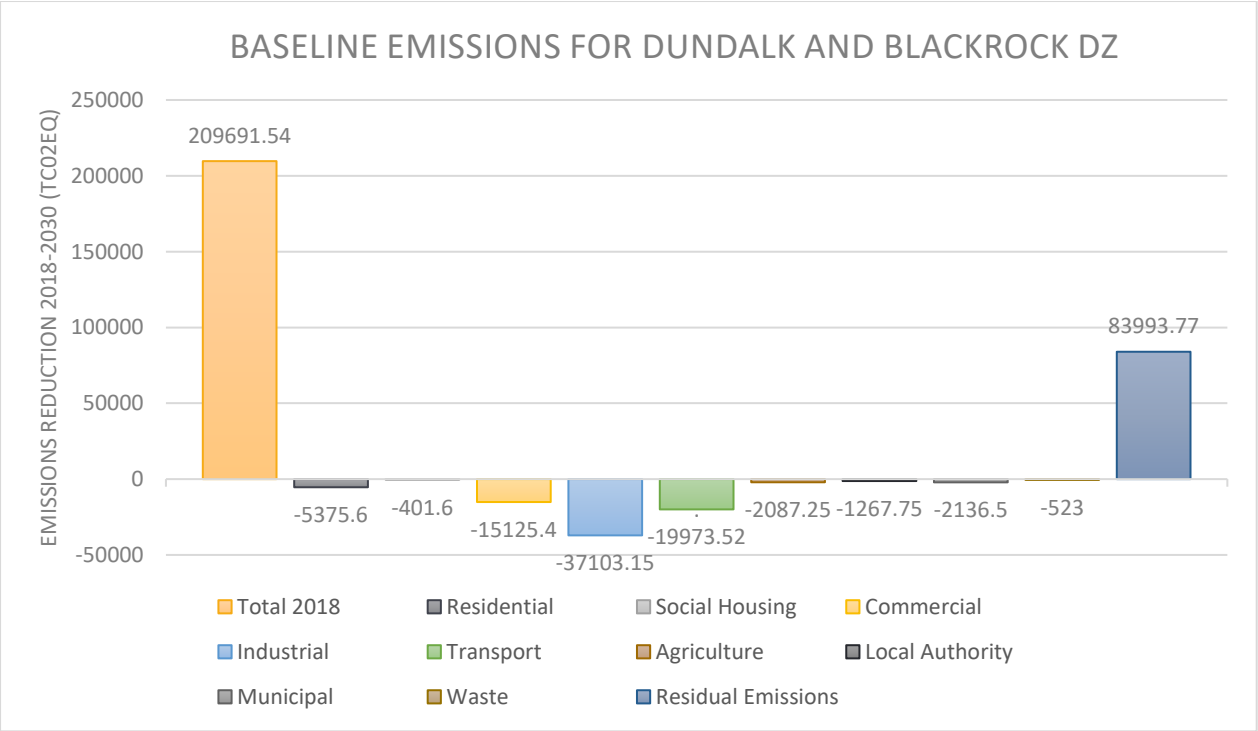


Figure 6.3. An outline of the total (tCO_2e) for the DZ and the reduction targets required for each sector under the Government Announced National Sectorial Emissions ceilings. The residual emissions are also presented.

6 Dundalk Blackrock Decarbonising Zone			
Context	Create climate focused governance for enhanced climate action measures within the DZ Develop stakeholder participation to deliver the goals of the DZ		
Benefits/ Opportunities of Actions	By placing enhanced focus on the large population centre of Dundalk Blackrock, novel and enhanced climate action projects can be developed that are specific to County Louth. Best practice and exemplar climate action projects can be showcased to the wider county in a local setting		
Objectives	Develop enhanced and exemplar climate action projects	Energise stakeholder involvement and awareness for meaningful climate action	Allow the Dundalk Blackrock DZ to achieve its 51% carbon reduction by 2023

Number	Action	Adaptation/ Mitigation	Tracking measure	Lead Department	Partners	Year
DZ 1	Bring together a specific decarbonising zone working group comprising the main stakeholders from the public and private sectors.	Both	Development of terms of reference. Establishment of the group. Number of formal meetings per year	Climate Team	Management Team	2024 onwards
DZ 2	Identify a specific list of opportunities to deliver detailed carbon reduction projects for the DZ, ensuring integrated environmental protection requirements are appropriately considered.		Development of a list of projects.	Climate Team	DZ implementation team	2024
DZ 3	Develop a voluntary climate action charter for businesses, community groups, state bodies and members of the public to sign and adopt	Both	Development of charter. Number of signatories signing	DZ implementation team	Climate team	2024 onwards
DZ 4	Develop and roll out a comprehensive communication strategy for the Dundalk Blackrock DZ and update this plan annually	Both	Development of strategy. Development of branding. The number of mainstream and social media engagement. Yearly updated list	Climate Action team	DZ implementation team	2024 onwards

Number	Action	Adaptation/ Mitigation	Tracking measure	Lead Department	Partners	Year
			of engagement events			
DZ 5	Develop an enhanced smarter mobility strategy for the DZ to focus on increasing the use of electric modes of transport, having due regard to environmental sensitivities including sensitive human receptors, water quality, biodiversity, European sites, and available grid capacity.	Mitigation	Establishment of Ebike and scooter sharing scheme	Climate Action team	13	2024-2029
DZ 6	Develop and pilot an anty-idling campaign	Mitigation	Development of campaign	Climate Action team	Environmental awareness	2024-2029
DZ 7	Produce a community map highlighting the walking and cycling access routes within the DZ	Mitigation	Development of map. Promotion of map within the DZ	Climate Action team		2025
DZ 8	Promote and celebrate exemplar climate action projects within the DZ	Both	Number of projects identified and number of promotional occurrences for these projects	Climate Action team	DZ implementation team, relevant local stakeholders	2024-2029
DZ 9	Engage with and promote the DKIT CREDIT Technology Gateway.	Both	Number of projects from the CREDIT group supported	Climate Action team	DZ implementation team	2024-2029

Number	Action	Adaptation/ Mitigation	Tracking measure	Lead Department	Partners	Year
DZ 10	Promote the best practice examples and learnings from the Dundalk Blackrock DZ to the wider county with the aim of rolling out these actions to other towns within Louth.	Both	Number of community groups, businesses and individuals from outside the DZ engaged. The number of new climate projects commenced outside the DZ. Establishment of new decarbonising implementation groups outside the DZ	DZ implementation team	Community section, Business groups, PPN, LEO, state bodies, Enterprise Ireland	2025 - 2029
DZ 11	Enhance the biodiversity value of the green and blue spaces within the DZ through nature-based solutions to provide additional ecosystem services such as carbon sequestration, amenity areas and clean water, having due regard for planning and development policy and environmental protection considerations during the Master-planning and development process.	Both	Green and blue space map for the DZ. Pilot carbon sequestration project. Citizen science engagement in the area	DZ implementation team	Biodiversity officer, NPWS, EPA, IFI, An Taisce	2024-2029

Number	Action	Adaptation/ Mitigation	Tracking measure	Lead Department	Partners	Year
DZ 12	Support the development of new sustainable energy committees within the DZ and provide bridging finance to allow these SCEs to complete energy master plans.	Mitigation	Number of new SECs created. Number of energy masterplans developed for SECs within the DZ	Climate Action team	SEAI, DZ implementation team	2024-2029
DZ 13	Examine the potential of maximising district heating opportunities within the DZ and support the implementation of best practice as recommended by SEAI. Raise awareness of the opportunities and benefits presented by district heating. Appropriate regard shall be had to planning and environmental protection requirements when investigating and progressing any development projects supported by this action.	Mitigation	List of District heating opportunities. Number of district heating awareness events. Delivery of a district heating pilot project within the DZ	DZ implementation team	SEAI, GSI, LCC sections, LEO, DKIT	2025-2029
DZ 14	Build on the Green for Business support from the LEO to develop a regional leading ecosystem of sustainable business practices where new green markets and products are prioritised.	Both	Promotion of the circular economy.	DZ implementation team	IDA, Enterprise Ireland, LEO	2024

Number	Action	Adaptation/ Mitigation	Tracking measure	Lead Department	Partners	Year
DZ 15	Support the establishment of renewable energy projects, small, medium and large, that will contribute to the overall goals of DZ. Promote - through control or influence as appropriate – project in accordance with planning and environmental protection requirements.	Mitigation		DZ implementation team	Renewables sector Communities	2024 - 2029
DZ 16	Create Reporting Structure to communicate progress	Both	One Annual Report and 3 quarterly reports to DoS	Sustainability	All Stakeholders	2024-2029

7 Implementation and reporting

7.1 Planning for implementation

The successful delivery of this climate action plan will require detailed implementation. The Ministerial Guidelines Annex A sets out a step process to establish a structure for implementation and reporting.

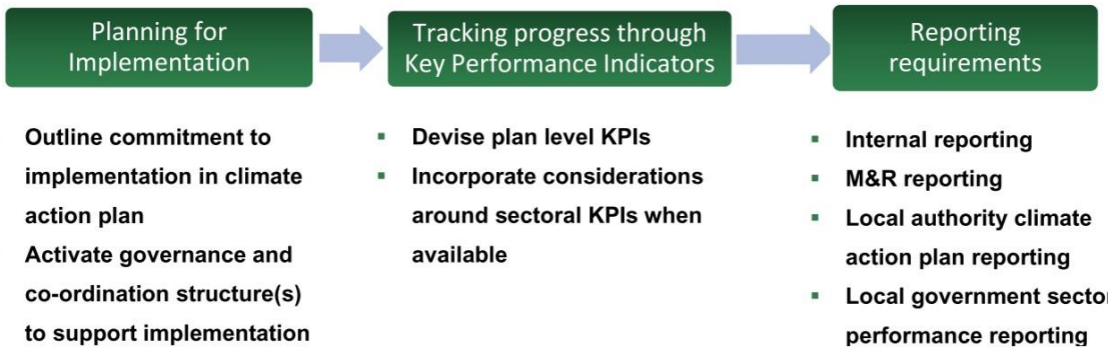


Figure7.1. Steps required to implement the actions in this climate action plan and the reporting requirements. Figure reproduced from The Ministerial Guidelines Annex A Developing and Implementing the Local Authority Climate Action Plan.

7.2 Tracking progress through Key Performance Indicators

"Measuring the impact of the delivery of actions is important to help understand the nature of the impact, to ensure that the impact is positive, and to assess what further action is required over time." The Ministerial Guidelines Annex A.

In order to ensure the successful delivery of this climate action plan, robust tracking is required. The identification of a detailed set of Kep Performance Indicators (KPIs) is required to measure the progress and success of each action.

The reporting will be subject to the oversight of the parent Department for the local action plans, the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, and it is likely there will be additional oversight of local authority climate action by the National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC).

7.3 Reporting requirements

A number of reporting avenues will be required to successfully communicate the progress of this climate action plan.

- **Internal reporting:** Reporting structures within Louth County Council will collect and monitor the performance of the local authority's climate action. This will be overseen by the LCC Climate Action Steering Committee, comprising the senior management team and members of the climate action and energy teams.

- **Monitoring and Reporting System (M&R):** This reporting to the SEAI will continue as before.

- **Sectoral Performance:** Louth County Council will report annually on our performance on climate action by

way of KPIs to inform the performance of the local government sector on climate action as part of the local government DECA 2030 strategy.

- **National Climate Action Plan:** Reporting to the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications will be conducted as required with the assistance of the Eastern and Midlands CARO.

7.4 Environmental Mitigation Measures and Related Environmental Governance Principles

Table 7.1. A list of Environmental Mitigation Measures and related Environmental Governance Principles to inform this plans implementation.

Promote climate action projects that support and maximise environmental co-benefits, such as biodiversity protection and enhancement; improved air, water or soil quality; or enhanced recreation, amenity and cultural heritage value, to ensure win-win benefits are gained.
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.
Ensure local authority development underpinned or supported by plan actions is planned and implemented in a manner that appropriately considers the potential for environmental co-benefits, potential environmental impacts and environmental protection requirements. No local authority climate action related development project that is likely to have significant negative effects on the receiving environment shall be supported.
Promote - through control or influence as appropriate - the carrying out of flood resilience measures underpinned by plan actions in a manner that supports climate action-biodiversity related co-benefits, and which has due regard for the protection and enhancement of rare, protected or important habitats and species.
Promote the carrying out of climate action related projects supported by the plan in a manner that supports climate action-cultural heritage co-benefits, and which has due regard to cultural, archaeological or architectural features and sensitivities.
Promote the carrying out of climate action related projects underpinned by the plan in a manner that supports climate action water quality co-benefits, and the achievement of Water Framework Directive objectives.
Promote climate action projects that support trees, hedgerows and other habitats such as wetlands, floodzones which contribute to green infrastructure.
Support opportunities to improve ecological connectivity of non-designated habitats and sites to improve overall ecosystem resilience and functioning while supporting climate action within the county.
Ensure local authority projects supported by plan actions have taken the necessary precautions to identify and manage invasives species, particularly with regard to Schedule III species. No local authority climate action related development project that is likely to cause the spread of invasives species listed in Schedule III shall be supported.
Support opportunities to promote peatland restoration, rehabilitation and maintenance while achieving climate targets through the implementation of the climate actions within the plan.

8 Summary

This report outlines the actions which Louth County Council will take to tackle the effects of Climate Change over the next 5 years. The graphic below outlines how the actions fit into the Framework for Action described in Chapter 2

Vision

Plan Vision

- Louth will be on target to be a net zero county by 2050
- Louth will take advantage of opportunities which arise from this new normal
- The people and businesses of Louth will rise to this challenge
- No-one will be left behind

Mission

Plan Mission

Louth County Council will enable Louth people and businesses to grasp all opportunities in making our collective contribution to the climate change fight

Strategic Goals

Objectives

17 High level Objectives

Actions

79 County-wide Actions

16 Decarb Zone Actions

Appendix A Louth County

In 2016 Co. Louth was the sixteenth largest county (measured by population) in the State at 128,884 (CSO Census of Population). The county was the smallest of the 32 counties in area (827 sq. km). In 2016, the county had a population density of 156 persons per sq. km, compared to the state at 70 persons per sq. km.

Co. Louth's population growth during the period 2002-2006 (26.6%) was stronger than that of the State at 8.2%. In the intercensal period 2011-2016, the population of the county grew by 4.9% compared to the State at 3.8% (slowest rate of growth in twenty years)

The County has two of the largest towns in the country, Dundalk (39,004) and Drogheda (42,347). Both towns are identified as regional centres in the National Planning Framework – Project Ireland 2040 (NPF) and have a key role in the Dublin-Belfast cross-border network. In addition to these major urban centres, the County also contains a number of substantial towns and villages including Ardee, Dunleer, Clogherhead and Carlingford. The County is strategically located along the Dublin-Belfast Economic Corridor and has strong links to Northern Ireland, and Newry in particular.

Quality road and rail networks that provide arterial connections to Dublin City, some 70 km distant, serve Co. Louth, placing it within commuting distance of the city. Belfast City is approximately 80 km distant.

Transport corridors within the County include a hierarchical road network, ranging from motorways to local access routes, in conjunction with cycle paths and footpaths. This transport corridor is also evident in the rail line which traverses the County on a north-south axis.
Motorway: M1 49km
National primary 22Km
National Secondary 26km

Louth falls within two river basin districts namely:

- Neagh Bann River Basin District (NBRBD),
- Eastern River Basin District (ERBD)

There is over 300km of rivers and watercourse in the county; however the 10 main rivers are as follows in Table 2.1:

Main Rivers in County Louth	
Big River	River Dee
Flurry / Ballymascanlan	Glyde River
Castletown River	Termofeckin
Fane River	River Boyne
White River,	Mattock River

Table 2.1 Main Rivers in County Louth

The coastline of Louth stretches from the County Armagh border, through Carlingford Lough, Dundalk Bay and as far south as the Boyne Estuary south of Drogheda over a length of 110km. The coastline is an important resource to protect and is one which is also subject to erosion from sea level rises due inter alia to climate change. Our existing coastal protection measures are located along the coast line at Blackrock, Salterstown, Port Beach, Baltray and Bellurgan, and Dundalk.

There is a rich variety of landscapes and topographies across the county it is evident that the north of the County is dominated by peat bogs and is, buffered by grassland and forestry. The Cooley mountain range covers most of the land cover in North Louth which is then bounded along the coast by the 3 settlements of Omeath, Carlingford and

Greenore. The populated area in the north of the County is Dundalk. The Corine map illustrates a scattering of settlements which are also surrounded by agricultural lands. The coastline along the southern section is less dominated by settlements than that to the north, with the majority of the population concentrated in the urban area of Drogheda. Other forestry and woodland scrub is distributed sporadically throughout the County.

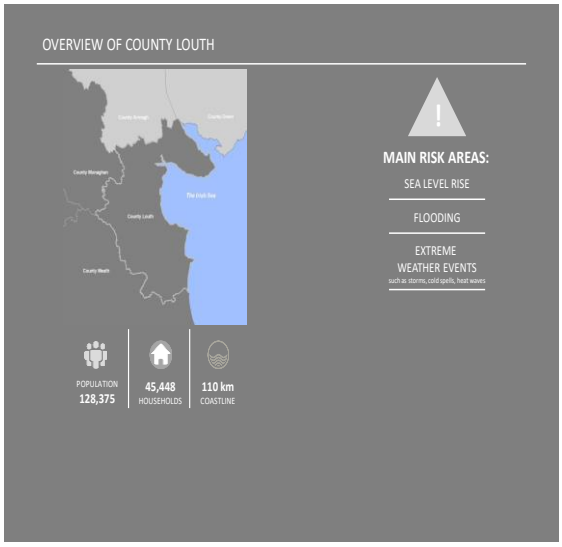


Figure 2.1. Overview of County Louth

In 2016 the CSO Census of Population confirmed that there were 45,448 households in Co. Louth, with approx. 80% of these having one or more cars. (4062 Council managed houses)

- CSO Work by Industry In Louth
- Agriculture, forestry and fishing
- Building and construction
- Manufacturing industries
- Commerce and trade
- Transport and communications
- Public administration
- Professional services

Population by general health 86% above good health

County Louth has a rich heritage, both built and natural, which contributes substantially to the County's character and identity. The county is also rich in biodiversity, thanks to an extensive coastline (stretching from Carlingford Lough to the Boyne Estuary), marine environments, wetlands, woodlands, rivers and upland habitats. Together, these habitats support a rich variety of plant and animal species. The county of Louth is an internationally important destination for migratory wildlife, with Dundalk Bay being Ireland's top location for wading birds. An area equivalent to more than one seventh of the County is designated under Irish and European legislation for wildlife protection, (including marine and inter-tidal areas). Some of the upland areas in the Cooley Peninsula are recognised as being amongst the most unspoilt in the Country.

There are 11 European sites (6 SACs and 5 SPAs) wholly or partly within County Louth. These form part of the EU-wide Natura 2000 network. These are the prime wildlife conservation areas in the country and are considered to be of significant importance at both European and Irish levels. There are 24 proposed ecological National Heritage Areas (NHAs) in Louth. These NHAs are sites that support elements of our natural heritage which are unique or are of outstanding importance at a national level and include both ecological and geological sites.

Archaeology & Heritage

The preservation and enhancement of Louth's built heritage is an important objective of the Development Plan. County Louth contains a rich archaeological resource of monuments

and an extensive variety of built heritage sites. These range from megalithic tombs, souterrains, ring forts, mottes and ecclesiastical sites, to architectural heritage of notable town centre buildings, tower houses, churches, country houses, demesnes and vernacular buildings. The County also contains many items of industrial heritage such as mills, road and rail bridges and associated infrastructure. The County's archaeological remains constitute important evidence of Louth's past and are a finite and fragile resource, very vulnerable to modern development and land use changes and climate change. The Council considers that the archaeology of the County is an important asset.

County Louth as a member of CARO

Louth County Council is located within the Eastern and Midlands Climate Action Region (CARO) and is one of 17 Local Authorities in the region. Louth County Council is located to the north east of this region. The Eastern and Midlands CARO has assisted and supported Louth County Council in the development of this climate change adaptation strategy.

Background to the Eastern and Midlands Climate Regional Office

The Eastern & Midlands CARO is one of four regional climate action offices set up in 2018 in response to Action 8 of the 2018 National Adaptation Framework (NAF) – *Planning for a Climate Resilient Ireland*.

The four CAROs have been established to drive climate action at both regional and local levels. In recognition of the significant obligation to develop and implement climate action measures, the four regional offices are mandated to co-ordinate engagement across the varying levels of government and help build on experience and expertise that exists in the area of climate change and climate action.

The composition of the four Climate Action Regions has been determined by the geographical and topographical characteristics, vulnerabilities and shared climate risks experienced across local authority areas. The climatic risks associated with the Eastern and Midlands Climate Action Region include Fluvial Flooding, Pluvial Flooding, Groundwater Flooding and Coastal Flooding.

The four CARO regions and constituent local authorities are illustrated in Table 2.1 as follows:

Table 2.1

Climate Action Region	Local Authority function area	Lead Authority
Midlands and Eastern	Carlow, Cavan, Kildare, Kilkenny, Laois, Leitrim, Longford, Louth, Meath, Monoghan, Offaly, Roscommon, Tipperary, Waterford, Westmeath, Wexford, Wicklow	**Kildare County Council**
Atlantic Seaboard North	Donegal, Sligo, Mayo, Galway City & County	**Mayo County Council**
Atlantic Seaboard South	Clare, Limerick, Kerry, Cork City & County.	**Cork County Council**
Dublin Metropolitan	South Dublin, Fingal, Dun-Laoghaire-Rathdown, Dublin City	**Dublin City Council**

Profile of Eastern and Midlands Climate Action Region

With 17 local authority areas, the Eastern and Midlands region is the largest of the four Climate Action Regions in Ireland. The region, exclusive of the Dublin Metropolitan Area, occupies the eastern and central aspects of the country. The Region borders Northern Ireland to the north with counties Louth, Cavan, Monaghan and Leitrim. The River Shannon flanks the western aspect bounding along its course, counties Leitrim, Roscommon, Longford, Westmeath, Offaly and Tipperary. The Irish Sea bounds the region to the east. Counties Louth, Wicklow, Wexford and Waterford are located to the east and south east of the region all with extensive coastlines along the Irish Sea.

The region with its extensive pattern of settlement areas and rural areas and has a population of almost 1.8 million people accounting for 37.7% of the total population of the state[1] and at 32,542 sq.km occupies 46.3% of the area of the state[2]. The region plays a significant role economically to the country hosting a range of sectors inclusive of multinationals, public service, private and small-medium enterprises. Agriculture remains the prevailing sectoral landuse in the region.

There is a rich variety of landscapes and topographies across the region. A mostly flat low lying landscape sweeps through the midland counties. Significant areas of raised bogs occupy this central location in the country

[1] Total population of E&M Region is 1,796, 923 persons. The state population is 4,761,865 persons (CSO, 2016).

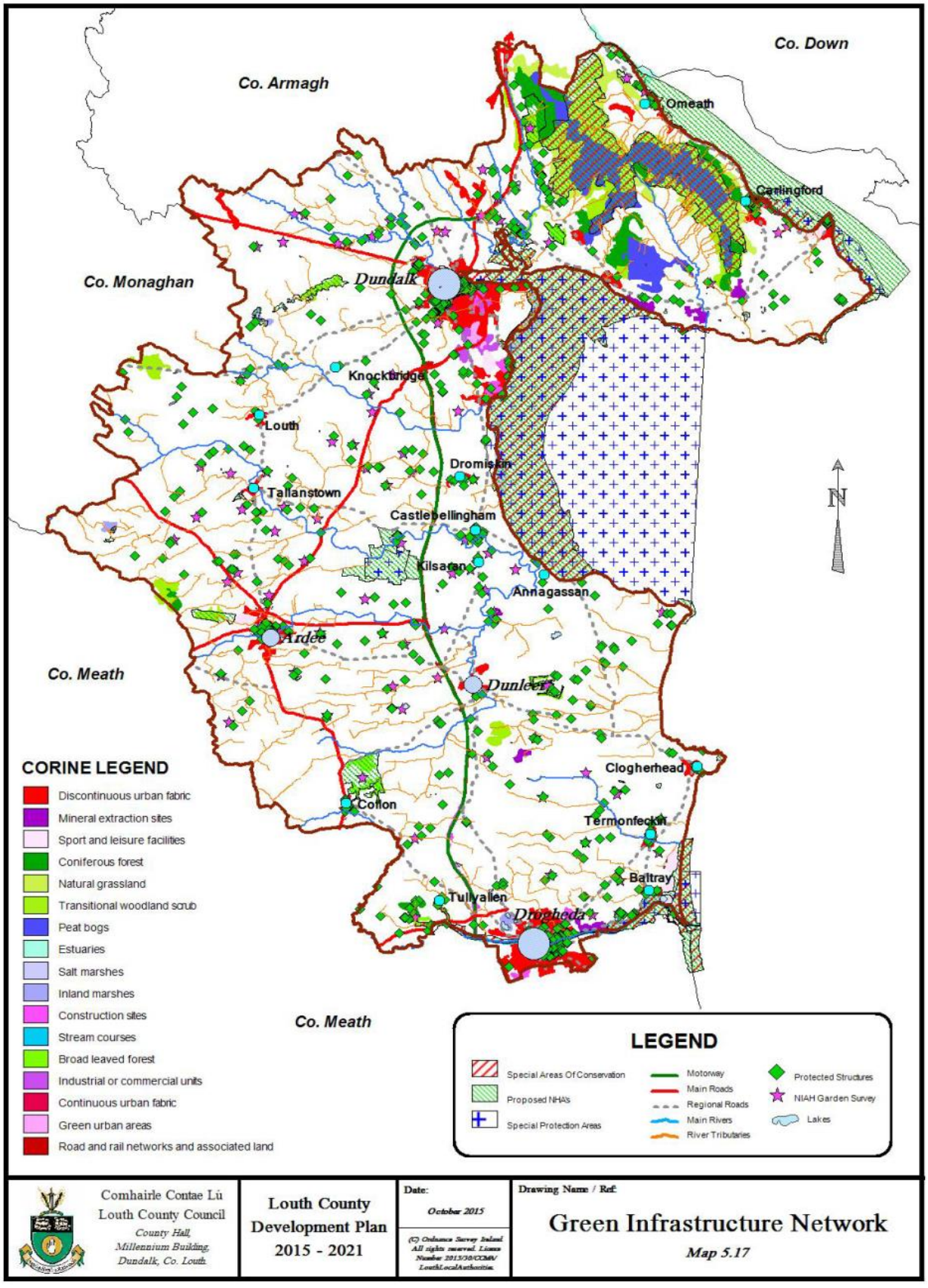
[2] Total area of state is 70,282 sq.km

as well as the Curragh Plains extending towards the Curragh Plains in County Kildare. The Drumlin Belt across the northern aspect of the region, the Wicklow Mountains, Galtee Mountains and Slieve Bloom Mountains offer variation and punctuation in the landscape of the region.

21 prominent Rivers rise and flow (with tributaries) through the Region. The most prominent of these include the River Shannon, River Barrow, River Suir, River Nore, River Liffey and River Boyne. Counties Louth, Wicklow, Wexford and Waterford occupy coastal locations to the east and south east of this region while County Leitrim extends to occupy a distance of 4.6km along the western coast of the country.

The region offers an extensive and crucially important network of critical infrastructure. The road network in the region typically radiates from the metropolitan Dublin Region. The Rail Network is significant with the Dublin-Cork, Dublin-Limerick, Dublin-Waterford and Dublin-Galway/Mayo lines. Rosslare Europort in Wexford is a gateway to Wales and greater Europe through France. Electricity and communications infrastructure is widespread throughout the region.

The Ireland's Ancient East proposition best represents the vast array of tourism products on offer in the region as a cultural and tourist destination.



Map 2.1 Green Infrastructure Network of County Louth

Appendix B Policy and Legislative Background

Climate Policy Context

Climate action is given impetus by the scientific evidence that supports the findings of human influence on climate change and the most recent legally binding international treaty on climate change, which sets the framework for ambitious and strengthened policy responses, the Paris Agreement 2015. Consequently, this Climate Action Plan is set within a broader context of international, EU, national and sectoral climate policy.

International Climate Change Policy

It has been recognised that successfully tackling climate change requires cooperation and ambition on an international level. Since the establishment of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1994, countries have sought to build international cooperation to limit the increase in the average global temperature and deal with the impacts of climate change, that result from these temperature increases.

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

i. Holding global average temperature increases to well below 2^0C and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5^0C above pre-industrial levels; and
ii. Increasing the ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change and foster climate resilience.

Another International agreement closely linked with the Paris Agreement is the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which was adopted by UN Member States in September 2015. At the Agenda's core are 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These goals aim to "end poverty, protect the planet and improve the lives and prospects of everyone, everywhere." The 17 SDGs contain 169 targets to be achieved by 2030. In 2019, World leaders called for a 'decade of action' in order to achieve the Goals within this timeframe. The SDGs are also addressed in Section 6 of this Plan.

Towards achieving greenhouse gas emission reductions as part of Paris Agreement commitments the European Commission, in December 2019, announced the European Green Deal aimed at making Europe the first climate neutral continent. The Deal seeks to achieve no net emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050, to decouple economic growth from resource use, and to leave no one behind. The EU introduced a set of proposals to align the EUs climate, taxation, energy, and transport policies to support achieving this aim. The European Climate Law made these targets legally binding, which also includes achieving a reduction in net greenhouse gas emissions of at least 55% by 2030.

Climate Change Policy in Ireland

Climate change policy in Ireland now reflects the ambition of the EU and that required to confront the challenges of climate change. Working towards the National Climate Objective the Climate (Amendment) Act 2021, promotes a sustainable economy and society where greenhouse gas emissions are balanced or exceeded by the removal of greenhouse gases. Through progressive economy-wide carbon budgets, sectoral ceilings, a suite of strategies devised to promote a combination of adaptation and mitigation measures, as well as robust oversight and reporting arrangements, climate policy is working to scale up efforts across all of society and deliver a step change on ambitious and transformative climate action to 2030 and beyond to 2050.

The Climate Action Plan 2023, launched on 21st December 2022, is the second annual update to the States' Climate Action Plan 2019 and the first to be prepared under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021, and following the introduction, in 2022, of economy-wide carbon budgets and sectoral emission ceilings. Climate Action Plan 2023 sets out a roadmap to 2025 towards taking decisive action to halve emissions by 2030 and reach net zero, no later than by the end of 2050, as committed to in the Programme for Government.

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

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

Sectoral Climate Adaptation Plans have been published across Government departments, in response to the National Adaptation Framework. Each Plan identifies the key risks faced across the sector and the approach being taken to address these risks and build climate resilience for the future. They were developed applying a six-step adaptation planning process described in Sectoral Planning Guidelines for Climate Change Adaptation, published by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications. The Plans address the following sectors: Agriculture, Forestry and Seafood, Biodiversity, Built and Archaeological Heritage, Transport infrastructure, Electricity and Gas Networks, Communications Networks, Flood Risk Management, Water Quality and Water Services Infrastructure and Health.

The Local Authority Climate Action Charter, signed by **Louth County Council** in October 2019, represents a commitment to scale up efforts and play a key role locally and nationally in delivering effective climate action. It tasks all local authorities with providing robust leadership in advancing climate action at regional and local levels, with adhering to the UN SDGs, in particular Goal 13 Climate Action, as well as reducing emissions from their own operations and to collaborate and partner with local enterprise, community groups, citizens as well as public, private, and educational sectors on climate action initiatives.

Delivering Effective Climate Action 2030 (DECA 2030) is the local government strategy on climate action published in April 2021. The strategy represents an overarching sectoral commitment to ensuring a coherent approach to climate action across the administrative and political structures of all 31 local authorities. At a sectoral level the strategy communicates a general strategic intent through an envisaged leadership position, to engage the local authority network in effective climate action. Within the sector, the overall strategy represents a top-level consensus on the approach to climate action and a strong commitment to the prescribed leadership role. The strategy is a stated roadmap for local authorities in delivering the required decarbonisation and adaptation responses to climate change.

Appendix C Plan Development Process

Phase 1 – Advance Planning

	TASKS	OUTPUTS
Getting Started	• Promote organisational support and establish governance arrangements • Mobilise the local authority climate action team • Secure SEA and AA resources	• Climate related arrangements and support structures and resources in place
Develop Schedule	• Identify key tasks and activities within the process • Develop a process timeline	• Schedule and timeline of key activities established
Establish Baselines	• Climate change risk assessment (adaptation) • City/countywide baseline emissions inventory (mitigation) • Decarbonisation Zone baseline emissions inventory (mitigation)	• Assessment complete (adaptation) • City/countywide Inventory complete (mitigation) • Decarbonisation Zone inventory complete (mitigation)

Phase 2 – Statutory Plan-Making

Stage 1 – Initiation Stage

	TASKS	OUTPUTS
Build the Evidence Base	• Profile of local authority area • Profile of the DZ area • Review of adaptation, city/county & DZ mitigation baselines • Review of policy context	• Summary report on key evidence base gathered.
Stakeholder Engagement	• Identify stakeholders • Determine engagement methods • Engage and take account of input from stakeholders	• Stakeholder engagement activities undertaken and report on engagement outcomes completed.
Drafting the Plan	• Commence the draft climate action plan	• Drafting of draft local authority climate action plan commenced

Stage 2 – Draft Plan Stage

	TASKS	OUTPUTS
Develop Draft Plan	• Develop the draft climate action plan • Develop the Plan Vision, Mission, Strategic Goals, Objectives and Actions • Develop the DZ Vision, Register of Opportunities, Strategic Priorities, Objectives/Outcomes and Actions. • Outline commitment to implementation in draft climate action plan.	• Draft local authority climate action plan complete
Publication & Public Consultation	• Publish the draft plan • Identify Stakeholders • Determine consultation methods • Invite and log Submissions	• Public Notice on website and in at least one local newspaper • Consultation events held
Collating Submissions	• Collate and log all submissions	• All submissions collated and logged

Stage 3 – Draft Plan Stage

	TASKS	OUTPUTS
Address the Submissions	• Document all submissions • Summarise and consider content of all submissions received • Provide response and recommendation	• Report developed on submissions received during public consultation process
Adoption of the Draft Climate Action Plan	• Furnish all documentation to elected members • Adoption by resolution	• Resolution by elected members
Final Publication	• Final publication of climate action plan	• Publication of final adopted climate action plan

Phase 3 – Implementation

Publication

	TASKS	OUTPUTS
Planning for Implementation	• Outline commitment to implementation in climate action plan • Activate governance and co-ordination structure(s) to support implementation	• Commitment to implementation outlined in climate action plan. • Governance & co-ordination structure(s) to support activated
Tracking Performance through KPIs	• Devise plan level KPIs • Incorporate considerations around sectoral KPIs when available	• Plan level KPIs assigned to climate actions
Reporting Requirements	• Internal reporting • M&R reporting • Local authority climate action plan reporting Local government sectoral performance reporting.	• Reporting requirements outlined and provided for.

Appendix D Climate Action Charter

CLIMATE ACTION CHARTER

For Local Authorities and Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment on behalf of Government.

(1) The signatories share the common understanding that:

(a) the evidence of global warming is unequivocal and the effects of climate change are clearly evident;

(b) it is important to take action and to work together to share best practices, to reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions and address the impacts of climate change

(c) reducing GHG emissions and preparing for climate change impacts will generate environmental, social, economic and health benefits for individuals, families, and communities

(d) It is important to take action to adapt to the now inevitable consequences of climate change and to work collectively to ensure that the local authority sector is positioned to build resilience against negative impacts and avail of the positive effects that may occur.

(2) The signatories acknowledge that a whole of government approach is essential in addressing climate change and recognise that:

(a) Central Government has a lead role to play in developing policy and ensuring resources are made available to realise Ireland's commitment to achieving a net zero carbon energy system objective for Irish society and in the process, create a climate resilient, vibrant and sustainable country

(b) Local Authorities are ideally placed to provide robust leadership in advancing this objective at the local and regional level. Support and resources will continue to be provided through the National Development Plan allocations, in addition to their own resources, which will aid them in developing and implementing relevant activities under this charter

(c) Central and Local Government need to work in partnership and collaboration to ensure an effective response to the challenges presented by climate change

(3) This Charter acknowledges that local authorities will, with the support of Central Government:

(a) be advocates for Climate Action in our own policies and practices, and in our many various dealings with citizens and to underpin this role through the corporate planning process.

(b) adhere to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 13 Climate Action;

(c) aim to measure the carbon impact of our various activities as accurately as possible and report as required so as to inform relevant local, regional and national policies,

(d) implement, in so far as is practicable, measures which reduce our carbon emissions in line with national objectives, and develop a method for planning and reporting on these actions

(e) deliver a 50% improvement in energy efficiency by 2030(on the 2009 baseline)

(f) ensure that policies and practices at local government level lead us towards low carbon pathways and put in place a process for carbon proofing major decisions, programmes and projects on a systematic basis, including investments in transport and energy infrastructure moving over time to a near zero carbon investment strategy

(g) Ask suppliers as part of the procurement process to provide information on their carbon footprint and on the sustainability practices and steps they plan to reduce its impact

(h) implement green public procurement strategy and procedures across all business areas

(i) support our employees to undertake changes in their lifestyles both at work and at home, to reduce carbon impact and encourage work-based employee-led groups to identify and implement ideas for improvement

(j) put in place, and resource, a long term training strategy (technical and behavioural) for LA staff to provide appropriate capacity for the sector to deliver on climate action

(k) encourage clients/customers/service users to undertake lifestyle changes to reduce their carbon impact, with a particular emphasis on supporting those clients/customers/service users who may face difficulties in funding such measures

(l) cultivate and actively participate in partnerships with enterprise, community and voluntary groups so as to, improve the use of resources and reduced climate impact

(m) play a key role in helping to build and implement a sustained localised citizen engagement model in supporting the various initiatives under the National Dialogue on Climate Action

(n) exercise our planning and regulatory roles to help improve climate outcomes in the wider community and beyond the public sector, by developing and implementing robust evidenced based policy and standards on climate action, through appropriate and relevant adaptation and mitigation measures

(o) continue to identify and develop specific actions to be taken to reduce the risks associated with negative climate change impacts and build resilience to these impacts through effective implementation of climate adaptation strategies/ Climate Change Action Plans

(p) support elected officials in ensuring all council led activities are climate proofed in terms of achieving effective low carbon and climate resilient outcomes

(q) Explore opportunities to partner or collaborate on climate action initiatives across the public, private and education sectors.

(r) Support Enterprise through LEO/LCDC offices to exploit opportunities which will arise from meeting the challenges of Climate Change

(s) work with relevant stakeholders to source funding for implementing climate action projects;

(t) liaise with 3rd level institutions & the research community both nationally and internationally with a view to developing centres of excellence where appropriate

(u) develop links with young citizens to give voice to their understanding and concerns on climate change and to enhance their awareness and the actions that they can take.

(v) continue to develop and strengthen links with both central government (relevant departments and agencies) and regional bodies to help ensure a coordinated and coherent approach to the delivery of the national climate action agenda

(w) Monitor, evaluate and report annually on the implementation of activities under this charter

Signed on behalf of the Government

Richard Bruton T.D.
Minister for Communications,
Climate Action and Environment

Signed on behalf of Louth County Council

Joan Martin
Chief Executive

Seán Canney T.D.
Minister of State for Natural Resources,
Community Affairs and Digital Development

Liam Reilly
Cathaoirleach

Appendix E Impacts of Climate Change: Risk Register for Louth County Council

Climatic Hazard	Impact area	Risk Statement
 All Weather events	**LA Assets**	More **frequent and intense extreme events** i.e. rainfall, wind and snow events will **damage local authority buildings, housing stock, equipment and facilities** (machinery yards, storage facilities etc) giving rise to **increased costs for maintenance, repair and replacement and increased demand on staff resources.**
 All Weather events	**Business Operations & Continuity**	More **frequent and intense extreme events** will see more **closures impacting the local authority in performing normal daily tasks, exercising statutory duties and organising events**. This will **interrupt work flows and efficiencies, disrupt scheduled events and increase staff costs** in dealing with extreme events.
 All Weather events	**Business Operations & Continuity**	Increased frequency of **flooding and inundation, storm and extreme cold events (snow)** will give rise to general **service disruption** presenting difficulties for business continuity and the delivery of projects locally, as a consequence of staff being unable to travel to work.
 Storms	**Business Operations & Continuity**	Projected increases in **storm intensity** will see a higher risk of **service disruption** due to closure of local authority buildings, damage to LA communications infrastructure, impact on road networks from debris and impact on utility networks e.g. Electricity supply, directly impacting Local Authority's ability to operate.
 Heavy Rainfall	**Critical Infrastructure** **Flood/ Water Management**	**Extreme rainfall events** could affect **critical infrastructure** such as roads, water, sewerage, storm water, housing and communications through flooding and inundation. Damage to critical infrastructure will **impact the economic function of transport routes, will give rise to flooding impacts to properties and communities** resulting in **increased costs of clean up and maintenance, repair and insurance costs and a wider economic impact.**
 Heavy Rainfall	**Environment, Bio-diversity**	**Extreme rainfall events** will give rise to flooding of habitats and wash nutrients and sediment into watercourses. This will result in **changes to geomorphology** and cause **contamination of**

		watercourses. Landscape may become more vulnerable, ecologically sensitive and may result in habitat loss.
 **Extreme Heat/drought conditions**	**Environment, Bio-diversity**	Heatwaves and/or sustained drought conditions will result in significant and serious **degradation of the natural environment and biodiversity** with loss to/of important species/habitats, impact on important landscapes and reduction in water quality.
 **Extreme Heat/drought conditions**	**Community**	**Higher temperatures** and more hot days could result in heat exhaustion and **increased heat-related stress with vulnerable people within communities increasing the need for emergency response**. Remote communities are particularly vulnerable.
 **All Weather events**	**Infrastructure** **Structural, community, cultural**	More **frequent** and **intense weather events** and combination events will undermine the integrity of **critical infrastructure, community infrastructure and cultural assets** giving rise to increased costs to repair, reinforce, or replace with potential for loss of these assets.
 **Extreme Heat/drought conditions**  **Biodiversity/ Environment**	**Emergency services** **Environment** **Infrastructure**	**Higher temperatures** and longer dry seasons will increase **risk of bog, sand dune, gorse or forest fires** in some areas, will impact on the integrity of road composition in these areas and water supply in such areas. This will impact on resources of the fire services, result in road closures, threat to public safety and potential local economic impact through loss of tourism potential.
 Storm Surges/Sea Level Rise	**Roads, Water Services, Community**	Significant threat to coastal communities by **sea-level rise**, giving higher **risk of flooding and inundation and more impactful storm surges**. This will result in significant impacts on property, land and critical infrastructure affecting the economic viability of certain areas and increasing further the vulnerability of coastal communities.
 Storm Surges/Sea Level Rise	**Emergency Services, Environment, Community**	**Sea level rise and storm surges** may increase the risk of coastal hazards such **as storm tide inundation and erosion events**, resulting in degradation of natural environment through contamination (salination), result in loss of

		popular tourist areas (economic impact) and will increase clean-up and maintenance costs.
 All Weather events	**Infrastructure Structural, community, Heritage**	More **frequent and intense weather events** and combination events will undermine the **integrity of Community, Heritage and Cultural Infrastructure,** giving rise to increased and significant costs of repair, reinforcement or replacement and possibly rendering assets unviable (note: some assets of heritage or cultural significance, by their nature and historical importance, cannot be replaced).
 Heavy Rainfall  **Extreme Heat/drought conditions**	**Bio-diversity Environment**	More climate extremes - **changes in rainfall variability and increased frequency of heatwaves** will impact on native species, encourage diseases, weeds, pests and invasive species which will need to be managed appropriately.
 Heavy Rainfall  **Extreme Heat/drought conditions**	**Environment Bio-diversity Water Services**	Extreme **rainfall events, storm surges in coastal areas and heatwave/drought events** will increase the risk of impacting **water quality** and the ability of the local authority to meet the requirements of the **WFD**.
 **All Weather events**	**All Services**	**Failure** by the local authority **to plan for, respond effectively and appropriately adapt** to the impacts of Climate Change will encourage a **negative perception of ability and will impact the reputational status** of the area (damage/loss of critical assets, degradation of the natural and historical environment, local economic impact, community abrasion).