Report for Elected Members & Stakeholders on Year 1 of implementation of the 5-year Kilkenny County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029

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WE'RE TAKING CLIMATE ACTION

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Contents

Acknowledgments:

Executive Summary

This is the first progress report of the [Kilkenny County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029](#) since the Plan was adopted by the Elected Members of Kilkenny County Council in February 2024. It looks at progress on delivering climate action across five strategic commitments, i.e. leadership and governance, climate mitigation, climate adaptation, delivery across services, and community activation and engagement.

The Plan contains 99 actions, comprising 13% adaptation actions, 34% mitigation actions, and 53% which are both adaptation and mitigation. 82% of actions in the Plan commenced in 2024.

A key focus for 2024 was putting in place and ensuring strong climate action **Governance and Leadership** across the Council. This comprised meetings of the Council-wide Climate Action Steering Committee, and meetings with the Council Plenary, and Strategic Policy Committee 4 (Climate Action, Energy and Environmental Protection). A new South-East Regional Energy Unit was established by the five local authorities in the South East to collaborate on and secure funding from the SEAI Pathfinder Programme to retrofit council buildings. Service Level Agreements and other partnership agreements are in place with Government Departments, and national and local partner organisations to secure funding and resources. Climate action has been integrated into many Council plans, strategies and programme, and also into the budgetary processes. Staff climate action training and capacity building has been delivered. A robust framework of reporting obligations, at EU, national and local level, has been delivered, as well as a communications programme for the public and stakeholders.

Significant work has been undertaken on **Climate Mitigation** actions across the Council in 2024. The Council achieved an 8.6% reduction in total greenhouse gas emissions since 2023, and a 38.9% reduction since the 2016-2018 baseline. In terms of Energy Efficiency targets the Council achieved a 1.3% reduction in energy consumption since 2023, and a 43.7% improvement in energy efficiency compared to the 2009 baseline. The Plan outlines range of key projects which will be undertaken over the next 6 years to further reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions in order to meet the 2030 targets.

Progress has also been made on **Climate Adaptation** actions in the Plan, informed by a Climate Risk Assessment of Council services. A range of actions were undertaken in 2024 including Flood Relief Projects, review of Health & Safety Policies and Procedures in relation to impact of climate change on staff welfare; nature-based solutions in Council developments and Severe Weather Emergency Planning.

Delivery of Climate Action Across Services has been achieved in 2024. Case studies of some of the actions delivered by Housing (retrofitting social housing), Flood Relief Capital Office (flood relief works), LEO (supporting sustainable businesses), Roads (decarbonisation of the Council fleet), and Climate Action (community climate action) are highlighted.

The Council played a key role in **Community Activation and Engagement** in relation to climate in 2024, in particular, under the Community Climate Action Fund. This new fund, provided by the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, and managed by Kilkenny County Council allocated €511,000 in 2024 to 22 communities across Kilkenny to provide energy efficient lighting and heating, insulation, PV panels, rainwater harvesting, bike parking and repair stations, community allotments and nature enhancement measures.

Finally, the report demonstrates how the actions in the Plan align with and deliver on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) at a local level. A total of 13 of the 17 UNSDGs are supported through actions the Plan.
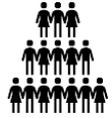
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4 full-time staff	13 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) delivered
42 Members Steering Committee	38.9% Reduction in Greenhouse Gas Emissions
28 Service Areas delivering Climate Actions	43.7% Improvement in Energy Efficiency
6 Meetings with Council, SPC and Steering Committee	6500 Public lights converted to LED
90 Staff trained	4 Energy Audits on Council Buildings
7 Service Level Agreements	11 Display Energy Certificates
1 New Regional Energy Unit established	38 Local Authority Houses Retrofitted
1 new Green Team established	2 no. of EV's purchased
1 EU Covenant of Mayors recommitment	10 Vehicles running on zero emission HVO
1 ISO50001 Re-certification	22 Community Climate Action projects funded (€511,000)
6 New Plans/Strategies climate proofed	22 Green for Business support 7 Energy Efficiency grants
99 Actions	31 free drop-in energy advice consultations (Energy Hub)
82% Actions Started	6 Severe Weather Meetings
300 Farm Visits	4 videos of Sustainable Businesses
3 Flood Relief Schemes	4 Cycling Programmes
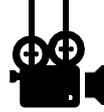
Introduction

This is the first progress report of the Kilkenny County Council Climate Action Plan 2024-2029. The report reflects the first year of the Plan implementation since its adoption by the Elected Members of Kilkenny County Council in February 2024, i.e. the period from February to December 2024.

Data and information contained within this report offer an accurate and transparent picture of progress in the first year of the Plan implementation against the ambition of the Plan.

The Climate Action Plan is a statutory 5-year Plan which outlines the measures that Kilkenny County Council will take to reduce energy use and carbon emissions, and adapt to the changing climate across its governance, services and operations. By delivering the 99 actions in the Plan Kilkenny County Council will reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 51% and improve its energy efficiency by 50% by 2030.

In addition, the Plan sets out how Kilkenny County Council will facilitate, support and inspire stakeholder climate action in the County through leadership, collaboration and advocacy.

The Plan was prepared in close collaboration with the Kilkenny County Council Climate Action Steering Committee, relevant staff from every service area in the Local Authority and Elected Representatives. Input has been provided by Strategic Policy Committee 4 (Environmental Protection, Climate and Energy), the Public Participation Network, the Climate Action Regional Office, adjoining Local Authorities, business and community stakeholders and the public.
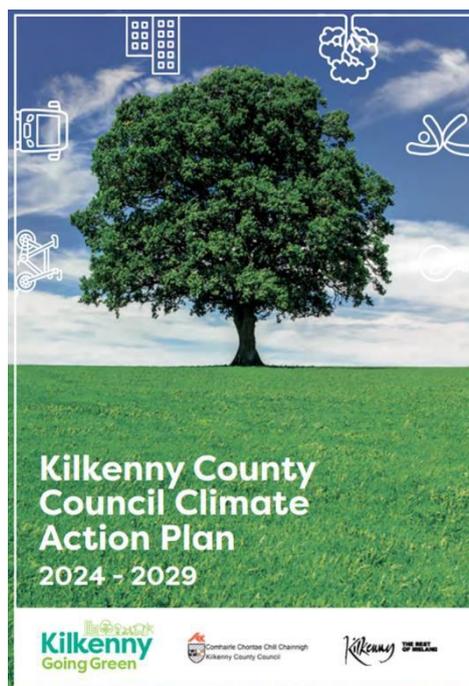
The Plans' Vision is that the Council will be:

> **_A climate resilient organisation that inspires and supports the County's transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, sustainable and carbon neutral economy by 2050._** (Vision Statement of Kilkenny County Council Climate Action Plan)

This ambition aligns with the Government's National Climate Objective to achieve the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy by 2050.

The Mission Statement of the Plan is

> **_To deliver Kilkenny County Council's statutory emissions and energy targets, embed climate action in all Council governance and operations, and thereby inspire and facilitate climate action in the County._**
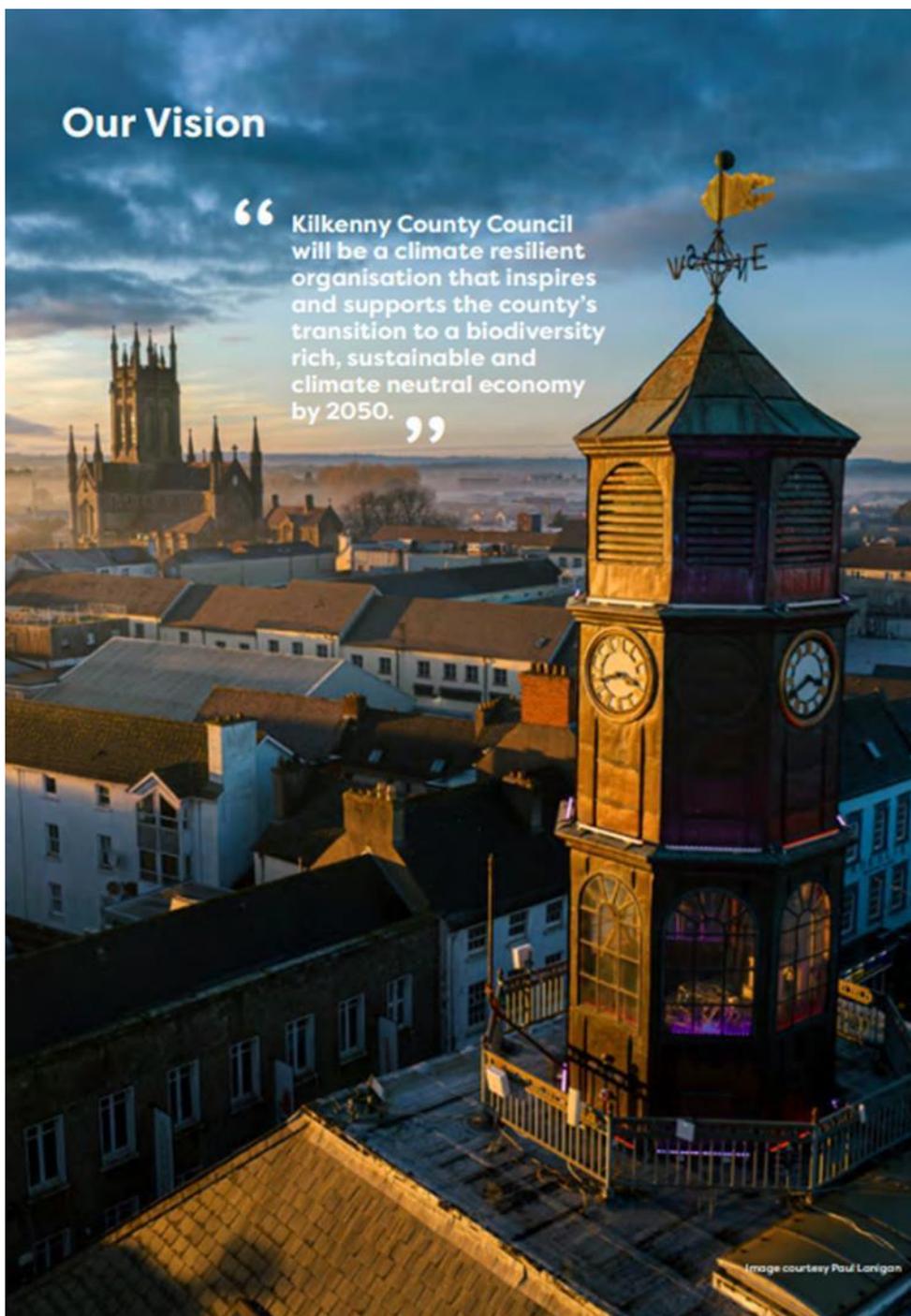
Our Vision

" Kilkenny County Council will be a climate resilient organisation that inspires and supports the county's transition to a biodiversity rich, sustainable and climate neutral economy by 2050. "

Image courtesy Paul Lonigan

Methodology and Format of Report

The format of this report is informed by the reporting requirements for Local Authority Climate Action Plans (LACAP), the Kilkenny County Council LACAP, recommendations of broader sustainability reporting frameworks[1] and alignment with United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDG's). Accordingly, this report provides progress updates on the actions of the Plan delivered and commenced in 2024, and it includes case studies to highlight the value of actions.

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[1] Including Environmental Social Governance (ESG) Frameworks and Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) standards.

The information is presented in line with the following five strategic commitments:

Governance & Leadership	Oversight and procedural aspects of integrating climate action into governance processes, business and operational models and organisational and local policy instruments.
Climate Mitigation Targets	Progress on delivering prescribed emission reduction targets established by national climate policy for all public sector entities in line with reporting methodology of the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI).
Climate Adaptation Goals	Measures to plan for and reduce vulnerability of Local Authority services and functions to climate change impacts, minimise risks and costs and protect lives and assets by building resilience into natural and human systems.
Delivery Across Services	Progress on delivery of climate action measures across Council services and functions which support, facilitate and enable Government Departments, agencies and stakeholders to meet their climate goals at the local level and influence the value chain through Green Public Procurement.
Community Engagement & Activation	Actions that support community engagement, activity and capacity to build resilience to climate change impacts, reduce energy consumption and emissions and protect, restore and/or enhance biodiversity and work to achieve the objectives of the Decarbonising Zone(s) (DZ).

Climate Actions and UN Sustainability Goals

The report demonstrates how the actions in the Plan align with and deliver on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) at a local level. The SDGs represent 17 social, economic and environmental priorities designed to combat the global challenges facing humanity by 2030.

The LACAP has identified the relevant SDGs relating to each of the actions in Plan. A total of 13 of the 17 SDGs are supported through the Plan. Details of the SDGs delivered under each of the five Strategic Goals of the Plan, and the Decarbonising Zone, are provided in Appendix 1.

Local Authority Climate Action Framework

The implementation of the LACAP delivers on commitments provided for under a local authority framework for climate action. This includes the national Climate Action Plans and the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021, the Local Authority Climate Action Charter (2019, currently under review) and the Local Government roadmap for climate action, "Delivering Effective Climate Action 2030. Local authority sector strategy for delivering on the Climate Action Charter and Climate Action Plan."

Climate Action Plan Overview

The Climate Action Plan contains a total of 99 actions. These comprise 95 actions arranged under the 5 Strategic Goals of the Plan, plus an additional 4 actions which relate solely to the implementation of the Kilkenny City Decarbonising Zone (DZ).

The actions were developed following extensive consultation with all service areas in the Council, the Elected Members, Strategic Policy Committee 4 (Environment Protection, Climate Action and Energy) and with stakeholders and the wider public. They were also informed by baseline data on climate risks to Kilkenny County Council service delivery, along with baseline data on the Council's energy and emissions.

Governance & Leadership	19
Built Environment & Transport	36
Natural Environment & Green Infrastructure	11
Communities: Resilience & Transition	13
Sustainability & Resource Management	16
Decarbonisation Zone	4

Breakdown of the 99 actions across the five Strategic Goals and Decarbonisation Zone

Types of Actions in the Climate Action Plan

The Plans actions address climate mitigation, climate adaptation (actions which prepare for the impacts of climate change) and a combination of both.
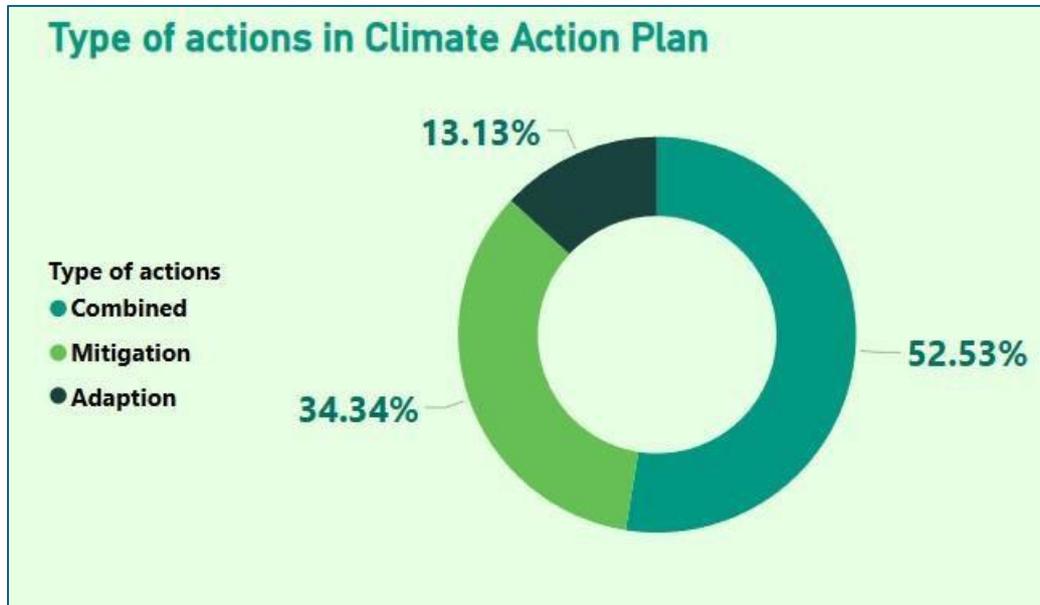

Breakdown of types of actions in the Climate Action Plan (mitigation, adaptation, combined mitigation & adaptation)

Status of Actions Implemented in 2024

Approx. 82% of actions in the Plan were commenced in 2024. This includes actions that were fully completed in 2024, and recurring actions that will be implemented beyond 2024.
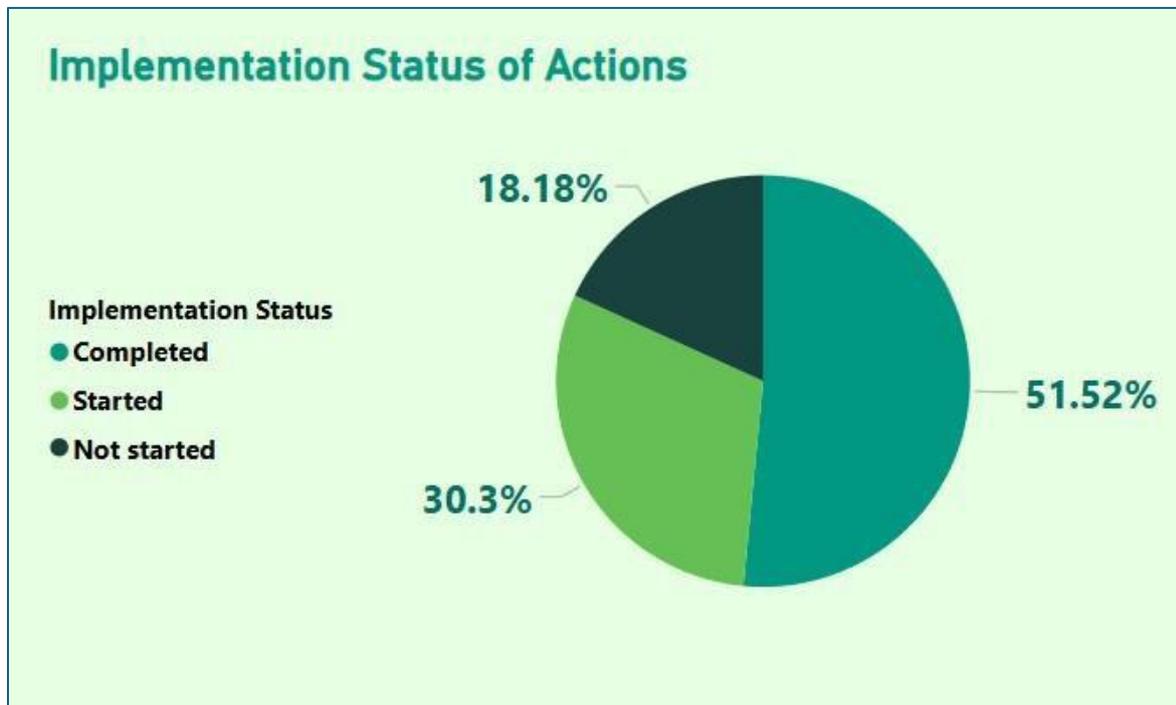
Status of actions implemented in 2024

	Governance & Leadership	Built Environment & Transport	Natural Environment & Green Infrastructure	Communities: Resilience & Transition	Sustainability & Resource Management
Actions started (started or in progress)	14	33	9	10	12
Actions Completed (incl. recurring actions)	9	20	5	9	6
Actions started that will be completed after 2024 (in progress)	5 (5 recurring)	13 (9 recurring)	4 (4 recurring)	1 (1 recurring)	6 (5 recurring)
Actions to be commenced after 2024 (not started)	5	3	2	3	4
Total No. Actions	**19**	**36**	**11**	**13**	**16**

Progress on actions in 2024 across the five Strategic Goals in the Plan

Decarbonising Zone Overview

A Decarbonising Zone (DZ) is a test bed for trialling different decarbonisation and climate action measures at a local and community level. It is a demonstration area for collaboration and for innovative approaches to reducing emissions, preparing for climate change and enhancing biodiversity.

The role of Kilkenny County Council in relation to the DZ is similar to that for the Climate Action Plan. Kilkenny County Council is required to:

i. Deliver its own emissions and energy reductions targets of 51% and 50% respectively
ii. Identify a Register of Opportunities and actions
iii. Support, advocate and influence stakeholders and the community within the DZ to deliver emission reductions and energy efficiencies

Kilkenny County Council commissioned a Baseline Emissions Inventory, stakeholder consultation and Decarbonisation Plan for Kilkenny City DZ. A Register of Opportunities was also developed for the Kilkenny City DZ. This comprises:

i. a 'technical register', i.e. opportunities which are quantified in terms of emissions reduction (e.g. retrofitting of dwellings, electrification of vehicles); and
ii. 'enabling' opportunities (e.g. behavioural change, awareness, capacity building) which are more difficult to quantify, but which will support the delivery of 'technical' opportunities and will be key levers in meeting emission reduction targets.

Four actions were identified in the DZ Plan. The first action (DZ1) is to establish a Kilkenny City Decarbonisation Working Group to coordinate the implementation of the DZ Plan. Further actions, based on the Register of Opportunities, will be identified by the Working Group, in consultation with the stakeholders.

DZ Workshop

In 2024 Kilkenny County Council hosted Local Authority Climate Action Teams from around the country to a workshop on Decarbonising Zones: Challenges and Opportunities (Built Environment) on 25th Sept. The event, coordinated by the Climate Action Regional Office (CARO), and hosted by Kilkenny County Council, was attended by 82 local authority staff engaged in delivering climate action.


Staff of Kilkenny County Council, CARO, the Heritage Council and KPMG at the Decarbonising Workshop hosted by Kilkenny County Council. Photo: Vicky Comerford.

Delivery of Strategic Commitments

Leadership & Governance

Governance Structure

	Cathaoirleach & Elected Members	
Climate Action Regional Office Eastern & Midlands)	**Chief Executive & Senior Management Team**	
South East Regional Energy Unit		**Strategic Policy Committee 4 (Climate Action, Energy & Environmental Protection)**
Local Authorities Water Programme Office	**Climate Action Office**	
South East Energy Agency	**Climate Action Steering Committee**	
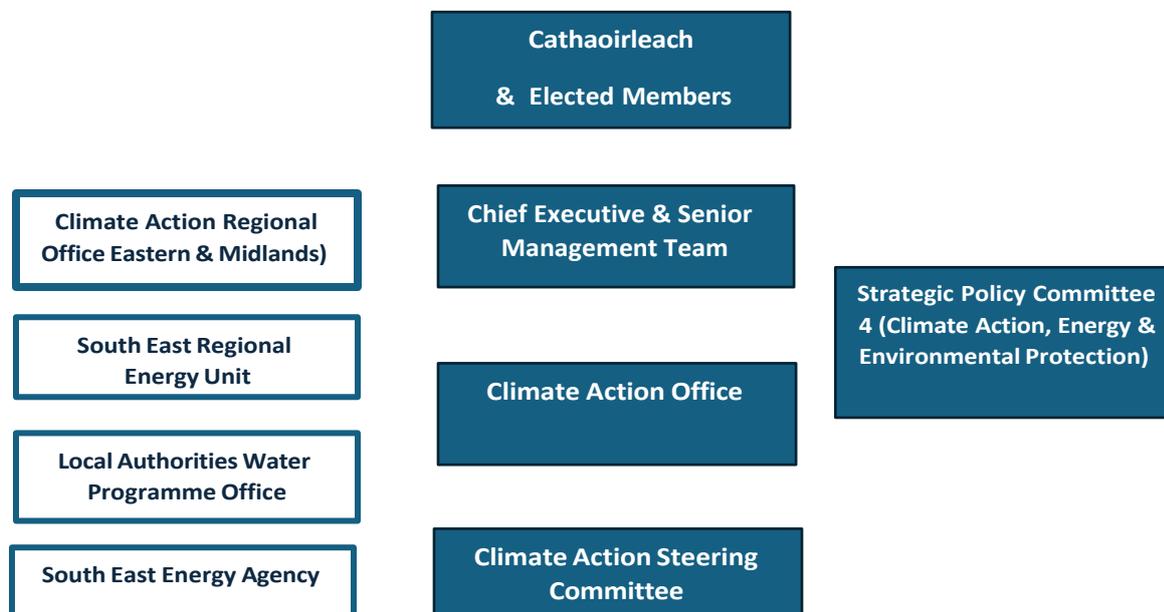
Climate Action Governance Structure in Kilkenny County Council, plus supporting partners

Kilkenny County Council has established and operates within a robust governance structure in relation to delivery of climate action. At a national level this includes the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, the Department of Transport, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, and the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland. At a regional level it includes the Climate Action Regional Office, the South East Energy Unit, the South East Regional Energy Unit, the Local Authorities Water Programme Office, and the Regional Assembly. At a local level it includes the Elected Members, Senior Management Team, Strategic Policy Committee 4 (Climate Action, Energy & Environmental Protection, Climate Action Office, and Climate Action Steering Committee.

### Internal Engagement

Elected Representatives

The Climate Action Office engaged extensively with the Elected Members in the preparation of the Plan from 2023 to Feb 2024. After the Plan was adopted in Feb 2024, the Climate Action Office presented to the Council Plenary in Dec 2024.

Strategic Policy Committee 4 (Climate Action, Energy & Environmental Protection)

The Climate Action Office engaged extensively with the Elected Members in the preparation of the Plan from 2023 to Feb 2024. After the Plan was adopted in Feb 2024, the Climate Action Office presented to the Council Plenary in Dec 2024.

Climate Action Steering Committee

Kilkenny County Council established the Climate Action Steering Committee in 2023. 42 Council staff are members of the Committee, comprising the Chief Executive, the five Director of Services, and key staff from all service areas in the Council who are responsible for delivering climate action. 28 service areas are represented on the Committee. An Energy Engineer from our partners the South-East Energy Agency is also a member of the committee.

The role of the Committee is to provide leadership within Kilkenny County Council to help deliver on our climate action targets, and to support the preparation and implementation of the Climate Action Plan by undertaking actions in each of their service areas. The Committee met three times in 2024 (March, May, July).

The following 28 Service Areas are represented on the Committee:

Housing
Community & Culture
Healthy Ireland

Planning
Environment
Climate Action
Parks & Special Projects
Local Enterprise Office
Tourism

Corporate Services
Water Services
Roads
Flood Relief Capital Projects
Machinery ard
Public Lighting
Health & Safety
Internal Audit

Finance
Information Systems
Procurement
Facilities Management

Libraries
Fire & Rescue Services
Biodiversity
Heritage
Arts
Civil Defence

Climate Action Office

There were 4 full time staff in the Climate Action Office in 2024 comprising the following: Climate Action Coordinator, Climate Action Officer, Community Climate Action Officer and Clerical Officer. There were 2 vacancies to be filled in 2024 – the Energy Officer, and the Regional Climate Action Officer (CARO).

The role of the Climate Action Office is is to co-ordinate and mainstream climate action across all services of Kilkenny County Council and to monitor and report on the implementation of the actions in the Climate Action Plan.

South-East Regional Energy Unit

A new South-East Regional Energy Unit was established in 2024 by the five local authorities in the South-East, in order to support the Authorities to meet their 2030 energy efficiency and carbon emission targets under three main pillars:

- Implement and progress energy efficiency upgrades to utilise Pathfinder Capital Support in each of the Authorities.

- Maintain and develop further a collaborative approach for energy efficiency across the Authorities.

- Establish and Embed Energy Management in the Authorities.

The unit is hosted by Tipperary County Council, and supports the Local Authorities of Kilkenny, Carlow, Waterford, Wexford and Tipperary to collaborate and access funding from the SEAI Pathfinder Programme.

Climate Action Regional Office (CARO)

The CAROs provide guidance, advice and support to Local Authorities on climate change across Ireland. The Eastern & Midlands CARO, one of the 4 CARO Offices, supports and coordinates climate action undertaken by the seventeen Local Authorities of Carlow, Cavan, Kildare, Kilkenny, Laois, Leitrim, Longford, Louth, Meath, Monaghan, Offaly, Roscommon, Tipperary, Waterford, Westmeath, Wexford and Wicklow. It is hosted by Kildare County Council as the lead authority and is supported by Kilkenny County Council as a partner local authority.

The E&M CARO coordinates quarterly sub-regional meetings with the five local authorities in the South East Region (Kilkenny, Carlow, Waterford, Wexford and Tipperary). The CARO also coordinates, develops and procures training courses under the Local Authority Climate Action Training Programme in conjunction with the LASNTG (Local Authority Services National Training Group).

Four Regional CARO offices support Local Authority Climate Action. Kilkenny County Council is a partner local authority to Kildare County Council which hosts the Eastern and Midlands CARO highlighted in green above.

South East Energy Agency

The South East Energy Agency (SEEA) provides climate action and energy expertise to Kilkenny County Council through an agreed Annual Work Programme, underpinned by a Service Level Agreement. An Elected Representative and Director of Service represent Kilkenny County Council on the Board. An Energy Engineer from the SEEA sits on the Kilkenny County Council Climate Action Steering Committee.

Local Authority Waters Programme Office

Local Authority Waters Programme Office (LAWPRO) is a shared service which works on behalf of Ireland's 31 local authorities to protect and restore good water quality in our rivers, lakes, estuaries, ground and coastal water through catchment science and local community engagement. LAWPRO was established to fulfil requirements under the European Union Water Framework Directive and is funded by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. LAWPRO coordinates the efforts of local authorities and other public bodies in the implementation of the River Basin Management Plan. The South East Region LAWPRO is jointly managed by Kilkenny and Tipperary County Council's.
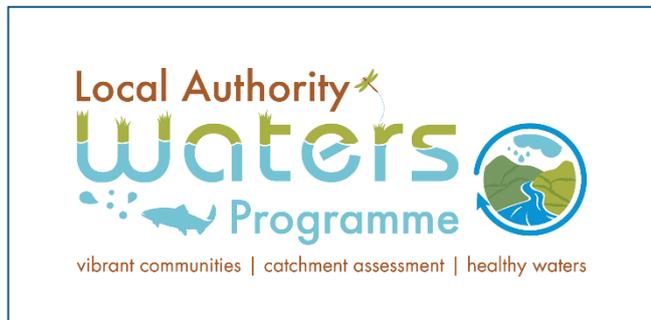
Service Level Agreements

Kilkenny County Council has several Service Level Agreements (SLA) and Grant Agreements in place with organisations and Government Departments in relation to the delivery of the Council's climate action programme. In 2024 these included the following:

SLAs/Agreements between Kilkenny County Council and partner organisations in relation to the delivery of Climate Action (2024)	
Organisation	**SLA/Agreement**
Department of Climate, Energy and Communications	Delivery of Local Authority Climate Action Plan
Department of Climate, Energy and Communications	Delivery of Community Climate Action Fund
South-East Energy Agency	Delivery of energy services
Tipperary County Council	Co-partner in provision of South-East Regional Energy Unit to access SEAI Pathfinder Programme for Local Authorities
Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI)	Provision of bridge funding to. Sustainable Energy Communities
Local Authority Water Programme Regional Office	Agreement for Kilkenny and Tipperary County Council's to jointly manage SE LAWPRO
Kildare County Council	Agreement to deliver on SLA for the Eastern & Midlands Climate Action Regional Office with the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications

Integration of Climate Action Objective into Strategies and Plans

Kilkenny County Council prioritises climate action in existing Plans and Strategies, including:

1. Kilkenny County Council Corporate Plan 2019-2024
2. Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021-2027
3. Kilkenny Local Economic and Community Plan 2023-2028
4. Full Forward Kilkenny 2030
5. Kilkenny Culture and Creativity Strategy 2023-2027
6. Kilkenny Sustainable Urban Mobility plan (in preparation)
7. Kilkenny County Council Strategic Policy Committee Scheme 2024-2029

In addition, in 2024, the Climate Action Office reviewed new Council Plans, Strategies and Programmes and provided recommendations to strengthen them re climate action, including:

1. Kilkenny County Council Corporate Plan 2024-2029
2. Kilkenny Biodiversity Action Plan 2025-2030 (in preparation)
3. Local Area Plans e.g. Ferrybank Local Area Plan (in preparation)
4. Waterford City Metropolitan Area Blue Green Infrastructure, Wide-Open Space and Amenity Strategy (in preparation)

5. Kilkenny County Council Grants Booklet 2025
6. Kilkenny County Council Workforce Plan (in preparation)

Staff and Elected Members Training and Capacity Building

In 2024, 99 Council staff successfully completed a range of climate action training. This included the training provided by the Local Government National Services Training Group in partnership with CARO under the Local Authority Climate Action Training Programme, Raising Awareness course. Participants included both Indoor & Outdoor Staff across all grades. In addition, the Climate Action Office provided climate action awareness briefings at staff induction training events for new staff, LAWPRO delivered Nature-based Solutions training for Engineers, and the new Council Green Team completed the National EPA Green Teams Training Programme.

Training and Capacity Building Event	Staff No.'s
Local Authority Climate Action Training Group (Raising Awareness course)	30
Staff Induction	25
Staff Induction	33
LAWPRO (Nature based Solutions for Engineers)	2
National EPA Green Teams Training Programme.	9
	99

Staff climate action training and capacity building in 2024

Integration of Climate Related Risks into Local Authority Risk Register

Climate change has been addressed to a limited extent in the 2024 Risk Register. More work will be undertaken in 2025 to integrate it comprehensively in all future Risk Registers.

Integration of Climate Action into Budgetary Processes

Climate Change and Climate Action were integrated into the Annual Budget 2024. This includes provision for the Climate Action Office, the Climate Action Plan and a range of projects including:

- Bridge Street, Callan active travel measures
- South East Greenway & links to Glenmore, Slieverue & Inistioge
- North Quays Project (Active travel)
- Graiguenamanagh active travel measures
- Graiguenamanagh Tinnahinch Flood Relief Scheme
- Ballyhale Flood Relief Scheme
- Minor Flood Mitigation Scheme at Ardaloo
- Abbey Quarter active travel and public realm
- Mayfair Library (including Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design Certified)
- Lacken Boardwalk – active travel measure
- Kilkenny City Active Travel programme
- Local Authority Housing Retrofit Programme
- Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Programme
- New Digital Strategy
- Green Schools Programme

Climate Action Reporting Framework

A key requirement for Kilkenny County Council is to report on progress on delivering the Climate Action Plan, and progress in meeting its climate action targets and goals. Kilkenny County Council reports to a range of national organisations, as well as reporting internally to staff, Elected Representatives and Strategic Policy Committees. In addition, the Council communicates with the public and stakeholders.

Internal Reporting

National Reporting

EU Reporting

Communicating with Stakeholders and the Public

Internal Reporting

The Climate Action Office reports on the implementation of the Plan to a range of internal reporting structures. In 2024 this included the following:

Reporting Mechanism/Structure	No.	Dates
Council Plenary Meetings	1	16th Dec
SPC 4 Meetings	1	8th Dec
Climate Action Steering Committee Meetings	3	8th March. 22nd May. 23rd July
Chief Executive Reports	12	Monthly
Annual Report	1	Annual
Reports on delivery of actions in LECP, County Development Plan		Annual

From 2025 the implementation of the Climate Action Plan will be monitored/tracked via an in-house monitoring system.

National Reporting Obligations

In 2024 Kilkenny County Council reported on the implementation of the Plan to a range of national bodies including the following:

Reporting System	Organisation	Details	Frequency
Climate Action Key Performance Indicators	Local Government Management Agency (LGMA)	Staff Steering Committee Severe Weather Emergency Response Team Greenhouse Gas Emissions Active Travel Social Housing Retrofit Training Green for Micro Business	Annual
Monitoring & Reporting (M&R)	Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI)	Energy performance Emissions targets Vehicle inventory Vehicle Procurement Energy Projects Building Register Business Travel	Annual
Energy Efficiency Directive (EED) Compliance Portal - SEAI	Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI)	Energy Audits	Annual
Public Sector Reduce Your Use Campaign	Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI)	Voluntary initiative to reduce energy use over the winter months	Annual
Critical Success Factors	Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI)	Strategy Energy Management Project Pipeline Energy Performance	Annual

Local Authority Performance Indicators Programme	National Oversight Audit Committee (NOAC)	Energy Efficiency Public Lighting Staff & Steering Committee	Annual
ISO50001 Energy Management System	National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI)	Energy audit of services and operational performance for public buildings, public lighting, fleet & machinery	Annual

Additional reporting obligations will be required in 2025.

Reporting to EU: EU Covenant of Mayors

Kilkenny County Council renewed its commitment to the EU Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy in 2024, a voluntary initiative of local governments in Europe. In doing so the Council has re-committed to implement EU climate and energy objectives, and to securing a better future for its citizens. The key focus is to reduce greenhouse gas emission, strengthen resilience to climate change, and address energy poverty. It was timely to renew the commitment, with the election of a new Council in 2024, and the adoption of the inaugural Kilkenny County Council Climate Action Plan earlier in 2024, along with the fact that the EU updated the Covenant in the last few years.

Renewing the Council's commitment to the EU Covenant of Mayors at the Dec 2024 Plenary meeting

Communicating and Reporting to the Public

Kilkenny County Council recognises the need to, and value of, engaging with the public and stakeholders in relation to our progress in delivering on our climate action targets, as part of our climate leadership role. In 2024, Kilkenny County Council communicated on climate action through a variety of media including videos, social media posts, radio interviews and press releases.

In 2025, it is planned to develop a comprehensive communications strategy for climate action to help reach wider and more targeted audiences, demonstrate leadership, and thereby facilitate local climate action in County Kilkenny.

Climate Mitigation Targets

Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Energy Efficiency Targets

Kilkenny County Council is required to achieve a 51% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions (based on a 2016-2018 baseline) and a 50% improvement in energy efficiency (based on a 2009 baseline) by 2030 under the National Climate Action Plan 2023.

Energy Target:
50% improvement
by 2030

Emissions Target:
51% decrease
by 2030

The emissions and energy use are from three areas:

- Buildings and Facilities
- Fleet
- Public Lighting

Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Energy Efficiency in 2024

The Council, along with all public sector bodies, submits energy and emissions data annually to the SEAI Monitoring and Reporting (M&R) system which tracks Ireland's progress on meeting climate targets. The SEAI publishes this data annually.

Provisional 2024 data are due to be published by the SEAI by the end of Q2 2025. However, based on estimated provisional data for 2024 (awaiting final verification by SEAI), Kilkenny County Council has achieved the following improvements in energy efficiency, reductions in energy consumption and reductions in greenhouse gas emissions in 2024:

Energy Efficiency & Energy Consumption

Kilkenny County Council achieved a decrease in energy consumption and an improvement in energy efficiency between 2023 and 2024. See table below.

Year	Energy Use (kWh)	% improvement in energy efficiency (compared to 2009 baseline)
2023	14,494,611	43.3%
2024	14,305,613 (estimate)	43.7%

In summary, Kilkenny County Council achieved the following in 2024:

- 1.3% reduction in Energy Consumption (compared to 2023)
- 0.4% improvement in Energy Efficiency (compared to 2023)
- 43.7% improvement in Energy Efficiency (compared to 2009 baseline)

The gap-to-target graph below shows the Council's energy performance from 2009 (the baseline year) to 2023, and our progress towards meeting the target of 50% improvement in energy efficiency by 2030.
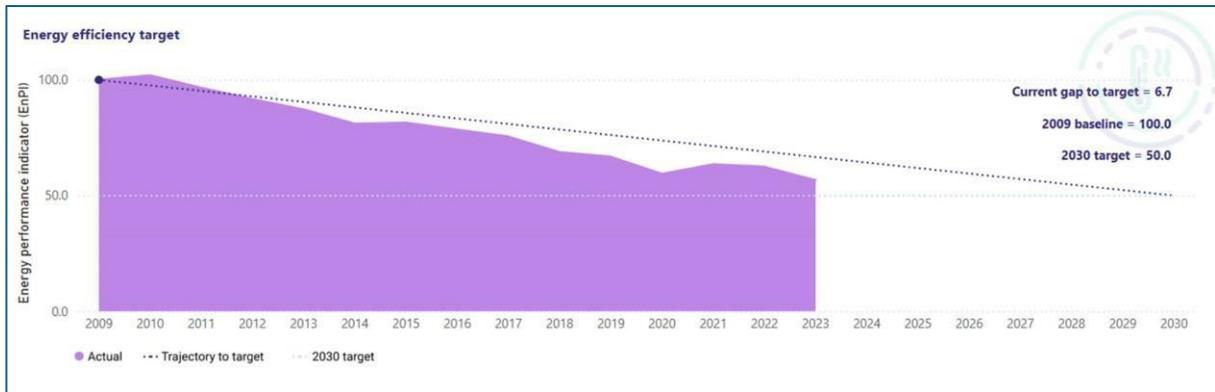
Gap-to-target graph for Kilkenny County Council's energy efficiency from 2009 to 2023

Based on the provisional data for 2024, **K k   y C u   y C u   u   p   y ffi   y by   6.3%   h   x 6 y   h h   030   y ffi   y**............. This equates to reducing the energy consumption by 214,865kWh.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Kilkenny County Council's Total greenhouse gas emissions are composed of emissions from heating of buildings and facilities (thermal), transport (fleet) and electricity.

T   CO   E

Kilkenny County Council achieved a decrease in Total greenhouse gas emissions between 2023 and 2024. See table below.

Year	Total greenhouse gas emissions (k CO)	% reduction (compared to 2026-2018)
2023	3,376,469.9	33.3%
2024	3,090,807	38.9%
By 2030	1,518,185	51%

This shows that in 2024 Kilkenny County Council achieved an 8.6% reduction in total greenhouse gas emissions (compared to 2023). Also, that the Council has achieved a 38.9% reduction in total greenhouse gas emissions since 2016-2018 (baseline years).

Looking specifically at the emissions from thermal (heating) and transport (i.e. not including emissions from electricity), Kilkenny County Council achieved the following reductions in 2024:

- 18.5% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions (compared to 2023)
- 15.9% reduction compared to the 2016-2018 baseline.

Based on the estimated 2024 Gap to Target, **K k   y C u   y C u   u   u   CO by   h 50.1% f   h 0 4   h   x   x y   h 030** .... This is a reduction of 31.1% from the 2016-2018 baseline level or an additional 1,572,621.6kg CO2 to reach the 2030 target of 1,518,185.4kgCO2.
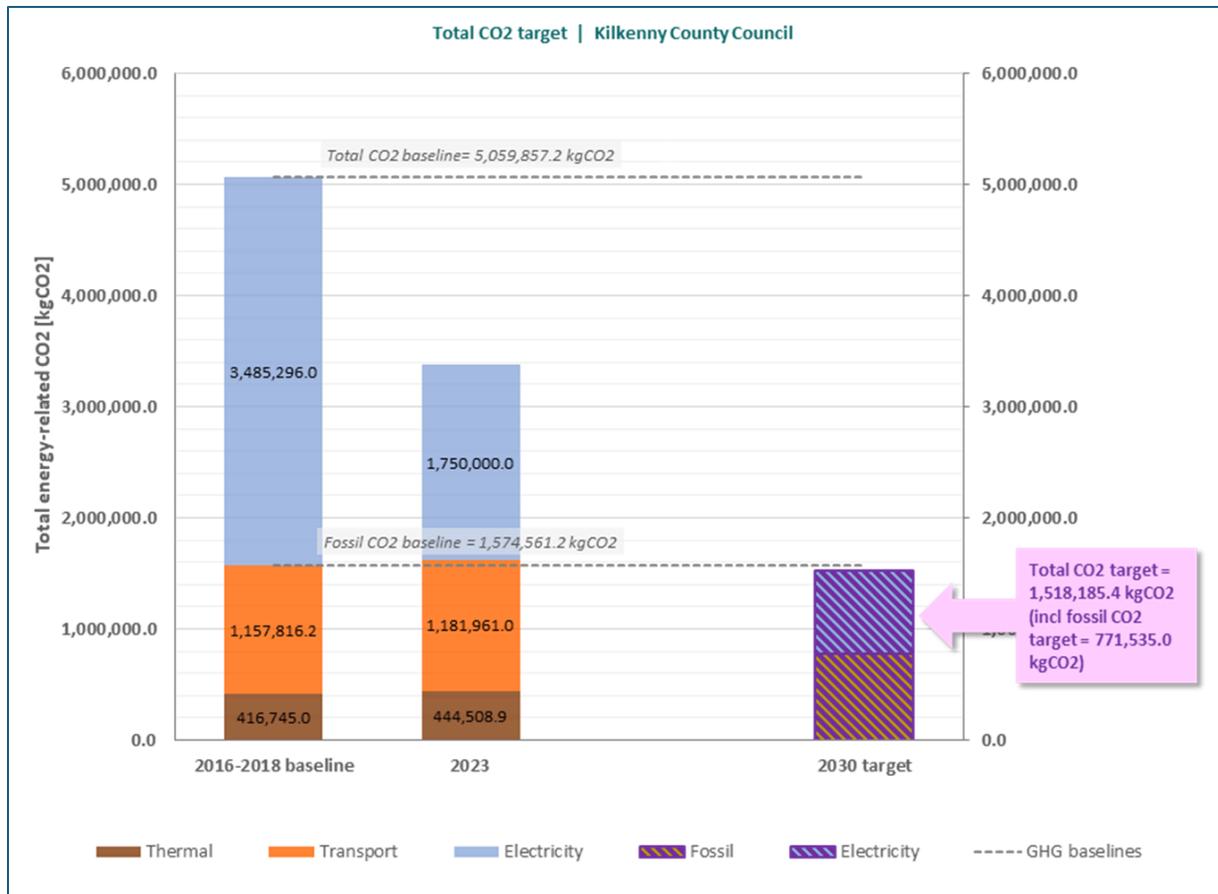

Illustration of Kilkenny County Council's total greenhouse gas emissions in 2016-2018 and 2023, plus the 2030 target. The emissions from heating (thermal), transport (fleet) and electricity are shown in different colours, and together comprise Total Greenhouse Gas Emissions.
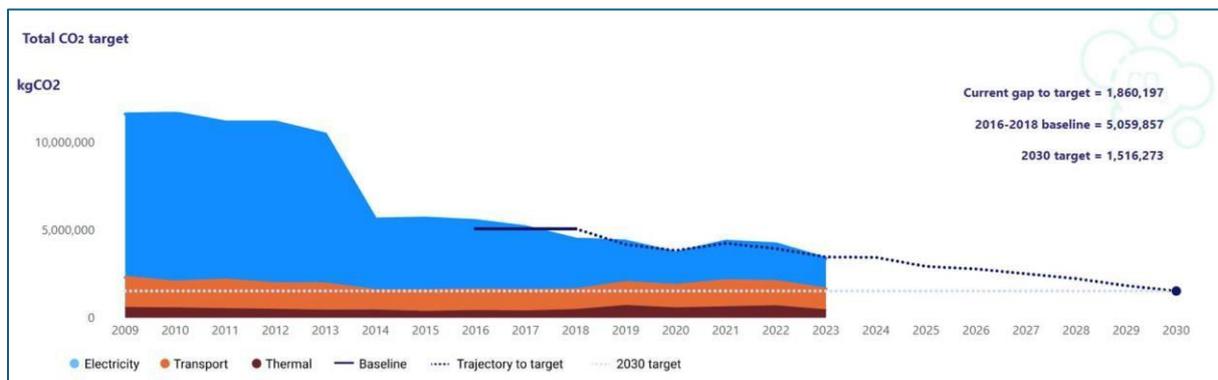
Total CO2 Gap-to-target graph (2023)

F   Fu   CO

In 2023 fossil fuel CO2 emissions were 1,626,469.9kgCO2. This was 3.3% above the 2016-2019 baseline. In 2024 estimated fossil fuel CO2 emissions were 1,324,929kgCO2. This was 15.8% below the 2016-2018 baseline. Based on the estimated 2024 Gap to Target, Kilkenny County council must save an additional 553,394kgCO2 in fossil fuel in the next 6 years to reach the 2030 fossil fuel target of 771,535kgCO2.

F   fu   CO   u   u   by   h   41. % f   h   0 4..............**35.1% f   h   016-**
01   b   .
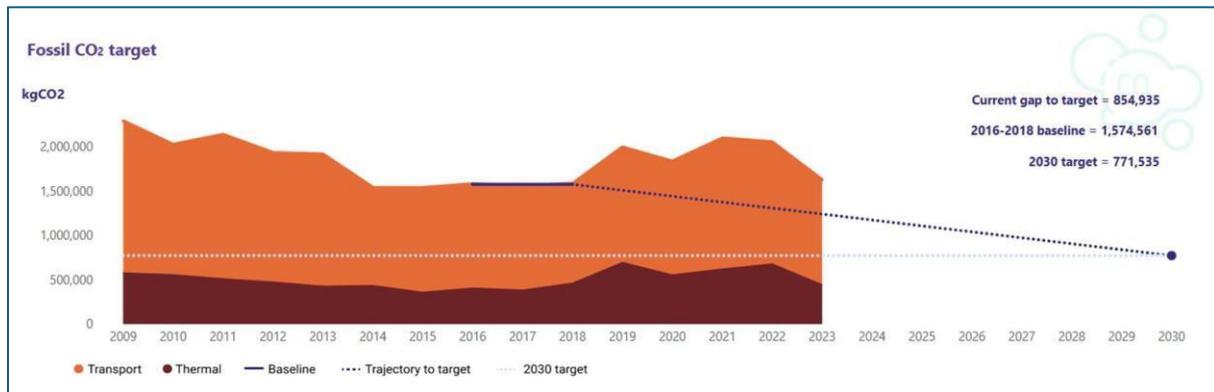
Projected Emissions when Planned Council Projects Completed

Kilkenny County Council will undertake a range of key projects over the next 6 years to further reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions in order to meet the 2030 targets. These include:

- Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project (PLEEP)
- Retrofitting of key Council building stock via Pathfinder Programme
- Electrification of vehicles and/or replacing diesel with HVO in Machinery ard Fleet

The projects have the following expected impact on Kilkenny County Council GHG Emissions and Energy Efficiency:

- Upgrade of public lightings under PLEEP should bring the council energy efficiency to 56.9% in 2030 and thus the council should meet the 2030 energy efficiency target. This project should reduce the council total ghg emissions by 418,000kgCO2, which is equivalent to 26.6% of the gap to target identified above.
- Retrofit of the council buildings under Pathfinder should reduce the council total ghg emissions by 226,684kgCO2 which is equivalent to 14.4% of the gap to target identified above. In term of fossil fuel CO2 emissions, the retrofit of building should save 153,200kgCO2, which is equivalent to 27.6% of the fossil fuel gap to target identified above.
- Decarbonisation of the fleet by switching the Machinery Yard from road diesel to HVO should reduce the council total ghg emissions by 561,000kgCO2 which is equivalent to 35.6% of the gap to target identified above. In term of fossil fuel the 561,000kgCO2 emissions reduction equates to 101% of the fossil fuel gap to target identified above.

Taking into account the expected decarbonisation of the grid, and after completion of the identified projects, in 2030:

- the council total CO_2 emissions should be 991,900kgCO_2, which is 80.4% below the 2016-2018 baseline
- the council fossil fuel CO_2 emissions should be 584,200kgCO_2, which is 62.9% below the 2016-2018 fossil fuel baseline
- the council energy efficiency should have improved by 60.5% compared to 2009 level

The gap-to-target graph below illustrates the Council's projected emissions on course to meet the 2030 targets when the planned projects are completed.
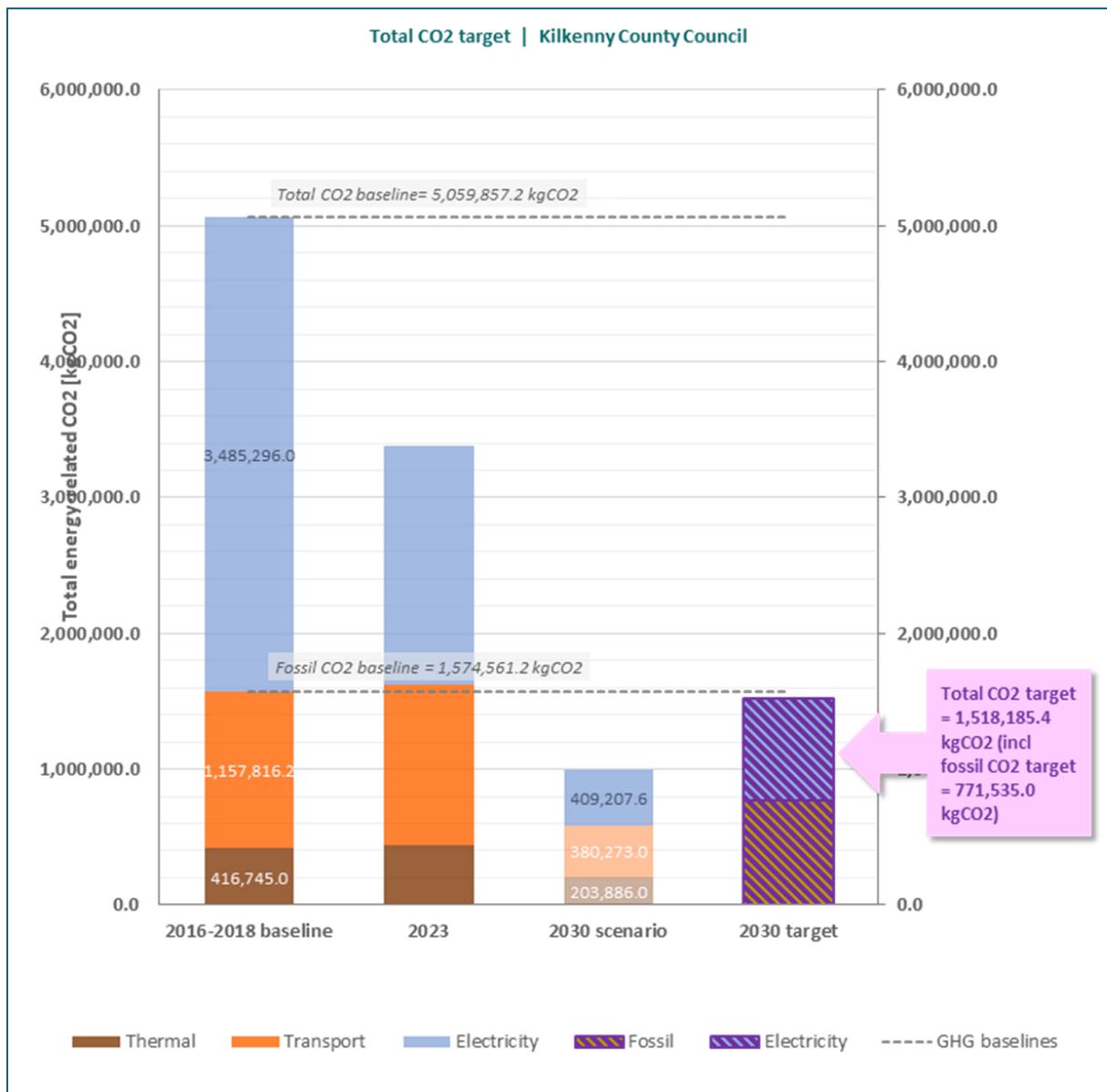
Mitigation Actions Commenced in 2024

The Kilkenny County Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 includes many actions to support the Council to meet it's 2030 targets on greenhouse gas emissions and energy efficiency, and demonstrate leadership on climate action across the county. This includes the key measures outlined above in relation public lighting, buildings and fleet, and additional actions from every service area across the Council.

Some of the actions are solely mitigation, and some actions combine mitigation and adaptation measures.

In 2024 the following mitigation actions were commenced:

Mitigation Actions Commenced in 2024

Action No.	Action Aim
2.1	Participate in the national Smarter Travel Mark Programme and Smarter Travel Mark in Kilkenny County Council
2.2	Review Local Authority business travel model and working arrangements to move towards the Avoid-Shift-Improve model, reduce emissions, energy use and reduce office space
2.3	Develop and implement a Regional EV Infrastructure Strategy in collaboration with neighbouring local authorities.
2.4	Develop a Fleet Decarbonisation Strategy for Kilkenny County Council Fleet. Ensure the strategy aligns with sustainability principles.
2.6	Integrate transport and land-use planning to facilitate a reduction in transport demand
2.10	Work with the NTA to enhance public transport options and connectivity to the surrounding area and regions
2.11	Integrate transport modes and enable a shift to sustainable modes through the effective management of parking demand and development of park and ride/stride and multi-modal hubs.
2.13	Implement the "Safe Routes to School Programme"
2.14	Communicate, raise awareness and encourage participation in sustainable and active travel
2.15	Explore feasibility of new Park and Ride locations on Regional and National Roads linked to Motorways & public transport
2.16	Explore the feasibility of using new low carbon technologies for road reconstruction on regional roads; and for reducing waste through re-use of materials
2.18	Develop a policy to reduce energy use in public lighting at pedestrian crossings
2.19	Manage and maintain Kilkenny County Council's ISO50001 energy management system certification
2.21	Implement an all-of-Council monitoring programme to track and report on energy use and emissions in all Kilkenny County Council assets
2.22	Continue to deliver the Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project (PLEEP)
2.23	Participate in the establishment and support of local authority Regional South East Energy Unit
2.24	Identify and implement a pipeline of projects for local authority assets to assist in achieving emissions and energy reduction targets
2.25	Undertake a programme of energy reduction, retrofitting, and onsite renewable measures on Local Authority buildings, facilities and social housing
2.26	Investigate the feasibility of local authority led/supported alternative heating systems and fuels including District Heating, Geothermal and Bioenergy.

2.31	Develop a planning policy which supports the re-use of existing buildings
2.33	Achieve Home Performance Index (HPI) Gold Standard on all new Kilkenny County Council social housing
2.35	Deliver a retrofit programme for Kilkenny County Council Social Housing
4.10	Continue to collaborate with the South East Energy Agency to provide an online home energy information programme
5.2	Develop and deliver a series of Business Showcase/Conference events, and positive Case Studies regarding decarbonisation/climate initiatives.
5.9	Continue to transfer public services to online systems
5.10	Undertake a programme of transferring relevant internal operations to online systems whilst driving down capacity requirements for data storage
5.13	Provide, facilitate and promote public drinking water fountains in public spaces
5.14	Undertake an audit of the waste produced by the Council's operations and services. Updated Council waste management policy with a view to promoting waste prevention, minimization and recycling.

In 2024 the following combined mitigation and adaptation actions were commenced:

Combined (Mitigation & Adaptation) Actions Commenced in 2024

Action No.	Action Aim
1.1	Ensure strong corporate governance by resourcing a Climate Action Steering Committee and Climate Action Office
1.2	Provide climate action training, capacity building and knowledge sharing to Council Staff and Elected Representatives
1.3	Develop and implement a Kilkenny County Council Green Public Procurement Strategy
1.5	Internal audit monitoring of the management, reporting and delivery of statutory targets related to climate action within all relevant Service Areas in the Council
1.6	Monitor, Report and Communicate on delivery of Kilkenny County Council climate actions and targets
1.7	Climate proof Kilkenny County Council internal Financial Systems
1.8	Collaborate with national, regional, and local stakeholders and partners on climate action delivery
1.15	Incorporate climate and sustainability best practice in Kilkenny County Council Developments
1.17	Develop and promote a Kilkenny Civil Defence Climate and Sustainability Policy
1.18	Implement and promote a Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service Climate and Sustainability Programme
2.5	Adopt and implement the Kilkenny City Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan and Mobility Management Plans for other towns in the county
2.7	Reallocate urban space towards the sustainable movement of people, and placemaking
2.8	Encourage independent journeys for all
2.9	Enhance permeability to support active travel
2.12	Develop a cycle network for Kilkenny City and larger urban areas.
2.20	Develop a Facility Management Strategy for Kilkenny County Council buildings and facilities
2.29	Ensure best practise in energy efficiency retrofitting of traditional/heritage buildings
2.30	Deliver sustainable and compact development
2.32	Continue to add to the Vacant Sites Register and Derelict Sites Register
2.36	Undertake a programme of energy reduction, retrofitting and onsite renewable measures on Local Authority buildings and facilities

3.2	Promote and facilitate tree, woodland and hedgerow protection, planting and management on public and private land
3.5	Identify and utilise environmentally friendly alternatives to herbicide use on Council land.
3.6	Identify, map and utilise local authority owned land for habitat enhancement/restoration and nature-based solutions
3.7	Implement Nature-based Solutions and biodiversity enhancement in new Kilkenny County Council developments
3.8	Implement Nature-based Solutions and biodiversity enhancement through the planning process
3.9	Provide biodiversity information and awareness on Council land, including at Dunmore Countryside Park
4.1	Deliver the Community Climate Action Fund.
4.2	Support communities to deliver local climate and sustainability actions, through grant schemes and programmes such as Sustainable Energy Communities, Tidy Towns, GAA Green Clubs, Green Schools and Heritage in Schools, Heritage Week, Heritage Grants, National Biodiversity Week, Creative Ireland and Cruinnui na nOg
4.4	Support climate awareness and resilience through the Healthy Ireland Programme and other relevant health programmes.
4.6	Design and deliver an arts programme which supports young people, communities and artists to creatively and positively respond to climate change
4.8	Deliver an educational and awareness programme, through the Library Service, on climate action, sustainability, biodiversity and the circular economy
4.9	Empower communities, through the Library Service, to reduce consumption and waste by facilitating the borrowing of books, tools and other items; hosting repair and up/recycling workshops; and providing makerspace technology (3D printers and sowing machines) to reuse and repurpose goods.
4.11	Support and collaborate with the education sector to provide information, training and educational programmes on local climate action, and to undertake research
4.12	Support climate action on farms through local authority policy and programmes
4.13	Provide information and advice to communities, businesses and other stakeholders to support local climate action, via Council networks
5.1	Develop and coordinate a new Sustainable Start-Up Business Module to the LEO Flagship 'Start our Own Business' programme
5.3	Provide climate and energy efficiency advice, training/mentoring and grants to the business sector
5.5	Support local businesses and social enterprises to optimise opportunities in the green tech and circular/green economy
5.6	Kilkenny Tourism CLG 'Green team' will develop sustainability awareness and training initiatives in collaboration with Failte Ireland, and green procurement criteria
5.8	Develop a Digital Strategy for County Kilkenny which optimises and promotes digital solutions
5.11	Monitor and report on air quality
5.12	Adopt the Green Teams National Programme within Kilkenny County Council
DZ2	Support Kilkenny City Sustainable Energy Communities (SEC's) in the DZ
DZ4	Implement relevant Local Authority Climate Action Plan actions in the DZ

Climate Adaptation

The Climate Action Plan addresses how Kilkenny County Council is preparing for, and is adapting to, the impacts of climate change. This includes identifying the key risks faced by the Council and the actions that it will take to build resilience for the future.

Climate change poses risks to the Council's assets and infrastructure, and to the delivery of its services, functions and responsibilities to the community and within the County.

Kilkenny County Council commissioned a Climate Change Risk Assessment as part of the preparation of the Climate Action Plan. The Risk Assessment analysed the impacts and the frequency of a range of climate hazards on the current and future provision of Council services, grouped under seven broad categories (Health and Wellbeing, Environment, Social, Financial, Reputation and Cultural Heritage). It identified the following as the three most significant future risks to the delivery of Kilkenny County Council services (based on predicted frequency and impact):

• River Flooding

• Extreme Precipitation

• Drought

Kilkenny County Council used this information to identify adaptation actions in the Climate Action Plan including; flood relief and flood forecasting measures, severe weather emergency planning, nature-based solutions/measures to hold and soak excess water, risk assessments of Local Authority owned heritage assets, and supporting climate resilience in communities and businesses in the county.

Planning for Severe Weather

The Kilkenny County Council Severe Weather Emergency Team, a high-level team examining operational needs and risks around severe weather events are consistently aware of, and continue to be updated on, the risks associated with climatic changes and their relevance for securing functional and operational needs of the body corporate to continue to function effectively and serve the community of Kilkenny.

The Severe Weather Emergency Committee met 6 times in 2024 in response to 6 significant windstorm events.

Actions Commenced in 2024

In 2024 the following adaptation actions commenced.

Adaptation Actions Commenced in 2024

Action No.	Action Aim
1.9	Deliver Flood Relief Schemes under the Catchment and Flood Risk Assessment Management (CFRAM) Programme, and Minor Flood Mitigation Works
1.11	Annual review of Kilkenny County Council's Emergency Response Protocol for severe weather events, and Kilkenny County Councils Risk Register
1.12	Review and update flood baseline data to inform Flood Relief Project Design
1.13	Review the Council's Health & Safety Policies and Procedures to take account of the impact of climate change on the welfare of staff
2.17	Identify and implement actions to improve drainage on the Regional and local road network, and identify infrastructure at risk from climate events
3.3	Develop an Invasive Species Register and Treatment Strategy for Council land.
3.4	Deliver a Pollinator Programme to protect and enhance pollinator habitats on Council owned land and in the wider county
3.10	Assess feasibility of identifying waterbodies that are both particularly vulnerable to extreme climate events, and at risk of not meeting the requirements of the EU Water Framework Directive.

However, this is not the full picture on adaptation actions commenced in 2024. Over 52% of actions in the Plan combine both mitigation and adaptation measures. For a full list of the combined adaptation and mitigation actions see pages 17 and 18 above.

Delivery Across Services

Climate action measures have been identified by every service area in the County Council and included in the Climate Action Plan. Twenty eight service areas, across the five Directorates of the Council, were involved in and contributed to the Plan.

Below are case studies of some of the actions undertaken by different service areas across the Council in 2024.

Retrofitting Social Housing

The Housing Section retrofitted 38 local authority houses in 2024 under the National Energy Efficiency/ Retrofitting Programme at a total cost of €1,488,758. Grant Funding of €1,292.000 was received from the Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage. Houses were retrofitted to a BER rating of B2/Cost Optimal Equivalent.

Retrofitting social housing not only makes these homes more comfortable and energy efficient for tenants. They also assist the most vulnerable in society to take climate action, and prepare for climate change, as well as reducing overall energy use and greenhouse gas emissions in the County. The National Energy Efficiency/ Retrofitting Programme will continue in 2025, with allocations expected in March/April 2025.

Flood Relief Works

The Kilkenny County Council Flood Relief Capital Office undertook a number of Flood Relief Projects in 2024. These projects will alleviate the risk of flooding to communities and help build resilience in the county to future flooding risk resulting from climate change.

Work was undertaken on two Flood Relief Schemes in partnership with the OPW in 2024. Both schemes were previously identified as priorities under the South Eastern Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Study.

- Graiguenamanagh Tinnahinch Flood Relief Scheme: Stage 1 (Scheme Development & Preliminary Design)
  Kilkenny County Council is the lead authority on this scheme, supported by Carlow County Council.
- Ballyhale Flood Relief Scheme: Stage 3 (Detailed Design).
  Once complete, the scheme will provide protection for over 27 residential and business properties in the town, as well as resolving significant flooding affecting local roads and access.

Graiguenamanagh-Tinnahinch Flood Relief Scheme Newsletter, Nov 2024.

In addition, work commenced on the Minor Flood Mitigation Scheme at Ardaloo, Jenkinstown. It includes the construction of a flood wall around the perimeter of the property site, upgrading the existing wall, the supply and installation of a main flood gate, and associated ancillary works.

Supporting Sustainable Businesses

The Kilkenny Local Enterprise Office (LEO) undertook a number of initiatives in 2024 to support businesses to take climate action and build resilience for climate change.

This included creating videos with four local businesses, highlighting the challenges they face in their sustainability journey, and showcasing the fantastic progress that has been made to date by business in the county.

Four businesses of varied types and sizes participated in this initiative, and they each demonstrate the success that can be achieved in the green transformation through small steps in the right direction and ongoing commitment to change.

The four businesses and the climate actions they took were:

- Martin Costello, Murphy Jewellers, High Street Kilkenny: savings from zoned heating and LED lighting

- Liam Walsh of Peter Walsh & Sons, Threecastles: energy savings and sustainability from a biomass plant and solar farm

- Gareth Connolly, Connolly's Red Mills: reed bed created in their Goresbridge Headquarters which captures waste water and acts as its own natural habitat

- Nicholas Mosse, Nicholas Mosee Pottery, Bennettsbridge: sustainable water turbines in operation for more than 100 years.

Council Fleet

The decarbonisation of Local Authority fleets is a significant challenge for Councils across the country. Currently, only two technologies are viable: Electric vehicles (EV's) and Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO).

EVs are a suitable solution for the replacement of Light Goods Vehicles (LGVs) in Council fleets. However, the low performance of the EV Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) and their cost are currently a barrier for immediate investment.

One of the 2 new EV's purchased by Kilkenny County Council in 2024, with the" Kilkenny Going Green' branding to raise awareness with the public

Two new LGV EV's were purchased in 2024. This brings the total number of Council EV's to 6.

In 2024, the Kilkenny County Council Machinery ard undertook a pilot project to test HVO in a range of vehicles in the Council fleet in order to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

HVO is a biofuel alternative to road diesel and green diesel. It is an interim solution until more sustainable technologies are found. Currently this is the only medium-term solution to decarbonise HGVs used in the Council fleet. For most vehicles, HVO can be used as a straight swap from road diesel without impacting the performance of the vehicles. Its integration requires the installation of new fuel storage tanks and allocation of additional budget for the purchase of HVO fuel as it is more expensive than road diesel.

The pilot study replaced fossil fuels with HVO in 10 Council vehicles from Oct 2023 to Sept 2024. A mix of vehicles, by type and age, was chosen for the trial, to monitor the effectiveness, costs and emissions, including the following:

Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil (HVO)

- o 2 Compact Sweepers
- o 1 large Road Sweeper
- o 2 large Relay Vans
- o 2 Arctic Truck Tractor Units
- o 3 no. 4-Axel Tipper Trucks

Overall, HVO performed very well in terms of efficiency and emissions reductions. However, HVO is more expensive than diesel or petrol, and there may also be additional costs where new fuel tanks are required. In terms of emissions reductions, the average % CO_2 savings per KG of fuel was 93%. This indicates that HVO is a viable interim fuel for some Council vehicles.

Data gathered from the pilot study shows that the Council reduced its emissions by 11.5% in 2024 due to the use of the HVO fuel. 74,514L of HVO was used in the Council fleet. It accounted for c.20% of the fuel consumed from the Machinery ard. The usage of HVO in 2024 saved 181,443kgCO_2 which is equivalent to 11.5% of the fossil fuel 2016-2018 emissions baseline.

Community Engagement and Activation

Kilkenny County Council has a key role to play in supporting communities to take climate action, and also in supporting climate resilience in these sectors. The Council will achieve this through delivery of its services, demonstrating leadership, collaboration and advocacy.

A significant number of the actions in the Plan address community engagement and activation. In particular, actions under Strategic Goal 4 (Communities: Resilience and Transition) and Objectives 4.1 refer:

Objective 4.1: *Support and empower communities to adapt to the impacts of climate change and facilitate local climate action through education and awareness initiatives, well-being, cultural and creative programmes, and grants.*

The Community Climate Action Fund

In 2024, one of the most significant community climate engagement and activation measures undertaken by Kilkenny County Council was commencement of the Community Climate Action Fund.

This new fund, launched by the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, enables communities to take local climate action supported by the Local Authority.

Paulstown Development Association received funding for new energy efficient lighting in the Community Hall under the Community Climate Action Fund

In 2024 Kilkenny County Council allocated funding of €511,000 to 22 communities to deliver a range of climate action projects including energy efficient lighting and heating, insulation, pv panels, rainwater harvesting, bike parking and repair stations, community allotments and nature enhancement measures. Communities have 18 months to complete projects. The Community Climate action Officer provides one-to-one support to all communities throughout the project. It is expected that Phase 2 of the Community Climate Action Fund will be launched by the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications in mid-2025.

The fund was significantly oversubscribed in Kilkenny, with 4 times the value of funding sought from communities as was available.

Overview of Community Climate Action Fund allocations			
Total grant funding requested from applicants	€1.8M	Total grant funding received from DECC	€511,000
No. of grant applications received	50	No. of grants awarded funding	22

A Community Climate Action Storymap which maps and showcases the communities and their projects was created to highlight the great work being undertaken, and encourage other groups to do similar. See below.

Details of the communities participating in the Community Climate Action Fund:

Community Climate Fund Projects allocated funding in 2024	
Group	**Project**
Paulstown Development Association (Hall)	Project completed October 2024-lighting upgrade
Inistioge Tidy Towns	Project completed October 2024-water refill station
Graiguenamanagh (Abbey Hall)	Project completed October 2024-solar pv and EV charger
Threefold Community Assset Westcourt	Installation of Polytunnel
Thomastown Allotments	Allotment works
Hugginstown & District Community Centre	Lighting upgrade
Coolagh Pattern Committee (Hall)	Community Garden
Castlecomer Enterprise	Heating & lighting upgrade, insulation
Callan Community Energy	Mobile solar powered trailer
Piltown AFC	Hedging & Bike Stand
Happe House & Millenium Court	Garden & biodiversity planting
Kilkenny Walking & Cycling Group	Bikes and helmets

Stoneyford Development (Community Hall)	Heating & lighting upgrade, insulation, bike stand & repair kit, balance bikes, pollinator planting
Lisdowney Community Centre & GAA Club	Windows, doors, bike stand, water refill station planting
Tullaroan Development Association (Sports Facility)	Solar pv, flood lighting Upgrade to LED Pollinator planting, Water Butts
Windgap GAA	Bike repair station, water refill station, solar panels
Iverk Agricultural Show	Heater & lighting upgrade, Rainwater harvesting tank
Tullahought Community Development (Community Hall)	Windows, Ceiling Insulation Works, composter
Kilmacow Community Centre	Solar pv, heating upgrade
Ballyfoyle Development Group (Community Hall)	Insulation, Lighting & heating upgrade, Bike Stands & repair Station, Wayfinder Map, Allotment Works, Tool Shed, biodiversity planting
Mullinavat Community Group (Community Centre & GAA)	Solar pv, EV Charging points, Lighting Upgrade, Water refill station, bike rack, pollinator planting
Urlingford Town Team (Hub & GAA Club)	Solar pv, water refill station and bike rack

Community Energy Hub

The Community Energy Hub is a new initiative launched in 2024 to help households, community groups, and businesses to reduce energy use, and avail of grants. It was developed by the South East Energy Agency, in partnership with the Library Services in Kilkenny, Carlow, Wexford and Waterford. The hub provides expert information on energy grants (online), plus monthly face-to-face drop-in clinics with an energy engineer in local libraries. 31 free drop-in energy advice sessions were delivered in 2024.

A range of additional community climate-related projects and supports were delivered across the Council through the Climate Action Office, Library Service, Community, Arts, Heritage, and Biodiversity Sections.

Appendix 1 Actions Delivering on Sustainable Development Goals

The tables below illustrate the actions delivered in 2024 and the SDG that they support.

Actions in Strategic Goal 1: Governance and Leadership which support delivery of SDGs		
(Recurring and/or completed in 2024)		
SDG No.	**SDG Theme**	**Actions/Our Performance Towards the SDG's**
3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES 12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION 13 CLIMATE ACTION 15 LIFE ON LAND 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS	Good health & well-being Sustainable Cities and Communities Responsible consumption and production Climate Action Life on Land Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions Partnerships for the Goals	• Ensure strong corporate governance by resourcing a Climate Action Steering Committee and Climate Action Office • Provide climate action training, capacity building and knowledge sharing to Council Staff and Elected Representatives • Develop and implement a Kilkenny County Council Green Public Procurement Strategy • Internal audit monitoring of the management, reporting and delivery of statutory targets related to climate action within all relevant Service Areas in the Council • Monitor, Report and Communicate on delivery of Kilkenny County Council climate actions and targets • Climate proof Kilkenny County Council internal Financial Systems • Collaborate with national, regional, and local stakeholders and partners on climate action delivery • Deliver Flood Relief Schemes under the Catchment and Flood Risk Assessment Management (CFRAM) Programme, and Minor Flood Mitigation Works, incorporating nature-based solutions, where possible, whilst having appropriate regard to environmental protection requirements associated with flood resilience development. • Annual review of Kilkenny County Council's Emergency Response Protocol for severe weather events, and Kilkenny County Councils Risk Register • Review and update flood baseline data to inform Flood Relief Project Design • Review the Council's Health & Safety Policies and Procedures to take account of the impact of climate change on the welfare of staff • Incorporate climate and sustainability best practice in Kilkenny County Council Developments • Develop and promote a Kilkenny Civil Defence Climate and Sustainability Policy • Implement and promote a Kilkenny Fire and Rescue Service Climate and Sustainability Programme

Actions in Strategic Goal 2: Built Environment and Transport which support delivery of SDGs (Recurring and/or completed in 2024)		
SDG No.	**SDG Theme**	**Actions/Our Performance Towards the SDG's**
![SDG 7 Affordable and Clean Energy] ![SDG 9 Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure] ![SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities] ![SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities] ![SDG 13 Climate Action] ![SDG 14 Life Below Water] ![SDG 15 Life on Land] ![SDG 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions]	Affordable and Clean Energy Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure Reduced Inequalities Sustainable Cities and Communities Climate Action Life below Water Life on Land Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions	• Participate in the national Smarter Travel Mark Programme and Smarter Travel Mark in Kilkenny County Council • Review Local Authority business travel model and working arrangements to move towards the Avoid-Shift-Improve model, reduce emissions, energy use and reduce office space • Develop and implement a Regional EV Infrastructure Strategy in collaboration with neighbouring local authorities. • Develop a Fleet Decarbonisation Strategy for Kilkenny County Council Fleet. Ensure the strategy aligns with sustainability principles. • Adopt and implement the Kilkenny City Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan and Mobility Management Plans for other towns in the county • Integrate transport and land-use planning to facilitate a reduction in transport demand • Reallocate urban space towards the sustainable movement of people, and placemaking • Encourage independent journeys for all • Enhance permeability to support active travel • Work with the NTA to enhance public transport options and connectivity to the surrounding area and regions • Integrate transport modes and enable a shift to sustainable modes through the effective management of parking demand and development of park and ride/stride and multi-modal hubs • Develop a cycle network for Kilkenny City and larger urban areas. • Implement the "Safe Routes to School Programme" • Communicate, raise awareness and encourage participation in sustainable and active travel • Explore feasibility of new Park and Ride locations on Regional and National Roads linked to Motorways & public transport • Explore the feasibility of using new low carbon technologies for road reconstruction on regional roads; and for reducing waste through re-use of materials

		• Identify and implement actions to improve drainage on the Regional and local road network, and identify infrastructure at risk from climate events. • Develop a policy to reduce energy use in public lighting at pedestrian crossings • Manage and maintain Kilkenny County Council's ISO50001 energy management system certification • Develop a Facility Management Strategy for Kilkenny County Council buildings and facilities • Implement an all-of-Council monitoring programme to track and report on energy use and emissions in all Kilkenny County Council assets • Continue to deliver the Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project (PLEEP) • Participate in the establishment and support of local authority Regional South East Energy Unit • Identify and implement a pipeline of projects for local authority assets to assist in achieving emissions and energy reduction targets • Undertake a programme of energy reduction, retrofitting, and onsite renewable measures on Local Authority buildings, facilities and social housing. • Investigate the feasibility of local authority led/supported alternative heating systems and fuels including District Heating, Geothermal and Bioenergy. • Ensure best practise in energy efficiency retrofitting of traditional/heritage buildings • Deliver sustainable and compact development • Develop a planning policy which supports the re-use of existing buildings • Continue to add to the Vacant Sites Register and Derelict Sites Register • Achieve Home Performance Index (HPI) Gold Standard on all new Kilkenny County Council social • Deliver a retrofit programme for Kilkenny County Council Social Housing • Undertake a programme of energy reduction, retrofitting and onsite renewable measures on Local Authority buildings and facilities

Actions in Strategic Goal 3: Natural Environment and Green Infrastructure which support delivery of SDGs (Recurring and/or completed in 2024)		
SDG No.	**SDG Theme**	**Actions/ Our Performance Towards the SDG's**
	Climate Action Life below Water Life on Land	• Promote and facilitate tree, woodland and hedgerow protection, planting and management on public and private land • Develop an Invasive Species Register and Treatment Strategy for Council land. • Deliver a Pollinator Programme to protect and enhance pollinator habitats on Council owned land and in the wider • Identify and utilise environmentally friendly alternatives to herbicide use on Council land. • Identify, map and utilise local authority owned land for habitat enhancement/restoration and nature-based solutions • Implement Nature-based Solutions and biodiversity enhancement in new Kilkenny County Council developments • Implement Nature-based Solutions and biodiversity enhancement through the planning process • Provide biodiversity information and awareness on Council land, including at Dunmore Countryside Park • Assess feasibility of identifying waterbodies that are both particularly vulnerable to extreme climate events, and at risk of not meeting the requirements of the EU Water Framework Directive.

Actions in Strategic Goal 4: Communities: Resilience and Transition which support delivery of SDGs (Recurring and/or completed in 2024)		
SDG No.	**SDG Theme**	**Our Performance Towards the SDG's**
3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	Good health & well-being	• Deliver the Community Climate Action Fund • Support communities to deliver local climate and sustainability actions, through grant schemes and programmes • Support climate awareness and resilience through the Healthy Ireland Programme and other relevant health programmes. • Design and deliver an arts programmes which supports young people, communities and artists to creatively and positively respond to climate change • Deliver an educational and awareness programme, through the Library Service, on climate action, sustainability, biodiversity and the circular economy • Empower communities, through the Library Service, to reduce consumption and waste • Continue to collaborate with the South East Energy Agency to provide an online home energy information programme • Support and collaborate with the education sector to provide information, training and educational programmes on local climate action, and to undertake research • Support climate action on farms through local authority policy and programmes • Provide information and advice to communities, businesses and other stakeholders to support local climate action, via Council networks
4 QUALITY EDUCATION	Quality Education	
10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES	Reduced Inequalities	
11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES	Sustainable Cities and Communities	
12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION	Responsible consumption and production	
13 CLIMATE ACTION	Climate Action	
14 LIFE BELOW WATER	Life below Water	
15 LIFE ON LAND	Life on Land	
16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS	Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions	
17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS	Partnerships for the Goals	

| Actions in Strategic Goal 5: Sustainability & Resource Management which support delivery of SDGs

(Recurring and/or completed in 2024)		
SDG No.	**SDG Theme**	**Our Performance Towards the SDG's**
	Clean Water and Sanitation

Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

Sustainable Cities and Communities

Responsible consumption and production

Climate Action

Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions | • Develop and coordinate a new Sustainable Start-Up Business Module to the LEO Flagship 'Start our Own Business' programme
• Develop and deliver a series of Business Showcase/Conference events, and positive Case Studies regarding decarbonisation/climate initiatives.
• Provide climate and energy efficiency advice, training/mentoring and grants to the business sector
• Support local businesses and social enterprises to optimise opportunities in the green tech and circular/green economy
• Kilkenny Tourism CLG 'Green team' will develop sustainability awareness and training initiatives in collaboration with Failte Ireland, and green procurement criteria
• Develop a Digital Strategy for County Kilkenny which optimises and promotes digital solutions
• Continue to transfer public services to online systems
• Undertake a programme of transferring relevant internal operations to online systems whilst driving down capacity requirements for data storage
• Monitor and report on air quality
• Adopt the Green Teams National Programme within Kilkenny County Council
• Provide, facilitate and promote public drinking water fountains in public spaces |

Actions in DZ Plan which support delivery of SDGs		
(Recurring and/or completed in 2024)		
SDG No.	**SDG Theme**	**Our Performance Towards the SDG's**
(SDG 11 icon)	Sustainable Cities and Communities	• Support Kilkenny City Sustainable Energy Communities (SEC's) in the DZ • Implement relevant Local Authority Climate Action Plan actions in the DZ
(SDG 13 icon)	Climate Action	
(SDG 16 icon)	Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions	
(SDG 17 icon)	Partnerships for the Goals	