

Local Authority Climate Action Plan

Westmeath County Council

Pre-Draft Consultation Report

During our Local Authority Climate Action Plan (LACAP) development we undertook a number of stakeholder engagement events, both internally and externally. The purpose of our stakeholder engagements was to inform stakeholders of the LACAP process, to provide an update on the plan development and to receive feedback from stakeholders, to incorporate into the plan.

Our stakeholder engagements included community workshops, an online survey, internal meetings with Senior Management, Elected Members and sections, as well as collaboration with Environmental Authorities. The outcomes from these engagements helped to inform our draft LACAP.

We undertook the following stakeholder engagements during the LACAP process.

Local Economic and Community Plans Workshops

Date:	Community:														
30 th May 2023	Mullingar														
6 th June 2023	Castlepollard														
7 th June 2023	Athlone														
8 th June 2023	Moate														
13 th June 2023	Kilbeggan														
16 th June 2023	Kinnegad														
Interactions: 6 Community Groups, 96 Citizens															
Responses: <div style="text-align: center;"><p>Priority measures to combat climate change</p><table border="1"><thead><tr><th>Measure</th><th>Percentage</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Education & Awareness</td><td>93%</td></tr><tr><td>Low emission vehicles</td><td>92%</td></tr><tr><td>Biodiversity Initiatives</td><td>83%</td></tr><tr><td>Wind Energy</td><td>82%</td></tr><tr><td>EV charging points</td><td>75%</td></tr><tr><td>House retrofitting supports</td><td>34%</td></tr></tbody></table></div>		Measure	Percentage	Education & Awareness	93%	Low emission vehicles	92%	Biodiversity Initiatives	83%	Wind Energy	82%	EV charging points	75%	House retrofitting supports	34%
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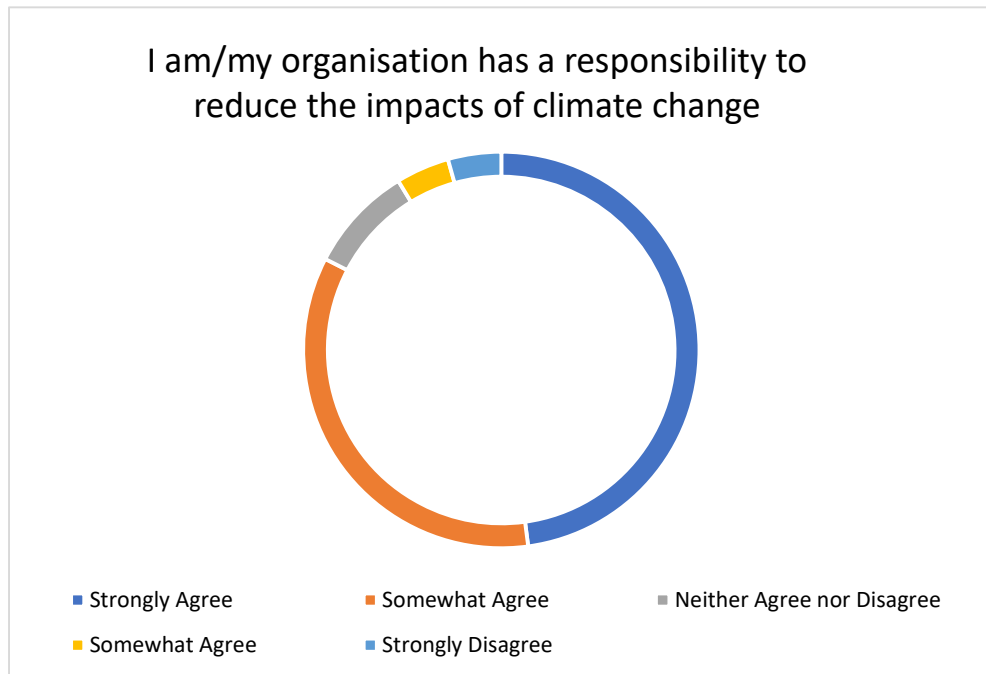
Internal Section Meetings

Date:	Section:
2 nd May 2023	Transport
9 th May 2023	Local Enterprise Office Municipal Districts
11 th May 2023	Planning Housing
12 th May 2023	Finance
18 th September 2023	Municipal District, Planning, Housing.
19 th September 2023	Heritage & Biodiversity, Regeneration.
25 th September 2023	Community, LEO, Transportation & Active Travel.
Interactions: 6 Sections. Head of section and key members of staff.	
Outcomes: LACAP Actions – specific to each thematic area/section.	

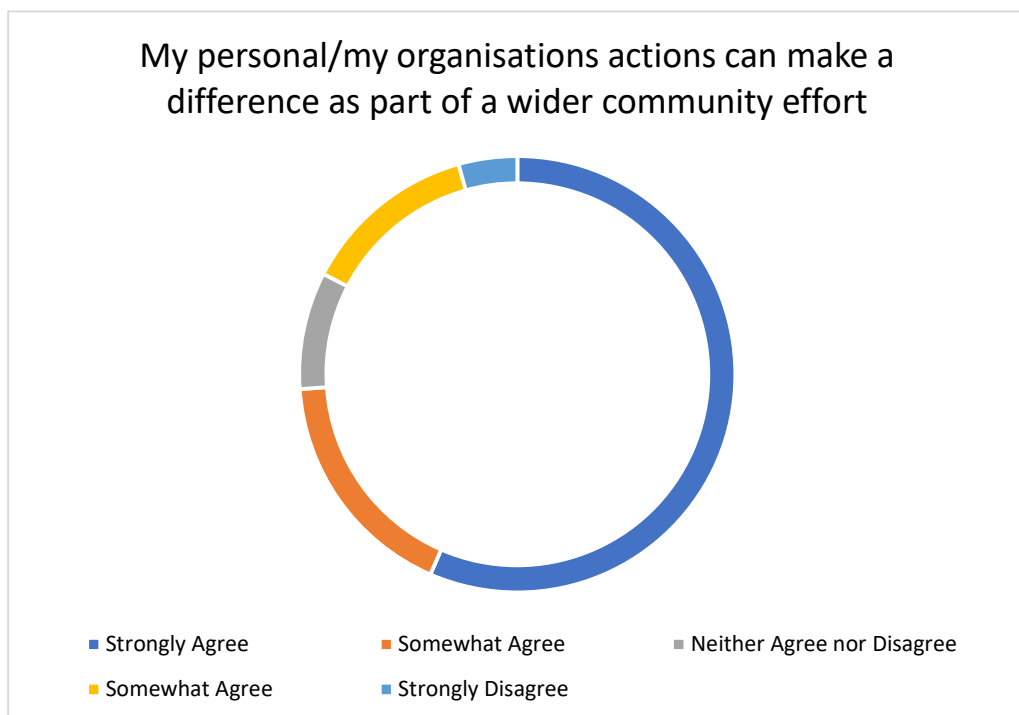
Online Survey

Date: 10 th July - 4 th August 2023						
Interactions: 13 questions per survey. 24 surveys completed.						
<p>Outcomes:</p> <p><u>Q.1</u></p> <div style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid gray; padding: 10px; margin: 10px auto; width: 80%;"> <p>I am/my organisation is worried about climate change</p> <table border="0" style="margin: 10px auto; width: 80%;"> <tr> <td>■ Strongly Agree</td> <td>■ Somewhat Agree</td> </tr> <tr> <td>■ Neither Agree nor Disagree</td> <td>■ Somewhat Disagree</td> </tr> <tr> <td>■ Strongly Disagree</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> </div>	■ Strongly Agree	■ Somewhat Agree	■ Neither Agree nor Disagree	■ Somewhat Disagree	■ Strongly Disagree	
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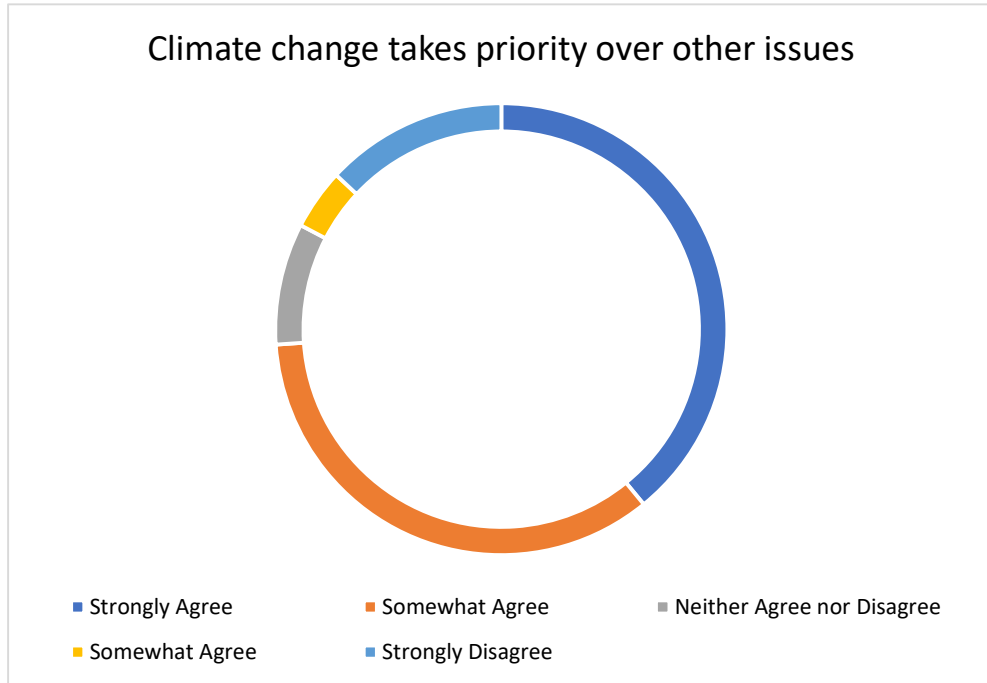
Q.2



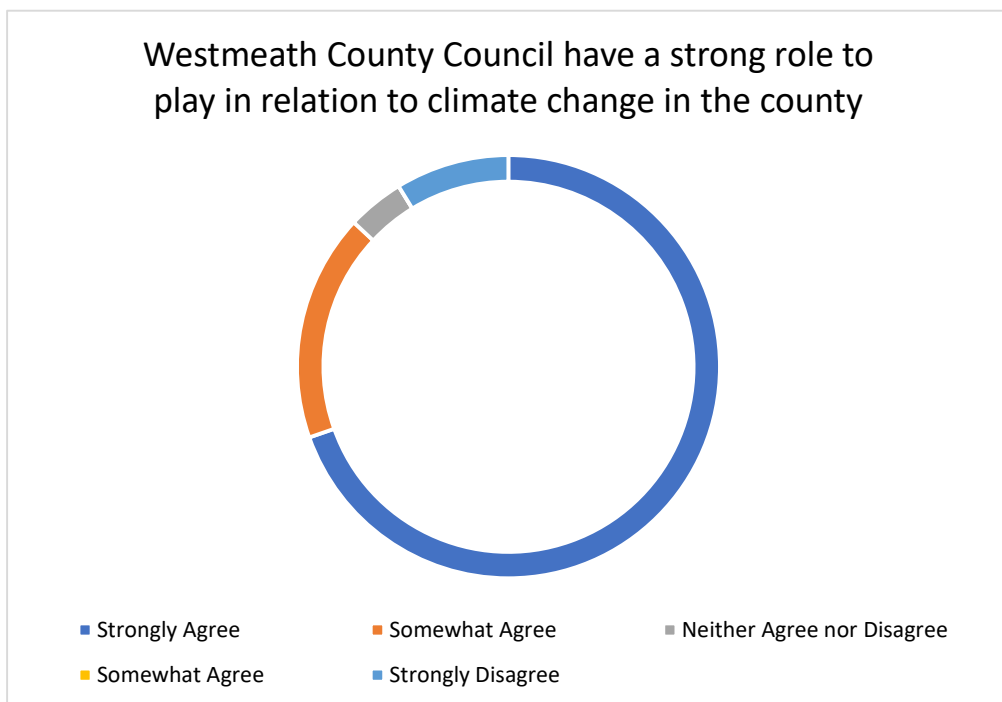
Q.3



Q.4



Q.5



Q.6

Rank the following environmental sustainability statements in order of importance, when thinking about a Climate Action Plan for Westmeath. Rank statements from 1-6 (1 being most important)

The 3 most important areas, as seen by respondents, were;

- Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy
- Sustainable Water-use and Healthy Waterways
- Protecting and Enhancing Biodiversity

Q.7

Think about changes you can make in your daily life to reduce your carbon emissions. How can Westmeath County Council support you in these changes?

From a number of detailed responses, we have summarised responses into the following areas, in no particular order.

- Traffic systems
- Waste disposal
- Cycle lanes
- Public transport
- Renewable energy projects
- Green energy
- Chemical use
- Education
- Energy emissions
- Recycling
- Electric vehicles
- Community
- Composting
- Farmers markets

Q.8

In your opinion, what is the best way(s) for the Council to influence and support communities in their journey to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy?

From a number of detailed responses, we have summarised responses into the following areas, in no particular order.

- Land allotments
- Farmers markets

- Waste disposal
- Pesticide use
- Weed control
- Green energy
- Public transport
- Education
- Green agriculture
- Support plant based food
- Rewards
- Grants
- Planting
- Land clean ups
- Community events
- Information
- Electric vehicles
- Solar panels
- Waterways
- Rewards
- Outdoor amenities
- Stakeholder engagement

Q.9

In your opinion, what is the best way(s) for the Council to influence and support sectors (transport, agriculture, industry, residential, commercial, waste, wastewater, land use and land use change) in the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy?

From a number of detailed responses, we have summarised responses into the following areas, in no particular order.

- Development
- Public transport
- Sustainable agriculture
- Biodiversity
- Infrastructure
- Education
- Information
- Waste
- Electric vehicles
- Finance
- Community energy projects
- Inspections
- Fines
- Planning
- Fossil fuels
- Agriculture
- Food

Q.10

What can Westmeath County Council do to support communities in taking action to protect their community from the impacts of climate change (i.e impacts of severe weather events)?

From a number of detailed responses, we have summarised responses into the following areas, in no particular order.

- Budgets
- Cycle lanes
- Flood defences
- Resilience
- Community projects
- Planning
- Stakeholder engagement
- Funding
- Information
- Grants
- Emergency response plans
- Social media
- Communication
- Agriculture

Q.11

How can Westmeath County Council support local action on biodiversity resilience?

From a number of detailed responses, we have summarised responses into the following areas, in no particular order.

- Weed control
- Biodiversity / wildlife
- Information
- Organic farming
- Schools
- Community
- Education
- Green space
- Grants
- Electric vehicles
- Planning
- Resources
- Investment

- Agriculture

Q.12

Please comment on other measures you feel can help protect natural resources including our waters, soils and air quality

From a number of detailed responses, we have summarised responses into the following areas, in no particular order.

- Education
- Specialists
- Biodiversity
- Water
- Weed control
- Funding
- Planning
- Communities
- Sewage
- Waste facilities
- Agriculture

Q.13

Do you have suggestions regarding specific actions that you wish to see included in the Climate Action Plan?

From a number of detailed responses, we have summarised responses into the following areas, in no particular order.

- Cycle lanes
- Tree planting
- Energy upgrades
- Staff resources
- Community schemes
- Solar energy
- Public transport
- Local food production
- Funding
- Education
- Water
- Biodiversity

- Agriculture

**SEA Environmental Report
Considerations from Environmental Authorities**

Responses received from:

- Environmental Protection Agency
- Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
- Department of Transport

Senior Management Meeting

Date: 17th October 2023

Attendees: Chief Executive, Director of Services, Senior Engineer, Climate Action Co-Ordinator

**Strategic Policy Committee Meeting
Environment, Climate Action, Water & Emergency**

Date: 19th October 2023

Attendees: SPC Elected Members, Key staff from Environment Section

Full Council Meeting

Date: 23rd October 2023

Attendees: Elected Members, Chief Executive, Director of Services, Key Staff from Environment Section