

CHAPTER 11



CHAPTER 11 Climate Action

Table of Contents

11.1	Aim	320
11.2	Background	320
11.3	Legislative and Policy Context.....	320
11.4	Climate Change	330
11.5	Climate Action – Adapting to Climate Change.....	333
11.6	Spatial Planning and Transport	333
11.7	Flood Risk Management	334
11.8	Green Infrastructure	334
11.9	Clean Energy	334
11.10	Urban/Rural Regeneration.....	335

11.1 Aim

To transition to a low carbon and climate resilient County, with an emphasis on reduction in energy demand and greenhouse gas emissions, through a combination of effective mitigation and adaptation responses to climate change.

11.2 Background

Westmeath County Council acknowledges that Climate Change is one of the most important and urgent issues facing the County today and accordingly has dedicated a standalone chapter to this subject matter. It is further noted that whilst Climate Change is a global phenomenon, the Council must take a leading role at local level to guide individuals, communities and business interests to mitigate against and adapt to Climate Change and its impacts.

Addressing the problem requires co-ordinated action at various levels in addition to behavioural changes, the Draft Development Plan has an important role to play in this regard. The Plan sets out to:

1. Integrate climate implications to inform spatial choices.
2. Support and translate National targets/obligations.
3. Prescribe objectives to realise adaptation and mitigation actions.
4. Ensure further integration in planning related decision-making processes.

The Draft Plan promotes behavioural change by influencing development patterns and by promoting a modal shift to more sustainable modes of transport. In addition, measures are included to fully integrate climate change into all aspects of spatial planning both at plan and project levels.

Because a response to climate change requires an inter-disciplinary approach, this chapter cross-references other sections of the Plan which include detailed adaptation and mitigation measures. Table 11.3 summarises how climate considerations have been incorporated into and ultimately inform the Draft Westmeath County Development Plan 2021-2027.

11.3 Legislative and Policy Context

11.3.1 Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)

Section 10 (2)(n) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) requires Development Plans to include various types of objectives, including those relating to climate mitigation and adaptation. It is a Statutory Requirement for local authorities to incorporate the promotion of sustainable settlement and transportation strategies in urban and rural areas.

11.3.2 International Legislative and Policy Context

Ireland has committed to addressing climate change through its commitments with Climate Change International and EU legislation to limit global temperature rise, reduce GHG emissions, improve energy efficiency, and increase energy consumption from renewable sources. These include:

- The Paris Agreement

- The UN Sustainable Development Goals
- The 2013 EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change
- EU 2020 and 2030 climate and energy targets as well as longer term 2040 and 2050 milestones and targets
- The Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy

11.3.3 National Policy Context for Climate Change

The 2012 National Climate Change Adaptation Framework (NCCAF) was Ireland's first step in developing a national policy on adaptation actions to combat the impacts of climate change. The National Policy Position on Climate Action and Low Carbon Development 2014 restated the policy position of the NCCAF, 2012. Greenhouse gas mitigation and adaption to the impacts of climate change were to be addressed in parallel national plans under an evolving climate policy to 2050.

The Irish government has since published the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, the National Mitigation Plan 2017, the National Adaptation Framework 2018 and Project Ireland 2040 (the National Planning Framework and the National Development Plan) and the Climate Action Plan 2019. These set out how Ireland will achieve its international and European commitments, and transition Ireland to a low carbon society. To provide local authorities with support in developing their Climate Change Action Plans (CCAPs), the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment (DCCAE) has developed the Local Authority Adaptation Strategy Development Guidelines 2018. In addition, the government has established four Climate Action Regional Offices (CAROs), each led by a local authority.

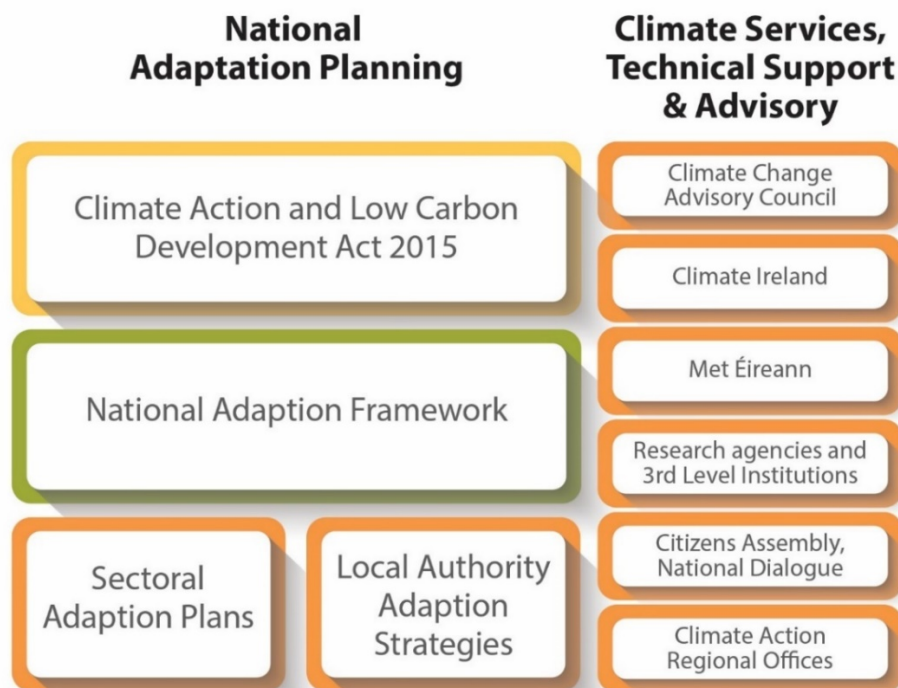


Figure 11.1: The National Policy Context for National Adaptation Plan

Source: Westmeath Climate Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024

11.3.4 Climate Action Plan – To Tackle Climate Breakdown 2019

The Government's Climate Action Plan 2019 - To Tackle Climate Breakdown, published on 17th June 2019, reflects the central priority that climate change will have in Ireland's political and administrative systems into the future, setting out governance arrangements including the carbon-proofing of government policies, the establishment of carbon budgets, the strengthening of the Climate Change Advisory Council and providing greater accountability to the Oireachtas.



Figure 11.2: Climate Action Plan – to tackle Climate Breakdown

The plan sets out 183 individual actions over 12 sectors and charts an ambitious course towards decarbonisation. This Plan reflects Ireland's commitment to achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Agreed by the United Nations in 2015, the 17 SDGs address the environmental, economic, and social challenges that the world needs to tackle by 2030 to ensure a sustainable future. SDG 13 calls on countries to 'Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts', by implementing commitments to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, as well as by improving public awareness of the need for Climate Action. Crucially, SDG 13 also calls on countries to integrate effective Climate Action measures into national policies.

This Plan sets out a commitment to undertake the following:

- 70% of the Country's electricity needs will come from renewable sources by 2030.
- Accelerate the take up of EV cars and vans so that we reach 100% of all new cars and vans as EVs by 2030. This will mean achieving our target of 950,000 EVs on the road by 2030.
- This means approximately one third of all vehicles sold during the decade will be Battery Electric Vehicle (BEV) or Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicle (PHEV).

- Make growth less transport intensive through better planning, remote home-working and modal shift to public transport.
- Increase the renewable biofuel content of motor fuels.
- Set targets for the conversion of public transport fleets to zero carbon alternatives.

Under this Climate Action Plan there are three actions that are allocated to local authorities including:

Action 64	Introduce minimum BER standards in the Local Authority social housing stock as part of retrofit works being carried out on older stock or refurbishment of vacant dwellings.
Action 65	Develop and establish a climate-action toolkit and audit framework for Local Authority development planning to drive the adoption of stronger climate action policies in relation to the patterns and forms of future development.
Action 66	Roadmap to develop supply chain to support the phase out of fossil fuel boilers in new dwellings.

(Source: Climate Action Plan 2019: pp. 82)

11.3.5 National Mitigation Plan 2017 (NMP)

Climate mitigation describes action to reduce the likelihood of climate change occurring or reduce the impact if it does occur. This can include reducing the causes of climate change (e.g. emissions of greenhouse gases) as well as reducing future risks associated with climate change.

Other beneficial effects arising from climate mitigation include contributions towards reductions in energy consumption, increases in alternative energy usage, maintenance/improvement of air quality and reductions/limits in increase of noise emissions.

Ireland's first National Mitigation Plan (NMP) published in July 2017 by the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment, sets out, on a whole-of-government basis, what Ireland is doing and is planning to do to further our transition to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050.

It represents an initial step to set Ireland on a pathway to achieve the level of decarbonisation required.

It is a whole-of-Government Plan, reflecting in particular the central roles of the key Ministers responsible for the sectors covered by the Plan – Electricity Generation, the Built Environment, Transport and Agriculture, as well as drawing on the perspectives and responsibilities of a range of other Government Departments.

At national level the *National Policy Position on Climate Action and Low Carbon Development* published in April 2014 establishes the fundamental national objective of achieving transition to a competitive, low carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050.

11.3.6 National Adaptation Framework 2018 (NAF)

Ireland's first statutory National Adaptation Framework (NAF) was published in January 2018 and complements the mitigation approach by addressing the climate resilience challenge.

The NAF specifies the national strategy for the application of adaptation measures in different sectors and by local authorities in their administrative areas in order to reduce the vulnerability of the State to the negative effects of climate change and to avail of any positive effects that may occur. A key action under NAF requires each local authority in the country to prepare local climate adaptation strategies.

11.3.7 Project Ireland 2040 - National Planning Framework

The National Planning Framework (NPF) has identified National Strategic Outcome Objectives 8 (Build Climate Resilience) and 9 (Support the transition to low carbon and clean energy) under National Strategic Outcome 8 *"Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society"*.

These objectives will shape investment choices over the coming decades in line with the National Mitigation Plan and the National Adaptation Framework; the NPF notes that new energy systems and transmission grids will be necessary for a more distributed, renewable energy focused system, harnessing both the considerable on-shore and off-shore potential from energy sources such as wind, wave and solar and connecting the richest sources of that energy to the major sources of demand.

The Council will demonstrate compliance with NPOs in areas such as densification, NPO 3 (C) 30% brownfield (role of URDF in consolidation) integrating transport links, increasing permeability (both pedestrian and cycling) and connection to public transport (15min walk).



Figure 11.3: National Strategic Outcomes (Source: National Planning Framework)

National Policy Objective 21

Enhance the competitiveness of rural areas by supporting innovation in rural economic development and enterprise through the diversification of the rural economy into new sectors and services, including ICT based industries and those addressing climate change and sustainability.

National Policy Objective 54

Reduce our carbon footprint by integrating climate action into the planning system in support of national targets for climate policy mitigation and adaptation objectives, as well as targets for greenhouse gas emissions reductions.

11.3.8 Midlands and Eastern Assembly - Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2019 (RSES)

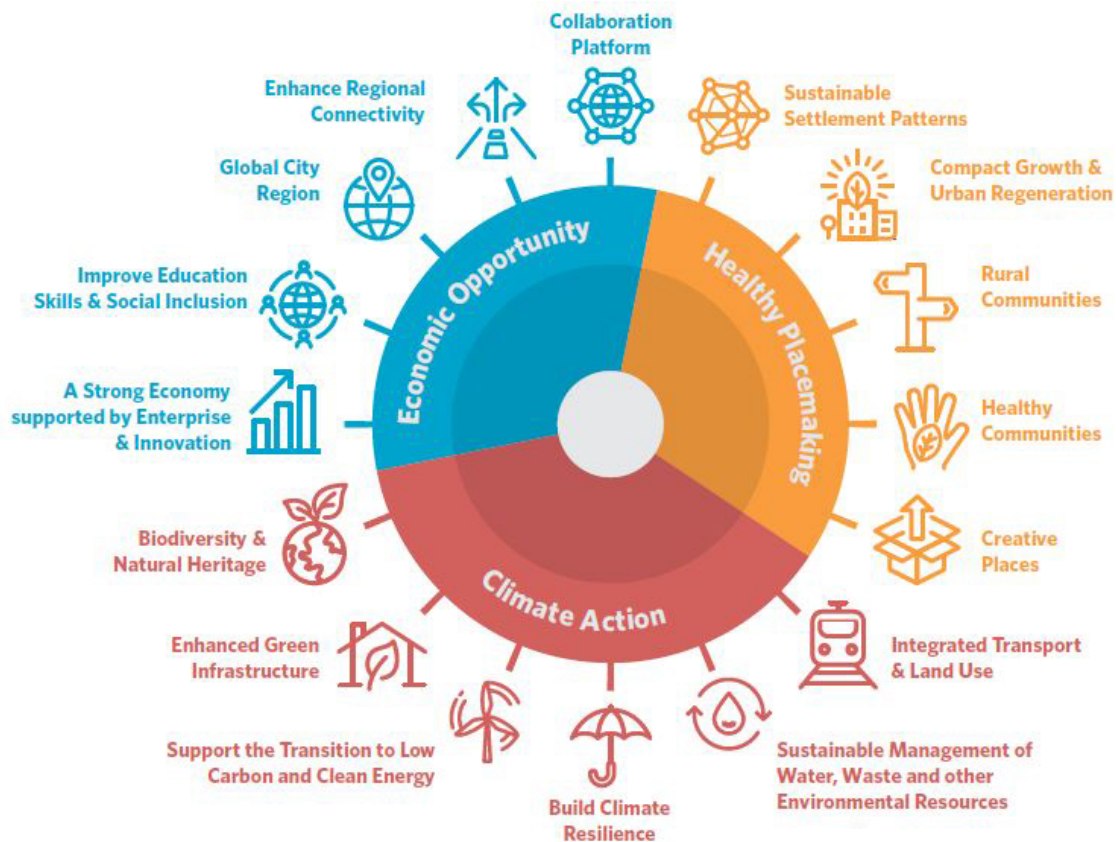


Figure 11.4: EMRA RSES - Regional Strategic Outcomes showing Climate Action as a key component.

The RSES provides a Climate Action Strategy – to accelerate climate action, ensure a clean and healthy environment and to promote sustainable transport and strategic green infrastructure. There are a number of RPOs that are relevant to this subject matter:

Regional Policy Objective 3.7

Local authorities shall have regard to environmental and sustainability considerations for meeting sustainable development targets and climate action commitments, in accordance with the National Adaptation Framework. In order to recognise the potential for impacts on the environment, Local authorities shall address the proper site/route selection of any new development and examine environmental constraints including but not limited to biodiversity, flooding, landscape, cultural heritage, material assets, including the capacity of services to serve any new development.

Regional Policy Objective 7.7

To reduce harmful emissions and achieve and maintain good air quality for all urban and rural areas in the Region and to work with Local Authorities and the relevant agencies to support local data collection in the development of air quality monitoring and to inform a regional air quality and greenhouse gas emissions inventory.

Regional Policy Objective 7.28

Work with local authorities and relevant stakeholders, to identify areas of high value agricultural land and to ensure food security in the Region and to promote sustainable farming practices that maintain the quality of the natural environment, protect farm landscapes and support the achievement of climate targets.

Regional Policy Objective 7.29

Support collaboration between local authorities, the Bord na Mona Transition Team and relevant stakeholders and the development of partnership approaches to integrated peatland management for a just transition that incorporate any relevant policies and strategies such as the Bord na Móna Biodiversity Plan 2016-2021 and the national Climate Mitigation and Adaptation Plans. This shall include support for the rehabilitation and/or re-wetting of suitable peatland habitats.

Regional Policy Objective 7.32

With the assistance and support of the Climate Action Regional Offices, local authorities shall develop, adopt and implement local climate adaptation and mitigation strategies which shall address issues including local vulnerability to climate risks and identify and prioritise actions, in accordance with the guiding principles of the National Adaptation Framework, National Mitigation Plan.

Regional Policy Objective 7.35

EMRA shall, in conjunction with local authorities in the Region, identify Strategic Energy Zones as areas suitable for larger energy generating projects, the role of community and micro energy production in urban and rural settings and the potential for renewable energy within industrial areas. The Strategic Energy Zones for the Region will ensure all environmental constraints are addressed in the analysis. A regional landscape strategy should be developed to support delivery of projects within the Strategic Energy Zones.

Regional Policy Objective 7.37

A bio-economy plan for the Region should be developed that outlines the capacity of the Region to supply the range of bioenergy resources required for the fuel mix as well as the current and projected consumption requirements for growth in this market.

Regional Policy Objective 7.39

Local authorities shall report annually on energy usage in all public buildings and will achieve a target of 33% improvement in energy efficiency in all buildings in line with the requirements of the National Energy Efficiency Action Plan (NEEAP).

Regional Policy Objective 7.40

Local authorities shall include policies in statutory land use plans to promote high levels of energy conservation, energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources in existing buildings, including retro fitting of energy efficiency measures in the existing building stock and energy efficiency in traditional buildings. All new buildings within the Region will be required to achieve the Nearly Zero-Energy Buildings (NZEB) standard in line with the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD).

11.3.9 Climate Action Regional Office (CARO)

Westmeath County Council is one of 17 Local Authorities located within the Eastern and Midlands Climate Action Region (CARO). The Eastern and Midland CARO has assisted and supported Westmeath County Council in the development of this climate change adaptation strategy. The Eastern and Midland 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 to drive climate action at both regional and local levels.

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.

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.

Under the NAF, sectoral adaptation plans are to be developed and implemented that will affect the work of the LAs. As such, the Midlands and Eastern CARO will liaise with respective government departments to align actions undertaken by the LAs with sectoral adaptation plans.

11.3.10 Westmeath County Council Climate Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024

The Climate Change Adaptation Strategy was adopted by Westmeath County Council in September 2019 and represents a proactive step by the Council in the process of adaptation planning to build resilience and respond effectively to the threats posed by climate change.

The purpose of the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy takes on the role as the primary instrument at local level to:

- (i) ensure a proper comprehension of the key risks and vulnerabilities of climate change.
- (ii) bring forward the implementation of climate resilient actions in a planned and proactive manner and,
- (iii) ensure that climate adaptation considerations are mainstreamed into all plans and policies and integrated into all operations and functions of Westmeath County Council.

Climate Action Policy Objectives

It is a policy objective of Westmeath County Council to:

CPO 11.1	<p>Support the implementation and achievement of European, national, regional and local objectives for climate adaptation and mitigation as detailed in the following documents, taking into account other provisions of the Plan (including those relating to land use planning, energy, sustainable mobility, flood risk management and drainage) and having regard to the Climate mitigation and adaptation measures which have been outlined through the policy objectives in this Development Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Action Plan (2019 and any subsequent versions); • National Mitigation Plan (2017 and any subsequent versions); • National Climate Change Adaptation Framework (2018 and any subsequent versions); • Any Regional Decarbonisation Plan prepared on foot of commitments included in the emerging Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Eastern and Midland Region; • Relevant provisions of any Sectoral Adaptation Plans prepared to comply the requirements of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, including those seeking to contribute towards the National Transition Objective, to pursue, and achieve, the transition to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by the end of the year 2050; and • Westmeath County Council Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024.
CPO 11.2	Provide for a reduction in energy demand and greenhouse gas emissions by providing for consolidated future development which supports sustainable travel patterns in line with the County Core Strategy.
CPO 11.3	Promote the benefits to quality of life, public health and biodiversity arising from implementation of policies promoting climate change adaptation and mitigation.
CPO 11.4	Encourage innovation and facilitate the development of pilot schemes that support climate change mitigation and adaptation measures.
CPO 11.5	Provide training on climate mitigation measures.
CPO 11.6	Support collaboration between local authorities, the Bord na Móna Transition Team and relevant stakeholders and the development of partnership approaches to integrated peatland management for a just transition that incorporate any relevant policies and strategies such as the Bord na Móna Biodiversity Plan 2016-2021 and the national Climate Mitigation and Adaptation Plans. This shall include support for the rehabilitation and/or re-wetting of suitable peatland habitats.

CPO 11.7	Work in collaboration with the Sustainable Energy Authority Ireland and relevant stakeholders to deliver a number of sustainable energy communities throughout the County.
CPO 11.8	Consider the use of heat mapping to support developments which deliver energy efficiency and the recovery of energy that would otherwise be wasted. A feasibility assessment for district heating in Local Authority areas shall be carried out and statutory planning documents shall identify local waste heat sources.

11.4 Climate Change

The Council acknowledge that adapting to climate change and recognising the critical nature of this key challenge going forward is crucial to the becoming a climate resilient county. Climate change covers a wide range of areas including but not limited to the following:



Figure 11.5: Climate Change Impact Areas

11.4.1 Climate Action – Mitigation and Adaptation

In responding to climate change, Westmeath County Council are and will be proactive in the process of climate action and, in this regard, the Council will support both mitigation and adaptation measures to tackle climate change.

Climate Mitigation consists of actions to reduce the likelihood of climate change occurring or reduce the impact if it does occur. This can include reducing the causes of climate change such as current and future greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions, examples of these include reductions in energy use,

switching to renewable energy sources and enhancement of carbon sinks, as well as reducing future risks associated with climate change.

One of the key issues relating to the preparation of this Development Plan in the context of climate mitigation relates to greenhouse gas emissions arising from transport. By improving sustainable mobility through land use planning this plan will support the reduction of existing levels of greenhouse gas emissions and limit increases in future emissions.

Other beneficial effects arising from climate mitigation include contributions towards reductions in energy consumption, increases in alternative energy usage, maintenance/improvement of air quality and reductions/limits in increase of noise emissions.

The SEA in Appendix 3 evaluates the likely significant environmental effects of this Development Plan and the reasonable alternatives selected. This assessment includes an analysis of impact of land use zoning on carbon reduction targets.

The second component of Climate Action, **Climate Adaptation** is a change in natural or human systems in response to the impacts of climate change and consists of actions that will reduce the impacts that are already happening now from our changing climate and those that are projected to happen in the future. These changes moderate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities and can be in response to actual or expected impacts. These include flood protection, reduced impact of rising sea levels, increased resilience of infrastructure, and emergency response planning.

Climate Mitigation and Adaptation are interconnected and should be planned together (see Figure 11.6).

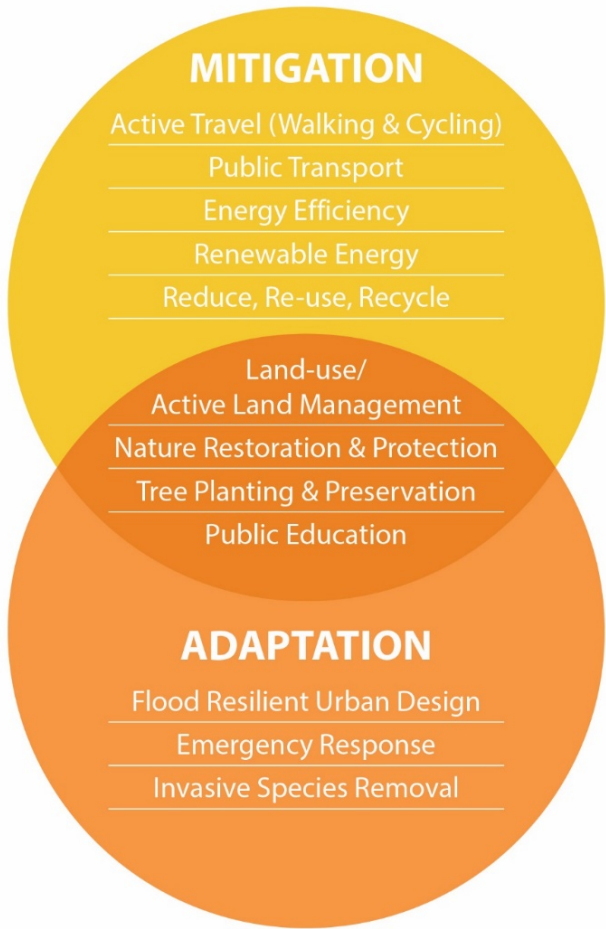


Figure 11.6: A diagram showing the Climate Mitigation and Climate Adaptation and their interrelationship

11.5 Climate Action – Adapting to Climate Change

The Council has implemented a number of measures in relation to climate change adaptation which are discussed below:



Figure 11.7 Outlines the areas which are being addressed through proposed mitigation and adaptation measures in the Draft Plan

11.6 Spatial Planning and Transport

The plan promotes an integrated approach to land-use and transportation which aligns with the Core Strategy and directs future development into existing towns and settlements within Westmeath, in order to reduce car dependency. The plan strongly supports the creation of compact urban growth, consolidation of existing settlements and prioritisation of the development of brownfield lands across the settlement hierarchy which in turn will encourage the use of public transport, cycling and walking as viable alternatives to the private car. Furthermore, allowing higher density development to occur along public transport corridors increases the number of people within the walking catchment of the public transport service, which in turn increases the patronage of the service, and leads to an increase in its financial and economic viability and in turn a positive environmental impact.

The Core Strategy encourages higher densities of development close to public transport routes (which can sustain/facilitate public transport). This supports the sustainable zoning of lands through the concentration of future infill and brownfield development using existing lands and serviceable settlements based on the projected population growth and needs.

11.7 Flood Risk Management

The Draft Westmeath County Development Plan is informed by a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) contained in Volume 5. The Draft Plan complies with OPW Guidance on climate change and has embedded the requirements for assessment within the key flood risk and surface water management policies. In incorporating flood extent data within the plan, climate change is considered and reviewed on a settlement by settlement basis, therefore climate change also influences the land use zoning decisions. The impacts of climate change are addressed in the SFRA by a series of adaptation actions that follow OPW/Government guidance that are driven by the most up to date research/flood mapping, the assessment of risk/impacts, and influences development through appropriate planning strategy/policy.

Athlone has been subject to a number of historical flood events. The Council has demonstrated its commitment to addressing the issue of flood risk in Athlone by working in partnership with the OPW to implement the Shannon Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Study (CFRAM). The Council has worked collaboratively with the OPW in relation to the implementation of flood defenses at the eight flood cells identified as part of the Shannon CFRAM.

11.8 Green Infrastructure

The plan supports the provision of green infrastructure networks within the county and the value of nature-based solutions to address climate change. In recent years, the Council has invested significantly in the development of a network of greenways within the County. The development of a 42km greenway from Mullingar to Athlone, which forms part of the National Cycle Network together with the development of the Royal Canal Greenway from the Co. Meath to the Co. Longford border forms the backbone of a green infrastructure network in Westmeath.

11.9 Clean Energy

The Draft Plan recognises the contribution that wind and solar energy make to meeting national renewable energy targets. In this regard, the plan strongly supports the development of renewable energy resources. In this regard, since the adoption of the Westmeath County Development Plan 2014-2020, the Council has granted permission for a number of solar farms within the County. The total number of photovoltaic panels permitted to date, on a total site area of approximate 330 hectares, which when operational will generate renewable energy output of approximately 130 MW. It is further noted that consent has been granted for a windfarm of 13 turbines at Coole with potential to generate 50MW of renewable energy.

It is acknowledged in the plan that the Council is open to new and innovative renewable energy sources and technological solutions to addressing climate change. In this regard, the Council will seek to collaborate with the Bord Na Mona Transition team and adjacent Local Authorities to progress the transition from brown to green energy.

As part of its commitment to implement the Westmeath County Council Climate Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024, the Council has adopted the following measures to increase energy efficiency such as:

- Upgrade of public lighting to energy efficient LED lighting
- Energy efficiency upgrades to Aras An Chontae HQ to maximise energy saving.

11.10 Urban/Rural Regeneration

Considerable emphasis is placed in the plan on the regeneration of vacant buildings and under-utilised sites in order to rejuvenate our towns and villages. In 2018, the Council was successful in securing funding under the Urban Regeneration Development Fund to the value of €6.4million for five individual projects in Athlone and Mullingar. In addition, further funding of €400,000 was granted to the Council under the Rural Regeneration Development Fund for a regeneration scheme in Kinnegad. The Council acknowledge the value of such schemes which provide for climate resilient development and the potential of same to positively transform our town and village centres.

Table 11.1: Land Effects on Direct Emissions

Land Effects on Direct Emissions				
		Emissions Increase	Emissions Decrease	Policy Response
Land Use		More residential	Less residential	<p>The Draft Plan provides for sustainable, planned and measured growth in line with the Core Strategy, providing for consolidation of settlements of all scales, reduction of sprawl, with a focus on brownfield and infill development interlinked with available transport options.</p> <p>Result: Emissions reduction due to cap on number of permissible dwellings.</p>
		Old Residential	New Residential	<p>Draft Plan prescribes compliance with new building regulations and development management criteria in relation to sustainable building design, energy efficiency, low carbon development and supports retrofitting of energy reduction measures in established properties.</p> <p>Result: Emissions reduction from previous growth pattern due to the realisation of development in a planned and sustainable manner.</p>
		Single use [only residential, or commercial or industrial]		<p>Draft Plan provides for mixed-use zoning in all settlements listed in the Settlement Hierarchy. The plan also prioritises the development of “Consolidation Sites” which consist of infill/gap sites within the existing urban footprints and provides flexibility in terms of the use of such sites for residential and/or mixed uses.</p> <p>Results: Emissions reduction</p>

	Use	Seasonal, weekend, occasional	Multi Use Development 24/7/365	<p>Policies are included in the plan for multi-functional community buildings, shared use of educational facilities together with provision for E-working/digital hubs.</p> <p>Result: Emissions reduction as flexible use of existing building stock reduces demand for additional properties.</p>
	Status	Greenfield	Brownfield	<p>The Draft Plan places a significant focus on regeneration of vacant properties and under-utilised brownfield sites. The Core Strategy provides that at least 30% of new housing in the designated towns of Athlone and Mullingar is to be provided on brownfield lands. Furthermore, the plan supports the regeneration of identified brownfield sites in the Self-Sustaining Growth towns. In this regard, 68% lands provided under this Plan for residential development are Brownfield/Infill lands (identified as per the CSO 2016 SAP boundary).</p> <p>Result: Emissions Reduction due to optimisation of use of brownfield lands, thus precluding need to zone greenfield lands.</p>
	Location	Peripheral, dispersed	Central connected	<p>In keeping with the ethos of the NPF, the Draft Plan promotes consolidation of existing settlements and sequential compact growth within the existing urban footprint.</p> <p>Result: Emissions reduction due to optimisation of use of town centre lands, thus precluding the need to zone additional lands on the periphery.</p>
	Condition	New peripheral Old poor condition	New central Old central	<p>The plan promotes the retrofitting of existing building stock in terms of energy efficiency.</p> <p>Result: Emissions reduction</p>
	Mode	Commute	Home-based Work-live	<p>The Draft Plan places strong emphasis on sustainable settlement development including the creation of economic conditions to provide for population growth, avoiding long commutes. This includes the creation of E-working/digital hubs in the Self-Sustaining Growth Towns, in order to increase the economic profile of such settlements and thus reverse commuting patterns by reducing the propensity to travel for work.</p>

				Result: Emissions reduction due to reduced travel demands.
Movement	Volume [number of movements]	High Movement numbers increase energy use	Low Movement numbers decrease energy use	<p>The plan promotes the development of vibrant towns and villages with residential, employment, services and community uses provided for within compact development forms, thus reducing demand for travel and decreasing energy use.</p> <p>Result: Emissions reduction due to reduced travel demands.</p>
	Volume [density of movements]	Low Movement Density Dispersed movements decrease use efficiency	<p>High Movement Density</p> <p>Large numbers in one place increases use</p> <p>Efficiency</p>	<p>Prioritisation of development in town and village centres increases energy efficiency</p> <p>Result: Emissions reduction</p>
	Distance (spatial)	Longer distance travelled [more emission likely]	Shorter distance travelled [less emission likely]	<p>The development of sustainable settlements, with complementary employment provision coupled with compact urban settlements form, gives rise to a reduction in emissions, encourages the use and reuse of buildings in urban and rural areas and reduces sprawl, helping to increase the efficiency of land use.</p> <p>Result: Emissions reduction</p>

Table 11.3: Incorporation of climate adaptation/mitigation in the County Development Plan

CHAPTER	HOW POLICY OBJECTIVES CONTRIBUTE TO CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION	EMPHASIS ON MITIGATION (M) OR ADAPTATION (A)
Chapter 1 Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies climate change as one of the cross-cutting themes influencing the content of the Plan 	M+A
Chapter 2 Core Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focuses on sustainable settlement patterns and compact urban growth along public transport corridors, thus minimising need to travel. Alignment provided between the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the National Planning Framework's National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs) in areas such as climate action, clean energy, sustainable cities and communities, economic growth, reduced inequalities and innovation and infrastructure, as well as education and health with a focus on compact, smart and sustainable development that have accessible services to all. 	M+A
Chapter 3 Housing Chapter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focuses on sustainable settlement patterns and compact urban growth along public transport corridors, thus minimising need to travel. Promotes energy efficiency in future housing stock 	A
Chapter 4 Sustainable Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sets out parameters for building sustainable communities in terms of sustainable housing, sustainable economic development and sustainable amenities 	M+A
Chapter 5 Economy and Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports the development of a low carbon economy and promotes the economic benefits associated with this transition Considers as mechanism to align our climate targets: Sustainable Development Goals, Climate Action Plan 2019 Climate Action Fund, Disruptive Technologies Innovation Fund, the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund, the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund. 	M+A

CHAPTER	HOW POLICY OBJECTIVES CONTRIBUTE TO CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION	EMPHASIS ON MITIGATION (M) OR ADAPTATION (A)
Chapter 6 Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides for climate resilience to be taken into consideration in future tourism plans and projects. Requires best-practice environmental management and climate proofing of tourism related developments. 	M
Chapter 7 Urban Centre & Placemaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides for the consideration of climate adaptation measures in both place-making strategies and projects 	M+A
Chapter 8 Settlement Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides for compact urban form, green infrastructure, increased permeability across the network of towns and rural villages in the County 	M+A
Chapter 9 Rural Westmeath	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotes development in viable rural settlements with access to rural transport links, sustainable rural diversification (Smart Villages) as well as sustainable agricultural/ forestry practices etc. Provides for rural housing policy including guiding principles for “Rural Areas under Strong Urban Pressure” in the context of a shift towards reduced travel demand. The environmental benefits of this approach, including contributing towards climate mitigation and greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets, has been demonstrated in the accompanying SEA. 	M+A
Chapter 10 Transport, Infrastructure and Energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotes reduced carbon usage and encouragement of modal shift to more sustainable modes of transport. Encourages the use of Sustainable urban drainage measures to reduce surface water run-off. Promotion of renewable energy and sustainable building design Recognised the importance of renewable (wind/solar etc.) development Provides for a shift to EVs cars Provides for less transport intensive growth through better planning, remote and home-working and modal shift to public transport. 	M+A

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides for climate change as a key consideration under flood risk policy. Provides policy in relation to SUDS and climate change. Facilitates measures which seek to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and supports the implementation of actions identified in the Westmeath County Council Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024. 	
Chapter 11 Climate Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides policy context in relation to developing a climate resilient society 	M
Chapter 12 Natural Heritage & Green Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion of a green infrastructure network and nature-based approach to climate 	M+A
Chapter 13 Landscape & Lake Amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measure to protect and enhance the existing landscape character areas, lakes, amenity areas, scenic routes and promotion of nature-based approach to climate change 	M
Chapter 14 Built & Cultural Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on climate-proofing protected structures, with emphasis on educating the public with regard to best practice. 	M+A
Chapter 15 Land Use Zoning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A consolidated Land Use Zoning strategy informed by the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 	M+A
Chapter 16 Development Management Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sets out criteria for new development in relation to building design and performance, energy efficiency and low carbon development. 	M+A



WESTMEATH COUNTY COUNCIL
Comhairle Chontae na hIarmhí

www.westmeathcoco.ie
A Westmeath County Council Publication

Westmeath County Council,
Áras an Chontae,
Mount Street,
Mullingar,
Co. Westmeath

Tel: 044-9332000
Email: info@westmeathcoco.ie
Web: www.westmeathcoco.ie