



KILDARE COUNTY COUNCIL

CLIMATE ACTION

STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE 11TH OF MARCH 2026

2.30 - 4.30 P.M. COUNCIL CHAMBERS

PRESENT

Councillors: Cllr. Daragh Fitzpatrick (Chair), Cllr. Angela Feeney, Cllr. Tim Durkin, Cllr. Rob Power (online)

Sectoral Interests: Tom Malone (Agricultural Representative),
Nathan Flaherty (PPN Environmental Conservation)

Officials: Marian Higgins, Director of Services,
Paula O'Rourke, Climate Action Coordinator
Mary Morrissey, Climate Action Officer
Edel Donnelly, A/Community Climate Action Officer
Paul Regan, Decarbonising Officer

Apologies: Cllr. Brendan Wyse, Cllr. Brian Dooley, Louise Rawlins Traynor
(PPN Env Conservation)

AGENDA ITEM 1: DECLARATIONS OF (A) CONFLICTS OF INTEREST OR (B) PECUNIARY OR BENEFICIAL INTERESTS UNDER SECTION 177 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2001, AS AMENDED.

No conflicts registered.

AGENDA ITEM 2: TO NOTE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE CLIMATE ACTION STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE HELD ON 12TH NOVEMBER 2025

No matters arising.

AGENDA ITEM 3: TO RECEIVE A PRESENTATION FROM PAULA O'ROURKE (CLIMATE ACTION COORDINATOR) ON KILDARE COUNTY COUNCIL CAP IMPLEMENTATION 2025

Presentation gave an overview of 2nd year of CAP reporting. Target climate neutral by 2050. Aligned with SDG's, 155 actions, 21 complete, 91 in progress, 48 DZ actions.

Climate Action in play in every policy. 2025-26 budget 32% increase in climate related spend.

EPC - new contracts 2 leisure centres and Áras. SEAI Gap to target analysis. We will do better than targets set.

Members raised the following points and asked the following questions:

Cllr. Rob Power

Asked the following questions:

- How is Kildare performing compared to other Counties?
- With Kildare being a more affluent County compared to others, is that making a difference?

Made the following comment:

- The finance section of the Climate Action Plan Annual Implementation Report highlights the climate investment across departments but it's not a catch all of everything it would be good to get a better picture of what is being spent, including as part of other projects.

Response for Paula O'Rourke

- Finance will put a list together of initiatives. Previous lists are very large; we want a true reflection.
- Kildare County Council's performance is mixed in comparison to other Local Authorities. We are high in some areas and medium in others. It was noted that due to Kildare being an affluent county this contributes to a great number of vehicles and the volume of transport is an issue. Transport emissions are a big issue in the county as well as available funding.
- New TII funding streams – EOI projects, The Climate Action Office has spent the last week developing EOIs for the EU JTF START fund and we're hoping to receive funds to get projects off the ground. One of the projects submitted looks to establish an independent bus service in Maynooth, if successful, we'll be notified in October. Just Transition funding of 30 million has become available, all depts involved max 10 large projects.

Cllr. Tim Durkan

Asked the following questions:

- In terms of the range of retrofitting / energy efficiency works grants available for people, is there a need to further increase awareness of them in the community?

- The Solar PV on roof of Áras is not producing enough power to cover the electric use of the Áras building so could the car park be considered for solar PV to supplement usage in the Áras?

Made the following comment:

- The planning section may have a key role to play in advancing retrofitting regulations going forward. For example, a solar panel can now be a tile on a roof. Maybe this could be made a planning regulation to increase uptake of new renewable energy technologies

Response from Paula O'Rourke

- The GLAS Energy Hub is available on the KCC Website which provides the public with a step-by-step guide on retrofitting including the range of grants available to homeowners.
- This will be part of the EPC. Through that we will be looking everywhere we can to put solar for our buildings.

Tom Malone

Made the following comment:

- In terms of using land for energy and the grading of land for energy/food production. Dept of Agriculture land use needs to differentiate between food production and energy production for different areas as overlap at present, need to give space to allow both to succeed.
- In relation to data centres, where renewable energy can be on site, a balance needs to be set.

Response for Paula O'Rourke

- It's possible to amalgamate the two. Other countries have shown this can be done. We need the new LULUCF Plan to be in place to help with this.
- Land use thresholds, energy production and food production. Even marginal land will have issues as usually peatland and issues such as carbon storage. Farmers tend to be the landowners of the land in question, and they are playing a key role in its restoration.
- In relation to data centres, they are free to generate renewable energy on site as much as they want.

Nathan Flaherty

Made the following comment:

- Highlighted the issues with fuel prices as a result of conflicts in the Middle East and stated we needed to work out how best to deal with this situation.

Asked the following question:

- In relation to the Herbata Data Centre and the level of CO₂ that it will produce, how does KCC align this to carbon targets.

Response from Paula O'Rourke

- Given the current political situation renewable energy very important for the county in terms of the security of supply.

- The Herbata Data Centre Planning application is with An Bord Pleanála, it hasn't been approved as yet.
- Regarding DH there is a possibility of data centres meeting renewable energy needs in Nass, Maynooth geothermal (2km down) being explored. In a recent circulated Data centres PPT, contract outside company to set up solar farm to outset.

Cllr. Angela Feeney

Asked the following questions:

- The most recent ERSI report found that the national residential retrofit target will not be met asking in relation to Council housing stock retrofitting how well is it progressing.
- Is there any updates on the CODEMA District Heating survey.

Made the following comment:

- Highlighted that there is a lot of mis/disinformation on retrofitting, some people believe they will have to move out of homes during the process, and serious financial concerns are an issue.

Director Marian Higgins

Made the following overall comments:

- In relation to Energy Performance Contracts, KCC the first county to go out for tenders. Significant funds will be allocated to projects aimed at lowering energy use in leisure centres and Áras, but these efforts may be less noticeable to citizens since no new buildings will be constructed, making them harder to promote.
- This will help make inroads into emission reductions.
- Acknowledged the negative impact fuel price increase will have for people.
- Highlighted that the EU JT START EOI process will hopefully lead to funding to advance significant projects later this year.

AGENDA ITEM 4: TO DISCUSS THE POLICY NEED WITHIN THE CLIMATE ACTION PLAN AND THE PROTOCOLS AND ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED TO INFORM THE PROCESS

Paula O'Rourke suggested the following policy areas for the SPC to focus on

- Tree cover – stating next steps would involve tendering for consultant to write Tree Policy (ref Parks Dept).
- Alternative Maintenance Updated Guidance - asked members if this document could be used as a Policy Document or did they want to draw up new Policy.

Marian Higgins suggested letting this document run for 1 year and review which the members agreed to.

Paula O'Rourke highlighted another policy area which will need to be examined is bioeconomy, Marian Higgins noted that AD has huge potential. Marian spoke about

the potential of anaerobic digestion and the problem with brown bins and suggested policy could be introduced around this.

Members raised the following points and asked the following questions:

Cllr. Tim Durkan

- Education process through schools a possibility?

Cllr. Rob Power

- What is next in terms of DZ, new town or duplication in other towns?

Paula O'Rourke provided the following responses.

- Richard Curtin (KCC Environmental Awareness Officer) could implement learning on various initiatives in schools.
- A review on the CDP before full council and it was suggested that Professor Jennie Stephens be asked to present on Climate mis/disinformation before full council.
- LACAP Guideline Review is due to take place this year with new CAP Guidelines expected in March 2027 and it was pointed out that the current members will be involved in formulation of the next CAP.
- The DZ is a testbed for actions with the idea that they will be replicated in other areas. Funding however is a major issue, Just Transition funding application to be submitted for DH in Maynooth.

AGENDA ITEM 5: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A site visit to Tallaght DH was proposed and with the Whole of Government Circular Economy Strategy 2026–2028 having been published a trip to the Rediscovery Centre in Ballymun or the Athy Circular Economy Hub was suggested. Members were asked to consider these options.

AGENDA ITEM 6: TO NOTE DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Climate Action SPC will take place in Council Chambers Wednesday, 13th May 2.30 – 4.30p.m.

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting closed at 15.30 p.m.