Workshop Report

Spatial Planning & Climate Action

Delivering a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient future

Workshops facilitated by:

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Final Report

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Eastern and Midlands CARO

Tionól Réigiúnach an Deiscirt
Southern Regional Assembly

Atlantic Seaboard South CARO

Report of the Spatial Planning and Climate Action Workshops, Southern Regional Assembly

January 2021

Workshop 1: Climate Change POLICY & MITIGATION measures that can be included into Development Plans

Workshop 2: Climate Change ADAPTATION measures and NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS that can be included into Development Plans

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1.0 Introduction

The scale of the challenge presented by climate change is evident across the globe through the devastating, destructive and extreme weather events linked as effects to global warming. Ireland's climate is changing in line with global trends and the impacts of this change is expected to continue and intensify into the near future. There is a strong level of awareness and understanding of the need to take urgent and radical climate action through a combination of mitigation and adaptation measure i.e. to tackle the cause of climate change by decarbonisation (mitigation) and to manage the impacts and risks by building resilience (adaptation).

National policy on Climate Action stems from the National Adaptation Framework (NAF), 2018 and the Climate Action Plan 2019, - to Tackle Climate Breakdown (CAP). These are given statutory authority by the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 and cumulatively, represent a robust policy response to climate change.

Delivering on successful adaptation and mitigation measures requires a scale up in efforts by all sectors across the economy through various enabling policy frameworks. The local government sector is identified as having an important leadership role as a key mobiliser of climate action at local and community level. There is scope for Local Authorities, ably supported by the CAROs, to deliver much wider change with an enhanced climate action function to which their respective climate action charters commit. The National Planning Framework and Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) provide a key enabling framework and it is recognised that spatial planning is a key mechanism to translate national priorities and influence positive climate policy and action at local level to:

(a) assist in the achievement of national obligations on climate action and
(b) to reduce the vulnerabilities of communities to the negative effects of climate change.

The workshops assist in implementing an objective of RSES to ensure effective co-ordination of Climate Action with the CAROs and Local Authorities (see RPO 88 of the RSES). The RSES recognises the need to climate proof our settlements, our built assets and our strategic infrastructure from the impacts of climate change. Climate Action is a cross-cutting consideration with an extensive scope beyond specific Climate Action measures.

1.1 Virtual Workshops

Two online workshops for planning authorities were run by the Southern Regional Assembly in collaboration with the Eastern and Midlands and the Atlantic Seaboard South Climate Action Regional Offices (CARO). The first workshop was held on 5th November 2020 on the theme of mitigation measures while the second workshop was held on 11th November 2020 on the theme of Adaptation and Nature Based Solutions. The two workshops followed a similar format of brief introductions followed by breakout sessions regrouping for plenary sessions. See Appendix A for the programme of both workshops.

This report of the workshops is based on the notes that were prepared by the participants during or after the breakout sessions combined with notes made during the plenary sessions. The report seeks to reflect

the key messages and points of agreement and disagreement. Sections 2, 3 and 4 provide a comprehensive listing of issues raised by the participants. These have been bundled under 'labels' which have been used throughout this report. A full list of these labels is included in Appendix B. Using the same labels, section 6 provides some conclusions by listing some areas where consensus reached at the workshops identify where planning can contribute to or respond positively to the climate change challenge.

The workshop format, with its three interdependent levels, was deliberately designed to make planners think about the contribution that spatial planning can make to climate change mitigation and adaptation. These three levels are:

(i) Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats – '**SWOT analysis** '
(ii) Developing a set of policies that can be seen as instruments or tools to achieve the objectives - '**Designing the Toolbox**', and
(iii) Formulate what can be done within the existing legal instruments under the Planning Legislation - '**Writing the Manua**l'.

The virtual nature of the meeting was organised around parallel plenary meeting room with up to ca. 40 participants and a total of 10 separate breakout 'rooms' with between three and seven participants in each. The technology allowed separate breakout meeting 'rooms' which facilitated effective plenary as well as breakout discussions. No time was lost between breakout sessions and plenary sessions with the result that the overall workshops had a high content in terms of discussion time amongst participants.

2.0 Part 1 – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats – SWOT analysis

This part of the first workshop asked participants to identify areas where the planning system functions well in relation to the topic and where improvements can be achieved. Opportunities and Threats identify improvements but also where underachievement may arise because certain conditions are not present.

Strengths	Weaknesses
Spatial Planning provides a good policy framework ▪ Climate change is recognised as an issue where action is required – urgency is accepted; ▪ Intent is in the policy; ▪ Local authority is used to writing policy and thinking collectively; ▪ UN Sustainable Development Goals are being incorporated. **Sustainable Urban Drainage** ▪ Promotion of SuDS. **Flood Risk Management** ▪ Flood risk assessment of Land Use Plans is integrated; ▪ Implementation of flood risk guidelines. **Renewable Energy** ▪ Renewable Energy Strategies; ▪ Promotion of micro-renewable infrastructure. **Energy Efficiency of Buildings** ▪ Improved energy efficiency in the built environment; ▪ Energy efficiency in buildings, especially public sector buildings. **Planning Hierarchy** ▪ The need to comply with national and regional policy framework; ▪ The framework is there to assist the local level; ▪ National and regional policy is in place; ▪ Ambition is there – national strategy; ▪ Metropolitan Transport Strategies in place (or are under preparation) are strong; ▪ Linkage is in place between the hierarchy, very important for local level; ▪ NPF & RSES are climate change centred; **Strategic Environmental Assessment** ▪ SEA gives a means of assessing climate change actions.	**Lack of public 'Buy In'** ▪ Political pressure; ▪ A lot of rapid change over a short time- economic costs ▪ Buy in from public needed; ▪ Individual action/ choices not keeping pace with policy shift. **Implementation** ▪ Intent in policies is not always translated into action; ▪ Targets are too far in the future; ▪ What's happened to date, over reliance on cars, location of development; ▪ Slow to adapt to change. **Weak Compact Growth Achievement** ▪ Redevelopment of brownfield sites; ▪ Compact growth and more sustainable settlement types / patterns. **Mobility** ▪ Provision of public transport options; ▪ Achievement of mobility management plans. **Energy** ▪ Predominant reliance on fossil fuels for energy; ▪ Use of renewable energy.

Waste Management

- Strong waste management, recycling.

Leadership

- EU Climate alliance – leadership by local authority;
- A broad consensus is now in place;
- Sign up to EU Climate Alliance - 10% reduction in energy usage by LA over time- planning is embedded in this- it will assist climate, compact growth, transport targets etc.;
- The 10 NSOs in the NPF are clear- all LAs are aiming for that.

Opportunities	Threats

Energy

- More comprehensive renewable energy strategies with national guidelines to support same;
- Set county level renewable energy targets;
- Promotion less developed renewable sector e.g. biomass / bioenergy / battery storage;
- More energy efficient homes.

Biodiversity

- An agreed national landscape character assessment,
- Protection of green infrastructure and biodiversity / nature-based solutions.

Compact Growth

- Optimising compact growth / higher densities / vacant / brownfield / derelict premises.

Mobility

- Integrated land use and transportation / modal shift;
- Sustainable mobility – EV charging points, electrify vehicles / supporting permeability and connectivity etc.;
- Future Local Transport Plans for key settlements;
- Pandemic – experimenting in changing our lifestyles – e.g. active travel, remote working.

Water Management

Funding

- Funding to support renewable energy initiatives.

Political Support

- Lack of political support;
- Engagement and buy-in by the community;
- Engagement with other state agencies;
- Pandemic – Economic recession takes focus off climate action;
- Voices of minority can dominate debate/ discussions – short-term electoral interests outweigh common good;
- Unable to bring the public with us;
- Inadequate leadership.

Area Constraints

- Need to balance the need to protect certain areas while supporting renewable energy agenda;
- Local area constraints for the rollout of renewable energy developments due to proximity of environmental sensitivities e.g. designated sites and landscapes, waterbodies, dwellings etc.

Monitoring

- Lack of proper/ effective monitoring at the appropriate level.

▪ Water conservation objectives. **Public Engagement** ▪ Development of engagement with communities and community fund allocation; ▪ Public consultation involved in our Plans. **Development Management** ▪ Development management standards to support the implementation of climate mitigation and adaptation measures. **Development Contributions** ▪ Incentivising sector with reduced development contributions. **Circular Economy** ▪ Promotion of circular economy. **Climate Proofing** ▪ Climate proofing development plan / development proposals; ▪ Better monitoring. **Rural Development** ▪ Innovative job opportunities in rural areas will retain population; ▪ Quality homes- opportunity in rural context – reducing fuel poverty, maximising existing infra and investment made; ▪ Quality of life – particularly in a rural context (e.g. reducing fuel poverty); ▪ Put in place mechanism for local jobs in rural areas in green economy.	

3 Part 2 - 'Designing the Toolbox'

Participants were asked to list effective examples of potential measures, policies or regulatory tools that can be introduced in the current round of development plan reviews.

Sustainable Transport

- Modal Split – not just focused on commuting;
- Measuring change in transport patterns, shift from car to other forms of transport;
- Better integration of land use and transport;
- Compact growth, 10 Minute Cities and Town concepts;
- Modal split indicators;
- Modal shift targets;
- Higher densities and public transport facilities;
- Supporting sustainable transport modes e.g. walking / cycling, bike rental hubs;
- Facilitating roll out of ICT in rural areas and delivering employment hubs;
- Current home working patterns are helpful for adaptation, won't have to travel in extreme weather, and reduces emissions associated with commuting.

Renewable Energy

- Renewable energy: on-shore wind, off shore wind, PV/ solar;
- Renewable energy targets, i.e. Mega Watts delivered;
- EV charge points – number and level of use;
- Policies to support local communities that are interested in sustainable energy;
- Policy approach to solar farms;
- Strong policies needed for Development Plan guidelines for suitable locations for different types of renewable energy - for example solar farms.

In West Kerry, sustainable energy projects need support to bring them along. The farming sector supports local renewable energy projects and there is interest in this area across different energy types. The Development Plan needs to be more supportive (for example a District Heating system in Dingle). Wind Energy developments have encountered strong opposition in West Kerry and there is a need to address this through focused Development Plan policy support for suitable renewable energy projects that benefit their incomes and community.

Green Infrastructure

- Provision and protection of Green Infrastructure;
- Green - Blue Infrastructure strategy;
- Incorporation of green infrastructure into master-planning;
- Indicators to help successful implementation of green and blue infrastructure strategies;

- Corridors through our towns - enhanced biodiversity;
- Integrating bio-diversity planning and land use planning at LAP level;
- Requiring designers to submit bio-diversity plan as part of the planning application;
- Green infrastructure at all levels – town design down to detail design;
- Zoning lands for urban landscapes i.e. forestry;
- Use of vacant Council lands for planting purposes;
- Eco-system services – the services which natural environments provide;
- Green Roofs.

Biodiversity

- Objectives to protect and enhance biodiversity, such as wetlands;
- Include monitoring – linked to SEA;
- GIS tool to identify biodiversity loss – compensation measures to be included;
- Integrating biodiversity planning – identify LA owned land that can be developed (sites for biodiversity, left-over lands);
- Biodiversity plans to be submitted;
- Build in compensatory measures as part of the zoning such as objectives for greater habitat protection and new native planting;
- Biodiversity- look at urban cooling and urban heat reduction through natural water features and tree planting.

Biodiversity and land use planning at LAP level. Look at public owned lands including incidental and 'left over lands'. These spaces can host biodiversity and native planting and potentially be connected in green networks. A review of such incidental lands owned by the Local Authority in Tipperary revealed a very considerable resource in towns and villages. Also, designers at planning application stage could be requested to submit biodiversity plans with development proposals.

Density

- Achievement of 30%, compact growth;
- Reuse of brownfield and vacant sites;
- High Density strategy;
- Concept of 10- Minute Cities and Towns –it sells the idea of compact growth in a positive way to the lay person, a non-technical term to an important concept that can get understood by all.

Energy Efficiency

- Lead by example in social housing: how a housing development can be carbon neutral/climate positive;
- Revising rural design guidelines to encourage more climate friendly designs;
- Retrofitting of older stock;

- Passive house design could get lower planning contributions as a financial incentive.

Flood Risk Management

- We have the opportunity to plan for flooding, mitigation measures, flood storage areas, being proactive;
- Incorporating SUDS at a town level – greater protection areas around rivers (surface water management plans);
- Building and reinforcing flood defences;
- Nature based solutions for dealing with surface water, including the use of SuDS;
- Maintaining riparian zones;
- Water quality as a consequence of flooding/heavy rainfall, both river and sea water quality (impacts on bathing, use of beaches);
- Flood defences – specific objectives to implement OPW works, protect vulnerable town centre uses.

Core strategy

- Core Strategy – identifying clearly where development must take place.

Masterplanning

- Enhancing permeability/ connectivity;
- Encourage mixed use development;
- Location of key pieces of community infrastructure;
- Higher densities near public transport;
- Developing 10 Minute Cities and Towns;
- Designing urban areas to incorporate shading/cooling areas and water features to provide for urban heat reduction.

Coastal Erosion

- Dealing with coastal erosion, particularly the soft coasts;
- Effects on roads and wastewater treatment infrastructure that is close to the coast, need to ensure that infrastructure is protected;
- Some strong/interested community groups in these areas;
- Ad hoc car parking;
- Ensuring alternatives for car parking near beaches where ad hoc parking can affect erosion.

Afforestation

- Community Neighbourhood forest schemes;
- Urban woodlands.

Climate Proofing

- Tools to carbon proof major projects;
- Climate proof each part of the County Development Plan;
- Strategic Environmental Assessment has an important role to play in integrating climate change and climate action into land use plans/reviewing/climate proofing plans;

- Include benchmarks and cross referencing.

Monitoring

- Tracking changes in land use – a critical piece of data;
- Integrate climate action targets into Development Plan.

Development Contributions

- Reduce development contributions for brownfield development;
- Development Contribution Schemes can be used to incentivise climate action.

Decarbonisation

- Strategic Decarbonization Zones.

Carbon Sequestration

- Carbon stores i.e. peatlands, forestry;
- Zoning land for forestry;
- Supporting native tree planting.

Communication

- Communicating the implication of approaches such as decarbonisation zones;
- Development Plans as communication tools for public understanding & buy in;
- Avoid certain wording (mitigation – adaption) and use more appropriate language for the public to understand;
- Engagement with citizens and education programmes e.g. including through the PPN;
- Development Plan has a role in creating awareness – can demonstrate how our actions can positively influence climate change – if average citizens can understand why they are being asked to do certain things we are likely to be more successful;
- Climate Action should have its own Development Plan chapter and be embedded in all chapters.

Coastal Zone Management

- An integrated approach is a must;
- Preserve and enhance the role that natural features and habitats such as wetlands and vegetated dunes play in regulating flooding and protection from coastal erosion;
- Specifying minimum setbacks from coastline/soft shoreline;
- Preserve natural features and habitats.

4.0 Part 3 - 'Writing the Manual'

In this part of the workshop, participants were asked to develop a list of policies using the available instruments in the statutory development plan, i.e.: development objectives (incl. zoning objectives and development standards).

Sustainable Transport

- Integrated Landuse and Transport Strategy;
- Objectives for: modal split, EV charge points, use of active travel infrastructure, parking standards, mobility managements plans;
- Integrate land use and transport – allocation of population in core strategy ;
- Prepare neighbourhood retrofit plans to better connect areas to work as 10-Minute City and Town communities;
- Working from home, provision of coworking hubs;
- Provide local employment to reduce the rate of commuting;
- Monitor modal shift;
- Increase bicycle parking;
- Need to integrate Smart City concepts for all settlement types (Smart Cities, Towns and Villages) into the Development Plan;
- Data capturing projects that need better integration into Development Plan.

Zoning Policies

- Zoning land for Eco-System Services (water quality, carbon storage, forestry);
- Protect and zone strategic natural resources e.g. prime agricultural lands;
- Zoning for biodiversity/green infrastructure. This will involve habitat mapping e.g. wetlands, dunes, existing natural features, ecological corridors, identifying gaps within those corridors, data gathering and auditing lands;
- Once mapped, must be retained;
- Operate across boundaries like wind energy strategies.

Core Strategy

- Allocation of population growth;
- Allocate population growth in core strategy following the principle of linking place where people live and work;
- Getting more climate action focus in core strategy objectives and making it more central to the development plan.

Water Management

- Integrated approach to water management;
- Integrated water management – water services, surface water, more nature-based solutions, managing flood risk;
- River Basin Management Plan provides overview;
- Bring measures into one chapter in development plan, integrated and linked back to the core strategy;
- Planning for infrastructure for water delivery and supply;
- IFI document 'Planning for Watercourses' – already incorporated into the Gorey Town LAP 2017-2023 e.g. the use of riparian buffers zones in flood risk management, protecting biodiversity and the development of amenity/riverside walks;
- SuDs strategy – e.g hierarchy of SuDS interventions;
- Rewetting of peatlands;
- Priority to Nature Based Solutions (NBS) for key infrastructure provision, increased use of SUDs, retrofitting green infrastructure, instead of hard engineering of CFRAMS, use more NBS such as Integrated Constructed Wetlands (ICWs) for smaller settlements and re-wetting wetlands such as Kilbarry pNHA in Waterford.

Decarbonisation

- Strategic Decarbonization Zones. How much is identified and then delivered.

Monitoring

- All Local Authorities need to monitor the same thing so that there are comparable figures and benchmarking is possible;
- Build on existing monitoring arrangements;
- Development of GIS datasets to highlight key risk areas;
- Monitoring energy planning permissions in terms of whether they are built;
- Monitor objectives in development plan to see how successful they are such as success under Building Energy Ratings;
- Review Local Authority development projects to ensure they have incorporated these measures.

Renewable Energy

- Objectives for renewable energy in terms of MWs delivered;
- Facilitate the development of small-scale community wind farms in counties. These may be considered in areas not zoned for wind farm development;
- Encourage and facility the production of renewable resources;
- 100% of electricity generation by renewable energy;

- Supporting the renewable potential of Shannon Estuary: offshore wind, tidal energy, decarbonise Moneypoint power station;
- Energy storage systems – support transition grid e.g. energy battery units. Requires new development standards to facilitate solar and energy storage;
- Make sure proactive development management objectives address the concerns of communities (concern on health implications, glint and glare from solar etc);
- Preparation of energy masterplans and rolling out at a town level – Local Authority will support communities (SEAI supported);
- Development Plans could have a rising site specific renewable energy targets tied into Development Plan period;
- Require solar panels within residential, commercial and mixed-use developments;
- Identifying suitable areas for solar farm developments, not previously identified before;
- Offshore wind potential and storage locations;
- Off-shore renewable wind energy and need for battery storage.

Green Infrastructure

- Objectives for green infrastructure;
- All new buildings should have a green roof unless there are heritage considerations.

Biodiversity

- Development of biodiversity datasets;
- Zoning for biodiversity – new development management standard introduced in Draft Wexford CDP that a certain % of a site must be planted for biodiversity (the larger the site, the bigger the %);
- Zoning land for Ecosystem Services - can be substantial in rural areas and more focused in urban areas. This is an example of disruptive planning/thinking.

Density

- Apply the principles of compact growth in the Key Towns and other settlements to ensure the promotion of the 10-Minute Cities and Towns concept;
- Direct development towards brownfield sites – through increasing densities (if economic conditions are favourable);
- Implementation of minimum density standards specific to the settlement hierarchy – maximum parking standards;
- Develop a 10-Minute City and Town concept by auditing barriers to permeability and infrastructure required, mix of land uses, minimum densities applicable to different levels of the settlement hierarchy, maximum parking standards;
- Objectives for location of key pieces of community infrastructure.

Energy Efficiency

- Review and update the Rural Housing Design Guidelines to incorporate climate change adaptation measures;
- Support and maximise the opportunities offered by the requirement of Nearly Zero Energy Buildings (NZEB) target for all new development and support the designation of centres of excellence in NZEB (for example the National Centre for Ireland) and Waterford and Wexford Educational Training Board (WWETB) training;
- Retrofitting buildings/more energy efficient housing;
- Building Energy Rating (BER) review in terms of a performance indicator.

Circular Economy

- Promote the Circular Economy

Waste Management

- Facilitate the development of civic amenity sites that are currently not served by such facilities.

Climate Proofing

- Employer/developer statements as part of planning applications to include the specific climate action measures that are integrated within their project (could be requested for larger scaled commercial/employment projects such as 100 plus employees or sq.m of development);
- Climate proofing/sustainability statement for development proposals.

Development Management

- Promotion of climate resilient design standards e.g. tree planting, use of SuDS, permeable materials for car parking areas etc.
- Parking standards; enhanced requirements for bicycle parking and more specific requirements for EV charging;
- Have climate resilient climate standards at the end of each chapter, then you can be more specific to the issues raised in the chapter. Ensure that they are not ignored, and the chapter they are located in isn't ignored;
- Sustainability statement for six houses or more – needs to be updated and incorporate adaptation. Reduce the threshold of six houses. These statements build in sustainable design requirements that can include renewable energy, green infrastructure etc.;
- Maximum standards for car parking – lesser hard surfaces which results in adaptation measures.

Coastal Erosion

- Work with GSI (coastal erosion studies) and OPW to refine distances from shoreline in LAPs;

- Setback distances from shoreline.

Communications

- Need to look at phrasing in Development Plan, mitigation and adaptation are not widely understood by the general public or user friendly -we need simpler and relatable terms for communities to buy into policies for climate change;
- Use the technology to reach out to people- plain English speaking needed- LAPs can be an important communication tool and can communicate the actions needed for climate change and what that means at a local level;
- Promote the Public Participation Network and Engagement with same, can be very effective.

Bio-Economy

- Number of jobs created in the County from the green economy such as rural jobs created by the bio-economy;
- Support the delivery of the bio- economy and the opportunities that arise.

5.0 Ranking of Measures and Policies

In the final breakout session of the second workshop, participants were asked to rank their proposals (both mitigation and adaptation) by choosing the top three (gold, silver and bronze). These were then presented and discussed in the plenary session.

Gold

Renewable Energy

- Local Authority Renewable Energy Strategy (LARES) to look at targets and their achievement in the Development Plan. The preparation of updated and comprehensive LARES enable national targets to be translated to the local area. For example, they can incorporate a revised wind energy strategy and identify the necessary infrastructure required.

Core Strategy

- A core strategy informed by strong evidence based (see box).

Cork City proposes to adopt an innovative Core Strategy where nine input studies provide an evidence base for the strategy. The nine studies explore what climate change means for the city in terms of land use strategies. These studies include: Capacity Study, Housing Strategy, Retail Strategy, Density and Height Study, Green and Blue Infrastructure Study, Recreational Infrastructure Study, Employment Study, etc.

- Making Climate Action Strategy part of the Core Strategy. Same prominence as Core Strategy to highlight the importance of Climate Action and underpinning the climate change/ environmental credentials of the strategy being pursued.

Communication

- Improve public consultation and communication by looking at the Development Plan structure and table on contents. Introduce climate change and adaptation across all parts of the Development Plan. Create virtual rooms to explain to communities what is needed and what is coming. Include development management standards within each chapter so that climate adaptation measures contained in them are more central and more visible.

Sustainable Transport

- Using Local Transport Plan to review current and new car parking provision, consider restricting motor vehicles access on certain roads and streets. Consider the designation of low emission zones where such measures would promote sustainable transport modes and would have wider environmental and social benefits.[1]

[1] See Objective TS40 Draft Wexford CDP 2021-2027

Agenda 2030

- Adopt a locally derived version of Agenda 2030 including targets and monitoring and the incorporation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Density

- Introduce the compact city through 10 Minute City and Town concept.
- Activate backland development to achieve this.

Centre of Excellence

- Identify Ennis (or other such towns) as a Climate Adaptive Town and centre of excellence. Introduce a Decarbonisation Zone within Ennis. A wetlands area has been identified in the Ennis 2040 Plan.

Energy Efficiency

- Reimagine what new buildings can do to achieve over and above their purpose. This includes rainwater harvesting, sharing energy and heat resources in business parks, co-location by using waste heat in industrial zones to be shared and used locally. Create district, work towards a circular economy.
- Policy to require energy performance that exceeds Building Regulations backed up by carbon offset levy where not achieving target (for eg. Local Authorities in London).

Silver

Green Infrastructure

- Preparation of green infrastructure / biodiversity strategies. For example, identifying large urban parks in Cork's hinterlands for park development justified by both a Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy and Active Recreation Infrastructure Study. Large multi-purpose parks will include passive and active recreation, greenways, forestry, biodiversity, flood mitigation, focal buildings, water courses;
- Mapping the Green Infrastructure networks for our main settlements and identifying ecological corridors and opportunities for connectivity;
- Use of unused Council lands for bio-diversity purposes. Eco-System Services;
- Planning for Green Infrastructure at the local level. Identifying in Local Area Plans; green infrastructure, nature based measures, carbon sequestration opportunities, wetland and habitat mapping etc. Ensuring the protection and enhancement of those areas through appropriate land use zoning and objectives and optimising and connecting these areas on an LAP/settlement-wide basis through development management standards in new development and through public realm/open space interventions.

Renewable Energy

- Apart from wind energy, need to focus more on other forms of renewable energy like solar or hydro;
- Target to achieve 100% of electricity from renewable sources by 2030 primarily through wind energy and solar. A review of wind energy strategies and more flexible approaches to encourage -biomass is encouraged on farms. Activate solar energy potential. The market cannot achieve the 100% renewable source target so relaxing policy will help reach it.

Coastal Zone Management

- Integrated approach to coastal zone management[2]. This includes protection and enhancing the role of natural features and habitats such as wetlands and vegetated dunes in regulating flooding and protecting from coastal erosion. Protecting both natural and cultural assets including heritage. Monitoring coastal erosion and coastal flooding. Achieve set back distances for new development from coastlines. Adopt co-ordinated approach to coastal protection works, working closely with coastal engineers and key stakeholders including GSI and OPW, using data from on-going studies, facilitating appropriate renewable energy developments and ensuring climate resilient new development. Integrated approach to Coastal Zone Management.

Water Management

- Nature Based Solutions in favour of hard engineering. For example, ICWs for settlements in cooperation with Irish Water. This reduces need for wastewater treatment plants.

Biodiversity

- GIS mapping of habitats in Development Plan.

Bronze

Rural Development

- Innovative approach to support sustainable rural communities e.g. ICT / business hubs/ renewable energy projects etc.

Water Management

- Adopt SuDS Strategy. Hierarchy of interventions (as per London Plan), including landscape, green roofs, blue roofs, street drainage etc.

Climate Proofing

[2] See Chapter 12 of the Draft Wexford CDP 2021-2027.

- Site Assessment Checklist that focuses on SEA topics, population and human health, flora and fauna, water etc. Comprehensive database of information on every zoned parcel of land.

Bio Economy

- Bio-energy and bio-economy campus in Lisheen. Deliver on the opportunities around the National Bio-Economy Campus in Lisheen as per RPO 59 in the RSES.

Neighbourhood Retrofit plans

- Neighbourhoods have been identified through profile process (primarily based on 15 Minute or 10 Minute City and Town concept of centres / schools / POS / creche / services / nature). Next step is to work out retrofit plans. A key challenge is retrofitting connectivity due to 'NIMBYISM'. For walking / cycling / integration, this will have to happen to discourage car usage and improve quality of life. Routes need to be sold as neighbourhood routes to overcome political resistance.

Key Performance Indicators

- Density, modal split, air Quality; % of population within 15 or 10 minutes of services on foot; land use changes; housing output; brownfield land.

6.0 Key Findings and Messages

- The workshops identified many areas where planning policy can influence positive climate action. These range between accepted policies that are well established in planning practice, policies that show significant potential and where participants demonstrate a high degree of consensus, and policies that are of a more innovative nature, or perhaps most relevant in particular parts of the region. The policies are listed in Table 1.

- While the current policy framework for spatial planning was identified as a strength, implementation was mentioned as a weakness in the SWOT analysis. It was stated that the intent in policies is not always translated into action and that targets are too far in the future. The lack of funding, monitoring and political support were identified as threats. However, participants were able to identify numerous opportunities to address these issues such as, inter alia, more comprehensive renewable energy strategies, better public engagement, using development contributions as incentives, better integration of land use and transportation.

- Considerable scope exists to create 'win-win situations' where job creation and climate change mitigation and adaptation go hand in hand. The Development Plan is ideally placed to emphasise the potential of the 'green economy'. Some initiatives by participants reflect this, particularly in relation to the potential for rural areas, but greater use can be made of the potential of the green economy.

- The 10-Minute Cities and Towns concept is identified by many as having great potential for sustainability and to improve quality of life in settlements. The concept suggests a focus on the town and the neighbourhood within the town/city. A Development Plan can best include this in the section dealing with individual settlements (or neighbourhoods in the case of a City Development Plan).

- Compact growth was mentioned in various guises across all breakout sessions. It was identified as a weakness in terms of past developments but recognises as a strength as regards the policy intent of the NPF and RSES. In the 'Designing the Toolbox' session it was stated that the 10 Minute City/Town concepts can better sell the idea of compact growth in a positive way to the lay person as it's important that this concept can be understood by all. This issue of communication was identified by participants as a 'gold' proposal in the 'Writing the Manual' session.

- Decarbonising Zones (DZ) featured in conversations throughout the workshops. The requirement for incorporating DZ in development plans stems from Action 165 of the Climate Action Plan 2019 where it states: 'Each Local Authority will identify and develop plans for one Decarbonising Zone'. The framework for DZ is currently being developed by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) who will issue a circular to all local authorities in Q1 2021 to

communicate what is required. It is envisaged that DZ will also be addressed by local authorities in their Climate Action Plans; a requirement under the amendment to the Climate Act 2015.

- While wind energy policy can be described as 'mature' in the context of development plan policy, the low level of acceptance of land-based wind energy projects by local communities, creates planning problems for implementation. New and innovative approaches are therefore necessary, which can show potential benefits of wind energy (and other renewable energy sources) to local communities.

- The choice to avoid hard engineering measures in climate change adaptation, is well recognised by the participants of the workshops and is reflected under the policy headings of 'water management' and 'green infrastructure'.

- Effective Strategic Environmental Assessment has an important role to play in integrating climate change and climate action into land use plans/reviewing/climate proofing plans, requiring the development of climate action policy across all key policy areas, with strong cross referencing.

The planning system is a key instrument to influence positive climate action. Planners, as enablers have the opportunity to understand the challenges and impacts presented by climate change and to enable proactive, forward looking and positive approaches towards the delivery of the national transition objectives across local communities. The workshops demonstrated that planners are acutely conscious of the importance and potential of spatial planning and the dynamic, professional and enthusiastic level of participation by all participants deserves respect and appreciation.

Accepted	Broad Consensus	Innovative
EV Charging points	Climate Proofing of policies and projects	Neighbourhood Retrofit Plans
Higher Densities	Water Management	Rural Development Job Creation
Wind Energy Strategy	Green Infrastructure	Coastal Zone Management
Energy Efficient Buildings	Renewable Energies and storage infrastructure	Performance of Buildings through Co-Location
Sustainable Urban Drainage	Local Transport Plans	Decarbonising Zones
Reduced car parking standards	Expanded Core Strategy	New Communication Tools in Development Plans
Reduced Development Contributions as incentive	Zoning	

Table 1 – Range of Possible Measures in Spatial Planning

Appendix A – Workshop Programme

First Workshop Agenda 5th November 2020

10.00 Welcome, Purpose and methodology – Kevin Lynch, SRA.
10.05 The Climate Action Plan – B. Maher, CARO.
10.10 The Regional Economic and Spatial Strategy – Bryan Riney, SRA.
10.15 BREAKOUT SESSION ONE: 'SWOT Analysis'.
10.30 PLENARY SESSION ONE: conclusions.
10.45 BREAKOUT SESSION TWO: 'Designing the Toolbox'.
11.00 PLENARY SESSION TWO: conclusions.
11.15 BREAKOUT SESSION THREE: 'Writing the Manual'.
11.30 PLENARY SESSION THREE: conclusions.
11.45 Round Table.
11.55 Closing comments and next steps.

Second Workshop Agenda 11th November 2020

10.00 Welcome, Purpose and methodology – Kevin Lynch.
10.05 Climate Adaptation Strategies: Main Elements – B. Maher, CARO.
10.15 BREAKOUT SESSION ONE: 'Designing the Toolbox'.
10.30 PLENARY SESSION ONE: conclusions.
10.45 BREAKOUT SESSION TWO: 'Writing the Manual'.
11.00 PLENARY SESSION TWO: conclusions.
11.15 BREAKOUT SESSION THREE: 'Gold, Silver and Bronze'.
11.30 PLENARY SESSION THREE: conclusions.
11.45 Round Table.
11.55 Closing comments.

Appendix B – Labels

Afforestation
Agenda 2030
Biodiversity
Bio Economy
Carbon Sequestration
Centre of Excellence
Circular Economy
Climate Proofing
Coastal Erosion
Coastal Zone Management
Communication
Core Strategy
Decarbonisation
Density
Development Contributions
Development Management
Energy Efficiency
Flood Risk Management
Green Infrastructure
Key Performance Indicators
Masterplanning
Monitoring
Neighbourhood Retrofit Plans
Renewable Energy
Rural Development
Sustainable Transport
Waste Management
Water Management
Zoning

Workshop Report

Spatial Planning & Climate Action

Delivering a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient future

Report End

January 2021

Eastern and Midlands CARO

Tionól Réigiúnach an Deiscirt
Southern Regional Assembly

Atlantic Seaboard South CARO