



## PRESS RELEASE

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# Climate Change Advisory Council welcomes news of building emissions falling by 6% in 2023

Emissions from buildings last year fell by 6%, in part due to the high price of fossil fuels. The reliance on expensive, imported fossil fuels needs to end so that people can afford to heat their homes sustainably. Government must make it easier and cheaper to install heat pumps in homes and workplaces.

Whilst welcoming the increase in capacity and delivery of the National Retrofit Plan in 2023, the Council wants to see the ambition and rate of upgrades to social homes doubled and highlights the need for special measures to support older people to achieve warmer, more comfortable, healthier homes.

Government also needs to urgently publish the National Heat Policy Statement and enact the Heat Bill to support accelerated delivery of district heating schemes and ensure a comprehensive approach to decarbonising the heat sector.

Additional recommendations within the Council's review include addressing embodied carbon emissions, promoting urban regeneration and infill development. The Government needs to encourage the renovation of derelict and vacant properties as well as promoting the use of low carbon materials such as timber within the construction sector to implement more sustainable building methods.

Launching the Annual Review of the Built Environment sector, Marie Donnelly, Chair of the Climate Change Advisory Council said: "We urgently need to phase out fossil fuels from our homes and workplaces. Building on the success and the positive impact of retrofitting incentives with almost 48,000 households benefiting in 2023, Government must do more to help everyone make sustainable choices in heating and insulating their homes. Many of the worst performing homes are likely to be owned by older people and householders least likely to be able to afford the work required. More must be done to support them and ensure that they are provided with necessary help to retrofit their houses and lower their heating costs."

"Government must address barriers to heat pump installation through the provision of increased grants and better information on suitability for and operation of heat pump systems. In a positive development, homes built after 2007 are now considered 'heat pump ready' and don't require a technical assessment to avail of grant support.

Commenting Jillian Mahon, member of the Climate Change Advisory Council added "The finalisation of the significantly strengthened National Planning Framework before the end of this year will be critical to help support urban regeneration in communities

throughout the country, enabling compact development and more efficient use of vacant land in our towns and cities.”

“The Council welcomes the recently launched Home Energy Upgrade Loan Scheme supporting homeowners to undertake retrofitting. Further financial mechanisms are also needed to support those just above the threshold for energy poverty but who cannot afford a deep retrofit.”

Finally, the Council has recommended that Government increases the resilience of the built environment to the future impacts of climate change such as flooding, extreme rainfall, droughts and intense storms by developing Sectoral Adaptation Plans.

**ENDS**

If you have any questions or are seeking further comment, please do not hesitate to contact: Shane Finnegan ([shane@aikenpr.com](mailto:shane@aikenpr.com) or 00447764534565) or Seamus Donnelly ([seamus@aikenpr.com](mailto:seamus@aikenpr.com) or 00447729556480)