



The Climate Change Advisory Council publishes Carbon Budget Proposals 2031-2040

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- The Climate Change Advisory Council's proposed Carbon Budgets to 2040 set out overall indicative emission reductions of 67%. This requires an annual reduction of at least 6.3% on average year on year to 2040.
- The response required will see the most significant change since the foundation of the State.
- A crucial step is to phase out harmful fossil fuels as early as 2039.
- This presents a transformational opportunity to achieve a sustainable society with improved health and well-being for all citizens.

The Climate Change Advisory Council has said Ireland has not risen to meet its climate change challenges and is currently set to miss its agreed carbon budget to 2030¹. An urgent response to the crisis is required, which will see the most significant change since the foundation of the State.

Today the Council published its final proposed Carbon Budget 3 (2031-2035) and the provisional Carbon Budget 4 (2036-2040)², setting out indicative emission reductions of 67%. An annual reduction of at least 6.3% on average year on year to 2040 is required to remain within the carbon budget.

If we do not act the Council has said that there will be profound costs to the Irish economy and to the people of Ireland.

The stark warning comes as the impact of climate change throughout Ireland continues to rise with increased flooding, droughts and coastal damage, which is already having significant and costly consequences for people, communities and nature.

Recognising that the transition will be highly disruptive, the Council has said that strong political leadership is required, now, by making the necessary investment, taxation and policy decisions to help Ireland capitalise on the transformational opportunity that a climate neutral society presents.

Commenting on the announcement, Marie Donnelly, Chair of the Climate Change Advisory Council said, "The Carbon Budgets proposed by Council set out a challenging but necessary pathway for Ireland to achieve a climate-neutral and biodiversity rich society before 2050, where Ireland no longer contributes to the increase in global temperatures.

"While the transition will bring significant political and social challenges, it presents us with an opportunity to achieve a more sustainable society, a cleaner environment with improved health and well-being for all of our citizens.

“A crucial step to help achieve this is for Government to prioritise investment and resources, now, by phasing out harmful fossil fuels as early as 2039 and saving people and businesses money. This will help Ireland avoid future fines and compliance costs, provide the opportunity to deliver energy independence, reduce costs and help to maintain our competitive economy in a low carbon world, while building greater resilience to the impacts of climate change. “

The process of change must be managed carefully and in a way which ensures that potential impacts on people, communities and nature are properly addressed. Mobilising financial supports, quickly, will help people and households, in both urban and rural communities, as well as the most impacted sectors, take action at the speed and scale required.

“We also need to see the upskilling of people and businesses for new technologies and practices, while reskilling those sectors that are most impacted.

Professor Peter Thorne, Council Member, noted “The Council has considered the most recent scientific evidence and determined pathways consistent with the National Climate Objective as the basis for the proposed carbon budgets from 2031 to 2040.

The Council’s Carbon Budget proposal does not take account of any exceedance in emissions that may occur between now and 2030. If emissions exceed the agreed carbon budget, then the exceedance must be deducted from the next carbon budget”³.

The Chair concluded; “To deliver an equitable and just transition we need inclusive decision-making and engagement with stakeholders, with lead Government departments, state agencies, semi-state companies and local authorities fully aligned with the achievement of the National Climate Objective.”

ENDS

NOTES

- ¹Relative to 2018
- ²The Council’s carbon budget proposal outlined here includes a final proposal for Carbon Budget 3 (CB3: 2031-2035) of 160 Mt CO₂eq and a provisional proposal for Carbon Budget 4 (CB4: 2036-2040) of 120 Mt CO₂eq, with overall indicative emission reductions of 67% by 2040, relative to 2018, and indicative annual emission reductions of 6.3% per year over the period 2024-2040, required to keep within these carbon budgets.
- ³For example, where the total greenhouse gas emissions for CB1 exceed the carbon budget for that period, the Minister for the Environment, Climate, and Communications will carry forward the excess emissions to CB2. The CB2 will be decreased by the amount of greenhouse gas emissions that are carried forward, ultimately making it more challenging to meet CB2 and subsequent carbon budgets.
- The Council submitted its first programme of Carbon Budgets to the Minister of the Environment, Climate and Communications in October 2021, which included emissions for the period 2021 to 2030, and a provisional budget for 2031-2035.

- In accordance with the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021, not less than 12 months prior to the expiry of the first carbon budget the Climate Change Advisory Council is required to prepare and submit proposed amendments to Carbon Budget 3 (CB3: 2031-2035) and propose a provisional carbon budget in respect to Carbon Budget 4
- The Council does not propose sectoral ceilings as these are the responsibility of Government. The allocation of sectoral ceilings will determine the challenges of each sector and the essential supports that Government will have to provide.

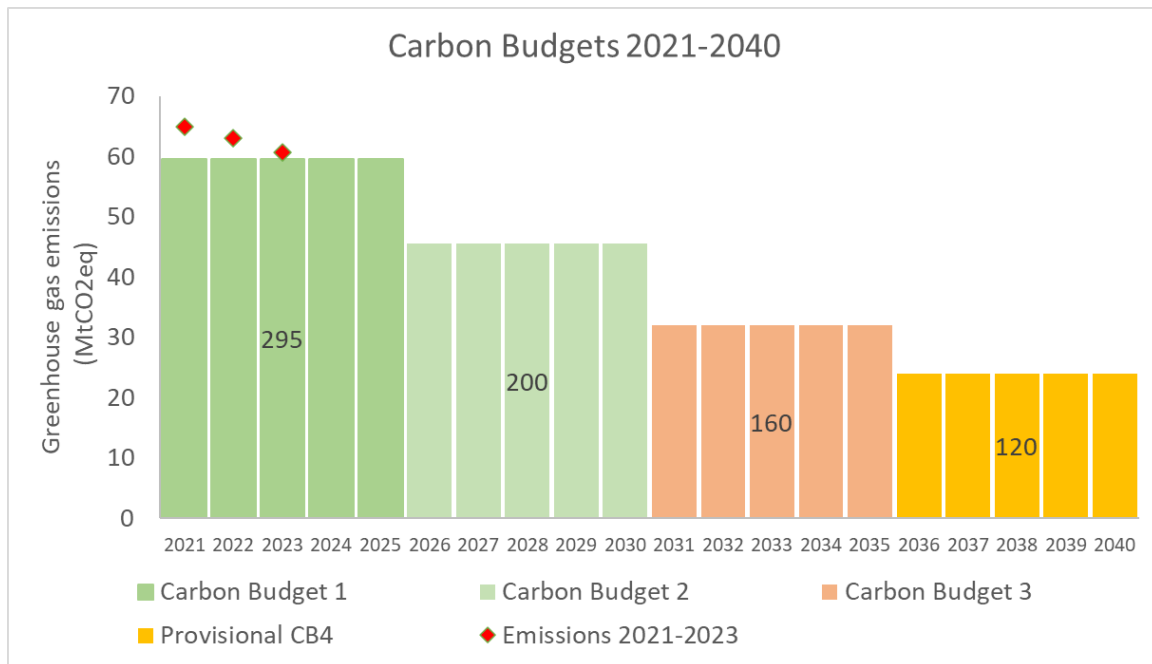


Figure 1: The Council's proposal for Carbon Budget 3 (CB3: 2031–2035) of 160 Mt CO₂ eq and a provisional Carbon Budget 4 (CB4: 2036–2040) of 120 Mt CO₂ eq using GWP₁₀₀ in the context of approved Carbon Budget 1 (CB1: 2021–2025) and Carbon Budget 2 (CB2: 2026–2030)¹ and the Environmental Protection Agency's provisional estimates of total emissions in the years 2021–2023.²

Figure 1 illustrates the Council's proposed carbon budgets for the periods 2031–2035 and 2036–2040 and also shows the agreed carbon budgets for the period up to 2030. In order to remain within the total emissions allowed under Carbon Budgets 1 and 2 and the carbon budgets proposed here, annual emissions will need to reduce by at least 6.3% on average year on year over the period 2024–2040.

The provisional Carbon Budget 3 (2031-2035) was a linear calculation to meet net zero in GWP₁₀₀ by 2050. Updated analyses of mitigation options were used for the new proposal, whereby the council considered temperature neutrality pathways rather than constraining

¹ Global warming potential 100 (GWP₁₀₀) describes how much impact the emission of a gas will have on atmospheric warming over 100 years compared with the emission of same amount of carbon dioxide. For example, the emission of 36 tonnes of methane is equivalent to the emission of about 1,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide, when the GWP₁₀₀ of methane is 28.

² <https://www.epa.ie/publications/monitoring--assessment/climate-change/air-emissions/irelands-provisional-greenhouse-gas-emissions-1990-2023.php>

Ireland to meet net zero emissions in GWP100. This has resulted in a 9 Mt CO2 eq increase in the Council's final proposal for Carbon Budget 3.

Published Supporting Documents are available on www.climatecouncil.ie :

- Letter to Minister
- Carbon Budget Proposal Report - Summary for All
- Carbon Budget Proposal Report
- Carbon Budgets Working Group Outputs Report

The Climate Change Advisory Council would also like to acknowledge the work of the Carbon Budgets Working Group who were tasked with assisting the Council in development an evidence base for the carbon budget proposals, in particular to provide modelling and analytical support for the development of carbon budget proposals.

All supporting documents utilised by the working group have been published online and are available [here](#).

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