



## PRESS RELEASE

### Climate Change Advisory Council releases its Annual Review 2023

**DATE: 25th July 2023**

- Ireland will not meet the targets set in the first and second carbon budget periods unless urgent action is taken immediately and emissions begin to fall much more rapidly.
- Government must address areas of uncertainty in how Ireland will reduce its emissions. The sectoral emissions ceiling for the Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry sector must be set, and it must be clear by how much each sector has to reduce its emissions.
- Government needs to identify and remove barriers to policy implementation by ensuring adequate funding and planning reform at scale and speed.
- Key actions need to be implemented now to prevent longer term damage and increased costs to society and the economy.
- Government must adopt new approaches to address emissions reductions, creating investment and enhancing skills across the economy, particularly in areas such as retrofitting and renewable energy.
- The establishment of a Just Transition Commission is recommended to ensure that Ireland achieves its climate objectives in a way that is fair and equitable and protects vulnerable people and communities.
- The Government should support opportunities which reduce emissions and make Ireland better prepared for the impacts of climate change.

The Climate Change Advisory Council has said that 2023 is a critical year for the delivery of Ireland's national climate action and that we must see emissions fall consistently if we are to meet our national and EU legal obligations in full and on time.

The Council, which published its Annual Review today, warned that at the current rate of policy implementation, **Ireland will not meet the targets set in the first and second carbon budget periods unless urgent action is taken immediately and emissions begin to fall much more rapidly.**

Calling for leadership and effective community engagement, the Council said that the pace of implementation of agreed policy by Government was not acceptable given the existential threat and impact of climate change on society.

While it recognised the importance of specific milestones including the adoption of carbon budgets and sectoral emissions ceilings and related implementation plans, the Council said that not enough has been done to address the gap between climate action and ambition.



On the scale and pace of change required, the Council said that rapid and far-reaching transitions across all sectors and throughout society are necessary to achieve deep and continuous emissions reductions and to secure a liveable and sustainable future for all.

Chair of the Climate Change Advisory Council Marie Donnelly said, “We must address the gap between climate action and ambition now and start to see emissions fall consistently.

“Government still has not identified how carbon budgets are to be allocated to sectors with uncertainties relating to the LULUCF sectoral emissions ceiling and the unallocated savings for the second carbon budget period. The Council is extremely concerned that this clarity may arrive too late to provide the necessary signals to all sectors of their obligations over the period to 2030 and beyond. If we are to achieve our targets this needs to be clarified urgently to enable sectors to prepare their approach to ensure they comply with their targets in the future.”

Within its Annual Review, the Council has set out a series of crucial recommendations. These include the need for government to build and maximise public support for climate action, ensuring a just transition and leveraging actions already in place where higher ambition or quicker delivery would positively impact change.

Concluding, Marie Donnelly, said, “Feasible, effective, and low-cost options for mitigation and adaptation are already available including the roll out of district heating, onshore wind development and community-based restoration of coastal environments, and they must be implemented now.

“Strong leadership from Government is required to make the difficult decisions that are needed to deliver systemic change throughout our economy and society. Key to this is effective and consistent engagement with communities, ensuring a fair and equitable transition, while building and maintaining public support and action. We all have a role to play.”

**The Council has provided sectoral recommendation which can be [found here](#)**

### **Recommendations for the electricity sector**

- Government needs to conclude work on laying out where and what type of on-shore wind should be located across the country.
- Local authorities need more assistance to help deliver onshore and offshore renewable energy applications more efficiently.
- It is critical to stop using coal for electricity generation as soon as possible.



- Electricity storage can form part of the solution to lowering our electricity emissions. Government needs to give guidelines and incentives to operators to ensure sufficient levels of storage are rolled out.
- Laws to support access to smart metering data must be progressed to help consumers better control of their energy use.

### **Recommendations for the transport sector**

- Motor Tax should be redesigned to promote energy efficient vehicles and should increase year on year.
- Government should increase investment in public transport including the electrification of our bus fleet. In addition, there should be a focus on improving the reliability and accessibility of services.
- The local authority in each of our main cities should introduce park and ride schemes along major roads and plan to reduce the number of public parking spaces.
- Commuters should be motivated to opt for public transport and active travel. This would include updating the Taxsaver Commuter ticket and Cycle to Work schemes, and the introduction of parking levies at workplaces in our main cities.
- Locating homes closer to businesses and services can help to reduce our dependency on private cars. The new national planning framework needs to greater reflect our climate ambitions.

### **Recommendations for the enterprise and waste sector**

- Government should urgently update building regulations to increase the use of timber in construction and also encourage greater usage of lower carbon cement and concrete.
- Government should work to find ways to help industry to become more energy efficient and less reliant on fossil fuels.
- Public education campaigns and economic incentives for businesses and households are required to achieve targets on food waste and food packaging waste.

### **Recommendations for the built environment sector**

- More urgency and ambition is required in developing district heating schemes, taking on board the lessons from other countries where it already supplies a significant proportion of heat. (District heating is a system that delivers hot water or air heating through an underground network to a large number of homes.)
- Large energy users, including data centres, should be obliged to supply their excess heat to local communities to support district heating schemes.



- Budget 2024 should set a target of all social housing being upgraded to a building energy rating of B2 or connected to a district heating network by 2030.
- The numbers of retrofits each year needs to increase. Homes that use peat or coal as their main heating fuel should be prioritised.
- Mortgage providers should be encouraged to offer green mortgage products that align to and support retrofitting schemes.

### **Recommendations for the agriculture and Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) sectors**

- Government should actively support income diversification opportunities for farmers.
- Government should ensure sufficient supplies of greener forms of fertilizer are available and launch an information programme for farmers.
- Urgent consideration should be given to the opportunities for roll out of feed additives for dairy farms that reduce methane emissions from cattle.
- A streamlined process for applications for the new forestry scheme will be needed to ensure speedy implementation.

### **Recommendations for adapting to the impacts of climate change**

- Government should set out a budget for developing our resilience to the effects of climate change. Given rising sea levels, a Coastal Management Strategy is urgently needed to help actively manage our changing coastlines.
- Communities, non-governmental organisations and the private sector must be involved in adaptation planning and implementation.
- An all-island approach to climate action should be developed further, especially for critical infrastructure such as our electricity network and the management of cross-border natural systems such as rivers.

### **ENDS**

#### **For further information please contact**

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#### **NOTES TO EDITOR**

The Annual Review 2023 has been submitted to the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications and will be available at:

<https://www.climatecouncil.ie/councilpublications/>

#### **About the Climate Change Advisory Council**



The Climate Change Advisory Council is an independent advisory body tasked with assessing and advising on how Ireland is making the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy.

### **What is the Annual Review?**

Each year the Climate Change Advisory Council reviews Ireland's performance of the previous year in:

- reducing greenhouse gas emissions,
- complying with the carbon budget and each sectoral emissions ceiling for that period,
- meeting Ireland's EU and international obligations,
- moving towards the National Climate Objective and preparing Ireland for the adjustments needed to be ready for the impacts of climate change.