

# THREE COUNTIES FORM ENERGY AGENCY

Agencies in Carlow, Kilkenny and Wexford have joined forces to create a low carbon, energy-efficient ecosystem which they claim will be “a unique magnet” for internationally-trading companies looking for a near zero emissions, a European base and access to a major talent pool.

**P**artners from across Carlow, Kilkenny and Wexford involved in the new ‘3 Counties Energy Agency’ (3CEA) say the new ecosystem they’ve created sets the area apart as a cluster for smart, low carbon and energy efficient business.

The new alliance builds on the successes already achieved by the award-winning Carlow-Kilkenny Energy Agency across both counties over the past 15 years. Adding Wexford to the group gives them the scale to achieve their ambitions in energy efficiency and renewable energy by 2030.

It also builds on the agency’s significant successes since 2002 in delivering €14.3m in avoided energy consumption since 2013 for the area, notes 3CEA Manager, Paddy Phelan.

According to Marie Donnelly, former Director for Renewables, Research and Innovation, Energy Efficiency with the European Commission, it create an important zone in Ireland.

Upon launching ‘3CEA’ on 19 January, she described the new partnership as “an excellent example of dynamism and innovation,” adding that it “reinforces its sustainable credentials as a location for Irish and international business and is a front-runner example not just for Ireland but also for Europe”.

Paddy Phelan says that while local authorities in the region have done much to achieve lower CO2 emissions by 2030, individual counties working under the sustainable energy action plans need to step up across transport, agriculture, industry and community sectors.

## UNIQUE ECOSYSTEM

“It establishes a unique ecosystem across the three counties, which will be similar to the environment created by the world-renowned Berlin Energy Agency. It will be a major boost to a part of the country that has traditionally lagged behind the rest of Ireland when it comes to job creation,” Phelan added.

Over the past five years, the former CKEA has helped deliver cumulative energy savings of €14.3m plus. Of this, 57% has been in thermal/heating costs for clients. A further 29% in energy savings have been achieved across transport and 14% in electricity.

Through the Better Energy Communities (BEC) initiative and other programmes, CKEA has delivered over €19.6m in capital energy investment for their clients, which translates into over 300 jobs in construction, retrofit, technical and engineering sectors.

The energy agency has worked with Kilkenny and Wexford County Council to cut the annual cost of street lighting by 64% across 19% of their entire street lighting asset with plans to



*Pictured at the launch of 3CEA were Paddy Phelan, 3CEA Manager, and John Hurley Kilkenny Chamber of Commerce.*

complete all within the next four years.

In Wexford, annual savings of €81,000 have been achieved, while the saving for Kilkenny was €101,547 for 2017. Across Laois, Westmeath, Offaly, Longford and Galway, savings of €45,000 were achieved. Transport is a key target and CKEA worked with 12 fleet companies across Ireland to save €561,230 annually since 2016 across 371 heavy goods vehicles, HGVs.

Since Carlow County Council won the 2013 Best Energy Community National SEAI Award, it has completed in excess of 500 deep retrofits in its social housing stock, with only a small percentage remaining, and has pioneered heat pump technology since 2012.

In Kilkenny, winners of the 2014 Best Community Energy Project nationally, several fire stations have been retrofitted and numerous GAA clubs, parish halls, community buildings and charitable organisations, societies and more have benefitted under the BEC supports scheme.

In Carlow, the energy group also helped Bagenalstown Outdoor Swimming Pool significantly cut its energy bills by €850 per annum. And in Wexford, CKEA helped the St Vincent De Paul charity shop achieve significant energy savings on its energy bills in Enniscorthy. And it has completed a deep retrofit of an entire estate under a pilot project with Wexford County Council.