

ON COURSE FOR COMMUNITY CLIMATE ACTION TRAINING

Through effective collaboration with Ireland's four Climate Action Regional Offices (CAROs), all local authorities have successfully completed the preparation and formally endorsed their Local Authority Climate Change Adaptation Strategy/Action Plans. Now a series of training programmes aim to equip people of all ages with the knowledge and skills necessary to plan for climate action in their local communities.

Marking the beginning of adaptation planning, the preparation of climate change action plans demonstrates a strong commitment by the local authorities to meet the national objective of effective climate resilient transition.

The four Climate Action Regional Offices (CAROs) have been working very closely with local authorities to assist them in the preparation of these strategies. The CAROs are now turning the focus on the practical implementation of adaptation actions and galvanising efforts within local authorities to build long-term climate resilience.

CLIMATE OPPORTUNITIES CONFERENCE

The Eastern and Midlands CARO, along with partners Midlands Regional Enterprise Office and Offaly County Council, held a very successful national conference on 9 October in Tullamore Court Hotel, Co. Offaly.

The one-day conference entitled 'Creating Economic and Business Opportunities from Climate Change' explored how businesses, in addressing and responding to climate change, realised unique economic and business opportunities. Topics explored included innovation, new technologies, circular economy, sustainable tourism, clean power and remote working.

Attendees gained insights into how a number of Irish businesses like Bord na Móna, Watershed Group, Lumcloon Energy and Viva-Green are adapting and capitalising on new opportunities, while adapting to and mitigating the effects of climate change.

This conference was linked to the work of the Regional Transition Team, actions of the Midlands Regional Enterprise Plan to 2020, National Adaptation Framework 2018 and the recently published 'All of Government Climate Action Plan - to Tackle Climate Breakdown'. The keynote speaker – Dr Tara Shine, Environmental Scientist and Director, Change by Degrees – opened the discussion by recognising the positives that can come about by conscious efforts to change and adapt.

The conference speakers highlighted real world examples of how initiatives seeking to address and respond to climate change can be a powerful tool and a source of competitive advantage that can transform business and uncover opportunities.



The Eastern and Midlands CARO was fundamental in organising and facilitating a Pilot Youth Climate Camp at the Irish National Stud & Japanese Gardens in Kildare Town in July.

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Two pilot Community Climate Action Awareness Training programmes in Kildare and Mayo are practical examples of building capacity with local communities to work positively on climate action initiatives and to increase knowledge and awareness of the challenges of climate change.

ADDRESSING CLIMATE ACTION

To assess the implications of both the Climate Action Plan and individual local authority adaptation strategies and the resulting resource demands for local authorities, the Atlantic Seaboard South CARO held a facilitated workshop on 2 September in Portlaoise. This one-day workshop was attended by members of the CARO Regional Steering Groups (RSGs) from across the country and was facilitated by Dr Seán Ó'Riordáin.

The Climate Action Plan 2019 envisages a central role for the local government system to make Ireland a zero carbon state over the next 30 years. In addition to having responsibilities to deliver a reduced level of carbon emissions through the operations of each local authority, local government will lead the broad move towards local de-carbonisation and will support and facilitate both public and private efforts. These are critical if the State is to achieve zero carbon status.

This workshop represented a 'bottom-up' approach building on arrangements and relationships in place from the adaptation strategy development process, which were strengthened by the success of that process.

It was the first step in assessing the resource requirements of local authorities in meeting the challenge of climate action.

Key outputs from workshop were the recognition of:

- The need to demonstrate tangible advances in reducing local government emissions as well as providing demonstrator actions for the wider local public service and local communities.
- The requirement to implement a work programme, set within the framework of the Climate Action Charters for each local authority (as required by the Climate Action Plan 2019).
- The necessity to undertake a comprehensive review of resource requirements of each local authority and the CAROs
- The importance of providing training to local authority staff in climate action (which is being currently progressed by the Eastern & Midlands CARO).

PILOT YOUTH CLIMATE CAMP

The Eastern and Midlands CARO was fundamental in organising and facilitating a very successful pilot youth climate camp at the Irish National Stud & Japanese Garden in Kildare Town in July. The camp initiative originated as an idea from a brainstorming event held previously under the auspices of the National Dialogue, in Solas Bhríde, Kildare.

The three-day camp was aimed at 11-14 year olds and had 30 active participants eager to learn about climate change, its impacts and solutions. The camp's schedule was very interactive, providing a fun and engaging way of learning through the three day modules which included:



Free outdoor and solar-powered screenings of 'Our Planet' by David Attenborough were held in September, to coincide with the publication of the Climate Change Action Plans 2019–2024 by Dublin's four local authorities.

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Climate Change on Agenda at AILG Autumn Training Seminar

'Climate Change and Planning – New Challenges for Local Government' was the theme of the Autumn Training Seminar organised by the Association of Irish Local Government in Monaghan on 12 September.

Representing the four CAROs at the seminar, Joe Boland, Director of Services at Kildare County Council, and Chair of the Eastern and Midlands CARO, focused on 'Climate Change and the Role of Local Government'. His presentation prompted a positive discussion about the challenges presented by climate change to the sector and the need for a co-ordinated approach to respond to these challenges.

Other keynote speakers during the seminar's morning session included Joan Blackburn, Met Éireann's Deputy Head of Forecasting, and Niall Cussen, National Planning Regulator.



Joan Blackburn, Met Eireann, Niall Cussen, National Planning Regulator and Joe Boland, Local Authority Climate Adaptation Network, who presented a series of topical presentations to the AILG Autumn Conference pictured with Cllr Luie McEntire, AILG President.

- Day 1: Weather & Climate, facilitated by Senior Climatologist with Met Éireann,
- Day 2: Biodiversity, Pollination and Ecology
- Day 3: Introduced the Climate Champions to a local Cool Planet Champion, a local Climate Ambassador in a fun and interactive way, and UN Sustainable Development Goals.

The camp was an example of effective and positive collaboration between the partners involved including Kildare Tidy Towns, The Hive Youth Club, M Co (National Dialogue), Marketing Manager of the Irish National Stud & Japanese Gardens and the Eastern and Midlands CARO.

The Eastern & Midlands CARO continues to work with various organisations and networks, in relation to the potential development of

a template for this camp, to allow further rollout across the region, and nationally, using existing community, voluntary and business networks in the local authority sector.

COMMUNITY CLIMATE ACTION TRAINING

The Eastern and Midlands and Atlantic Seaboard North CAROs have been instrumental in planning, organising and securing funding for two pilot Community Climate Action Awareness Training programmes in Kildare and Mayo.

Funded under the Rural Environment theme of the LEADER programme, the training programmes are practical examples of building capacity with local communities to work positively on climate action initiatives. They also aim to increase knowledge and awareness of the challenges of climate change.

The overall aim of the training is to equip individuals, local communities and voluntary groups with the knowledge and skills necessary to plan for climate action in their local area, to minimise negative impacts and maximise benefits for the local environment.

Building awareness of climate change and the capacity of community organisations to develop local actions is key to these training programmes, as well as harnessing learnings to influence future training and local authority policies to support local initiatives.

Both the Eastern and Midland and Atlantic Seaboard North CAROs will monitor the progress, learnings and outputs of these programmes for replication across the regions and nationally.

***The Communities 4 Climate Action** training programme in Kildare is a 10-week training programme that explores a range of important issues for local communities around climate science, community resilience, sustainable production and consumption, energy and transport, water, food culture, and sustainable land use.

This programme includes a field trip to CloughJordan Eco-village in Co. Tipperary, which will demonstrate real life examples of community projects on rural regeneration, green initiatives, community resilience and sustainable practices.

***The Community Climate Action Training** in Mayo will run over an eight-week period, starting in mid-October, and will be delivered over three evenings in six towns throughout the county.

The 18 workshops will conclude with a final Climate Conference to bring all the communities together and link them with some of the support agencies, such as SEAI and Sustainable Energy Community Mentors.

The workshops will provide an introduction to a number of topics, such as climate change in communities, coastal impacts, biodiversity and water conservation issues, household and community energy,

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personal consumption, transport and green solutions.

The format of the workshops will allow for educating and creating awareness of climate change issues and for interactive discussion around these issues and associated actions that can be taken individually or as a community. The training material will be a combination of both generic and specifically local information directed to those communities.

CLIMATE FILM SCREENINGS

Free outdoor, solar powered screenings of 'Our Planet' by David Attenborough were held in September, to coincide with the publication of the four Dublin local authorities' Climate Change Action Plans 2019–2024.

The screenings were co-hosted by the Dublin CARO, Dublin City Council and Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council in partnership with Happenings. Over 800 people attended the leave-no-trace, plastic free events in Merrion Square and Blackrock Park with support from Refill.ie. The screenings were designed to engage Dublin citizens on the power of collective climate action.

GREEN AWARE SLIGO CAMPAIGN

Following the adoption of their Climate Adaptation Strategy

Sligo County Council launched the Green Aware Sligo campaign to raise awareness about climate change. In the campaign's launch video, Ciarán Hayes, Chief Executive of Sligo Council, challenges staff and communities to become more aware of the significant impacts of climate change, and what we, as individuals and collectively, can do to change this.

The six-week social-media and radio campaign covers a range of topics such as energy, travel and business. Each week a new theme will be promoted, for example, in areas such as how making your home more energy-efficient can lead to significant savings, or how businesses can deal with issues such as plastics and packaging.

The thoughts and experience of younger people and community groups that have being impacted by climate events are also shared, as well as what they are doing to address this profound issue. The campaign provides practical guidance and advice, like how to apply for grants to improve the energy ratings of their home, or more environmentally friendly ways to go about our daily lives.

Throughout September and October, this awareness campaign will demonstrate how even small changes individuals make may have a much more significant impact when looked at collectively.