

To the Mayor and each Member Limerick City and County Council

Local Authority Decarbonisation Zones

16 March, 2021.

Action 165 of the Climate Action Plan 2019 specifically requires identification of one location or area in each local authority that would be subject to a plan for a Decarbonisation Zone (DZ). A Decarbonisation Zone (DZ) is a spatial area identified by the local authority, in which a range of climate mitigation, adaptation and biodiversity measures and action owners are identified to address local low carbon energy, greenhouse gas emissions and climate needs to contribute to national climate action targets.

Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage Circular Letter LGSM01-2021, dated 10 February, 2021 (attached herewith) outlines a process where local authorities will identify one potential area suitable for a decarbonising zone. Each zone should be accompanied by a broad outline of the main projects that could be implementable in the zone plus an indication as to potential outcomes deliverable in terms of reductions in carbon emissions.

At a minimum, these outcomes must be capable of meeting the Government's targets for carbon emissions reductions specifically an average 7% per annum reduction in overall greenhouse gas emissions from 2021 to 2030 (a 51% reduction over the decade).

The proposals can include for a broad range of projects such as:

- renewable energy production and consumption
- building retrofit, energy efficiency and carbon-neutrality
- district heating systems
- design scalability and spatial proximity
- promoting liveability and community-oriented human environments
- decreasing reliance on the private car and encouraging active travel modes
- supporting efficient and sustainable public and private transport
- transport demand measures and goods delivery
- waste minimisation and the circular economy
- flood relief
- biodiversity, ecosystems and green space
- behavioural change

The Department hosted an online webinar for local authorities on 12 February, 2021 which outlined the requirements of the scheme. DZs can be urban or rural areas with specific population or geographic area criteria contained in the Circular Letter. Council's must submit an initial proposal for a DZ to the Department by 30 April, 2021. Thereafter, follow-on steps could include:

- Harnessing those plans to develop low carbon projects for future calls under the Climate Action Fund; and

- Early progression of demonstrator projects harnessing a range of technologies and initiatives and which would be subject to a mid-project review by the Local Authority.

It is proposed to submit an area of Limerick city, utilising the existing +City XChange area as its core, on the basis that the baseline research and analysis, data gathering, stakeholder mapping and community engagement already undertaken, and identified projects commenced, will provide a structure for an expanded DZ and support an earlier implementation of the DZ in Limerick.

The Circular states that, following Departmental approval of the candidate DZ, local authorities will have until the end of Q4 2021 to submit more detailed implementation plans.

Brian Kennedy

Director of Service