

Carlow

2026

Decarbonising Zone

**Carlow County Council is delivering a Decarbonising Zone in Carlow Town
to lead climate action locally, reduce emissions, and create a healthier,
more sustainable place to live.**



CARLOW PPN 2026

What is a Decarbonising Zone?

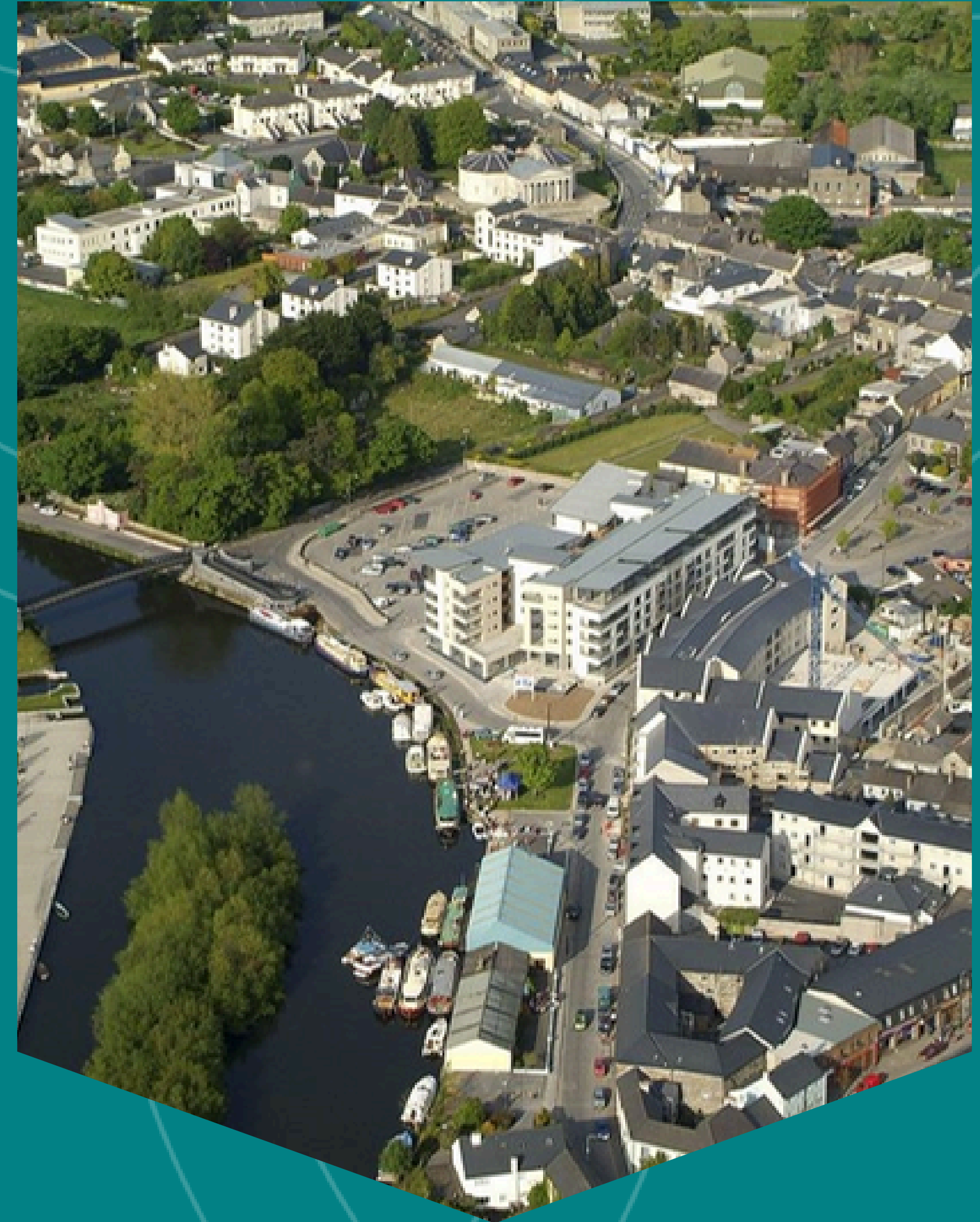
Decarbonising Zones (DZ) are specific areas chosen by local authorities where targeted actions are taken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and support climate action.

These zones primarily act as test areas for innovative ways to adapt to and reduce the impacts of climate change, with lessons shared across the county and wider Ireland.

They focus on:

- Cleaner energy and energy efficiency
- Low-carbon transport (walking, cycling, public transport)
- Sustainable buildings and heating
- Nature-based solutions like planting trees and improving biodiversity
- Climate adaptation, such as flood resilience and reducing urban heat

Each DZ is tailored to local needs and must achieve at least a 7% annual reduction in emissions (2021–2030), in line with national climate targets.



CLIMATE ACTION PLAN 2019

To Tackle Climate Breakdown



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Why Carlow Needs a Decarbonising Zone

Ireland's Climate Action Plan requires every local authority to create a DZ to help meet EU and national climate targets.

For Carlow, the DZ will:

- Act as a pilot area to test climate solutions
- Help develop approaches that can be expanded across the county
- Support businesses, communities, and public bodies to work together on reducing emissions
- Build a resilient, low-carbon local economy



Where is Carlow's Decarbonising Zone

Carlow's Decarbonising Zone covers the built-up area of Carlow Town, specifically the Electoral Divisions of Carlow Urban, Carlow Rural, and Graiguecullen Urban.

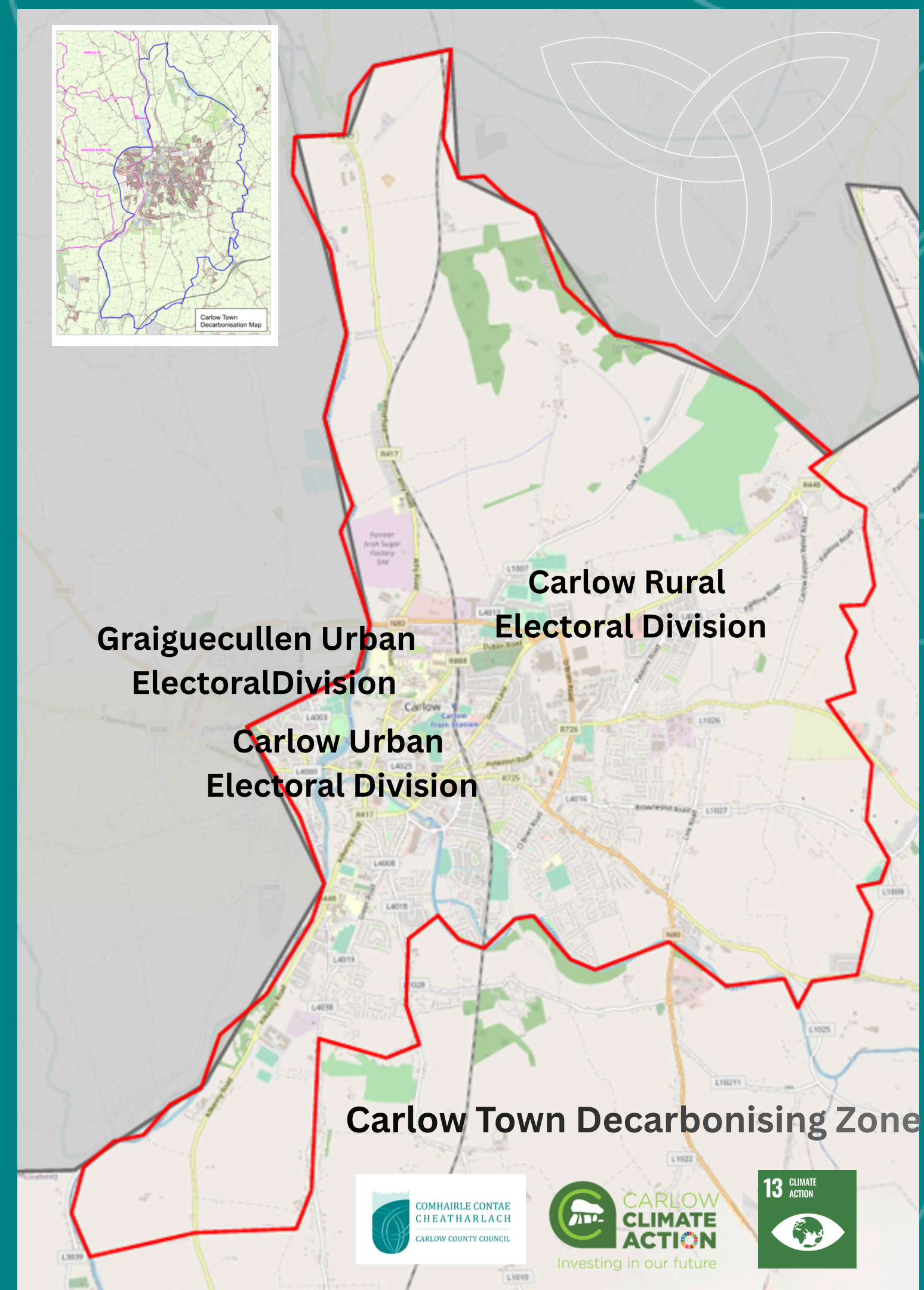
The area is home to a population of over 27,000 people (Census 2022), representing just over 44% of the county's population, making it the most significant centre for climate action in the county.

The zone includes a diverse mix of land uses, such as:

- Residential areas
- Commercial and retail areas
- Educational institutions
- Industrial and employment hubs

It also features important natural assets, including two key rivers:

- The River Barrow, one of Ireland's longest rivers, which is designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and is of major environmental and historical importance
- The Burren River, which flows through the town centre before joining the River Barrow



Why was Carlow Town Chosen?

Carlow Town was selected because it offers the greatest potential impact:

- Large population – Over 27,000 people (about 44% of the County)
- High energy use – As the main economic and service centre
- Strong transport links – Opportunities for low-carbon travel options
- Major employers and institutions – Including SETU, MSD, Teagasc
- Education and community engagement – Schools and colleges support awareness and innovation
- Existing sustainability efforts – A strong base to build on
- Ideal test location – Lessons learned can be applied across the county



What does the Decarbonising Zone focus on?

In Carlow, the Decarbonising Zone focuses on taking a broad, joined-up approach to tackling climate change at local level.

It looks at improving homes and buildings through retrofitting and cleaner energy, making it easier and safer to walk, cycle and use public transport, and expanding green spaces and biodiversity.

It also supports reducing waste and encouraging reuse, while helping communities take part through awareness, local projects and support for those affected by fuel poverty. The aim is not just to cut emissions, but to make Carlow a healthier, greener and more attractive place to live for everyone.



Who are the key Partners in Carlow Town Decarbonising Zone?

Reducing Green House Gases in Carlow Decarbonising Zone is a shared effort, bringing together government, businesses, educators, and the community to create a low-carbon, sustainable future.

Carlow County Council

- Leads the planning, coordination, and delivery of the DZ
- Engages stakeholders and oversees implementation

Local Communities and Residents

- Play a central role in participation, behaviour change, and local initiatives
- Community groups, residents' associations, and volunteers are key drivers

Businesses and Industry

- Major employers such as MSD, retail centres, and local enterprises support emissions reduction through energy efficiency, innovation, and sustainable practices

Education and Research Institutions

- South East Technological University (SETU), KCETB, Schools and colleges that support education, research, and innovation in climate action



Who are the key Partners in Carlow Town Decarbonising Zone?

State Agencies and Public Bodies

SEAI (Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland) – funding and technical support

Teagasc – sustainable agriculture and land use expertise

Transport agencies (e.g. NTA, TFI) – sustainable mobility solutions

Other government departments aligned with climate policy

Utilities and Energy Providers

Electricity and gas network operators (e.g. ESB Networks)

Support renewable energy integration, grid development, and energy solutions

Community and Voluntary Organisations

Sustainable Energy Communities (SECs)

Environmental groups, sports clubs, and NGOs supporting local action and engagement



What role of Carlow County Council play in the Decarbonising Zone?

In Carlow, the council has an important role in making climate action happen. It can reduce emissions directly by improving its own buildings, fleet, lighting and services, focusing efforts within a defined Decarbonising Zone. But it can't achieve big targets alone.

Most emissions come from transport choices, homes and businesses, so Carlow County council also works with the community—bringing together residents, businesses, schools and energy groups, supporting projects, and helping people take action.

By building partnerships and backing local initiatives, the council helps create the conditions for real, large-scale change across the whole community.



Carlow Decarbonising Zone Working Group

What this means for you

The Decarbonising Zone is already bringing practical changes that are improving daily life in Carlow while reducing emissions, with further developments continuing over time.

For residents, this means both new opportunities and visible improvements in the area.

Changes to the Town and How It Develops

Over time, you might have noticed:

- More energy-efficient buildings
- New infrastructure supporting sustainable travel
- Planning decisions that prioritise sustainability and resilience
- Improved public spaces and local amenities

These changes will continue and are designed to create a more attractive, future-ready town.



What this means for you

Safer and More Accessible Travel Options

Changes are already happening to make it easier to walk, cycle, and use public transport, and these improvements will continue into the future.

- Expanded and safer walking and cycling routes
- Better public transport options
- Improved connections between communities, schools, and workplaces

These changes aim to reduce traffic, save money on fuel, and make every day journeys easier and safer.

Cleaner Air and a Healthier Environment

Reducing emissions means:

- Better air quality, especially in busy areas
- Reduced noise pollution
- More green spaces, trees, and biodiversity

This contributes to improved physical and mental wellbeing for the whole community



What this means for you

Access to Funding Advice and Supports

Residents, businesses, and community groups can receive:

- Guidance on a wide range of potential funding opportunities for energy upgrades and sustainability projects
- Advice and support through organisations such as the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI)
- Information on how to access and apply for relevant grants and schemes as they become available
- Opportunities to get involved in local energy and sustainability initiatives



A Better Future for Carlow Town

The Decarbonising Zone is focused on driving meaningful climate action by:

- Reducing emissions to support national and global climate targets
- Transforming Carlow into a low-carbon, climate-resilient town
- Supporting local jobs as part of a sustainable, green economy
- Preparing for and adapting to climate impacts such as flooding and extreme weather
- Deliver shared benefits for the whole community, including improved wellbeing, stronger local connections, and a more attractive place to live, work and study.

What Happens Next?

- Projects will continue to roll out in phases up to 2030
- Progress will be reviewed regularly
- New initiatives will be introduced as opportunities arise



Find out more or get involved at **Carlow.ie** or contact Carlow County Council at **climate@carlowcoco.ie**