

Climate Action Roadmap 2023

For Climate Action Plan 2023



An tSeirbhís Chúirteanna
Courts Service



September 2023

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1 Introduction

Climate Action Plans 2021 and 2023 set out the requirement for all Public Sector Bodies to adopt a Climate Action Mandate. The Mandate aims to support the public sector to lead by example on climate action, and thereby inspire the necessary climate action in wider society to reduce Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions. The Climate Action Mandate requires all public bodies to develop a Climate Action Roadmap and for this roadmap to be updated in line with each successive Climate Action Plan.

This second iteration of the Courts Service Climate Action Roadmap, published in September 2023, refers to the 2023 Climate Action Plan. The first Courts Service Climate Action Roadmap was published in March 2023 in reference to the 2021 Climate Action Plan. These publications timeframes are in line with SEAI and EPA guidance. Our Roadmap will continue to be updated regularly to adopt future Climate Action Plans and Mandates.

The Courts Service is a statutory independent state agency responsible for the administration and management of the Courts in Ireland. It was established by the Courts Service Act 1998, at which time it took over a large historic estate, primarily from the Local Authority and the Office of Public Works (OPW). There have been considerable adjustments to and consolidation of the Courts Service estate since 1998 and currently 103 venues are in use, distributed throughout the country.

The Courts Service energy use and carbon generation are solely due to the operation of our buildings and staff travel - we have no fleet or transport operations.

The Courts buildings range from small single courtroom venues to the Criminal Courts of Justice (CCJ) at 23,000 square meters, which is the largest and busiest courthouse in the country. There is a similarly wide range in building age, from the iconic Four Courts constructed in 1785, to our newest venue completed in 2018. The average age of the Courts Service venues is 162 years old with an average time since refurbishment of 40 years. Some venues are in daily use as both offices and courthouses, while others are used intermittently on court sitting days only. Further concentration and rationalisation of the estate is expected over the decade to 2030.

The majority of the buildings are owned by the Courts Service or the relevant Local authority, with responsibility for management and maintenance residing

with the Courts Service, in cooperation with the OPW. The Four Courts complex and four other buildings are owned by the OPW. Eight buildings are currently in Public Private Partnership (PPP) arrangements – this includes the CCJ which was opened in 2010, and seven regional courthouses completed between 2017 and 2018 on green field sites or as extension/refurbishments of existing courthouses. Twenty-six courthouses are under the OPW *Optimising Power at work* program, and we work very closely with our nominated energy advisors in these venues.

The estate includes 64 buildings with protected status. Many are in prominent town centre locations, have high visibility, and are located within Architectural Conservation areas (ACAs). The Courts Service places great value on these buildings, rich in judicial and architectural heritage. However, the complexity of the specific conservation requirements of heritage and protected buildings presents a challenge for upkeep, modernisation, and decarbonisation.

2 Our Targets and Project Pipeline

2.1 Our 2030 Targets

The Climate Action Plan 2021 set the 2030 targets for Public Sector Bodies to become twice as energy efficient as they were in 2009 and to generate half as much carbon as generated based on an annual average over 2016 - 2018. The Climate Action Plan 2023 reaffirms these targets. Since 2011, the Courts Service has reported annually on its energy consumption using a Monitoring and Reporting (M&R) platform developed by SEAI. The M&R software was updated to reflect the 2030 energy efficiency and decarbonisation targets for Public Sector Bodies. The new M&R platform contains all the historic energy data reported by the Courts Service and integrates the post-2020 carbon reporting data.

Energy Efficiency Target

The energy efficiency target of a 50% improvement compared to 2009, is measured relative to an activity metric - floor area in the case of the Courts Service – and can take account of an expanding organisation and modernising estate. This target is a continuation of actions taken towards the 2020 target of a 33% improvement compared to 2009. Energy efficiency efforts which have been effective to date will be continued, iteratively and in all venues, with a focus on eliminating wastage via better controls, streamlining systems, applying deeper upgrades, and optimising user behaviour via continual staff engagement.

By 2020 the Courts Service had achieved an energy efficiency improvement of 26.5% relative to 2009, falling short of the 33% target. The result is partly due to the age and condition of our estate, funding, and maintenance issues and partly due to Covid-19, which had a significant impact on energy consumption from 2020 to 2022. As an essential service, the Courts remained in operational use throughout the pandemic, increasing ventilation in line with Health and Safety recommendations in courtrooms and offices - either naturally, via open windows and doors, or mechanically, with increased reliance on Air Handling Units. This placed an extra load on our heating plant during the cold winter months of 2020/2021 and 2021/2022, increasing thermal energy use and carbon generation, and associated electrical consumption.

By 2022 the Courts Service had reversed the Covid effect and achieved an energy efficiency improvement of 34.6% relative to 2009, including an 11.7% improvement from 2021 to 2022.

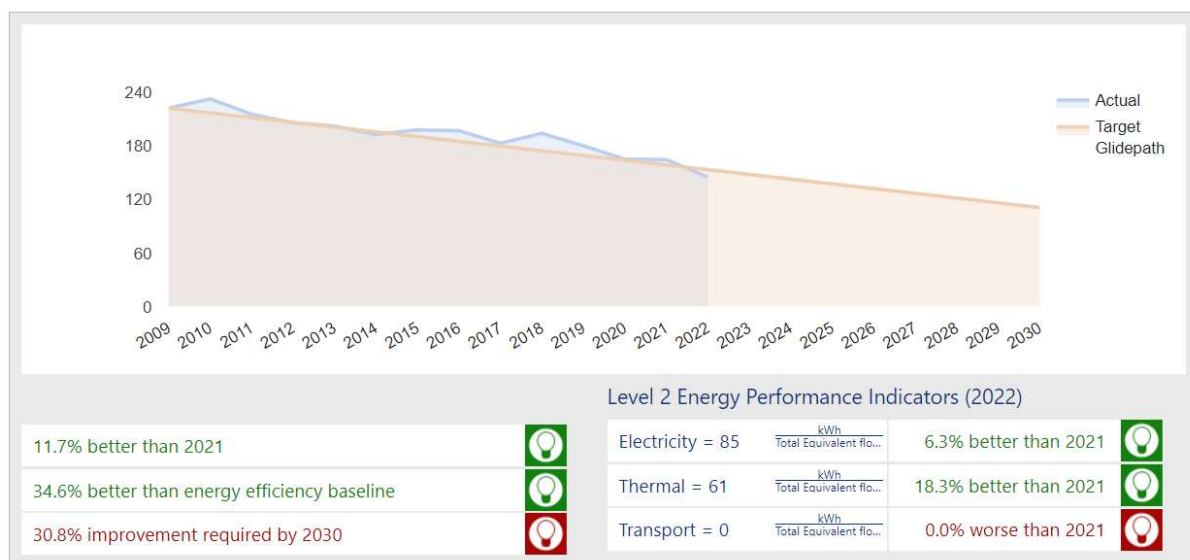


Figure 1: Extract from Courts Service 2022 M&R scorecard

The extract above from the M&R shows the progress made since 2009 with divergence from the glidepath during the Covid-19 pandemic and on occasions in the past – refer to past changes below.

Decarbonisation Target

The decarbonisation target is a new target post-2020 and is absolute and as such is blind to organisational changes or expansion, e.g., an increasing workforce or enlarged building footprint. It is associated only with the carbon generated as a result of an organisation’s heating and transport. The carbon associated with electricity consumption is outside of the organisations control and forms part of a broader government commitment to progressively decarbonise the electricity grid.

The Courts Service decarbonisation target is based on our heating systems only (no organisational transport) and will require a fundamental change away from our traditional hydrocarbon-based thermal fuels and a move to cleaner heating options such as Heat pumps, biofuels, and district heating systems.

2.2 Estate Configuration

Past Changes

The energy consumption data for the Courts Service indicates a number of significant past changes in our estate configuration, namely the addition of the CCJ in 2010 at 23,000m² and the addition of our seven regional PPPs in 2017/2018. Both additions are clearly visible on our M&R (see Figure 1 above) and Gap-to-Target analysis below. The impact on our energy efficiency performance is not significant, as this is measured relative to our activity metric (area), which increased significantly at each addition. However, the impact on our carbon performance and targets is significant – as the 2030 target is based on our 2016 to 2018 average - in 2016 and for part of 2017 the seven regional PPPs did not form part of our estate, while in 2018 a substantial increase is noted. The result was an increase in our carbon generation by 2021 relative to the 2016 – 2018 baseline, but 2022 data shows that this upswing has been largely reversed (see Figure 4).

Future Changes

The Courts Service is currently undertaking two major streams of work which will impact on our estate configuration in 2030.

- The development of a dedicated Family Law Centre in Hammond Lane in Dublin, due for completion in 2028 and likely to result in the full or partial exit from currently leased buildings. The building will be a new construction and will be either Nearly Zero Energy Building (NZEB) or a Zero Energy Building (ZEB) in line with applicable Building Regulations at time of construction. Full details on area, systems, energy, and carbon modelling are not yet available and have not been incorporated in the current Gap to Target modelling.
- A national review of the Courthouse estate and its constituent court venues condition, usage and demographics is underway as part of the ***Estate Strategy 2022 - 2025***, setting out steps to establish a vision for the future Courts Service property estate to support the Courts Service Modernisation Programme and Long-Term Strategic Vision 2030.

Energy efficiency and decarbonisation actions will be reviewed and updated in future iterations of the Climate Action Roadmap to recognise any future changes to estate scale and composition, once sufficient levels of details are available.

Significant Energy Users

All Courts Service energy consumption and carbon generation is due to our buildings only - no organisational vehicles are used. Although the Courts

Service has a large estate with 103 venues, a substantial portion of the energy consumption is due to a relatively small number of venues.

- Our three largest venues, all in Dublin city, are responsible for circa 40% of our energy consumption, namely.
 - The Criminal Courts of Justice (CCJ), a Public Private Partnership (PPP) building.
 - The Four Courts, an OPW owned complex.
 - Phoenix House Headquarters, a leased venue.
- Twenty buildings are responsible for three quarters of our energy consumption which, in addition to the three listed above, include:
 - 7 Regional PPP Buildings
 - 10 Courts Service operated buildings in regional towns and Dublin.
- Twenty-six of our non-PPP largest energy consumers are part of the *Optimising Power at Work* program.

The projects required to reach our 2030 targets are heavily focused on the Significant Energy Users identified above, specifically the Four Courts and our eight PPP venues. However, action is required in all venues to move them to a more sustainable footing.

Pathfinder project

The carbon reduction targets will be most challenging for our sixty-four protected heritage venues. Heritage properties present unique challenges because the fabric of the building (floors, walls, roof) has to breathe to function. This permeability means they may not be suitable for Heat pump space heating and cannot be insulated in the same way as non-heritage buildings without the risk of condensation, rot, and mould. Windows may be protected and the integration of renewable technologies, for example solar photovoltaic (PV) panels on the roof, may be subject to heritage approval and present challenges with access and support. Our decarbonisation effort must recognise and be sensitive to these constraints.

To identify appropriate technical solutions and a pathway to BER B for our heritage buildings, we are partnering with SEAI and the OPW in the Pathfinder program, with Ennis and Sligo Courthouses. The aim is to also quantify costs, resourcing, delivery mechanisms and operational implications for our organisation. Significant progress was made on the investigation and analysis phase of the pathfinder projects during 2023, with air pressure tests, wall and roof opening up to verify makeup, and conservation investigation. A report with costed proposals on the path to BER B is due in September 2023.

2.3 Our Gap-to-Target Tool

SEAI developed a Gap-to-Target (GtT) tool to extract historic energy use and carbon generation data from the M&R database as far back as 2009 for each Public Sector Body individually, thus providing us with a customised and full-estate overview of our energy usage, carbon generation and targets. This allows us to accurately model the impact of energy efficiency and decarbonisation projects and more importantly, to understand the type, scale and timeframes of the projects required to reach our 2030 targets. This project pipeline forms the basis of this Climate Action Roadmap.

In advance of using the GtT tool, the energy efficiency and decarbonisation benefits of a wide range of projects were quantified using the Courts Service detailed energy database. The projects were extracts from Registers of Opportunity following SI426 energy audits, internal reviews, and/or projects which are already under investigation. The projects ranged from well advanced and fully funded projects at tender stage, to early concept projects, with delivery timelines set accordingly and spanning the years to 2029.

The Courts Service GtT tool was generated, and the impact of a range of quantified projects and timelines on progress to target examined, allowing us to identify the range of projects required to reach our dual targets – delivery of these projects represents the success scenarios as set out in the following sections.

The GtT is based on the latest data on the M&R (2022 provisional results at time of publication of this Roadmap in September 2023) and will be updated for each iteration of the Climate Action Roadmap to reflect consumption and project progress. The next iteration will contain 2023 energy consumption and carbon generation data. The output of the GtT analysis regarding progress to Energy efficiency targets is presented in Figure 3 and regarding decarbonisation targets in Figure 4. Two scenarios are generated within the completed GtT tool - a do-nothing scenario and a success scenario.

Scenario 1: Do-nothing

The energy efficiency do-nothing scenario is represented by the red dashed line in Figure 3 and is based on the assumption that the pace of improvements in energy efficiency since 2009 will be maintained to the end of the decade, essentially a Business-as-usual scenario. This identifies that an energy efficiency improvement of **44.7%** would be achieved by 2030, falling significantly short of the 50% energy efficiency target.

The decarbonisation do-nothing scenario is represented by the red and blue dashed line in Figure 4 below, representing two starting points - our 2022 and baseline (2016-2018 average) carbon generation. This highlights that by 2030, if we rely solely on the decarbonisation of the grid without delivering a pipeline of energy efficiency and decarbonisation projects, we will generate **58.5%** more carbon than our targets.

Scenario 2: Success Scenario

Under the success scenario the energy efficiency and decarbonisation targets are fully achieved via the completion by 2029 of the range of projects entered in the GtT tool. The list of planned and proposed projects to achieve targets are set out in Figure 2, with details on measure, venues involved, project readiness status and estimated timeframes for delivery. An estimate of the energy and decarbonisation benefit of each project has been conducted based on evidence available and entered in the GtT tool.

Any external funding for measures is also highlighted – these include potential funding from the SEAI for the pathfinder projects, funding from the OPW (in OPW owned buildings) and funding from our PPP partners (e.g., contractual lifecycle cost replacement, benefits sharing). Note no co-funding is guaranteed at this stage for most projects.

There is considerable overlap between energy efficiency and decarbonisation, with many projects delivering both benefits, for example controls optimisation which reduces both electricity and heating fuels. However, projects that reduce electricity only (e.g., lighting upgrades) are classified as energy efficiency projects only and will not contribute to our decarbonisation goals (see section on Decarbonisation Targets above). Specific decarbonisation focused projects are therefore required, and these are focused on fuel switching away from hydrocarbon fuels to biomass or bioLPG boilers, or the displacement of some of the boiler load with electric heat pumps.

The Courts Service established a dedicated Sustainability Unit in 2020 and with the full support of the Senior Management team the unit has received increasing resourcing and funding in the intervening years. The Sustainability Unit will be responsible for delivering the majority of the non-PPP projects highlighted above. We will do this in many instances in cooperation with the OPW and dependencies are noted. We also plan to establish internal frameworks to allow us to progress projects at a greater scale as the decade progresses. Several projects are maintenance projects (*) or venue refurbishments (**), in line with the modernisation of our estate, and these are led by the relevant Regional Office with Sustainability Unit engagement and funding for additional energy efficiency and decarbonisation measures. Work in our PPP venues will be carried out in cooperation with our on-site PPP partners, with funding mechanisms and contractual implications to be fully investigated.

| Timelines | Action | Venue | Project Readiness Stage | | | | | | External Funding | Energy Efficiency Action | GHG Action |
|-------------|---|------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|-------------|--------------------|---------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------|------------|
| | | | 1 Concept | 2 Priority | 3 Scoped | 4 Business case | 5 Designed | 6 Tender | | | |
| 2021 - 2030 | Staff Engagement & Comms, Green teams | Ongoing - All venues | | | | | | | N | Y | |
| | Minor energy efficiency projects | Ongoing - All venues | | | | | | | N | Y | Y |
| 2022 - 2025 | Pathfinder Project | Ennis & Sligo Courthouses | | X | | | | | SEAI | Y | Y |
| | Boiler Replacement & Controls upgrade, w/fuel switch | Longford, Nenagh, Clonmel | | | | X | | | N | Y | Y |
| 2023 | Fuel switching LPG to BioLPG | All LPG venues | | | X | | | | N | N | Y |
| | BMS Optimisation | CCJ | | | X | | | | N | Y | Y |
| | Four Courts Lighting upgrade. | Phase 2 Gandon and Judges Library. | | | X | | | | N | Y | Y |
| | Install Heat Pump for DHW | 7 x BAM PPP courthouses | | | X | | | | PPP | Y | Y |
| | Full building Fan Coil Unit replacement* | Phoenix House | | | X | | | | N | Y | Y |
| | Venue refurbishment - fabric and systems** | Mallow District Court | | | X | | | | N | Y | Y |
| 2024 | Courtroom lighting upgrade | 7 x BAM PPP courthouses | | | X | | | | PPP | Y | Y |
| | Install Photovoltaic solar panels | CCJ | | X | | | | | PPP | Y | Y |
| | Lighting Upgrade | CCJ | | X | | | | | PPP | Y | Y |
| | Venue refurbishment - fabric and systems** | Balbriggan Courthouse | | X | | | | | N | Y | Y |
| | Boiler Replacement & Controls upgrade, w/fuel switch | Athlone, Thurles, Gorey | | X | | | | | N | Y | Y |
| 2025 | Four Courts Boiler Replacement, w/fuel switch | Four Courts | | X | | | | | OPW | Y | Y |
| | Install Photovoltaic solar panels | 7 x BAM PPP courthouses | | X | | | | | PPP | Y | Y |
| 2026 | Oil Phase-out, boiler replacement w/Biofuel (year 1 of 3) | 1/3 of remaining oil venues | | X | | | | | N | Y | Y |
| | Install Photovoltaic solar panels | 10 venues | X | | | | | | N | Y | Y |
| 2027 | Boiler Replacement with Heat Pumps, w/peaking boiler | CCJ | | X | | | | | PPP | Y | Y |
| | Oil Phase-out, boiler replacement w/Biofuel (year 2 of 3) | 1/3 of remaining oil venues | | X | | | | | N | Y | Y |
| 2028 | Install Photovoltaic solar panels | 10 venues | X | | | | | | N | Y | Y |
| | Oil Phase-out, boiler replacement w/Biofuel (year 2 of 3) | 1/3 of remaining oil venues | | X | | | | | N | Y | Y |
| | Install Photovoltaic solar panels | 10 venues | X | | | | | | N | Y | Y |

Figure 2: Project pipeline for achieving 2030 targets.

2.4 Achieving the energy efficiency target

The extract from the GtT regarding the energy efficiency target is shown in Figure 3 below. This highlights the glidepath in blue, which shows what consistent annual progress to target looks like – it shows a sharp correction achieved in 2022 with a 11.7% improvement on 2021 energy efficiency, as a result of the lessening impact of Covid (as outlined above) and the impact of projects delivered in 2021 and 2022. The dashed red line indicates the Do-nothing scenario.

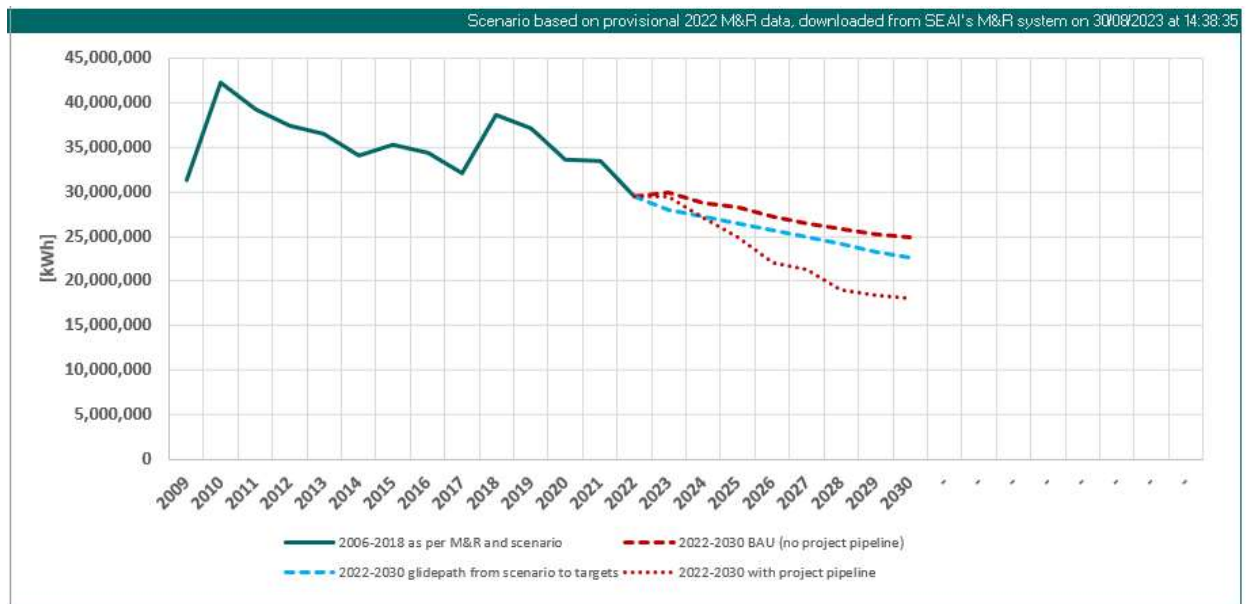


Figure 3: Extract from GtT Energy Efficiency results

The dotted red line in Figure 3 indicates the year-on-year energy efficiency progress to target based on the project pipeline entered in the GtT tool. This shows a gradual correction to meet the glidepath between 2024 and 2025 and to exceed target by the end of the decade, reaching a **60%** improvement in energy efficiency by 2030 relative to 2009. This overshoot allows a small cushion against project delay or underperformance and will be continually revisited in roadmap iterations as future year data becomes available.

The energy efficiency projects included are listed in Figure 2 and at a high level are focused on the following actions:

- Boiler replacement with controls upgrade
- Controls optimisation
- Lighting upgrades
- Asset renewal and maintenance
- Whole building refurbishments
- Installation of Photovoltaic solar panels

- Installation of Heat Pumps
- Minor projects to eliminate waste energy.
- Staff Engagement

2.5 Achieving the carbon emissions reduction targets

The extract from the GtT regarding the decarbonisation target is shown in Figure 4 below. This highlights in dark brown the carbon currently and historically generated from our heating systems, with the dotted red line indicating our baseline (2016 – 2018 average) on which our 51% decarbonisation target is based. The uplift since the baseline period due to the coming onstream of the seven PPP buildings between 2017 and 2018, as well as the impact of Covid-19 is apparent. This uplift resulted in an increase of 8.5% in the carbon generated between the baseline and 2021, but this trend was reversed in 2022 which delivered a 14% reduction on the baseline.

The light brown area shows our projected future carbon generation based on the planned and proposed project pipeline to meet targets, indicating a gradual reduction in the coming years to maintain the glidepath and to exceed target by the end of the decade. As with the energy efficiency target, this cushion will need to be continually revisited in roadmap iterations as project progress is evaluated.

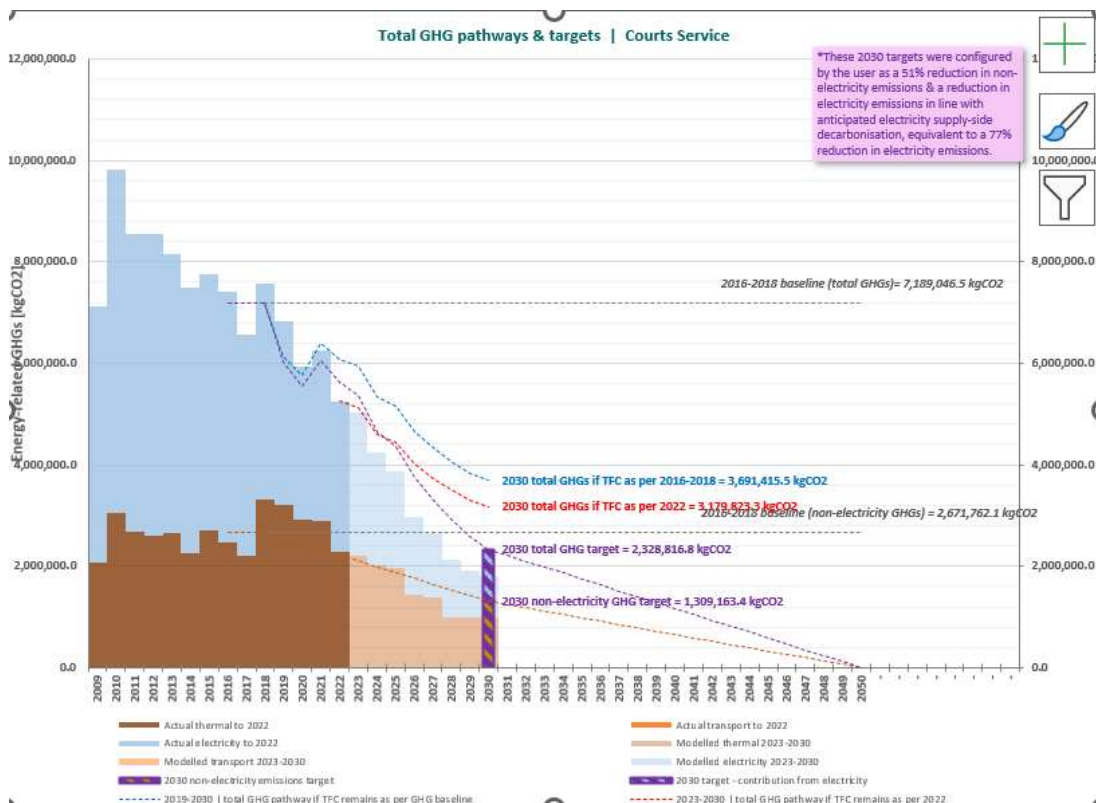


Figure 4: Extract from GtT decarbonisation results

The decarbonisation projects included are listed in Figure 2 and at a high level are focused on the following actions:

- Pathfinder project
- Boiler full or part replacement with Heat pumps
- Boiler replacement with Biomass or BioLPG boilers
- Fuel switching existing boilers.
- Controls optimisation
- Whole building refurbishments
- Minor projects to eliminate waste energy and staff engagement.

2.6 Building Stock Plans

In line with the Climate Action Mandate 2023, all public sector bodies are required to develop a building stock plan, in line with the EPBD, by end-2023 for retrofitting their building stock to meet CAP targets. The Courts Service have detailed data on our estate and await SEAI guidance, due in autumn 2023, on the requirements of the Building Stock Plan. Once complete, we will use the plan to review the requirements – technical, financial, resourcing, and operational - to upgrade all building stock to Nearly Zero Energy Buildings (NZEB) or Zero Emission Buildings (ZEB) as outlined in the EPBD proposal and Energy Efficiency Directive. We await transposition of the upgraded EPBD into Irish law to gauge all requirements for incorporation in future Climate Action Roadmaps and internal Environmental Sustainability strategies. Our long-term building renovation plans will be informed by the learnings from our Pathfinder projects in Sligo and Ennis Courthouses.

2.7 Funding, Dependencies and Risk

The project pipeline set out under the success scenario is ambitious and involves work in many locations simultaneously. We will review the suitability and deliverability of these projects within the proposed timeframe on an ongoing basis and update the roadmap as required. It is essential to note that the funding source for most projects has not been identified and is not clear at this point. Similarly, the human resources, both internally and within the broader consulting and construction industry, are noted as potential constraints. We have a heavy dependency on the OPW in relation to many of our buildings and their continued cooperation and support is essential in the successful delivery of many of our projects. We are also heavily dependent on the continued cooperation of our PPP partners in our decarbonisation journey. The Courts Service Management and Board have approved this roadmap and its proposed project pipeline and timeframe, subject to the availability of adequate funding and capacity within the broader industry.

3 Our People

3.1 Leadership and Governance for Climate Action

The Courts Service Energy Performance Officer (EPO) is Assistant Secretary John Cleere, Head of Corporate Services Directorate, who has decision making powers with respect to facilities, corporate budgets, and procurement. John is a member of the Senior Management Team and was nominated as the Climate and Sustainability Champion for the Courts Service. He has responsibility for implementing and reporting on the Climate Action Mandate.

In 2020, a new energy unit was established within the Corporate Services Directorate, dedicated to energy efficiency, decarbonisation and complying with public sector targets. Our ambition has since broadened to include a broader environmental sustainability agenda, resource use and biodiversity and we are now the Sustainability Unit.

The Sustainability Unit team consists of 7 members, and we are recruiting for an additional technical HEO for the Munster region.

- Head of Energy Resources
- Administrative HEO
- Technical HEO, Eastern Region
- Technical HEO, Western Region
- Technical HEO, Munster Region
- Administrative EO, half-time
- Administrative CO

The Courts Service Corporate Strategic Plan 2021 – 2023 identified the provision of a modern and improved estate and facilities as a key strategic goal and further commits to improving sustainability and reducing carbon generation in line with climate legislation. The subsequent publication of the Climate Action Plan 2021 confirming the public sector energy efficiency and decarbonisation targets for the next decade to 2030, quantified the scale of the challenge. These two interlinked drivers provided the backdrop and context for the development and publication in 2021 of the Courts Service first *Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2021 - 2024*, which sets out the priority areas and initial steps in our sustainability journey into the early years of the decade. The strategy sets out the vision for the coming years via four distinct, but interconnecting priority activities as set out below:



Figure 5: Environmental Sustainability strategy Priorities

The four priorities are:

- The overarching sustainability priority for the Courts Service for the full decade will be progressed incrementally towards, and achieving, the public sector **energy efficiency and decarbonisation** targets for 2030. Ten essential actions have been identified to set the groundwork for this transition.
- The second priority area is **engagement and communication** with colleagues, the Judiciary, and stakeholders, in recognition of the need to engage all levels of our organisation in what will be a transformative decade, keep all stakeholders informed, and empower our colleagues as partners in this transition.
- We also acknowledge that there are broader organisational sustainability challenges and opportunities beyond the public sector

targets which should not be ignored. The focus of priority 3 is on actions to manage and **minimise the non-energy finite resources** we use, with the aim of becoming a resource-accountable organisation.

- Priority 4 sets out the path to identify **biodiversity** opportunities within our estate and actions required to take the first steps in managing our public lands in a pollinator-friendly manner.

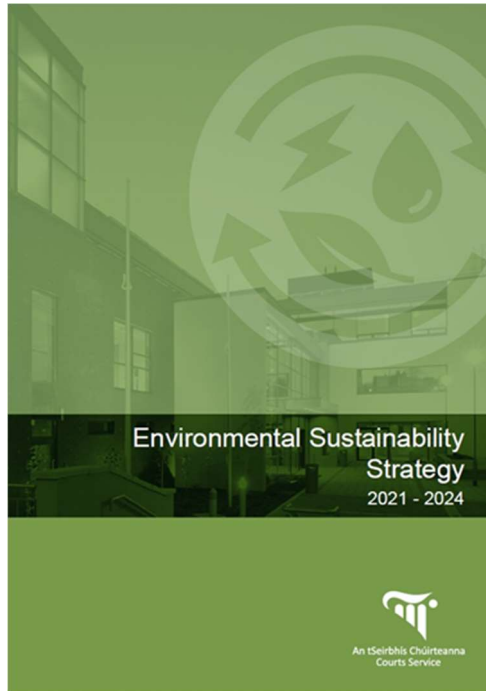


Figure 6: Environmental Sustainability strategy

Available at: https://courts.ie/acc/alfresco/1816b54b-180a-48c1-a07c-06192f5817a6/Sustainability_Strategy.pdf/pdf

The next ten years will be transformative for the Courts Service as we deliver on our Modernisation Programme to improve our services for all users. The *Environmental Sustainability Strategy* aims to follow the Modernisation Programme approach – to place the user at the centre of this transition and to make it as efficient and as effective as possible.

3.2 Courts Service Green Team

Following a call for volunteers in 2021, the Sustainability Unit set up our Green Teams with member of all grades and from Court Service venues across the country. Our teams meet monthly to discuss ideas, highlight issues, and share solutions around energy use, waste, water, and biodiversity. Ideas generated and issues brought to our attention can lead to initiatives being actioned with our input & assistance.

3.3 Engaging Staff

A key priority of the Courts Service *Environmental Sustainability Strategy* 2021-2024 is Engagement and Communication with the stated aim of creating, formalising, and expanding channels of communication around sustainability with Courts Service colleagues, the Judiciary, other courts users and external stakeholders. It is recognised that environmental and sustainability goals and targets will only be achievable with large scale participation from all. While the technical and systems-based initiatives are suitable for an organisational approach, minimising energy and finite resource use requires constant attention and effort at point of use.

Communication is a key to ensure a shared sense of ownership of this societal and organisational challenge, to capture ideas and opportunities for solutions and to share details on initiatives and progress. We have a multipronged approach to our communication and engagement campaign with emails, articles, an annual staff engagement event and partner workshops.

Strategy

The first step in our communication campaign began with the publication of our first *Environmental Sustainability Strategy* in November 2021 and its support and promotion by our Senior Management Team. We sought to socialise the content and generate interest via presentations, videos, emails, and articles in our internal newsletter. We also communicated it via external media channels in cooperation with our Communication Unit. The strategy is continually referenced in Sustainability articles and is the time-framed action plan by which our progress is measuring in parallel with our annual reporting.

Regular communications

The Sustainability Unit communicates with staff on an ongoing basis via articles in our bi-weekly internal newsletter, emails to all for bank holiday and Courts break shutdowns and articles in our Courts Service news. Through these channels we share details on the work of the unit, our progress relative to our strategic objectives, our green team actions, the broader climate action context including updates on public sector target and interesting general content in relation to sustainability.

We developed a Sustainability page on our Courts Connect intranet, which is accessible to all staff and frequently referenced in our communications. It provides access to our *Environmental Sustainability Strategy*, our sustainability actions, Climate Action Plans, our Climate Action Roadmaps, Public sector annual reports and information on the *Reduce Your Use* campaign.

We provide regular updates to our Senior Management Team, board, committees and regional management on sustainability obligations and actions. We provide updates on our energy consumption, carbon generation and progress relative to targets in our annual report.

One Small Change Campaign 2021

One of our strategic goals is to run a sustainability-focused staff engagement campaign annually. In preparation for our first campaign, two members of the Sustainability Unit took part in SEAI Staff Engagement Accelerator Program in 2021 and availed of the follow-on support to develop a logo and visuals for our campaign. The result was the *One Small Change* name and logo which we now use and incorporate in all our Sustainability engagement.



Figure 7: *One Small Change* campaign 2021 poster

In October 2021, we launched our first annual *One Small Change* campaign to align with OPW Energy Efficiency Week. This was a month-long campaign aiming to draw attention to small changes in behaviour staff could make, which cumulatively help to make our organisation more energy efficient and sustainable. Each week a new, simple energy saving idea was presented, with regular email communication and corresponding posters displayed in our venues. Our green teams and on-site staff in venues assisted greatly in the management and display of the posters in line with our message.

Our final week focused on lighting, asking staff to get to know the location of switches and inviting them to take personal action and switch off lights when not required. Our posters for the week were accompanied by newly mounted and highly visible light strips and *One Small Change* logos at manual

switches in a broad range of venues. This was our most visible intervention and received a wide range of very positive feedback, including from our CEO and has resulted in a noticeable drop in lighting levels, particularly in intermittently occupied areas such as bathrooms, kitchenettes, and corridors.



Figure 8: *One Small Change* campaign 2021 light switch labels

Reduce Your Use Campaign 2022

In 2022, in recognition of the impact on the war in Ukraine on energy security and costs, the Cabinet approved a suite of energy-efficiency measures across the public sector. The Government asked Public Sector Bodies to lead by example in lowering energy consumption and costs, by signing up to the *Reduce Your Use* energy efficiency campaign. The campaign, developed by the SEAI the OPW, included both mandatory energy reduction measures for public bodies and an information campaign for public bodies, businesses, and the public alike. Therefore in 2022, we substituted our planned annual engagement event for participation in the *Reduce Your Use* campaign.

The information campaign included twice weekly communications for public sector staff, including energy awareness resources, online seminars, live webinars, and one-to-one online energy clinics. These resources are practical and evidenced-based, detailing what actions can help to save the most money and energy and encouraging long-term sustainable behaviour.

The team in the Sustainability Unit, with the support of the SMT, took the lead in this campaign by promoting weekly energy saving actions for staff to take at work, in addition to suggesting energy saving ideas to try at home. This was communicated via emails to all staff on Monday & Friday each week, encouraging staff to participate in a weekly webinar. A dedicated page on the *Reduce your Use* campaign was also set up on Courts Connect intranet, where all the information on the diverse topics and associated webinars and resources are available. Regular information on the campaign was also issued in the biweekly internal newsletter.

Recognition

We were honoured to be recognised as leaders in staff engagement with the inclusion of the Sustainability Unit's *One Small Change* posters in the *Reduce your Use* campaign.

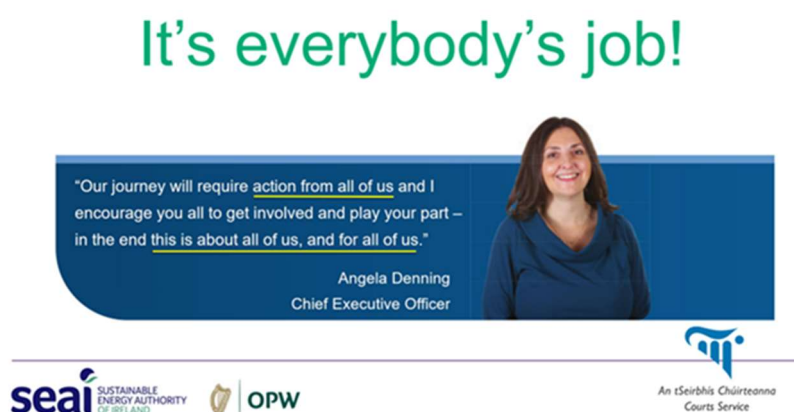


Figure 9: Extract from *Reduce Your Use* material.

We were also delighted to be recognised in the Green Teams National Program training with examples highlighting our organisations efforts, in particular the *One Small Change* campaign and the leadership from our CEO demonstrated in the forward to our *Environmental Sustainability Strategy*.

One Small Change 2023

In 2023, we are continuing our focus on reducing the electricity used for lighting our buildings, by expanding the light sticker campaign shown in Figure 8 above. We are rolling this signage out to all buildings nationwide where manual lighting is in use and are encouraging staff to become aware of the location of light switches in their area and take action when the lights are not required.

Working with our partners

Twenty-six courthouses are under the OPW *Optimising Power at work* program, and we work very closely with our nominated energy advisors in these venues. The advisors carry out regular site visits and on-site staff engagement events recommenced in 2023 (after a break during covid). These events include workshops on energy, carbon, and climate change issues, for colleagues and our external partners, as well as location-specific actions and information on waste, single-use plastic, water, and biodiversity.

3.4 Sustainability Learning and Development training.

In cooperation with our Learning and Development (L&D) Unit we have developed and are continuing to develop Sustainability training modules as follows:

- We produced short training videos on Building Management System (BMS) operation to enhance understanding and encourage engagement. This training is for service officers and all staff who interact with the new standardised BMS interface which we are rolling out in all locations.
- We provided access to the SEAI Energy Academy training via our L&D online portal, initially trialling access with our green teams to provide them with information, examples, and ideas that they can action locally and incorporating their feedback before making the training available to all interested staff via our intranet.
- In 2023 we began incorporating Sustainability training as part of our new staff induction programs, providing an overview of our targets, obligations, and achievements.

We have engaged with the Department of Justice on the Climate Action Plan 2023 requirement for comprehensive training in 2023 for all senior managements at Principal Officer level or above and await instruction on a centralised or One-learning approach to meet this requirement.

4 Our way of working

4.1 Annual Report

We provide updates on our sustainability actions, energy consumption, carbon generation and progress relative to targets in our annual report. The Courts Service 2022 Annual report was published in June 2022 and contained the following sustainability information:

Environmental Sustainability in 2022

In 2022, the Courts Service focused on delivering on the key actions set out in the Environmental Sustainability Strategy published in November 2021. A sample of the actions completed include:

- *Completion of a Gap to Target analysis in preparation for publication of the first Climate Action Roadmap in Q1 2023.*
- *Collaboration with the OPW and SEAI in a Pathfinder project for two protected Courthouses to identify appropriate technical solutions and funding mechanisms to achieve 2030 decarbonisation targets.*
- *Investment of €1.5 Million in upgrades to thermal plant and systems, smart building controls, migration to electric heating, energy efficient lighting and fuel monitors.*
- *Expansion of our staff engagement programs and green team activities.*

We participated in the Reduce Your Use campaign in the winter of 2022/23, a Public Sector wide energy efficiency initiative developed by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland and the Office of Public Works. This included twice weekly emails to all staff, weekly webinars, and the provision of Courts Service fleeces to all staff in late 2022 to align with the campaign messaging.

Energy data

In 2022 the Courts Service Monitoring and Reporting data indicated the following provisional results:

- *Carbon emissions of 5,246,688 kgCO₂.*
- *Total final energy consumption of 28,062,078 kWh.*
- *Total energy expenditure €3,782,618.*
- *Contribution from renewables 0.1% (thermal).*

- *The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland Monitoring and Reporting provisional result indicates the Courts Service was 37.8% more energy efficient in 2022 than in 2009, indicating an improvement of 15.7% between 2021 and 2022.*
- *Covid-19 continued to have a significant impact on our energy utilisation in early 2022 due to system operation to support increased ventilation in line with Health and Safety guideline.*

From 2023, we will include the following additional information in the annual report, as set out in the Climate Action Mandate:

- Implementation of the mandate under comply or explain requirements.
- Compliance with Circular 1/2020: Procedures for offsetting the emissions associated with official air travel.

4.2 Green public procurement

The Courts Service continues to operate a devolved procurement function with a dedicated procurement co-ordinator located in the Finance Unit. The procurement plan updates are delivered quarterly to Senior Management who are committed to creating more awareness of GPP and its benefits.

In March 2023, an external procurement consultant delivered a GPP presentation to the Courts wide Procurement Network. This created awareness around Green Public Procurement and gave an overview on how to consider incorporating it into award and selection criteria. All information, including The Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) updated guidance on Green Public Procurement (GPP) for the public sector in 2021 is readily available on Courts Connect – The Courts Service’s intranet to support the organisation’s public procurement needs.

The EPA guidance calls out ten priority sectors where clear, verifiable criteria that can be included in procurement documents have been identified to ensure that the goods and services procured are sustainable.

In the last year, of the ten EPA criteria sets, the Courts Service would have drawn down framework agreements from the OGP in relation to the following services:

- Waste Management Services,
- Provision of Electricity and Gas,
- Provision of paper and printing services,
- Provision of stationery,
- Security Services,

- Stenographer & DAR Transcriptions,
- ICT Equipment & Consumables.

Work is continuing in the development of a Multi-party Framework Agreement for Design Teams and Technical Advisors to support future building/ construction projects. These frameworks will provide the Estate Management Unit with the expertise to deliver on and implement the Estates Strategy 2022 - 2025 and the Courts Service Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2021 - 2024, delivering on the Courts Service broader sustainability commitments.

GPP has also been considered in relation to the Heating and Lighting project for Phoenix House.

The Courts Service green selection and award criteria have been applied, where possible, on contracts below threshold or procured directly. As older contracts are renewed the Courts Service GPP commitments will be reviewed and included, where applicable.

A system to gather and record data on GPP implementation in the Courts Service, using the reporting template and relevant guidance, will be developed during 2023.

4.3 Resource Use

It cannot be overlooked that the Courts Service consumes more finite resources than the energy used to power and heat our building stock. Therefore, a priority action in our *Environmental Sustainability Strategy* was to commence monitoring of and reporting on major non-energy finite resources used to deliver our operational objectives, with a focus initially on waste and water.

A key objective of our Modernisation Programme is digitisation of many of our paper-based process and reducing paper consumption is one of the benefits identified. As projects are delivered, the Courts Service will review, and seek to quantify these benefits for inclusion in future reports. Working with the Modernisation Programme we will seek to eliminate paper-based processes as far as is practicable. Working with our procurement team, from late 2023, we will seek to move to the use of recycled paper as a default, as required per the Climate Action Mandate 2023.

The Sustainability Unit, in cooperation with our nationwide green teams, have begun highlighting paper use and encouraging staff to reduce the use of unnecessary paper throughout the organisation including samples below.

- Based on a suggestion to our Innovation Network, a pilot was run at several printing stations with posters to equate pages to trees consumed/CO2 produced/ equivalent bulb hours and to breakdown the pages printed by office location. This has now developed into a competition, launched by the CEO in November 2022, challenging staff to sign their office up to the initiative to reduce their paper usage through printing. The initiative is led by the Innovation Team and supported by the Sustainability Unit, with ICT providing monthly statistics on paper use at each printer. The competition has the potential to be scaled across our organisation.
- An email footnote has been incorporated into all mails sent from our organisation highlighting consideration for the environment before printing emails.

Cuimhnigh ar an timpeallacht sula ndéanann tú an ríomhphost seo a phriontáil
Please consider the environment before printing this email

4.4 Energy & environmental management systems and accreditation

The Courts Service is an obligated body with reference to SI426 and therefore we must undertake stand-alone energy audits on buildings representing at least 85% of our delivered energy use every four years. A review was initiated in 2021 and full compliance achieved in 2022. Compliance will be maintained until ISO50001 certification is achieved.

The *Climate Action Plan* calls for all large Public Sector Bodies to achieve formal environmental accreditation by the end of 2024. Adopting a formal Energy Management System (EnMS) is the best way for large organisations to manage their energy use and drive continual improvement. ISO50001 is an internationally recognized EnMS standard based on the management system model of continual improvement and provides an alternative route for compliance with SI426. We plan to start the process of preparing for formal environmental accreditation with ISO50001 in 2023 to complete certification in 2024.

5 Our Buildings and Vehicles

5.1 Display Energy Certificates

In late 2020, we carried out a full review of the status of Display Energy Certificates (DEC) across our estate and rectified any shortcomings in early 2021. While many of our buildings are protected structures, we ensured that all buildings over 250m² which we occupy had a valid DEC securely mounted in a prominent place for public review. We track our DEC annually on renewal to ensure an improvement trend and address any dis-improvements. From 2023 onwards we plan to expand the numbers of venues with DEC to complete the entire estate.

5.2 Bicycle friendly Buildings

One of the actions under our *Environmental Sustainability Strategy* is to investigate measures to support greener travel, including expanding bicycle parking and electric vehicles (EV) charging points in or close to our venues.

In 2022, we carried out a review of our Dublin city venues in cooperation with Dublin City Council and have identified adequate public bicycle parking on the streets around our buildings. We are engaging with the OPW for the upgrade of existing bicycle parking inside security on our Four Courts campus and are liaising with Dublin City Council on reinstatement of bicycle parking outside security for public use, due for completion by Q4 2023.

We are currently completing our review of existing bicycle parking in other parts of Dublin and nationally, and where discrepancies are identified, we will expand parking spaces for the use of colleagues, regular venues users and public visitors. Once this project is complete, we will seek to achieve the Smarter Travel Mark, when the programme has been fully developed.

A greener travel approach is inherent in our new construction projects, reducing the provision of car parking spaces and increasing bicycle parking in line with Building Regulations.

5.3 Parking in Buildings

It is a requirement of the Climate Action Mandate that public bodies phase out the use of parking in buildings that have access to a range of public transport services and active/shared mobility options for the majority of staff/visitors while providing that sufficient accessible parking is maintained for those with physical mobility issues. In late 2023, we will begin an assessment on our current parking arrangements, with a view to understanding the implications for each of our buildings.

5.4 Fossil Fuel Heating Systems

Courts Service venues have historically suffered from a lack of planned preventative maintenance and lifecycle replacement of major energy intensive plant, such as boilers and chillers. This has led to a situation where essential plant is malfunctioning, obsolete or beyond economic lifecycle, resulting in higher energy use and carbon generation than is required per unit of output. For boilers, an additional critical element is the use of oil/diesel/kerosene fuels which needs to be phased.

An asset register of all thermal plant across our estate detailing age, condition and fuel source was developed, to inform the selection of projects, prioritising elimination of oil/diesel and replacement of boilers at or beyond their economic life. For the past number of years, we have carried out a major summer capital investment program updating our boiler stock. We have increased the number of our buildings fuelled by LPG and are currently reviewing the availability, reliability, and cost of a full migration to bioLPG. Our boiler upgrade projects also include a complete overhaul of building control and Building Management Systems.

Analysis of these projects show a reduction of between 40% and 60% is achieved via boiler and controls upgrades. We still have a large number of boilers within our estate that are obsolete, or oil/diesel fired. Currently 33% of our buildings are heated by electricity or wood pellets, but 27% are still heated by oil.

| Heating Fuel | Number of Venues |
|--------------|------------------|
| Electricity | 33 |
| Natural Gas | 36 |
| Oil/Diesel | 28 |
| LPG | 5 |
| Wood Pellets | 1 |

Figure 10: Breakdown of heating fuels by venue

We will not install heating systems that use fossil fuels in new buildings or those undergoing major renovations after 2023. In 2023, we hope to focus on upgrade to the heating systems in our electrically heated buildings, many of which are of an older vintage. Our pathfinder project, due for reporting in Q3 2023, will inform the feasibility of installing heat pumps in our heritage and highly permeable buildings.

5.5 Vehicles

The Courts Service have no transport operations (beyond staff travel in private vehicles) and have no fleet. We do not anticipate any change in this over the coming decade and do not expect to purchase any vehicles.

6 Biodiversity

A key priority of the Courts Service *Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2021-2024* is to support biodiversity in and around our venues, and we are a partner member of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan (AIPP). In Ireland, the decline of Irish pollinators is a serious problem for our environment, the sustainability of our food production, and our agricultural and tourism sectors. With one third of our bee species threatened, our lush and blooming island could look very different in future decades - but there is a relatively simple solution and as custodians of a large estate of public properties, the Courts Service wish to play our part to help.



Figure 11: Nenagh Courthouse biodiversity initiatives

In 2021 we successfully ran pilot rewilding Projects in Nenagh and Carrick on Shannon including no-mow areas and bug hotels. We carried out a review of our extensive estate to identify all rewilding opportunities. In 2022 biodiversity projects were initiated at Carlow, Cork, Mullingar, Roscommon, Tralee, Tullamore, Waterford, and Wexford courthouses.

We collaborated with local partners at Nenagh courthouse to expand the initiative by lifting the grass turf and scattering native seeds to create a wildflower meadow, whose first season bloom is shown in photo above. We have also collaborated with Co. Councils at Limerick Mulgrave Street & Cavan courthouse on rewilding opportunities at those venues and seek to expand our biodiversity locations in 2023.

7 Conclusion

The scale of the challenge embedded in our transition to a more sustainable organisation over the next decade is very significant. It will require a fundamental rethink of the systems that service our buildings, the fuels we use and the resources we consume, as well as new solutions and collaborations not experienced before. The transition will require commitment from every level of the organisation, and we will all need to reconsider how we interact personally and collectively with our workplaces and the environmental impact of our actions and inactions.

Our 2021 *Environmental Sustainability Strategy* set out the Courts Service commitment to maintain focus on, and progress towards our 2030 targets, to reduce the resources we consume, to manage our estate in a biodiversity-friendly way, and to engage and empower our colleagues as partners in this transition.

This second Climate Action Roadmap, aligned with the Climate Action Plan 2023, builds on the work to develop our first Climate Action Roadmap, which identified the projects required to maintain steady progress towards and achieve our 2030 energy efficiency and decarbonisation targets. We acknowledge the challenge in delivered such an extensive and broad ranging series of interventions in so many of our venues over a relatively short period of time. We will continue to support, resource, and fund these efforts, investigating as many channels for project delivery and funding as possible. We will re-evaluate our progress at each iteration of the Climate Action Roadmap and take corrective action where necessary.

The public sector has been asked to lead by example and the Courts Service are committed to rising to this challenge by pursuing our 2030 targets. The Courts Service Board and Senior Management Team have noted that the project pipeline to achieve our 2030 targets is ambitious, with project in many venues simultaneously, for which costs have not been determined nor funding secured at this point. Further risks identified include dependencies on the OPW and our PPP partners, as well as potential constraints within the broader construction industry throughout the decade. Therefore, the Courts Service Board and Senior Management Team approve this roadmap subject to the availability of adequate funding and capacity within the broader industry.