



# Environmental Sustainability Strategy

2021 - 2024



An tSeirbhís Chúirteanna  
Courts Service

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# FOREWORD

**“The imperative to take action on climate change is all around us...As an organisation with a large portfolio of public buildings, significant effort will be required to decarbonise our estate to reach our 2030 targets. And as custodians of a significant heritage estate, we are committed to the challenge of taking them with us on this transition to ensure their continued use for future generations.”**



I am delighted to introduce our first Courts Service *Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2021 – 2024*. This strategy builds on work that has been undertaken by so many of our colleagues around the country and formalises our aspirations to become a more sustainable organisation and our route to achieving that goal.

The imperative to take action on climate change is all around us – from this month’s COP26 Climate Conference in Glasgow, to the *European Green Deal* ambition to make Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050, to Ireland’s recently published *Climate Action Plan 2021* which sets out our national ambition over the coming decade in line with the 2020 Programme for Government and the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Bill 2021.

As private citizens we have been issued a call to action for the common good. As a public sector body we are tasked with leading by example and supporting the mobilisation of the wider industry. As an organisation with a large portfolio of public buildings, significant effort will be required to decarbonise our estate to reach our 2030 targets. And as custodians of a significant heritage estate, we are committed to the challenge of taking them with us on this transition to ensure their continued use for future generations.

While recent events have shown us that we have the ability to respond and adapt quickly to rapid and unexpected challenges, we plan for a controlled transition towards a more sustainable workplace over the next decade, with the first steps to 2024 set out within this strategy. Our journey will require action from all of us and I encourage you all to get involved and play your part - in the end this is about all of us, and for all of us.

**Angela Denning**

Chief Executive Officer, The Courts Service

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *Courts Service Corporate Strategic Plan 2021 – 2023* identifies 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 recent publication of the *Climate Action Plan 2021* confirms the challenging public sector energy efficiency and decarbonisation targets for the next decade to 2030 and sets out a roadmap for the coming years.

These two interlinked drivers provide the backdrop and context to the development and publication 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. Four distinct but interconnecting priority areas have been identified and are crystallised into 24 key actions over the coming three-year period.

The first and 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.

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. This 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.

The Courts Service is committed to maintaining focus on and progressing 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. The external impetus to support these efforts is all around us and ever increasing. The priorities and actions within this strategy highlight the first step in initiating and mobilising the Courts Service transition and laying the groundwork for our ambition to meet the greater challenges expected mid-decade and beyond.

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

<b>ACA</b>	Architectural Conservation areas
<b>BER</b>	Building Energy Rating
<b>CCJ</b>	Criminal Courts of Justice
<b>DEC</b>	Display Energy Certificate
<b>EnMS</b>	Energy Management System
<b>EV</b>	Electric vehicles
<b>GWP</b>	Global Warming Potential
<b>M&amp;R</b>	Monitoring and Reporting portal
<b>NEEAP</b>	National Energy Efficiency Action Plan
<b>NZEB</b>	Nearly Zero Energy Building
<b>OGP</b>	Office of Government Procurement
<b>OPW</b>	Office of Public Works
<b>PPP</b>	Public Private Partnership
<b>PV</b>	Solar Photovoltaic
<b>SEU</b>	Significant Energy User
<b>SEAI</b>	Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland
<b>TPER</b>	Total Primary Energy Requirement



## 1. INTRODUCTION



# INTRODUCTION

The *Courts Service Corporate Strategic Plan 2021 – 2023* sets out a vision “to deliver excellent services to court users; working in partnership with the Judiciary and others, to enable a world class Courts system”. It identifies the provision of a modern and improved estate and facilities as a key strategic goal. The plan also commits to implementing measures to ensure we play our role in improving sustainability and reducing carbon generation in recognition of our obligations under climate action legislation.

The *Climate Action Plan 2019* recognised that Ireland would need to significantly increase its efforts in tackling climate change. It further acknowledged the key role public sector bodies have played over the past decade in leading by example while tackling their own emissions, and thereby stimulating and inspiring action across wider society. However, decarbonisation targets within the plan were quickly surpassed by the publication of the *EU Green Deal*, setting the goal for Europe to cut its greenhouse gas by more than half by 2030 and to become the first carbon-neutral continent by 2050. With the focus now on the transition to a low-carbon economy, more stringent targets have been set for Ireland under the *2021 Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Bill* and the newly published Government *Climate Action Plan 2021: Securing Our Future*. Both highlight the urgency to act to mitigate climate change and set challenging targets for all public sector bodies to continue to lead by example and significantly increase energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions by 2030.

The United Nations definition of sustainability is “**meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs**” and is composed of the three interconnecting pillars of economic, environmental, and social sustainability.

The Courts Service commitment to provide a modern and improved estate and to meet its public sector energy and decarbonisation obligations, provides the backdrop to the development and publication of the Courts Service first *Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2021 - 2024*.

## 1.1 Context

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 (comprising 106 buildings) are in use, distributed throughout the country as follow:

- 15 in Dublin
- 15 in the eastern region
- 13 in the north midland's region
- 29 in the southern region and
- 31 in the western region.

The buildings themselves range from small single courtroom venues to the Criminal Courts of Justice (CCJ) at 23,000 square meters, 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 refurbishment and modernisation 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-five 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.

A Courts Service Estate Strategy will be developed in 2022 to establish a vision for the future Courts Service property estate which supports the Courts Service Modernisation Programme and Long-Term Strategic Vision 2030. Actions and investment within the *Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2021 – 2024* will be aligned with the future estate vision and anticipated estate composition and resulting venue reporting requirements for 2030.

The Courts Service energy use and carbon generation reported to date is solely due to the operation of our estate. In 2020, a new unit was established within the Courts Service dedicated to environmental sustainability and tasked with improving energy efficiency, reducing carbon generation, and complying with public sector targets. Since then the ambition has broadened to include management of waste and other finite resources and increasing the biodiversity of the estate. This strategy sets out the resulting Environmental Sustainability vision for the next three years.





## 1.2 Public sector targets to 2020

### Overview

In 2009 the government set a target for public sector bodies to achieve a 33% improvement in energy efficiency by 2020, in line with the EU Energy Efficiency Directive (SI426) and the National Energy Efficiency Action Plan (NEEAP).

Since 2011, public sector bodies are required to report annually on their energy use and energy efficiency actions via an online Monitoring and Reporting portal (M&R) managed by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI). The portal records the baseline 2009 energy consumption and monitors annual progress towards energy efficiency goals for each public sector body. From this data an annual report is produced by the SEAI showing the performance of each public sector body, of each department and of the entire public sector, relative to targets. The Courts Service reports all electricity and thermal fuel use in our 103 venues on the M&R.

### 2020 Performance relative to targets

Based on the *Public Sector Annual Report 2020*, (which analyses 2019 data) the Department of Justice was responsible for 4% of the total public sector energy consumption. The Department has 18 separate reporting bodies under its aegis. The Courts Service is the third largest energy consuming body within the department (after An Garda Síochána and the Irish Prison Service) and is responsible for 10% of the total departmental energy use. The Department of Justice is expected to reach the 2020 target of 33% energy efficiency with final analysis and confirmation due for publication by SEAI in the annual report in December 2021.

The Courts Service achieved a 26.5% improvement in energy efficient by 2020 relative to a baseline of 2009. While considerable progress has been made, the result falls short of the 33% target. The Courts Service has struggled to maintain sufficient downward trajectory towards targets throughout the decade to 2020 - due to the increasing size and complexity of the portfolio, the age and condition of our estate, funding and maintenance issues. However, the gap to target was larger than expected, largely due to the Covid-19 pandemic which impacted both project delivery timelines and direct energy use.

As an essential service, the Courts have remained operational throughout the pandemic to maintain access to justice. The initial onset of Covid-19 and resulting restrictions caused a temporary reduction in energy use overall across the estate, attributed to reduced or virtual court sittings and remote working. However, increased ventilation throughout the winter heating season of 2020 into 2021, in line with Health and Safety recommendations to limit the spread of Covid-19 indoors, resulted in

greater thermal energy use than expected. This trend is expected to continue through the 2021/2022 winter.

### Energy Consumption in 2020

The Courts Service 2020 M&R results indicate the following:

- Total Primary Energy Requirement of 33,600,239 kWh.
- Contribution from renewables < 0.1%, from grid electricity 55.2% and from fossil fuels 44.7%.
- Thermal fuel usage is made up of 79.3% natural gas, 17.9% Kerosene, 2.6% LPG and 0.2% renewables.
- Carbon emissions of 5,914,298 kgCO<sub>2</sub>.

## 1.3 Public sector Targets to 2030

The recently published *Climate Action Plan 2021* sets 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 they did in the 2016 - 2018 baseline period. SEAI is currently developing new software and procedures to reflect the 2030 targets, due for completion in 2022, to support public sector bodies in reporting their energy usage and carbon generation, and in charting a path to reach the 2030 targets.

The carbon reduction requirements will be the most challenging for our historic buildings, rich in architectural heritage and with specific conservation requirements. Pilot or pathfinder projects will be essential to establish appropriate technical and renewable solutions for protected properties, costs, delivery and funding mechanisms, and operational implications and will thereby indicate the full extent of the challenge embedded in the 2030 targets.



## 2.

## STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

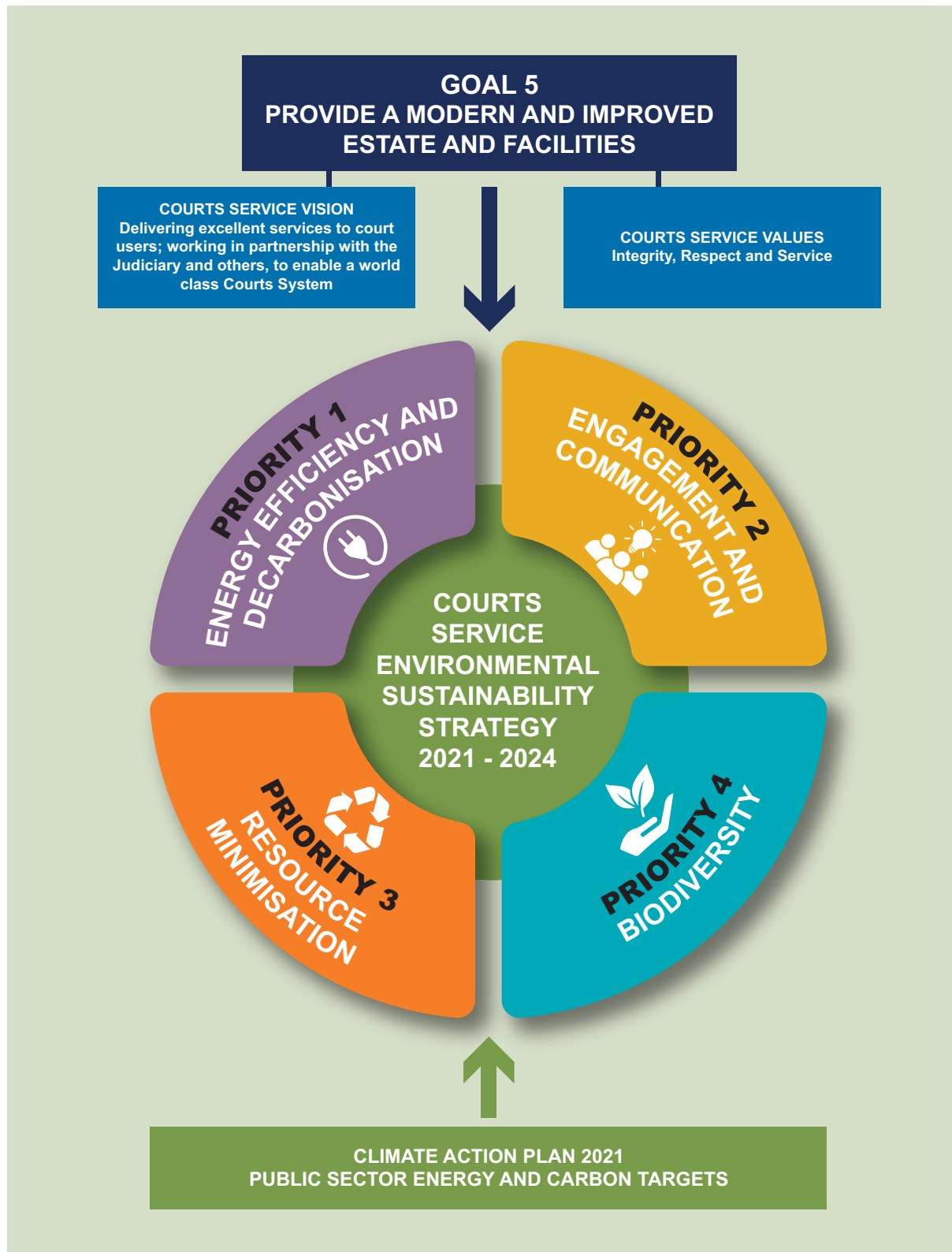


# STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

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.

Four distinct but interconnecting priority areas have been identified for the duration of this first Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2021 – 2024. Each priority has a set of key actions for delivery over the lifetime of the strategy, which will establish the building blocks for the next phase of deeper energy upgrades and decarbonisation in the second half of the decade to 2030. The four priorities are summarised below and set out in greater detail in the following sections.

Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3	Priority 4
To maintain steady progress towards public sector 2030 energy efficiency and decarbonisation targets and to provide transparent annual reporting on performance.	To create, formalise and expand channels of communication around sustainability with Courts Service colleagues, the Judiciary, other courts users and external stakeholders.	To become a resource-efficient, resource-aware and resource-accountable organisation.	To manage our estate in a way that supports biodiversity and is pollinator friendly.



## 2.1 Priority 1: Energy Efficiency and Decarbonisation



To maintain steady progress towards public sector 2030 energy efficiency and decarbonisation targets and to provide transparent annual reporting on performance.

The overarching sustainability goal for the Courts Service in the next decade will be progressed incrementally towards, and achieving, the public sector energy and carbon targets for 2030. The *Climate Action Plan 2021* sets the following 2030 targets for public sector bodies:

- To become 50% more energy efficient by 2030 (compared to baseline of 2009).
- To generate 51% less CO<sub>2</sub> by 2030 (compared to baseline of 2016-2018 average).

Ireland's Long-Term Renovation Strategy 2020 also sets the target of upgrading all public sector buildings to a Building Energy Rating (BER) of B by 2030.

The energy efficiency target will be a continuation of actions taken in the decade up to 2020, when the Courts Service became 26.5% more energy efficient than in 2009. Energy efficiency 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. The carbon generation target is new, is relative to average generation over the 2016 – 2018 period and is absolute. As such it is blind to organisational changes or expansion, e.g. an increasing workforce or enlarged buildings.

There is considerable overlap between the two targets, with energy efficiency measures inherently delivering carbon reduction. 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. However, the baseline difference between the targets is significant (2009 for energy efficiency versus 2016-2018 average for carbon) and requiring a much greater carbon reduction from our current position. More importantly decarbonisation will require a fundamental change away from our traditional hydrocarbon-based thermal fuels and a move to significant on-site, adjacent renewable generation and district heating systems.

The carbon reduction and BER B targets will be most challenging for our historic buildings, rich in architectural heritage and with specific conservation requirements. Heritage properties are difficult to upgrade to a BER B rating because the fabric of the building (floors, walls, roof) has to breathe to function 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 options for improvement limited. The integration of renewable technologies, for example solar photovoltaic (PV) panels on the roof, may be subject to heritage approval and may present challenges with access and support. Many venues retain original internal features, such as timber panelling on walls in courtrooms or cornices, which must be protected and may limit potential for internal upgrades. Our decarbonisation effort must recognise and be sensitive to these constraints.

A fundamental element of the work of the Sustainability Unit is to report to SEAI on the annual energy use and (from 2022) carbon generation, projects completed and proposed and plans to reach targets. We will also continue to collaborate with our Department of Justice partners via the Energy Performance Officers forum. The key additional actions within the lifetime of this strategy are set out below.



## ACTION

1.1 Migrate to new SEAI 2030 monitoring and reporting, complete a gap-to-target analysis and adopt the Climate Action Mandate.

SEAI is currently developing new software and procedures to reflect the 2030 targets, which is due for completion in mid-2022, and which will support public sector bodies in reporting their energy usage and carbon generation. Once the software is available, the Courts Service will migrate all historic energy data to the new platform, integrate the new carbon reporting data including colleague mileage and commence annual reporting via the new portal. The migrated data on the new portal will allow us to carry out a full estate gap to target analysis - both at organisational and individual significant energy user (SEU) level – which will identify the glide path (or gradual reduction pathway) to reach 2030 targets and form the basis for the Climate Action Roadmap (see below).

We will adopt the Climate Action Mandate as set out in the *Climate Action Plan 2021* and instigate or initiate all measures recommended by the end of 2022, as set out in actions throughout this strategy. This includes the recent nomination of a member of the Senior Management Team as the Climate and Sustainability Champion, who will be responsible for reporting on the mandate.

**ACTION**

1.2 Run a pathfinder 2030 courthouse project to identify the technical, financial and operational challenges embedded in the 2030 targets.

The SEAI runs a **Pathfinder Program** to assist public sector bodies in understanding the means to achieve the 2030 energy and carbon targets within their building stock. In June 2021 SEAI and the OPW agreed to include a courthouse in the initial stage of the pathfinder program. The design of the BER B energy-exemplar pathfinder courthouse 2030 will be fully funded via the OPW pathfinder funding stream. However, funding for project delivery will need to be secured separately. Venue shortlisting and selection will conclude in Q4 2021 based on ownership, heritage status, venue use and energy significance. Project duration to design and costing stage is expected to be twelve to eighteen months.

This early decade pathfinder initiative will demonstrate the appropriate and sensitive technological solutions needed to achieve our 2030 public sector energy efficiency and decarbonisation targets in our primarily heritage estate. It will provide an evidential basis for the costs involved in the full 2030 transition, which will allow us to plan for future investment and cofounding options. Significantly, it will highlight the logistical and operational challenges inherent in similar upgrades of all venues before 2030, representing an unprecedented estate transformation in less than ten years.

**ACTION**

1.3 Develop a Climate Action Roadmap.

In line with the requirement for public sector bodies within the *Climate Action Plan 2021*, a Climate Action Roadmap will be developed in late 2022. This will be heavily informed by our gap to target analysis and initial design solutions from the pilot pathfinder project (as detailed above). The roadmap will be a multiyear energy action plan to deliver on our 2030 energy efficiency and decarbonisation targets and will be scaled to maintain steady progress along the glide path to 2030, rather than end loading, subject to adequate funding and resourcing. The roadmap will also plot a course to achieve a 50% overall contribution from renewable space heating by 2030, via a selection of heat pump, biomass, or district heating solutions as appropriate. The Climate Action Roadmap will form the basis of the next Environmental Sustainability Strategy from 2024 onwards.



## ACTION

### 1.4 Develop individual sustainability strategies and targets for ten Significant Energy Users.

The energy database identifies the Significant Energy User (SEU) within the Courts Service estate as the Criminal Courts of Justice (CCJ), the Four Courts and Phoenix House. Together they represent over 40% of the Total Primary Energy Requirement (TPER) of the estate (at 18%, 14%, 9% TPER respectively). The CCJ was constructed and is managed under a PPP arrangement. In addition, seven venues under a separate PPP arrangement, opened in 2017/2018, collectively represent a further 14% of TPER.

These ten venues use more than half of the energy and generate more than half of the carbon of the entire Courts Service estate and therefore improvements in these venues is key to achieving 2030 targets. In Q4 2021, detailed analysis of systems, usage, operation and trends in the form of energy audits in accordance with the Energy Efficiency Directive (2021/27/EU) as transposed into Irish law via SI426 and amended to SI626 and SI599, will be carried out. The audit output will be a prioritised list of opportunities based on efficiency improvements, carbon reduction and payback which, following technical and financial validation, will form the basis of an individual sustainability strategy for each of the ten venues to plot a course towards 2030 targets.





**ACTION****1.5 Prioritise demand reduction by identification and elimination of waste energy.**

Energy wastage refers to the use of energy in a location or at a time when it is not required and serves no operational purpose. It accounts for at least one quarter of all energy use in the Courts Service estate. The reasons for energy wastage are broad ranging but can be categorised at a high level as caused by issues with systems, buildings or behaviour. Systems-based wastage is generally due to inefficient plant, poor maintenance, absent or malfunctioning controls, poor system zoning, competing systems or lack of insulation. Building-based wastage refers to heat and ventilation losses beyond what is normal and expected including unsealed windows, poor insulation, ventilation gaps or deteriorated fabric. Behaviour which results in energy wastage includes non-optimal engagement with controls systems and leaving systems operational when not required (lights, Air Conditioning Units, monitors, PC's).

A key focus of any energy management campaign is the identification and elimination of all waste energy, upgrading and management of control systems and greater oversight of preventative maintenance items with high energy impact. This work will be carried out on a venue by venue basis, starting with the largest energy use venues and with systems-based wastage. Behaviour-based wastage will be tackled under the colleague engagement action.

**ACTION****1.6 Establish large plant asset register and initiate annual plant replacement program.**

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 out in line with government targets for the elimination of such fuels within public buildings. For chillers and air-conditioning units, the refrigerant used and its Global Warming Potential (GWP) is critical, in line with the EU service ban on F-gases (HFCs) with the elimination of the highest GWP gases accelerating through the decade to 2030.

To address this situation, an asset register of all thermal plant across the full estate will be completed in 2021 to identify age and condition, fuel used and alternative fuel options. Similarly, an asset register of all major cooling plant across the estate will be created in 2022 to identify age and condition, refrigerant used and recharge rates (in line with maintenance regime).

These asset registers will facilitate selection of projects for a major capital investment program, prioritising elimination of oil and outdated refrigerants, and where appropriate fuel switching to more renewable sources. The Courts Service is heavily reliant on the OPW for delivery of large project of this type, relying on both OPW technical expertise and contractor frameworks. The major plant replacement program will be run annually throughout the decade, subject to capital funding and OPW resource availability.



**ACTION**

1.7 Integrate recording of fuel used in colleague business travel into environmental sustainability metrics.

From 2021 onwards all public sector bodies are required to include the carbon generated as a result of business travel by colleagues within the broader carbon generation reporting via the M&R portal. The government is committed to decarbonising Ireland’s transport sector, which accounts for one fifth of Ireland’s greenhouse gas emissions according to the *Climate Action Plan 2019* and has set a goal of halving transport emissions by 2030. This mirrors the carbon reduction public sector bodies must achieve by 2030. From 2021, we will integrate the carbon generated due to colleague travel in our annual monitoring and reporting to SEAI and investigate reduction pathways via greener travel initiative and technology.



**ACTION**

1.8 Develop a Greener Travel and Electric Vehicle charging policy to encourage greener business and personal travel.

While the Covid-19 crisis has shown us more sustainable new ways of working and reducing travel, further measures will be investigated to support greener travel, including expanding bicycle parking and electric vehicles (EV) charging points in or close to our venues. On-site ‘destination’ charging in carparks or adjacent, would be designed to supplement rather than replace home charging, on-street and forecourt fast charging networks. The impact on space reduction, parking times and charging

options will be investigated via pilot projects commencing in 2021 in PPP venues. A broader public sector guidance document on EV infrastructure for colleague charging is expected in the coming year to address how best to monitor energy usage, manage billing, optimise charge duration, future proof capacity and finance the initiative.

This guidance, in tandem with outcomes from pilot EV charging projects, will form the basis of the Courts Service EV charging policy.

During 2022 we will carry out a review of bicycle parking and need at our venues and where discrepancies are identified, we will expand bicycle parking spaces for the use of colleagues, regular venues users and public visitors.



## ACTION

1.9 Achieve and maintain statutory compliance with energy regulations and achieve certification to ISO50001.

A review of the Courts Service compliance with energy regulations SI243 (Energy Performance in Buildings Directive) and SI426 (EU Energy Efficiency Directive) within our estate was completed in Q2 2021. SI243 requires that all buildings over 250m<sup>2</sup> occupied by public sector bodies have a Display Energy Certificate (DEC) mounted for public review. The DEC is an annual assessment of the energy performance of the building based on the energy used.

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. Any gaps in compliance will be rectified by Q1 2022 and thereafter maintaining compliance will be managed annually as a new workflow.

The *Climate Action Plan 2021* calls for all large public sector bodies to achieve formal environmental accreditation. 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. Starting in Q2 2022 the process of preparing for formal environmental accreditation with ISO50001 will be initiated with an estimated certification date of Q1 2024.



### ACTION

1.10 Include sustainability as a key priority for all renovation projects and new builds.

In accordance with EU Energy performance of Buildings Directive (recast) all new buildings must be Nearly Zero Energy Building (NZEBs) by the end of 2020. An NZEB is defined as *“a building that has a very high energy performance, ...in that the nearly zero or very low amount of energy required should be covered to a very significant extent by energy from renewable sources, including energy from renewable sources produced on-site or nearby”*, per Building Regulations.

There are multiple options for compliance with NZEB regulation, which should be carefully considered to best match the operational requirements and organisational structure of the Courts Service. In addition, there are alternative funding mechanisms available for additionality in energy efficiency and decarbonization ambitions beyond Building Regulations, which can only be availed of if integrated early in the design process. Courts Service experience in previous construction projects has also demonstrated how critical adequate and validated commissioning is for energy efficiency following service commencement and in the early years of operation.

The Courts Service has several new build construction projects and large refurbishments in design or under consideration, including the Hammond Lane project. To ensure all potential opportunities for sustainability are realised, a key workstream for the Sustainability Unit will be involvement in all major construction projects from design stage to signoff of commissioning.

## 2.2 Priority 2: Engagement and Communication



To create, formalise and expand channels of communication around sustainability with Courts Service colleagues, the Judiciary, other courts users and external stakeholders.

The Courts Service environmental and sustainability goals and targets will only be achievable with large scale participation from colleagues, the Judiciary, stakeholders and other court users. While the technical and systems-based initiatives outlined above are suitable for an organisational approach, minimising energy and finite resource use requires constant attention and effort at point of use. Therefore, communication is a key priority of this strategy 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.

Huge improvements in energy efficiency have already been made in the past decade due to the personal and collective action of Courts Service colleagues. We need to support and promote this enthusiasm and generate interest in the challenge ahead, in order to facilitate a change in mindset to make sustainability a core consideration in decision making. To support this change in mindset we must make the public sector targets and the steps required to achieve them easy to understand. We also need to highlight the importance of reaching beyond these minimum targets to demonstrate our commitment to a broader view of sustainability. We will include our partners in the Judiciary, the legal professions and other regular courts users in our communication campaign and seek to collaborate with interested parties in these organisations.

We will work with the Communications Media Unit to ensure that we make best use of the various communications channels to provide the right information, at the right time, to the right people, as set out in the Communications and stakeholder engagement strategy.



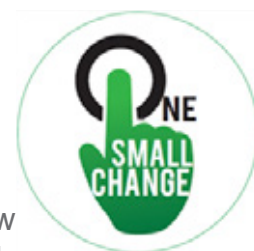
**ACTION****2.1 Create a broad understanding of the Courts Service Environmental Sustainability Strategy.**

The publication of this strategy is the first step in bringing the sustainability targets, goals and challenges of the Courts Service to a wider audience, both internally and externally. We plan to socialise the content of the strategy to our colleagues and stakeholders over the coming months via presentations, on-site events, targeted communications and information boards, to create a broader understanding of what lies ahead and why. By sharing information and building a culture of awareness, we hope to encourage colleagues to engage with and support the transition. This strategy will also be shared more broadly to external stakeholders and interested parties such as the SEAI, the OPW, the Department of Justice, the Department of Expenditure and Reform, and others, who are essential for supports, project delivery, training and funding.

**ACTION****2.2 Initiate a colleague engagement and awareness campaign including a specific sustainability focused annual event.**

Research within the broader public sector has shown that energy savings of between 10-20% can be achieved as a result of a targeted and sustained colleague engagement campaign. To tap into this unrealised potential, a key strategic goal over the coming years is to enhance and formalise colleague engagement, building on existing awareness of sustainability and expanding communication channels.

The headline Courts Service colleague engagement event will be an annual one-week sustainability focused event. From 2021 this will coincide with *Energy Efficiency Week*, a national OPW-run program for all 300 public sector buildings throughout the country. During *Energy Efficiency Week* the first phase of the month-long Courts Service *One Small Change Campaign* was commenced. This campaign aims to draw colleague attention to small changes in behaviour they can make, which cumulatively can have a big impact and will make our organisation more energy efficient and sustainable. Four very simple but important actions will be focused on in Q4 2021 and these will be repeated and expanded upon in future campaigns.



From 2022, on-site engagement events will be rolled out in larger venues (subject to Covid-19 safety review) in cooperation with our *Optimising Power at Work* and PPP partners. These will include workshops on energy, carbon and climate for colleagues and our external partners, as well as location-specific actions and information on waste, single use plastic, water and biodiversity. We will engage with external partners and stakeholders to develop interesting and interactive events.





## ACTION

### 2.3 Establish an organisation wide green team network.

The enthusiasm of many colleagues to contribute to our sustainable transition is clear from individual initiatives, actions and their support of efforts to date. The goal now is to spread this enthusiasm, share knowledge and capture new ideas via a **Green Team** network spanning every level and geographical location of the organisation. Following a successful call for volunteers in Q3 2021, the **Green Team** was initiated and is now in its early stages. Members include a range of colleagues who are personally motivated to take action on climate change, see areas for improvement in their workplaces or have interest in specific elements of sustainability - and as such they will be sources for ideas and initiative and lead efforts locally.

Monthly meetings will commence from Q4 2021 and optional training for **Green Team** members will be available before year end. From 2022 as well as the general network, we plan to set up both venue specific teams for the larger locations and national teams to focus on the common issues such as energy efficiency, biodiversity, recycling/waste and community action to tie in with other workstreams within this strategy.



**ACTION**

2.4 Develop sustainability Learning and Development training for focused groups and all colleagues.

In cooperation with the Learning and Development Unit we will roll out a series of training programs from Q4 2021 onwards. The initial training is timed to tie in with new Building Management control upgrades and standardisation across the organisation and will be tailored specifically for the most energy impactful roles. Content dedicated to the **Green Team** will be provided from Q4 2021 including certification. Following **Green Team** review and feedback this content will be made more widely available.

In 2022 appropriate climate action and sustainability training (technical and behavioural) will be developed for all Courts Service colleagues and the Judiciary, in line with requirements under the *Climate Action Plan 2021*. This will be released to coincide with the annual public sector energy efficiency week in Q4 2022.

**ACTION**

2.5 Embed regular communication to share information and capture ideas as a business as usual activity.

From 2021 regular communication to all colleagues on energy efficiency, carbon reduction, biodiversity and other sustainability issues will commence via email and the Court Service Brief. This action seeks to ensure information flow and knowledge transfer on work programs within the organisation and highlight broader significant societal and public sector sustainability events. Details on local projects and initiatives, successes and failures will be shared to encourage similar actions in other venues. From 2022, we will develop capture suggestions and initiatives, from the green team members initially and then expanding to all colleagues in cooperation with the Courts Service Innovation network.

### 2.3 Priority 3: Resource minimisation



To become a resource-efficient, resource-aware and resource-accountable organisation.

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 key goal of this strategy is to commence the monitoring of and reporting on major non-energy finite resources used to deliver our operational objectives. This will focus initially on waste and water.

Considerable effort and progress have already been made in many of our venues to reduce our waste generation, reduce reliance on paper, eliminate single use plastics and increase recycling and composting rates. We plan to build on and formalise these efforts, to collate data, set benchmarks and goals, record progress and report transparently on an annual basis from 2023 onwards. Similar monitoring, comparison and reporting will be initiated for our water use and water conservation initiatives will be activated.



**ACTION**

3.1 Carry out a detailed baselining analysis on the existing waste streams within major venues and across the organisation.

There is currently no standard approach to, or oversight of, waste streams across our organisation. Initial investigation on waste streams in Dublin, which are largely under an Office of Government Procurement (OGP) contract, indicate that detailed information is available from the service provider and that there is a wide disparity between waste types generated and recycling rates between venues. Many locations lack glass recycling, battery recycling or composting options. While there is a national IT disposal procedure operational within the Courts Service, there is no uniform policy in place regarding disposal of electrical waste and appear to be no records available. A detailed analysis will be completed in 2022 for all major waste streams in all major venues across the estate, to identify and compare waste generation, recycling and composting rates, and identify opportunities for improvement.

**ACTION**

3.2 Implement a structured waste management program to measure and compare waste generation and recycling rates across the estate.

Based on the baselining exercise above, a structured waste management program will be introduced. This will include the introduction of standardised waste options across the organisation and the establishment of a common benchmark for generation and recycling rates. Venues will be provided with information on their current status and how to bridge the gap to the organisational benchmark. Colleague information sessions will be rolled out to support the initiative. Progress will be monitored on a quarterly basis.

**ACTION**

3.3 Implement a structured water management program to measure, compare and benchmark water usage across the estate.

There is currently no standard approach to, or oversight of, water usage across our estate. Only PPP venues report monthly on water usage and in the case of the CCJ the water usage is charted against footfall. There is a large disparity in metering type, reading frequency and billing arrangements in other venues. A key aim within the lifetime of this strategy is to consolidate all water billing data online in one location, as completed with electricity and gas, and we are working with Irish water on this as they migrate to a new centralised system over the coming years. Following this, a baseline of large venue usage will be created, and benchmarks established based on footfall (if available) or area and venue usage. The goal is to quickly identify any anomalies, investigate and rectify any systems leaks or issues.



**ACTION****3.4 Analyse and control costs for energy and other resources, to identify optimisation opportunities, ensure value for money.**

The Courts Service annual spend on thermal and electrical fuels in 2020 was circa €2.7 Million. While the largest proportion of the energy spend is based on usage, standing charges and other charges are significant and set to increase over the decade. The Programme for Government sets out the intention to increase carbon tax from €26/tonne in 2020 to €100/tonne by 2030, via a steady increase of €7.50 per year. As well as the social and legal imperative to reduce energy consumption and carbon generation, there is also a financial incentive.

Utility structures require careful management to ensure they are optimally set - to minimise ongoing cost without accruing penalties. The following two streams of cost management will be embedded into business as usual by 2023:

- Initiation of a monthly meter reading and reporting policy to remove estimates and align cost with actual usage.
- Annual review of standing charges (MIC) and adjustment for optimal value.

Similar value analysis will be carried out for water and waste, once baselining exercises are complete.

## 2.4 Priority 4: Biodiversity



To manage our estate in a way that supports biodiversity and is pollinator friendly.

Another important element of the Courts Service Environmental Sustainability strategy is to support biodiversity in and around our venues. The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Bill 2021 defines Biodiversity as the *‘variability among living organisms from all sources including terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part’*.

There has been a global decline of pollinators due to habitat destruction and in Ireland the decline of our solitary pollinating bees 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.

We plan to support broader national biodiversity initiatives by managing our large estate of public land in a more pollinator friendly way with a five-year rewilding program. Existing biodiversity initiatives including insect hotels, attic bat caves and swift boxes will be expanded where appropriate. Other biodiversity initiatives under consideration include Composting, Tree planting, Green roofs and further fauna habitats. Our target is to introduce one or more biodiversity initiatives in 80% of all suitable venues within five years.





## ACTION

### 4.1 Partner with external biodiversity initiatives including the National Pollinator Plan and other biodiversity networks.

The *All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021-2025*, published on 26 March 2021, sets out a five-year road map to support bees and other pollinating insects and encourage greater biodiversity on our island. One key objective of the plan is to support organisations with site networks on public land to manage them in a pollinator-friendly way. As custodians of a large estate of public land, the Courts service has signed up as a partner to the *All-Ireland Pollinator Plan* and will submit an annual report from 2021 onwards. From 2022 onward we will seek to integrate with other biodiversity efforts, including local groups, local authority and educational facilities.



**ACTION****4.2 Introduce pilot rewilding initiatives and review.**

Building on the enthusiasm of colleagues in several venues, we started our rewilding pilot projects in 2021 and aim to complete a total of five by year end. The first part of this journey will be the rewilding of small areas of grass in suitable venues, with the goal of providing food and a habitat for our pollinators, most notably our native bees and butterflies. We will trial two different approaches, to compare and contrast process, success rates, visual aesthetics and perception in year two.

**ACTION****4.3 Map all green areas within the Courts Estate to identify rewilding opportunities.**

A baselining exercise will be completed by mid-2022 to review the site footprint and identify rewilding opportunities, including green areas, edges and roof space, across our estate. The numbers, size and location of these opportunities and site specifics will provide the basis of the biodiversity action plan.

**ACTION****4.4 Complete colleague and public perceptions survey of pilot rewilding initiatives.**

In late 2022 we plan to carry out surveys to gauge colleague and public perceptions of both established pilot projects and preferences on proposed projects in specific venues. A secondary aim of the surveys will be to increase awareness of the program and biodiversity generally. Surveys and polls in other high-profile venues have elicited an overwhelmingly positive response to biodiversity suggestions.

**ACTION****4.5 Develop a project pipeline of biodiversity initiatives throughout our estate.**

Based on the output from pilot project, venue mapping and surveys, a multiyear project pipeline will be developed. The goal is to introduce one or more biodiversity initiatives in 80% of all suitable venues within five years.



### 3. ACTION SUMMARY

# ACTION SUMMARY



## Priority 1: Energy Efficiency and Decarbonisation

Goal	Action	Completion date
To maintain steady progress towards public sector 2030 energy efficiency and decarbonisation targets and to provide transparent annual reporting on performance.	<b>Action 1.1:</b> Migrate to new SEAI 2030 monitoring and reporting, complete a gap-to-target analysis and adopt the Climate Action Mandate.	Within 3 months of SEAI software completion.
	<b>Action 1.2:</b> Run a pathfinder 2030 courthouse project to identify the technical, financial and operational challenges embedded in the 2030 targets.	Q2 2023
	<b>Action 1.3:</b> Develop a Climate Action Roadmap.	Q1 2023
	<b>Action 1.4:</b> Develop individual sustainability strategies and targets for ten Significant Energy Users.	Q1 2023
	<b>Action 1.5:</b> Prioritise demand reduction by identification and elimination of waste energy	Iterative process, reviewed annually.
	<b>Action 1.6:</b> Establish large plant asset register and initiate annual plant replacement program.	Heating plant Q1 2022 Cooling plant Q1 2023
	<b>Action 1.7:</b> Integrate recording of fuel used in colleague business travel into environmental sustainability metrics	Q3 2022
	<b>Action 1.8:</b> Develop a Greener Travel and Electric Vehicle charging policy to encourage greener business and personal travel.	Q3 2023
	<b>Action 1.9:</b> Achieve and maintain statutory compliance with energy regulations and achieve certification to ISO50001.	Q1 2024
	<b>Action 1.10:</b> Include sustainability as a key priority for all renovation project and new builds.	Continual process, reviewed annually.



## Priority 2: Engagement and Communication

Goal	Action	Completion date
<b>To create, formalise and expand channels of communication around sustainability with Courts Service colleagues, the Judiciary, other courts users and external stakeholders</b>	<b>Action 2.1:</b> Create a broad understanding of the Courts Service Environmental Sustainability Strategy.	Q2 2022
	<b>Action 2.2:</b> Initiation of a colleague engagement and awareness campaign including a specific sustainability focused annual event.	Annually from Q4 2021
	<b>Action 2.3:</b> Establish an organisation wide Green Team network.	Q4 2021
	<b>Action 2.4:</b> Develop sustainability Learning and Development training for focused groups and all colleagues.	Q4 2021
	<b>Action 2.5:</b> Embed regular communication to share information and capture ideas in Business as Usual.	Q4 2022



## Priority 3: Resource minimisation

Goal	Action	Completion date
<b>To become a resource-efficient, resource-aware and resource-accountable organisation</b>	<b>Action 3.1:</b> Carry out a detailed baselining analysis on the existing waste streams within major venues and across the organisation.	Q3 2022
	<b>Action 3.2:</b> Implement a structured waste management program to measure and compare waste generation and recycling rates across the estate.	Q2 2023
	<b>Action 3.3:</b> Implement a structured water management program to measure, compare and benchmark water usage across the estate	Q2 2023
	<b>Action 3.4:</b> Analyse and control costs for energy and other resources. to identify optimisation opportunities, ensure value for money	Energy Q4 2022 Other Q4 2023



## Priority 4: Biodiversity

Goal	Action	Completion date
To manage our estate in a way that supports biodiversity and is pollinator friendly.	<b>Action 4.1:</b> Partner with external biodiversity initiatives including the National Pollinator Plan and other biodiversity networks.	Q4 2022
	<b>Action 4.2:</b> Introduce pilot biodiversity initiatives and review.	Q2 2022
	<b>Action 4.3:</b> Map all green areas within the Courts Estate to identify rewilding opportunities.	Q2 2022
	<b>Action 4.4:</b> Complete colleague and public perceptions survey of pilot rewilding initiatives	Q3 2022
	<b>Action 4.5:</b> Develop a project pipeline of biodiversity initiatives throughout our estate	Q1 2023



