

Submission to County Development Plan:

Having reviewed the draft County Development Plan in particular the section on Climate Action chapter 12. As Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) Mentors for the establishment of Sustainable Energy Communities for County Louth we would like to make the following submission.

- The Climate Action plan 2019 published by the Department of Communications Climate Action and Environment under section “Citizens and Communities” sets a target of increasing the number of Sustainable Energy Communities (SECs) across the country to 1500. It has been our experience that Louth County Council supports SEAI’s SEC Programme and Mentors. The Council’s Energy Team is strengthening its work with Community Groups seeking to become Sustainable Energy Communities and that will undoubtedly increase the number of Sustainable Energy Communities in the County. That should be stated more clearly in the Plan.
- It has also been our experience that Louth County Council is aligning with the Climate Action Plan 2019, objective of driving action through national Dialogue on Climate Change by supporting programmes of education on energy and renewable energy plus other factors that impact on climate change in communities across the county. That needs to be emphasised in the plan to promote that success. Promoting leadership-in-action by the Local Authority is critical to motivating increased community participation. The draft plan is not strong enough in that at present.
- The CDP also needs to more clearly emphasise the Council’s support for the implementation of National and County initiatives for limiting emissions of greenhouse gases by stating it’s support for accelerating the retrofitting of existing buildings throughout the county – The council is right now participating with Dunleer SEC to develop such initiatives and all that needs to be promoted to demonstrate the Council’s leadership and to encourage a much higher level of participation in such projects.
- The Renewable Electricity Supply Scheme (RESS) was established to provide support to renewable electricity projects and is a pivotal component of the National Energy Climate plan of delivering on its objectives of achieving Ireland’s 70% renewable electricity target for 2030. One element of the RESS was a facility for Community Led projects and states clearly the role of SECs in this. The CDP may make reference to the promotion and support of the role for communities in the expanding National RESS programme. This will include new and existing Sustainable Energy Communities (SECs) and Renewable Energy Communities (RECs) within the county. This should facilitate local community participation and ownership in renewable energy generation.

Gerry Reaburn SEAI County Mentor
Eugene Conlon SEAI County Mentor