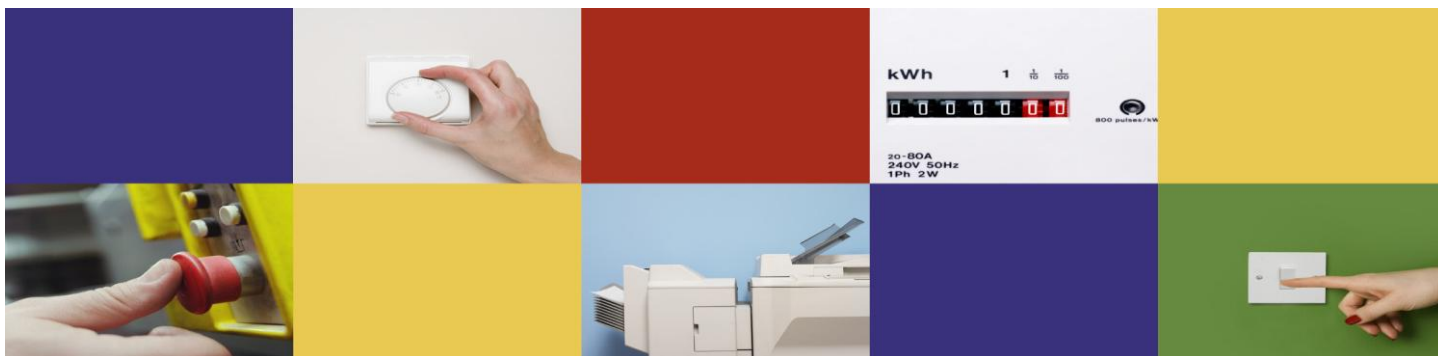




Energy Update

LOUTH COUNTY COUNCIL

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Issue 7 of the Energy Newsletter. It's been a while from our last issue, however Energy projects within the Councils buildings have been consistent and lots of new works have been achieved which have brought us lots of both Financial and Carbon savings.

This issue will inform you of the projects Louth County Council have implemented, as well as giving you ideas on how you can save Energy both in the workplace and at home as we all face huge, rising energy costs during the SUMMER months.

So, let's keep energy at the forefront of all that we do here in Louth County Council.

Question: What are we in Louth County Council doing to tackle climate change and save Energy?

Answer: Future Proofing Our Buildings with Green Steps



Photo 1: PV panels on Dundalk Town Hall

Solar PV panels have been installed at Dundalk Town Hall and the Civil Defence Building. These works have added to the existing renewable energy installations with 2 new solar panel systems now increasing our installed capacity to 30kW. LCC first installed solar panels back in 2014 at the County Museum and then again in 2017 at County Hall. Having monitored these projects, we have seen how well they perform, the clear benefits and how easy they are

Summer 2025 Issue 7

to install and maintain. The PV panels are great example of how generating our own renewable energy can reduce costs and tackle carbon emissions. In monitoring and recording our data from the solar panels we concluded that they were consistently outperforming their predicted electricity generation. Even with our Irish weather pattern they work well and are providing clean energy that can be utilised in council buildings. This form of **Green Energy** might be something worth exploring in your home

Building on this success, our Sustainability Team has launched a tender to expand solar PV to 22 more council-owned sites. This includes libraries, fire stations, offices, and sports centres across Louth. The goal is to generate up to 800kWp of solar power, helping us avoid around 300 tonnes of CO₂ emissions each year. It's all part of our push to future-proof our buildings, reduce our carbon footprint, and meet our 51% energy savings target by 2030. Green energy isn't just a plan—it's already powering LCC's Buildings.

Answer: Transitioning to Sustainable Modes of Transport

The new **Fleet Management Section** is responsible for overseeing the procurement of new electric vehicles (EVs) to support sustainability goals. They ensure that all vehicles are regularly serviced, meet safety and environmental standards, and are used efficiently. This includes managing vehicle usage for cost-effectiveness and reduced environmental impact. The section also provides driver training on fuel-efficient driving and safety, while handling the budget for fleet operations, including procurement, maintenance, and fuel costs. They work closely with the Louth County Council (LCC) Energy Section to help meet the council's goal of 51% energy savings by 2030. By switching to electric vehicles and using renewable energy for charging, the fleet supports LCC's efforts to cut carbon emissions and improve energy efficiency, playing a key role in reaching these energy targets.

LCC currently operates 15 electric vehicles (EVs) as part of our fleet. Of these, seven are already active, while the remaining eight are in the final stages of preparation, including internal fit-outs and branding. By the end of July,

our EV fleet will expand to a total of 26 vehicles, following the arrival and commissioning of additional units.



Answer: Air Source Heat Pump for County Hall and the Animal Compound

Air Source Heat Pumps have already been installed at County Hall, the County Archives Building, and the Animal Compound. We're now planning to roll them out further at Dundalk Fire Station, the County Museum, Dundalk Library, and Dundalk Town Hall, as part of our ongoing move towards cleaner, more energy-efficient heating systems.

Air Source Heat Pumps work by transferring heat absorbed from the outside air to an indoor space. This works via the wet central heating systems to heat radiators and provides domestic hot water. Heat pumps work similarly to a refrigerator: they absorb heat and transfer it to another medium. In Co. Hall it is used to keep an ambient heat using the underfloor heating for vast foyer area and the ground floor motor tax area and in the animal compound maintaining the appropriate level of heating for the kennel area

This renewable technology is likely to play an increasing role in heating our homes and buildings.



Answer: Data Loggers

Many data loggers have been installed in the County Archives Building, Co. Hall, Town Hall, Dundalk and Drogheda Fire Stations. These loggers allow us to monitor gas and electricity use, as well as giving us up to the minute information on our carbon and electrical savings from our newly installed Solar Photo Voltaic Units

ISO 50001 – ENERGY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM UPDATE

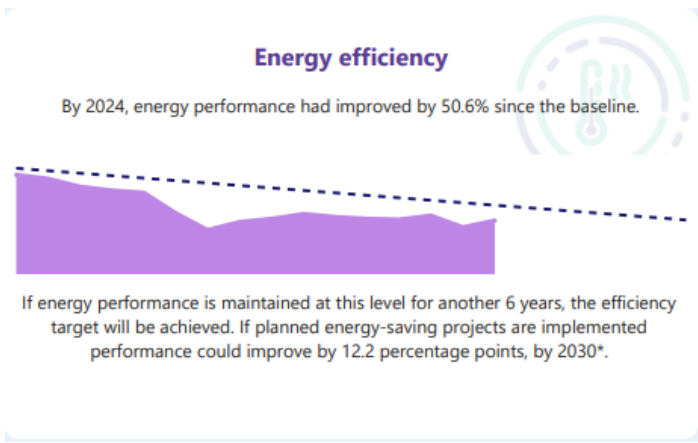
Louth County Council developed an Energy Management System), along with determining appropriate legislation, creating annual Energy Action Plans, developing Register of Opportunities, planning Audit Schedules and energy awareness programmes to enable better monitoring of its energy use. It participated in an SEAI programme to develop that to the highest standard possible - ISO 50001. Its continued registration recommendation for I.S. EN ISO 50001:2018 in March 2024 until February 2027. As part of the accreditation process a surveillance audit is carried. Louth County Council was delighted to get positive feedback following the surveillance audit by the NSAI on last year. NSAI Auditor Donal Harlow complimenting Staff and Management of Louth County Council commented: *"The result is positive with no findings, and evidence of a lot of positive work done by the energy team, a lot of positive planning and action by the council management team"*



OUR TARGETS

How are we in Louth County Council doing with regard to our statutory energy targets?

The table below will show you that we are doing very well. The Council's energy efficiency stands at 50.6% (i.e. the Council's energy use at the end of 2020 has reduced by 50.6%) compared to the baseline, (as reported by SEAI).



New Government targets set out 51% reduction in Carbon emissions by 2030. Council staff are now considering new energy works as part of the Energy Action Plan 2024. As part of that, staff are developing a **Gap to Target Plan** to 2030 to identify suitable and sufficient annual energy efficiency works that will achieve our targets

THE STILL

We'd like to inform all staff that our state-of-the-art Learning Pod is now available for hosting staff meetings or workshops for up to 30 participants at the Dundalk Library / Museum courtyard. Bookings for The Still can be made via the meeting room booking system on the intranet. This new facility is open to all staff and community groups, made possible through funding from H2020 and the VARCITIES project.



TIPS ON HOW TO REDUCE ENERGY AND SAVE MONEY DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS

Appliances and lighting combined account for one fifth of all the energy used in your home but there are ways to reduce the energy consumed and save money.

A good rule of thumb is **if it makes things hot, then it uses a lot of electricity**. For example, electric showers, kettles, tumble dryer and hairdryers

Fridge/freezer

Close the fridge door as quickly as possible. If it's open for even 20 seconds it takes 45 minutes for the fridge to cool down to its original temperature.

Defrost your freezer regularly. The SEAI recommends to do it every six months to help it run efficiently.

Dishwasher

Only turn on the dishwasher when it is fully loaded.

Use a low temperature setting and an eco-setting, if it has one.

Washing machine



Use a lower temperature of 30 degrees and wait until you have a full load before turning it on, but don't overload it.

Tumble dryer

Avoid using a tumble dryer if possible. Instead use a clothes horse or hang washing outdoors. If the dryer has to be used, turn it on during off-peak hours and keep the filters clean.

Boiler

Get it serviced once a year to run more efficiently. You should ask your plumber to explain the settings and how to use them correctly.

Oven

The oven is one of the most expensive appliances in the home to run. Close the door quickly after opening while cooking or it will have to reheat itself which will require more energy. Batch cooking saves time and energy. It is better to use a microwave for smaller meals instead of your oven.

Kettle

Only boil the kettle for the amount of water you need, there are measurements on it to help you.

Mobile Phones

Don't charge your phone at night time when you're in bed. The device might only need one hour to fully charge, not the seven or eight hours while you sleep.

Standby mode

Plug out appliances when not in use. Even in standby mode they are using 20% of the energy they would consume if they were on. So, if there's any kind of light on, it means there's electricity going through the device.

Electric Ireland says devices on "standby" typically make up about 7% of a home's energy usage. It says laptops should only be plugged in when being charged and should be unplugged when not in use.



Lighting

Turn off lights when you are leaving a room or when you do not need them.

Use low energy LED lights, especially in rooms you use a lot, like the living room and kitchen. An LED light bulb uses around 80-90% less electricity than a standard bulb and will last up to 10 times longer.

Replacing all the light bulbs in your home could easily save you up to €60 a year depending on how many lights you have.

Heating

Turn the thermostat for your living areas down to 19°C.

The temperature in hallways and bedrooms should be cooler, ideally between 15-18°C. A heating bill could be reduced by 10% by simply lowering room temperature by just one degree.

Turn the radiator temperature down or off in rooms that are not used a lot.

Shop Around and Make a Switch

According to bonkers.ie, to reduce water heating costs by up to 30% you need to make sure your tank is properly insulated with a three-inch thick lagging jacket.

Home energy Kits are available in your nearest Louth Library Branch

If you want to see how much energy an appliance is using, an energy monitor can be used.

Home Energy Saving Kits are available in more than 120 libraries across Ireland which allow homeowners to monitor their energy usage and insulation levels.

The kits can be borrowed for two to three weeks to carry out a home energy audit.

FOLLOW THESE TIPS AND SAVE MONEY !!!

As you can see lots is happening in the energy section and much the success and savings achieved are all down to you, the staff of Louth County Council. **We welcome your suggestions** to continue with our savings. If you have ideas for potential energy savings please email: energy@louthcoco.ie