



DHLGH Environmental Policy Statement 2022 - 2025

1. The Department's Mission is to support the sustainable and efficient delivery of well-planned homes, effective local government and vibrant inclusive communities. Sustainable development is at the heart of this Mission, with strategic goals identified to –
 - a. To provide a framework that ensures a sustainable housing system in Ireland with a supply of good quality housing to match needs.
 - b. To provide a framework for the sustainable management of water resources from source to sea.
 - c. To support and enable democratic, responsive and effective local government, effective electoral management and high quality fire services and emergency management.
 - d. To ensure that planning and building in our regions, communities and maritime area contributes to deliver sustainable and balanced development.
 - e. In the context of climate change and the impact of weather on Ireland, serve society through the production and communication of reliable weather and climate information to protect life and property and to further enhance Met Éireann's role as the authoritative voice on meteorology and climatology in Ireland.
 - f. To conserve, protect, manage and present our built, natural, archaeological heritage and our biodiversity, for its intrinsic value, including to the environment as well as a support to local communities, regional economic development and sustainable employment.
2. Good environmental performance is as relevant in our workplace as in the home and elsewhere. Accordingly it is an integral part of our day-to-day management and activities in DHLGH. The office environment utilises many resources, including energy, water, paper, equipment and other consumables. In this regard, as part of our green housekeeping policy, we have placed particular emphasis on conservation and demand management. Our procurement policies have also given priority, where feasible, to environmentally-friendly goods and services.
3. This Environmental Policy Statement has been developed as part of the process of complying with the requirements for accreditation to the ISO 14001 Environmental Management. The Statement, and Environmental Management Programme that underpins it, also take account of the key principles and objectives set out -
 - a. In the *Sustainable Development Goals National Implementation Plan 2018-2020*
 - b. In *Project Ireland 2040 - The National Planning Framework (NPF)*.



c. In the *Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Bill 2021*

4. Sustainability is at the heart of long term planning and the NPF seeks to ensure that the decisions we take today, meet our own needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Since 2015, Ireland has been a signatory to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which frame national agendas and policies to 2030. The SDGs build on the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and have a broader agenda that applies to all countries. There is significant alignment between the UN SDGs and the National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs) of the NPF in areas such as climate action, clean energy, sustainable cities and communities, economic growth, reduced inequalities and innovation and infrastructure, as well as education and health.
5. NPF objectives include -
 - a. Strengthened and more Environmentally Focused Planning at Local Level
 - b. Sustainable Mobility
 - c. Compact Growth
 - d. Sustainable Management of Water, Waste and other Environmental Resources
 - e. Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society
6. In its practices, the Department is committed to:
 - a. Continually improving the environmental performance of our in-house practices, policies and programmes, taking account of customer needs and expectations, and reviewing and reporting at regular intervals on progress being made;
 - b. Harnessing digital capacity and systems in lieu of former paper based systems, where possible. This commitment, combined with the Departments Clean Desk Policy, will ensure both a reduction in waste and an optimisation of space in all Departmental locations;
 - c. Reduction and prevention of pollution on Departmental sites;
 - d. Annually establishing objectives and targets for improved environmental performance and increasing their ambition in light of progress including:
 - 1) Implementing strategies to maximise the efficient use of natural resources, including energy and water, and of other materials, supplies and equipment;
 - 2) Ensuring electricity from renewable sources are used for the supply of electricity to the Departmental sites.
 - e. Continuing to decrease energy consumption in Departmental sites through:
 - 1) The installation of Solar Thermal Panels to heat hot water throughout our buildings;



- 2) Upgrading to new high efficiency gas boilers;
- 3) Replacing current light bulbs with energy saving bulbs
- 4) Ensuring electrical office equipment has energy saving modes, such as the powersave function;
- 5) Introducing Multi-Function Devices (MFD's) which ensure that print requests default to:
 - a) Black & White;
 - b) Double sided;
 - c) Job requests disappearing in 24 hours if not recovered;
 - d) Displaying the cost of print run on the devices screen.
- f. Implementing a programme for waste prevention and reduction, and for the collection, segregation, re-use, recycling, storage and safe disposal of all waste arising in the building, including litter, toner cartridges, used batteries, etc.;
- g. Further extending the TFI Smarter Travel campaign to encourage staff to use sustainable and healthy modes of travel to work including walking and cycling. Some notable initiatives include:
 - 1) Promoting the Annual Travel Pass scheme within the Department;
 - 2) Encouraging the Cycle to Work scheme within the Department. This scheme has seen significant uptake;
 - 3) Improving facilities for cyclists in our main Departmental sites, including showers, lockers etc. Recognition of our efforts has resulted in DHLGH received a gold accreditation award as a Cycle Friendly Employer from the EU Cyclists Federations – becoming only the second Government Department to achieve this accreditation;
 - 4) Installing EV Charging points across our Departmental sites;
 - 5) Organising an annual Department "Car Free Day";
 - 6) Encouraging the use of public transport for official business.
- h. Liaising with appropriate organisations regarding the environmentally sensitive maintenance of Departmental offices, their grounds and related facilities and equipment;
- i. Participating in OPW's *Optimising Power @ Work, Staff Energy Awareness Campaign*. Providing information, and training as necessary, to increase awareness and to enable staff to make the changes in office culture and practice that are needed to achieve best environmental management practice, and advising all new staff on the Department's approach in this regard in order to drive delivery within DHLGH of the Public Service Target of 50% energy efficiency improvement by the end of 2030;



- j. Complying with all relevant environmental legislation and standards.
 - k. Complying with applicable legal requirements and with other requirements that relate to the Department's business activities.
7. Green Procurement is currently being embedded in all Department procurement practices. A key example of this is the recent procurement competition for a new catering contractor for the restaurant in the Custom House. The green procurement criteria provided a focus on further elimination of plastics and waste in this service.
8. These initiatives will be referenced (as required good practice) in the Request for Tender document as the Department seeks a new catering contract for its restaurant in its Wexford Office and tenderers will be asked for proposals for further elimination of plastics in their service. The Department also facilitates staff by enabling them to recycle household WEEE arisings through a WEEE Ireland compliance scheme.
9. This Environmental Policy Statement is disseminated to all staff and is available on the Department's website at www.housing.gov.ie. Implementation is overseen by a cross-Divisional "Environment Management Team" reporting to the Management Review Team. Details of improved energy performance are published as part of the Department's Annual Report. The statement is subject to review every three years or with changes, in association with the preparation of Statements of Strategy under the Public Service Management Act 1997.

Graham Doyle
Secretary General
6 October 2022