Is it not now time for a more joined-up local response to challenge the ‘climate emergency’?

Pete Roche,
NFLA Policy Advisor Dublin 18th Oct 2019
Ireland & Climate Change

- Summary of where policy has got to;
- Why climate change is an emergency;
- Why local authorities are in a unique position to tackle climate change;
- And some exciting examples of projects being implemented by local authorities in Great Britain
Net zero target for 2050;
A provision for a 2030 target, consistent with pathway to 2050 target, to be set by 2020;
Renewable target for electricity 70% by 2030
Irish Parliament Declares Climate Emergency – May 2019

- ... And endorsed the Committee’s Report;
- People Before Profit TD Brid Smith “should ban on oil and gas exploration”;
- Minister said Ireland not in a position to cease exploration; will reduce dependence on fossil fuels from 70% to 30% by 2030 - these fuels are “an essential part of the transition”.

Ireland just became the second country to declare a climate emergency after a 'strange' Dáil vote.

Climate activist Greta Thunberg described tonight's move as "great news".

Ireland has become the second country in the world to declare a climate and biodiversity emergency this evening.

The move comes after a Fianna Fáil amendment to the Oireachtas report on Climate Change was accepted by both sides of the Oireachtas without a vote.

Earlier this week, the Green Party moved a Dáil motion to declare a climate emergency after the UK did the same earlier this month.
Climate Action Plan – June 2019

- Republic “way off course” 85% dependent on fossil fuels;
- 3rd highest per capita emissions in EU;
- Expected to miss 2020 targets;
- Almost €87 million spent on carbon credits to “pretend” Ireland is meeting its emission target
180 measures

- ban on non-recyclable plastic by 2030;
- up to 500,000 homes in a “retrofit plan”;
- use of renewables for electricity generation up from 30% to 70%
- 3.5GW of offshore & 8.2GW of onshore wind
Carbon-free Ireland

“Climate action presents enormous opportunities. New jobs, new business and new wealth created through renewable energy, building insulation and forestry, reduced imports of fossil fuels and maybe even the possibility of Ireland becoming an electricity exporter.”
Disquiet about October’s Budget

Cycling campaigners say budget cash is not enough

- “This is a status quo budget from a status quo government. When it comes to really tackling climate breakdown ... this budget gives us very little.”
- Gov accused of going back on pledge to allocate 10% of the transport budget to cycling;
- Where is the large housing retrofit programme?
Scientists warn even if Paris commitments so far are met, temperatures would surpass 1.5°C and increase by 3 to 5°C by 2100 & more beyond;

Potential for rapid and unpredictable acceleration of the threat through system feedbacks, which could eliminate our ability to influence or control outcomes;

Likelihood of very serious impacts is very high – declaring an emergency is a rational response.
Emergency Response

- 1.5°C global average temp increase still dangerous – no room for manoeuvre;
- IEA says we can’t afford another single fossil fuel plant anywhere
- 2050 is too late for net zero; it has to be 2030
- Governments, companies, cities, communities need to set ambitious targets.

Whatever the arguments for or against XR’s actions, their demands for emission cuts (net zero by 2025) more accurately reflect the rates & timeframe of 1.5°C than those proposed by any government.
Recipe for serious warming?

- US EIA expects global energy consumption to rise 50% by 2050;
- Despite renewables fossil fuels still provide 70%;
- Petrol 80% of energy for transportation;
- Coal 25% of all energy;
- Recipe for serious global warming and climate instability
Good News

- World’s rising reliance on fossil fuels may end much earlier than expected;
- Clean energy incl wind & solar emerging faster & cheaper than predicted;
- Bloomberg NEF: “like waiting for a sneeze” - first 1% takes forever, then 5% to 50% incredibly fast”;  
- Renewables cheaper than new fossil - soon cheaper than existing.
LA’s unique position
on carbon targets & fuel poverty

- democratic route
- offers opportunity to share benefits of energy revolution equitably.
- planning powers
- Large number buildings
- Large fleet of vehicles.
- responsibility for social housing, economic regeneration, transport and social care.
Role of Irish LAs

• Compared to many other countries, local authorities in Ireland have limited powers;
• LAs working with the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment (DCCAE) to develop a regional approach through four Climate Action Regional Offices (CAROs)
Dublin Plan More Ambitious

- Dublin plan is “way more ambitious”;
- 4 greater Dublin area councils five year plans to 2024;
- Working on a master plan to reach 2030 & 50 targets;
- Costed, evidence-based, realistic pathways.
Local Climate Emergency

- 18 local authorities across Ireland declared an emergency;
- Few, if any, set a date for net zero emissions;
- Over half of UK authorities have declared;
- More common to include net zero by 2030 target; debate about how realistic, but it is driving ambition.
Can we afford to pay for a climate emergency response?

- This is a very odd question - can we afford to take action to address an existential risk that could trigger the largest economic crisis in human history, with the possible collapse of civilisation?
- A Green New Deal would pay for itself.
Global Green Deal

- Climate action blocked at intergovernmental level – too many have retreated from responsibilities.
- More than 100 cities around the world working on climate action plans to meet Paris Agreement;
- On October 9 mayors at the C40 World Mayors Summit in Copenhagen announced support for a Global Green New Deal. Local Gov must unite to respond to the climate emergency.
Local Energy Revolution

- Exciting local energy revolution;
- Nottingham wants to be 1\textsuperscript{st} UK net zero City;
- 40 renewable projects with a capacity of 12MW;
- Dramatic social housing makeovers;
- First to introduce workplace parking levy;
- Pioneering V2G technology;
Vehicle to Grid (V2G)

- Central & Local Gov has a fleet of thousands of vehicles;
- EVs will come back to depots probably with a 90% charge which could be sold back to the grid during the peak (red zone) period of 4.30 to 7.00. Charge up again in the small hours.
Warrington

- Warrington to become 1st LA to produce all its own electricity, following a landmark funding deal with Investec Bank and Leapfrog Finance to build solar farms at two sites in York and Hull - will generate ‘millions of pounds’ in profits every year for 30 years
Bristol City Leap

- Prospectus to attract £1bn for low carbon investment in Bristol’s low carbon & smart energy infrastructure investment in next 10yrs
- £300m heat networks; £125m smart systems;
- £400m for energy efficiency; £40m for renewable energy
3 routes to solar

- Partnering with community energy to issue shares for renewable projects;
- Buying a ready-made solar farm or building a new one, using capital reserves, to generate income;
- Launching a solar bond to fund new solar farms;
Dundee – solar EV charging

- Dundee at vanguard;
- largest no. of electric minicabs in UK (134)
- UK’s largest local authority fleet, with 117 electric cars and vans;
- council-owns four solar-powered charging hubs;
- highest number of rapid chargers of any Scot city;
Edinburgh’s Transformation

- Planning a city centre transformation which prioritises walking & cycling.
Enhance Energy Efficiency

- Enhance En Ef in Council Buildings: Re:fit programme finance;
- LED bulb replacement – Solihull plans to cut street lighting costs in half by 2024;
- All new buildings should be zero carbon;
- Use powers to go beyond building standards
Stirling Council has installed solar on over 2,600 council homes. Over 7MW of capacity. Has now installed batteries in 94 properties.
Stirling District Heat Network

- New £6m renewable energy scheme providing low-cost heat from wastewater from the city’s sewage works.
- Initially network will deliver low-carbon heat to key public buildings, but could expand to housing.
Clydebank District Heating

- £250m Queen’s Quay regeneration project in Clydebank will use water from the Clyde to help heat a mix of residential, commercial and public buildings via 5MW of heat pumps and a district heat network.
Conclusions

- Imperial College Researchers say we need big lifestyle changes:
- eat less meat and dairy;
- swap cars for bikes;
- take fewer flights;
- and ditch gas boilers;
- Local authorities ideally placed to help us through changes;