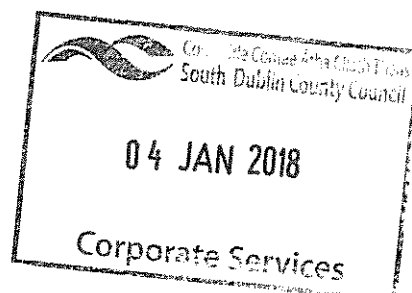




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Mr Colm Murphy  
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Re: MO1/1117 Motion in relation to the National Mitigation Plan

Our ref: MB-2017 257

03 January 2018

Dear Mr Murphy,

Thank you for your letter of 8 December 2017 arising from a motion agreed by the elected members of South Dublin County Council at a recent meeting.

As Ireland's first Minister with the responsibility for climate action, I am fully committed to addressing climate change here in Ireland. I am working closely with my fellow Ministers to ensure that climate action and reducing our Greenhouse Gas (GhG) emissions remains high on the political agenda. Tackling climate change is one of the most important long-term challenges facing both Ireland and the global community.

As the elected members will be aware the National Mitigation Plan (NMP) covers greenhouse gas emissions in the Electricity Generation, Built Environment, Transport, and Agriculture, Forest and Land Use sectors. For each sector, the Plan sets out the sectoral policy context, the greenhouse gas emissions trends for each sector, the opportunities and challenges, mitigation measures currently in place and under development, and specific actions to take forward work within each sector. The Plan is available on my Department's website at:

<http://www.dccae.gov.ie/en-ie/climate-action/topics/mitigation-reducing-ireland's-greenhouse-gas-emissions/national-mitigation-plan/Pages/default.aspx>.

Measures in the NMP are underpinned by 106 actions which Departments and Agencies across Government will undertake on a phased basis between now and 2022. Many of the measures the elected members refer to in the motion are included

*Fáiltítear roimh comhfhreagras i nGaeilge*

in the NMP as either measures already in place or which are being considered by Government.

Measures BE 10.1 to 10.4, inclusive, relate to the introduction of building regulations transposing the requirements of the energy performance of buildings directive in respect of nearly zero energy buildings, NZEBs, and major renovations. The 2010 energy performance of buildings directive requires member states to ensure that, from 31 December 2020, all new buildings meet NZEB standards and major renovations are brought to a cost-optimal standard. In parallel, new buildings owned and occupied by public authorities will be required to achieve this standard two years earlier, that is, by December 2018.

These advanced performance requirements are being implemented through Part L of the building regulations. In terms of dwellings, The Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government is working on an amendment to Part L and the corresponding technical guidance document. That will be made available for public consultation in early 2018.

Regarding buildings other than dwellings, a statutory instrument amending Part L was signed into law in November 2017. In general, this amended regulation will apply to all building works, material alterations, and material changes of use and major renovations that commence after 1 January 2019.

My Department is currently developing a new Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS) which is being designed to assist Ireland in meeting its Renewable Energy – Electricity contributions out to 2030. The development of the new scheme has included an extensive independent economic appraisal, comparing the cost of supporting a range of commercial renewable technologies, including ground mounted and rooftop Solar Photovoltaics (Solar PV), at various scales including micro-generation.

The new RESS will provide pathways for delivering on the 2015 Energy White Paper commitment to ensure communities and citizens are at the centre of the energy transition in Ireland. Communities are effectively being designed into the fabric of the new scheme and a comprehensive assessment of policies and support measures to increase community ownership from renewable electricity projects has been undertaken.

Micro generation, including the use of solar PV panels on domestic rooftops, was also appraised as part of the RESS economic assessment. The analysis identified a number of challenges that may need to be addressed before the introduction of a tariff or other financial support for exported electricity from solar PV rooftop installations. These include amongst others, a reform of network charges, an assessment of the distributional impact of such a policy decision on the PSO (cost burden sharing), and development of a fair tariff for exported electricity taking the benefits of self-consumption into account. This approach is in line with experience from other EU member states who have attempted to introduce supports for micro generation.

Notwithstanding these challenges, I am committed to finding an appropriate mechanism for supporting micro generation, as I like you, believe that micro-generation will have an important role in Ireland's transition to a carbon free economy, in assisting Ireland meet its renewable electricity targets, and increasing social acceptance of and promoting renewable energy projects right across the country.

Under the direction of my Department, the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) facilitated a workshop on micro generation last month and relevant stakeholders were invited to participate with the end goal being the development of a policy position on how best to support micro generation in Ireland. It is my expectation that the development of this policy will occur in conjunction with the development of the main RESS.

Last month, Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport, Shane Ross, T.D., and I committed to work together to ensure that all new passenger cars sold in Ireland from 2030 onwards will be zero emission vehicles. A Low Emissions Vehicle Taskforce was established to accelerate the deployment of low carbon transport technologies, including electric vehicles (EVs). The Taskforce is co-chaired by my Department and the Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport.

Since its formation, the LEV Taskforce has been exploring the potential for further growth in the EV market and this had led to a package of support measures for EVs in Budget 2018. These measures include:

- the continuation of the existing EV purchase grant and VRT relief;
- a new grant to support installation of home charger points for buyers of new and second-hand EVs;
- a new Benefit-in-Kind rate of 0% for EVs which will be in place for at least three years;
- funding to support a reduction in tolls for EVs; and
- funding to support the operation and development of the public charging network with a specific emphasis on increasing the number of rapid chargers.

The range of supports available for EVs is summarised on my Department's website at: <https://www.dccae.gov.ie/en-ie/news-and-media/press-releases/Pages/Ministers-Naughten-and-Ross-reaffirm-commitment-to-Electric-Vehicle-transition.aspx>

The Taskforce is currently examining options for future charging infrastructure requirements for EVs. The key objectives are supporting the operation of the existing charging network and facilitating the expansion of the network, with a particular focus on increasing the number of rapid chargers.

I hope the information set out above clarifies the matter.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Denis Naughten", followed by a horizontal line.

Denis Naughten, T.D.,  
Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment