

Opening Statement

I thank the Chair and Committee Members. I am accompanied by colleagues from the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment:

- Mr. Frank Maughan, Head of Climate Mitigation and Awareness;
- Mr. Eamonn Confrey, Head of Electricity Policy Division; and
- Ms. Rebecca Minch, Head of Energy Efficiency and Affordability Division.

Ongoing development and implementation of Ireland's climate mitigation policy

The Government published its first statutory NMP in July 2017, explicitly recognising that it does not represent a complete roadmap to achieve the objective of transitioning Ireland to a low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050. The NMP begins the process of development of medium- to long-term options to ensure that we are well positioned to take the necessary actions in the next and future decades.

Importantly, the National Mitigation Plan is a living document that will be updated as on-going analysis, dialogue and technological innovation generate more and more cost-effective sectoral mitigation options. Policy development and implementation will happen in parallel.

Policy oversight, development and implementation structures

Climate mitigation policy requires strong governance and accountability, including oversight by the Oireachtas, independent advice from the Climate Change Advisory Council and coordination across Government supported by continuing investment and robust technical and analytical input. The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 requires relevant Ministers to present an Annual Transition Statement to both Houses of the Oireachtas setting out details of measures and

actions, and their effectiveness. A Climate Action High Level Steering Committee, chaired by Minister Naughten and meeting quarterly, drives ongoing policy development and implementation. It has met twice to date. The Technical Research and Modelling Group (TRAM), chaired at Assistant Secretary level and meeting monthly, provides the necessary analytical support.

Implementation to date of the actions proposed in the National Mitigation Plan (NMP) which are relevant to the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment

The Committee has identified forty-five actions as being relevant to its work. A separate briefing note was provided in advance on progress on these actions and we look forward to engaging with you on them.

Plans for ongoing climate mitigation policy development and implementation

In terms of ongoing policy implementation and development, and building on the NMP, it is important to highlight the publication in February of the National Development Plan (NDP), which will lead to a significant step change in funding available for climate action over the next decade with a strong focus on strategic investments in the areas of transport, renewable energy, grid development and interconnection, and the built environment, to address the significant climate mitigation challenges that Ireland faces. Almost €21 billion will be directed, between Exchequer and non-Exchequer resources, to addressing the transition to a low-carbon society. In addition, the NDP allocated a further €8.6 billion for investments in sustainable mobility. This capital investment will enable us to deliver a significant reduction in our greenhouse gas emissions over the period to 2030.

Preparation of a National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP), an EU requirement, is at an early stage, with a draft to be finalised by end-2018 and the final plan to be developed by end-2019. In terms of climate mitigation policy, the NECP will need to align with, and where possible build on, the NMP and the NDP. Given the significant investment priorities already identified in the NDP, the NECP is likely to have to look

to taxation, regulation and behavioural change actions and measures to further develop mitigation policy at this juncture.

The National Dialogue on Climate Action (NDCA)

Finally decarbonisation will involve fundamental societal transformation, as well as ongoing engagement with society through the NDCA. The central objective of the Dialogue is to create awareness, engagement and the motivation to act across society. Under the NDCA, a Climate Ambassador Programme commenced in September 2017; a Climate Action Week took place in October 2017, a Green Schools Climate Expo held 22 February 2018; and the EPA hosted a series of lectures on climate action policy. An Advisory Group has been established by the Minister to input into the organisation of regional and local events that will be piloted shortly.