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# Making homes more energy efficient

**THE** Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment, Richard Bruton, has announced the 57 successful applicants to the SEAI Communities grant scheme. This scheme will support these communities to deliver energy upgrades to nearly 700 homes and 570 community and commercial buildings in their local area, eliminating 34,676 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> annually – this is the equivalent of taking more than 11,000 internal combustion engine cars off the road. Reducing emissions from buildings is a key action under the government's Climate Action Plan.

Minister Bruton said: "Today we are providing €25m to fund proposals developed by 57 of those communities and help those pioneering communities to deliver real climate action. All projects are community orientated with a cross sectoral approach includ-

ing the public and private sector. This is an innovative model supported by SEAI coming together with organisations that can mobilise businesses, homeowners and community and charity organisations to get projects off the ground."

Minister Bruton visited one of the 2018 grant recipients, St Michael's **House** Leisure Centre, in Coolock, Dublin. This is part of a larger upgrade project including a number of homes, businesses and public buildings. St Michael's Leisure Centre received a grant of €72,000 towards a renewable heat pump and lighting upgrade. Minister Bruton added: "If we are to reach the targets set in the Climate Action Plan we must reduce the harmful emissions that come from our buildings. We need to scale up our ambition in this area. Upgrading our homes and businesses with improved insulation

and energy efficiency measures can greatly reduce our impact on our environment. Community partnerships are key to reaching our targets set out in the Climate Action Plan. Innovation

and pioneering partnerships between the public and private sectors, residential and non-residential sectors, commercial and not-for-profit organisations are to be encouraged and supported. This is part of a much wider effort that we are delivering as part of our Climate Action Plan to engage communities. This is in addition to the 300 sustainable energy communities who are working towards longer term sustainable energy plans in their local areas. These grants will support communities to drive projects which will deliver significant upgrades to groups of homes and businesses in their local area. Not only will these upgrades help us deliver on our climate commit-

ments, but they will result in cleaner, healthier, warmer homes and businesses and cheaper energy bills."

Up to €25m of Project Ireland Government funding is available to support the successful projects, which have a total value of €66m.

Examples of projects that will benefit from the funding include:

Waterford County Council is leading a project that will see a selection of Waterford libraries, schools, community centres, GAA clubs, shops and farms carry out insulation, heating, lighting and refrigeration upgrades.

Northside Community Enterprises (NCE) is working with communities in Dublin, Wexford and Kildare. Homes, businesses, a church, NCBI charity shops and the Mater Hospital will be upgraded with a combination of lighting upgrades, new heating systems, including Combined Heat and Power

and solar PV for generating electricity.

Wicklow County Council is leading a project in Wicklow and Wexford that will see a selection of homes, leisure centres, recycling centres, public buildings, a bakery and a hotel carry out upgrades on insulation, heating, lighting, refrigeration, heat recovery and steam generation.

Jim Gannon, CEO of SEAI, com-

mented: "The Government's Climate Action Plan recognises the central role of communities in achieving our climate action ambitions. SEAI is working with hundreds of energy communities across the country, providing them with the knowledge and the means to both plan their own low carbon pathway and to deliver on their ambitions."

**For more details on the 2019 projects, visit [www.seai.ie](http://www.seai.ie)**