



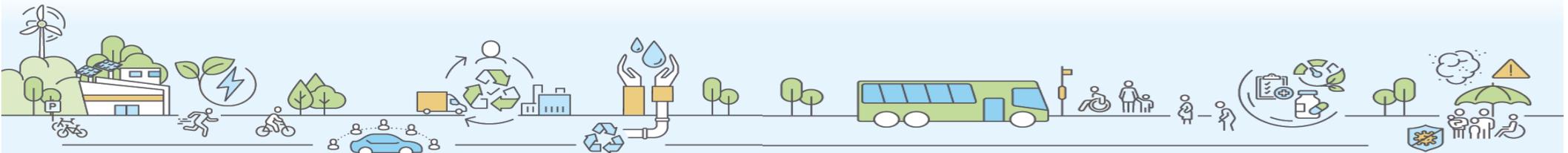
# We're taking climate action

## Health Service Executive Guidance for Regional Climate Action Implementation Structures

*“The HSE is committed to achieving net-zero emissions no later than 2050, delivering healthcare which is environmentally and socially sustainable.”*

*— HSE Climate Action Strategy 2023 – 2050.*

**The purpose of this document is to outline the guidance for the regional implementation structures to support effective delivery of the HSE Climate Action Strategy 2023 – 2050 at regional and local levels across the HSE.**



## 1. Introduction:

The Health Service Executive (HSE) recognises that it has a significant role to play in tackling the climate crisis by dealing with the growing health impacts of climate change and curbing its own emissions. The healthcare sector is a notable contributor to global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (est. 5- 15%) and one of the sectors at the forefront of supporting human health adapt to the impacts of climate change. The HSE launched its Climate Action Strategy in 2023. Work has been ongoing to deliver on the 10 strategic objectives — please see Table 1. The Strategy identified six overarching focus areas and ten strategic objectives for effective delivery of the HSE Climate Action vision. The programme of work to implement the Climate Action Strategy comprises a portfolio of programmes to be delivered over the period 2023-2050. As part of this commitment, an ongoing review will be incorporated to check progress.

Table 1: Climate Action Focus Areas and aligned Strategic Objectives

Focus Areas	Strategic Objectives
1. Sustainable Buildings & Green Environment	i. Sustainable buildings
	ii. Green Environments
2. Transport & Mobility	iii. Transport
	iv. Mobility
3. Sustainable Procurement	v. Green Procurement
	vi. Procurement Decarbonisation Trajectory
4. Greener Models of Healthcare	vii. Greener Models of Healthcare
5. Water Conservation & Waste Management	viii. Water Conservation
	ix. Waste Management
6. Adaptation & Resilience	x. Adaptation & Resilience
	<b>Enabling Objectives</b>
	a. Measurement and Assurance
	b. Collaboration, Communications, Training and Awareness

Effective implementation of the HSE’s Climate Action Strategy at national, regional and local levels will be key to ensuring delivery of environmentally sustainable services. The approach outlined below will help to ensure that implementation of the Climate Action Strategy is aligned with the HSE

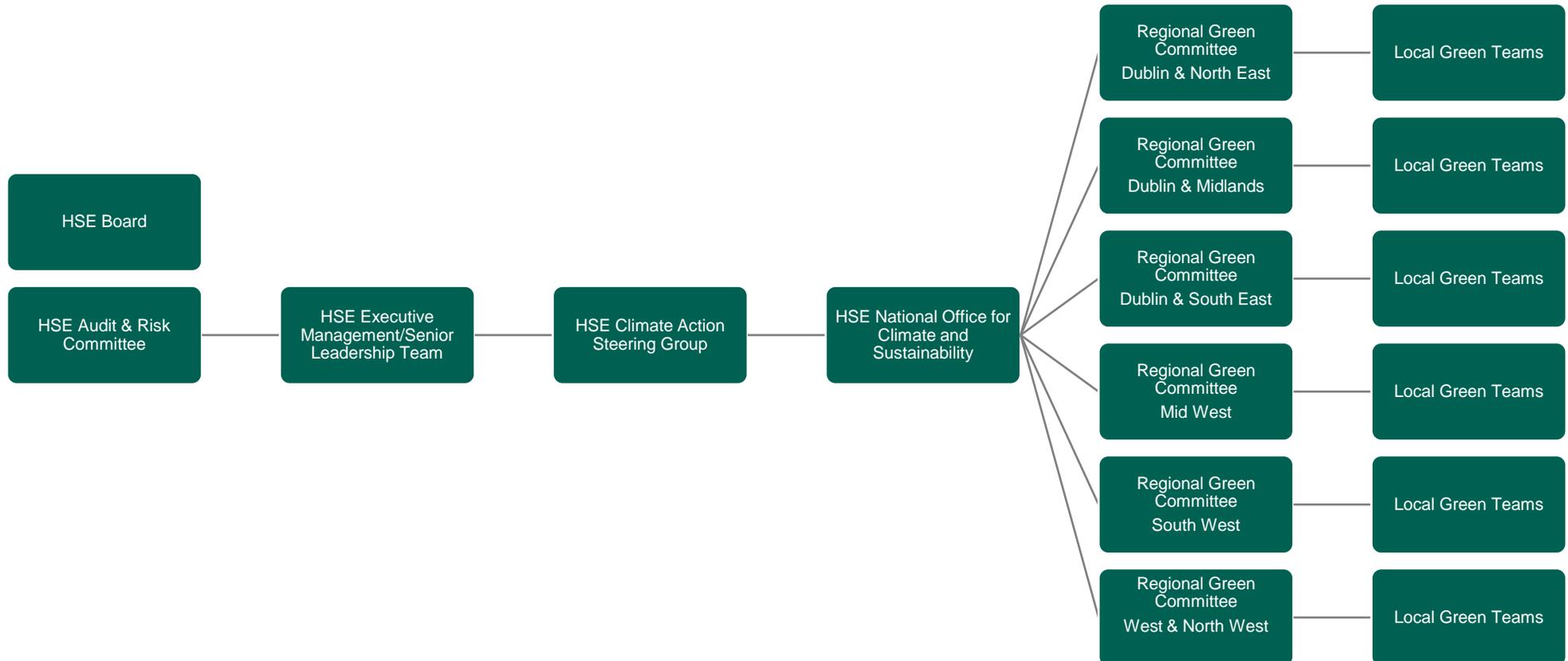
National Reform initiatives outlined in Sláintecare. Our most recent Staff survey shows 60% of our staff want to act on climate change to improve sustainable healthcare.

Focused on efforts to enable local ownership while maintaining national consistency, six Regional Executive Officers report directly to the HSE CEO and are a core part of the HSE Executive at national level. The Climate Programme is nationally, regionally and locally structured, with this principle in mind and it aims to strike the right balance between national efforts for a sustainable healthcare system and regional and local ownership to drive sustainable change.

## 2. Governance Structure:

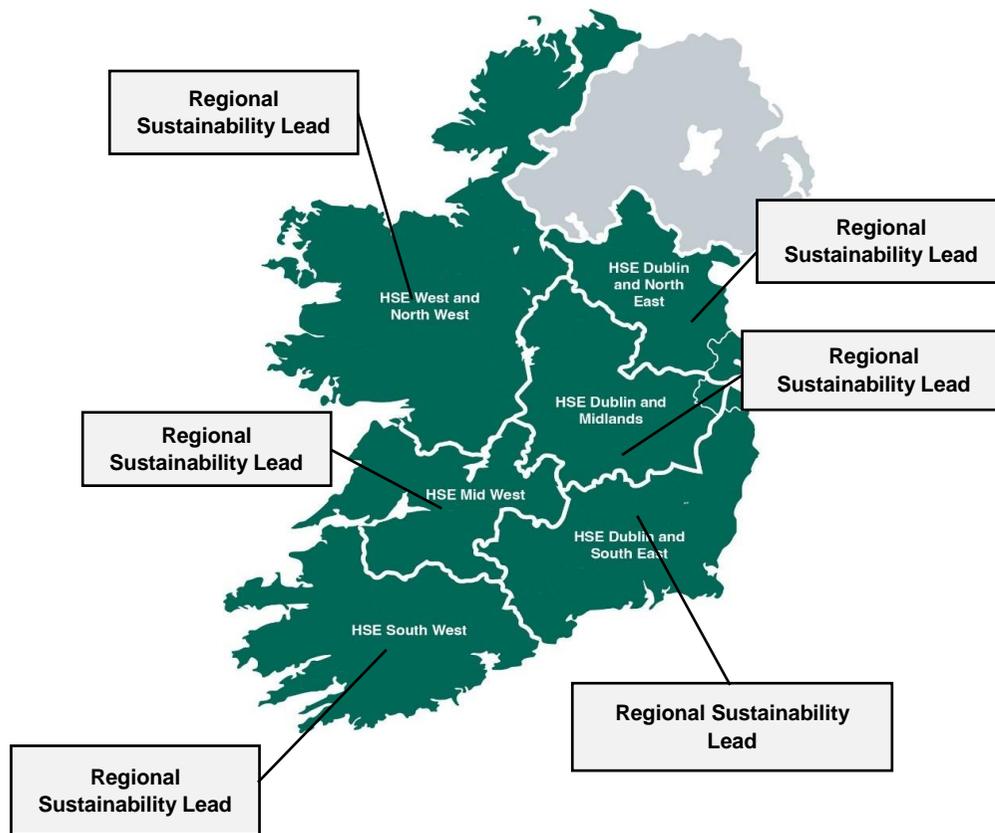
Below is an overview of the governance structure in place for the HSE Climate Action Strategy. Delivering on the ambition of the Strategy will require appropriate leadership and governance structures at all levels and particularly at regional level coupled with continuous alignment of the Strategy with revised policies and objectives at national and local levels with due consideration of risk planning processes.

Figure 1: Governance & Regional Structure



## HSE National Climate Action Steering Group

Implementation of the Climate Action Strategy is governed by an overarching Steering Group, reporting to the HSE's Executive Management Team, the Audit and Risk Committee and the Board of the HSE. The Climate Action Steering Group are responsible for providing governance, direction and support implementation of the Strategy. Where effective and appropriate governance arrangements are already in place e.g. in relation to healthcare infrastructure decarbonisation as part of the wider Capital and Estates Strategy, update reports will be provided. The National Climate Action Steering Group includes regional representatives from each of the six new HSE health regions. The Regional Sustainability Lead once appointed will establish a Regional Green Committee, and attend the National Climate Action Steering Group to report progress for their region. Please see Pg. 6 for further details.



**HSE's National Office for Climate and Sustainability** coordinates delivery across the portfolio of climate action programmes. Under the remit of the National Director for Wellbeing, Equality, Climate & Global Health Strategy, Dr Philip Crowley, the central programme office comprises a small team, led by Programme Manager, Roisin Breen.

**HSE Capital and Estates Sustainable Infrastructure Office** works in close collaboration with the National Office for Climate and Sustainability. The Capital and Estates team focus is on leading and supporting HSE and HSE funded Significant Energy Users<sup>1</sup> with their efforts to reduce energy use through behavioural change, support engineering retrofit and upgrade works and a forward looking energy efficient and carbon zero design approach for all new capital works (Strategic Objective 1). The **HSE Capital and Estates Sustainable Infrastructure Office** also will lead on delivery of actions under Green Environments (Strategic Objective 2) and Water Conservation (Strategic Objective 8).

The operating model to deliver Strategic Objective 1, Sustainable Buildings, was already in place in advance of the HSE's Climate Action Strategy and is being delivered as part of the HSE Capital and Estates Strategy and its Infrastructure Decarbonisation Roadmap. There are currently three Regional HSE Capital & Estates

<sup>1</sup> To better understand energy use across the Healthcare Estate, and focus resources on the largest energy users, the Capital & Estates team developed a Significant Energy User (SEU) register which identifies the top 150 Healthcare hospitals (HSE and Section 38/39 agencies) which account for 85% of total health sector energy usage, 103 of these sites account for 80% of health sector usage.

Energy Bureaus (East, West and South). These three Regional Energy Bureaus will be restructured into six Capital & Estates Climate Action Sub-Groups aligned to the six new HSE Health Regions. These Sustainable Infrastructure sub-groups will form part of the Regional Green Committee structure as outlined above.

### Climate Action Strategy Working Groups

At National Level, work programmes have been established to manage implementation each of the strategic objectives identified under the HSE Climate Action Strategy.

A **work programme lead** has also been assigned to each individual work programme. The role of the work programme lead is to ensure efficient, effective and timely delivery of the actions related to their work programme and to report progress and risks to the relevant work programme sponsor (if different) and National Climate Action Steering Group, as appropriate. The work programme leads have formed a working group for each of the 6 priority areas comprising individuals with the necessary skills, knowledge, and expertise to implement their work programme.

In addition to the six strategic objectives, there are two enabling functions:

1. The **Measurement and Assurance** function supports the work streams in establishing an effective approach to tracking and managing progress. In addition to this, there are also a number of KPI's that the HSE are mandated to report on within the Government's Climate Action Plan. Therefore, creating a comprehensive data, measurement, risk management and assurance system to track our actions and enable improvement over time will be fundamental to long-term success and reporting.
2. The **Collaboration, Communications, Training and Awareness** function recognises that as a whole we will collaborate to our common goals as laid out in the strategy. In addition, the HSE must inspire and upskill our workforce to both understand and embrace climate action and sustainability.

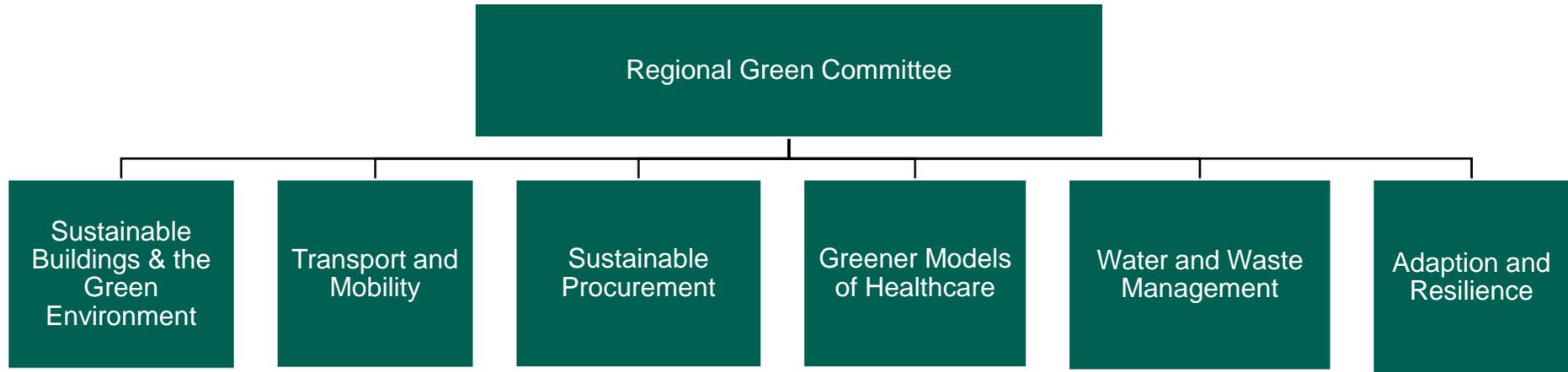


### 3. Regional & Local Implementation Structures:

#### a. Regional Green Committee.

At regional and local level, regional green committees and local green teams (including energy teams) will be established where they do not already exist. They will seek to act on each of the six focus areas identified in the strategy and ensure ownership for implementation of the twelve strategic objectives.

Figure 2: Proposed Regional Green Committee structure:



#### Regional Green Committees

- Each **Regional Green** committee will include the already established Capital & Estates energy bureau to cover strategic objectives relating to sustainable buildings (SO1), green environments (SO2) and water conservation (SO8).

#### Appointment of 1 WTE Regional Sustainability Lead Support

- Reporting directly to the Regional Green committee Lead and is essential to provide leadership and ensure effective action in the region and to support local green teams.

#### Evolution of Regional Green Committees

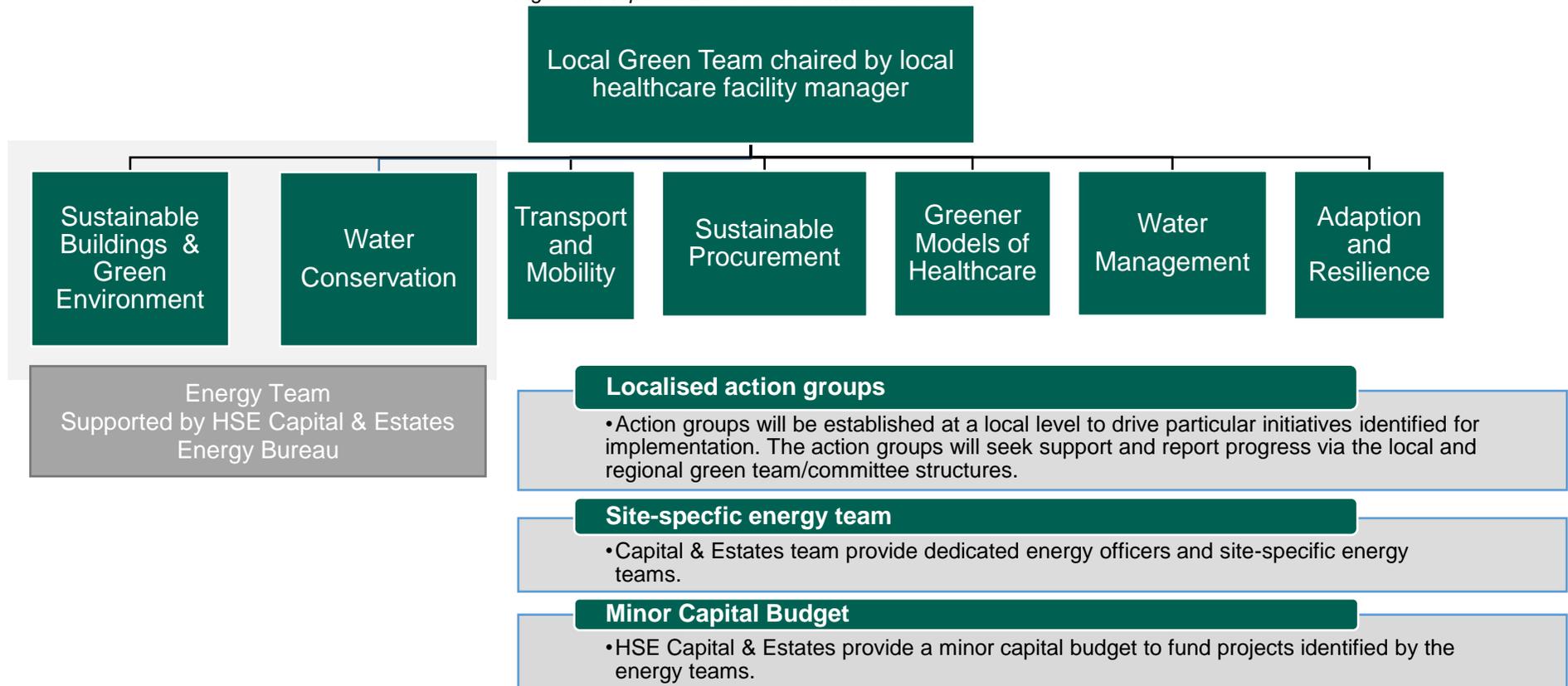
- In time the regional green committees should form 5 other subgroups mimicking the structure in Table 1 Climate Action Focus Areas and aligned Strategic Objectives and Figure 2 Proposed Regional Green Committee structure. Until this is in place, all other 5 focus areas will be covered directly by the Regional Green Committees.

<b>Regional Green Committee governance structure?</b>	The Regional Sustainability Lead will work with the Regional Green Committee, and attend the National Climate Action Steering Group to report progress for their region. The Regional Green Committee will liaise and collaborate with the National Offices and local green teams.	
<b>What does the Regional Green Committee do?</b>	A forum to plan how national sustainability initiatives should be implemented across their respective regions and communicate developments at national level.	
	Implement advice, guidance and supports provided by the National Steering Group and national working groups, coordinating implementation of strategic objectives across their respective region.	
	Inform the relevant National Climate Action Steering Group & working groups on plans, progress, obstacles, risks and issues arising.	
	Report on progress against agreed measures/KPIs and targets both those set by HSE Climate Action Strategy and Government Climate Action Plan requirements.	
	Manage the process to ensure that each Significant Energy User (SEU) within its region has a fully operational green team and an effective energy team in place.	
<b>Who sits on the Regional Green Committee?</b>	Chair/Regional Green Committee Lead.	Regional procurement representation.
	Climate Regional Lead support.	Regional finance representation.
	Healthcare staff (i.e. Clinical and non-clinical NCHD, Nursing, HSCP etc. including champions of sustainability). Hospital Green and Energy Team chairs.	Regional Community operational representation.
	Regional AND Capital & Estates (Regional Energy and Sustainability Officers).	Regional Hospital operational representation.
<b>When does the Regional Green Committee meet?</b>	The regional green committee will meet on a <b>Quarterly</b> basis in the first instance to review progress on implementation of the Climate Action Strategy across their region, with a focus on the sites where green teams have been established (i.e. significant energy users per HSE region). The frequency can be assessed once the group is established and embedded.	

## b. Local Green Teams

As outlined in the Public Sector Climate Action Mandate Section 2, there is a requirement to establish green teams. In line with this, Local (site specific) Green Teams will be responsible for coordinating the implementation of Climate Action initiatives that reduce environmental impacts of our day-to-day healthcare operations of the facility. Local Green Teams, chaired by a local healthcare facility manager, would incorporate existing Energy Teams (established and supported by the HSE Capital & Estates Energy Bureau). Initial focus will be on establishing Green Teams in significant energy user sites. Where an significant energy users currently has an active Energy Team<sup>2</sup> a wider Green Team should be established with the Energy Team being an integral (and initially the most active) component of the Green Team. Where no Energy or Green Teams exists, a Green Team (with an incorporated Energy Team) should be established.

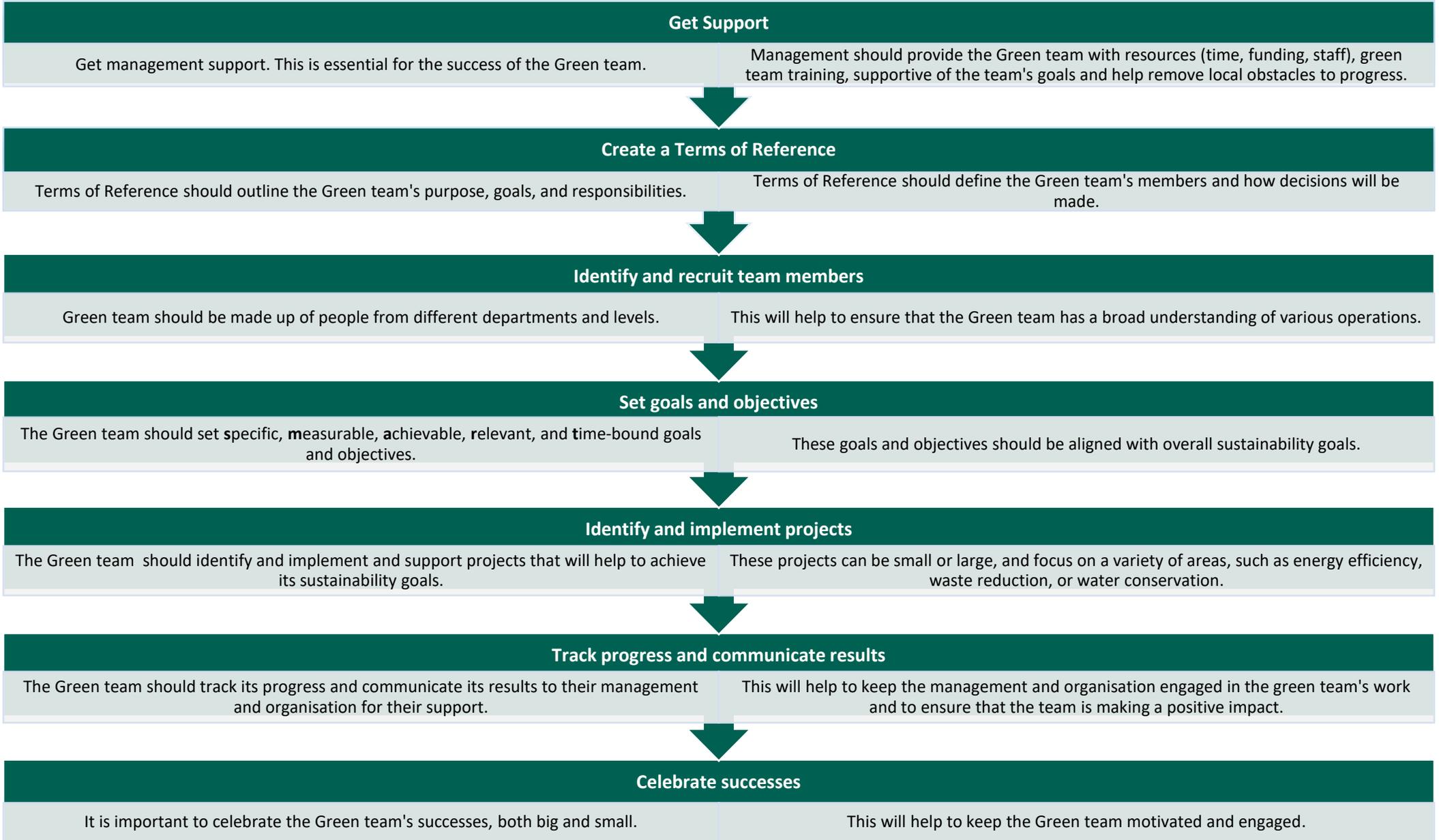
Figure 3: Proposed Local Green Committee structure:



<sup>2</sup> There were 121 Energy Teams in place and supported by Capital & Estates at the end of Q2 2024.

<b>Local Green Teams governance structure?</b>	The local Green Team will appoint a chair, who will act as the focal point for communications for the local Green Team and link as required with the Regional Green committee.	
<b>What does the Local Green Teams do?</b>	Recruit green team members especially identifying local sustainability champions (who are already active in climate change) and assign roles and responsibilities.	Report on performance, measures and risks to regional green committee.
	Set goals in line with national guidance for the green team to deliver in the short, medium and long term.	Provide a point of contact for queries arising. Support existing groups and individuals active on sustainability initiatives
	Manage and track progress against the goals set. Support local action in all the strategy priority areas	Communicate success to demonstrate impact. Participate in national and regional climate exchanges with others active in sustainability
	Manage and mitigate any risks and challenges identified, including reporting to regional and/or national level obstacles they encounter.	Maintain and build momentum relating to the sustainable healthcare agenda. Support staff training on sustainability
<b>Who sits on the Local Green Teams?</b>	Healthcare management (Line Manager and budget holder).	Healthcare staff who can potentially influence other colleagues in the workplace.
	Healthcare staff who volunteered as “green” champions with an interest in climate action and sustainability.	Healthcare staff from a representative sample of departments/services i.e., management, nurse, doctor, finance, procurement, maintenance, catering, HR, health and safety, wellbeing etc.
	Representation from HSE Capital & Estates i.e. Regional Energy & Sustainability Officers.	
<b>When does the Local Green Teams meet?</b>	Local green teams will meet on a <b>monthly</b> basis to review progress on implementation of the Climate Action Strategy on their site. The frequency can be assessed once the group is established and embedded.	

#### 4. Getting your Green team set up and running it's organisation:



**5. Sample Terms of Reference:**



**Terms of Reference**

**XXX Regional Green Committee**

<b>Status</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>
Draft	Initial draft	1.0	XX/XX/XXXX

**1. Introduction:**

- Insert paragraph of the Government's Climate Action Plan which details targets that Public Sector Bodies in Ireland are legally obliged to meet.
- Insert a paragraph on the HSE Climate Action Strategy 2023 - 2050 and set out the Climate Action Programme with corresponding actions and targets the organisation will take to both reduce the environmental and social impact of the delivery of healthcare and help the population prepare and adapt to climate-related impacts.

**2. Scope:**

- Insert a paragraph on the governance structure of the Committee as outlined in Figure 1: Governance & Regional Structure.

**3. Purpose:**

- Provide an overview of the regional green committee and how it is a vital element in the implementation of the HSE Climate Action Strategy. In addition, insert a paragraph on how the committee will identify and lead on the implementation of key strategic objectives across the region across the six pillars identified with the HSE Climate Action Strategy 2023- 2050:
  - Sustainable Buildings & Green Environment
  - Water Conservation & Waste Management
  - Greener Models of Healthcare
  - Sustainable Procurement
  - Transport & Mobility
  - Adaptation & Resilience

**4. Membership:**

- Outline the proposed membership of the committee. Please see 3. Regional & Local Implementation Structures, a. Regional Green Committee.

**5. Meetings:**

- Insert a paragraph on quorum and the frequency of the meetings.



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