

# Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report

For  
**Climate Adaptation Strategy**  
for **Cork County Council**

*Determination of the need for a Strategic Environmental  
Assessment for Cork County Council Climate Adaptation  
Strategy prepared under the National Climate Change  
Adaptation Framework*

September 2019

**ON BEHALF OF**  
Atlantic Seaboard South Region  
Climate Action Regional Office (CARO)

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

The Earth's Climate is changing. While natural fluctuations in climate are considered normal, emerging research and observational records from across the world show rates of change that are far greater than those experienced in recent history. Global temperatures have risen and are projected to rise further bringing changes in weather patterns, rising sea levels and increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather. Ireland's climate is changing in line with global patterns and these changes are bringing significant and wide-ranging economic, environmental and social impacts.

Climate change is now recognised as a global challenge with policy responses required in terms of both mitigating the causes of climate change and in adapting to the now inevitable consequences of our changing climate. Action at local level is vitally important to help reduce the risks and impacts of climate change across communities.

This local authority Climate Adaptation Strategy forms part of Ireland's national strategy for climate adaptation as set out in the National Adaptation Framework (NAF) which was produced under the provisions of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015.<sup>1</sup>

It is tasked with mainstreaming climate change adaptation over time into all functions, operations and services of the local authority. It seeks to inform or 'climate proof' existing plans and policies produced and implemented by the local authority. This ensures a considered, consistent and coherent approach, facing head-on the challenges of a changing climate. Crucially, it also helps in building resilience within the local authority organisation itself as well as across all communities.

## 2 LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

### 2.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment

A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is the formal, systematic evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a plan or program, or variation to a plan or program before a decision is made to adopt it. The SEA Directive<sup>2</sup> requires, inter alia, that SEA is undertaken for certain plans, programs or variations to these.

The SEA Directive has been transposed into Irish law through the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (S.I. 435 of 2004) and The Planning and Development Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Regulations 2004 (S.I. 436 of 2004). These Regulations have since been amended by the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 200 of 2011) and the Planning and Development (SEA) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 201 of 2011). The criteria as set out in Annex II of The SEA Directive (Directive 2001/42/EC) on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment, this criteria is also set out in Schedule 1 of the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and

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<sup>1</sup> *Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015* (S.I. No. 25/2016). Available at <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2015/act/46/enacted/en/htm>

<sup>2</sup> Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of Ministers, of 27th June 2001, on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment

Programmes) Regulations 2004 (S.I. 435 of 2004) need to be considered while drafting the Climate Adaptation Strategy.

This SEA screening report is consistent with the process as recommended by The Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government guidance document entitled *Implementation of SEA Directive 2001/42/EC Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment November 2004*, specifically Chapter 3 (SEA: Screening and Scoping) and furthermore uses the criteria for SEA screening criteria set out in the SEA Directive.

An Appropriate Assessment Screening Report has also been prepared for this Climate Adaptation Strategy in line with Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC).

## 2.2 Climate Change Adaptation

### 2.2.1 International Context

The **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)** is an international environmental treaty adopted in May 1992. The framework's objective is "*to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system*". The framework did not set binding limits on greenhouse gas emissions and contained no enforcement mechanisms. However, the framework outlined how specific international treaties may negotiate further action towards its key objective. **The Paris Agreement 2015** is a protocol set within the context of the UNFCCC (ratified by Ireland on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2016) and it is aimed at:

- Limiting global warming to less than 2<sup>o</sup>C above pre-industrial level and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5<sup>o</sup>C.
- Building resilience and increasing the ability to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

The agreement states the need for Parties to formulate and implement National Adaptation Plans.

### 2.2.2 EU Context

The 2013 EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change encouraged all Member states to adopt comprehensive adaptation strategies. It sought better-informed decision making through the identification and addressing of gaps in knowledge about adaptation. The European Climate Adaptation Platform Climate-ADAPT, was developed as a resource mechanism to help users access and share information on adaptation.

The Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy is a voluntary, bottom-up, approach for cities and local governments to combat Climate Change and move towards a low emission, resilient society. The Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy brought the Compact of Mayors and the EU Covenant of Mayors under one international body in January 2017 incorporating over 9,000 cities and local governments.

### 2.2.3 National Context

The 2012 National Climate Change Adaptation Framework (NCCAF) was Ireland's first step in developing a national policy on adaptation actions to combat the impacts of climate change.

The National Policy Position on Climate Action and Low Carbon Development 2014 restated the policy position of the NCCAF, 2012. Greenhouse gas mitigation and adaptation to the impacts of climate change were to be addressed in parallel national plans under an evolving climate policy to 2050.

The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 was a landmark national milestone in the evolution of climate change policy in Ireland. It provides the statutory basis for the national transition objective laid out in the National Policy Position (as per above). Further to this, it made provision for

and gives statutory authority to both the National Mitigation Plan (NMP), published in 2017 and the National Adaptation Framework (NAF) published in 2018. This Local Adaptation Strategy forms part of the National Adaptation Framework.

The Local Authority Adaptation Strategy Development Guidelines 2018 provides guidance to Local Authorities to develop their own Climate Action Adaptation Strategy. In developing this adaptation strategy Cork County Council has been consistent with these guidelines.

### 2.3 Cork's Climate Adaptation Strategy Objectives

The purpose of the Cork County Council's Climate Adaptation Strategy is to achieve the national objective of becoming a more climate-resilient society and economy by 2050. In order to help tackle current and future challenges that climate change can present, Cork County Council have set out a number of key objectives in their strategy, under seven thematic principles. Table 1 below outlines Cork County Councils Climate Adaptation Strategy objectives per theme.

Under each theme in the Climate Adaptation Strategy, there are a number of actions that have been detailed to achieve each Objective. All the actions per theme can be found in Appendix 1.

**TABLE 1 CORK'S CLIMATE ADAPTATION STRATEGY OBJECTIVES**

<b>Local Adaptation Governance and Business Operations</b>
To support the successful and practical implementation of adaptation planning
To ensure that climate adaptation is mainstreamed into all activities and operations of Cork County Council
To develop and maintain a resource and risk model for Cork County Council
To build resilience within Cork County Council to support service delivery
To build capacity within Cork County Council to respond effectively to extreme weather events
To identify and support opportunities that may arise from pursuing adaptation efforts through the functions of Cork County Council
<b>Infrastructure and Built Environment</b>
To increase the resilience of roads and transport infrastructure
To increase the resilience of Cork County Council buildings, housing stock, architectural heritage and other capital assets
To increase the resilience of Cork County Council coastal infrastructure including harbours, piers, beaches
<b>Landuse and Development</b>
To Integrate climate action considerations into landuse planning policy
<b>Drainage and Flood Management</b>
To adapt to the increased risk and impact of flooding
<b>Natural Environment, Built and Cultural Heritage</b>
To protect and enhance the natural environment and support Bio-diversity
To protect Heritage and Cultural Infrastructure
<b>Community Health and Wellbeing</b>
To build capacity and resilience within communities
<b>Other Sectors and Agencies</b>
To collaborate with other Sectors and Agencies in programs relating to climate change

## 2.4 Consultation

### 2.4.1 Environmental Authorities

Article 5 (4) of the SEA Directive specifies that each Member State should designate the relevant Environmental Authorities which, by reason of their specific environmental responsibility, are likely to be concerned with the potential environmental effect of any plan or programme. Article 9(5) and 9(6) of the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (as amended) details the need for the competent authority (Cork County Council) to consult the relevant environmental authorities regarding the development of certain plans and programmes. On an Irish context, as a minimum the following environmental authorities should be contacted when developing county plans and programmes:

- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA);
- The Minister for the Environment (Minister Communications, Climate Action and Environment) – *where the planning authority considers that a plan might have significant effects in relation to the architectural or archaeological heritage or to nature conservation; and*
- The Minister for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources (Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine) - *where the planning authority considers that a plan might have significant effects on fisheries or the marine environment.*

Cork County Council on the 5<sup>th</sup> June 2019 sent the Draft Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, the SEA Screening Report and Appropriate Assessment (AA) Screening to the following Environmental Authorities:

- Environmental Protection Agency;
- Department of Communications, Climate Action and the Environment;
- Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine;
- Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government; and
- Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

### 2.4.2 Summary of Environmental Authorities Consultation submissions

Two submissions were received during the Environmental Authority Consultation period. Table 2 details the summary of submissions from each of the organisations and Cork County Council response to each of the submissions.

**TABLE 2 ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORITIES SUMMARY OF SUBMISSIONS AND RESPONSES**

Environmental Authority	Summary submission	Cork Co. Co. response
EPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommended mitigation actions should be accelerated.</li> <li>• Suggests including a schematic showing the relationship between the Strategy, Legislation and Guidance.</li> <li>• Highlighted the importance of collaboration between Local Authorities.</li> <li>• Recommended recognising maladaptation early and put in place countermeasures as soon as possible.</li> <li>• Consideration of cumulative or in-combination effect, in particular when considering, selecting and implementing specific adaptation measures.</li> </ul>	Cork Co. Co. acknowledge the submission from the EPA and have incorporated the suggestions throughout the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, for example, updated the schematic and supporting narrative in chapter 1 to demonstrate the context of the strategy with Climate Act, NAF, adaptation guidelines. Additional text was also inserted in chapters 2 & 5 of the strategy to provide for green procurement and grey, green, and soft measures.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Strategy should clearly reference climate data and projections/scenarios used in developing the strategies.</li> <li>• Suggested consulting OPW flood risk management plans and refer to the UN Sustainable Development Goals.</li> </ul>	<p>Furthermore, a number of Actions were updated or added post consultation. For example, Action No. 46 was added to the strategy, as follows:</p> <p><i>Explore opportunities to install systems similar to those currently operating in the County in areas subject to flooding with reference to CFRAMS.</i></p> <p>Addition of Action No 50, as follows:</p> <p><i>Develop a plan to support an active native tree planting programme in conjunction with an awareness campaign that informs of the benefits to communities in improving air quality, offsetting carbon emissions, promoting biodiversity, limiting flood risk, reducing urban heat, as well aesthetic value.</i></p> <p>Addition of Action No 51, as follows:</p> <p><i>Support provision for natural borders/buffers and include as integral component of the design of greenway/ blueway, tracks, trails, amenity and tourism areas to promote the natural enhancement and influence positive user experience. Consult with the NPWS to ensure appropriate buffer zones are provided, maintained and protected to avoid individual impacts on designated species-area habitats and to protect and enhance wider biodiversity</i></p>
<p>Department of Communications, Climate Action and the Environment</p>	<p>No response</p>	
<p>The Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine</p>	<p><i>Responded to the public consultation, see summary in section 2.4.3 below</i></p>	
<p>Department of Heritage, Culture and the Gaeltacht</p>	<p>No response</p>	



<p>Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.</p>	<p>The department made a number of observations under a number headings as follows:</p> <p><b>Archaeology</b></p> <p>The department referenced its own sectoral Climate Change Adaptation Plan, and highlight it aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Create awareness among civil society</li> <li>-Create structures and networks to facility engagement</li> <li>-Support the custodians of heritage sites in protecting their properties</li> <li>-Provide guidance on mitigating damage and on appropriate adaptation</li> <li>-Promote the development of the required skills and expertise.</li> </ul> <p>Five goals underpin the sectoral Climate Change Adaptation Plan for Built and Archaeological Heritage:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improve understanding of the heritage resource and its vulnerability to climate change impacts</li> <li>2. Develop and mainstream sustainable policies and plans for climate change adaptation of built and archaeological heritage</li> <li>3. Mainstream Ireland's heritage for future generations</li> <li>4. Communicate and transfer knowledge</li> <li>5. Exploit the opportunities for built and archaeological heritage to demonstrate value and secure resources</li> </ol> <p>Its is the department understanding that local and national adaptation plans will align where possible to ensure effective delivery of both and to prevent duplication.</p> <p><b>Architectural Heritage</b></p> <p>The architectural report includes all buildings, structures, settlements and designed landscape of special interest. While the architectural heritage of this country has survived well in the past, changing climatic conditions may make it less able to cope. Climate change can alter and accelerate decay or can overwhelm the capacity of older structures to deal with servere weather events, increased extremes of wetting and drying</p>	<p>Cork Co Co acknowledge the submission from the Department and have incorporated suggestions throughout the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, for example an update to an Objective under Infrastructure and Built Environment as follows:</p> <p><i>To increase the resilience of Cork County Council buildings, housing stock, architectural heritage and other capital assets.</i></p>
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	<p>or cold or heat. The Department's recommendation should be taken into account to identify the architectural heritage at risk in its areas, to assess the vulnerabilities to climate change and develop disaster risk reduction policies for direct and indirect risks, the department recommends the followings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Identify the architectural heritage in local authority area including but not restricted to, protected structures and architectural conservation areas designed in the local authority Development Plan,</li> <li>-Include objectives to carry out climate change risk assessment for the historic structures and sites in its area</li> <li>-Include objectives to develop disaster risk deduction policies addressing direct and indirect risk to architectural heritage in its area</li> <li>- Include objectives to develop resilience and adaptation strategies for the architectural heritage in its area</li> <li>-Develop the skills capacity within the local authority to address adaptation / mitigation / emergency management issues affecting historic structures and sites in order to avoid inadvertent loss or damage in the course of climate change adaptation or mitigation works.</li> </ul> <p>The Department recommends that, where such offices are employed, the architectural conservation officer and / or heritage officer should be included in the local authorities Adaptation Steering Group</p>	
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### 2.4.3 Public Consultation

Cork County Council also conducted a six-week period from 15<sup>th</sup> July 2019 to 26<sup>th</sup> August 2019, where the Draft Climate Adaptation Strategy, with the accompanying SEA Screening Report and AA Screening Report, were presented for public consultation. An extension of two weeks was given to the 26<sup>th</sup> August post-consultation submissions requesting an extension to the consultation period.

The following outreach methods were used to advertise the consultation and invite submissions:

- Newspaper Notices were published in the following papers:
  - Irish Examiner;
  - The Southern Star;
  - The Corkman;
  - The Avondhu;
  - The Vale Star;

- The Carrigdhoun Weekly; and
- The East Cork Journal.
- The Adaptation Strategy, along with the Strategic Environmental Assessment and Appropriate Assessment Screening Reports, were made available for inspection in County Buildings and libraries of Cork County Council – at the following locations:
  - Cork County Council Headquarters, County Hall, Carrigrohane Road;
  - Leabharlann Bhaile Bhuirne, Baile Mic Ire, Co. Chorcaí;
  - Bandon Library, Shopping Centre, South Main Street, Bandon;
  - Bantry Library, Bridge Street, Bantry;
  - Carrigaline Library, Main Street, Carrigaline;
  - Castletownbere Library, The Square, Castletownbere;
  - Charleville Library, Main Street, Charleville;
  - Clonakilty Library, Kent Street, Clonakilty, Co. Cork;
  - Cobh Library, Arch Building, Casement Square;
  - Dunmanway Library, The Square, Dunmanway;
  - Fermoy Library, Connolly Street, Fermoy;
  - Kanturk Mart, Percival Street, Kanturk;
  - Kinsale Library, Methodist Hall, Kinsale;
  - Cork County Library & Arts Service, County Library Building, Carrigrohane Road;
  - Macroom Library, Railway View, Macroom;
  - Mallow Library, Thomas Davis St. Mallow;
  - Midleton Library, Main Street, Midleton;
  - Millstreet Library, Carnegie Hall, County Council Offices, Millstreet;
  - Mitchelstown Library, Sutton's Court, Clonmel Road, Mitchelstown;
  - Newmarket Library, High Street, Newmarket, Co. Cork;
  - An Leabharlann, Oileán Chléire (Cape Clear), An Sciobairín;
  - Passage West Library, Community Centre, Passage West;
  - Schull Library, Main Street, Schul;
  - Sherkin Island Library, Adjacent to the Community Hall, Sherkin Island;
  - Skibbereen Library, North Street, Skibbereen; and
  - Youghal Library, Rivergate Shopping Mall, North Main Street.
- Consultation information along with the documents was made available on the Cork County Council Website: <https://www.corkcoco.ie/en/news/councils-climate-adaptation-strategy-notice-extension-closing-date-public-consultation>
- Presentation to Elected Members of Cork County Council; and
- Engagement with adjoining Local Authorities including the following:
  - Clare County Council;
  - Cork City Council;
  - Limerick City and County Council;
  - Kerry County Council;
  - Tipperary County Council; and
  - Waterford City and County.

#### 2.4.4 Summary of Public Consultation submissions

A number of submissions came in during the consultation periods, and 59 submissions were received. The submissions were from the following organisation and individuals:

- Fiona Hayes
- Cork Environmental Forum
- Ervia
- Lucy Weir
- Nick Turner
- Adrienne Pollock
- Alan O' Connor
- Rodney Daunt
- Christie Nicole Godsmark
- Phoebe Webb
- Cathleen McCarter
- Russ Ho
- Nick Turner
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Wendy Waggit
- Irish Environmental Network

- Frances Kay
- Nigel De Hass
- DCCAE/ Geological Survey Ireland (Hard Copy)
- Uisce Eireann/ Irish Water
- David Bosonnet
- Fáilte Ireland
- Damien Enright
- Ian Stretch
- Ervia
- Julia Kemp
- Gas Networks Ireland
- Fred La Haye
- Justin Fleming
- Jerry Crowley
- Valerie Bush
- JD Crowley
- Amy Ho
- Roisin Cuddihy
- Phoebe \*3
- Dr. Mary Stack
- Robert Hurden
- Isolda O' Connor
- Julia Cooper
- Cllr Liam O' Connor
- Carrigaline Tidy Towns
- SHEP Earth Aware
- Office of Public Works (OPW)
- Cork County Council Heritage Officer
- BioAtlanis Ltd
- Cllr Liam Quaide
- Ruth Doherty
- Cork Chamber
- Eirgrid
- Cork Airport
- John Baker
- Mary Cunningham
- Cycle Sense
- Department of Agriculture Food & the Marine
- Carol Harpur
- Fiona Hayes
- Cork Environmental Forum
- Brendan McCormack
- Ballineen & Enniskeane Tidy Towns

Cork County Council reviewed each submission and incorporated a number of changes throughout the Climate Adaptation Strategy. A number of new actions were added to the strategy post consultations, for examples, under Infrastructure and Built Environment, Action 35 *Ensure that climate change is considered in locating and planning future developments* and under Local Adaptation Governance and Business Operations.

The removal of the word 'change' from the title of this Strategy so now its appropriately called *Climate Adaptation Strategy*. Other typos, additional text and inclusion of definition explanations have been added to the main body of the text in the Strategy post consultation.

Many of the submissions received related to mitigation i.e. reducing the dependency on fossil fuel and the production of greenhouses gases etc. Corks Climate Adaptation Strategy aims to address the effects of climate change, by set actions to adapt to the adverse weather effects. While the submissions on climate mitigation were welcomed, it may not have changed the outputs of this Climate Adaptation Strategy. Table 3 below summaries the main themes from the submission to the consultation period.

**TABLE 3 SUBMISSION SUMMARIES**

Theme	Submission Summaries
Adaptation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highlighting the need to support the OPW Flood risk management plans and CFRAM programme;</li> <li>• Recommends setting minimum regulatory standards for surface water run-off in new residential development and on-domestic buildings;</li> <li>• Suggesting full consideration to be given to green roofs and green walls on all new and where feasible, existing development;</li> <li>• Recommending to make available flood control aids and equipment to communities;</li> <li>• Suggests the need to plan for significant sea-level rise affecting coastal areas and allow for these projections to increase further as science keeps up with a dynamic climate reality;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasising the need for local urban planning for water features;</li> <li>• Consider the role of kelp forests in the protection of coastlines;</li> <li>• Highlighting that nature-based solutions should be at the core of the plan;</li> <li>• Promote and work with communities and stakeholders;</li> <li>• Recruit Climate Change Officer;</li> <li>• A call to set clear targets/ measures (timetabled actions) and monitor progress/ update annually/ duration of each timeframe should be clarified/ publish periodic updates;</li> <li>• Support Training roll out to communities with professional partners and to develop community leadership/ Build resilience;</li> <li>• Suggesting that the need for mental and physical wellbeing of individuals to be considered;</li> <li>• Highlighting the lack of budgets for the various actions and that a template for procurement should be developed; and</li> <li>• Suggesting that public awareness/ communicate should be rolled out to include the many and varied groups.</li> </ul>
Mitigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider the value of rewilding, reforestation using native species, changes in landuse away from tradition towards ecological agricultural practices and the use of wildflower meadows and biodiversity trails;</li> <li>• Promote, design and deliver sustainable modes of transport within metropolitan Cork Region and towns, in addition to enhancing the provision of local public transport and incentives to use it, in addition to promoting the use of facilities such as park and ride;</li> <li>• Highlighting the need to diversify rural areas with ambitious targets for forestry, that planting significantly more trees in urban and rural areas should be enforced. In addition to protecting existing trees and hedgerows. Furthermore, the national forest cover should be extended, and a good working model would be the Bride Valley Diversity;</li> <li>• Recommending the promotion of walking and cycling;</li> <li>• Suggesting the need to provide blueways and greenways;</li> <li>• Suggesting pedestrianising town centres;</li> <li>• Consider incorporating carbon capture as a high priority, such as less mowing of urban spaces;</li> <li>• Highlighting the potential to decarbonise in all areas;</li> <li>• Suggesting the need for a circular economy.</li> </ul>
Other Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommending whole-river solutions, which neither obliterate wildlife nor remove rivers from their communities, should be given greater priority so that flood prevention does not come into conflict with the goal of protecting nature. Draw on international opinion;</li> <li>• Suggests stop giving planning permission on flood plains;</li> <li>• Reconsider the need for SEA/AA Screening;</li> <li>• Suggesting working with food and farming communities;</li> <li>• Highlighting the issues of dumping, waste collection and management of food waste;</li> <li>• Suggestions to promote the concept that new housing development will where feasible incorporate methods of sustainable food production;</li> <li>• Suggesting Cork County Council should initiate in each of its regions a standing committee of volunteers who would address the issues raised by climate-sensitive planning applications and liaise with the Council;</li> <li>• Calls for the ban on the use of Roundup chemical weed killer;</li> <li>• Calls to ban the use of single-use plastics;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Suggests that climate action committee should have community representatives;</li><li>• Suggests that incentivise rate reductions to businesses that take steps for climate adaptation and the introduction of green participatory budget to support projects selected by citizens. For example where local groups apply for funding match funding through the local biodiversity action plans;</li><li>• Promote rainwater harvesting and explore water storage options;</li><li>• Make provision for more indoor and all weather sporting and recreation facilities;</li><li>• Recommends the development of an urban biodiversity plan with the assistance of community groups for each town and village that will list actions to be undertaken which will help reduce the impacts of climate change. For example activities and initiatives that support people and their interaction with nature need to be strongly promoted such as tree week etc;</li><li>• Highlights that expert resources of committees/ council suggested in the strategy has no reference as to who will be on them, suggesting that appropriate expertise scientists/ social scientists etc should be enlisted;</li><li>• Recommends that new housing developments should be eco towns or villages;</li><li>• Highlighting the issues of climate refugees; and</li><li>• Recommending the assessment of planning applications, subjecting them to analysis of their exposure to climate change and how the development contributes negatively or positively to climate change.</li></ul>
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The Chief Executive Report attached with Cork's Climate Adaptation Strategy provides a detailed response to each of the submissions.

## 2.5 Appropriate Assessment

An Appropriate Assessment Screening Report has also been prepared for this Climate Adaptation Strategy in line with Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC). The Report concludes:

*In conclusion, further to a screening of Cork County Council's Climate Adaptation Strategy for possible significant effects on Natura 2000 sites no significant effects were identified. The screening outlined in this report included an assessment of possible in-combination effects. Based on the objective information contained in this report and applying the precautionary principle, it is concluded that the Strategy will not have a significant effect on Natura 2000 sites.*

The AA Screening Report accompanies Cork's Climate Adaptation Strategy.

## 3 DETERMINING WHETHER AN SEA IS REQUIRED

The objective of the SEA Directive for the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the Environment is to:

*"provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development, by ensuring that, in accordance with this Directive, an environmental assessment is carried out of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment."<sup>3</sup>*

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<sup>3</sup> Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of Ministers, of 27th June 2001, on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment

Post the Environmental Authority and Public Consultation, the updated Climate Adaptation Strategy was screened for SEA requirements. The below details the SEA screening process carried out.

### **3.1 Requirement to carry out SEA – Pre-Screening Checklist**

In order to determine if this Strategy is considered a plan/programme under Article 3 of the SEA Directive, a pre-screening check is necessary. Figure 1 below provides details of the pre-screening checklist; this checklist is based on the decision tree published by the EPA in the *Development of SEA methodologies for plans and programmes in Ireland*.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> P. Scott & P. Marsden., 2001-EEP/DS-2/5 *Development of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Methodologies for Plans and Programmes in Ireland* Synthesis Report © Environmental Protection Agency 2003

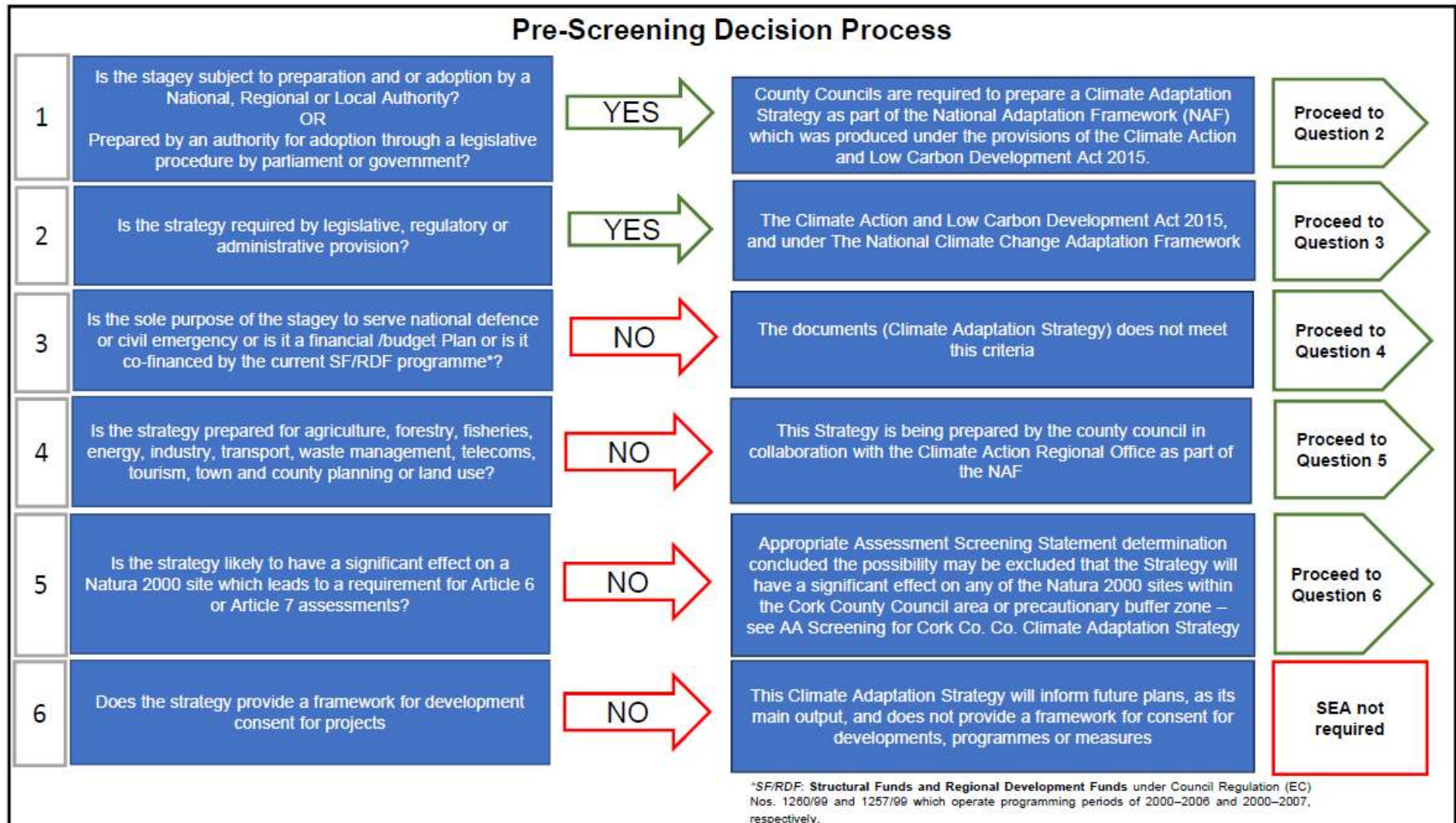


FIGURE 1 PRE-SCREENING DECISION PROCESS



## 4 SEA SCREENING DETERMINATION

The Climate Adaptation Strategy was screened using the criteria contained in Annex II of the SEA Directive. Table 4 and Table 5 below, details the screening assessment using the *criteria for determining the likely significance of effects* as set out in the SEA Directive, Annex II.

**TABLE 4 SCREENING DETERMINATION FOR ANNEX II (1.), CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING THE LIKELY SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECTS**

The Characteristics of the Plan and Programmes having regard, in particular, to, the following criteria		Likely to have significant environmental effects
Criteria	Screening Determination	
The degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources.	<p>The purpose of this Climate Adaptation Strategy is to identify the risks to Cork County associated with climate change, and to set strategic goals, objectives and actions to adapt to these changes.</p> <p>Cork County Council's Climate Adaptation Strategy forms part of Ireland's national strategy for climate adaptation as set out in the National Adaptation Framework (NAF) which was produced under the provisions of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015.</p> <p>Cork County Council's Climate Adaptation Strategy, if adopted, will not set a framework of consented projects for future development, i.e. projects listed in both Annex I and Annex II of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive.</p>	No
The degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;	<p>This Climate Adaptation Strategy will inform other future plans, as its main output, to ensure that Cork County Councils policies, strategies, plans, actions and measures being developed must be informed, take account and be aware of the need to adapt to the impacts of climate change.</p> <p>Future individual county development policies, strategies, plans and projects must be considered under the SEA, EIA and/or AA processes.</p>	No
The relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development;	As the Climate Adaptation Strategy is aimed at integrating climate change adaptation into Cork County Councils plans, strategies and management team's agendas, the climate change adaptation measures will be implemented via future plans.	No

	<p>This Climate Adaptation Strategy's main output is to ensure that all policies, strategies and plans for Cork County Council must be informed of the need to adapt to the potential impacts of climate change.</p> <p>Individual county development policies, strategies, plans and projects must be considered individually under the SEA, EIA and/or AA process.</p>	
<p>Environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme;</p>	<p>The Climate Adaptation Strategy looks to integrate climate change adaptation into Cork County Council as a management function and/or an important criterion to be considered in developing Local Authority Plans or Actions. The climate change adaptation actions taken will be implemented via future plans as its main output is to ensure that all policies, strategies, plans and measures for Cork County Council must be informed of the need to adapt to the potential impacts of climate change.</p> <p>Individual county development policies, strategies, plans and projects must be considered individually under the SEA, EIA and/or AA process.</p>	No
<p>The relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (e.g. plans and programmes linked to waste-management or water protection).</p>	<p>As the Climate Adaptation Strategy is aimed at integrating climate change adaptation into identified Cork County Councils Plans and Strategies and future Plans and Strategies, with some specific actions to help raise awareness of climate change both within management team and the wider public in Cork County, these actions can support plans and programmes that are related to waste generation, management, flood resilience and protection.</p> <p>However, these climate change adaptation actions will be implemented via future plans as its main output is to ensure that all policies, strategies, plans and measures for Cork County Council must be informed of the need to adapt to the potential impacts of climate change.</p>	No

**TABLE 5 SCREENING DETERMINATION FOR ANNEX II (2.), CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING THE LIKELY SIGNIFICANCE OF EFFECTS**

<b>Characteristics of the Effects and of the Area Likely to be Affected, taking account of the following criteria</b>		<b>Likely to have significant environmental effects</b>
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Screening Determination</b>	
The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	Cork County Council Climate Adaptation Strategy is designed to inform responses throughout the local authority to the effects of climate change, which is now inevitable. At this stage, based on current information, it is difficult to estimate the duration, or indeed it's variability, but it is likely to be long term which justifies the need for an adaptation strategy such as the one being prepared. The adaptation strategy in its role to "climate-proof" existing plans, policies and activities of the Local Authority is an essential first step in dealing with climate change effects from a Local Authority perspective.	No
The cumulative nature of the effects	Changes in climate change are cumulative and work in combination. This can be seen where climatic factors combine and create what are called "compound events" where combined weather events may contribute to enhanced risk.	No
The transboundary nature of the effects	In order to deal with transboundary effects Cork County Council Climate Adaptation Strategy has included actions, for example, actions 40 and 44 in Drainage and Flood Management theme, which state that it will work with the OPW in the development of major and minor flood projection and flood proofing, in addition to working with Irish Water in identifying water sources vulnerable to climate changes.	No
The risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents)	Cork County Council Climate Adaptation Strategy is designed to inform responses to the effects of climate change including working with other agencies to raising awareness of the impacts of climate change on communities (e.g. specific actions under the Other Sectors and Agencies theme)	No
The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	Areas of characteristics and cultural heritage within Cork County are provided with a level of protection from both planning policy and planning legislation. However, Cork County Council Climate Adaptation Strategy is designed to inform responses throughout the local authority to the effects	No

	of climate change and does not identify specific areas for development.	
The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>special natural characteristics or cultural heritage;</i></li> <li>- <i>exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values; and</i></li> <li>- <i>intensive land-use.</i></li> </ul>	Cork County Council Climate Adaptation Strategy is designed to inform responses throughout the local authority to the effects of climate change, and to incorporate adaptation measures into all plans and policies produced by the county council. This strategy will not result in development plans or set a framework for future development, and as such will not result in changes to the landscape, land-use or exceed environmental parameters.	No
The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, community or international protection status.	Cork County Council Climate Adaptation Strategy is designed to inform responses throughout the local authority to the effects of climate change and does not identify specific areas for development. Any effects uncovered as part of this process will be considered in relation to the characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, and the process will have regard, in particular, to the criteria as listed, according to the legislation.	No

## 5 CONCLUSION

This SEA Screening Report was carried out in order to determine the need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment for Cork County Council Climate Adaptation Strategy prepared under the National Climate Change Adaptation Framework. It has been concluded, based on the pre-screening check, and review against the environmental significance criteria as set out in Annex II of the SEA Directive, that a Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required. Furthermore, the purpose of this Climate Adaptation Strategy is to inform Local Authority policies, procedures and further plans on the need to incorporate climate change adaptation measures and it does not set out projects, plans or specific measures.

It is likely, that through the implementation of Cork County Councils Climate Adaptation Strategy, that there would be expected beneficial effects, as it aims to reduce risk from climate change. Specific actions in the strategy propose environmentally friendly adaptation measures, particularly actions falling from the objective under the to Natural Environment, Built and Cultural Heritage theme, for example, one objective under this theme is; *To protect and enhance the natural environment and support Biodiversity.*

## **APPENDIX 1 – CLIMATE ADAPTATION STRATEGY, ACTIONS PER THEME**

Local Adaptation Governance and Business Operations	Actions
1	Establish a Climate Action Steering Group with senior representatives from the key functions of the Local Authority to ensure the successful implementation of the actions of this Climate Adaptation Strategy, to set strategic direction, to report on progress and encourage local innovation.
2	Integrate Climate Action into the Service Delivery Programmes and provide for its translation to Team Development Plans and Personal Development Plans to enable actions to be directly pursued per business unit/section.
3	Ensure that climate action is a standing item on the Agenda of all Management Team meetings.
4	Appoint a Climate Action Officer with responsibility for climate related activity within Cork County Council.
5	Liaise with the Climate Action Regional Office and provide progress and update reports when requested. Assist the CARO in its development as a centre of excellence in the Atlantic Seaboard South Region.
6	<p>Manage and oversee the effective mainstreaming of Adaptation measures into all plans, programmes, strategies and policies* of Cork County Council:</p> <p>(a) Build and strengthen partnerships and promote inter-departmental communications and co-operation  (b) Compile a list of all plans, strategies and policies including expected review/update timelines and ensure integration of climate action into all reviews  (c) Monitor that climate change considerations are integrated into service delivery programmes  (d) Report to Management team on progress</p> <p>*Such plans, programmes, strategies and policies include (but not confined to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Corporate Plan</li> <li>•County Development Plan</li> <li>•Local Area Plans</li> <li>•Biodiversity Plan</li> <li>•Heritage Plan</li> <li>•Severe Weather Plan</li> <li>•Winter Maintenance Plan</li> <li>•Roads Programme</li> <li>•Housing Strategy</li> <li>•Local Economic and Community Plan</li> <li>•Economic Strategy</li> <li>•Tourism Strategy</li> <li>•Safety Management Systems</li> </ul>
7	<p>Risk assess Cork County Council activities in the context of climate change by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Collection and collation of historic weather event data</li> <li>•Compilation of international and national data on projected climate patterns</li> </ul>
8	<p>Risk assess Cork County Council activities in the context of climate change by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Identification of vulnerabilities of Cork County Council in the context of emerging climate knowledge</li> </ul>
9	<p>Develop a system to document, monitor and analyse data on the impact of extreme weather events on Cork County Council which shall take into account the following baselines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Nature and extent of extreme weather events</li> <li>•Impact of extreme weather events on public service delivery</li> <li>•Impact of extreme weather events on Local Authority assets.</li> <li>•Actions taken to adapt to events and to restore services</li> <li>•Resources required to deal with the impact of extreme weather events</li> <li>•Resource deficits identified in dealing with extreme weather events, including the H&amp;S aspects of prolonged events on rest times</li> <li>•Financial implications of extreme weather events, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>oClean up and repair costs</li> <li>oCentral government funding received</li> <li>oOpportunity costs of extreme weather events</li> </ul> </li> <li>•Number of days of closure of Local Authority buildings</li> <li>•Staff working days lost</li> <li>•Lost activities due to reassignment or loss of resources.</li> <li>•Number of activations of Severe Weather Assessment Team</li> <li>•Number of emergency road closures</li> <li>•Number of emergency call outs</li> <li>•Number (and dates) of call outs to deal with wild fires</li> <li>•Number of Health and Safety incidents</li> <li>•Number of kilometres of road treated in freezing and high temperature conditions</li> <li>•Number of representations and calls for assistance from elected representatives, customers, other sectors and members of the public</li> <li>•The nature, extent and cost of service provided to or obtained from other sectors</li> <li>•The proportion of the impacts that is deemed to derive from climate change</li> </ul>
10	<p>Develop Business Continuity Plan to identify and address specifically, the impacts associated with extreme weather events on all functions/services of the Local Authority and explore potential opportunities to increase resilience. This will involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Prepare for and minimise the impact of service disruption</li> <li>•Assess the Local Authority's back-up system's infrastructure and review of power outage back-up procedures to ensure resilience</li> <li>•Develop a Contingency Plan for identified essential key staff to be able to access all essential Local Authority systems remotely due to a climate event to reduce or eliminate climate event impacts on statutory deadlines and backlog.</li> <li>•Assess impact of climate events on outdoor working/site visits and any impacts on deadlines and level of service provided</li> <li>•Assess staff working environments during extreme weather events, review potential ways to maintain safe working conditions and provision of alternative working locations</li> <li>•Develop plans for staff deployment and availability in the event of travel restrictions during extreme weather events</li> </ul>
11	Maintain the internal communication protocol for extreme weather events to increase staff awareness of potential risk to safety and to ensure all staff travel only in safe conditions.

<b>12</b>	Assess back-up communication systems to ensure communication for emergency responders is maintained in the event of disruption to main communication system.
<b>13</b>	Develop a Climate Change and Adaptation Training Programme to educate staff and elected members on the implications of climate change on Local Authority operations and build capacity within the Local Authority.
<b>14</b>	Build resilience and capacity within local communities to enhance the overall response to extreme weather events.
<b>15</b>	Develop resource plans for the specific demands of climate change.
<b>16</b>	Support existing extreme weather event response arrangements and investigate further deployment of early warning systems, along with reviewing and collating information on existing early warning systems.
<b>17</b>	Identify, source and leverage funding streams for Cork County Council in the active implementation of adaptation actions and measures with an emphasis on capitalising on opportunities that will contribute both environmentally and economically to the area.
<b>18</b>	Support, encourage and nurture new ideas seeking to capture opportunities associated with environmental and technological advances that support low climate adaptation.

Infrastructure and Built Environment	Actions
19	Develop an integrated system, in the context of climate vulnerabilities, for the management of transport infrastructure, including roads, bridges, walking & cycling facilities.
20	Review information available from existing asset management systems such as the Pavement Management System, Eirspan Bridge Management System and Bridge Asset Management Programme (BAMP).
21	Compile a vulnerable infrastructure inventory to aid works prioritisation and inform route prioritisation plans.
22	Establish a procedure for structural integrity assessments of infrastructure after extreme weather events.
23	Integrate climate considerations into the design, planning, tendering process and construction of all transport infrastructure.
24	Develop actions plans for the adaptation of Local Authority roads and transport infrastructure to reduce the impacts of climate change.
25	Evaluate the requirements of roadside tree and hedgerow maintenance in the context of extreme weather events.
26	Integrate climate considerations into the design, planning and construction of all roads, footpaths, bridges, public realm, coastal and other construction projects and make provision to incorporate green infrastructure as a mechanism for carbon offset within projects as well as for wider environmental benefits such as providing shade to alleviate heat stress, supporting urban bio-diversity, water retention and flood alleviation.
27	Develop an integrated system, in the context of climate vulnerabilities, for the management of capital assets, including buildings, housing stock, fleet, recreation areas and public amenities.
28	Review information available from existing asset management systems such as the iHouse System and any other relevant documents.
29	Compile a vulnerable infrastructure inventory to aid works prioritisation.
30	Establish a procedure for structural integrity assessments of assets after extreme weather events.
31	Integrate climate considerations into the design, planning and construction of all capital projects.
32	Undertake a gap analysis of the Local Authority fleet in the response to extreme weather events.
33	Develop actions plans for the adaptation of Local Authority buildings, housing and assets to reduce the impacts of climate change on occupants.
34	Review the tenant's handbook to increase awareness of extreme weather events and provide climate change resilience information.
35	Ensure that climate change is considered in locating and planning future developments.
36	Develop an integrated system, in the context of climate vulnerabilities, for the management of coastal infrastructure, including harbours, piers and beaches
37	Work with national and regional agencies to develop Coastal Zone Management Plans to identify at risk coast erosion and deposition zones, and, where appropriate, actions to manage climate risk and building resilience to climate change



Landuse and Development	Actions
38	<p>During the Review of the Cork County Development Plan and Local Area Plans identify and integrate climate change as a critical consideration, guiding principle and strategic objective, and tailor planning policies to reduce the vulnerability of Co. Cork to the impacts of climate change, for example by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Enhancing the role of the natural environment to promote climate adaptation through promoting green infrastructure</li> <li>•Continuing to take a risk-based approach to development in areas at risk of all types of flooding (coastal, fluvial, pluvial and groundwater)</li> <li>•Designing urban areas to incorporate shading/cooling areas and water features to provide for urban heat reduction.</li> <li>•Promoting climate resilient designs and materials.</li> </ul>
39	Evaluate and implement best practice in Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) in the context of climate change.

Drainage and Flood Management	Actions
40	Work with the OPW and other organisations in information sharing in relation to flood risk and in the development of major and minor flood protection and flood proofing schemes throughout the county, encouraging a whole of catchment approach to the flood management and promote the requirements of our natural and cultural heritage in relation to flood relief works which may be carried out in the context of climate change.
41	Ensure that flood event emergency response plans are reviewed on a regular basis to reflect the increase in flood risk due to climate change.
42	Compile an inventory of existing drainage districts for which Cork County Council is responsible.
43	Develop management plans for Cork County Council drainage districts taking into account impacts from climate change such as increased siltation and plant growth.
44	Work with Irish Water to identify combined sewers that are at risk of surcharging during extreme rainfall events and develop suitable solutions.
45	Investigate the use of smart monitoring in the management of Cork County Council drainage systems.
46	Explore opportunities to install systems similar to those currently operating in the County in areas subject to flooding with reference to CFRAMS.

Natural Environment, Built and Cultural Heritage	Actions
47	Support efforts to attain water quality standards set out in the Water Framework Directive.
48	Evaluate the requirements of Bio-diversity in relation to roadside tree and hedgerow maintenance in the context of climate change.
49	Identify invasive species whose spread is linked with climate change. Develop appropriate management techniques for their control.
50	Develop a plan to support an active native tree planting programme in conjunction with an awareness campaign that informs of the benefits to communities in improving air quality, offsetting carbon emissions, promoting biodiversity, limiting flood risk, reducing urban heat, as well aesthetic value.
51	Support provision for natural borders/buffers and include as integral component of the design of greenway/ blueway, tracks, trails, amenity and tourism areas to promote the natural enhancement and influence positive user experience. Consult with the NPWS to ensure appropriate buffer zones are provided, maintained and protected to avoid individual impacts on designated species area habitats, and to protect and enhance wider bio-diversity.
52	Develop a system to document, monitor and assess the impact of climate change on Cork County Council owned heritage and cultural assets

Community Health and Wellbeing	Actions
53	Raise awareness of the impacts of climate change and ways for communities to increase response and resilience to these impacts. This should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Information on Severe Weather Event preparedness</li> <li>•Property security and safety</li> <li>•Health issues related to extreme weather events</li> <li>•Public safety awareness</li> <li>•Water safety awareness for unsupervised watercourses in local areas</li> <li>•Local resources to adapt to events e.g. road salting</li> </ul>
54	Develop a programme to enhance capacity to respond to and recover from extreme weather events with specific aims to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Help the vulnerable community to develop a stronger facilitating role for mitigating risks</li> <li>•provide advice on the risk of extreme events affecting their locality</li> <li>•Devise adaptation actions to enhance preparedness and reduce dependency on Local Authority emergency responses</li> <li>•Provide support to develop appropriate resilience arrangements to enable response and recovery</li> </ul>
55	Develop public awareness campaigns to increase knowledge of and encourage behavioural change around climate change and severe weather events.

Other Sectors and Agencies	Actions
56	Liaise, collaborate and work in partnership with the Sectors identified in National Adaptation Framework in the delivery of the Sectoral adaptation actions, as approved by government, where they are relevant to the functions and activities of Cork County Council.
57	Work with the Government Departments to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify funding streams available to communities to enable local climate action resilience and adaptation projects</li> <li>• Harness and enhance delivery methods for community funding for climate action.</li> </ul>
58	Review and revise Emergency Management Plans and protocols to ensure that they provide for appropriate inter sectoral stakeholder engagement for Climate Change Impact response.