

REGIONAL OFFICES TAKE ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Following the recent establishment of the four local authority Climate Action Regional Offices (CAROs) in Cork, Mayo, Kildare and Dublin, they will now focus on the development of Local Authority Climate Change Adaptation Strategies, in addition to climate-related projects, research, funding, the development of regional specialisms and addressing mitigation.

Climate action is one of the key principles that underpin the National Development Plan 2018-2027. It has been recognised that an all-of-Government approach will be required to achieve a successful transition to a low carbon, climate resilient economy, and local authorities will have a key role to play in ensuring effective action at both regional and local levels.

The publication in October 2018 of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C, has confirmed that Ireland is already seeing the negative impacts of climate change. The report demonstrates the impacts, vulnerabilities and risks of further global warming to human societies and natural systems.

Ireland's climate is changing and the scale and rate of change is consistent with global and regional trends. Efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions will play a vital role in limiting the scale of future climate change but even with these efforts, the effects of climate change will continue to impact on our communities.

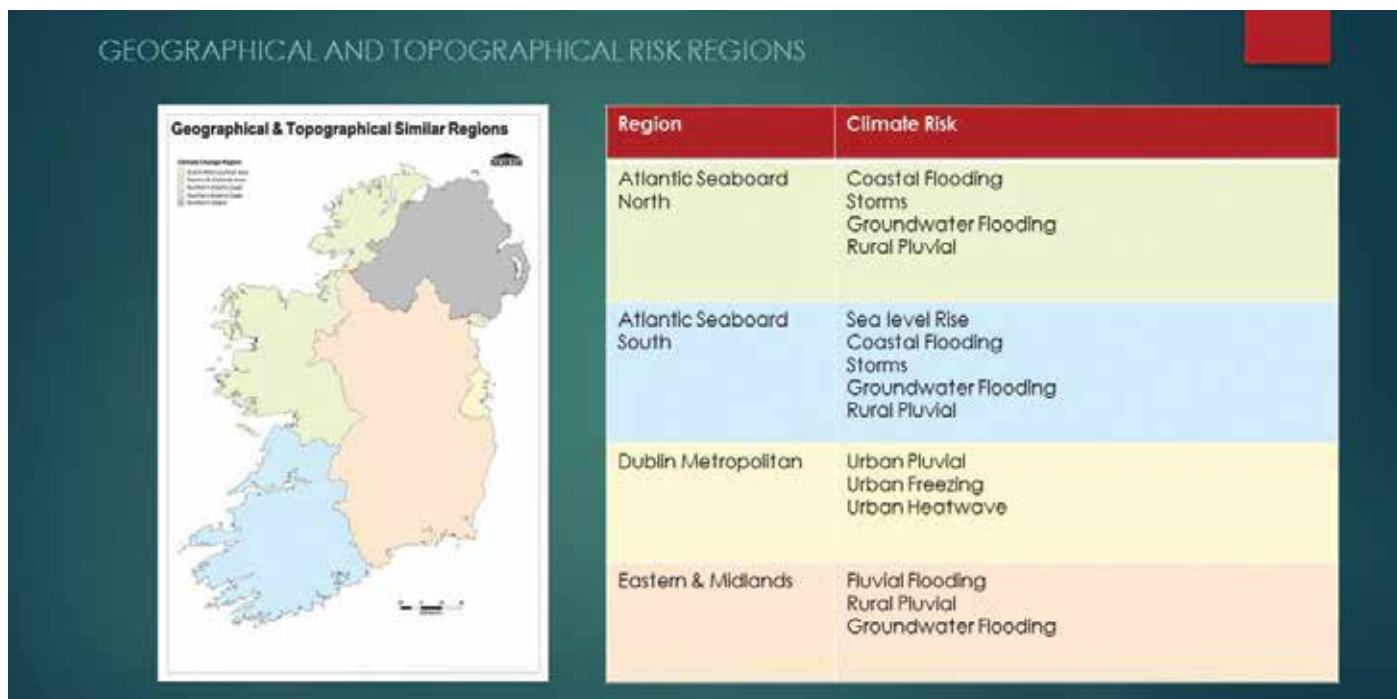
As the level of government closest to local communities, local authorities are uniquely placed to effect real positive change with respect to delivery of the national transition objective of a low carbon, climate resilient future.

In 2017 the Public Sector Reform Oversight Group (PSROG) approved the business case, proposed by the CCMA and LGMA, for the development of four local authority (CAROs). Following



Pictured (l-r): Liam Dromey (Atlantic Seaboard South CARO), David Mellett (Atlantic Seaboard North CARO), Seán Canney TD (Minister of State at the Dept of Communications, Climate Action & Environment and the Department of Rural and Community Development), David Dodd (Dublin Metropolitan CARO) and Alan Dunney (Eastern & Midlands CARO), at the launch of the Local Authority Adaptation Strategy Development Guidelines by the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment, in Athlone on 3 December 2018.

CLIMATE CHANGE



Each CARO is focused on a regional specialism, based on ongoing climate change risks.

In a bidding process, these four lead authorities for CAROs were established:

- Atlantic Seaboard South Regional Office was awarded to Cork County Council,
- Atlantic Seaboard North Regional Office was awarded to Mayo County Council,
- Eastern & Midlands Regional Office was awarded to Kildare County Council and
- Dublin Metropolitan Regional Office is being managed by a consortium of the four Dublin local authorities with Dublin City Council acting as the lead authority.

REGIONAL CO-ORDINATORS

Each of the CAROs is led by a regional co-ordinator, supported by a team of Regional Executives/Assistants and Administrative Support. Kildare County Council, as host of the Eastern & Midlands CARO, will also be supported by a partner local authority and the process for identifying this local authority is ongoing.

Based on similar geographical/topographical characteristics and on the basis of existing synergies in addressing threats and impacts of severe weather events and ongoing climate change risks, local authorities have been grouped under each regional office as follows:

- Atlantic Seaboard North – Local authorities in Donegal, Sligo, Mayo and Galway.
- Atlantic Seaboard South – Local authorities in Clare, Limerick, Kerry and Cork.
- Eastern and Midlands – Local authorities in Leitrim, Cavan, Monaghan, Louth, Longford, Meath, Roscommon,



The Dublin CARO was officially launched by Cllr Nial Ring, Lord Mayor of Dublin in the Mansion House on Saturday 16 February 2019.

- Westmeath, Kildare, Offaly, Laois, Wicklow, Tipperary, Carlow, Kilkenny, Wexford and Waterford.
- Dublin Metropolitan – Local authorities in South Dublin, Fingal, Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown and Dublin City.

Actions undertaken by each Climate Action Regional Office (CARO) will be decided on an annual basis by a work programme and will be primarily developed with reference to the goals of the National Adaptation Framework (NAF) 2018 and the National Mitigation Plan (NMP) 2017.

The work programme for 2019 is currently under review by the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment (DCCAE), but will likely include a number of tasks under the following six work packages:

CLIMATE CHANGE

1. Establishment of Offices
2. Local Authority & Sectoral Adaptation Planning
3. Projects, Research & Regional Specialisms
4. Communications & Behavioural Change
5. Training, Education & Resources
6. Mitigation

ADAPTATION STRATEGIES

A key focus for 2019 will be the development of Local Authority Climate Change Adaptation Strategies as set out in the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015. Each local authority is required to develop and adopt a Local Adaptation Strategy and the deadline for the completion is 30 September 2019, to mirror the deadline for the 12 government sectors to complete their sectoral plans.

The local authority sector will also consider the impact of actions arising from these sectoral adaptation plans. This will require cross-sectoral and cross-boundary co-ordination and co-operation, to ensure the key actions identified through the local authority adaptation strategy process are comprehensive and complementary to the actions of other agencies.

A number of text templates have also been issued to constituent local authorities by the three CARO offices; environmental consultants have been procured at regional level for the purpose of the Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessments (AA) which will be required and the services of a graphic designer will also be procured. It is intended that public consultation on the draft strategies will be undertaken once the SEA and AA screening has been completed.

DRAFT ACTION PLANS

The official launch of Dublin CARO, by Cllr Nial Ring, Lord Mayor of Dublin in the Mansion House on Saturday 16 February, coincided with the public consultation of the Draft Climate Change Action Plans by Dublin's four local authorities.

These action plans outlined how energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions will be improved in their own buildings and operations, while making each local authority area more adaptive to the impacts of climate change. The plans include a range of actions across five key action areas – Energy & Buildings, Transport, Flood Resilience, Nature Based Solutions and Resource Management.

In addition to the adaptation strategies, the CAROs will also focus on climate-related projects, research, funding, the development of regional specialisms and addressing mitigation. In this context, there will be a strong emphasis on liaison with a number of stakeholders, including third-level institutions, regional assemblies, the education sector and energy agencies.

To facilitate community liaison and behavioral change through consultation, collaboration, education and awareness, the CAROs will also work with other agencies, including amongst others, the DCCAE and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), who are facilitating the National Dialogue on Climate Action.



A series of public consultation engagement events took place in venues across Dublin's four local authorities from 13-28 February, while further public consultation on the four draft plans ran until 25 March.



Training workshops for key staff in local authorities preparing the adaptation strategies have been held in three of the CARO regions (Atlantic Seaboard North, Atlantic Seaboard South and Eastern & Midlands regions), in collaboration with Climate Ireland. These have been followed up with the facilitation of on-site local workshops by the CARO teams, to assist local authorities in the development of their strategies.