

Climate Strategy,
Strategic and Economic Development,
Cork City Council,
City Hall,
Cork,
T12 T997.

13 September 2019

Re: Submission to Cork City Council Draft Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019 - 2024

To Whom It Concerns,

Cork Chamber is the leading business organisation in Cork, proactively working to identify and progress developments that are facilitative of economic and sustainable growth. Representing an employer base of close to 1,200 businesses and over 100,000 employees across the region, Cork Chamber is the largest business representation organisation in the South of Ireland.

In supporting a thriving sustainable Cork, we lend our strong support to the development of a Cork City Council Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019 - 2024, adding support to the actions identified under the seven high level themes and recognising the criticality in preparing for the expected effects of climate change and increasing temperatures. Notwithstanding the efforts globally to limit this rise to within the 1.5 degree, Ireland will still expect effects from this temperature rise and must prepare for this, as well as pragmatically for beyond the 1.5 degrees. Limiting warming global temperatures to within 1.5 degrees requires a decrease of CO2 emissions to fall by approximately 45% from 2010 levels by 2030. To address the effects of climate change, we also take this opportunity to express support for all efforts to mitigate effects and welcome the commitment to develop a dedicated climate change mitigation strategy to work in parallel with adaptation. We encourage that the mitigation strategy is developed immediately to reflect the urgency and pace of action needed to address climate change and reduce climate emissions now. Furthermore, we believe that this adaptation plan needs to be adopted immediately and must be an intrinsic part of all operations, activities and project considerations. Resilience must be front and centre, and a central pillar within this adaptation strategy and the forthcoming mitigation strategy.

The EPA's Climate Change Research Programme undertake ongoing analysis and studies on climate change in Ireland. Through analysis of the meteorological records, evidence shows

that Ireland's climate is changing in line with global patterns with impacts set to increase in the coming decades and through the second half of the century. Predicted adverse impacts to include sea level rise, more intense storms and rainfall events, increased likelihood and magnitude of river and coastal flooding, adverse impacts on water quality, changes in distribution of plant and animal species, and effects on fisheries sensitive to changes in temperature. Therefore, it is essential that actions to address these predicted impacts and to increase societal resilience are undertaken and prioritised. The effects of climate change are being felt now with weather related incidences happening more frequently, therefore it is prudent to be proactive in this respect now. Furthermore, it is crucial that strategies to address these challenges are premised on a top down and bottom up approach involving businesses, communities and individuals as this is an all of society challenge.

The focus on implementation, monitoring and evaluation is commended as it is essential that this strategy is an agile framework for implementing and driving forward actions. The establishment of key performance indicators will be instrumental in progressing actions, as will the commitment to ongoing review and updating of the strategy as conditions change. We view this as crucial as preparedness and proactivity will be key in negating the worst effects of changing climate patterns. We query the specific timeframes implied as short, medium and long term and seek clarity on the duration of each timeframe. We suggest the inclusion of a concise timeframe matrix within this strategy to better assist monitoring and review, and clearly delineating each action with the set period of implementation corresponding.

We support the initiation of a Climate Action Steering Group as set out in Action 1 and recognise the crucial role of this group in overseeing the implementation and ongoing agility and adaptability of the strategy to react and be proactive to anticipated effects. We support the integration of climate adaptation considerations across all plans, projects, programmes, strategies and policies in Cork City Council and support the focus on prudent and resilience building actions and planning described within Action 2.1. It is essential that adaptation is integral to all functions. We note the practicality of Action 3.2 and support the development of baseline data to guide future actions however within this we also stress the need for prudence and the consideration of accelerated and unpredictable effects of climate change. We support the development of the Customer Services Unit and the importance of this unit in informing and advising the public during extreme weather events. We support Action 5.2 towards increasing the resilience and capacity within local businesses and communities in responding to extreme weather events and we steadfastly welcome the inclusion of Cork Chamber as action partner to this action. Resilience building is key, and this will be particularly urgent for those locations and all communities, business and wider communities in vulnerable, low lying fluvial, pluvial and coastal flood prone locations. Cork Chamber will participate as appropriate in this action implementation. We support Action 5.3 in relation to extreme weather event response arrangements and acknowledge and commend the immense role of emergency response teams during extreme weather/ storm related emergencies, and the utmost priority of ensuring the safety of these teams.

We welcome the inclusion of Cork Chamber as action partner within Action 6.3 and highlight the importance of engagement with business and broader community representatives in addressing climate change impacts and in identifying new ideas and innovation. Climate change is an all of society concern and efforts should reflect the potential for all sectors of society to address the associated challenges. We welcome the inclusion of Cork Chamber in Action 7.1 and support the undertaking of this action without delay. The development of baseline data to identify vulnerable infrastructure and priority projects is crucial for public safety, business continuity, and socio-economic resilience. Cork Chamber will be fully participative as appropriate on action implementation. We believe these should be addressed in the short term to ensure the preparedness and the resilience of investment projects. It is also imperative that climate considerations are immediately taken into consideration in the design, planning and tendering process and construction of transport infrastructure projects to ensure the safety and reliability of infrastructure as well as the longevity and resilience of the investment in capital expenditure projects.

Cork Chamber support the emphasis on awareness raising and reach out to communities and commend the inclusion of climate change resilience information to social housing tenants in Action 8.3, lending support to all efforts to grow citizen engagement and knowledge of climate change effects alongside adaptation and mitigation actions. We emphasise the value of engaging across all communities and advocate for the inclusion of business community representation where appropriate.

We encourage the immediate rollout of electric vehicle charging infrastructure to support electric vehicle rollout as set out in Action 8.4 and encourage the role which City Council can adopt within this action as being changemakers. Currently there is a noted lack of infrastructure to support alternative fuel technologies in Cork City, and this has a detrimental effect on building market confidence amongst consumers. The increased visibility and use of electric vehicles will be instrumental in growing momentum and a shift from traditional technologies.

We note the criticality of Action 9.1 for the integration of climate actions into the Cork City Development Plan and Local Area Plans. We support the inclusion of natural resilience through green infrastructure, and nature for climate adaptation and the inclusion of climate resilient designs and materials and the criticality of energy efficiency, water conservation and renewable energy solutions as part of new developments. It is critical that Cork City is developed in a way that is prudent, future-proofing and resilient incorporating nature-based opportunities to both enhance resilience, health, food security (planting for pollinators, heat/air pollutant abatement through tree planting and greening) and wellbeing as well as placemaking. Green infrastructure and planting is an important element of a robust adaptation strategy and Cork Chamber recognises the intrinsic natural value of planting, greening and climate resilient public infrastructure.

We support the necessity of Action 9.3 and encourage the immediate adoption of this approach in the selection of locations for future development and land use zoning policy. In

relation to objective 10, all efforts to increase preparedness to potential flood risk events are essential. Cork City is especially vulnerable with business and residential communities being severely impacted in recent years. Cork Chamber highlight the opportunity to engage the business and residential community as part of this broad objective and suggest the inclusion of business and broader community representation in action planning and communications planning as appropriate.

Cork Chamber are fully supportive of the shrub and tree planting programme and encourage the immediate acceleration of planting and biodiversity enhancement for Cork City through actions listed in objective 13, 14 and 15. Alongside the emphasis on greening for climate change adaptation and resilience, Cork Chamber strongly support the emphasis on green public procurement adopting a life cycle costing model.

Moreover, we support the inclusion of Action 15.2 to raise awareness within local communities and request the inclusion of business representation as external stakeholders within this. The business community has been severely impacted in terms of economic and property loss, closure days and stock losses in recent years. Coupled with the increased difficulties experienced in areas affected by flooding to gain insurance, we believe it is vital to include business representation among the action partners. This will increase the robustness of the action, empowering communities to build local resilience. A robust collective of action partners will be instrumental in navigating the practicalities of the associated challenges, encouraging and enabling communities, business and wider community.

In reference to Action 16.3, we take this opportunity to highlight the potential of introducing a 'green' participatory budget to support climate change mitigation and adaptation projects selected by local citizens such as is done in Lisbon¹. Though this, citizens decide how to allocate funds, the 'green' label sets aside funds for projects with positive climate change mitigation and adaptation impacts, such as cycle lanes, wetland restoration, tree planting, or water capture and storage. This engenders the direct engagement & empowerment of communities and could be an influential mechanism for behavioural change, and as part of a broader suite of activities. Again, we highlight the potential to include citizen representation and business community representation with the external partners to this action.

Action 16.5 seeks to investigate the potential of climate action technologies. Cork Chamber highlights innovative nature of the Cork business community and the strong entrepreneurial composition of the business community. We advocate for the inclusion of business representation as part of the external partners to this action. Innovation and new thinking will be crucial in securing the equitable move to a low carbon society. The effects of climate change will be felt across all of society and therefore the encouragement of innovation will be essential in adopting a flexible, agile and proactive response approach for adaptation and to

¹ https://www.climate-kic.org/news/lisbons-city-finance-lab-awarded-e5-million-budget/?utm_source=LinkedIn&utm_medium=Post&utm_campaign=Lisbons_CFL-backed_green_participatory_budget

support mitigation. Within this, we believe the external stakeholders to this action, must include private sector business representation amongst others.

Cork Chamber support the breadth of the activities and actions as set out. We highlight the opportunity to engage with private sector business representation as a partner on actions where appropriate and believe there are practical benefits in this approach. We believe that this is instrumental to facilitate fully representative discussions of future pathways and actions that are informed via ground up community level and top down policy level. Resilience and capacity building at community and local level is a central pillar to successful mitigation and adaption. As such we request the inclusion of business representation within Action 17.1.

Budget allocation to facilitate necessary adaption and mitigation priorities is a necessity to protect socio economic growth and activity as the effects of climate change become increasingly apparent, and Cork Chamber recognises the high priority of this funding in the overall context of climate adaptation and future economic, environmental and social resilience.

Finally, Cork Chamber is supportive of this strategy, commending the development of the strategy and actions within. We emphasise the value of public consultation and welcome future opportunities to engage on this and associated topics.

Yours Sincerely,



Michelle O'Sullivan
Senior Public Affairs Executive,
Cork Chamber