

DEVELOPING A CLIMATE MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION STRATEGY FOR MEATH PROGRAMME BRIEFING NOTE

Meath County Council has commissioned WSP Mouchel to work with the County to develop a strong climate mitigation and adaptation strategy for the county. This short paper gives a brief background on the subject, this project and the outcomes. It's an exciting project with the opportunity to bring strong economic benefit to the County and to demonstrate leadership.

WHAT IS CLIMATE CHANGE, MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION?

Ireland, and Meath's climate is changing, largely due to emissions of man made greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide and methane. This will lead to long term changes in Ireland's climate – much hotter summer days, heavier rainfall, sea level rise and also knock on effects such as new pests which could affect farmers in the county. There will also be positive benefits such as fewer very cold days. These changes can be seen today, and happen over the long term. We'll also see policy programmes to cut fossil use, especially as national programmes to meet Ireland's greenhouse reduction targets.

There are two main ways to respond to climate change:

1. Cutting emissions of greenhouse gas emissions – by burning fewer fossil fuels and managing other emissions, such as from agriculture. This is termed "climate mitigation."
2. Adapting to a future climate by getting ready for the future that scientists are anticipating. This is termed "climate adaptation."

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT TO MEATH?

A strong adaptation and mitigation strategy are relevant to Meath for three main reasons:

1. Thinking ahead and moving faster than others can deliver competitive advantage for Meath and its businesses.
2. Helping business, residents and our county get ready for the future. Many of the decisions we make on new developments and infrastructure will be there for a long term. We want to make sure that the decisions made in Meath – by the council, by our officers and by business and residents anticipate this future. A strong adaptation strategy keep the county running in more extreme weather and avoid unforeseen shocks to our services, residents and business.
3. Playing our part. We want to play our part in the global challenge of reducing greenhouse gases and supporting national programmes to deliver the national commitments made by Ireland to reduce greenhouse gases to 20% below 2005 levels by 2020.

WHAT WILL THIS PROJECT DELIVER?

This project will deliver three main outputs:

1. An estimate of how much greenhouse gases are released across the county and from what sources.
2. An analysis of the key risks and opportunities from addressing climate impacts across the County
3. A practical strategy to reduce greenhouse gases and to get ready for Meath's future climate that's forecast.
4. These will cover both the Council's direct impacts and also its wider influence to residents and businesses through the policies and programmes that it runs.

To do this we're working with a team from across the Council and working with relevant organisations. The WSP Mouchel team will be drawing on national policies and programmes and best practice from other regions across Ireland, Europe and the world.

KEY TIMESCALES

The project started in April 2017 and will run for 12 months. First outputs will be produced by mid June to support the County Development Plan. The draft Climate Action strategy will be developed towards the end of 2017.

HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

We'll be consulting widely as part of the project. We're especially keen to hear about:

- Are there key opportunities and risks that should be covered in our work?
- Are there the relevant programmes running already to address these? Do they work? Could they be even better?
- Do you have ideas or programmes that we should be including?
- What does success look like in your view?

If you've any immediate thoughts on these questions, do please email any of the project team and we'll include these.

PROJECT CONTACTS

Our key project contacts for this work are as follows. Please feel free to contact any of us. We're looking forward to working on the project.

Meath County - Caroline Corrigan
(caroline.corrigan@meathcoco.ie)

WSP Mouchel - Dan Watson (Daniel.watson@wspgroup.com)
David Symons (David.symons@wspgroup.com)