



*****EMBARGOED UNTIL 00:01 ON TUESDAY 29th SEPTEMBER 2026*****

Ireland must stop reacting to individual events and instead start preparing systematically for a climate of greater extremes, says Climate Change Advisory Council

- Council warns Ireland is increasingly moving between weather extremes, from severe flooding and prolonged rainfall to exceptional heat and drought-like conditions.
- Government urged to put a price on inaction and properly cost climate resilience as Budget 2027 approaches.
- 30 of 54 major flood relief schemes remain at preliminary design stage, with major schemes taking an average of 11 years to complete.

Tuesday 29th September:

Launching *Preparing for Ireland's Changing Climate*, the adaptation and resilience chapter of its Annual Review 2026 today, the Climate Change Advisory Council has warned that Ireland's climate resilience planning and preparation does not match the scale or urgency of the risks the country now faces.

With Budget 2027 approaching, the Council says Government must also better understand the scale and level of investment required in climate resilience. It must also quantify the cost of inaction to determine what continued delay will ultimately cost households, businesses, communities and the State.

The Council says Ireland must prepare for the full range of climate extremes rather than treating storms, floods, droughts and periods of extreme heat as isolated emergencies. It is calling for a fundamental shift from reactive response to proactive adaptation, backed by long-term planning and sustained investment.

Storm Chandra and prolonged rainfall exposed vulnerabilities in homes, transport and critical infrastructure earlier this year, while unprecedented summer temperatures highlighted growing risks to water supply, agriculture, health systems and vulnerable communities.

The Council says climate resilience must be built into long-term decisions across critical infrastructure and essential services. Sectoral adaptation plans published in November 2025 are not comprehensively costed, lack committed funding and measurable targets, and do not consistently align actions with identified climate risks.

Flood protection is one clear example of the ever widening delivery gap as growing climate impacts rapidly outstrip our response. Eight years after they were prioritised through the 2018 national flood risk assessment, 30 of the 54 major flood relief schemes remain at Stage 1 - preliminary design, while major schemes currently take

an average of 11 years to complete. The Council says technical expertise and staffing within the Office of Public Works and local authorities must be strengthened to accelerate delivery.

It also warns that short-term pressures must not create new long-term climate risks. Over the past six years, 288 flood-prone sites have been proposed for rezoning by councillors. As pressure grows to expand housing supply, the Council says climate risk must remain central to planning decisions and development in flood-prone areas must be avoided. In addition, these zones will expand with further climate change with many areas previously not flooded becoming increasingly prone to flooding.

The Council is also calling for stronger local and community resilience, including building sustained capacity within local authorities and better support for households, businesses and communities to prepare for and recover from extreme weather.

The Council has expressed considerable disappointment that the Extreme Weather Event Assistance Scheme, committed to in the Programme for Government 2025, has still not been established. It says the absence of a permanent and properly resourced scheme remains a critical gap for households, communities, farmers and businesses following extreme weather.

Professor Peter Thorne, Chair of the Climate Change Advisory Council's Adaptation Committee, said:

"Ireland is already living with the consequences of a changing climate. This year alone, we have moved from severe flooding and prolonged rainfall to exceptional heat and drought-like conditions. We are not prepared for either extreme.

The recent UNEP publication tells us that we will exceed 1.5°C of warming and that some impacts of climate change are now unavoidable and we must make decisions today to prepare for our future.

By far the most effective adaptation measure is emissions reductions that avoid future impacts. Government must accelerate mitigation actions while also taking action to protect society from the coming storm. Adaptation is not an alternative to getting off our addiction to fossil fuels."

We cannot keep treating extreme events as one-off emergencies, simply repairing the damage while people continue to live in fear of the next major event. We need to build back better and take measures to protect vulnerable homes, communities, infrastructure and public services before the next crisis hits.

Government needs to put a price on inaction to improve investment decisions and track delivery, fund the measures we know are needed and move from plans to delivery. Climate resilience will cost money, but the cost of inaction will be far greater. ."

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NOTES TO EDITOR:

- The [United Nations Limiting Overshoot publication](#) was released earlier this month, and determines that the exceedance of 1.5°C has been identified as unavoidable.
- Ireland's first [National Climate Risk Assessment](#) identified 115 climate-related risks and identified 43 significant national risks, including risks to infrastructure, health, biodiversity and the economy.

If you have any questions or are seeking further comment, please do not hesitate to contact:

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The Climate Change Advisory Council will publish Sectoral Reviews throughout the year. The publication schedule below is subject to change and indicative only:

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Published</u>
Our Changing Climate	Published 1 st April 2026
Electricity	Published 13 th May 2026
Transport	Published 17 th June 2026
Built Environment	Published 29 th July 2026
Agriculture, Forestry and Land Use (AFOLU)	Published 9 th September 2026
Preparing for Ireland's Changing Climate	Published 29 th September 2026
Industry and Waste	Mid October 2026
Biodiversity	Start of November 2026
Cross Sectoral	Mid November 2026
Irish Translation of Summary document	Mid November 2026