



## Climate Change Advisory Council Meeting - MINUTES

**Date:** 19.02.26

**Start time:** 10:00

**Venue:** Seamount Suite, St. Helen's Hotel, Stillorgan, A94 V6W3 and MS Teams

**In Person:** Marie Donnelly (Chair), Jillian Mahon, Dr. Cara Augustenborg, Professor Edgar Morgenroth, Dr. Eimear Cotter (EPA Observer), Prof. Yvonne Buckley, Prof. Liam Delaney, Prof. Frank O'Mara (Teagasc), Patricia King (joined 13:13)

**Online:** Prof. Morgan Bazilian, Prof. Peter Thorne,

**Apologies:** Eoin Moran (Met Éireann)

**Agenda Item 8:** Lisa Johnson from Ecodiversity, joined for this item.

**Agenda Item 9:** Mark Harrington and Sarah Horgan, Springboard Communications joined for this item.

**Secretariat:** George Hussey, Phillip O'Brien, Meabh Gallagher, Stephen Flood, Claire Camilleri, Eleanor Mathews, Jodie Colgan, Ben Macfarlane, Dylan O' Flynn, Bryn Canniffe

### 1. Opening of Meeting (09:30)

The Chair welcomed Council members and noted that Dr Eimear Cotter has recently been appointed as EPA Director General effective in March.

The Chair also introduced Dylan O'Flynn who had recently joined the Mitigation Team of the Climate Secretariat.

#### 1.1 Minutes for the Climate Change Advisory Council Meeting 10<sup>th</sup> December 2025.

The minutes were accepted.



## **Matters arising from the minutes**

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

## **Adoption of Agenda**

The agenda was adopted without amendment.

## **Disclosure of Interests**

There were no disclosures of interest.

## **2. Adaptation Committee Update (10:15)**

Chair of the Adaptation Committee Prof. Peter Thorne, briefed Council members on the outcomes of the Adaptation Committee meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> of January 2026.

Meeting details included:

- Secretariat provided updates on the SAP letter sent to government on the 18<sup>th</sup> December. It was noted that the Council received a response from the Minister of the Department of Public Expenditure Infrastructure Public Service Reform and Digitalisation.
- Progress of the research studies that are currently underway.
- Discussion of Adaptation Workshop to be held on the 15<sup>th</sup> April.
- Consideration of the resilience recommendations for Transport and the final draft of the Annual Review 2026 Our Changing Climate 2025.
- The Committee also reviewed the prepared Adaptation Scorecard Review Report.
- The Committee also considered two research reports, the draft report on the impacts of climate change on mental health and the draft report on managing coastal risks in Ireland.

It was noted that the next meeting of the Adaptation Committee meeting would be on the 26<sup>th</sup> March 2026.

The Council discussed the significant effect of recent weather events and the significance of Council recommendations on adaptation policy and interventions. The Council asked that the issues relating to flooding in particular and the best means by which to communicate important messages in this area be considered at the upcoming Adaptation Committee meeting.



### **3. Documents for Approval (10:20)**

Council discussed the scorecard review report and agreed the document. It will be used to internally revise the process and then published in due course.

Council discussed Document 3.2 Draft report on the impacts of climate change on mental health in Ireland. The Council discussed the reports findings and accepted the report and it was approved for publication on the Council's website.

The Council identified mental health in climate change as a developing area and requested that the Secretariat to continue to examine the research in this area.

### **4. Thematic Session Preview – Fossil Fuel Subsidies (10:35)**

The Secretariat gave an introduction to the upcoming Thematic Session on Fossil Fuel Subsidies. Council provided feedback for the Secretariat for consideration in planning the upcoming session.

### **5. Budget 2026 Expenditure Assessment (10:46)**

The Secretariat presented a follow-up assessment of the allocations in Budget 2026. The Council discussed the Budget Expenditure approach. The Council recommended that a follow up with the Department of Public Expenditure Infrastructure Public Service Reform and Digitalisation to discuss their Expenditure Assessment approach. The Secretariat also flagged that they will begin to develop the budget letter over the next few months.

### **6. Transport Policy and Congestion (11:40)**

The Secretariat presented a draft letter for consideration of the Council in respect of transport policy and congestion in our major cities.

It was agreed subject to minor changes, and the amended letter was approved for sending to the Minister and for publication on the Council website.

### **7. Carbon Budgets Update (13:45)**

Council discussed various issues of governance under the Climate Act.

### **8. Annual Review 2026 – Our Changing Climate, Electricity and Transport (14:30)**

The Secretariat presented an outline of the process for approval and publishing the 2026 series of sectoral reviews.



Council discussed the final draft of Our Changing Climate and approved the report for publication on the Council website subject to agreed changes. The Secretariat wanted to also thank Met Éireann for their inputs to this report.

Council discussed the second draft of the recommendations for AR2026 Electricity Sector Review. It was agreed that Council members would submit their ranking of preferences to the Secretariat after the meeting for incorporation into the draft of the review to be presented at the next Council meeting.

The Secretariat presented a first look at the draft of the recommendations for the AR 2026 Transport Sector Review.

After discussion and feedback, it was agreed that the Secretariat would present further developed recommendations for input at the April 2026 meeting.

#### **9. Comms Update (16:35)**

The Secretariat updated Council on the Council's participation at Stripe Young Scientist and Technology Exhibition in January 2026.

The Secretariat also introduced new communications partners, Springboard Communications to the Council.

#### **10. Governance (17:00)**

The Secretariat updated the Council on the new Ethics Acts that came into operation on 1 January 2026. SI 674 of 2025 covers the Chair and members of the Climate Change Advisory Council. The Operational Guidance of the Council will be updated to reflect these changes.

A budget update was also provided.

Council noted the contents of the update.

#### **11. International Update (17:10)**

The Secretariat updated Council on recent ICCN and EEAC activities and their work programmes for 2026.

An update on ESAB activities was also given.



## **12. Activities of the Council (17:10)**

The Council noted the report of Council activities.

## **13. AOB and next meeting (17:25)**

- The Council were updated that discussions for the final 'Fill the Gap Analysis' contract under a framework agreement with UCC had begun.
- Prof. Liam Delaney gave an update on activities in respect of the Behavioural Workshop held in November 2025. The Council will begin bringing together ideas for another edition of the workshop in 2026.
- The Council noted that this was Patricia King's last meeting and thanked her for her significant contributions during her term.
- It was noted that the next Council meeting would be held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> of April 2026 and would be held in person.

Signed by Prof. Peter Thorne on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2026

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of the initials "P. W." followed by a stylized, scribbled-out name.