



Subject:	DAERA Consultation on the establishment of a Just Transition Commission for Northern Ireland
Date:	13 December 2024
Reporting Officer:	John Tully, Director of City & Organisational Strategy
Contact Officers:	Debbie Caldwell, Climate Commissioner

Is this report restricted? Yes No

Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.

Insert number

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)
4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter
5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained
6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction
7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in? Yes No

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To present a draft response to the DAERA consultation regarding the establishment of a Just Transition Commission for Northern Ireland.

2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note the proposals set out in the consultation document and to approve the draft council response as attached at appendix 1. Subject to approval by Council, the response will be submitted to DAERA via their online consultation platform.
3.0	Key Issues
	<p>Background</p> <p>3.1 The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 (the Act) sets out a framework for tackling climate change and reducing emissions in Northern Ireland. It places requirements on government departments relating to delivering just transition objectives and includes a requirement for the establishment of a Just Transition Commission (Commission). The Act states the functions of the Commission will include overseeing the implementation of the just transition elements of the Act and providing advice to departments on how to ensure their emissions reduction policies and Climate Action Plans (CAP) comply with the just transition principle. DAERA is responsible for establishing the Commission.</p> <p>3.2 The just transition principle aims to promote fairness during the transition to a low-emissions economy and to ensure support is provided to those who are most affected by climate change. Often this will be the individuals or groups who have done the least to cause it, and yet who may be the least equipped to adapt to its effects. High-level objectives include taking action to reduce emissions in a manner which helps to support environmentally sustainable jobs, low-carbon investment, and infrastructure.</p> <p>3.3 Ensuring that Northern Ireland reaches its net zero goal in a way that is fair, sustainable and balanced is a priority for the NI Executive and the establishment of the Commission is an essential element in supporting the delivery of that ambition. The consultation is not about the merits or otherwise of the Commission, but rather the proposed Regulations (the legislation) that will set out the type of public body the Commission should be. DAERA is therefore seeking feedback on issues such as composition, membership, role and legislated functions, reporting arrangements, secretariat and support required. DAERA is also seeking initial suggestions for what the Commission should focus on.</p> <p><i>Draft Council Response</i></p> <p>3.4 Overall, the establishment of the Commission is to be welcomed. DAERA is proposing to base the structure of the Commission around the Scottish model, which provides a good practice</p>

	<p>framework. However, within the draft consultation response, we've made various recommendations that in summary focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased recognition of the role of local government and its participation in the framework. • Suggested enhancements to the membership, including amendments to the Climate Change (Just Transition Commission) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024 so that local government is a named sector within the Schedule. • The importance of meaningful collaboration and civic engagement an ensuring participation by key stakeholders including civic society, business and economy and the education and skills sectors.
3.5	<p>As part of our response, we recommended that the Commission should focus on the following priority areas. More details are provided in the draft response attached at appendix 1 and area summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Participation and collaboration. - Addressing social risks. - Supporting a green jobs revolution - Laying the social groundwork for a resilient and inclusive net-zero economy. - Driving local solutions. - Reinforcing the urgency for concerted efforts to combat climate change. - Focus on high-impact sectors - Supporting processes.
3.6	<p>A copy of the DAERA consultation and supporting materials including the draft Regulations can be accessed at here.</p>
3.7	<p>Financial and Resource Implications</p> <p>There are no financial or resource implications arising directly from this report. Whilst the Commission may have oversight of any Just Transition Funds that may be established in future, this consultation does not seek views on proposals to establish such funds.</p>
3.8	<p>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</p> <p>There are no equality, good relations or rural needs implications arising directly from this report.</p>
4.0	<p>Appendices – Documents Attached</p>
	<p>Appendix 1 - Draft BCC consultation response.</p>