



Subject:	DAERA Consultation - Rethinking Our Resources: Northern Ireland Resources and Waste Management Strategy
Date:	14 th April 2026
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Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
	The purpose of this report is to present to Members the draft Belfast City Council response to the DAERA public consultation on 'Rethinking Our Resources: Northern Ireland Resources and Waste Management Strategy'
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	Members are requested to review and agree the draft Belfast City Council response to the recently published DAERA public consultation on 'Rethinking Our Resources: Northern Ireland Resources and Waste Management Strategy'

3.0	Main report
3.1	<p>Members will recall, from the Committee meeting on 10th February 2026, that The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) recently published a consultation titled “Rethinking Our Resources: Northern Ireland Resources and Waste Management Strategy. At that meeting, members noted the contents of the consultation document,</p> <p>A link to the Consultation can be found here Rethinking Our Resources: Northern Ireland Resources and Waste Management Strategy Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs This can also be found attached as Appendix I</p> <p>The draft strategy outlines 10 targets and over 60 actions to help Northern Ireland achieve its vision of “a resource efficient country where we rethink how we deal with resources and waste, reducing and diverting overall waste, extracting the maximum value from recycling materials to deliver a low-carbon circular economy, with recovery and landfill as methods of last resort.”</p> <p>Proposed actions include support programmes, statutory and best practice guidance, campaigns, data refinements, and cross-departmental collaboration. The strategy provides a long-term plan for significant environmental change, alongside short-term actions necessary to drive the required outcomes.</p> <p>The draft Strategy aims to integrate policy reforms, modern technology, and partnerships to ensure long-term sustainability and adaptability.</p> <p>The strategy provides a range of drivers and support, based on the recognition of the different levels of potential from all stakeholders in the value chain. The actions within the strategy are designed to help Northern Ireland achieve both the Circular Economy Package targets and the recycling target set out in the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 that will require contributions from a wide range of sectors. The Circular Economy Package targets include a municipal waste recycling target of 65% and a 10% cap on the amount of municipal waste going to landfill by 2035.</p> <p>The Climate Change Act requires that at least 70% of waste must be recycled by 2030 in Northern Ireland. It is important to note that the 70% recycling target in this Act potentially relates to all waste generated in Northern Ireland, not specifically household waste.</p> <p>Therefore, the sectors in scope of the draft Strategy include household waste, non-household municipal waste, commercial and industrial waste, construction and demolition waste, hazardous waste and agricultural waste.</p> <p>The Consultation opened on 15th January 2026, and the closing date has been extended to 06 May 2026. Responses are invited, from both individual members of the public and organisations, including Councils.</p> <p>The Service has compiled a draft a response to the consultation. This can be found attached as Appendix II and the key summary responses are outlined below.</p> <p>We note that the government response and outcome of the DAERA Rethinking Our Resources Measures for Climate Action and a Circular Economy in Northern Ireland public consultation exercise is still awaited.</p>

In addition to the BCC response, arc21 has engaged with its member councils to inform and draft a coordinated responses by the group. At the time of writing this report, we have not received the final draft arc21 response.

Summary of key responses to the consultation

Part 1: The Need for change – Outlining the aims scope and vision, as well as targets and objectives.

We support the overall direction of the draft strategy and its alignment with Circular Economy and Climate objectives. However, the strategy is high level and lacks clarity on delivery - particularly regarding infrastructure, enforcement, statutory powers and the application of the waste hierarchy including greater emphasis on prevention.

The council has concerns about the measurability and realisation off the targets and objectives, noting the need for clear definitions, baselines, interim, milestones and robust monitoring.

Greater clarity is also required on roles responsibilities and expectations for local authorities. The impacts of parallel policies on costs and material flows should be considered. Critically, delivery will depend on sustained funding, capital investment and practical guidance, without which the strategies ambitions may be difficult to achieve.

Part 2: Enabling Change and Empowering Action

We broadly agree with the inclusion of the seven ways streams within the scope of the strategy and support most proposed actions in principle. However, there is a lack of clarity on the definition scope and measurement of the 70% recycling target including how performance will be monitored and verified across all relevant waste streams.

The council has significant concerns regarding deliverability particularly in relation to infrastructure, capacity, timing, statutory backing, enforcement powers and the level of funding and support that will be made available to local authorities.

It is also disappointing that are no clear targets for litter and fly tipping.

Further clarity is required and how domestic infrastructure will be funded and delivered in a timely manner to reduce reliance on export markets. Local authorities already face increasing cost pressures and lack of adequate infrastructure risks exasperating these costs and undermine the achievement of targets.

Part 3: Making it Happen

We support the proposed actions relating to infrastructure, stakeholders, communication skills and enforcement. However there remains a clear need for greater clarity on roles, responsibilities, timescales and how delivery will be coordinated across stakeholders.

We highlight that Northern Ireland currently lacks sufficient domestic waste infrastructure and relies heavily on export. There are limited treatment facilities within Northern Ireland. Strong alignment between the strategy and local development plans is essential to enable appropriate planning for future infrastructure supported by clear policy and up-to-date guidance.

Whilst communications and engagement actions are welcomed, further detail is required on implementation, funding and the role of partners alongside clarity on performance

metrics and the support available to councils.

Similarly, skills training research and enforcement actions are supported in principle but require clear delivery mechanisms, adequate resourcing and defined accountability.

Part 4 Monitoring Progress

We feel the proposed approach of a mid-term report and a final review over a six-year period is insufficient. We would encourage more frequent (annual) reporting. This would enable earlier identification of issues or under performance, support timely intervention, and corrective action and improve transparency and accountability.

Part 5 Supporting Documentation

We broadly agree that the strategy acknowledges the requirements of the Waste and Contaminated Land Order, but further clarity is needed on how these will be operationalized and monitored

The proposed waste compositional surveys are welcomed although clarification is required and whether they will cover all relevant waste streams outlined within the strategy.

The council agrees in principle with the conclusions of the Environment Report, Habitats Assessment, Equality Screening and Rural Needs Impact Assessment. However, each assessment is limited by the high-level nature of the strategy and relies heavily on assumptions around its successful delivery, regulatory controls and mitigation.

There is insufficient detail to fully assess impacts at this stage particularly in relation to infrastructure timing and potential differential impacts in section 75 groups and rural communities.

Financial and Resource Implications

None with regards to responding to the consultation However Council would request that DEARA consider the financial impact on Councils of any changes that occur following the consultation and that they work with Councils to estimate the impact and provide financial support to them to deliver changes to how our Services are provided.

Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment

None with regards to responding to the consultation

4.0

Appendices

Appendix 1 - [Rethinking Our Resources: Northern Ireland Resources and Waste Management Strategy](#)

Appendix 2 - Belfast City Council's draft response to the Rethinking Our Resources: Northern Ireland Resources and Waste Management Strategy