



Subject:	Consultation response to Draft Environment Strategy for Northern Ireland
Date:	7 December 2021
Reporting Officer:	Siobhan Toland, Director, City and Neighbourhood Services Department
Contact Officers:	Mark Challis, Policy and Business Development Officer

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	The purpose of the report is to present the compiled council draft response to the consultation on the Draft Environment Strategy for Northern Ireland for Members to consider and agree. The Draft Environment Strategy for Northern Ireland document is attached in Appendix 1 and the compiled council draft response is attached in Appendix 2.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Review the report and the Council's draft consultation response to the Draft Environment Strategy for Northern Ireland (Appendix 2) and agree to the submission to DAERA by the 19th January 2022.

3.0	Main report
3.1	<p>The Consultation https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/environment-strategy-consultation opened on 11 November 2021 and with a closing date of 19 January 2022 at 16:00.</p>
3.2	<p>The Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs (DAERA), on behalf of the Northern Ireland Executive, has published a consultation on the draft Environment Strategy and welcomes the views of everyone across Northern Ireland.</p>
3.3	<p>DAERA advised that the Environment Strategy is intended to be an overarching document setting out Northern Ireland’s environmental priorities for the coming decades and will form part of the Green Growth agenda (the Green Growth Strategy will provide more detail on actions in respect of climate change & greenhouse gas emissions).</p>
3.4	<p>The Department advise that this Environment Strategy will form the basis for a coherent and effective set of interventions that can deliver real improvements in the quality of the environment and thereby improve the health and well-being of all who live and work here; elevate Northern Ireland to an environmental leader; create opportunities to develop our economy; and enable us to play our part in protecting the global environment for decades to come</p>
3.5	<p>Belfast City Council welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback and our full response (Appendix 2) provides the specific commentary for members consideration. Members are advised that given this consultation was only issued on 11th November that officers have attempted to coordinate a response to the key relevant areas which we would have greatest interest in, from City and Neighbourhoods Department and Place & Economy.</p>
3.6	<p>A summary of feedback including specific page references within the Council response at Appendix 2 follows in the key issues section of this report:</p>
3.7	<p><u>Key issues</u></p> <p>The breakdown of the comments from BCC within the draft Environment Strategy document is as follows:</p>

3.8

Strategic Environmental Outcome 1 - Excellent air, water, land & neighbourhood quality

Air quality – new Air Quality Strategy for NI by 2022 (*Council's draft responses are included on pages 2-5 of Appendix 2*)

Water Resources: Quality & Quantity - Implement the 'Living with Water in Belfast Plan'.

Marine and Coastal Water Resources: Quality & Quantity.

Sustainable Drainage & Wastewater Management - Engagement with district councils to include SuDS (Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems) <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/managing-stormwater-strategy-promoting-use-sustainable-drainage-systems-within-northern> in Local Development Plans (*page 6 App 2*).

Neighbourhood Environment Quality - Increase the maximum Fixed Penalty Notice for litter and dog fouling offences to £200 by 2023. Publish Northern Ireland's first Litter Strategy by 2024. Amend the Environmental Offences (Fixed Penalties) (Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations (NI) 2012 to give Councils greater powers to vary fines by 2023. Include litter in Extended Producer Responsibility legislation (*pages 6-7 App 2*).

Dilapidated Buildings & Neglected Sites - Engage with Councils through Local Development Plans process to prioritise dereliction in plan strategies & policies. Develop a wide-ranging Dilapidation Bill. Introduce to the NI Assembly by 2023. New provisions to tackle low level dilapidation. Significantly enhance district councils' cost recovery powers. (*pages 7-12 App 2*).

3.9

Strategic Environmental Outcome 2 - Healthy & accessible environment & landscapes everyone can connect with & enjoy.

Connecting People to the Environment: Landscapes, Seascapes & Natural Beauty - Landscape policy/ legislation review (*page 13 App 2*).

Connecting People to the Environment: Outdoor Recreation & Natural Space Provision - Develop Community Path Network & Places Plans. Development of revised / new outdoor recreation legislation. Development of a new Strategy for Sport and Physical Activity for the

next 10 years and beyond. Update Outdoor Recreation Action Plan for NI. Improve quantity, quality & accessibility of existing natural spaces, parks, recreational routes and marine & freshwaters. Expand off-road network of both local community paths and regionally significant NI wide routes (*page 13 App 2*).

Environment Engagement Index (EEI) - The EEI is unique to NI and explores engagement and connection to nature through an annual survey.

The Next Generation – Eco schools (*page 13 App 2*).

Sustainable Settlements - Build and strengthen the resilience of our city by creating places where people want to live and work, to visit and invest. Develop and support sustainability and Green Growth. Work across Government to promote the Greenway network encouraging walking and cycling and reducing car dependency (*included in planning policy response pages 13-14 App 2*).

3.10 **Strategic Environmental Outcome 3 - Thriving, resilient & connected nature and wildlife.**

Protecting Nature on Land - 30% of land and water protected for nature by 2030. Increase NI woodland cover to 8.8% (122,000 hectares) by 2030 (*page 14 App 2*).

3.11 **Strategic Environmental Outcome 4 - Sustainable production & consumption on land and at sea.**

Producer Responsibility - By 2030: Increase recycling of packaging from 60% to 78%. From 2024, phase in new UK wide Extended Producer Responsibility Scheme for packaging. By end of 2024, 80% of full net costs of packaging contributed by producers. 2021/2: UK consultation on Review of Waste Electrical & Electronic Equipment. 2023: UK review of producer responsibility and increased recycling for End of Life Vehicles. 2022: review of producer responsibility for batteries (*pages 15-17 App 2*).

Reducing Single-Use Plastic (SUP) (*pages 17-18 App 2*).

Carrier Bags (*page 18 App 2*).

	<p>Chemicals</p> <p>Environmental Regulation: Permitting - Digital transformation of application services for waste, water and pollution control authorisations. Digital transformation of site inspection forms for waste, water and pollution control regulatory staff. Publication of consultation on policy proposals for a new environmental permitting regime during 2022.</p> <p>Antimicrobial & Disinfectant Contamination.</p> <p>3.12 Strategic Environmental Outcome 5 - Zero waste & highly developed circular economy.</p> <p><u>Circular Economy</u> - Publish Circular Economy Strategic Framework by 2022. Appoint members to a NI Circular Economy Coalition representing a diverse range of industries, sectors and interest. (page 19 App 2).</p> <p><u>Waste Management</u> - Publish new Waste Management Strategy by 2023. Introduce new UK wide Extended Producer Responsibility Scheme for packaging in 2023. Bring forward all actions set out in the Waste Prevention Plan 2019. By 2035, send no more than 10% of waste to landfill. (page 19-20 App 2).</p> <p><u>Illegal Waste Disposal & Fly-tipping</u> – Commence outstanding sections of 2011 Act. Secure agreement to the protocol of all 11 councils. DAERA and councils to review protocol annually. Consistent approach to data collection across NI regarding Fly-tipping and illegal waste disposal (pages 20 – 21 App 2).</p> <p>3.13 We have also included within our response that the impact of the administration and application of any new changes for which District Councils would have a role need to be formally appraised and evaluated and further consulted on. The economic impact of the roll out of this future strategy would need to be determined to ensure there is no additional burden on the rate payers within the Belfast City Council area.</p>
3.14	<p><u>Next steps</u></p> <p>Members are asked to consider and agree the council response to DAERA attached at Appendix 2.</p>
	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p>

3.15	None associated with this report. <u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment</u>
3.16	None associated with this report.
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix1: Draft Environment Strategy for Northern Ireland https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/environment-strategy-consultation
	Appendix 2: Belfast City Council consultation response