

Environment Strategy for Northern Ireland

Public Discussion Document



September 2019

A living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.



Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**

www.daera-ni.gov.uk



**INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE**

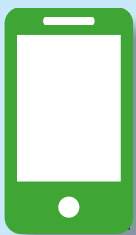
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To get a copy of this document in another format,



- **Telephone: 028 9056 9497** and talk to **Lisa Frazer**. If you have a hearing difficulty you can contact the Department via **Text Relay**. Dial **18001 028 9056 9497**



- **Email: esni@daera-ni.gov.uk**



- **Visit** our webpage at: www.daera-ni.gov.uk

About us

We are the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs. (DAERA)

What do we do?

Here are some of the things we do.



- We look after the development of farming, forests and fishing in Northern Ireland.
- We provide a service to look after the health and welfare of animals, fish and plants.
- We look after environment and rural development in Northern Ireland.
- We provide research, expert advice and education.
- We look after some parts of public health in how food is made.

The Environment

- The environment is very important to all of us - we are a part of nature too and clean air, good water and being able to use outdoor spaces can improve our lives.
- Many of the things that we do affect the environment in a bad way but there is a lot we can do to make it better.
- This is important because the environment supports our lives, businesses and jobs, communities, families and our health.
- A Northern Ireland Environment Strategy is needed to improve our environment, create opportunities for business, improve people's health, and help to protect our planet.



Programme for Government

- The Programme for Government (PfG) is how the NI Executive (the Ministers of all the NI Departments) sets out what it wants to do.
- DAERA is responsible for PfG Outcome 2:
“We live and work sustainably - protecting the environment”
- We are doing some things very well - such as recycling waste from households - but other targets have been harder to achieve, like reducing our greenhouse gas emissions.

Why do we need an environment strategy now?

- Northern Ireland has never had an environment strategy before - these are some of the reasons we think we need one now:
 - we need to find better ways to deal with our environmental problems;
 - people are concerned about the future of our planet because of things like climate change and plastic waste;
 - DAERA wants to continue to protect and improve the environment after Brexit; and
 - there are still lots of things we don't know about the environment - we need new ways to measure how we are looking after it.

Why are we publishing this document?

- We want people to tell us what they think our environment should look like in the future and what we should be trying to achieve. We have made a few suggestions but nothing is decided yet.
- We will look carefully at every reply and use your views to help us to create the Environment Strategy.
- All responses must be received by **5pm on 23 December 2019**.



What will the strategy cover?

- We want the new Environment Strategy to focus on results that will make a difference to the lives of people now and in the future.
- At the very least, the Environment Strategy will cover these areas:
 - **Climate Change**
 - **Natural Environment and Landscapes**

The natural environment includes everything that is not man-made.
 - **Resource Efficiency**

This means using resources (like water, timber, coal and oil) in a way that reduces harm to our environment as much as possible.
 - **Marine Environment**

The sea has lots of wildlife and habitats - it is about one third of our natural environment.
 - **Environmental Quality (Air, Water and Neighbourhood)**

Environmental quality is about how the environment affects human beings and other living things.
 - **Fisheries and Aquaculture**

Inland and sea fishing, and farming of fish, shellfish and plants that grow in water. DAERA also protects fish stocks.
 - **Built environment**

This is the part of our surroundings built by humans, including buildings and human-made spaces, like parks, roads and railways.

Strategic themes

- The Department has developed 4 possible **Environmental** themes:
 - **Engagement** - when the environment is clean and healthy it is good for us in many ways but when it is not it can be very bad for us. The way we affect the environment can be good or bad too. How we connect with our environment affects how well we understand it and look after it.
 - **Prosperity** - most people see that the natural environment is valuable but this does not always stop people from damaging it. Some people are more likely to protect the environment if they think it will help the economy.



- **Efficiency** - this means making sure that goods and services are provided and used in a way that is good for the environment, people and the economy.

- **Quality** - some of the environmental quality issues that we expect the strategy to cover include:

Air - most of our local issues are caused by road transport, household heating, industry and farming.

Noise - one of the environmental issues most often complained about, particularly domestic noise.

Biodiversity - includes all life on Earth including plants and animals.

Water - we need fresh water for all life - humans, animals and plants can't survive without it.

Neighbourhood - includes: litter; dog-fouling; dilapidation; graffiti; and fly-posting, which can make local areas less pleasant.



Outcomes - what we want the strategy to achieve

- We want the Environment Strategy to be about the results or outcomes we need to achieve. We don't want to tell people what these should be but we think it could be helpful to show what they might look like.
- We have suggested 6 possible outcomes below but they are just ideas - we want to know what you think they should be, and why.
- Suggested outcomes:
 - We reuse and recycle our resources as much as possible and produce zero waste.
 - We can all access a healthy environment.
 - We reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and prepare for the impacts of climate change.
 - The loss of wildlife is stopped, our ecosystems are healthy, and our landscapes are properly looked after.
 - We provide and consume goods and services in ways that can be sustained in the future.
 - We have excellent air, water, land and neighbourhood quality.

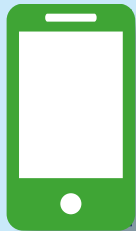
Big ideas:

- An Environment Strategy is important - it will say what we want our environment to be like in the future and how we will make that happen.
- It needs big ideas and this is your opportunity to tell us about your big ideas for the environment.
- We may not be able to use all of these ideas but we promise to consider them all as we decide what the Environment Strategy should look like.



How you can respond to this public discussion document

- To find out more about this discussion document; or
- Tell us what you think about it.



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- **Online**
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