

February 26th, 2026

Notice Of Meeting

You are requested to attend the meeting to be held on **Wednesday, 4th March 2026 at 7:00 pm** in **Church Street, Newtownards.**

Agenda

Agenda

 *EC 04.03.26 Agenda.pdf*

Page 1

1. Apologies

2. Declarations of Interest

Reports for Approval

3. Annual Service Plans 2026-27

(Attached)

 *Item 3 Annual Service Plans 2026-27.pdf*

Page 4

3.1 Estates Services

(Attached)

 *Item 3.1 Estates Services DRAFT Service Plan 2026-27.pdf*

Page 7

3.2 Parks and Cemeteries

(Attached)

 *Item 3.2 Parks & Cemeteries Service DRAFT Service Plan 2026-27.pdf*

Page 20

3.3 Waste and Cleansing Services

(Attached)

 *Item 3.3 Waste & Cleansing DRAFT Service Plan 2026-27.pdf*

Page 49

4. Notice of Motion 670 Recycling on the Go Pilot

(Attached)

 *Item 4 Notice Of Motion 670 Recycling on the Go Pilot.pdf*

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5. Play Park Refurbishments and Older Children Play Provision for 2026/27

(Attached)

 *Item 5 Play Park Refurbishments and Older Children Play Provision for 2026-27.pdf* *Page 69*

6. On Street Residential Charging Scheme Update

(Attached)

 *Item 6 On Street Residential Charging Scheme Update.pdf* *Page 73*

7. Estates Carbon Reduction Targets

(Attached)

 *Item 7 Estates Carbon Reduction Targets.pdf* *Page 76*

8. NI Waste Management Strategy - Consultation Response

(Attached)

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 *Item 8.1 Appendix 1 - RoR NI Resources and Waste Strategy - AND response.pdf* *Page 82*

 *Item 8.2 Appendix 2 - RoR NI Resources and Waste Strategy.pdf* *Page 94*

 *Item 8.3 Appendix 3 - RoR - Summary and Consultation Questions.pdf* *Page 209*

Reports for Noting

9. Notice of Motion 616 Donaghadee Harbour and Parade

 *Item 9 Notice of Motion 616 Donaghadee Harbour and Parade.pdf* *Page 248*

 *Item 9.1 Appendix 1 Response from DfI Minister.pdf* *Page 251*

 *Item 9.2 Appendix 2 Response from DfI Consultancy Service.pdf* *Page 252*

10. Update on Green Fleet

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 *Item 10.1 Appendix 1 Roadmap to Green Fleet October 2024.pdf* *Page 257*

 *Item 10.2 Appendix 2 Green Fleet Action Plan 2025-2030.pdf* *Page 263*

11. Quarterly Sustainable Energy Management Strategy Update 2025-2026 Quarter 3

 *Item 11 Quarterly Sustainable Energy Management Strategy Update 2025-2026 Quarter 3.pdf* *Page 264*

 *Item 11 App 1 Updated Sust Energy Management Strategy Action Plan.pdf* *Page 272*

12. Northern Ireland Local Authority Municipal Waste Management Statistics, April to June 2025

 *Item 12 NI Local Authority Municipal Waste Management Statistics, April to June 2025.pdf* *Page 289*

 *Item 12 Appendix 1 LACMW Q2 2025-26 Report.pdf* *Page 302*

13. Notice of Motion 665 Comber Dog Park

 *Item 13 Notice of Motion 665 Comber Dog Park.pdf* *Page 318*

14. Notices of Motion

14.1 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Douglas and Alderman Cummings

To task officers to investigate and engage with other statutory agencies to work together to safely remove the fallen tree over the Enler River, Comber, which has been there since Storm Eowyn.

14.2 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Cochrane and Alderman Brooks

That this Council notes with deep concern the recent destruction caused to bushes, trees and wild grass in The Commons, Donaghadee.

Further to this, Council agrees to write to the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, calling upon him to designate The Commons, Donaghadee as either an Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI), or another appropriate form of protected status, in order to help safeguard this important green space.

15. Any Other Notified Business

*****IN CONFIDENCE*****

Items Delegated for Decision/Approval (In Confidence)

16. Tender Reports

16.1 Tender for the Provision of New and Replacement Play Areas,

and Play Area Maintenance within the Borough of Ards and North Down

 *Item 16.1 Tender for Provision of New & Replacement Play Areas & Play Area Maintenance.pdf* *Not included*

16.2 Extension of Ice Cream and Hot Drinks Vendors at Various Locations in the Borough 2026-27

 *Item 16.2 Extension of Ice Cream and Hot Drinks Vendors at Various Locations in the Borough 2026-27.pdf* *Not included*

16.3 Extension of Catering Services Provider at Bangor Walled Garden

 *Item 16.3 Extension of Catering Services Provider at Bangor Castle Walled Garden.pdf* *Not included*

16.4 Extension of Key holder Response and Opening and Locking Tender 2026-2027

 *Item 16.4 Extension of Key Holder Response and Opening and Locking Tender 2026-2027.pdf* *Not included*

16.5 Building Repair Tender

 *Item 16.5 Tender for the Provision Of Building Works at Ards and North Down Council Properties.pdf* *Not included*

17. Ward Park Full Business Case

 *Item 17 Ward Park Full Business Case.pdf* *Not included*

 *Item 17 Appendix 1 - Ward Park Full Business Case Version 1.0.pdf* *Not included*

 *Item 17 Appendix 2 - Images of Defects.pdf* *Not included*

 *Item 17 Appendix 3 - Design Drawings.pdf* *Not included*

 *Item 17 Appendix 4 - NPC NPV Calculations.pdf* *Not included*

Reports for Noting (In Confidence)

18. Comber Greenway Lands (Comber Section)

 *Item 18 Comber Greenway Lands (Comber Section).pdf* *Not included*

 *Item 18.1 Appendix 1 Comber Greenway - Original Route Through McLaughlins* *Not included*

 ~~Item 18.2~~ **Appendix 2 Comber Greenway - Alternative Route Through McLaughlins Land.pdf** **Not included**

 **Item 18.3 Appendix 3 Comber Greenway - Alternative Route Costs Compared.pdf** **Not included**

19. Residual Waste Treatment Report

(Attached)

 **Item 19 Residual waste treatment report.pdf** **Not included**

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

25 February 2026

Dear Sir/Madam

You are hereby invited to attend a hybrid meeting (in person and via Zoom) of the Environment Committee of Ards and North Down Borough Council in the Council Chamber, 2 Church Street, Newtownards on **Wednesday, 4 March 2026** commencing at **7.00pm**.

Yours faithfully

Michael Steele
Acting Chief Executive
Ards and North Down Borough Council

A G E N D A

1. Apologies
2. Declarations of Interest

Reports for Approval

3. Annual Service Plans 2026-27 (Copies attached)
 - 3.1. Estates Services
 - 3.2. Parks and Cemeteries
 - 3.3. Waste and Cleansing Services
4. Notice Of Motion 670 'Recycling On the Go Pilot (Report attached)
5. Play Park Refurbishments and Older Children Play Provision for 2026/27 (Report attached)
6. On Street Residential Charging Scheme Update (Report attached)
7. Estates Carbon Reduction Targets (Report attached)
8. NI Waste Management Strategy – Consultation Response (Copy attached)

Reports for Noting

9. Notice of Motion 616 Donaghadee Harbour and Parade (Report attached)
10. Update on Green Fleet (Report attached)

11. Quarterly Sustainable Energy Management Strategy Update 2025-2026 Quarter 3 (Report attached)
12. Northern Ireland Local Authority Municipal Waste Management Statistics, April to June 2025 (Report attached)
13. Notice of Motion 665 Comber Dog Park (Report attached)

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 - 16.2. Extension of Ice Cream and Hot Drinks Vendors at Various Locations in the Borough 2026-27 (Report attached)
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 - 16.4. Extension of Key Holder Response and Opening and Locking Tender 2026-2027 (Report attached)
 - 16.5. Building Repair Tender (Report attached)
17. Ward Park Full Business Case (Report attached)

Reports for Noting (In Confidence)

18. Comber Greenway Lands (Comber Section) (Report attached)

19. Residual Waste Treatment Report (Copy attached)

MEMBERSHIP OF ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE (16 Members)

Alderman Adair	Councillor Douglas
Alderman Armstrong-Cotter	Councillor Edmund
Councillor Ashe	Councillor Harbinson (Vice Chair)
Councillor Blaney	Councillor Irwin
Councillor Boyle	Councillor Kendall (Chair)
Councillor Brady	Alderman McAlpine
Alderman Cummings	Councillor Newman
Councillor Cathcart	Councillor Wray

Unclassified

ITEM 3**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
	If multiple:
Meeting	Environment Committee
Date of Meeting	04 March 2026
Responsible Director	Director of Environmental Services
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Estates Services Head of Parks and Cemeteries Head of Waste and Cleansing Services
Report title	Annual Service Plans 2026-27
Attachments	Item 3.1 Estates Services Draft Service Plan Item 3.2 Parks and Cemeteries Draft Service Plan Item 3.3 Waste and Cleansing Services Draft Service Plan
File Reference (if applicable)	43600
Legislation	Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014
Resource Implications	None Narrative: Resources in place to deliver draft Service Plans
Screening Requirements	<i>The Council will commit to consider the implication of all reports under the categories of Section 75, Rural Needs, Data Protection, Climate and Sustainability:</i> Screening of report not required
Link to Corporate Plan Priority and Outcome	Multiple

If multiple:

	<p>7. Ards and North Down Borough Council is a high performing organisation</p> <p>If multiple:</p>
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Background

Members will be aware that Council is required, under the Local Government Act 2014, to have in place arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions. To fulfil this requirement Council has in place a Performance Management Policy and Handbook. The Performance Management Handbook outlines the approach to the Performance Planning and Management process as:

- Community Plan – published every 10-15 years
- Corporate Plan – published every 4 years (Corporate Plan 2024 - 2028 in operation)
- Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) – published annually
- Service Plan – developed annually

The Council’s 16 Service Plans outline how each respective Service will contribute to the achievement of the corporate objectives including, but not limited to, any relevant actions identified in the PIP.

Plans are intended to:

- Encourage compliance with legal, audit and operational context.
- Provide focus on direction.
- Facilitate alignment between Corporate, Service and individual plans and activities.
- Motivate and develop staff.
- Promote performance improvement, encourage innovation and share good practice.
- Encourage transparency of performance outcomes.
- Better enable us to recognise success and address underperformance.

Key Issues

Any key issues that the Service may face in 2026/27 have been detailed within the attached Service Plans.

Next Steps

Attached are the 2026/27 Service Plans for Estates Services, Parks and Cemeteries and Waste and Cleansing in accordance with the Council’s Performance Management Policy and Handbook for members consideration and approval.

Summary

The attached Plans:

- Have been developed to align with the objectives of the Big Plan (2017 – 2032) and the Corporate Plan 2024 – 2028 and have been developed in conjunction with staff, officers and management, and in consultation with key stakeholders where relevant.
- Set out the objectives for the Services for 2026-27 and identify the key performance indicators used to illustrate the level of achievement of each objective, and the targets that the Service will try to attain along with key actions required to do so.

- Are based on the agreed budget. It should be noted that, should there be significant changes in-year (e.g. due to Council decisions, budget revisions or changes to the PIP), the Plans may need to be revised.
- Will be reported to Committee on a six-monthly basis as undernoted.

Reference	Period	Reporting Month
Half Yearly 1	April – September	December
Half Yearly 2	October – March	June

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council Approves the attached Service Plans for 2026/27.

ESTATES

Service Plan: 01 April 2026 – 31 March 2027



**Ards and
North Down**
Borough Council

APPROVALS

Prepared By	Peer Reviewed By	Approved By Director
Peter Caldwell	Stephen Daye	Graeme Bannister
Head of Estates	Head of Parks and Cemeteries	Director of Environmental Services
03/11/2025	03/11/2025	07/11/2025

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- 7. **What Services/ Activities will be stopped** 12
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1. Introduction to Service

<p>Name of Service Directorate</p>	<p>Estates</p>
<p>Introduction and Reflection</p>	<p>Environmental Services</p> <p>The purpose of the Estates Service is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactively manage our estate in collaboration with service managers, to ensure it is ‘fit for purpose’; • Maintain our assets in line with statutory regulations and industry best practice; • Seek out opportunities to improve the condition and energy efficiency of our assets; and • Provide a quality service to users whilst enforcing the relevant legislation at our Harbours and Car Parks. <p>We are faced with an aging estate that requires a strategic approach to implement a series of improvements in order to ensure its continued safe operation. In addition, the Corporate Plan has indicated the importance of transitioning toward sustainability so our assets must be maintained and invested in to achieve this. Much progress has been achieved in recent years however we are aware of the need for further improvement, and we will strive for excellence in everything we do. We believe that we can assist with the delivery of our corporate objectives by actively improving the condition of our estate and assets and ensuring they are fit for purpose.</p> <p>The Service will need to continually evolve to address the issues highlighted above and grasp opportunities presented. It is assumed that any identified resources will be available to enable this.</p> <p>Challenges include legislative compliance in a changing environment, responding to technological threats and opportunities presented by cloud-based computing and mobile working, and delivering excellence in our Services in the context of finite financial resources.</p> <p>Existing processes and strategies appear to be working effectively. Our system of planned refurbishments is improving the condition of our estate. This can be demonstrated by the fact we have raised our Condition benchmark yet lowered the planned refurbishment expenditure for three consecutive years.</p>

2. Context, Challenges and Key Assumptions

PESTLE Analysis

Political	Brexit City Deals and Confidence and Supply Deal LG elections
Economical	Balance between Service needs and rate increases
Social	Lower disposable income Aging local population
Technological	Threat of cyber crime Connectivity Mobile working Cloud-based computing
Legal	GDPR Social value clauses Rural proofing Procurement regulations Legislative changes
Environmental	Climate change regulations (net Zero) Sustainability issues

SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
A competent, experienced and motivated team are in place, ready to embrace change and meet future challenges.	Aging estate resulting in excessive maintenance burdens and energy inefficiency.
Opportunities	Threats
Political desire to effect changes to meet our commitments for Net Zero.	Budget uncertainty Keeping abreast of ever-changing legislation

3. Strategic Objectives and Collaboration

Within our new Corporate Plan 2024-2028 we have a vision of *A Sustainable Borough*. One where Economic, Environmental and Social Wellbeing are linked and in which we, as a Council, make decisions about policies, services, investments and resources that balance the demands of each.

By doing so we can positively impact the people and the assets in our Borough and play a part in addressing some of the world's most pressing problems e.g. poverty, inequality, depletion of natural resources, climate change, economic growth etc.

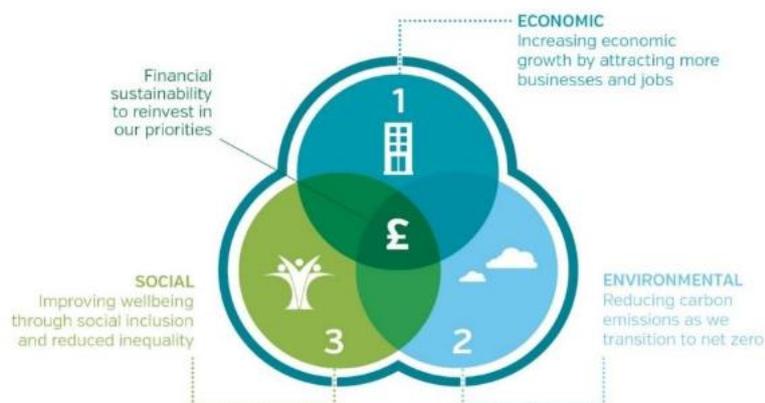
In brief, *A Sustainable Borough* is one where we make sure that we think about economic, social AND environmental impacts when we make decisions.

The three **priorities** we will be delivering against are:

- **ECONOMIC** - increasing economic growth by attracting more jobs and businesses
- **ENVIRONMENTAL** - reducing carbon emissions as we transition to net zero
- **SOCIAL** - improving wellbeing through social inclusion and reduced inequality

These priorities align with the three pillars of sustainable development. They are ambitious, and we will need to work in partnership and collaborate to achieve them.

The diagram below summarises our three Corporate Priorities and shows how they all link together. As you will see at the heart of the diagram is our commitment to address the key issue of our financial sustainability – as without that, we will be less able to deliver on all our ambitions.



We have also identified **seven outcomes** that we want to achieve to meet our priorities. They are (not in order of priority):

1. An engaged Borough with citizens and businesses who have opportunities to influence the delivery of services, plans and investment
2. An environmentally sustainable and resilient Council and Borough meeting our net zero carbon targets
3. A thriving and sustainable economy
4. A vibrant, attractive, sustainable Borough for citizens, visitors, businesses and investors
5. Safe, welcoming and inclusive communities that are flourishing
6. Opportunities for people to be active and healthy
7. Ards and North Down Borough Council is a high performing organisation

The table below reflects the key projects/objectives that will be achieved by our Service over the next 12 months, and the key Services across the Council that will be collaborated with as part of the process. In addition, each objective is linked to the Corporate Plan priorities and outcomes.

Strategic Project/Objective	Collaboration Required	Corporate Plan Priority	Corporate Plan Outcome (1-7)
Continue to implement our Roadmap to green fleet by purchasing greener alternate vehicles.	Finance, Technical (for chargers), Services that will use the vehicles	Environmental	2
Continue to implement our journey toward net zero by carry out energy saving initiatives, ensuring that the full budget allocated is spent appropriately.	Finance and Services that utilise the buildings where the initiatives are installed.	Environmental & Economic	2
Roll out the programme of replacement playgrounds proposed by Parks	Parks & Finance	Social	4, 5, 6
Successfully implement and continuously review Council's Maintenance Strategy, keeping our Estate safe, accessible and fit for purpose.	Finance & various internal departments as "owners" of the Estate	Social	4,5

4. Service Improvement

The “**Service development/ improvement**” element should identify areas of the service that require development/ improvement along with any new, innovative ideas for future improvements. **Please state clearly in the “Rationale” section why the improvement is being undertaken and what evidence there is to support the decision.**

Only Service improvement activities should be included in this section, ‘business as usual’ activities should be detailed in Section 6.

Please ensure KPIs are included in Section 6 to measure Service development/ improvement(s) outlined below.

Service development/ improvement 2026/27?	Which of the specified aspects will this improve?	Rationale	Responsible Officer(s)	Who do we need to help us? (Internal and/ or External partners) Please specify
Car park estate inspected as per schedule to identify key issues	<input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Effectiveness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service Quality <input type="checkbox"/> Service Availability <input type="checkbox"/> Fairness <input type="checkbox"/> Sustainability <input type="checkbox"/> Efficiency <input type="checkbox"/> Innovation	Required in order to ensure that Car Parks meet the needs/expectations of users in terms of their upkeep.	TBC	Internal- Technical advice. External- MTC contractors
Adherence to annual target for CO2 reduction within our Estate 2026/27	<input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Effectiveness <input type="checkbox"/> Service Quality <input type="checkbox"/> Service Availability <input type="checkbox"/> Fairness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sustainability <input type="checkbox"/> Efficiency <input type="checkbox"/> Innovation	Annual Target set in order to meet overall reduction of 48% of CO2 emissions by 2030 (in line with Climate Change Act)	Geoff Allen	External- MTC contractors to implement energy saving initiatives. Internal resources to monitor consumption.

5. Service Risk Register

Service Risk Register should align with the Corporate Risk Management Strategy.

When completing your Service Plan, you must review and consider your current Service Risk Register. Please confirm this has been completed. **Yes**

6. Key Activities (KPIs) for 2026/27

Please ensure service development/ improvements detailed in Section 4 are included as KPIs.

KPIs should be aligned to the 7 Outcomes of the Corporate Plan 2024-2028, detailed below:

- 1 An engaged Borough with citizens and businesses who have opportunities to influence the delivery of services, plans and investment
- 2 An environmentally sustainable and resilient Council and Borough meeting our net zero carbon targets
- 3 A thriving and sustainable economy
- 4 A vibrant, attractive, sustainable Borough for citizens, visitors, businesses and investors
- 5 Safe, welcoming and inclusive communities that are flourishing
- 6 Opportunities for people to be active and healthy
- 7 Ards and North Down Borough Council is a high performing organisation

In addition to the outcomes the KPI should align with one of the three **Corporate Priorities** of the **Corporate Plan**, detailed below:

Corporate Priority 1	Economic	Increasing economic growth by attracting more jobs and businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Support • Attracting Investment • Rural Regeneration • Labour Market Partnership • Sustainable Tourism • Town and City Regeneration • Vacant to Vibrant Scheme • Innovation Hub
Corporate Priority 2	Environmental	Reduce carbon emissions as we transition to net zero	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste Management • Digital and Physical Infrastructure • Estate Management • Tree Planting Strategy • Management of Outdoor Spaces • Local Development Plan • Litter Control and Enforcement • Sustainable Waste Resources Strategy • Sustainable Energy Management Strategy
Corporate Priority 3	Social	Improving wellbeing through social inclusion and reduced inequality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sport, leisure and outdoor recreation • Active travel • Environmental Health • Community Development • Neighbourhood Environment • Good Relations • Leisure Strategy • Placemaking

Existing KPI Number	Performance Measures Should include improvement actions outlined in Section 4 and relevant measures both existing and new.	Is the KPI Mandatory/ Statutory/ Service-led	Reporting frequency (6 Monthly/ Year-end)	Outcomes and Priorities to be mapped to KPIs on Ideagen		KPI to be included in Performance Improvement Plan	2026/27 Reporting						
							2024/25 Actual	2025/26 Target	2025/26 YTD End of H1	2026/27 Target	Reporting end of H1 Target	Reporting end of H2 Target	Cumulative/ Fixed
	% Spend against budget	Mandatory	6 Monthly	7	Economic	N/A		100%		100%	100%	100%	Fixed
	% Staff attendance	Mandatory	Yearly	7	Economic	N/A		95%		95%	-	95%	Fixed
	% of completed Employee Appraisals	Mandatory	Yearly	7	Economic	N/A		95%		95%	-	95%	Fixed
NEW	Adherence to annual target for CO2 reduction within our Estate 2026/27	Service Led	Year end	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 Additional Outcomes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Economic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social Additional Priorities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	n/a	n/a	n/a	On schedule	On schedule	On schedule	Fixed
NEW	Car park estate inspected as per schedule to identify and prioritise key issues	Service Led	6 monthly	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Economic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	No	n/a	n/a	n/a	On schedule	On schedule	On schedule	Fixed
	Carry out regular refurbishment projects across the estate. We will ensure our facilities are maintained to an acceptable standard. Refurbishments carried out according to the schedule.	Service Led	6 monthly	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Economic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	On schedule	On schedule	On schedule	Fixed
	To retain satisfactory outcome of Designated Persons annual audit of safety systems at our Harbours	KPI by Type	Year end	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> Economic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	No	n/a	Yes	n/a	Yes	Yes	Yes	Fixed

3. What Services/ Activities will be stopped

Please add detail of KPI's that have previously been monitored that will no longer be reported on for 2026/27.

What service/ activities will we be stopping/ changing in 2026/2027	Reason for stopping / changing activity	Savings	Impact on Performance	Impact on the Public	Impact on staffing
Set milestones for energy reduction in order to meet our 2030 target.	Milestones now set and annual KPI will be in place	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Implementation of the action plan arising from the Sustainable Energy Management Strategy	The outworkings of the strategy will be monitored via the CO2 reduction target above.	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
To implement the Service transformation outlined in section 4.	Transformation complete.	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
To provide update to Council on our Roadmap to Green fleet.	Update complete- regular reports will continue.	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

4. Reporting, Monitoring and Review

Provide detail below how this plan will be monitored and reviewed.

Monitoring Method	Frequency	Responsible Officer
Team Meeting	Monthly	HoST/ SUMs/ Line Managers
HoST	Quarterly	HoST
Standing Committee	6 Monthly	Directors and HoST
Performance Improvement Plan	Annually (30 th June)	Transformation Manager
Self-Assessment Report	Annually (30 th September)	Transformation Manager
Other		

PARKS & CEMETERIES SERVICE

SERVICE PLAN

01 April 2026 – 31 March 2027



**Ards and
North Down**
Borough Council

APPROVALS

Prepared By	Peer Reviewed By	Approved By
Stephen Daye	Peter Caldwell	Graeme Bannister
Head of Parks & Cemeteries	Head of Estates	Director of Environmental Services
30/10/2025	03/11/2025	07/11/2025

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Kiltonga Nature Reserve, Newtownards

1. Introduction to Service

The Parks and Cemeteries Service operates within the Environmental Services Directorate. The Service has responsibility for the maintenance and development of approximately 300 hectares of Parks and other open spaces including outdoor leisure facilities and burial grounds throughout the Borough. This also includes the maintenance of all sports facilities, play parks, greenways, amenity beaches and associated promenades along Council leased foreshore. In addition, the Parks and Cemeteries Service helps to enhance the appearance of the Borough through floral displays and other plantings at selected high-profile locations under its Ards and North Down in Bloom initiative. Seven of our facilities have received the Green Flag award. These are Castle Park, Londonderry Park, Kiltonga Nature Reserve, Linear Park, Ballymenoch Park, Clondeboye Cemetery & Cairn Wood. The Green Flag Award is an international certification which recognises parks and open spaces with excellence levels of maintenance, facilities and community involvement.



Parks & Cemetery Staff at the 2024 Business Planning Day

The work of the Parks and Cemeteries Service also helps to raise the profile of the Borough through external award schemes such as Green Flag, Ulster in Bloom and Best Kept Awards. The Service also has responsibility for the Council's statutory duty for biodiversity, the provision of allotments, play, outdoor recreation and sports grounds.

Other initiatives include creating improvement strategies such as 'Let's Grow Together' (a sustainable community food growing strategy) and a Tree & Woodland strategy with the **STAND4TREES** initiative that includes planting 15,000 trees per year. The Parks and Cemeteries Service carries out its activities on Council owned property and, in some cases, property owned by other agencies, for example DFI Roads roundabouts (with sponsorship income received) and strategic open space.

We work with our stakeholders to deliver a high quality, customer focused service supporting the local communities, while continuing to sustain and improve high standards of maintenance. We deliver high-quality standards of maintenance throughout the whole service area as well as achieving Green Flag Awards and In Bloom Awards and other external accolades. We maintain these successes and

continuous improvement against a backdrop of budget restraint. The knowledge and expertise of our professional teams enables us to deliver excellent levels of customer service, together with safe and secure facilities that rate highly with local people and visitors alike.



Parks & Cemetery Staff at Bangor Walled Garden in May 2025 celebrating the ten years anniversary of Ards & North Down Borough Council

The Parks and Cemeteries Service Plan will support the delivery of the 2024-2028 Corporate Plan's vision of creating a sustainable borough by focusing on the three Corporate Priorities: economic, environmental and social sustainability which will assist in:

- Boosting Economic Growth: Attracting businesses and generating employment within the Borough.
- Reducing Carbon Emissions: Advancing our transition towards a net zero future.
- Increasing Social Inclusion: Reducing inequalities and promoting social inclusion.

Council has agreed a transformation process for the Parks & Cemeteries Service and this required a restructuring exercise that would transform service delivery and realise longer term savings. The agreement to transform is being carried out under a three-stage approach i.e. Phase One - Performance Improvement Initiatives such as merging area units, creating improvement strategies, standardising and updating operating procedures and improving governance etc. Phase Two - Review and Restructure that achieves a radical move to a new service model that requires changes in our culture, structure, and management. A structural review of the Service

will be concluded in 2026/7; Phase Three - Transformation: we move to implement the key issues identified to ensure successful structural change and to realise additional savings, improved performance and excellent customer service. In 2025, the Council agreed a council wide transformation process, part of this decision included Outdoor Leisure moving to the Parks and Cemeteries Service, this transformation will continue into 2026.

2. Context, Challenges and Key Assumptions

Our ongoing transformation is already improving services and reducing our costs. In the next five years, with an improved structure in place to manage this transformation, the service will see a reduction in the cost to Council and build on the previous savings already achieved but with an improved customer focused service that will assist in achieving real differences in people's lives. The saving will be made up of efficiency revenue savings and a reduction in staffing costs plus income generation - this will be achieved by an improved structure, embracing volunteers and staff working smarter. To ensure this Service Plan is relevant we hold annual Business Planning Days in October and November for all our team, and this is reflected in the PESTLE analysis below.

2.1 PESTLE

Political

- Central Government cost pressures has impacted available funding for NI Executive, Government Departments and Stormont Assembly. This Challenging Environment includes increased taxes.
- The Stormont Assembly has many major decisions and strategies in the pipeline or delayed.
- Emerging strategies from Stormont are being developed including an 'Outdoor Recreation' bill, 'Right to Grow' Act and changes to Countryside Access legislation.
- The Department for Infrastructure (DfI) 'Active Travel Plan' can assist in transforming transport and recreational activities across the Borough.
- Brexit impact on the service with regard to the purchase of plants and materials from the UK have lessened following recent UK & EU agreements.
- The importance of open spaces for health and wellbeing as well as biodiversity needs to be recognised more at local and regional government and then translated into Strategies/Action Plans and funding stream.
- The polarising impacts of Climate Change and the associated 2022 Act has a toxifying impact on progressing change. And allows climate change to be viewed differently along the political spectrum.
- The delivery of consultation, projects etc need to be undertaken outside of election windows as far as possible.

Economical

- The UK government has introduced significant increases in employer national insurance, and this may have impacts on economic growth.
- Spending profiles and delivery timescales dictated by external funders creates a challenging environment and stress on team. Service unable to apply for funding due to Structural limitations and capacity issues.
- Local Authority expenditure is under increasing pressure with reduced central grant and expected low increases in the level of domestic rates, this means that our Service will have to increase income and minimise expenditure to achieve the highest possible levels of efficiency and effectiveness but still endeavour to meet increasing public expectations for service provision, while contributing to the Councils primary objective of growing the non-domestic rate base.
- Council needs to pursue external funding to fund service improvements. In many cases to be able to avail of funding opportunities, revenue spend is required to design up projects, conduct the necessary surveys, business cases and submit planning applications etc. Given that most funding opportunities are yearly, there is not sufficient time to be able to do the necessary enabling works and then deliver a capital project within the funding timelines. Recognition should be given to this issue, as on many occasions funding opportunities cannot be availed of due to the lack of having the enabling works in place etc.
- Areas of deprivation and low disposable income remains an issue for many, meaning families have less to spend. However, this in turn presents both opportunities and challenges for our (mostly free to use) outdoor facilities, as users move toward the less formal and more passive forms of outdoor activity.
- Establishing amenity monetary and social value of parks and other open spaces has become a priority locally, regionally and globally.

Social

- The work of our Service provides enhanced social cohesion and civic pride through the provision and development of quality connected green spaces. A volunteering and Friends group policy has been agreed by Council and is being implemented. This gives local people opportunities to play a role in their local park and socially engage with likeminded individuals. It is intended that such social engagement will have a beneficial impact upon social isolation within the Borough. Parks and Open Space are integral to supporting greater levels of health and wellbeing within the Borough and as such the Parks and Cemeteries Service will be developing programmes to encourage a greater level of engagement with the natural environment, play and recreation opportunities available. The Ards and North Down in Bloom initiative continues to promote wider community participation.

- The Service is committed to embedding the 5 Steps to Wellbeing (Take Notice, Keep Learning, Connect, Keep Active & Give) into all aspects of our Service and collaborating with other departments to ensure widespread uptake of the initiative.
- The Parks Development Business Unit continues to provide a series of events programmed around wellbeing, trees, biodiversity, community growing, allotments, play and recreation. This programme will be further refined and expanded upon going forward.
- The Ards and North Down in Bloom initiative has been developed with three overlapping objectives which are: horticultural excellence, community participation and environmentally sustainable practices.
- The Ards and North Down in Bloom Community Competitions encourages everyone who lives or works in the Borough to think about their local environment and how attractive flowers, plants, trees and gardens can enhance it.
- By actively supporting this competition they will not only make their garden or business more attractive but also contribute to the Borough's entry to the Translink Ulster in Bloom Competition and other regional awards.
- Service engagement regarding the Corporate Plan has been emphasised and this works well with the structural changes that are in the process of being implemented within the Parks and Cemeteries Service. Empowering our stakeholders to take an active role in the Service is vital to ensure a sustainable future for Parks and Cemeteries. The lessons learnt around the erosion of community support for the implementation of the capital projects and ambitions, highlights the costs of not engaging.
- Currently provision for young people consists almost entirely of facilities such as skate parks, MUGA, and grass pitches etc. These are seen as meeting the needs of all young people when in fact they are places dominated by boys.
- The initiative 'Make Space for Girls' and the University of Leeds 2022 report Safer Parks 'Improving access for Women & Girls' highlights the need to reexamine our service provision.
- Cultural and demographic trends, for example an ageing population may increase or decrease demand or take up of a particular service. Or if the profile of the local population is changing this may affect the need for translation services or other equal access considerations.
- Increasingly the Social Return on Investment of our Service has become an important factor, and this provides a principled approach that can be used to measure and account for a broad concept of value within Council's parks and cemeteries. It enables the social, environmental and economic benefits that a service or activity delivers to be calculated and monetised.

Technological

- The maintenance practices adopted by our Service are constantly subject to review following the introduction of new machinery, stricter safety limits, and advances in sports surfaces such as 3G and other synthetic surfaces.

Additionally, new supply products on the market influence how the service is delivered.

- In 2026/7 we will continue to progress the phased implementation our monitoring software (PSS Ultimate), this mobile reporting app ensures the complete management of our teams and tasks, workload and priorities.
- A proactive Machinery and Plant Replacement & Utilisation Strategy continues to be implemented across the service. This provides the scope to include the consideration of technical innovations in replacing aged equipment including the use of more electric based equipment. This in turn will create better efficiencies across the service. PSS Equipment Module will also be utilised to improve efficiency and compliance.
- In 2026/7 we will continue to progress the phased implementation our cemetery software (PlotBox) and a move towards a more efficient paperless administration system and online burial bookings etc.
- Council is using Treeconomics to better understand the value of all council owned/maintained trees and has produced a Tree Asset Valuation that quantifies and highlights the ecosystem services provided by our trees.
- A proposed new website/online processes will create new opportunities to engage with our customers.
- Grants Management systems for whole council to be implemented late 2026. Looking at innovative solutions via pilot.

Legal

- Future EU legislation including further restrictions relating to artificial surfaces.
- The Service operates under several statutory regulations. Statutory obligations in relation to Climate Change mitigation and adaption, Biodiversity Net Gain and Carbon NET Zero targets will increase demands on our service provision.
- Given the many important national and European designations within the Borough, certain services elements require NIEA approval and robust Habitat Regulations Assessments.
- The Burial Ground Regulations (NI) 1992 present significant challenges to the burials service in terms of dealing with historical burial issues and potential future developments and public expectations.
- Legislative changes in pesticide control products will have a significant bearing on the delivery of certain service elements including weed control and the use of insecticides. The service takes account of this and reviews our practices to include alternative weed and pest control methods, and this is reflected with an agreed policy change agreed by Council in 2021 and updated in 2024.
- Changing categories of vehicle omissions for procurement.

Environmental

- Surfacing treatments included in capital projects needs to be carefully considered to ensure that minimal maintenance is required in terms of weed control etc as herbicide use is reduced.
- The impact of changing environmental and climactic patterns will continue to be significant and the Service will need to take this into consideration and can adapt as a result.
- A major challenge for the Borough is the impact of coastal erosion, with our coastline being the longest of any Council in Northern Ireland, we expect this to have more of an impact than Councils with more limited coastline.
- Coastal erosion impacts many areas managed by the Service including amenity beaches and coastal paths. Possible coastal strategy underway at regional level.
- The Natural Capital of our greenspaces will put a cost to our Parks and other open spaces.
- Our Service has received significant internal funding to implement the new Local Biodiversity Action Plan. The Biodiversity Unit is under significant pressure to deliver on both internal and external projects which require advice and appropriate assessment processes i.e. Habitat Regulation Assessments.
- Our Service continues to progress electrification of its equipment and will be trialling robotic machinery including lawnmowers. Climate issues within the new Corporate Plan have been emphasised and this works well with the structural changes that are to be implemented with Parks and Cemeteries Service.
- Identification of land for our tree planting ambitions will become a major impact if new land cannot be purchased.
- Council is a key delivery partner along with the Department for Infrastructure in developing and the delivery of Active Travel solutions such as Greenways in the Borough, which contributes to wider environmental targets associated with the Climate Act.
- Conflicts between the environmental protection offered by legislation such as Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI) and other interests primarily arise from tensions between conservation goals and economic development, land use practices, and infrastructure projects.

2.2 SWOT

A SWOT analysis helps to interpret the findings of the PESTLE analysis to determine the Service strengths and weaknesses, and opportunities and threats. As it is important, as a part of the internal focus, to conduct the SWOT analysis prior to completing our business plan.

The SWOT analysis below was completed during a staff business planning day in October 2025 and highlights the future challenges which our Service will face.

Strengths

- Profile of Parks & Cemeteries Service within the public and media is high.
- The Corporate Plan with a strong focus on sustainability.
- Commitment to the Roadmap to Sustainability by incorporating sustainable practices with the service.
- Commitment to Climate Adaptation Plan
- Strategies such as the Local Biodiversity Action Plan, Play, Tree & Woodland, Lets Grow Together and 5 Steps to Wellbeing etc have successfully refocussed the Parks & Cemeteries Service and ensured linkages to the Corporate Plan and other local, regional, national and international strategies.
- Heritage/historic interest and distinct character of the sites.
- Highly skilled workforce with apprentices in place.
- Excellent service delivery quality, recognised through awards.
- Strategy in place to replace machinery and move towards electric.
- Provision of community participation and engagement through Friends Groups, Stakeholders & Volunteers.
- Delivery of a sensitive and efficient Cemetery Service.
- Broad range of recreation opportunities within the facility portfolio.
- Working closely with others to building strong relationships.
- A curated programme of events including play, recreation and biodiversity helps to animate our parks and open spaces and encourage greater usage of them and aid social cohesion and health and wellbeing.
- Addition of Outdoor Leisure to Parks and Cemeteries service will bring efficiencies in management and stakeholder engagement.

Weaknesses

- Cemetery Provision and alternative solutions with a failure to plan for our future cemetery provision.
- Lack of resources to seek additional external funding
- Lack of resources to manage revenue and capital projects
- Criticism of Coastal Management
- Office and other staff facilities are not fit for purpose and do not aid collaborative working.
- Lack of available data on impacts of climate change to allow for planning and response.
- Although sickness levels have improved they continue to be challenging but moving closer to Council average.
- Need enabling revenue budget to realise capital funding available.
- Historic inconsistencies with the service Standard Operating Procedures.
- Some parks have limited ecological value, requiring new management techniques such as rewilding.

- Limited variety and consistency of sites within the geography of the Borough.
- Failing park infrastructure including street furniture, paths, fencing etc.
- Need to further explore the potential play and recreation opportunities at our sites as well as identifying new ones.
- Embracing sustainable transport and reducing staff car parking.
- Connected greenways and cycle routes to promote Active Travel.
- Identify need in underrepresented communities.
- Delays in getting allocated contractor works carried out.
- Difficulties surrounding how we maintain our horticultural areas.

Opportunities

- Social value of our greenspaces is being trialled and requires further investigation in order to better measure and value the social benefits of green spaces and address existing inequalities in access.
- Corporate transformation project is underway.
- Greater collaboration across teams and wider organisation.
- Taking a Natural Capital approach to Parks & Cemeteries, development of a green infrastructure plan.
- Our service has a strong role to play in both climate mitigation and adaption.
- Council has introduced policies to develop Apprenticeships, Traineeships and Volunteering.
- The initiative 'Make Space for Girls' and the University of Leeds 2022 report Safer Parks 'Improving access for Women & Girls' highlights the need to reexamine our service provision and design guides.
- Grow our Friends Groups and engagement with communities
- Further develop and grow our volunteering opportunities.
- Increase the use of open space through events and activities.
- Commercialisation activities to reduce ratepayer burden.
- Creating an enabling revenue budget to realise internal capital funding.
- Maximise potential of our coastal locations.
- National political awareness and benefits of Parks & Open Spaces highlighted after Covid.
- Valued as a community asset for fundraising, community work, exercise, and well-being.
- Improve attractiveness of borough as a tourist destination through provision of park and open space activities.
- Increase recreation across the Borough with additional infrastructure such as Trails and Greenways.
- Alternative burial provision needs to be explored to meet sustainability of burial provision.
- Provide additional memorial garden facilities within the Borough.
- Use of the LBAP to increase biodiversity net gain.
- National and local drive on climate adaption strategies highlighting value of parks and open spaces and potential investment opportunities.

- Recognition of the importance of outdoor spaces for Health and Wellbeing purposes. Increase opportunities for everyone to cycle with regular Park Pedal events
- Provide access to inclusive bikes at Bangor Sportsplex .
- Engagement around our Sand Dunes & Coastlines for both biodiversity and building climate resilient communities.
- Opportunities to extend the usage of Sports Pavilions.

Threats

- Limited availability of future grave provision in key locations.
- Aging workforce leading to increased sickness.
- Loss of skills base due to recruitment and retention challenges.
- Unmanageable public expectations on service provision.
- Lack of resources to increase capital funding availability and miss grant funding opportunities.
- Change in political priorities due to an uncertain regional local government environment and national general election.
- Future uncertain statutory obligations to climate change, biodiversity and carbon NET zero targets, has divided political opinion.
- Non availability of external funding such as lottery funds specific to parks and open spaces.
- Economic downturn leading to increased visitor numbers to freely accessible facilities.
- Climate change will increase flooding, storms etc impacting service provision and facilities.
- Lack of investment in social support provision impacts our facilities and increases vandalism and anti-social behaviour.
- Recruitment of skilled and experienced staff.
- Clarity over process of Legionella management.

3. Strategic Objectives and Collaboration

In our Corporate Plan 2024-2028 Within our new Corporate Plan 2024-2028 we have a vision of *A Sustainable Borough*. One where Economic, Environmental and Social Wellbeing are linked and in which we, as a Council, make decisions about policies, services, investments and resources that balance the demands of each.

By doing so we can positively impact the people and the assets in our Borough and play a part in addressing some of the world's most pressing problems e.g. poverty, inequality, depletion of natural resources, climate change, economic growth etc.

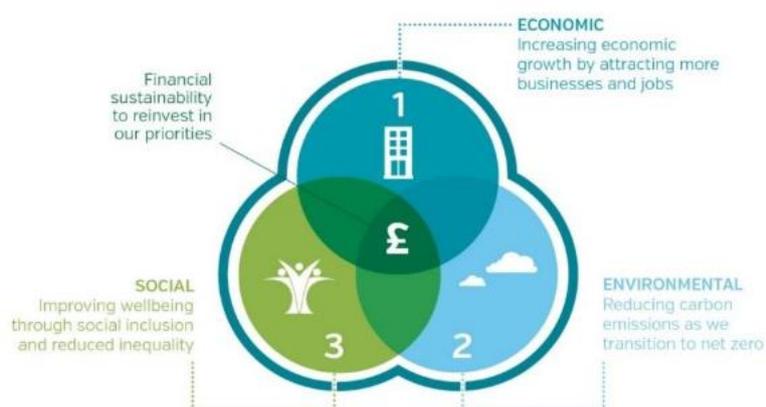
In brief, *A Sustainable Borough* is one where we make sure that we think about economic, social and environmental impacts when we make decisions.

The three priorities we will be delivering against are:

- **ECONOMIC** - increasing economic growth by attracting more jobs and businesses
- **ENVIRONMENTAL** - reducing carbon emissions as we transition to net zero
- **SOCIAL** - improving wellbeing through social inclusion and reduced inequality

These priorities align with the three pillars of sustainable development. They are ambitious, and we will need to work in partnership and collaborate to achieve them.

The diagram below summarises our three Corporate Priorities and shows how they all link together. As you will see at the heart of the diagram is our commitment to address the key issue of our financial sustainability – as without that, we will be less able to deliver on all our ambitions.



We have also identified **seven outcomes** that we want to achieve to meet our priorities. They are (not in order of priority):

1. An engaged Borough with citizens and businesses who have opportunities to influence the delivery of services, plans and investment
2. An environmentally sustainable and resilient Council and Borough meeting our net zero carbon targets
3. A thriving and sustainable economy
4. A vibrant, attractive, sustainable Borough for citizens, visitors, businesses and investors
5. Safe, welcoming and inclusive communities that are flourishing
6. Opportunities for people to be active and healthy
7. Ards and North Down Borough Council is a high performing organisation

The Parks & Cemeteries Service Vision is: “Creating an environment for communities to flourish”. This vision was agreed in 2022 and reflects a move away from a service

fixated with processes, to a more people-based service that is delivering corporate and community outcomes and building trust with our stakeholders.

Our Service Delivery Framework

- 1. A Fit for Purpose Structure:** that promotes innovation, flexibility, and responsiveness: the new structure is flatter, the merging of posts will give clearer responsibility lines and promote greater independent working. The new development team has been created to focus on developing and providing a better service. The structure also removes structural silos with clearer management roles with significantly less units which means less depots saving on resources. Standard Operating Procedures strengthens governance and ensures the most effective distribution of resources among the various units.
- 2. Developing the Future Workforce:** The merging of posts will give greater responsibilities to staff at all levels and encourage cultural change that embraces shared authority and decision-making. The use of Task & Finish groups has not only identified saving and improved service but given confidence to our team to know that all voices are heard and listened too. Management is committed to improving sustainability knowledge training and is rolling out actions that will complement the Councils wider Appraisal system. It is acknowledged that work is required to promote opportunities for development both internally and externally. Retention strategies and clear career pathways are required to ensure staff morale is high, creating an environment where staff can reach their full potential. Apprenticeships within the service have continued to grow and an intensive training programme will ensure the workforce is future proofed.
- 3. An Active Role in Climate Recovery, Biodiversity Gain & Sustainability:** The service will play an essential role in both climate mitigation (meeting our net zero obligations) and climate adaptation. By changes in our operations through reduced carbon emission of fleet, plant and equipment we are reducing levels of CO2 created by our service. This is and will continue to be achieved through electrification of equipment, more efficient plant and machinery, use of renewables, staff training, or simple changes to how often we mow – all will contribute towards the service meeting the Northern Ireland wide target of net zero by 2050.

Parks and other green spaces can sequester carbon contributing directly to a reduction in atmospheric CO2 concentrations. Through our strategies such as the Tree & Woodland Strategy, and its target for tree planting, and the Grassland Management Strategy and its ambitious rewilding targets, we can ensure we maximise the amount of carbon we can absorb from the atmosphere. Data has already been gathered for our tree stock for the quantity of carbon that can be removed and stored from the atmosphere.

The 'peat free' campaign also ensures we and our stakeholders are leaving peat in the ground to continue to further absorb carbon. Green spaces also play a crucial role in climate adaptation by mitigating the impacts of extreme weather events like heatwaves and flooding, regulating temperatures through shade, improving air quality and managing stormwater runoff, essential for making places more resilient to climate change. We will continue to manage and increase our Green Space provision to protect the borough from these ever increasingly frequent and extreme weather scenarios. The Council Climate Adaptation has several actions within our Service area to support in the contribution to adaptation and resilience.

The Local Biodiversity Action Plan key focus areas are Education and Awareness, Research and Monitoring, Land Management and Building Partnerships. The objectives are to conserve, protect and enhance habitats and species, raise awareness and work with our communities and key stakeholders to improve biodiversity. Many of our habitats are at severe risk, mostly by human activity. Only by working with communities can we instil the behaviours and take the action needed to create and enhance biodiversity and achieve Biodiversity Net Gain.

The development of the Cycling Masterplan will enable greater connectivity and promotion of Active Solutions for people to help reduce carbon emissions.

4. **Embrace Changes in Environmental Law & Good Practice:** Our Service is driven by both legislative requirements and an ambition to go beyond just compliance but to deliver best practice. Northern Ireland's first Environmental Improvement Plan was published in September 2024 and forms the basis for an effective set of interventions to deliver real improvements for the environment whilst making social and economic gains as well. This high-level plan with six strategic outcomes sets a direction of travel for all future actions, plans, targets and strategies that this council and our service will support and contribute towards.

Changes on chemical usage, emissions and invasive species will challenge how services are delivered, and this will involve discussions with stakeholders and promoting new ways of maintaining the infrastructure. The focus this year will continue to be the legislation on the ban on micro-plastics and its future impacts on 3G pitches, play parks and other recreational facilities. Our pesticide reduction strategy is assisting the Service to significantly decrease glyphosate application and finding innovative ways to remove weeds when appropriate to do so.

5. **Stakeholder Engagement, Embracing Citizenship & Volunteers:** increasing stakeholder involvement, collaboration and partnership with communities, volunteers, businesses, external organisations in government and the third sector. A 'Friends of' policy is being implemented, and the Service has

resources and an Engagement Officer to expand this and ensure our stakeholders have a part to play in managing our local parks.

Volunteering has been successfully implemented in the Bangor Walled Garden with twelve volunteers in place assisting our horticultural team. Consistent engagement needs to be the key to maintain our relationship with our stakeholders and always building trust in how we management important community assets. The Council Volunteering Policy is scheduled for review and this is an opportunity for our Service to shape the new document.

Greater engagement with local people and especially young people has been established by the Development team in relation to play, recreation and outdoor leisure provision and increased opportunities on the new greenways and existing community trails.

6. **Bringing the Parks back to life with Events and Activities:** the development team are in a strong position to deliver quality events and activities that encourages active use of our spaces. The provision of quality infrastructure such as improved trails, greenways and play facilities will also enable recreation activities to occur passively. In 2026, our delivery of events and activities will be expanded and upon previous years of community involvement. Significant investing in our open spaces is underway in multiple projects including Greenways, Play Parks and the successful delivery and continued delivery of the Ward Park project.
7. **Embracing Digital Efficiencies:** digital solutions such as PlotBox have already made marked service performance and customer service improvements. PSS Ultimate was introduced in 2025, and this will improve monitoring of service provision. In 2026 we will continue to improve robotic and remote-control equipment to redirect staff to other duties, this will also complement our move towards electrification. The use of GIS has ensured efficiencies within many areas of our service including bin collections, invasive species management etc. Council is using software such as Treeconomics to better understand the value of all council owned/maintained trees and produced a Tree Asset Valuation that quantifies and highlights the ecosystem services provided by our trees. Having an evidence-based understanding of our trees can help council to make informed and strategic management decisions. We are also planning to extend the digital mapping all of our trails so that people can virtually walk the route to see if it would be suitable for them prior to travelling to the site. We will be supporting the transition to online centralised grants management system for whole council.
8. **Actively Pursuing Income Generation & Commercialization:** The Parks & Cemeteries Service introduced a roundabout sponsorship policy in October 2022, and this and other income generating initiatives will continue to assist our move towards reducing our Gross to NET budget ratio and in turn reduce the burden on ratepayers. A wider Sponsorship Policy was agreed by Council in

2024. Other initiatives will be progressed in 2026/7 including expanding our sponsorship opportunities beyond roundabouts, vendor contracts, licencing, mobile saunas, paid events and expanding our cemetery memorial income opportunities.

On completion of the service and corporate structural review the Service intends to review the above vision and service delivery framework in 2026/27.



Strategic Objectives and Collaboration

The table below reflects the key projects/objectives that will be achieved by our Service over the next twelve months, and the key Services across the Council that will be collaborated with as part of the process. In addition, each objective is linked to the Corporate Plan priorities and outcomes.

Strategic Objective	Collaboration Required	Corporate Plan Priority	Corporate Plan Outcome
A Fit for Purpose Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR • Transformation • Finance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic • Environmental • Social 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 • 7
Developing the Future Workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic • Social 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 • 6 • 7
An Active Role in Climate Recovery, Biodiversity Gain & Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate and Community Planning • Transformation • Estates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic • Environmental • Social 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 • 2 • 4 • 5 • 7
Embrace Changes in Environmental Law & Good Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 • 2
Stakeholder Engagement, Embracing Citizenship & Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Planning • Leisure • Communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic • Environmental • Social 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 • 5 • 6

<p>Bringing the Parks back to life with Events and Activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism • Administration • Leisure • Communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental • Social 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 • 5 • 6
<p>Embracing Digital Efficiencies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Services • Transformation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7
<p>Actively Pursuing Income Generation & Commercialization</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications • Lands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 • 7
<p>Continue trialling Social Value initiatives within the Service.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leisure • Environmental Health • Community Planning • Transformation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic • Environmental • Social 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 • 4 • 6 • 7
<p>Embedding the 5 Steps to Wellbeing into all aspects of our Service and collaborating with other departments to ensure widespread uptake of the initiative internal and externally.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leisure • Environmental Health • Community Planning • Transformation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic • Environmental • Social 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 • 4 • 5 • 6 • 7

4. Service Improvement

In the table below, service improvement activities are included in this section and are detailed in Section 6 of this document.

Service Development/ Improvement 2026/27	Which of the specified aspects will this improve?	Rationale	Responsible Officer(s)	Who do we need to help us? (Internal and/ or External partners)
Implement and embed the Parks and Cemeteries Transformation and Restructuring Business Case including Outdoor Leisure	Efficiency	Following agreement by Council for the transformation of Parks and Cemeteries Service, embedding a new structure is vital to ensure the transformation objectives are met. The inclusion of Outdoor Leisure within the Service needs bedding in.	Head of Service	HR Finance Transformation
Report annually on progress towards the 'Benchmark Standard for Community Growing and Allotment Provision': that Council aims to complete by 2028, in collaboration with other public bodies, to provide 1250sqm (0.3 acres) of community growing space per 1,000 households.	Sustainability	The 'Benchmark Standard for Community Growing and Allotment Provision' is a key Corporate Plan requirement and a wider Northern Ireland initiative that complements the Councils own strategies such as 'Let's Grow Together' (a sustainable community food growing strategy for the Borough), 'Roadmap to Sustainability'.	Development Manager	Lands Community Planning Departments
Report annually on progress towards building on our Service being Climate Change	Sustainability	Our parks and other greenspaces will become a 'Climate Change Ready' enabler. Our climate change adaptation actions and policies will ensure our Service assists the	Head of Service	Corporate Community Planning

Service Development/ Improvement 2026/27	Which of the specified aspects will this improve?	Rationale	Responsible Officer(s)	Who do we need to help us? (Internal and/ or External partners)
ready with actions and policies in place to assist wider Corporate Strategies.	Innovation	Council in being prepared for a changing climate by taking action to reduce the potential impacts of climate change to our staff, our users/customers, the green infrastructure we manage and the natural environment.		Climate Manager NET Zero Board
Build on the 2025/6 Social Value trial within the Service and associated projects and schemes.	Service Improvement Innovation Service Quality	Using the principles of social value to create a platform to deliver long term societal impact and creating a greater understanding about the structural features in our management systems and structures that can be used to normalise and de-risk the process of creating more inclusive parks and similar spaces.	Head of Service	Transformation Community Planning Procurement Local Communities & Businesses
Continue to develop new revenue generation initiatives that improves and expands our services whilst reducing ratepayer burden.	Efficiency Service Improvement	Following agreement by Council for the transformation of Parks and Cemeteries Service, there was a commitment to reduce Service costs, and this is being met with improved income targets that reduces the cost burden on ratepayers. However, this is also an opportunity to improve services within our facilities including Outdoor Leisure.	Head of Service	Corporate Business Community Communications

Service Development/ Improvement 2026/27	Which of the specified aspects will this improve?	Rationale	Responsible Officer(s)	Who do we need to help us? (Internal and/ or External partners)
Create an innovative programme that delivers over 100 events and activities within our Parks and open spaces that delivers internal strategies and the broader corporate strategic objectives.	Service Improvement Innovation Service Quality	The importance of Parks and Open Spaces as a place for people to enjoy active lifestyles and increase their health and wellbeing and to increase biodiversity is ever increasing and the Service can play an active role in facilitating these activities.	Development Manager	Communications Estates Tourism External providers/facilitators
Report to Committee on the Embedding of the 5 Steps to Wellbeing into all aspects of our Service and collaborating with other departments to ensure widespread uptake of the initiative internal and externally.	Service Improvement Innovation Service Quality	Council is committed to the PHA's 5 Steps to Wellbeing (Take Notice, Keep Learning, Connect, Keep Active & Give) initiative. Internally: organisations perform better when their staff are healthy, motivated and focused. Externally: through initiatives, activities and programmes our Service with our partners can deliver achievable community and corporate goals.	Head of Service	Public Health Authority Environmental Health Leisure
Create an a Parks & Cemeteries Strategy for the Borough and report to Council.	Service Improvement Innovation Service Quality	Create a document that challenges the service and brings an overarching narrative to existing strategies and policies.	Head of Service	Transformation Communications

5. Service Risks Register

The Parks & Cemeteries Service Risk Register is aligned with the Corporate Risk Management Strategy. When completing our Service Plan we reviewed and considered our current Service Risk Register and can confirm this has been completed. **Yes**

6. Key Activities (KPIs) for 2026/27

When completing our Service Plan we have ensured that the Service development/ improvements detailed above are included as KPIs.

Performance Measures <small>Should include improvement actions outlined above and relevant measures both existing and new.</small>	Is the KPI Mandatory/ Statutory/ Service led	Reporting frequency (6 Monthly/ Year-end)	Outcome	Corporate Priority	2026/27 Reporting						
					2024/25 Actual	2025/26 Target	2025/26 YTD End of Q3	2026/27 Target	Reporting Six Monthly	Reporting Year-End'	Cumulative or Fixed
Spend against budget within 5% of total	Mandatory	6 Monthly	7. Ards and North Down Borough Council is a high performing organisation	Economic – Economic growth to focus on attracting more businesses and jobs	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	Fixed
% Staff attendance (95% Target)	Mandatory	Annual	7. Ards and North Down Borough Council is a high performing organisation	Economic – Economic growth to focus on attracting more businesses and jobs	94%	94%	94%	95%		95%	Fixed
% of completed Employee Appraisals in the period September 2026 to March 2027	Mandatory	6 Monthly	7. Ards and North Down Borough Council is a high performing organisation	Social – Social inclusion and reduced inequalities	100%	95%	98%	95%	95%	95%	Fixed
Implement and embed the new Parks and Cemeteries Structures	Service Led	6 Monthly	7. Ards and North Down Borough Council is a high	Economic – Economic growth to focus on attracting more	n/a	Project under way	Project under way	100%	100%	100%	Fixed

Performance Measures <small>Should include improvement actions outlined above and relevant measures both existing and new.</small>	Is the KPI Mandatory/ Statutory/ Service led	Reporting frequency (6 Monthly/ Year-end)	Outcome	Corporate Priority	2026/27 Reporting						
					2024/25 Actual	2025/26 Target	2025/26 YTD End of Q3	2026/27 Target	Reporting Six Monthly	Reporting Year-End	Cumulative or Fixed
			performing organisation	businesses and jobs							
Seven Green Flag Awards Obtained. (PIP Objective)	Service Led	Annual	2. We are an environmentally sustainable and resilient Council and Borough	Environmental – Reduction of carbon emissions to net zero	7	7	7	7		7	Fixed
Establish and Maintain five 'Friends of Groups. (PIP Objective)	Service Led	Annual	5. We have socially sustainable communities that are safe and welcoming	Social – Social inclusion and reduced inequalities	2	5	5	5		5	Fixed
Investment of £37,000 in funding for In Bloom Projects. (PIP Objective)	Service Led	Annual	4. We have a vibrant, attractive, sustainable Borough for citizens, visitors,	Social – Social inclusion and reduced inequalities	21,000	£26,000	£22,472	37,000		37,000	Fixed
100% of available allotments utilised.	Service Led	Annual	6. We have active and healthy people	Social – Social inclusion and reduced inequalities	100%	100%	100%	100%		100%	Fixed
Providing annual report of progressing corporate action of 1,250sqm (0.125ha) of community growing space per 10,000 households by 2028. (PIP Objective)	Service Led	Annual	5. We have socially sustainable communities that are safe and welcoming	Social – Social inclusion and reduced inequalities	n/a	100%	100%	100%		100%	Fixed

Performance Measures <small>Should include improvement actions outlined above and relevant measures both existing and new.</small>	Is the KPI Mandatory/ Statutory/ Service led	Reporting frequency (6 Monthly/ Year-end)	Outcome	Corporate Priority	2026/27 Reporting						
					2024/25 Actual	2025/26 Target	2025/26 YTD End of Q3	2026/27 Target	Reporting Six Monthly	Reporting Year-End*	Cumulative or Fixed
Achieve five Bloom/ Best Kept Awards. (PIP Objective)	Service Led	Annual	1. We have an engaged Borough with citizens and businesses who have	Social – Social inclusion and reduced inequalities	4	4	8	5		5	Fixed
Maintain 132,000m2 of rewilded council land under Grassland Management Strategy. (PIP Objective)	Service Led	Annual	2. We are an environmentally sustainable and resilient Council and Borough	Environmental – Reduction of carbon emissions to net zero	120,000	130,000	132,000	132,000		132,000	Fixed
Plant 15,000 trees as part of the STAND4TREES Initiative. (PIP Objective)	Service Led	Annual	2. We are an environmentally sustainable and resilient Council and Borough	Environmental – Reduction of carbon emissions to net zero	15,532	15,000	15,000	15,000		15,000	Fixed
100 Community Projects Organised. (PIP Objective)	Service Led	6 Monthly	5. We have socially sustainable communities that are safe and welcoming	Social – Social inclusion and reduced inequalities	40	70	70	100	70	100	Cumulative
Maintain low levels of herbicide used (litres) in council land.	Service Led	Annual	2. We are an environmentally sustainable and resilient Council and Borough	Environmental – Reduction of carbon emissions to net zero	130	130	130	130		130	Fixed
Annual Parks & Cemeteries Business Planning Day organised.	Service Led	Annual	7. Ards and North Down Borough Council is a high performing organisation	Economic – Economic growth to focus on attracting more businesses and jobs	100%	100%	100%	100%		100%	Fixed

Performance Measures <small>Should include improvement actions outlined above and relevant measures both existing and new.</small>	Is the KPI Mandatory/ Statutory/ Service led	Reporting frequency (6 Monthly/ Year-end)	Outcome	Corporate Priority	2026/27 Reporting						
					2024/25 Actual	2025/26 Target	2025/26 YTD End of Q3	2026/27 Target	Reporting Six Monthly	Reporting Year-End*	Cumulative or Fixed
Monthly Staff Performance Improvement Meetings organised	Service Led	6 Monthly	7. Ards and North Down Borough Council is a high performing organisation	Economic – Economic growth to focus on attracting more businesses and jobs	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	Fixed
Continue to develop new revenue generation initiatives including rolling out mobile sauna business placements.	Service Led	Annual	7. Ards and North Down Borough Council is a high performing organisation	Economic – Economic growth to focus on attracting more businesses and jobs	n/a	100%	100%	100%	0	100%	Fixed
Report annually on progress towards building on our Service being Climate Change Ready with actions and policies in place to assist wider Corporate Strategies.	Service Led	Annual	2. We are an environmentally sustainable and resilient Council and Borough	Environmental – Reduction of carbon emissions to net zero	n/a	100%	100%	100%	0	100%	Fixed
Build on the trail Social Value initiative and report to Council Committee. (PIP Objective)	Service Led	Annual	1. We have an engaged Borough with citizens and businesses who have	Social – Social inclusion and reduced inequalities	n/a	100%	100%	100%	0	100%	Fixed
Embed 5 Steps to Wellbeing into all aspects of our Service with 20 (5 internal & 15 external) focussed information sessions, activities and programmes delivered.	Service Led	6 Monthly	6. We have active and healthy people	Social – Social inclusion and reduced inequalities	n/a	20	21	20	10	20	Cumulative

Performance Measures Should include improvement actions outlined above and relevant measures both existing and new.	Is the KPI Mandatory/ Statutory/ Service led	Reporting frequency (6 Monthly/ Year-end)	Outcome	Corporate Priority	2026/27 Reporting						
					2024/25 Actual	2025/26 Target	2025/26 YTD End of Q3	2026/27 Target	Reporting Six Monthly	Reporting Year-End	Cumulative or Fixed
Create a Parks & Cemeteries Strategy for the Borough and report to Council. (PIP Objective)	Service Led	Annual	7. Ards and North Down Borough Council is a high performing organisation	Economic – Economic growth to focus on attracting more businesses and jobs	n/a	n/a	n/a	100%		100%	Fixed

7. What Services/ Activities will be stopped

Detail of KPI's that have previously been monitored that will no longer be reported on for 2026/27 are detailed below.

What service/ activities will we be stopping/ changing in 2026/2027	Reason for stopping / changing activity	Savings	Impact on Performance	Impact on the Public	Impact on staffing
None					

8. Reporting, Monitoring and Review

Below is how this Service Plan will be monitored and reviewed.

Monitoring Method	Frequency	Responsible Officer
Team Meeting	Monthly	HoS/ SUMs/ Line Managers
Staff Business Planning Day (changing in 2026 to October)	Annual	All Staff
HoST	Quarterly	HoS
Standing Committee	6 Monthly	HoS

Performance Improvement Plan	Annually (June)	Transformation Manager
Self-Assessment Report	Annually (September)	Transformation Manager

WASTE AND CLEANSING

Service Plan: 01 April 2026 – 31 March 2027



Ards and
North Down
Borough Council

APPROVALS

Prepared By	Peer Reviewed By	Approved By Director
Ian Frazer Jenna Frazer Alastair Kerr	Peter Caldwell	Graeme Bannister
Waste Collection Services Manager Waste Resources and Contract Manager Borough Cleansing Services Manager	Head of Estates	Director of Environmental Services
03/11/2025	03/11/2025	07/11/2025

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1. Introduction to Service

Name of Service	Waste and Cleansing
Directorate	Environmental Services
Introduction and Reflection	<p><i>The primary function of the services is to ensure the effective management of municipal solid waste produced within the Borough, to protect the local environment. Secondly, the Council has a statutory duty under the Litter (NI) Order and the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act, to keep adopted streets and roads clean and free from litter.</i></p> <p><i>The new HRC booking system was introduced in September 2023 and this has helped to manage and control household waste received through the HRCs. This has contributed positively to both the recycling rate and the reduction in overall waste arisings.</i></p> <p><i>Traffic management regulations continue to create difficulties for Street Cleansing services in respect of litter and detritus clearance on high-speed roads (>30mph speed limit). The requirement to provide traffic management plans, road and lane closures adds significantly to costs, especially where temporary road closures are restricted to weekends incurring additional overtime costs.</i></p> <p><i>Five Council Public Conveniences were entered in the annual British Toilet Association Cleanliness Awards. All received Platinum Awards, the highest standard awarded.</i></p> <p><i>With waste collection, disposal and recycling costs continuing to increase, there is an ongoing review of the Council's kerbside collection service, to look at options to enhance recycling and reduce the overall cost of service delivery. While the review is largely complete, the delay in DAERA reporting on the outcomes of the Rethinking our Resources consultation means that further changes may be needed to comply with potential new Regulations. As a result, the process has been parked until the results are published.</i></p> <p><i>The Council via arc21 had received notice that the remaining consented landfill for the disposal of residual household waste within the arc21 region will cease receiving municipal waste in January 2025. As a result, a tender exercise through arc21 has put in place a residual waste treatment contract, that means the diversion of most of the Council's residual waste from landfill with additional recycling and energy recovery.</i></p>

2. Context, Challenges and Key Assumptions

Insert a brief narrative on the external issues, including current and anticipated, impacting upon the service – consideration of PESTLE factors may be useful.

Political	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delays in the implementation of legislation impacting waste management planning and service design. • Absence of new NI Waste Management Strategy or response to DAERA's Rethinking our Resources consultation as a template for forward planning and future proofing the delivery of waste management services.
Economical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Above inflation cost pressures impacting waste treatment costs. • Financial cuts impacting stakeholders (DFI Roads, DAERA and NIEA). • Lack of local recycling markets for recovered materials.
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ageing population resulting in increased demand for assisted lift service. • Housing stock has seen increase in development of apartments, HMO conversions and townhouses which can present waste collection issues. • Getting public buy-in to further recycling schemes, dealing with those who do not use existing recycling services correctly, or require additional mitigation measures.
Technological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developments around the use of alternative fuels and the likely impact on the Council fleet. • Development of digital waste tracking and the human resource implications of managing the notification system.
Legal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public procurement exercises relating to waste treatment/disposal are complex on account of the range of treatment methods available, planning restrictions, licensing requirements, and contract awards are regularly challenged through judicial reviews and the Court system.
Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New and emerging targets for recycling and landfill diversion. • The presence of "forever" chemicals in a wide range of household products resulting in the possible future need for further separation and treatment.

Insert a brief narrative/ list of the challenges which your services will face over the period of the plan. This should, where relevant, reference external issues highlighted above. A SWOT analysis may be useful for completing this section.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current recycling rate is higher than NI average. • Separate glass collection service aligns with likely outcome of DAERA's Rethinking our Resources consultation. • Good employee relations through regular meetings, training and use of working groups. • Strong Health & Safety culture built on extensive training and risk assessment programme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of progress in terms of the implementation of service changes and improvements in the absence of a NI Waste Management Strategy. • Household Recycling Centre estate is old and in need of modernisation to enable improvements in reuse and recycling. • Ageing workforce and difficulties filling posts as majority of posts are not suitable for hybrid working and, in some cases, involve weekend working. • Traffic Management Regulations make the sweeping and litter picking of high-speed roads (>30MPH) difficult and expensive.
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further improvements to the Council household waste recycling rate (56% for the year 2024/2025) through review of kerbside collection system. • Modernising the Council's HRC estate to provide better facilities with easier to use recycling options and the growth of reuse and upcycling options. • Reducing waste collection costs through realising the value of collected materials. • Further use of digital transformation to modernise and drive efficiencies with customer interaction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited NI market for recycling materials resulting in the need to export recovered materials. • Financial impact of compliance with new and pending legislation. • Closure of remaining landfill in the arc21 region resulting in escalating residual waste disposal costs. • Difficulties with the recruitment of suitable personnel

3. Strategic Objectives and Collaboration

Within our new Corporate Plan 2024-2028 we have a vision of *A Sustainable Borough*. One where Economic, Environmental and Social Wellbeing are linked and in which we, as a Council, make decisions about policies, services, investments and resources that balance the demands of each.

By doing so we can positively impact the people and the assets in our Borough and play a part in addressing some of the world's most pressing problems e.g. poverty, inequality, depletion of natural resources, climate change, economic growth etc.

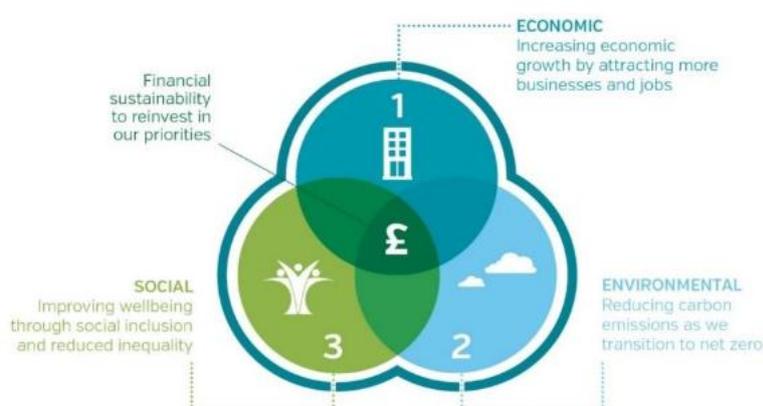
In brief, *A Sustainable Borough* is one where we make sure that we think about economic, social AND environmental impacts when we make decisions.

The three **priorities** we will be delivering against are:

- **ECONOMIC** - increasing economic growth by attracting more jobs and businesses
- **ENVIRONMENTAL** - reducing carbon emissions as we transition to net zero
- **SOCIAL** - improving wellbeing through social inclusion and reduced inequality

These priorities align with the three pillars of sustainable development. They are ambitious, and we will need to work in partnership and collaborate to achieve them.

The diagram below summarises our three Corporate Priorities and shows how they all link together. As you will see at the heart of the diagram is our commitment to address the key issue of our financial sustainability – as without that, we will be less able to deliver on all our ambitions.



We have also identified **seven outcomes** that we want to achieve to meet our priorities. They are (not in order of priority):

1. An engaged Borough with citizens and businesses who have opportunities to influence the delivery of services, plans and investment
2. An environmentally sustainable and resilient Council and Borough meeting our net zero carbon targets
3. A thriving and sustainable economy
4. A vibrant, attractive, sustainable Borough for citizens, visitors, businesses and investors
5. Safe, welcoming and inclusive communities that are flourishing
6. Opportunities for people to be active and healthy
7. Ards and North Down Borough Council is a high performing organisation

The table below reflects the key projects/objectives that will be achieved by our Service over the next 12 months, and the key Services across the Council that will be collaborated with as

part of the process. In addition, each objective is linked to the Corporate Plan priorities and outcomes.

Strategic Project/Objective	Collaboration Required	Corporate Plan Priority	Corporate Plan Outcome (1-7)
Complete kerbside collection review and develop implementation plan if Council agrees outcomes of the review.	Corporate communications for public engagement, consultation and media requests.	Economic Environmental	1, 2, 4, 7
Undertake a trial kerbside collection of plastic bags and wrapping, subject to funding and commercial sensitivities.	Arc21 for material off taker and procurement support. Potential partnership with Queen's University's Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Centre as part of a materials valorisation project. Corporate communications to support citizen engagement within the trial area.	Environmental	1, 2, 4, 7
Commence implementation of the HRC Estate Improvement Strategy if agreed by Council.	Planning, Lands, and Regeneration	Economic Environmental	1, 2, 4, 7

4. Service Improvement

The “**Service development/ improvement**” element should identify areas of the service that require development/ improvement along with any new, innovative ideas for future improvements. **Please state clearly in the “Rationale” section why the improvement is being undertaken and what evidence there is to support the decision.**

Only Service improvement activities should be included in this section, ‘business as usual’ activities should be detailed in Section 6.

Please ensure KPIs are included in Section 6 to measure Service development/ improvement(s) outlined below.

Service development/ improvement 2026/27?	Which of the specified aspects will this improve?	Rationale	Responsible Officer(s)	Who do we need to help us? (Internal and/ or External partners) Please specify
Implement the HRC Estate Improvement Strategy if agreed by Council.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategic Effectiveness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service Quality <input type="checkbox"/> Service Availability <input type="checkbox"/> Fairness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sustainability <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Efficiency <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Innovation	The Council’s current HRC estate comprises 9 sites with most more than 25 years old. Due to size, the need for better waste segregation, and H &S requirements, there is a need for a replacement and upgrading programme.	Head of Service and Waste Contracts and Resources Manager	Internal - Planning, Lands and Assets and Property Services. External – DAERA and statutory consultees where planning permission is required.
Commence the implementation of new kerbside collection model if agreed by Council.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategic Effectiveness <input type="checkbox"/> Service Quality <input type="checkbox"/> Service Availability <input type="checkbox"/> Fairness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sustainability <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Efficiency <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Innovation	One of the outcomes from the DAERA Rethinking Resources Consultation is likely to require councils to reduce the volume provided for residual waste at the kerbside, as well as targets to improve recycling. The preferred scenario identified as part of the WRAP study could deliver the requirements.	Head of Service and Waste Collections Manager	Internal – Comms, Administration External – DAERA,
Commence kerbside collection of textiles if market conditions improve.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Effectiveness <input type="checkbox"/> Service Quality <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service Availability <input type="checkbox"/> Fairness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sustainability <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Efficiency <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Innovation	Textiles are the largest remaining residual waste stream not collected at the kerbside and have the highest carbon footprint on account of the raw materials used and the manufacturing processes involved	Head of Service and Waste Collections Manager	Internal – Comms External – Re-processors

5. Service Risk Register

Service Risk Register should align with the Corporate Risk Management Strategy.

When completing your Service Plan, you must review and consider your current Service Risk Register. Please confirm this has been completed. Yes

6. Key Activities (KPIs) for 2026/27

Please ensure service development/ improvements detailed in Section 4 are included as KPIs.

KPIs should be aligned to the 7 Outcomes of the Corporate Plan 2024-2028, detailed below:

1	An engaged Borough with citizens and businesses who have opportunities to influence the delivery of services, plans and investment
2	An environmentally sustainable and resilient Council and Borough meeting our net zero carbon targets
3	A thriving and sustainable economy
4	A vibrant, attractive, sustainable Borough for citizens, visitors, businesses and investors
5	Safe, welcoming and inclusive communities that are flourishing
6	Opportunities for people to be active and healthy
7	Ards and North Down Borough Council is a high performing organisation

In addition to the outcomes the KPI should align with one of the three **Corporate Priorities** of the **Corporate Plan**, detailed below:

Corporate Priority 1	Economic	Increasing economic growth by attracting more jobs and businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Support • Attracting Investment • Rural Regeneration • Labour Market Partnership • Sustainable Tourism • Town and City Regeneration • Vacant to Vibrant Scheme • Innovation Hub
Corporate Priority 2	Environmental	Reduce carbon emissions as we transition to net zero	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste Management • Digital and Physical Infrastructure • Estate Management • Tree Planting Strategy • Management of Outdoor Spaces • Local Development Plan • Litter Control and Enforcement • Sustainable Waste Resources Strategy • Sustainable Energy Management Strategy
Corporate Priority 3	Social	Improving wellbeing through social inclusion and reduced inequality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sport, leisure and outdoor recreation • Active travel • Environmental Health • Community Development • Neighbourhood Environment • Good Relations • Leisure Strategy • Placemaking

Existing KPI Number	Performance Measures Should include improvement actions outlined in Section 4 and relevant measures both existing and new.	Is the KPI Mandatory/ Statutory/ Service-led	Reporting frequency (6 Monthly/ Year-end)	Outcomes and Priorities to be mapped to KPIs on Ideagen		KPI to be included in Performance Improvement Plan	2026/27 Reporting						
							2024/25 Actual	2025/26 Target	2025/26 YTD End of H1	2026/27 Target	Reporting end of H1 Target	Reporting end of H2 Target	Cumulative/ Fixed
	% Spend against budget	Mandatory	6 Monthly	7	Economic	N/A		100%	98.7%	100%	100%	100%	Fixed
	% Staff attendance	Mandatory	Yearly	7	Economic	N/A	92.19	95%	92.53%	95%	-	95%	Fixed
	% of completed Employee Appraisals	Mandatory	6 Monthly	7	Economic	N/A	100%	100%	97.54%	95%	95%	95%	Fixed
	% of household waste sent for recycling (including composting and preparing for reuse) (KPI a2)	Statutory	6 Monthly	2	Environmental	Yes	56.1%	60%	62.0%	60%	60%	60%	Fixed
Additional Outcomes				Additional Priorities									
	Improve recycling rate (%) at Council HRCs	Service Led	6-monthly	2	Environmental	Yes	76.5%	70%	78.1%	70%	70%	70%	Fixed
Additional Outcomes				Additional Priorities									

Existing KPI Number	Performance Measures Should include improvement actions outlined in Section 4 and relevant measures both existing and new.	Is the KPI Mandatory/ Statutory/ Service-led	Reporting frequency (6 Monthly/ Year-end)	Outcomes and Priorities to be mapped to KPIs on Ideagen		KPI to be included in Performance Improvement Plan	2026/27 Reporting						
							2024/25 Actual	2025/26 Target	2025/26 YTD End of H1	2026/27 Target	Reporting end of H1 Target	Reporting end of H2 Target	Cumulative/ Fixed
	Reported biodegradable waste sent to landfill (tonnes)	Statutory	6-monthly	2	Environmental	Yes	9,584	<9,584	0	<150	<75	<150	Cumulative
Additional Outcomes				Additional Priorities									
	Annual household waste collected per household (tonnes)	Service Led	6 Monthly	2	Environmental	Yes	1.09	<1.1	0.58	<1.1	<0.6	<1.1	Cumulative
Additional Outcomes				Additional Priorities									

Existing KPI Number	Performance Measures Should include improvement actions outlined in Section 4 and relevant measures both existing and new.	Is the KPI Mandatory/ Statutory/ Service-led	Reporting frequency (6 Monthly/ Year-end)	Outcomes and Priorities to be mapped to KPIs on Ideagen		KPI to be included in Performance Improvement Plan	2026/27 Reporting						
							2024/25 Actual	2025/26 Target	2025/26 YTD End of H1	2026/27 Target	Reporting end of H1 Target	Reporting end of H2 Target	Cumulative/ Fixed
	The amount of Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste arisings (tonnes)	Statutory	6 Monthly	2	Environmental	Yes	83605	<83605	42038	Less than 25/26 outcome	45000	<83605	Cumulative
				Additional Outcomes	Additional Priorities								
				<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Economic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social								
	Annual household waste collected per capita (kgs)	Service Led	6 Monthly	2	Environmental	Yes	474	<474	254.14	Less than 25/26 outcome	275	474	Cumulative
				Additional Outcomes	Additional Priorities								
				<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social								

Existing KPI Number	Performance Measures Should include improvement actions outlined in Section 4 and relevant measures both existing and new.	Is the KPI Mandatory/ Statutory/ Service-led	Reporting frequency (6 Monthly/ Year-end)	Outcomes and Priorities to be mapped to KPIs on Ideagen		KPI to be included in Performance Improvement Plan	2026/27 Reporting						
							2024/25 Actual	2025/26 Target	2025/26 YTD End of H1	2026/27 Target	Reporting end of H1 Target	Reporting end of H2 Target	Cumulative/ Fixed
	Achieve 100% success in Loo of the Year Awards (Gold or Platinum Award)	Service Led	Year-end	2	Environmental	Yes	5	5	5	5	0	5	Fixed
				Additional Outcomes <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	Additional Priorities <input type="checkbox"/> Economic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social								
	Achieve or exceed the NI average LEAMS Score for Litter (Reported by KNIB)	Service Led	6 Monthly	2	Environmental	Yes	Not measured	No target	Not measured	72%	72%	72%	Fixed
				Additional Outcomes <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	Additional Priorities <input type="checkbox"/> Economic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social								

7. What Services/ Activities will be stopped

Please add detail of KPI's that have previously been monitored that will no longer be reported on for 2026/27. An example is provided below.

What service/ activities will we be stopping/ changing in 2026/2027	Reason for stopping / changing activity	Savings	Impact on Performance	Impact on the Public	Impact on staffing

8. Reporting, Monitoring and Review

Provide detail below how this plan will be monitored and reviewed.

Monitoring Method	Frequency	Responsible Officer
Team Meeting	Monthly	HoST/ SUMs/ Line Managers
HoST	Quarterly	HoST
Standing Committee	6 Monthly	Directors and HoST
Performance Improvement Plan	Annually (30 th June)	Transformation Manager
Self-Assessment Report	Annually (30 th September)	Transformation Manager

Unclassified

ITEM 4

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
	If multiple:
Meeting	Environment Committee
Date of Meeting	04 March 2026
Responsible Director	Director of Environmental Services
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Waste and Cleansing Services
Report title	Notice Of Motion 670 'Recycling on the Go' Pilot
Attachments	
File Reference (if applicable)	74009 / NOM 670
Legislation	Other Waste and Contaminated Land (Northern Ireland) Order 1997
Resource Implications	Budget and Staffing Narrative: Agreed in 2026/27 budgets
Screening Requirements	<i>The Council will commit to consider the implication of all reports under the categories of Section 75, Rural Needs, Data Protection, Climate and Sustainability:</i> Screening of decision not required
Link to Corporate Plan Priority and Outcome	Priority 2: Environmental 2. An environmentally sustainable and resilient Council and Borough meeting our net zero carbon targets If multiple:

Background

A Notice of Motion (NOM 670) was agreed at Environment Committee in June 2025. The NOM stated, 'This Council is pleased with the recycling rates for waste that have been achieved in the Borough, however there are currently limited facilities to recycle litter. This sends out a poor message to our residents and visitors. This Council asks that officers bring back a report that explores how, and when recycling litter bins could be introduced to the Borough. Indication of costs should be included.'

Facilitating sustainable practices is a priority for Ards and North Down Borough Council. This includes providing opportunities for residents, employees at work, and visitors to recycle packaging and food waste at home, at work, and at many council premises.

For household recycling, the Council provides a comprehensive waste and recycling service. This includes kerbside collections, bring banks and HRCs. Household recycling performance was 56.1% in 2024/25 and exceeded 60% in the first half of 2025/26.

For businesses and other non-household organisations, the Council has a statutory duty to provide a commercial waste collection where this service is requested. It is Council policy to require its commercial waste service customers to also separate recyclable materials for collection.

There are fewer opportunities for residents and visitors to recycle items outside the home or workplace. The proposed pilot scheme will seek to improve recycling opportunities for people 'on the go' particularly those making use of our public parks.

Aim of the trial

To extend recycling opportunities to residents and visitors of Ards and North Down's public parks and to measure the effectiveness of the scheme infrastructure, communications, and user satisfaction.

Existing good practice

The design and execution of the Ards and North Down 'Recycle on the Go' (RoTG) pilot will benefit from similar initiatives across the UK and Ireland. WRAP guidance was published in 2012, and Belfast City Council recently completed a similar on-street recycling trial with environmental charity, Hubbub. The AND pilot will employ insights from these schemes, including:

- The use of highly visible recycling bins
- Clear and specific messages on target materials, i.e. plastic drinks bottles and metal drinks cans
- Use of bold images and iconography
- Clarity on non-target items, e.g., coffee cups, liquids

The scope of the AND RoTG pilot has yet to be finalised but will draw from existing good practice.

The pilot scheme

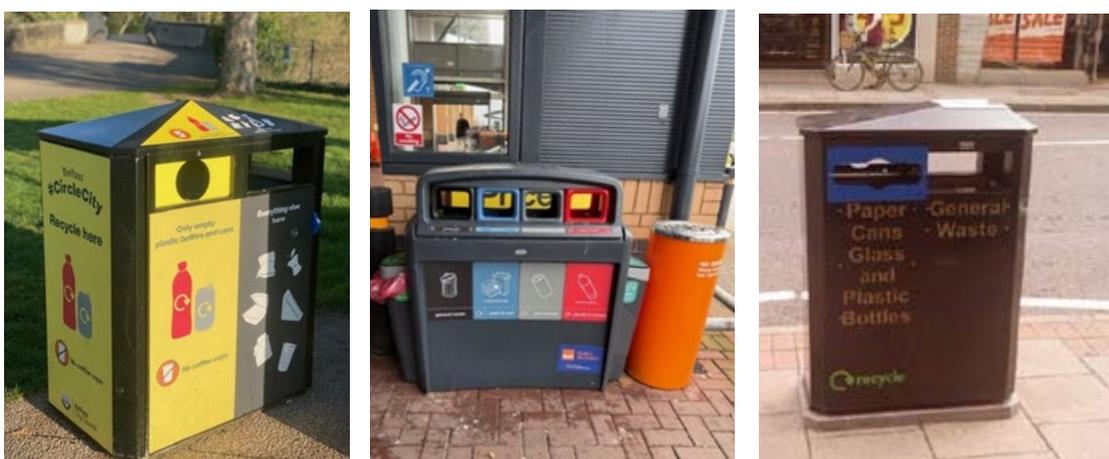
The project will be led by a cross-service team in both Parks and Cemeteries Service and Waste and Cleansing Services. A project manager will be identified from the council's Recycling Officers. The project team will include close engagement with the Council's Communications team. It is anticipated that joint learning from this pilot will inform potential extension of this initiative beyond council parks.

We propose a phased introduction of new recycling bins, with a pilot exercise in Ward Park and Council-managed bowling greens. The containers will be co-located with litter bins in areas of high footfall so that visitors can dispose of rubbish and recycling conveniently at one location. The accessibility of the recycling bin will also eliminate a physical barrier to recycling. Co-located bins will also maximise capture of recyclables and minimise contamination.

The scheme will target two key materials streams – plastic drinks bottles and metal drinks cans. These two material streams are recyclable at the kerbside and commonly used by people when out and about. Provision of a recycling container will positively reinforce recycling behaviours and divert additional recyclables from disposal.

A recent successful pilot by Belfast City Council and environmental charity, Hubbub, found that the RoTG recycling comprised almost 50% by weight of target material. The trial found that contamination levels were low enough that the recycling could be sent for reprocessing.

The Ards and North Down pilot will follow the same approach as the Belfast pilot. It will ensure that the containers are clearly labelled with both materials iconography and wording to make targeted recyclable materials clear. This will reduce confusion and contamination. Examples of clearly labelled RoTG containers are shown below.



Images (left to right): Victoria Park, Belfast; B&Q Holywood Exchange; and Elmbridge BC (from WRAP's 'Recycle on the Go' guidance (2012))

Cost of delivering the RoTG pilot

A budget of £45k has been identified to support the delivery of this pilot. This includes £15k capital funding of the new recycling bins and £30k revenue for communications, operations, and project evaluation.

This trial will target key packaging materials for recycling. For this reason, it is possible to cover the costs of delivering this RoTG trial with funding received from the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) scheme.

Monitoring and evaluation of the pilot

The evaluation of the pilot scheme will include:

- Public engagement with AND messages and communications, e.g. Council website and social media channels
- Waste composition analysis to measure the quantity and types of target and non-target material captured
- User satisfaction survey
- Net costs or savings of delivering the pilot scheme

A project report will be brought to Environment Committee at the end of the trial period.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council **Approves** to proceed with a trial as set out in this report.

Unclassified

ITEM 5

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
	If multiple:
Meeting	Environment Committee
Date of Meeting	04 March 2026
Responsible Director	Director of Environmental Services
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Parks and Cemeteries
Report title	Play Refurbishments and Older Children Provision for 2026/27
Attachments	
File Reference (if applicable)	CW4
Legislation	Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014
Resource Implications	Budget Narrative: budget in place
Screening Requirements	<i>The Council will commit to consider the implication of all reports under the categories of Section 75, Rural Needs, Data Protection, Climate and Sustainability:</i> Screening of decision not required
Link to Corporate Plan Priority and Outcome	Priority 3: Social 4. A vibrant, attractive, sustainable Borough for citizens, visitors, businesses and investors If multiple:

Background

The Ards and North Down Borough Council's Play Strategy (2021–2032) promotes the modernisation of local play areas. Under this strategy, sites are prioritised within the Annual Independent Inspectors Report, supplemented by local knowledge and insight, and in accordance with budget made available. Furthermore, the agreed strategy includes a settlement hierarchy approach to fund provisions for older children, such as skate parks, pump tracks, and Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAs).

To ensure high standards, the Council employs expert contractors who adhere to specific design criteria, including age-appropriate equipment ratios and a minimum of 30% inclusive equipment. All projects comply with British and European safety standards. Rigorous oversight is provided by an independent inspector accredited by the Register of Play Inspectors International (RPiI), ensuring all assessments remain objective and professional.

2025/2026 Financial Year

To date in 2025/2026 the following play parks have been completed:

- Seafont Play Park, Groomsport

The following facilities are due for completion by the end of March 2026:

- Northfield Play Park, Donaghadee
- Island View Play Park, Greyabbey
- Moss Road Multi Use Games Area, Ballygowan

An agreed Multiuse Use Games Area (MUGA) for older children play at Seapark, Holywood has been delayed due to the requirement to submit a Certificate of Lawful Use/Development to the Planning Department and a determination is awaited for that. It is expected that the budget earmarked for this project can be accrued into the 2026/27 Financial Year if required.

As in all previous years from 2015, sourcing of external funding will continue to be explored by Officers for future play park developments.

Key Issues

1. Older Children Facilities in 2026/27

- 1.1 If a Certificate of Lawful Use is approved then the MUGA at Seapark will be delivered.
- 1.2 The next location identified for an older children facility, based on the settlement hierarchy approach outlined in the Play Strategy, is Portaferry. It is envisaged that the location will be adjacent to the play park at Cloughey Road. A public consultation will be carried out to ascertain what type of older children facility the local teenagers and wider community would like to see delivered.
- 1.3 Members will also be aware that, through Peace Plus funding, a Pump Track is due to be delivered this year at The Commons, Donaghadee and a Pump Track element (along with other cycling facilities) will be delivered at Sportsplex, Bangor. It is proposed to install a youth shelter (£15,000) adjacent to the new pump track at The Commons, Donaghadee.

1.4 It is further proposed to install a basketball area (£15,000) to the rear of the tennis pavilion in Ward Park, Bangor, as this was a significant request raised through the public consultation, carried out as part of the wider Ward Park redevelopment project. The associated cost includes the need for some groundworks and resurfacing of the area.

2. Play Parks in 2026/27

The budget available for play park refurbishments for the 2026/27 Financial Year is £1,125,000. The refurbishment approach outlined below, while taking cognisance of the Independent Inspectors scores, attempts to use the available budget in a targeted approach to ensure a fair spread of investment across the Borough, especially those areas that haven't received investment in the recent past.

Members should be aware that the relative prioritisation between sites can change each year, for example the rate of deterioration of facilities can vary due to amount of use and/or location.

Based on the evidence from the independent inspector's report and supplemented by local knowledge and insight it is recommended that the following Play Parks are proposed for refurbishment.

- Tullymally, Portaferry
- Sportsplex, Bangor
- Glenford, Newtownards
- Skipperstone, Bangor
- Main Street, Ballyhalbert (currently a Tier 2 will be upgraded to a Tier 1)
- Ballywalter Road, Millisle (Tier 1)

Next Steps

It is proposed that Council proceeds to deliver the following play parks and older children provision based on the independent inspector's report on need and officers' input to ensure a fair distribution across the Borough and within available budget.

Summary

Recommended Play Park Refurbishments Proposed based on the independent report and officers' input:

- Tullymally, Portaferry (Tier 3) £85,000
- Sportsplex, Bangor (Tier 2) £170,000
- Glenford, Newtownards (Tier 2) £170,000
- Skipperstone, Bangor (Tier 2) £170,000
- Main Street, Ballyhalbert (currently a Tier 2 will be upgraded to a Tier 1) £250,000
- Ballywalter Road, Millisle (Tier 1) £250,000

Older Children Play Provision Proposed

- An older children facility will be delivered at Cloughey Road, Portaferry, £200,000.
- A youth shelter adjacent to the new pump track at Donaghadee, £15,000
- A basketball area to the rear of the tennis pavilion building in Ward park (partial MUGA), £15,000.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council **Approves** the delivery of play refurbishments as detailed in this report.

Unclassified

ITEM 6

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
	If multiple:
Meeting	Environment Committee
Date of Meeting	04 March 2026
Responsible Director	Director of Environmental Services
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Estates
Report title	On Street Residential Charging Scheme Update
Attachments	
File Reference (if applicable)	65369
Legislation	Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014
Resource Implications	None
	Narrative:
Screening Requirements	<i>The Council will commit to consider the implication of all reports under the categories of Section 75, Rural Needs, Data Protection, Climate and Sustainability:</i>
	Screening of report not required
Link to Corporate Plan Priority and Outcome	Priority 2: Environmental
	2. An environmentally sustainable and resilient Council and Borough meeting our net zero carbon targets
	If multiple:

Background

Members will be aware that the Council is participating in the “On Street Residential ChargePoint Scheme” (ORCS). The scheme is 75% funded by the “Office for Zero Emission Vehicles” (OZEV) with 25% match funded by the Department for Infrastructure (DfI). The project has been progressed by the EV consortium, led by Derry City and Strabane District Council.

Council agreed the tender for the Supply, Installation, Operation and Maintenance of Electric Vehicle charge points for the NI Electric Vehicle Consortium to Weev in February 2025, and the Concession Agreement was signed at its meeting in on 31 January 2026.

Charge Point Locations

The charge points will be positioned in a range of locations that are in ‘close proximity to a residential area’, as the aim of the scheme is to benefit homes without driveways/ off-street parking.

The EV Chargers for the Ards and North Down Borough Council area, as previously agreed, are in the following car parks:

Holborn Square, Bangor (2 charge points)
Bingham Lane, Bangor
Ann Street, Newtownards (2 charge points)
Kennel Lane, Newtownards (2 charge points)
West Street, Newtownards
Mill Street Gasworks, Newtownards (2 charge points)
Church Road, Holywood (2 charge points)
Meeting House Street, Portaferry

Due to NIE connection issues the following ChargePoint locations have been amended:

1. Central Avenue, Bangor moved to Abbey Street East, Bangor.

New location is 300 metres (4-minute walk) from original location and services the same homes as the original location.

2. Manor Street, Donaghadee moved to The Harbour Car Park, The Commons, Donaghadee.

New location is 180 metres (2-minute walk) from original location and services the same homes as the original location

Next Steps

Officers are currently working with Weev to carry out the preparatory works and provide the necessary permissions to allow charge points to be installed in Spring 2026.

When a “live” date for the charge points becomes available, Officers will ensure there is appropriate communication with residents to raise awareness of the charge points.

Once operational, Officers will monitor usage of these charge points to better inform any future strategy relating to EV charging across Ards and North Down.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council **Agrees** the two alternative locations as identified in this report.

Unclassified

ITEM 7

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
	If multiple:
Meeting	Environment Committee
Date of Meeting	04 March 2026
Responsible Director	Director of Environmental Services
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Estates
Report title	Estates Carbon Reduction Targets
Attachments	
File Reference (if applicable)	50002
Legislation	Other Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022
Resource Implications	Budget Narrative: In place for 2026/2027 only at this stage
Screening Requirements	<i>The Council will commit to consider the implication of all reports under the categories of Section 75, Rural Needs, Data Protection, Climate and Sustainability:</i> Screening of decision not required
Link to Corporate Plan Priority and Outcome	Priority 2: Environmental 2. An environmentally sustainable and resilient Council and Borough meeting our net zero carbon targets If multiple:

Background

Members will be aware that the Climate Change Act 2022 imposed mandatory reductions in our carbon emissions with a target of 48% reduction over baseline data by 2030 and 100% by 2050.

Officers have since developed a number of Policies and Strategies in order to meet these targets, including:

- Sustainable Energy Management Strategy and Action Plan
- Roadmap to Sustainability
- Roadmap to Green Fleet
- Sustainable Waste Resource Management Strategy
- Climate Action Plan
- Climate Adaptation Plan
- Corporate Plan

Performance Targets

In order to help us meet these targets, Officers would propose to implement a series of strategic annual targets, or milestones, that will help Council monitor progress toward the longer term (2030) target.

These milestones have been developed by calculating the carbon savings associated with the implementation of the energy saving initiatives highlighted within the Sustainable Energy Management Strategy's Action Plan. An updated Action plan is presented to Council each quarter, as part of the Sustainable Energy Management Plan update. The projects therefore which will deliver on the carbon reduction target for 2026/2027 in the table below, are listed in report item 11 (Appendix 1).

Naturally, the carbon reductions will only be possible if ALL the proposed projects are completed and it assumes that the required ongoing budget will be available. Existing annual budgets include a considerable amount for these projects (£500k per year) and this will need to be retained or expanded in future years in order to deliver these projects.

Year	Target Reduction over baseline emissions	Budget Required
2025-2026	15%	£500k
2026-2027	16%	£650k
2027-2028	19%	£600k
2028-2029	37%	£750k
2029-2030	53%	£900k

Table 1

Reporting and Review

It is worth noting that the carbon savings on which the targets are based are theoretical, based on a number of complex variables, many of which, (such as weather) are outside of Council's direct control. There is therefore likely to be times where the targets are not met, but nonetheless Officers believe they are important milestones to serve as a general indicator of the performance of our journey toward carbon neutrality.

There is also scope for new technologies to be introduced that may create the need to adjust our targets.

For these reasons, it is proposed for Members to agree the forthcoming annual target and associated budget as part of the Service Planning Process each year. This will enable us to keep the targets under review and adjust the targets for the following years. These targets will form part of the Estates Services Annual Service Plan, for which Members will receive 6-monthly updates on our performance.

Other Carbon Emitters

Members should note that these projects and the associated carbon reduction targets focus **ONLY** on the utilities (Electricity, Gas and Oil) and do not include targets for reducing the carbon output of our fleet.

Our fleet will be an extremely challenging task to decarbonise and this is explained further in our “Roadmap to Green Fleet” document, for which a separate update has been produced.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council agree the annual carbon reduction target for 2026/27, contained within Table 1 above.

Unclassified

ITEM 8**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
	If multiple:
Meeting	Environment Committee
Date of Meeting	04 March 2026
Responsible Director	Director of Environmental Services
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Waste and Cleansing Services
Report title	NI Waste Management Strategy - Consultation Response
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Ards and North Down Borough Council Draft Response Appendix 2 - Draft NI Resources and Waste Management Strategy Appendix 3 - NI Resources and Waste Management Strategy - Consultation Questions
File Reference (if applicable)	72010
Legislation	Other Waste and Contaminated Land (Northern Ireland) Order 1997
Resource Implications	None Narrative:
Screening Requirements	<i>The Council will commit to consider the implication of all reports under the categories of Section 75, Rural Needs, Data Protection, Climate and Sustainability:</i> Screening of decision not required
Link to Corporate Plan Priority and Outcome	Priority 2: Environmental

If multiple:

	<p>2. An environmentally sustainable and resilient Council and Borough meeting our net zero carbon targets</p> <p>If multiple:</p>
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Background

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) has launched a public consultation to seek views on its draft Rethinking Our Resources: Northern Ireland Resources and Waste Management Strategy.

The Waste Management Strategy Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009 state that the Department shall have a waste management strategy containing policies in relation to the recovery and disposal of waste in Northern Ireland. The Regulations state that the Department must consult with district councils and other relevant stakeholders in its preparation of the strategy.

A public consultation opened on 15 January 2026 and will close on 8 April 2026. This is a public consultation on a draft NI Resources and Waste Strategy. The Department is yet to publish its response to its recycling consultation - Measures for Climate Action and a Circular Economy in NI Consultation.

Key issues

Ards and North Down Borough Council has one of the highest local authority recycling rates in Northern Ireland. This is, in large part, due to the provision of a comprehensive kerbside recycling collection service, an effective network of HRCs, and the support and active participation of the Borough’s citizens.

The Council’s ambition is to build on this performance through improved design and delivery of waste and recycling services and supporting householders and employees to minimise waste at source and recycle as much as they can. The publication of a new NI Resources and Waste Strategy is important in informing and enabling our future service delivery.

The draft strategy’s aims are to:

- maximise the potential for better use of the resources consumed in Northern Ireland
- prevent them becoming waste, or where generated, to ensure they are captured and processed into products that minimise environmental pollution
- build on previous plans by broadening the range of sectors obligated, presenting new actions to achieve higher targets
- set out the greater ambition necessary to meet net zero
- integrate policy reforms, modern technology, and partnerships to ensure long term sustainability and adaptability.

The draft strategy sets out 10 targets and 63 actions which will help government, and its stakeholders meet and exceed targets, whilst transforming the landscape of waste management.

A draft response has been prepared and is attached at Appendix 3. The draft response text is italicised.

Key response points are:

- This Council supports the publication of the draft NI Resources and Waste Strategy and welcomes its alignment with the objectives of the Council's Corporate Plan.
- Notes the opportunities presented by the proposals, but stresses the need for robust evidence, clear policy recommendations, investment, communications and behaviour change programmes, and a fully resourced regulatory enforcement function.
- Supports the inclusion of the proposed sectors within the scope of the strategy and calls for support, guidance, and tools for obligated sectors to minimise any cost burden associated with regulatory compliance.
- Expresses concern on the lack of clarity on how the proposed implementation will be funded and resourced.
- Records Council's concern on the delayed publication of a response to the Rethinking our Resources recycling consultation.

Next Steps

An agreed Ards and North Down Borough Council response to this consultation must be submitted through the Department's Citizen Space online consultation website by 8 April 2026.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council Approves the draft consultation response attached at Appendix 3.

Rethinking our Resources: Northern Ireland Resources and Waste Management Strategy

Questions

Part 1: The need for change	
5	<p>Do you agree with the vision for the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy? If your answer is no, please explain why.</p> <p><i>Disagree.</i></p> <p><i>Ards and North Down Borough Council supports the vision set out in DAERA’s draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy. Council welcomes a Resources and Waste Strategy which will underpin the Council’s ambitions and actions delivered under its Corporate Plan 2024-2028, A Sustainable Borough.</i></p> <p><i>The draft Strategy notes that Northern Ireland is the smallest region of the UK. This Council agrees with the statement that this provides an opportunity for us to lead. This Council would add that this can only be achieved where the vision is supported by evidence, a clear policy framework, investment in infrastructure, coordinated communications and behaviour change interventions, and a resourced and effective regulatory enforcement function.</i></p> <p><i>The stated vision is necessarily pitched at a high level, however, there are some words and phrases which are open to too much interpretation. For example, ‘rethink’ and ‘diverting overall all waste’ may be interpreted differently by different stakeholders.</i></p> <p><i>To support successful delivery, the Strategy would benefit from recognizing the role of councils in efficient service planning and long-term asset management as well as our corporate sustainability and community wellbeing responsibilities.</i></p> <p><i>Council notes that the draft Strategy includes limited information on how implementation of the Strategy’s vision will be resourced. The increasing costs of delivering waste and recycling services – including transport, staff costs, reprocessing and disposal costs – combined with new capital costs associated with service change and compliance with new regulatory requirements (e.g. Digital Waste Tracking, separate collections), reduces the Council’s ability to support many other important priorities, including economic growth’.</i></p>
6	<p>Do you agree with the targets for the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy? If your answer is no, please explain why.</p> <p><i>Disagree.</i></p> <p><i>Ards and North Down Borough Council agrees with most of the draft Strategy targets. We note that the first five targets are SMART objectives and can be measured. The remaining five targets are positive actions but their achievement</i></p>

	<p><i>cannot be measured. In addition, the 2025 municipal recycling target date has now passed.</i></p> <p><i>The draft Strategy's recycling targets restate existing recycling targets set out in the EU's Circular Economy Package and the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022. The 70% Climate Change Act requires more definition to better understand the actions needed to be taken by Councils and other stakeholders. We also ask DAERA to synchronise waste-sector milestones with public sector climate duties (e.g. reporting on scope 3 emissions from 2028) so we can demonstrate carbon reductions from waste prevention/reuse alongside recycling rates.</i></p> <p><i>This Council fully supports widening the scope of recycling targets to include household-like waste from non-household businesses and organisations. This significant change will require clear objectives, guidance, resources and support for obligated organisations.</i></p> <p><i>Council notes that every household in Northern Ireland now is provided with comprehensive kerbside and Household Recycling Centre recycling services. Increases in recycling are now achieved through communications leading to changes in citizen recycling behaviours. It is increasingly challenging for councils to demonstrate continuous improvement and increases in diversion are often hard won. This Council considers that the draft Strategy would benefit from a more holistic combination of policy, guidance, resources and funding designed to support councils in the delivery of waste and recycling services and thereby deliver more quality resources for use by reprocessors and manufacturers in Northern Ireland. Council notes that such a combination of interventions has been effectively employed by Welsh Government to support some Welsh councils to exceed 70% recycling and the nation of Wales to exceed 68% recycling.</i></p> <p><i>This Council welcomes that the draft Strategy brings business and non-household recycling into its scope. There is, however, a missed opportunity to consider 'Recycling on the Go' in public spaces and events.</i></p> <p><i>This Council considers that the first phase Digital Waste Tracking target cannot realistically be met. Council notes a lack of consultation with local government on the methodology, required investment and training, and implementation timescale.</i></p>
7	<p>Do you agree with the objectives for the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy? If your answer is no, please explain why.</p> <p><i>Disagree.</i></p> <p><i>This Council agrees with the 4 ambitions identified in the draft Strategy but observes that these are objectives with clearly stated timeframes or measures of success. In addition, these are narrowly focused on dealing with waste after it has been created. The draft Strategy would benefit from the incorporation of waste prevention and reuse measures or clearer stated links to DAERA's Waste Prevention</i></p>

	<p><i>Programme, the Department for Economy’s Circular Economy Strategic Framework, and the Northern Ireland Green Growth Strategy.</i></p> <p><i>The Council recommends an additional bullet point under objective 2 that clarifies the need for efficient use of materials and assets across the public sector, including good practice in procurement and long-term project planning, which is already reflected in several AND Council strategies. This would help reduce waste generation at source and deliver better value for money.</i></p> <p><i>This Council also notes with concern the Northern Ireland Executive’s delayed response to DAERA’s Rethinking our Resources consultation. Without the clarity of a Departmental response on the future of waste and recycling services, the actions and investment necessary for the achievement of the draft Strategy’s stated objectives are unclear.</i></p>
<p>Part 2: Enabling change and empowering action</p>	
<p>8</p>	<p>Do you agree that the sectors in scope of the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy, which are controlled wastes consisting of household waste, non-household municipal waste, commercial and industrial waste, construction and demolition waste, hazardous waste and agricultural waste, should be the sectors in scope of achieving the Climate Change Act (NI) 2022 70% recycling rate target for Northern Ireland?</p> <p><i>Agree.</i></p> <p><i>Yes, this Council agrees with the sectors identified should be those in scope of achieving the Climate Change Act 70% recycling target. For transparency and delivery, we request a published methodology that disaggregates sectoral contributions and will then allow us to track local progress locally.</i></p> <p><i>As public sector carbon reporting frameworks expand to include Scope 3 emissions, high quality data on waste arisings will be essential. Waste related emissions form a significant element of organisational Scope 3 reporting, and without reliable data councils cannot accurately track progress against their own climate change commitments. Improving waste data will therefore support the Council in delivering its Climate Action Plan, managing long term costs, and planning a credible transition towards net zero.</i></p> <p><i>Inclusion of additional sectors with the strategic scope will require regular gathering of sectoral waste data to establish a baseline and measure progress towards targets.</i></p>
<p>9</p>	<p>Do you support the following actions set out for household waste in the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy? If your answer is no, please explain why.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions 1 to 10 proposed to increase recycling rates and improve recycling quality of household waste <i>No, do not support.</i> <i>Some of the stated actions occurred in the past, some lack clear definition, and some are to be delivered too late to inform decision making and investment. Infrastructure funding should allow councils to futureproof facilities, reduce long-term operating costs and improve service reliability, in line with local asset management strategies. This Council notes that the HWRCCP capital funding programme will have closed to applications before the closing date of this consultation.</i> <i>Delivering the changes needed to deliver the Strategy’s ambitions will require clear policy direction, capital and revenue funding, and support and guidance. We note that the core set of materials, the minimum service standard, and the waste compositional analysis report will be published by March 2027. We are aware that these actions have been completed and would ask that their publication be brought forward.</i> <i>We fully support increasing the capture of food waste through household collections. It is unclear what enhancements are proposed in the action 9.</i> • Actions 11 to 12 proposed to reduce the amount of waste arisings from households going to landfill <i>Yes, support.</i> <i>While we support both actions, we would urge the Department to bring forward the development of guidance (action 12). This direction is key to service design and investment decisions.</i> • Actions 13 to 14 proposed to promote household waste prevention and reuse in Northern Ireland (These actions are in conjunction with those in the Waste Prevention Programme) <i>Yes, support.</i> <i>We would add that waste prevention actions should be included within the Strategy itself.</i> • Action 15 proposed to promote more sustainable and efficient use of our resources generated from household waste <i>Yes, support.</i>
<p>10</p>	<p>Do you support the following actions set out for non-household municipal waste in the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy? If your answer is no, please explain why.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action 16 in relation to communications and behaviour change relating to non-household municipal waste

	<p><i>Yes, support.</i> <i>We would note that any campaign should be coordinated with all key stakeholders including councils providing non-household recycling services, private sector service providers, and NI non-household sector bodies. An awareness raising campaign will result in an increase in enquiries and service requests. It is important that councils and other stakeholders can support the campaign and prepare to respond to business owners and non-household organisations.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions 17 to 19 in relation to the provision of guidance and support to business and workplaces in relation to non-household municipal waste recycling and best practice <i>Yes, support.</i> <i>This Council supports the recommendation to provide guidance, tools, and resources to support workplaces in the implementation of effective recycling practices. In addition, and as noted in Rethinking our Resources, Measures for Climate Action and a Circular Economy consultation, this Council would support funding of dedicated workplace recycling advisors as an intervention to support businesses and workplaces to minimise any cost burden associated in complying with workplace recycling. These advisors could be able to help businesses that are required to report emissions to other organisations as part of procurement processes (for Scope 3 reporting).</i> • Actions 20 to 23 in relation to the development of policy and regulation pertaining to non-household municipal waste <i>Yes support.</i> <i>The draft Strategy notes the prevalence of food waste in the home and in the workplace and this Council supports a consistent approach to recycling in the home and in the workplace. This Council understands that the Department has consulted twice on consistency in household and workplace recycling, and engaged directly with councils, service providers, and businesses. If the core list for businesses is to be consistent with that for households, why is the latter to be published by December 2028 when the former is to be published by March 2027.</i> • Actions 24 and 25 relating to data, performance targets and reporting of non-household municipal waste <i>Yes, support.</i> <i>As noted in our response to actions 20 to 23, could the reporting framework and requirements on businesses not be published together.</i>
11	<p>Do you support the following actions set out for commercial and industrial waste in the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy? If your answer is no, please explain why.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action 26 proposed to increase recycling by obtaining improved data on C&I waste. <i>Yes, support</i> • Action 27 proposed to provide guidance and support tools to producers of commercial and industrial waste. <i>Yes, support</i>
12	<p>Do you agree with the following actions proposing to improve construction and demolition waste recycling and diversion from landfill and ensuring better data collection in the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy? If your answer is no, please explain why.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions 28 and 29 proposed to improve construction and demolition waste recycling and diversion from landfill and ensure better data collection. <i>Yes, support</i>
13	<p>Do you agree with the following actions proposing to increase the reuse, recycling and correct handling of hazardous wastes in Northern Ireland, in the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy? If your answer is no, please explain why.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions 30 to 34 proposed to reduce the use of and exposure to hazardous substances, and to increase the reuse, recycling and correct handling of hazardous wastes in Northern Ireland <i>Yes, support.</i> <i>Action 32 will require support through investment and market development if surplus paint schemes are to be expanded further.</i>
14	<p>Do you agree with the following actions proposing to increase recycling of materials arising from the agricultural sector in the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy? If your answer is no, please explain why.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions 35 to 37 proposed to increase recycling of materials arising from the agricultural sector <i>Yes, support.</i> <i>The draft Strategy notes the size and importance of Northern Ireland's agricultural sector. It also notes the lack of robust waste data and the challenges and commercial opportunities presented by the agricultural sector waste streams within the scope of the draft Strategy. This Council agrees that better waste data is needed to support interventions to recover and recycle more. Additionally, this Council notes the importance of providing support tools, guidance and resources to support improved waste and recycling practices and</i>

	<p><i>minimising any additional cost burden for operators within this sector. Working with rural communities and representative bodies on practical guidance and data collection would help ensure the Strategy reflects local contexts and supports long-term service planning in rural districts.</i></p>
15	<p>Do you agree with the following actions proposed to reduce litter and flytipping in the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy? If your answer is no, please explain why.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>• Actions 38 to 43 propose to reduce litter <i>Yes, support.</i> <i>This Council supports the proposed interventions to reduce litter. Council notes that the citizen behaviour campaigns, while noted in the body of the draft Strategy, should also be included in the list of proposed actions. This should include links to the ‘responsible traveller’ theme within local Community Plans and Discover Northern Ireland’s ‘Leave No Trace’ campaign.</i></p> <p>• Actions 44 to 46 propose to reduce fly-tipping <i>Yes, support.</i> <i>This Council supports the actions proposed to reduce fly-tipping. In an anticipation of volume restrictions on household waste and new recycling requirements for non-household premises, this Council recommends that NIEA and Council enforcement functions be adequately resourced to deter any increases in illegal waste disposal.</i></p>
16	<p>Do you agree that the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy covers the main issues and key considerations for all seven waste streams detailed in Part 2?</p> <p><i>Agree</i></p>
<p>Part 3: Making it happen</p>	
17	<p>Do you agree with the following actions relating to waste infrastructure and capacity in the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy? If your answer is no, please explain why.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>• Actions 47 to 49 proposed in relation to infrastructure and capacity <i>No, do not support.</i> <i>This Council has commented on the Strategy’s absence of a clear and resourced approach to provision of necessary waste and recycling infrastructure. We note the passive and reactive language used in Actions 47, 48, and 49, and call on DAERA to demonstrate the leadership needed to deliver the waste treatment infrastructure and capacity needed in Northern</i></p>

	<p><i>Ireland. We note that the narrative of the draft Strategy identifies the importance of the principles of Self-sufficiency and Proximity in managing the waste generated by households, businesses, and industry in Northern Ireland. Development of the necessary infrastructure and capacity will only be catalysed through clear waste and resources policy direction and robust and timely planning decisions at a local and Ministerial level. For example, the delay in publishing the Departmental response to Rethinking our Resources – a future framework for household and non-household collections - and the failure of the NI Executive to determine the planning status of local government-led residual waste treatment capacity, means that investors lack the confidence to invest in local reprocessing and treatment infrastructure.</i></p> <p><i>Consideration of operational costs, transport efficiencies and capacity needs will help ensure value for money.</i></p>
18	<p>The Department envisages working with the stakeholders, partners and sectors listed above. Are there any additional stakeholders, partners and sectors that should be included?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) • Department for the Economy • Northern Ireland’s councils • Council waste management groups • Waste management companies • Reprocessors • Communities • Representative Body / Member Organisations and Trade Bodies • Business and industry • The agricultural sector • The construction and demolition sector • Environmental organisations and NGOs • Research and Development • Education • Healthcare <p>Yes.</p> <p><i>This Council acknowledges the challenges of engaging with a diverse range of stakeholders. We invite the Department to work in partnership with local councils to engage through local as well as national member bodies and groups.</i></p> <p><i>We note the omission of representation from NI’s tourism sector. Tourism NI, for example, is developing a visitor charter which may include management of litter, waste, and recycling.</i></p>

19	<p>Do you agree with the following actions proposed to facilitate increased communications and engagement amongst all stakeholders in the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy? If your answer is no, please explain why.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions 50 to 55 proposed to facilitate increased communications and engagement amongst all stakeholders in relation to resources and waste. <i>No, do not support.</i> <i>The draft Strategy notes the centrality of communications in delivering the stated objectives. This Council welcomes the draft Strategy's commitment to gathering knowledge and behavioural insights through WRAP's Recycling Tracker and its commitment to the coordination and delivery of the national recycling campaign for Northern Ireland – Recycle Now's 'NI Recycles'. This Council acknowledges the outcomes of this work, including the launch of the MyRecyclingNI website as a tool to raise awareness of recycling end destinations and to address the measured decline in citizen confidence in recycling. This Council notes, however, that funding for national-level campaigns has not been maintained and the burden of campaign delivery falls on campaign partners, particularly councils.</i> <i>This Council broadly supports the six stated actions, but notes that a commitment to gathering ongoing insights into citizen (and in the future employee) knowledge and behaviour is missing from the draft Strategy's commitments. In addition, this Council notes the absence of a re-commitment to increased funding for, and delivery of national-level behaviour change campaigns in this draft Strategy.</i>
20	<p>Do you agree with the following actions on skills, training and research required for the future in the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy? If your answer is no, please explain why.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions 56 to 58 proposed in relation to research, innovation, and skills <i>Yes, support.</i> <i>This Council supports the stated actions, and calls for more ambition and investment in research, innovation, and skills needed to develop a more circular economy. This Council welcomes investment in studies to re-establish sectoral waste and resources baselines and the publication of guidance on material sampling at Materials Facilities. Council notes the 8-year gap since the most recent household waste composition study and would welcome a commitment to timescale for regular and frequent future updates to all baseline composition data as these data inform future service delivery decisions for councils and investment decisions for the sector. This Council welcomes the introduction of Digital Waste Tracking (DWT) but notes with concern the timescale for Phase 1 implementation of DWT and the lack of timely engagement between DAERA / NIEA and local councils.</i>

	<p><i>This Council also welcomes a strategic focus on the development of skills and training to support transition to a more circular use of resources. This Council would ask that the Department recognises the need for development of local skills and knowledge and, in planning and delivery, works closely with regional schools and colleges as well as with universities and third sector organisations.</i></p>
21	<p>Do you agree with the following actions proposing to improve compliance and enforcement in the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy? If your answer is no, please explain why.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions 59 to 63 proposed to improve compliance and enforcement <i>No, do not support.</i> <p><i>This Council welcomes the proposed actions to raise awareness of sector obligations, increase capability to share intelligence, target enforcement resources for greatest impact, work in enforcement partnerships, and the introduction of a single Incident Management System. This Council also welcomes the draft Strategy's inclusion of communications and engagement as a necessary precursor to enforcement actions. This Council also notes, however, the Department's current under-resourcing of regulatory enforcement capacity in some areas. The draft Strategy does not adequately address this.</i></p> <p><i>While supporting communications and targeted interventions, this Council would also support increased regulatory enforcement capacity to support optimized compliance with new or revised waste regulations, for example, new recycling requirements on non-household premises. Without a commitment to additional enforcement resources, Northern Ireland will not achieve increased diversion of quality materials to reuse and recycling.</i></p>
Part 4: Monitoring progress	
22	<p>Do you agree with the described approach in Section 4 of the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy to monitoring and evaluation?</p> <p><i>Disagree.</i></p> <p><i>This Council welcomes the aims, actions, and targets proposed in the draft Strategy. We would reiterate our point that, of the 10 targets, only 4 are measurable future objectives.</i></p> <p><i>This Council observes that changes in waste arisings and composition are both useful for policy and investment decision making as well as being indicators of progress. This Council therefore asks for commitment to a timescale outlining regular and frequent gathering of citizen knowledge and behavioural insights. Similarly, the Council asks that the Department makes a commitment to a timescale outlining regular and frequent updating of primary waste composition</i></p>

	<p><i>data across household; commercial and industrial; construction, demolition and excavation; and agricultural sectors. Council also wishes to record that, while it welcomes the introduction of Digital Waste Tracking and the data it will gather, DAERA / NIEA must engage with local councils on the practicalities and timescales for its effective implementation.</i></p>
Part 5: Supporting documentation	
23	<p>Referring to Appendix 3b of the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy, do you agree the Waste and Contaminated Land (NI) Order 1997 requirements for a waste management plan are sufficiently addressed throughout the strategy?</p> <p><i>Disagree.</i></p> <p><i>This draft Strategy does note waste prevention and reuse actions but largely focuses on recycling and residual waste treatment actions. We would reiterate our point that a robust NI Resources and Waste Strategy should consider aim, actions, and objectives across the waste hierarchy and make clearer linkages with related strategies, for example, the Circular Economy and Green</i></p>
24	<p>Do you agree with the conclusions of the Environmental Report, assessing the potential impact of the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy on the Northern Ireland environment?</p> <p><i>Agree.</i></p>
25	<p>Do you agree with the conclusions of the Habitats Regulations Assessment of the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy?</p> <p><i>Agree.</i></p>
26	<p>Do you agree with the conclusions of the Equality Screening Assessment of the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy?</p> <p><i>Agree.</i></p>
27	<p>Do you agree with the conclusions of the Rural Needs Impact Assessment of the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy?</p> <p><i>Disagree.</i></p> <p><i>The RNIA finds no evidence to suggest that the WMS will impact those in rural areas differently from those in urban areas. The RNIA states that consideration of rural impacts is already covered through the Rethinking our Resources recycling</i></p>

consultation and that these interventions will be assessed separately at a policy level.

This Council, however, notes that this Strategy establishes the policy framework for the specific policy interventions which are expected from the recycling consultation. Therefore, it is relevant to point out that waste and recycling services are centred around larger, urban areas resulting in reduced competition to provide such services to businesses and organisations located in rural areas. As a result, the cost of compliance with new regulations may be higher than in urban areas where operators provide more competitively priced services.



Rethinking Our Resources:

Northern Ireland Resources and Waste Management Strategy

January 2026



Department of
Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs

An Roinn
Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe

Department o'
Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers

www.daera-ni.gov.uk

This document is also available on the DAERA website at:

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/rethinking-our-resources-northern-ireland-resources-and-waste-management-strategy>

On request, we can arrange to provide other formats of the documents above, such as:

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Northern Ireland Resources and Waste Management Strategy

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Ministerial Foreword



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Ministerial Foreword

Northern Ireland is making significant strides toward a more sustainable future. As a region with a relatively small population and landmass, we have a unique opportunity to lead by example in how we manage our natural resources.

While our current economy has traditionally followed a linear model - **take, make, use, and dispose** - we are now embracing a more circular approach. Encouragingly, we are already seeing progress, with growing awareness and action across communities, businesses, and government to reduce waste and make better use of our resources.



By prioritising waste reduction, reuse, repair, and recycling, we can unlock a host of benefits:

- **Environmental Gains:** Reducing the amount of waste sent to landfill helps lower greenhouse gas emissions and protects our natural landscapes.
- **Economic Opportunities:** Embracing circular practices can stimulate innovation, create green jobs, and support local businesses.
- **Resource Efficiency:** By keeping materials in use for longer - through refurbishment, remanufacturing, and recycling - we reduce our reliance on finite resources.
- **Community Resilience:** A circular economy fosters local solutions, empowering communities to take ownership of sustainable practices

Currently, [92.1% or 33.6 million tonnes](#) of material used annually in Northern Ireland is not yet cycled back into the economy. While some of this material supports long-lasting infrastructure, there is a tremendous opportunity to do more with what we already have.

Together, we can make Northern Ireland a model of sustainable resource management and circular innovation. To achieve this, Northern Ireland has set a bold and legally binding commitment to reach Net Zero by 2050, as outlined in the Climate Change Act (NI) 2022. Achieving this goal demands a united effort across society, with the resources and waste management sector playing a critical role. Through the Waste and Contaminated Land (NI) Order 1997, the draft Climate Action Plan, and the Environment Act 2021, we are implementing policies that reduce emissions, enhance recycling, and improve resource efficiency. The publication of our first Environmental Improvement Plan and the evolving regulatory landscape shaped by the Windsor Framework further strengthen our environmental governance. Together, these measures form a robust foundation for climate action and a transition to a circular economy that benefits our environment, economy, and communities.

A New Resources and Waste Strategy for Northern Ireland

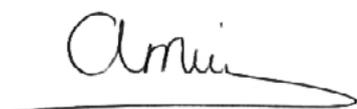
Never has the resources and waste sector been on the cusp of such significant change. Between now and 2035, a raft of legislative and policy interventions are proposed to be brought forward, both by UK Government and by the NI Assembly, all aimed at improving our environment and our economy by encouraging better management of our resources and reducing our reliance on fossil fuels. This document sets the strategic direction for the sector for the next 6 years, taking account of all these upcoming changes.

This draft strategy and its predecessor share an ambition to advance resource efficiency in Northern Ireland. Therefore, a key aim of this draft strategy is to continue to move resources up the waste hierarchy by providing better local opportunities for dealing with our waste, while growing and greening the local economy at the same time.

To achieve this, the draft strategy sets out targets and actions which will help government, and our stakeholders meet and exceed targets, whilst transforming the landscape of waste management. These include:

- **Actions on increasing waste prevention and reuse.**
- **Increased action on household and business recycling to improve the quantity and quality of material recycled.**
- **The introduction of extended producer responsibility for packing materials and a deposit return scheme.**
- **Further action to increase capture of food waste and ensure this type of waste is not sent to landfill.**
- **Actions to improve how we deal with waste in commercial and industrial settings.**

An effective waste strategy is essential to promote sustainability, conserve resources and protect the environment. This draft strategy not only fosters a healthier ecosystem but also encourages community engagement and supports long-term economic resilience. Moving forward, ongoing education, innovation and collaboration across sectors will be critical to adapting to emerging challenges and ensuring the continued success of our waste management efforts.



Andrew Muir MLA

Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs.

Rethinking Our Resources:

Northern Ireland Resources and Waste Management Strategy



Executive Summary

Executive Summary

Over the last two decades in Northern Ireland, we have made significant improvements in how our waste is managed, but new legal commitments and targets mean we now have a unique opportunity to put Northern Ireland's resources to better use, increasing their value to the economy, offering job creation and reducing their impact on the environment. Waste management is not just about how we treat waste but how we are able to manage our valuable resources throughout their full lifecycle by influencing how we consume, how we prevent waste, how we capture it for recycling and how we treat it at the end of its useful life. This is a core aim of this draft strategy.

Improving how resources and waste are managed will require action from all sectors. We recognise that everyone living and working here uses resources and creates waste. Equally, most organisations generate or handle waste to a greater or lesser extent. Some, such as councils, waste management companies and recyclers, have a particular interest in this draft strategy. Given this broad audience, the strategy has been written to be accessible to all. This means that some of the more detailed and technical areas of waste management will be found within the appendices, rather than the main document. A glossary is also available in the appendices.

Understanding the Strategy

The strategy is split into four parts:

Part 1: The Need for Change - Outlines the vision, targets, and objectives driving the strategy.

Part 2: Enabling Change and Empowering Action - Details actions for seven significant waste categories to drive the required change.

Part 3: Making it Happen - Discusses the necessary conditions for effective resource management, including infrastructure, collaboration, communication, research, and enforcement.

Part 4: Monitoring Progress - Explains how success will be measured and reported.

The Aim of the Strategy

The draft strategy aims to integrate policy reforms, modern technology, and partnerships to ensure long-term sustainability and adaptability. It focuses on controlled wastes from households, commercial and industrial premises, and category 3 animal by-products, contributing to recycling targets and Net Zero commitments. The draft strategy provides both long-term plans and short-term actions to drive significant environmental change.

Rethinking Our Resources:

Northern Ireland Resources and Waste Management Strategy

VISION

Our vision is for 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.

The Scope of the Strategy

The proposed scope of this strategy is for **controlled wastes** generated by households, commercial and industrial premises and category 3 animal by products as defined in [Article 10 of Regulation \(EC\) 1069/2009](#). Managing these specific, yet widely generated resources, will make key contributions to the Climate Change Act (NI) 2022 recycling target and Net Zero commitments.

The Need for Change

Despite significant progress in waste management, Northern Ireland faces diminishing returns from earlier efforts. To further improve resource use and waste diversion, more innovation and redesigned policy measures are needed. This draft strategy offers a long-term plan for substantial environmental change, along with practical short-term actions to achieve the desired outcomes.

The waste hierarchy is central to effective waste management, prioritizing prevention, reuse, and recycling to maximize environmental and societal benefits. Key interventions since 1990 include increasing the recycling rate from 10% in 2002 to over 50% in 2024, introducing regulations on the separate collection of food waste, and implementing a carrier bag levy.

These are just some of the key interventions that have driven progress and great advances. According to the [2022 Northern Ireland Greenhouse Gas Inventory](#) we have reduced our GHG emissions from the sector by approximately 1,518Kt CO₂e from 2002. Despite these advances, further action is needed to meet challenging targets and Climate Change obligations.

Enabling Change and Empowering Action

This part of the draft strategy outlines targets and actions for seven waste categories to achieve a 70% recycling rate by 2030. It addresses key challenges and highlights necessary actions for each sector, including improving household recycling quality and quantity, mandatory recycling for non-household municipal sectors, reducing hazardous wastes, and improving agricultural

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waste management. Additionally, it discusses tackling littering and fly-tipping to improve overall resource efficiency and recycling rates as well as wider environmental protection.

Making it Happen

Five key areas are crucial for successful waste management:

1. **Infrastructure and Capacity:** Ensuring sufficient infrastructure to handle and process waste and recyclables.
2. **Working Together to Achieve Shared Goals:** Engaging diverse stakeholders through workshops, webinars, and campaigns.
3. **Communication and Engagement:** Developing a multi-year strategy to inform and motivate citizens.
4. **Research, Innovation, and Skills for the Future:** Prioritising research and innovation to overcome infrastructure and capacity challenges and addressing emerging skills and training needs.
5. **Enforcement:** Ensuring compliance with regulations to maintain a safe and healthy environment.

Monitoring Progress

DAERA will provide strong leadership, bringing stakeholders together to achieve the draft strategy's vision. Supporting governance structures, performance indicators, and baselines are essential for monitoring and evaluating progress. Collaboration with other UK nations and the Republic of Ireland is also crucial for achieving shared goals.

Conclusions

The strategy outlines **10 targets** and **63 actions** to help Northern Ireland achieve its vision. These actions include new support programmes, statutory and best practice guidance, campaigns, data refinements, and cross-departmental collaboration. The draft strategy provides a long-term plan for significant environmental change, alongside clear, effective, and realistic short-term tactics and actions necessary to drive the required outcomes. The actions, which are diverse and complex in design; have been listed within relevant sections, with the full list of actions also available in Appendix 2.

Our Targets

Achieve a waste recycling rate of at least 70% by 2030.

Achieve a municipal waste recycling rate of 55% by 2025.

Achieve a municipal waste recycling rate of 60% by 2030.

Achieve a municipal waste recycling rate of 65% by 2035.

Achieve a 10% cap on the amount of waste going to landfill by 2035.

DAERA will continue to tackle the problem of littering and will continue to work with stakeholders to advance our anti-litter agenda including the introduction of bans or levies on certain materials.

DAERA will continue to lead the development of multi-year, integrated Communications and Engagement for waste and recycling.

DAERA will continue to support updating skills and training needs to facilitate a shift to a more Circular Economy in Northern Ireland.

DAERA will work with Devolved Administrations to develop and implement the first phase of mandatory Digital Waste Tracking across the UK by October 2026.

DAERA will continue to develop a greater understanding of Serious and Organised Crime's involvement in environmental crime, to enhance capabilities in tackling this issue.

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Objectives

1. Increase waste diversion

- Reduce reliance on landfill and recovery, reduce loss of valuable resources, reduce littering and reduce instances of waste crime.

2. Enhance Resource Efficiency

- Increase the quantity and quality of recycling to improve the environment, grow a low-carbon circular economy and to meet our legal targets.

3. Improve Communications and Skills

- Invest in comprehensive communication campaigns and behaviour change to improve resource and waste management. Work with the relevant sectors to ensure the right skills are in place to enable a transition to a circular economy.

4. Strengthen Partnerships and Collaboration

- Work with businesses, industries, communities and the waste sector to develop shared responsibility for waste management and sustainable resource use.

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Need for Change

1. The Need for Change

1.1 Introduction

Northern Ireland has enormous opportunities to put its resources to better use, increasing their value to the economy, offering scope for social gain, such as job creation, and reducing their impact on the environment. While the beginnings of a circular economy have emerged in recent years, with much higher recycling rates, there is potential to go further by fully realising value from the materials arising as waste at the end of their life. This draft strategy document sets out our vision for a more progressive approach to managing resources and waste in Northern Ireland.

VISION

Our vision is for 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.

1.1.1 How to Read Rethinking Our Resources: The New NI Waste Management Strategy

Everyone uses resources and creates waste, whether at home as a householder, in the workplace, or out and about. Equally, most organisations generate or handle waste to a greater or lesser extent. Some, such as councils, waste management companies and recyclers, have a particular interest in this strategy. Given this broad audience, the main body of the strategy has been written to be accessible to all. To do this, much of the technical information relating to the waste management sector, such as legislative requirements, roles and responsibilities and skills has been added to the appendices of this document. Readers can use the 'find' function to search for specific key words or phrases and alternatively can use the table of contents to jump to sections of interest.

Drivers for Change

The drivers for change outlined below and the legislative interventions outlined in Appendix 3a serve as a foundation for shaping Rethinking our Resources, guiding the development of the work and influencing the subsequent outputs to ensure alignment with identified needs and priorities. This waste management strategy is the cornerstone of these workstreams.

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Targets and Actions

There are many targets and actions set out in this strategy. To provide clarity, the associated actions needed to achieve the higher-level targets have been included in the relevant section. A full list of all actions is available in Appendix 2.

1.1.2 Stakeholder Engagement

DAERA has engaged extensively with stakeholders who could be impacted by this draft strategy. Development of the draft strategy has been an iterative process, with stakeholders helping to co-design the detail. This is key to ensuring an impactful strategy as government alone cannot deliver the targets and actions outlined below. With support from the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP), DAERA has actively engaged to date with a wide range of stakeholders including collectors, reprocessors, local authorities, business organisations and trade bodies. Further engagement with key stakeholders will take place whilst this consultation is open for responses.

1.2 Background*What is waste?*

Waste originates from the consumption of products by citizens and businesses across the economic sectors of Northern Ireland. It is defined as [“any substance or object...which the producer or the person in possession of it discards or intends or is required to discard”](#).

Why is action to deal with waste important?

Environmental emissions are generated throughout the entire lifecycle of the products we use daily. While the final treatment of waste typically accounts for around 4% of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, international research highlights that waste prevention, recycling, and the substitution of fossil fuels and virgin raw materials with secondary materials from waste streams could reduce emissions by up to 20% when considering the full lifecycle and cross-sectoral benefits.¹ This demonstrates the significant potential of the waste management sector to contribute to climate mitigation - not only through improved waste treatment but also by enabling more sustainable resource use and supporting the transition to a circular economy.

Several pieces of legislation are crucial to a Northern Ireland waste management strategy because they outline the legislative and policy framework that mandates a transformative shift in how waste is handled, aligning with climate goals and circular economy principles. Key laws such as the Waste and Contaminated Land (NI) Order 1997, the Climate Change Act (NI) 2022, and the Environment Act 2021 impose statutory duties on DAERA to develop and revise waste management plans, set ambitious recycling and landfill reduction targets, and reduce

¹ [IPCC AR 4](#)

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sectoral emissions. The draft Climate Action Plan and Environmental Improvement Plan further detail sector-specific interventions and monitoring mechanisms, while the Windsor Framework introduces post-Brexit regulatory considerations that affect trade and compliance. Together, these instruments shape a comprehensive draft strategy aimed at protecting the environment, improving resource efficiency, and achieving net zero by 2050.

The waste management sector is identified as one of the key sectors, for reducing GHG emissions, within the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022. To achieve this, several policies and proposals have been developed for the draft Climate Action Plan that will mitigate emissions within the sector. More details on the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022, the draft Climate Action Plan and other important legislation is contained in Appendix 3a. Furthermore, an effective waste management strategy that has actions focussed across its lifecycle has the potential to significantly reduce Northern Ireland's environmental impacts, while contributing to economic growth.

Delivering Resource Efficiency: the 2013 NI Waste Management Strategy

The first waste management strategy for Northern Ireland was published in April 2000. This was revised in March 2006, and then superseded by a strategy in 2013, [Delivering Resource Efficiency](#). The 2013 strategy set the direction for waste management in Northern Ireland towards using resources more efficiently, while beginning the development of a low-carbon, circular economy. This strategy also informed the development of three council waste management plans.

To deliver on its ambitions, the 2013 strategy had a total of 27 actions and 17 targets. Together these formed a plan for government action to meet the strategy's objectives, as well as measurable indicators to monitor and evaluate progress.

The [Closure Report](#) for the 2013 strategy, published in June 2022, shows that overall, a total of 36 (82%) of the actions and targets were either achieved, achieved beyond the target date, superseded or alternative action taken. One action was not completed but all remaining actions recorded that improvements were made. Over the lifetime of the 2013 strategy, two headline objectives were successfully met:

- 1. To reduce the amount of biodegradable waste going to landfill to 35% of 1995 levels by 2020; and**
- 2. To achieve a recycling rate of 50% of household waste by 2020.**

Continuing this cycle, the waste management strategy was reviewed and the [Waste Management Plan for Northern Ireland](#) was published in December 2019.

While the 2019 plan fulfilled DAERA's legal obligations to review the previous strategy, its scope meant that it did not provide the strategic waste management direction to introduce new policy

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measures. DAERA has since developed and published a waste policy tracker as a “one-stop shop” on ongoing waste policy, alongside meeting regularly with relevant stakeholders to update them on current and proposed policy.

Waste Management Plan 2019 - Review

This review of the 2019 Waste Management Plan for Northern Ireland (WMPNI) highlights notable progress in household recycling, landfill reduction, and energy recovery, with recycling rates surpassing EU targets and landfill usage dropping significantly. Policy advancements such as Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and the planned Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) reflect alignment with broader UK and EU circular economy goals. Community-led reuse and repair initiatives have expanded, and public engagement has increased through education and legislative tools. However, challenges persist, including data gaps in commercial and industrial waste, insufficient infrastructure for hazardous waste, and slow planning approvals for new facilities.

Looking ahead to this new strategy, the review recommends strengthening data collection and transparency, accelerating infrastructure development, and boosting recycling and reuse efforts. Support for businesses, targeted action on hazardous and marine waste, and sustained public engagement are also key priorities. Securing long-term funding and maintaining alignment with UK and EU policy frameworks will be essential to closing existing gaps and positioning Northern Ireland as a leader in sustainable waste management. This draft strategy has considered and included the recommendations from the review of the 2019 waste management plan, where appropriate.

Proposed Scope

The scope of any strategy needs boundaries to focus its deliverable actions and ensure that Government and key stakeholders can be jointly responsible for its effective delivery. The proposed scope of this draft strategy is for **controlled wastes** generated by households, commercial and industrial premises and category 3 animal by products as defined in [Article 10 of Regulation \(EC\) 1069/2009](#). Managing these specific, yet widely generated resources, will make key contributions to the Climate Change Act recycling target and Net Zero commitments.

Whilst there are clear improvements in how Northern Ireland has managed its waste over time, international strategies show that, because of diminishing returns associated with the earlier drivers, improving both resource use and waste diversion will require even more innovation and a redesign of policy measures to drive the necessary change. This draft strategy provides the long-term plan to drive significant environmental change, but it also provides clear, effective and realistic shorter-term tactics and actions necessary to drive the required outcomes.

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1.3 Rethinking Our Resources: The Need for Change



The waste hierarchy (figure 1), is the cornerstone of effective waste management policy, offering a clear framework to prioritise actions that will maximise environmental and societal benefits. By emphasising prevention, reuse and recycling before considering disposal, the hierarchy encourages sustainable resource use and crucially, reduces greenhouse gas emissions and minimises the strain on our already limited landfill capacity.

Using this approach to inform policy empowers everyone to rethink waste and view it as a valuable resource which can foster innovation and create opportunities for green jobs. As a guiding principle, the waste hierarchy inspires meaningful change, ensuring that our policies and legislation align with long-term environmental goals whilst promoting a cleaner, healthier future for all.

This draft Waste Management Strategy covers a range of activities for sectors to better manage their waste and includes prevention activity along with actions for recycling and more environmentally efficient final treatment of waste. However, it is not a duplication of the Waste Prevention Programme, and the actions contained within. This draft Waste Management Strategy is intended to be read alongside and in conjunction with the current and any future Waste Prevention Programme.

The [Northern Ireland Environmental Statistics Report](#) published in 2023 highlighted the level of public concern in NI about environmental issues was high in 2022/23, with 80 percent very or fairly concerned about the environment, and this concern was equal across gender, age and race.

Since 1990, a significant number of interventions have transformed the waste management landscape; notable policies are:

- Increasing our recycling rate from 10% in 2002 to over 50% in 2024.
- Introducing regulations on the separate collection of food waste. NI was the first UK nation to do so.
- Introducing a carrier bag levy. NI was the first UK nation to do so.

These are just some of the key policies that have driven the progress and great advances. We have also reduced our GHG emissions from the sector by 61% during this time frame.

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But we now must go further.

Meeting ambitious targets and fulfilling our Climate Change commitments requires urgent action to address the long-term consequences of exceeding our planet’s limits. How we manage our existing resources, and the waste sector will play a critical role in achieving this.

1.3.1 Rethinking Our Resources: Inspiring Action and Driving Change

Rethinking our Resources is a DAERA driven set of workstreams relating to reform within the resources and waste sector. Several new legislative and strategic drivers have been developed and implemented since the inception of the previous Waste Management Strategy: Delivering Resource Efficiency in 2013. Some of our existing and new critical enablers are set out below.

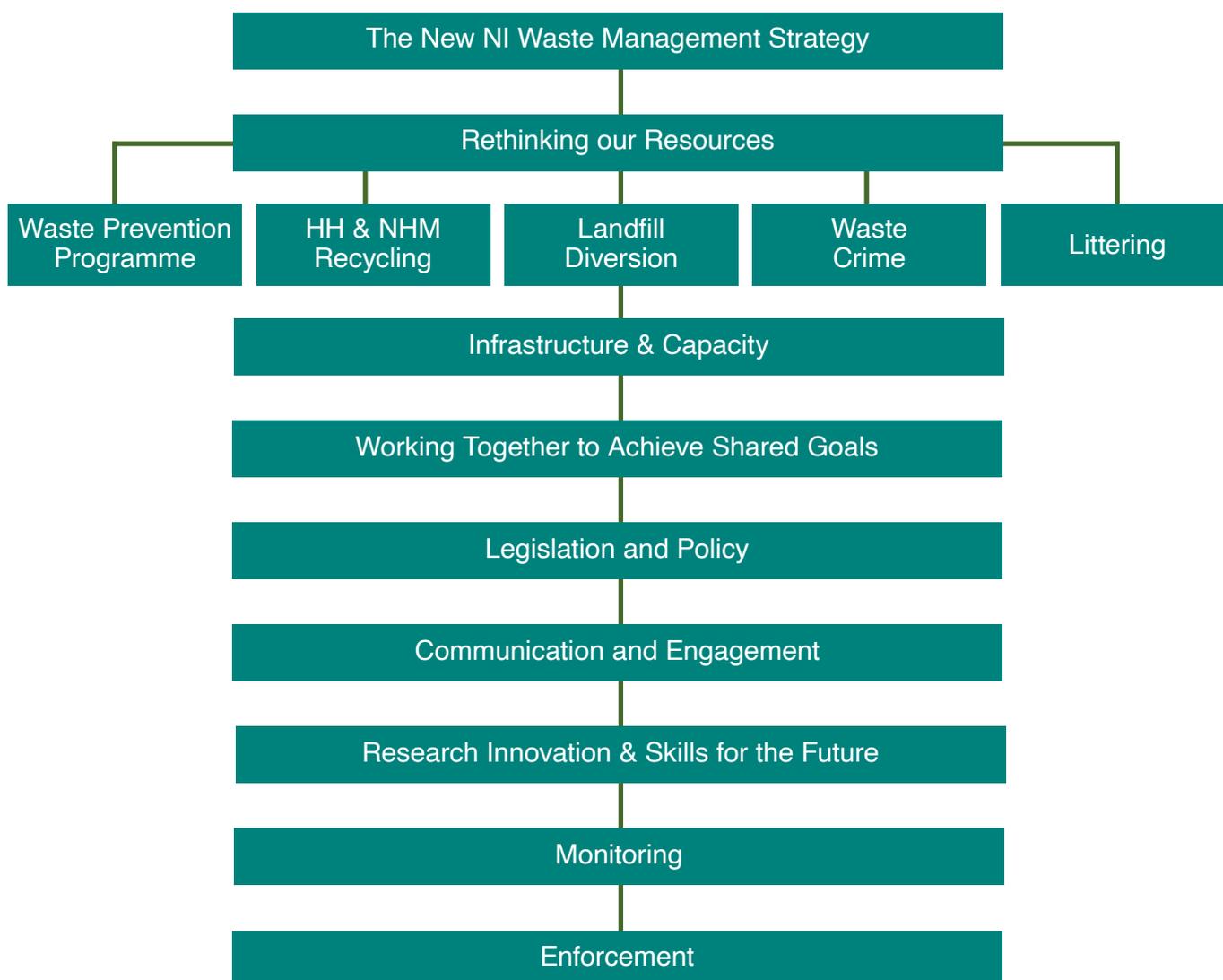


Figure 2: Rethinking Our Resources Workstreams

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1.4 Circular Economy

The prospect is stark. If we do not change the way we manage our resources, our existing natural resources will continue to be depleted, and irreparable damage will have been done to the planet, which in turn will have a devastating impact on humanity and nature.

Our current, linear economic approach has resulted in an unsustainable growth model that is having an irreversible effect on Earth’s ability to provide for us and threatens the way we live. We are already seeing early signs of the impact, with the cost of oil, gas, and electricity rising at unprecedented rates due to dwindling resources and disruption to supply chains.

The [Circularity Gap report](#) found that NI that NI imports and extracts around 31.5 million tonnes of materials annually. That is the equivalent weight of nearly 16 million cars or around 17 tonnes of material for every person living in NI. For a country the size and population of NI, we are consuming, and wasting, a disproportionate amount of the earth’s precious natural resources.

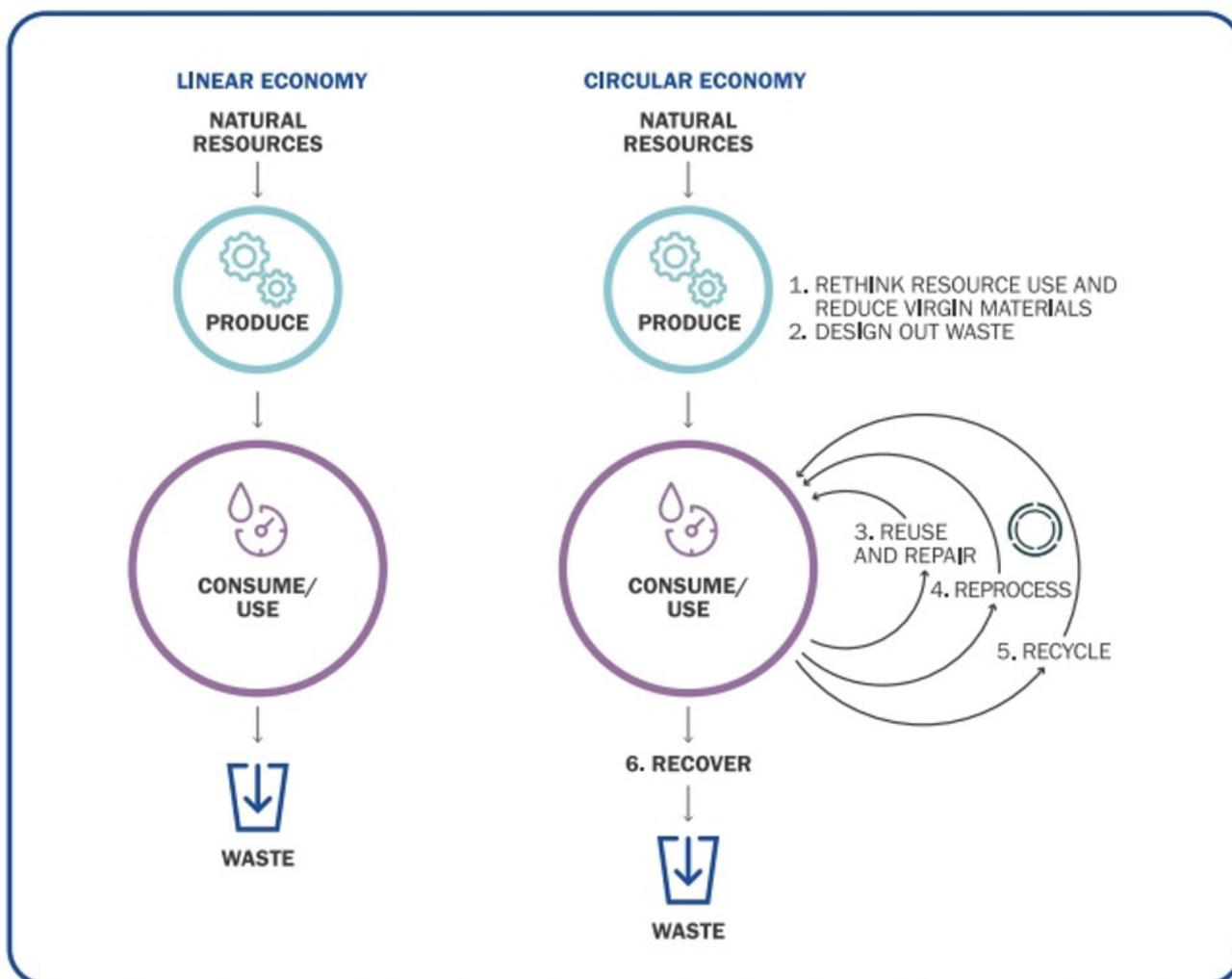


Figure 3: Linear vs Circular - Taken from the Draft Circular Economy Strategy for Northern Ireland

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It will require ambitious and innovative actions to tackle the Climate Crisis, and as such, Northern Ireland is developing its first ever Climate Action Plan to mitigate the climate impacts of greenhouse gases. The Climate Risk report for Northern Ireland details impacts on health and wellbeing, agriculture, infrastructure, business, terrestrial and marine species, and forestry because of climate extremes such as flooding, and temperature rises.

Climate change is an issue that affects everyone living on our planet. It requires action from everyone. Although NI is the smallest region of the UK with a population of just 1.9 million people, we have an opportunity to lead the way in changing the way we live, the way we consume and the way we waste.

Implementing a low-carbon Circular Economy represents an essential component of the solution. However, transitioning to a Circular Economy is not solely an environmental necessity; it is equally crucial to improve both the quantity and quality of materials collected in order to maximise resource value. Such enhancements are intended to strengthen the circular economy, unlock economic opportunities, and bolster supply chain resilience, furthermore, this shift offers significant societal benefits. By fostering green job creation, upskilling the workforce, promoting self-sufficiency, and upgrading infrastructure, we can support sustainable growth and ensure prosperity for future generations.

1.5 Extended Producer Responsibility

A core principle of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is to ensure that producers can be financially incentivised to design products that are easier to reuse, dismantle and/or recycle at end of life and to minimise the volume of virgin materials used in their production. It also means that the cost of collection and treatment of end-of-life products is paid for by the producer. The first such EPR scheme to be introduced is for packaging (pEPR).

Following two consultations, the four UK nations have finalised the necessary legislation for household pEPR, with the implementation of payments to councils from the producers of packaging beginning in 2025. The current UK-wide packaging producer responsibility system has been in place since 1997. We now achieve over 60% overall recycling for packaging. Under the revised pEPR proposals, the UK packaging recycling rate is expected to reach 76% by 2030.

Coupled with the [Plastic Packaging Tax \(General\) Regulations 2022](#), which incentivise producers of plastic packaging to source at least 30% of input material from recycled sources, the introduction of pEPR will enhance circular economy practices and the quality and quantity of materials collected for recycling. Packaging producers will pay the cost of dealing with household packaging waste and they will be required to attain higher targets for material recycling.

The UK government is also working with Devolved Governments to improve producer

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responsibility for waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE), batteries and end-of-life vehicles (ELV). A UK-wide [consultation](#) to reform the producer responsibility scheme for WEEE was published in early 2024, along with a [call for evidence](#), seeking views on longer-term reforms to the WEEE Regulations 2013. A UK-wide government response was issued in December 2024. A UK-wide Statutory Instrument amending the existing WEEE regulations was laid at Westminster on 03 June 2025, delivering two key WEEE priorities. Further longer-term legislative reforms, including introducing new UK wide Regulations, are expected to be delivered in 2027.

1.6 Deposit Return Scheme

The introduction of a deposit return scheme (DRS) for single-use drinks containers in Northern Ireland is part of wider UK reforms of extended producer responsibility for packaging (drinks containers being a form of packaging). As with pEPR, the DRS aims to make businesses take financial responsibility for packaging right through the value chain to disposal. The scheme is designed to contribute to wider circular economy reforms by keeping materials in circulation as long as possible, minimising waste and litter.

DAERA is working with other UK jurisdictions to optimise and harmonise a DRS, with implementation planned across the UK from 2027 and draft regulations now finalised. The department regularly liaises with officials in the Republic of Ireland who introduced a DRS in 2024 to help inform development of the UK scheme. DAERA also has good input from stakeholders and business representatives from across the island of Ireland to identify any unintended consequences of the two schemes.

The [outcome of two consultations](#) has determined that single-use drinks containers containing at least 150ml and up to 3l of liquid will be in-scope of the DRS. The containers include polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottles, and steel and aluminium cans.

[Across the UK](#), consumers go through an estimated 14 billion plastic drinks bottles and 9 billion drinks cans a year, [with an estimated 420 million bottles and 270 million cans consumed in Northern Ireland](#). The UK DRS will have a 90% recycling target within three years of launch.

1.7 Digital Waste Tracking

A UK-wide digital waste tracking system is in development. The aim of digital waste tracking is to join up fragmented data collection systems and replace paper-based record-keeping, making it much easier and less time consuming for waste collection companies to comply with reporting requirements. Under the Environment Act 2021 new regulations place a requirement on all in the waste chain (except households) to record their transactions and the onward movements of waste.

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Digital waste tracking, phase one of which will be mandatory by the end of October 2026, will:

- help support more effective regulation of waste movements.
- help businesses comply with their duty of care regulatory responsibilities with regards to waste.
- help us move towards a more circular economy by enabling us to maximise the value we extract from our resources.

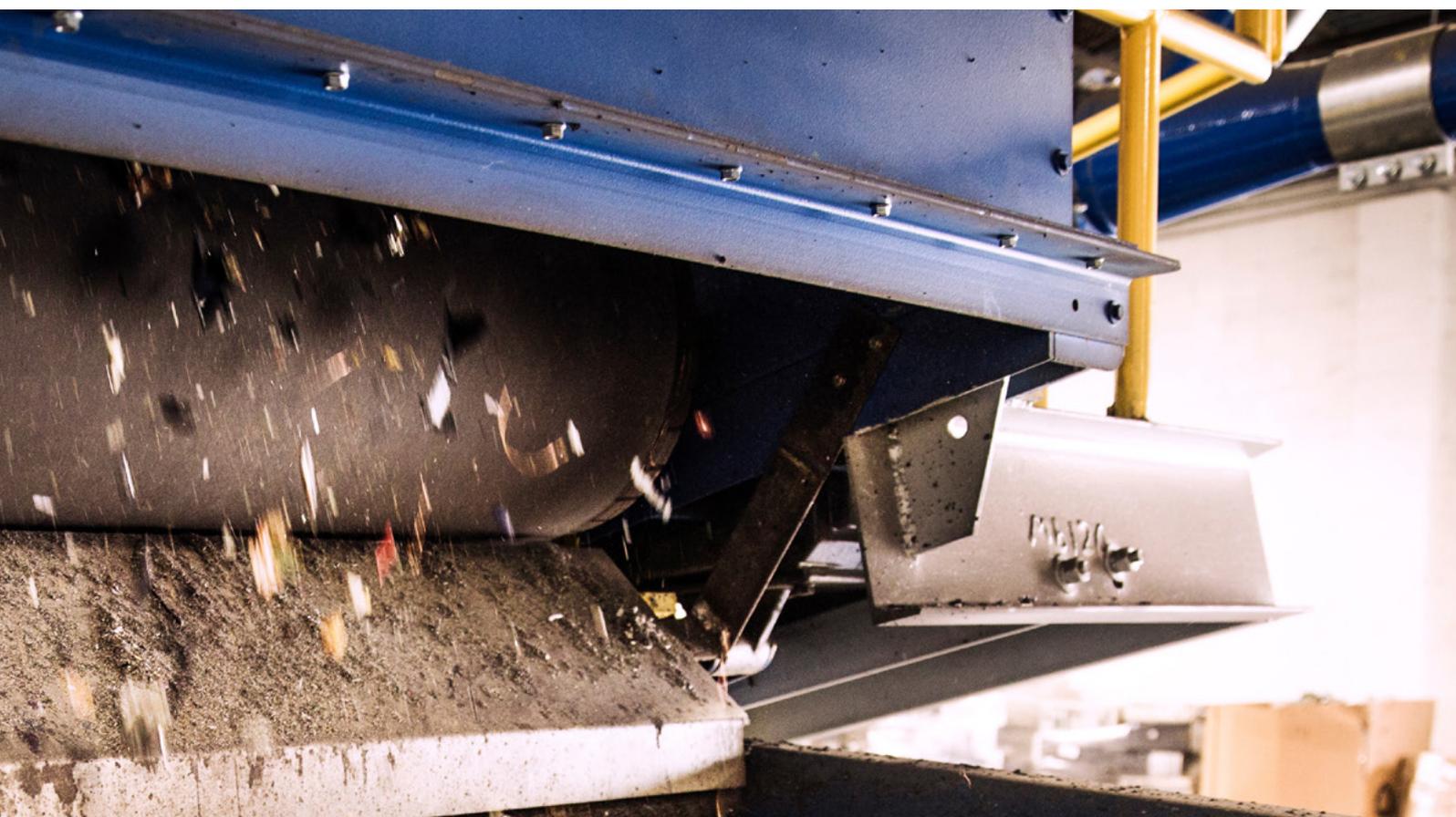
Once the new waste tracking service is fully implemented, information about waste transfers, movements and activities will be recorded in one place and therefore it should be possible to remove many of the existing separate reporting requirements for businesses and local authorities.

In 2022 the UK government, the Scottish Government, the Welsh Government and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in Northern Ireland, jointly published a consultation to seek views on our proposals for the service. A summary of responses and joint government response is available [here](#).

The proposed targets and actions in this draft strategy are made on the best available data relative to the sectors and waste streams in scope. As digital waste tracking is implemented and starts to improve the picture of the waste producing landscape, the progress of the actions and setting of the targets within this strategy will be regularly reviewed.

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Enabling Change and Empowering Action



2. Enabling Change and Empowering Action

This section of the strategy highlights how the seven key waste categories contribute significantly to Northern Ireland's overall waste stream. It sets out clear targets to drive meaningful change and outlines actions designed to empower all stakeholders to play an active role in achieving these essential improvements.

The seven categories of waste are:

- 1. Household waste**
- 2. Non-household municipal waste**
- 3. Commercial and industrial waste**
- 4. Construction and demolition waste**
- 5. Hazardous waste**
- 6. Agricultural waste and,**
- 7. Littering and fly-tipping**

Achieving 70% Recycling by 2030.

A key legislative target required by the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 is that the Department must ensure that at least 70% of waste is recycled by 2030 in Northern Ireland. The types of waste to be included within this target are not outlined within the legislation, therefore this strategy proposes that this target includes, and is limited to, the following controlled waste sectors to achieve the 70% target for Northern Ireland: household waste, non-household municipal waste, commercial and industrial waste, construction and demolition waste, hazardous waste and agricultural waste.

This part of the draft strategy then sets out the key challenges that are faced by each sector in improving how they manage their resources over the next six years and beyond. Key highlights include ways to improve the quality and quantity of recycling from households; the implementation of recycling for the non-household municipal sector (this includes businesses, hospitals, schools, public buildings and more); the reduction of hazardous wastes and improvements to how agricultural waste is dealt with.²

Part 2 also includes narrative on littering and fly-tipping. Whilst we do not anticipate that these will form part of the scope of the 70% target, they are, nevertheless, an important facet of an effective waste management strategy. Action to tackle littering and fly-tipping helps push those resources into better management and recovery systems, improving overall resource efficiency and increasing recycling rates as well as having a positive impact on our environment.

The sections below feature targets and associated enabling actions that will help deliver those targets. A full list of targets and enabling actions can be found in Appendix 1 & 2.

² Please note: Agricultural waste in this context has a limited scope, and category 1 & 2 animal by products are not included.

2.1 Household Waste

2.1.1 Introduction

Household waste includes materials collected directly from households via kerbside collections, services to communal properties, material taken to bring sites and household recycling centres, and several other smaller sources including litter bins.

[Household waste makes up approximately 11% of Northern Ireland’s overall waste generated by weight.](#)

Since 2006/07 household waste has accounted for 86-90% of the total waste collected by councils in Northern Ireland. Household waste accounted for 87.5% of all council-collected waste during 2023/24.

According to [the most recent data](#), in 2023/24 household waste arisings in Northern Ireland amounted to 875,443 tonnes. Only 0.3% of this waste was prepared for reuse. This low figure is largely to do with the inability of the system to effectively capture and measure reuse figures. The household waste recycling rate stood at 51.1%.

Progress over the past 20 years in managing resources and waste has seen a shift away from a reliance on landfill and an increase in the proportion of waste sent for recycling. The recycling rate for household waste in Northern Ireland has increased from 10% in 2002 to a high of 51.9% in 2019/20, making it the second highest recycling nation within the UK and the 9th highest globally.³

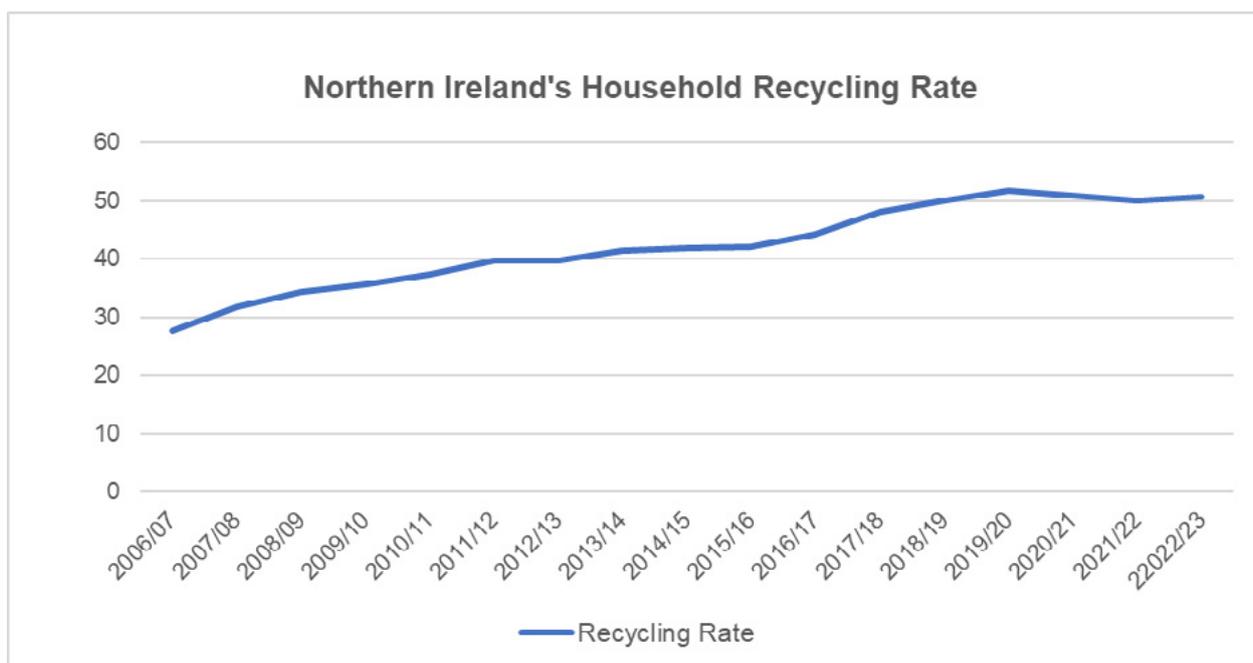


Figure 4: Northern Ireland’s household waste recycling rate (2006/07-2022/23)

³ Eunomia Global Recycling League Table May 2024.

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Although recycling rates have improved significantly, progress has plateaued since the Covid pandemic. We continue to send valuable materials to landfill, where they cannot be recovered or repurposed, and instead release harmful greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change. Of relevance is biodegradable waste which if sent to landfill can emit harmful greenhouse gases (in particular, methane) for decades.

Key opportunities to reduce the environmental impact of waste include.

- 1. Minimising waste generation**
- 2. Increasing the quality and quantity of recycling**
- 3. Maximising separation of recyclables to ensure optimum reprocessing opportunities.**
- 4. Diverting waste from landfill to alternative treatment methods further up the waste hierarchy.**

2.1.2 Challenges

[Waste composition data for Northern Ireland](#) shows that there remains untapped potential for further gains in the recycling rate by capturing more materials for reprocessing or preventing them being generated as waste in the first place. Key materials that are present in the remaining residual waste stream are food waste and packaging, both valuable resource streams with large environmental impacts.

Prevention and reuse

There are significant opportunities in the area of prevention to enhance outcomes by providing citizens with a broader array of options to minimise waste and encourage product reuse, thereby reducing the likelihood of disposal. A challenge historically with waste prevention and

minimisation has been the measurability of interventions and confirming the good progress in this area made by Northern Ireland stakeholders. Demonstrating the clear benefits and impacts of prevention is important to ensure minimisation and reuse activities are clearly established at the top of the waste hierarchy. Improvements are needed in measurement, data and case studies to quantify the benefits and share good practice insights.



Figure 5: The New 2 You reuse store at the entrance to Pennyburn Recycling Centre in Derry City and Strabane District Council.

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A small number of councils now provide reuse shops at their household recycling centres, while many have been implementing initiatives to promote reuse, such as Community RePaint initiatives and partnerships with local charities to share both new and pre-loved toys at Christmas. Despite the progress made, figures for 2023/24 show that only 2,513 tonnes, or 0.3% of local authority collected waste, was prepared for reuse. However, the financial, environmental and social benefits of these activities are considerable, as measured in the [Benefits of Reuse Tool](#).

Case Study: Building Sustainable Futures

Establishing a Northern Ireland Reuse and Repair Network

One successfully delivered action of the current Waste Prevention Programme was to undertake a feasibility study into the economic and social benefits of establishing a reuse and repair network in Northern Ireland.

From this feasibility study, Northern Ireland Resources Network (NIRN) was established and became incorporated in February 2022. NIRN is the representative body for reuse and repair organisations, established with support from DAERA and now funded by the Carrier Bag Levy, with the aim to promote sustainable reuse and repair as a practical way of tackling Northern Ireland's waste generation. The network encompasses a diverse range of organisations including community groups, social enterprises, charities and all eleven local authorities.

Members from NIRN all share a commitment to community-driven initiatives with activities ranging from repair cafes, community fridges and lending libraries.

As one of the few organisations in Northern Ireland focused on the top tiers of the Waste Hierarchy, the learnings from NIRN and its members are valuable in highlighting the current and potential activities to take in tackling Northern Ireland's waste generation.

Each year, NIRN captures the cumulative triple line benefits (environmental, social and economic) of their members. In 2023 their members' metrics continued to grow:

- Environmental: **8,261** tonnes reused, with **41,667** tonnes of carbon savings.
- Social: **294,999** volunteer hours, benefiting **305,774** citizens.
- Economic: turnover **£14,960,305** and trained or upskilled **1,052** people.

As NIRN supports existing members to grow their activities further as well as increasing the number of members each year, these activities will deliver increased quantitative data.

NIRN has been in operation for 4 years and continues to go from strength to strength, enhancing the profile of reuse and repair across Northern Ireland, contributing to our circular economy and our net zero ambitions.



Figure 6: Eimear Montague (left), Executive Director NIRN presenting Andrew Muir (right), Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs with a bow tie made from recycled materials at an event in Stormont.

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Evidence indicates that limiting the amount of residual waste households can dispose of encourages greater use of recycling services and reduces overall waste generation. This approach also discourages the purchase of non-recyclable products commonly found in the residual waste stream. However, the challenge is to ensure that citizens have comprehensive recycling services with sufficient capacity for their recyclables and food waste, along with supporting policies for smelly/odorous waste to complement the restriction in residual capacity.

Food waste remains a significant part of Northern Ireland's household and non-household waste. Recycling is a positive step but reducing municipal food waste remains a policy priority for DAERA. Reducing wasted food generates the twin benefits of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and costs for householders and businesses. Many councils offer home composting schemes, and these have been encouraged through behaviour change campaigns, however, not every household is suitable for undertaking home composting due to lack of space. Therefore, other activities should be considered for prevention of food waste within these households.

Efficient, local recycling

Most of us want to do the right thing when we recycle and therefore, we believe that every householder in Northern Ireland should have the same opportunity to recycle the same materials no matter where they live or work. DAERA is seeking to establish a comprehensive core set of materials to be offered across all 11 council areas and which can be added to over time. Not only does this approach make recycling easier for the people of Northern Ireland, but it also affords government and councils the opportunity to deliver consistent and joined up communications.

There are clear opportunities through material targeting and increased separation in collection systems to ensure that dry recyclables avoid contamination and meet the specifications required to be processed by Northern Ireland businesses. Where recyclables go to is incredibly important to citizens and the local Northern Ireland economy. DAERA has recently published council reports on [where materials are being transported to](#).

A key challenge is to help councils explore the opportunities to transition to greater material separation, minimise contamination, reduce service delivery and processing costs, and ensure residents are not adversely burdened. There are [UK examples](#) of a high separation, lower-cost collection service with high satisfaction rates reported by households. Supporting the transition to a circular economy means we should take more responsibility for our own waste, managing and processing as much as possible here and within the UK and Ireland, reducing our reliance on exports of material.

[Evidence from across the UK](#) clearly shows that recycling rates are affected by collection scheme design and influenced by the contextual variables of each council area. These factors include the proportion of properties with gardens, the number of flatted properties and the deprivation of the area, which is associated with both participation and the amount of waste

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that can be recycled. This means that each council area will have a natural ceiling on recycling performance that varies according to their demographics and geography. Having a single universal target for household recycling will not drive the right outcomes since some areas are unlikely to achieve the average and those areas that could divert more material may not be sufficiently incentivised. Recognising that each area has different levels of recycling potential and then providing tailored support to achieve the optimum level in each area is essential to maximise the contributions needed to increase national recycling rates.

The capture of organic waste for recycling is essential to contribute to meeting the recycling targets. Garden waste is already collected free by councils and in high volumes across Northern Ireland. A key challenge is that high-capture food waste schemes typically involve investment in weekly collections, free liner supply to make the system sufficiently clean for households, and on-going communications.

2.1.3 Actions

DAERA commits to the following actions:

1. Define what is to be included in the waste recycling 70% target and identify the contributions required from the household, business, commercial and industrial sectors.
2. Introduce an EPR scheme for household packaging.
3. Flexible plastic packaging to be collected for recycling from households.
4. Develop reform of the Producer Responsibility Schemes for WEE and Batteries by 2027, and End of Life Vehicles in line with Windsor Framework requirements and UK ambition.
5. Introduce DRS for single use drinks containers in Northern Ireland.
6. Conduct an up-to-date waste compositional analysis to determine the composition of household waste in Northern Ireland.
7. Develop guidance to ensure all councils in Northern Ireland collect a core set of materials that includes glass bottles, paper and card, plastic bottles, plastic pots tubs and trays, cartons and metal packaging. Plastic film will be introduced to the core set in 2027. The core set will be reviewed regularly.
8. Develop guidance to set out minimum service standards for local councils on delivering household recycling collections, in collaboration with all councils and wider stakeholders.

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9. Develop plans to ensure that all councils provide food waste collection services to all households in Northern Ireland and enhance their existing food waste collections to increase capture of food waste.
10. Administer the Household Waste Recycling Collaborative Change Programme (HWRCCP) as a funding mechanism for Councils to transform kerbside recycling and Household Recycling Centre infrastructure and services to realise the economic potential of recycling to the economy.
11. Implement measures to divert more household biodegradable waste from landfill.
12. Develop guidance for all councils in Northern Ireland to assist in reducing residual waste collected from households, reflecting the move towards the collection of more recyclables, reuse and waste prevention. Household circumstances will be considered and exemptions provided where appropriate.
13. Implement and review the activities in the Waste Prevention Programme.
14. Review the feasibility of setting waste prevention targets for Northern Ireland.
15. Continue to promote the MyRecyclingNI website and encourage councils to improve their end destination data reporting to ensure households understand where their recyclable materials are being processed.

2.2 Non-household municipal waste

2.2.1. Introduction

This draft strategy and its predecessor share an ambition to advance resource efficiency in Northern Ireland. However, where the previous strategy largely focused on improving waste management and recycling from household sources, we now need to go further. As such, this draft strategy includes specific proposals designed to elevate recycling performance of household-like waste that is generated across other sectors, including businesses and the public and third sectors.

This change in scope is supported by regulation. The Waste (Circular Economy) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 transposes the EU Circular Economy Package (CEP) in Northern Ireland, amending both the WCLO and the Waste Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2011. Key to this is the extension of the scope of the definition of municipal waste to include **waste collected from sources other than households where this waste is similar in nature and**

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composition. This means that most businesses, public sector and third sector organisations are now in scope of this revised definition. These sectors include, but are not limited to, retail and wholesale, hospitality, food manufacturing, health centres and hospitals, schools and further education, offices and similar non-food-producing outlets. This type of waste is known as non-household municipal (NHM) waste. Estimates provided by WRAP to support the impact assessment for the recent consultation [Rethinking Our Resources: Measures for Climate Action and a Circular Economy in Northern Ireland Consultation I Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs \(daera-ni.gov.uk\)](#) have shown that in 2021 approximately 57,920 businesses and organisations in Northern Ireland were within scope of this definition. It further estimated these organisations produced around 767,044 tonnes of waste that year. This is approximately the same annual tonnage of waste produced by all Northern Ireland's households combined. Of the approximately 767,044 tonnes of NHM waste produced, approximately 348,000 tonnes (45%) was estimated to have been collected for recycling.

NHM sectors	Total	Micro (0-9)	Small (10-49)	Medium (50-249)	Large (250+)
Food manufacturing	550	360	120	50	20
Retail and wholesale	15,790	12,730	2,700	325	35
Transport and storage	3,700	3,185	390	115	10
Hospitality	5,090	3,740	1,215	125	5
Education	3,310	1,540	1,440	325	10
Health	4,765	2,830	1,440	435	60
Office and other services	24,715	21,500	2,540	565	115
	57,920	45,885	9,845	1,940	255

Table 1: NHM entities by activity and number of employees, 2021⁴

Scale of NHM waste

In 2020 DAERA published [WRAP's Municipal Recycling Potential in Northern Ireland](#) report alongside its [Future Recycling](#) discussion document. This study and stakeholder feedback found that the NHM recycling rates have significant potential to increase and are an essential contributor to meeting the municipal recycling target. Larger businesses were generally found to be already recycling their respective waste streams, with established systems in place. However, most of the small and micro-sized businesses were found to be either recycling small quantities of material or have no services in place at all.

⁴ Notes: All figures are rounded to the nearest 5 units. Figures may differ from those published in ONS outputs due to the application of a different rounding methodology. Business numbers obtained from <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/> and waste tonnage values from WRAP analysis for DAERA.

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Food waste remains a significant component of Northern Ireland's municipal waste stream, representing approximately 40% of NHM waste. In 2015, the [Food Waste Regulations \(Northern Ireland\)](#) were laid to encourage the recycling of food waste from food-producing premises. These regulations place an obligation on food businesses producing 5kg or more of food waste per week to arrange for this material to be presented separately for collection and recycling.

Responses to the *Future Recycling* discussion document indicated a strong preference for NHM waste to be segregated into a minimum of four streams - **food waste, mixed dry recyclables, glass containers, and residual waste**. Based on this approach, WRAP analysis has identified the potential for NHM recycling to exceed 80%, almost double the current estimated rate.

2.2.2 Challenges

Barriers to NHM Recycling

Stakeholder feedback to the Future Recycling discussion document in 2020 confirmed views that individual businesses and organisations may face specific barriers to increasing the amount of recycling they can do. These barriers may include, for example, an increased service cost, limited site storage space for containers or a lack of service provision in more rural areas.

Although there has been no specific monitoring of business compliance with the Food Waste Regulations, recent surveys of business waste and recycling practices in Northern Ireland indicate that compliance is generally low. This may be a combination of a lack of knowledge of the recycling requirement on food businesses, the potential additional cost burden for some organisations and limited support to help optimise services to keep costs low. As demonstrated across the UK, the wide range of businesses in scope of the current Northern Ireland regulations would also warrant dedicated resources to deliver education, compliance checks and any enforcement required.

The need for new recycling regulation.

All businesses have a duty of care to take all reasonable steps to keep their waste safe and to ensure that it is only ever passed to an authorised person to deal with or dispose of safely. However, there are currently no legislative or regulatory requirements on businesses and other workplaces to separate specific dry materials for recycling. The decisions of businesses and other organisations to introduce recycling depends on a wide range of factors, including the potential cost savings or cost burdens, space or site capacity to store recyclables for presentation, corporate policy, and availability of recycling service providers.

Potential Cost Burden

Services offered to businesses for waste and recycling collection operate in a competitive market where pricing varies according to factors such as the quantities of waste generated,

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its composition and contract terms. The market share of the provider in any one area also influences the efficiencies in delivery and the minimum level of charge to offset the operational and treatment costs. The absence of robust data on reporting what services are in place in each area, limited pricing information and the wide range of businesses affected make it challenging to understand the real cost burden that a business may face changing its services and where best to target support.

The cost of a council or private operator collection of a recycling container is lower than the cost of a collection of a similarly sized residual waste container. Businesses can potentially reduce waste disposal costs by recycling more and by reducing the number of residual waste containers or collections they pay to have collected. DAERA developed and launched a suite of new resources to support businesses to optimise their recycling and waste service configurations in Autumn 2024. See the [Business of Recycling](#) website for more details.

Smaller sized premises may be unable to reduce the number of residual waste containers they require. The introduction of recycling could therefore result in no cost saving, or perhaps an additional cost to the business. The responses to the *Future Recycling* discussion document confirmed cross-sector interest in a range of mechanisms to reduce costs for businesses, including joint procurement initiatives.

Communications and behaviour change

To date limited campaigns have been provided to promote recycling behaviours at the workplace. This contrasts with household recycling which has been the focus of behaviour change campaigns over the last 20 years.

The diversity of business types within the NHM sector, from offices through to healthcare premises, means they tend to have different communication channels and networks through which information is shared making joined up approaches to communications more difficult. Communication plans and support measures to guide businesses through future changes will need to be adaptable to take account of the sector variations and their operating models and design approaches to successfully engage the critical staff involved in procuring and managing waste services.

Waste prevention and reuse remain a strategic focus for government. Reducing waste in the workplace has been demonstrated to reduce costs for businesses.

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To increase NHM recycling rates, DAERA commits to the following:

- 16. Deliver a targeted national campaign to raise awareness in advance of the introduction of any new workplace recycling practices.**
- 17. Work with councils and service providers to develop a minimum service standard for non-household waste and recycling services.**
- 18. Develop guidance, tools and resources to support workplaces to implement effective recycling practices.**
- 19. Work with Invest NI, trade bodies, councils and other stakeholders to ensure businesses are aware of the requirements and the support available to them.**
- 20. Undertake a review of the Food Waste Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 with a view to extending the scope to all businesses.**
- 21. Develop regulations requiring businesses and other non-household organisations to present a consistent core list of materials for recycling. The core list of materials will mirror the core list of materials collected by household waste and recycling services to achieve consistency across sectors.**
- 22. Progress actions to reduce or eliminate the disposal of NHM biodegradable waste to landfill.**
- 23. Review, with councils, the potential for household recycling centres (HRCs) to be adapted to accept, measure and monitor non-household waste and recycling.**
- 24. Through waste composition analysis, establish overall and sectoral baseline non-household waste compositions and arisings.**
- 25. Establish a reporting framework to capture non-household waste and recycling performance data, including end destinations for materials.**

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2.3 Commercial and Industrial Waste

2.3.1. Introduction

The previous waste strategy, Delivering Resource Efficiency, noted that an absence of mandatory reporting resulted in a lack of robust data on commercial and industrial (C&I) waste arisings, composition and recycling. Waste and recycling estimates were obtained through surveys of commerce and industry. The strategy referenced [WRAP's Northern Ireland Commercial and Industrial \(C&I\) Waste Estimates report](#), which indicated that of 1.3 million tonnes of C&I waste in 2009, 0.8 million tonnes was estimated to be of industrial origin. .

More recent analysis by WRAP for DAERA modelled 1.44 million tonnes of C&I waste annually, including NHM arisings but excluding agricultural waste. This figure was modelled using a similar methodology to that used to estimate 2009 arisings.

Most industrial sectors remain outside the scope of the Circular Economy Package targets, set out at the beginning of this strategy. WRAP analysis of 2021 [Nomis - Official Census and Labour Market Statistics](#) local unit data has identified 4,925 entities within those wider industrial sectors. These are listed in Table 2 below.

Industrial sectors (excluding NHM sectors)	Total	Micro (0-9)	Small (10-49)	Medium (50-249)	Large (250+)
Drink and tobacco	70	60	5	5	0
Textile, wood, paper and publishing	795	635	130	30	0
Power and utilities	600	545	40	15	0
Chemical, non-metallic minerals manufacture	615	425	135	40	15
Metal manufacturing	1,010	790	180	35	5
Machinery and equipment	1,835	1,495	225	85	30
	4,925	3,950	715	210	50

Table 2: Local industrial entities by sector and number of employees, 2021⁵

What is not in scope?

Consistent with previous studies, the following sectors are not included within the scope of C&I:

- Agricultural, forestry, fishing, and aquaculture.
- Mining and extraction.
- Sewerage and waste management.

⁵ Notes: All figures are rounded to the nearest 5 units. Figures may differ from those published in ONS outputs due to the application of a different rounding methodology. Source: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk>

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- Construction and engineering.
- Businesses within households and extraterritorial organisations.

Although the baseline and recycling performance data is poor for industrial sectors in Northern Ireland, it is thought that industrial recycling rates may be relatively good.

Northern Ireland businesses are provided with advice on how to [save energy and reduce waste](#) through several Invest NI-funded programmes. All businesses can access Invest NI's resource efficiency guides and resource matching service, delivered by International Synergies NI Ltd. Businesses with a combined annual energy and resource spend of more than £30,000 can request support to develop sustainability reports and access to technical consultancy support.

2.3.2 Challenges

The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 has established an ambitious recycling target of 70% by 2030. This is five years ahead of the CEP's 65% recycling target. The waste streams, and therefore sectors, in scope of the 2030 target have yet to be defined.

To establish a framework for improvement, it will be necessary to establish a robust baseline of waste arisings and current recycling performance for all sectors within scope. Until improvements in the tracking of waste arisings can be made, only estimates of recycling contribution and waste prevention potential can be made.

As part of its plan to improve waste data, DAERA will seek to gather information to determine business count; waste composition overall and by sector; and NHM tonnes of waste and recycling for the industrial sectors in Northern Ireland.

C&I sectors have not been a focus of previous strategies. C&I sectors face diverse waste prevention and recycling challenges. As such there is a need to continue to promote existing support programmes and to develop specific support tools and guidance for these business types.

2.3.3 Actions

DAERA commits to:

26. For industrial sectors outside the scope of NHM waste, gather baseline data on C&I arisings, composition and recycling performance.
27. Work with Invest NI and business sector groups to maintain awareness of the technical advisory support available to businesses and organisations in scope of future industrial recycling targets.

2.4 Construction and Demolition Waste

2.4.1 Introduction

For the purposes of this draft strategy, the focus of this section is non-hazardous construction and demolition (C&D) waste, as the hazardous waste elements arising from the C&D sector are covered elsewhere in this draft strategy.

The construction sector is a crucial industry for reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the long term. One-third of material consumption and 26% of carbon dioxide emissions come from this sector globally. The recent [Circularity Gap Report: Northern Ireland](#) highlighted agriculture and construction as Northern Ireland's most material- and emission-intensive sectors. Infrastructure, housing, and repair and maintenance are still the [construction sector's most important activities](#) in both Northern Ireland and the UK. C&D waste can be a mixture of surplus material resulting from [construction, demolition, excavation, refurbishment, renovation, road works and site clearance](#).

These activities generate a wide variety of [waste materials](#) including, but not limited to, wood, plaster, metals, asphaltic substances, bricks, block, concrete, native vegetation, excavation dirt, rock, stone and gravel.

Where C&D materials could potentially be recycled, this should be on the basis that the materials can be easily segregated at source or easily reprocessed into new products and materials. The treatment techniques and technologies for the recycling of C&D waste are well established. Keeping materials in the economy as long as possible and retaining their value allows waste not only to be reduced, but materials also to be reused.

The prevention and reuse of C&D materials provides opportunities for lowering costs through the reduced need to purchase new materials and reduced disposal costs.

Drivers for Change

Under the revised [Waste Framework Directive](#), [C&D waste is a priority waste stream](#). It sets the following objectives:

- Promote selective demolition to enable removal and safe handling of hazardous substances and facilitate reuse and high-quality recycling by selective removal of materials, and to ensure the establishment of sorting systems for construction and demolition waste at least for wood, mineral fractions (concrete, bricks, tiles and ceramics, stones), metal, glass, plastic and plaster.
- In line with WFD Article 9, 1(f) we will reduce waste generation in processes related to industrial production, extraction of minerals, manufacturing, construction and demolition, taking into account best available techniques.

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[Assessments undertaken in 2010/11](#) indicate that Northern Ireland just met the revised Waste Framework Directive in 2009/10, recycling or recovering approximately 70% of non-hazardous C&D (excluding soils and stones).

Significant volumes of soils and stones are still being sent to landfill. Reclamation, recycling and recovery are an important element of the C&D sector, providing alternatives to the use of virgin aggregates and materials. Soils can be used for fill material and concrete, bricks, tiles and ceramics being crushed for sub-base.

Total C&D waste in Northern Ireland is estimated at 2.5 million tonnes by using data from authorised waste site returns in 2021.

Most of this waste (c85%) comes from three main sources:

- Circa 60% (1.49 million tonnes) comprises soils and stones (other than those containing hazardous substances).
- Circa 17% (0.41 million tonnes) comprises a mixture of concrete, bricks, tiles and ceramics (other than that containing hazardous substances).
- Circa 8.5% (0.21 million tonnes) comprises mixed C&D waste (other than that containing mercury, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) or hazardous substances).

Soils and stones (other than those containing hazardous substances) make up most of the material deposited at landfill. Predominantly this material is accepted for capping as recovery.

2.4.2 Challenges

Despite its potential, the level of C&D waste recycling and material recovery varies greatly across the European Union, ranging from less than 10% to over 90%. EU countries apply different definitions of [C&D waste](#), which makes cross-country comparisons difficult.

Many EU countries have succeeded in establishing markets for recovered C&D materials. However, this recovery is strongly based on recycling and backfilling operations. This means that the materials arising from C&D are not always suitable for reuse or closed-loop recycling.

Therefore, interventions should not focus solely on increasing recycling, but, by priority, opportunities should be identified for waste prevention and reuse activities.

UK estimates of recovery rates from non-hazardous C&D waste have been calculated for 2019 and 2020. Accurately quantifying C&D waste is very challenging due to limitations on reporting, the sector generating C&D waste being diverse and tonnages frequently being estimated rather than weighed. Until new measurement processes are devised and enacted, the difficulty

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remains not only in both estimating the arisings and profile of waste, but also legally proving the contribution to recycling targets.

A key challenge in incentivising waste prevention in this sector relates to landfill tax and a limited financial incentive to divert C&D waste into recycling processes. The standard rate of landfill tax applies to “active” materials typically containing concentrations of biodegradable municipal waste. C&D waste arisings are predominantly described as “inactive” or inert materials, which are subject to a tax levy circa £100 per tonne lower than the standard rate. Aside from limited financial incentive to manage inert arisings, industry stakeholders suggested that there is a likely misclassification of waste to take advantage of the lower rate, implying that waste crime may be adding additional waste to arisings, compromising recycling performance.

The end of waste Quality Protocol was revised in October 2013. It reflected the latest approved industry standards, including factory production control, and incorporated other improvements and clarifications to make it easier for producers and users to [ensure full compliance with the end of waste criteria](#). This Quality Protocol was funded by Defra, the Welsh Government and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) as a business resource efficiency activity. It was developed by the Environment Agency and WRAP (Waste & Resources Action Programme) in consultation with Defra, the Welsh Government, industry and other regulatory stakeholders. The Quality Protocol is applicable in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It sets out the end of waste criteria for the production and use of aggregates from inert waste.

2.4.3 Actions

28. Undertake a review of C&D waste data to identify improvements in how it is captured, the treatment routes utilised and the overall composition of C&D waste to identify reduction, reuse, recycling and recovery opportunities.
29. Based on these data improvements, develop a baseline for C&D waste arisings and current reuse, recycling and recovery rates.

2.5 Hazardous Waste

2.5.1 Introduction

Hazardous wastes are those that are deemed dangerous to human health or the environment and are difficult to handle. Feedback gathered during engagement with stakeholders has shown the need for DAERA to provide a strategic focus on the management of higher-risk and difficult waste streams, such as hazardous waste.

According to NIEA, approximately 118,000 tonnes of hazardous waste were generated in Northern Ireland in 2022/23. Industry is the largest generator of hazardous waste, generating

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wastes such as industrial solvents, sludges and oils. Other sectors such as construction, healthcare, education, agriculture and vehicle maintenance and disposal produce hazardous wastes including asbestos, lead acid batteries, WEEE, clinical waste, solvent-based paints and varnishes, and waste oils. Households across Northern Ireland generate significant quantities of several hazardous wastes including WEEE, batteries, solvent-based paints, and cleaning and gardening chemicals. The expansion of the Household Recycling Centre network to accept small-scale hazardous waste from households is important.

2.5.2 Challenges

Despite hazardous waste being generated by all sectors, we believe there is scope to reduce the amount through targeted waste prevention programmes.

[Persistent Organic Pollutants \(POPs\)](#) are a group of organic compounds that have toxic properties, persist in the environment, accumulate in food chains and pose a risk to human health and the environment. Because of their persistence, these chemicals have the potential to be transported across international boundaries far from their source - through air, water and migratory species. When disposing of waste containing POPs above certain concentration limits, the POP content must be destroyed or irreversibly transformed so that it is no longer harmful.

At present, due to economies of scale, capacity for hazardous waste treatment and disposal is limited in Northern Ireland. While there are some treatment options for hazardous liquid waste, the country does not have any specialised hazardous solid waste incineration sites, has a limited hazardous waste treatment capacity and hazardous waste landfill capacity. Most hazardous wastes are exported to Great Britain and elsewhere for end treatment and disposal. There are currently application/s progressing through the planning system and resultingly hazardous waste treatment capacity within Northern Ireland may improve in the longer term.

The [Draft Circular Economy Strategy for Northern Ireland](#) also recognises the potential for circular economy principles to reduce the production of, and exposure, to hazardous substances and reduce the use of hazardous chemicals in Northern Ireland.

2.5.3 Actions

30. Continue to monitor the issues of Persistent Organic Pollutants in waste and engage with and update stakeholders on their legal requirements and any other issues arising.
31. Ensure all sites accepting hazardous waste codes have been fully trained in Technical Guidance WM3.

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32. In collaboration with industry, the third sector and councils, build on existing schemes to establish widespread collection platforms via HRCs for surplus paint from household and commercial waste streams by 2027.
33. Undertake effective regulation of the movement and management of hazardous waste.
34. Eliminate the use of Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs), in line with commitments under the Stockholm Convention.

2.6 Agricultural Waste

2.6.1 Introduction

According to the [Agricultural Census in Northern Ireland](#) there are approximately 26,000 farm businesses in Northern Ireland, farming just over 1 million hectares of land. Waste management has become increasingly important to farming in Northern Ireland, with regular issues such as the disposal of waste generated from routine farming practices, and the sector dealing with unauthorised activities of others such as the increasing blight of fly-tipping and/or illegal dumping.

Using the [2022 Waste Data Interrogator](#), we have estimated that around 400,000 tonnes of agricultural waste was produced in Northern Ireland⁶. As with other waste streams, each element of the waste hierarchy must be applied to agricultural waste. It should be noted that category 1 & 2 animal by-products are not within the scope of this strategy nor included in the indicative figure for agricultural waste (above).

Feedback gathered during engagement with stakeholders identified the need for a strategic focus in relation to agricultural waste. Furthermore, the *Circularity Gap Report: Northern Ireland* highlighted agriculture as one of our most materials - and emission-intensive sectors. For consistency in definition with the other sectors, the draft strategy focusses on the sector-controlled wastes and [category 3 animal by products](#), which excludes carcasses, methane and slurries.

Sustainability for Our Future - DAERA's Plan to 2050 contains ten goals that underpin our strategic priorities for the next three decades. Goal 1 is Sustainable Farming and Food, which aims to include the promotion of resource efficiency and minimisation of waste throughout the food chain.

DAERA in conjunction with NIEA has published a guidance document, [Agricultural Waste - Responsibilities for Farmers](#), that outlines the Duty of Care requirements for the management of agricultural waste.

⁶ The figures used include using total agricultural waste exported, sent for disposal and sent for recovery. This is an indicative figure only.

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2.6.2 Challenges

Agricultural waste takes two distinct forms: pre-farm gate food waste (production wastes and surplus not redistributed), and generation of routine controlled wastes from farming practice.

Pre-farm gate and supply chain food waste and surplus

For generations, farmers have found successful methods of managing the waste streams generated in agriculture and food production within their sites. However, increasingly complex supply chains, due to broader and changing consumer preferences, put pressure on the management of valuable resources. Standard sector pressures include ordering of stock according to seasons, rising energy costs, management of surplus products, pest control, recruitment of labour and diversifying crop production in the face of climate change. These make managing waste increasingly challenging. Wider research also suggests challenges to agriculture from commercial relationships with buyers, with products not meeting quality requirements and becoming waste, primarily because of being misshapen or damaged and unable to meet the specification, despite being perfectly edible.

Sectors such as councils and business waste recycling benefit from long-standing good practice guidance, performance benchmarks, cost alleviation tools and case studies to help advise managers on minimising the generation of waste they control. The agricultural sector currently lacks sufficient support tools and accessible examples of best practices that could be shared and scaled to benefit others within the industry.

As with other sectors, the limited data on waste streams makes it difficult to measure the success of current practice and identify areas of improvement that could be made.

There are opportunities to make waste products and surplus nutrients from agri-food production part of Northern Ireland's decarbonisation journey. Biogas from anaerobic digestion (AD) plants is already contributing and there is more potential in the sector, particularly as AD moves to adopt direct gas-to-grid technology.

Plastic waste

Currently, all waste, including plastics, must be disposed of according to the Waste Management Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006. [Farm plastic waste](#) must be sent to a licensed recycling centre or taken to a permitted landfill site for disposal. The recycling of such plastics is costly to farmers, especially due to contamination with organic waste. While there is a ban on burning or burying the plastic into the ground, there are no incentives or regulations in place to compel the recycling of these plastics. The biggest barrier to increasing the recycling rate is cost pressure due to high contamination, gate fees and lack of infrastructure to process the materials. However, opportunities exist to tackle plastic waste arisings from farms, such as that generated from silage wrapping, through the introduction of innovative take-back and recycling schemes.

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The majority of the agricultural waste streams have short lifespans, with no nationally mandated schemes for end-of-life management of agri-plastics. To create a circular model, regulatory and financial drivers need to be put in place to promote and encourage increased recycling. As well as this, more needs to be done to help design out waste, to include more recycled content in new products and to encourage the use of new or alternative materials that are more environmentally sustainable. There is significant scope for improvement in the availability of data, the robustness of collection infrastructure, and the treatment of waste and recyclates arising from farms and the wider agricultural sector. Additionally, the current lack of incentives to promote waste management practices higher up the waste hierarchy presents a barrier to more sustainable outcomes.

2.6.3 Actions

35. **Work with key stakeholders to improve information on waste arisings in the agricultural sector.**
36. **Work with stakeholders to establish and celebrate the good resource and waste management practice already in existence in the agricultural sector in Northern Ireland and provide new support tools and guidance to enable the sector to manage waste more effectively.**
37. **Review existing data sources, opportunities to improve data capture and options to share information useful for the sector to improve performance.**

2.7 Litter and Fly-tipping

2.7.1 Introduction

Litter

Litter causes negative local environmental impacts, is unsightly and costs local ratepayers money to be removed. When cities, towns, villages and the countryside are blighted by litter, the ability to enjoy the local environment is also reduced and so too is the community's wellbeing.

Despite local efforts to collect litter, it can end up being washed into rivers and waterways, eventually making its way into the ocean as marine litter. The increasing quantity added to slow rates of degradation, is leading to a gradual increase in marine litter found at sea and on the shores. The continued increase in marine litter worldwide can be attributed to the lack of enforcement of existing regulations, combined with a lack of awareness among main stakeholders and the public. Marine litter is part of broader waste management issues, which are a major concern in many countries.

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Carrier Bag Levy

Through the landmark Carrier Bag Levy Scheme, Northern Ireland has already acted to reduce the use of all carrier bags with positive results over the last 12 years. To date the levy has seen approximately 2.4 billion carrier bags removed from circulation. In addition to its environmental aims, since its introduction, the carrier bag levy has generated £65 million. This revenue has been made available to support additional environmental programmes and initiatives. DAERA administers and allocates the proceeds of the Northern Ireland Carrier Bag levy with a clear commitment that all proceeds will be reinvested and used to support the wider Northern Ireland environmental sector. Levies and bans could be expanded to other items that affect our environment, particularly single-use plastics.

Deposit Return Scheme (DRS)

DRS will see consumers pay a deposit for certain drinks packaging items, such as cans and bottles. They would then be refunded when they return the packaging to be recycled. This will help encourage behaviour change around littering by incentivising people to return their containers to enable their deposit to be returned.

Chewing Gum

A voluntary producer responsibility scheme funded by producers to reduce street litter from [chewing gum](#) is currently in operation in Northern Ireland. The scheme offers grant funding to Councils in Northern Ireland to fund street cleaning and behaviour change actions.

Single-Use Vapes

The environmental damage created by the alarming rise in the littering and incorrect disposal of used single-use vapes is a concern. It's estimated that as many as five million single-use vapes are simply thrown away in residual bins or littered every week across the UK, rather than being recycled. Single-use vape waste introduces plastic, nicotine salts, metals and lithium-ion batteries into the environment and can have a devastating impact on our environment and biodiversity. A single-use vapes working group has been formed between Northern Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales.

From 1 June 2025, selling and supplying single-use vapes is illegal in Northern Ireland. The Scottish, Welsh and UK Governments have also introduced equivalent legislation, with an agreed operational start date of 1 June 2025.

Single-Use Plastic (SUP) Directive

The Single-Use Plastics Directive has the aim of reducing the volume and impact of specific plastic products on the environment. Articles 2-7, 14 and 17 of EU Directive 2019/904 are included in Annex II of the Windsor Framework and will be transposed into Northern Ireland law.

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The Regulations will place a range of measures on various types of single-use plastic products and on those who manufacture or import these products

- The Directive prohibits the placing on the market of 10 commonly littered single-use plastic products and includes the requirement for beverage containers (bottles, cartons and pouches) up to 3 litres in size to have a cap that is attached to the main part of the container.
- Action is required for producers of wet wipes, tobacco filter products containing plastic, sanitary items and beverage cups to have labelling which informs consumers of the presence of plastic in the product; of the waste disposal means to be avoided for that product; and the resulting negative impact of littering or other inappropriate means of waste disposal of the product on the environment.
- Beverage producers will also be prohibited from placing any plastic bottle made from polyethylene terephthalate (PET) up to 3 litres in size on the market unless it contains a minimum of 25% recycled plastic from 2025. To reduce the amount of virgin plastic that is used in manufacture, from January 2030 all plastic bottles must contain a minimum of 30% recycled plastic.
- A proposal for a consumption reduction plan will be developed, which will detail targets to be achieved for single-use plastic takeaway cups and food containers to reduce unnecessary waste and tackle plastic pollution.

Wet Wipes Containing Plastic

On 18 November 2025 DAERA introduced The Environmental Protection (Wet Wipes Containing Plastic) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2025. These regulations prohibit the sale and supply of wet wipes containing plastic, with certain exemptions.

The aim of the regulations is to restrict the use of wet wipes containing plastic in a domestic setting where suitable alternatives exist to tackle the environmental impacts of plastic and microplastic pollution.

All UK nations are introducing legislation to ban wet wipes containing plastic. Wales introduced their regulations in June 2025, with England following in November 2025. Scotland will introduce their legislation in due course.

There will be an 18-month transition period after the regulations were made, affording retailers adequate time to use up existing stock and source plastic free alternative. The regulations will come in effect in Northern Ireland in May 2027.

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Fly-tipping

There is no legal definition of fly-tipping; however, it is [generally defined](#) as the illegal dumping of rubbish or bulky items on land without a licence or permit to accept waste. It pollutes the land and waterways and can be dangerous to human and animal health. Tyres, asbestos and construction rubble are among the top items of commercial waste being tipped across Northern Ireland according to [NIEA](#). The clean-up of fly-tipped waste can be very costly. Between 2016 and 2017 it cost taxpayers £0.5 million to clear 306 incidents. Everyone, from householders to businesses, has a responsibility to make sure their rubbish does not end up being illegally dumped.

2.7.2 Challenges

Litter

The KNIB [Litter Composition Analysis Report 2022/23](#) documents 2,080 locations in Northern Ireland, covering all 11 council areas across a range of land uses to provide a measure of the quality of the local environment. The report estimates that there are around 12 million pieces of litter polluting the streets of Northern Ireland at any one time. Areas that were shown to be least littered were those with low-density housing, such as affluent estates and areas of semi-detached housing, with the most littered being more rural areas. Cigarette butt litter was the most common type overall, followed by confectionery and drinks packaging. The survey did highlight improvement, with results indicating that 86% of streets and open spaces in Northern Ireland met or exceeded acceptable standards for visible litter. That equates to a 6% increase from the 2018 figure.

The [2022 Marine Litter Survey Report](#) detailst he amount of litter observed on 12 reference beaches in Northern Ireland during the 2022 calendar year. An average of 542 items of litter per 100 metres of beach surveyed were recorded. The most common types included plastic, polystyrene, string and cord. Many of the items commonly found in terrestrial litter were also present in large quantities as marine litter, washed up on beaches.

These surveys highlight the severity of the litter problem and the necessity of incoming legislation to create a more circular economy in Northern Ireland. The litter composition analysis identified cigarettes and drinks and food packaging to be the most abundant types of litter present.

Fly-tipping

Data from [NIEA](#) shows that during 2023/24 its costs associated with the removal of waste from 68 fly-tipping incidents amounted to £241,838. The total, however, is considerably higher as the costs of small-scale clean-ups in the 11 councils and from private land have not been included. For example, last year [Newry, Mourne and Down Council](#) reported spending approximately £2 million keeping streets and roads clean in the district.

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NIEA will, where sufficient evidence is available, conduct enforcement action against those identified as being responsible for the illegal depositing of waste resulting from incidents of fly-tipping. These powers are conferred under the Waste and Contaminated Land (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 (the 1997 Order).

Following the commencement of Article 5 of the Waste and Contaminated Land (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 on 2 January 2023 Northern Ireland District Councils were afforded similar enforcement powers to that given to NIEA under Articles 4 and 5 of the 1997 Order.

To tackle the issue of fly-tipping it is important not solely to focus on enforcement, but to also inform, educate and motivate people to change their behaviour. Both householders and businesses have a responsibility to make sure their rubbish does not end up being illegally dumped. It is important that anyone paying for the removal of waste ensures that those removing the waste have the correct licence to do so. The [Live Here Love Here](#) campaign offers a range of programmes focused on positive litter action including the annual [BIG Spring Clean](#), [Adopt A Spot](#). It is a positive, people-powered campaign focused on improving our local environment and building a sense of civic pride in our local communities, encouraging residents to take responsibility for their landscape.

2.7.3 Actions

DAERA commits to:

Litter

38. **Legislate for beverage containers and bottles to have lids and caps that will remain attached (tethered) to reduce commonly littered bottle caps.**
39. **Prepare regulations to restrict the sale or supply of ten commonly littered single-use plastic items.**
40. **Prepare regulations to implement clearer labelling of products that contain single use plastic to allow customers to make informed choices.**
41. **Prepare regulations to set a requirement for 25% average recycled content in PET bottles by 2025 and 30% average recycled content in all beverage bottles by 2030 to reduce the amount of virgin plastic that is used in manufacture.**
42. **Prepare regulations to restrict the supply and sale of wet wipes containing plastic to help tackle plastic & micro-plastic pollution.**
43. **Develop a proposal for a consumption reduction plan and targets for single use plastic takeaway cups and food containers to reduce unnecessary waste and tackle plastic pollution.**

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Fly-tipping

- 44. Work to implement a consistent approach to data collection across Northern Ireland regarding fly-tipping and illegal waste disposal.**
- 45. Aim to sign up all district councils to the Fly-Tipping Protocol.**
- 46. We will continue to collaborate with the voluntary producer responsibility scheme for chewing gum.**

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Making it Happen

3. Making It Happen

3.1. Introduction

There are five areas in this section.

- **Infrastructure and Capacity**
- **Working Together to Achieve Shared Goals**
- **Communication and Engagement**
- **Research, Innovation and Skills for the Future**
- **Enforcement**

Key to ensuring successful, safe and effective waste management is ensuring the relevant infrastructure and capacity is available to support it.

Waste management infrastructure in Northern Ireland ensures that the waste and recyclables generated by society can be safely handled, managed and processed into new products. A robust and successful waste management infrastructure is required to react to, and deal with, the changing volume and composition of waste that arises from providing goods and services to society. Ideally, waste should be treated or disposed of within the region in which it is produced.

To allow infrastructure to adapt and be developed, it is essential that planning and development decisions are evidence-based and use the most up-to-date, robust data.

National reviews show that Northern Ireland does not have sufficient capacity to process all the potentially available mixed recyclables from household and commercial sources, nor does it have the medium-term landfill capacity to dispose of residual waste.

It is therefore important that we put additional focus on the other four areas within this section.

The waste sector is complex and involves a wide array of stakeholders. It is essential that new policies and legislative decisions are made with full consideration of their impact across the sector. Meaningful collaboration with stakeholders is the only effective way to ensure these decisions are both informed and sustainable.

Following the publication of this strategy, DAERA will lead the development of a multi-year, integrated Communications and Engagement Strategy for waste and recycling. The scope of the strategy will include campaigns to provide citizens with the information and knowledge they need and to motivate them to ensure that resources and waste end up in the “right place”.

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Research and Innovation must be prioritised and supported by government. We do not have the necessary infrastructure and capacity to deal with our resources currently and therefore, we must turn to research and innovation to help us overcome this. Already there are excellent examples of how research is being used here to help improve how we use our resources. The emerging skills and training needs of business and industry as the transition towards greater circularity takes place are also important.

Finally, enforcement and compliance with regulations ensures that we continue to maintain a safe and healthy environment. DAERA will be continuing with the risk-based approach to enforcement, detailed in the 2013 Waste Management Strategy, coupled with the learnings from the past 12 years. DAERA takes a risk-based approach using “Best Available Techniques (BAT)” to waste regulation compliance.

3.2 Infrastructure and Capacity

Materials processing

Materials facilities (MFs) in Northern Ireland have a permitted capacity in the region of 3 million tonnes based on recent studies undertaken by Monksleigh in their Material Recovery Facilities (Qualifying Materials) Market Overview report published in February 2024.

Northern Ireland also has a range of reprocessors who take sorted recyclable materials and reprocess them into new products. Some reprocessors have MFs on site, but this is not always the case, and so recyclable inputs must often be purchased from a supplier.

Further information on what happens to recycling collected in Northern Ireland can be found at: <https://myrecyclingni.org.uk/>.

Organic waste

Households in Northern Ireland have had a comprehensive collection service for food and garden waste for several years. The material collected is sent for in-vessel composting with a small portion sent to anaerobic digestion (AD).

Northern Ireland had 47 NIEA authorised AD facilities as of August 2024 (42 waste licences and 5 PPC Permits).

Recovery and disposal

Northern Ireland’s residual waste infrastructure has been developed by both the public and private sector. However, Northern Ireland does not have the required domestic capacity to deal with all its arisings.

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Most energy recovery is derived from mixed residual waste, with a smaller proportion from specific streams, e.g. wood. There are two wood burning power facilities in Northern Ireland however most of the remaining material is sent for export as refuse-derived fuel (RDF) because Northern Ireland has only one operational energy from waste (EfW) plant.

Waste exports and imports

From a review conducted by WRAP of NIEA waste data returns Northern Ireland exported 1,188,627 tonnes of waste (for onward treatment, recycling, reclamation, recovery and disposal to the UK, the Republic of Ireland and rest of the world) in 2021/22 and imported 1,033,884 tonnes which was primarily from the Republic of Ireland for treatment and recovery.

There are several reasons why so much of our waste is exported, including a lack of infrastructure or capacity in NI or the wider UK for material streams, higher levels of contamination and not meeting the quality standards required by local reprocessing. Proposals outlined in the recent *Rethinking Our Resources: Measures for Climate Action and a Circular Economy in NI* have been designed to improve quality of material and reduce our reliance on the export of materials. The Climate Change Committee have recommended that NI should ban exports of waste materials by 2030. Waste exports by destination can be seen in Figure 4 below.

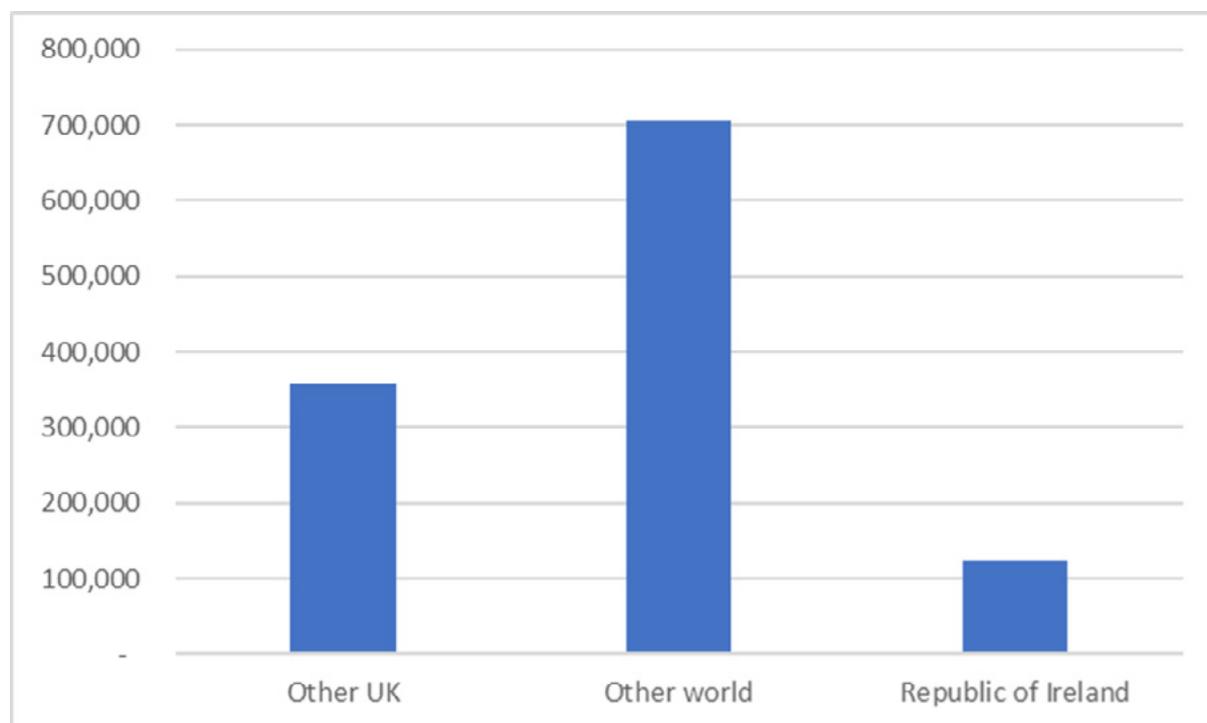


Figure 8: Waste exports from Northern Ireland by destination.

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Of exported waste, 60% was sent to other parts of the world, with the bulk of exports arising from the commercial and industrial sectors.

Materials exported to other parts of the UK, the Republic of Ireland and the rest of the world fall under these main recovery categories:

- incineration of waste for use principally as a fuel or other means to generate energy
- waste transfer for recovery
- organic substance recycling/reclamation
- metal recycling/reclamation.

Waste imports by origin can be seen in Figure 9 below.

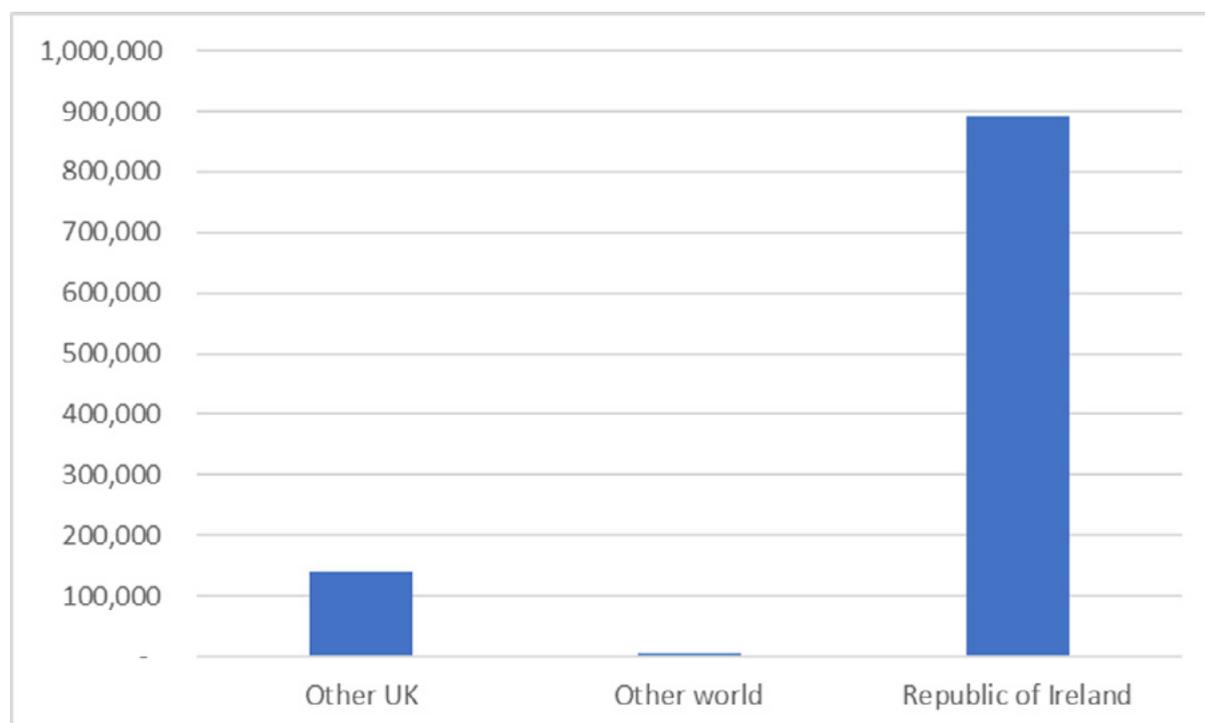


Figure 9: Waste imports into Northern Ireland by origin.

In terms of imports into Northern Ireland, 86% arrived from the Republic of Ireland, the majority from municipal (household and NHM) sectors.

Materials imported to Northern Ireland fall under these main recovery categories:

- waste transfer for recovery
- organic substance recycling/reclamation
- inorganic substance recycling/reclamation.

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Planning

The provision of appropriate waste facilities and infrastructure can make a valuable contribution towards sustainable development. The aim of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) in relation to waste management is to support wider government policy focused on the sustainable management of waste, and a move towards resource efficiency.

Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 11, Planning and Waste Management, sets out planning policies for the development of waste management facilities.

Since the last Waste Management Strategy: Delivering Resource Efficiency, planning policy has undergone a period of reform. The Planning Act (NI) 2011 (the Act) established the two-tier system for the delivery of planning functions in Northern Ireland. Under the Act, responsibility for delivering the main planning functions passed from a central government department to local councils in April 2015.

The Department for Infrastructure (DfI) has responsibility for preparing regional planning policy and legislation, monitoring and reporting on the performance of councils' delivery of planning functions and making planning decisions in respect of a small number of applications of strategic significance. The [Strategic Planning Policy Statement for NI](#) (SPPS) sets out the guiding principles for councils to use in making planning decisions, including for waste management.

PPS 18 sets out the planning policy for development that generates energy from renewable resources, including biodegradable waste. The PPS aims to facilitate the siting of renewable energy generating facilities in appropriate locations within the built and natural environments.

3.2.1 Projections for Future Waste Arisings

Overall, it is estimated that Northern Ireland produces 5,329,958 tonnes of waste based on 2021/22 data from the Waste Data Interrogator (highlighted in green in Table 3)

In Northern Ireland household waste arisings equated to 1,092 kg per household during 2022/23, compared to 1,183 kg per household during 2021/22, as reported in [LAC Municipal Waste Management Statistics - Annual Report 2022/23](#).

Table 3 below highlights the waste arisings by sector, with high and low waste arising estimates for sectors other than household, and litter and fly-tipping. The estimates used in this table are highlighted in green.

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Sector	Arisings (tonnes) LOW	% of total arisings	Arisings (tonnes) HIGH	% of total arisings	Waste Statistics 2018	% of the total arisings
Household waste	910,341	18%	910,341	14%	841,000	11%
Commercial and industrial waste (including NHM and agricultural waste)	1,478,520 (NHM: 798,493, agricultural waste: 390,555)	30%	1,831,928 (NHM: 798,493, agricultural waste: 390,555)	28%	1,065,000	14%
Construction and demolition waste	2,420,879	49%	3,550,203	55%	4,953,000	65%
Hazardous waste	62,915	1%	118,000	2%	/	0%
Litter and fly-tipping	48,810	1%	48,810	1%	/	0%
Other	/	0%	/	0%	804,000	10%
Total	4,921,45	100%	6,459,282	100%	7,663,000	100%

Table 3: Waste arisings by sector, with estimated high and low waste arisings.

Recovery capacity

The Future Management of Northern Ireland's Municipal Waste: The World Has Changed (June 2016), a study by the Strategic Investment Board on the circular economy, suggested that:

“Northern Ireland is likely to require a thermal treatment capacity of around 600,000 tonnes and potentially up to 800,000 tonnes per year, which is two to three times the current estimated need.” [Background paper on Waste Management in Northern Ireland](#).

Since then, the Full Circle Generation Energy from Waste (EfW) plant in Belfast has become operational. In 2023, a new facility proposed by EP UK Investments at Kilroot was granted planning permission. This, once complete, will be a multi fuel combined heat and power (CHP) plant. These sites provide potential permitted capacity of over 400,000 tonnes per annum.

Landfill

Landfill sites are the biggest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions from the waste sector, with around [75% of all emissions](#) from the sector being attributed to these sites. Northern Ireland's landfill sites accepted 1,294,965 tonnes of waste in 2022/23. Soil and stones from the construction and demolition sectors make up 60% of construction and demolition waste sent to landfill, with municipal waste accounting for just over 200,000 tonnes or 15.7% of the total.

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Landfill capacity in Northern Ireland is limited, and landfill sites contribute to greenhouse gas emissions as biodegradable materials decompose and emit methane. The Climate Change Committee recommended that banning biodegradable materials from landfill would significantly reduce emissions.

As a result of the successful NILAS scheme, the 2015 Food Waste regulations and increasing energy recovery rates, the proportion of local authority collected waste being sent to landfill has reduced from 74.9% in 2007 to a low of 18.7% in 2024.

Provisional data shows Northern Ireland's councils sent 95,501 tonnes of biodegradable waste to landfill in 2023/24, down 22% from the previous year. This can represent the least favourable environmental (and often, economic) option for many materials.

The Self Sufficiency Principle

states that an entity (e.g. a country or community) should produce everything it needs independently to reduce reliance on external sources.

The Proximity Principle emphasises prioritising the use of local resources, suppliers and solutions to minimise costs time and environmental impact.

3.2.2 Challenges

To deliver on the proximity and self-sufficiency principles to drive a more integrated and localised management of the waste and recyclables generated in Northern Ireland, we need to be clear on the opportunities for and limitations to setting realistic targets and actions. It is unclear how much of the resource and waste generated in Northern Ireland can be reprocessed within the local economy or in the UK and the Republic of Ireland. Further work is required to understand the commercial potential for resources to be managed here and what effective levers are available to either incentivise or direct more reprocessing here.

With limited residual waste infrastructure, it is likely that Northern Ireland will continue to increase the export of residual streams.

As with large-scale sorting and reprocessing infrastructure, residual treatment typically requires extensive long-term investment, which happens in a climate of certainty. In recent years the UK economy has been under pressure and, combined with a lack of waste management strategy or new clear proposals, investors have struggled to understand the long-term risks and rewards, and have little confidence to invest.

Projections of arisings have varied according to national and regional and subsector estimates. By developing a national approach to collections that sets a limit on the number of collection scenarios, but achieves high environmental standards within each, will help infrastructure

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planning. Setting a clear implementation plan to deliver the draft strategy with timelines and demonstrating progress and adherence to commitments is important to signal national commitment.

For sorting facilities like MFs, the challenges are around whether facilities can process the additional range of materials that this draft Waste Management Strategy requires over its lifespan, including the increased quantities from households and businesses. The increased processing requirements in line with the proximity principle will require higher-quality output materials to achieve the optimum environmental benefits and so understanding whether the sorting equipment and processes can separate products from mixed streams to the standard local reprocessors ideally need is vital.

UK MFs tend to process relatively small quantities of commercial waste at present. Their sorting infrastructure will likely need to manage streams of household and NHM waste that may be the same material categories but appear in very different volumes at different times of the year.

3.2.3 Assessment of Need for the Future

DAERA has concluded that there is a need for additional waste infrastructure in Northern Ireland to process the quantities of waste that may arise in future years. Depending on the scale of waste infrastructure being developed, it is the responsibility of the relevant planning authority to determine planning permissions for such applications. This responsibility falls to either the local council or the Department for Infrastructure, depending on the scale and scope of the application. DAERA has a remit to provide input to planners, where appropriate and relevant.

Councils should set out policies and proposals in their Local Development Plans (LDP) that support the SPPS Waste Management Regional Strategic Objectives and Policy, tailored to the local circumstances of the plan area. Local councils must assess the likely extent of future waste management facilities for the plan area. Specific sites for the development of waste management facilities should be identified in the LDP together with key site requirements. In deciding which sites and areas to identify for such facilities, councils should assess their suitability against the criteria set out in the policy. This includes the physical and environmental constraints on development, existing and proposed neighbouring land uses, and any significant adverse impacts on the quality of the local environment. Local councils remain responsible for developing local council waste management plans as part of their wider strategic planning responsibilities, in support of the WMPNI.

The Department recognises the commitment of all 11 councils to a move away from reliance on landfill sites for residual waste.

DAERA has commissioned the Strategic Investment Board to carry out an assessment of waste infrastructure required in NI to 2050, including an assessment of landfill capacity. This is due to be published in early 2026.

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3.2.4 Actions

47. DAERA will respond to all input requests that are submitted to DAERA for planning of waste infrastructure.
48. To continue to monitor non-hazardous landfill capacity and continue to assess the level of permitted and planned landfill infrastructure.
49. Engage with each of the three local council waste management groups to identify how their waste management plans may need to be updated regarding waste management infrastructure

3.3 Working Together to Achieve Shared Goals

3.3.1 Introduction

The resource and waste sector is a multi-layered and multi-dimensional sector with a significant number of stakeholders. To ensure that this draft strategy can be successfully implemented, we must bring these stakeholders along with us. Adequate consideration of the impact of policy and legislative decision-making on the sector is needed. This is achieved through extensive engagement with the sector, both through in-person workshops, webinars and seminars, and through funding of targeted awareness-raising and behavioural change campaigns. A detailed stakeholder list, and their roles, can be found in Appendix 3c.

3.3.2 Challenges

It is recognised that the resource and waste sector covers a broad range of activities and organisations. The diversity of the sector, from large multinational companies to community-led organisations, is part of its strength.

These organisations can have a broad range of views and bring different perspectives on how the sector can develop in Northern Ireland. Regardless of their size or views, each of these organisations has a part to play in the success of this waste management strategy.

Allowing everyone to contribute to the success of this strategy means providing the opportunity for engagement and collaboration. Constructive dialogue, based on robust data and evidence, will be required to drive change that allows actions to be delivered and targets to be met.

There are already several forums where parts of the resources and waste sector can come together to discuss and debate relevant topics, for example through the DAERA Government Waste Working Group, the Chartered Institution of Wastes Management (CIWM) and RecycleNI.

However, we recognise that this strategy can help facilitate wider cross-sector discussions by providing a structure and defining respective roles and responsibilities.

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3.3.3 Actions

This strategy sets out a call to action for collective responsibility, and over the lifetime of this strategy, we aim to enable all players in the sector to work collaboratively to support the implementation of the actions detailed in this strategy, this will involve collaboration between Government, industry and wider stakeholders.

3.4 Communication and Engagement

This draft strategy sets out a programme of complementary actions in this area. Actions fall into three categories:

- Actions to develop an underpinning policy framework.
- Actions to support infrastructure and networks to deliver waste prevention, reuse, redistribution and recycling.
- Actions to coordinate and deliver communications and behaviour change campaigns.

Many of the actions focus on establishing policies and infrastructure to deliver effective waste prevention, reuse and recycling. For us to succeed, as citizens of Northern Ireland we must take personal responsibility for the waste we produce, whether this is at home, on-the-go or in the workplace. Following the publication of this draft strategy, DAERA will support a suite of integrated communications and engagement with Northern Ireland citizens for waste and recycling. The scope of the draft strategy will include campaigns to provide citizens with the information and knowledge they need and to motivate them to ensure that resources and waste end up in the “right place”.

3.4.1 Behaviour Change

More investment is needed in the application of behaviour change theory and interventions to generate necessary improvements in waste management behaviours around waste prevention, reuse and recycling from citizens at home and in the workplace. WRAP’s 2023 [Recycling Tracker](#) report identifies that communications alongside other behaviour change interventions have the potential to bring a step change in recycling rates. Leaflets, social media, out-of-home advertising and other communications will remain at the core of our engagement with householders and businesses.

To achieve this, DAERA supports strategic partners in the delivery of communications and engagement activities, including coordinating messages and campaigns across government

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departments. As government policy continues to develop, we will review our network of campaign partnerships to maximise reach and impact of the campaigns.

The Northern Ireland National Communications Advisory Panel (NI NCAP) will continue to be the advisory group for citizen-facing recycling communications activity. Membership includes councils and organisations responsible for delivery of direct communications on council waste and recycling services.

Communication and engagement with stakeholders in support of new policies and regulations will be required, for which NCAP will play a vital role. This will include publicising public consultations and raising awareness in advance of new waste regulations coming into force. The department will engage with citizens, councils, waste service providers and the wider resources industry to ensure everyone understands their role in complying with the law.

DAERA is developing guidance for communicating and engaging with businesses and organisations to recycle more. Communications will be in support of new workplace recycling requirements. This new campaign will raise awareness in advance of new non-household recycling requirements and signpost obligated workplaces to supporting guidance and resources.

It is not possible to cover every aspect of behaviour change intervention that DAERA provides funding for within this strategy, however, more information on our approach to behaviour change and upcoming or past campaigns can be found on the [DAERA website](#).

Some examples of interventions which are supported by DAERA include:

Recycle Now - a recycling intervention that DAERA will continue to support, as the national recycling campaign in Northern Ireland. [Recycle Now](#) campaign delivery will be informed by the priorities identified in this strategy.

Recycling Tracker - DAERA has supported WRAP's Recycling Tracker for Northern Ireland for several years. This provides an annual update on our recycling knowledge, attitudes and claimed behaviours. The insights will continue to be used to identify priority areas for recycling communications.

The Tracker identifies that in Northern Ireland an average of 1.8 recyclable items are placed in the residual waste, and an average of 6.2 non-recyclable items are placed in the recycling. To help reduce householder confusion, DAERA is proposing that a core set of materials should be collected from each home in Northern Ireland. DAERA will work in partnership with NCAP to coordinate the delivery of national and local communication activities to improve the quality and quantity of household recycling, including changes to recycling services.

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MyRecyclingNI - The website [MyRecyclingNI](#) was launched by DAERA as part of Recycle Week 2022 to make information on the end destinations of household waste and recycling easily accessible to the public. Delivered by WRAP and updated annually, the website shares DAERA's audited [local authority waste and recycling data](#) and end market information. Effective communication of the end destinations of recycling addresses a knowledge gap identified by respondents to the Northern Ireland Recycling Tracker survey and will increase public confidence that our recycling efforts are worthwhile.

Love Food Hate Waste - An example of a waste prevention intervention that DAERA supports. Almost every home in Northern Ireland now has a regular food waste recycling collection. Even so, a recent WRAP study for DAERA found that food waste is more than 30% by weight of the average household's general waste bin. Since 2007 WRAP's Love Food Hate Waste (LFHW) campaign has been supporting people to reduce household food waste. By supporting LFHW, we aim to raise awareness of the financial cost of wasting food and of its environmental impact. LFHW provides us with the knowledge and skills to save money through better meal planning, storage and preparation.

3.4.2 Actions

To facilitate increased communications and engagement amongst all stakeholders in relation to resources and waste DAERA will:

50. Continue to utilise behaviour change theory and interventions to generate necessary improvements in correct recycling from citizens at home and in the workplace.
51. Communicate and engage with stakeholders in support of new policies and regulations through the Communications and Engagement Plan.
52. Support existing and new strategic partners in the delivery of communications and engagement activities, including coordinating messages and campaigns across government departments.
53. Continue to partner with external organisations, where appropriate, to deliver campaigns to engage the education sector and address target waste streams, global waste problems and littering.
54. Work to establish a Northern Ireland Business Recycling Advisory Group.
55. Work in partnership with Northern Ireland National Communications Action Plan (NCAP) to co-ordinate the delivery of national and local communication activities with Councils to improve the quality and quantity of household recycling, including changes to recycling services.

3.5 Research, Innovation and Skills for the Future

3.5.1 Introduction

Northern Ireland is transitioning from the current linear economy to one that values resources, is more circular, reduces carbon emissions and drives up social value. Skills and training are at the heart of this transition, but this transition must be managed fairly and be just for all in society.

The just transition elements of the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 sets out the objectives of the just transition principle, which include supporting jobs that are climate resilient and environmentally sustainable, supporting low-carbon investment and supporting those who are most affected by climate change and may be the least equipped to adapt to its effects or may stand to lose out economically.

The Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland recognises that the [Circular Economy Strategic Framework](#), having been informed by the [Circularity Gap Report](#), will also set out the potential for new green jobs in Northern Ireland, outlining the emerging skills and training needs of business and industry as the transition towards greater circularity takes place. Workers and employers will be required to retrain and develop new skills to adapt to changing environments. Activities and services will become focused on reusing materials and closing material cycles - processes that require diverse skills in design and engineering, as well as practical, labour-intensive roles.

Developing green skills through an inclusive skills strategy will allow the smooth adoption of the circular economy model. The key elements in this transition are research and innovation that can advance waste management practices while linking to the effective implementation and embedding of the circular economy. Research and innovation will allow not only new practices to be developed but will also require new skills to be applied across the resources industry. It encompasses technological advancements and the skilled professionals who operate them, communication strategies grounded in an understanding of human behaviour to influence consumer attitudes and actions, and cross-disciplinary collaboration that promotes a holistic, multi-disciplinary approach to resource management.

3.5.2 Research

For this strategy and the policies contained within it to be effective, it must be grounded in robust research and data analysis. This section outlines the role of research in understanding waste trends, identifying areas for improvement and informing policy decisions.

What is Just Transition?

The just transition principle aims to promote fairness during the transition from a high-emissions to low-emissions economy and to ensure support is provided to those who are most affected by climate change, particularly those who may have done the least to cause it or may be the least equipped to adapt to its effects.

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.

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Benchmarking and Best Practices

Researching best practices from other regions or countries provides valuable insights into successful waste management approaches. Benchmarking against similar municipalities or industries can highlight gaps in current practices and set achievable targets. This comparative analysis helps in adopting innovative methods such as advanced recycling technologies, circular economy models, and other systems that have proven effective elsewhere.

Economic Analysis

Economic research helps assess the financial viability of different waste management options. Cost-benefit analyses, funding models, and economic incentives for waste reduction are crucial components. Understanding the economic impacts of waste, including potential savings from waste diversion and the economic benefits of creating green jobs, will ensure that the strategy is both effective and financially sustainable.

Waste Composition Analysis

A comprehensive analysis of all waste streams is crucial to identify the types and quantities of waste generated. This involves detailed categorisation of waste at the source, whether from household sources, from commercial and industrial sources or from construction and demolition activities. Whilst composition analyses have been undertaken over the last 15 years, this has been sporadic. To determine the composition of waste, track seasonal variations, and identify the most significant sources of waste DAERA has commissioned a £1.5m project to update waste data for three key sectors - households (last updated 2017), commercial and industrial (last updated in 2009) and construction and demolition (last updated 2011). Understanding these patterns enables targeted interventions and resource allocation. The new waste data project will be completed by March 2027 and will help establish baselines for our new recycling targets.

The Code of Practice on Sampling and Reporting at Materials Facilities has been published on DAERA website. It sets out the requirements for sampling and reporting of waste materials received by Materials Facilities. A key aim of this code is to strengthen the quality and quantity of waste data and increase transparency on material quality in the supply chain.

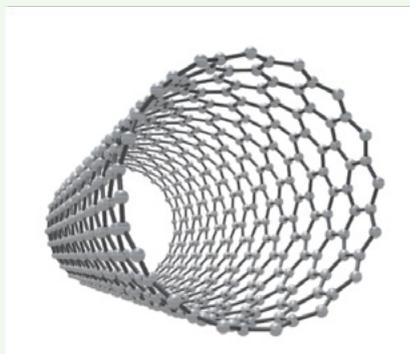
3.5.3 Innovation

Staying abreast of technological advancements in waste management is critical for the long-term success of this strategy and resource and waste management, more generally. Research focuses on emerging technologies in waste processing, recycling, and disposal. This includes exploring automation in sorting, new recycling techniques for complex materials, and advancements in materials and undertaking supply chain trials.

As detailed in Part 1 of this Strategy, a UK-wide digital waste tracking (DWT) system is currently in development. Under the Environment Act 2021 new regulations place a requirement on all in the waste chain (except households) to record their transactions and the onward movements of waste.

Case Study

Innovative Technologies & Research: Transforming Waste into Value at QUB



Queen's University Belfast has been pioneering new technologies and innovative solutions. One such project is the production of hydrogen and carbon nanotubes from waste plastics.

Plastics that cannot be recycled or are in the wrong waste stream end up either in landfills or elsewhere in the environment and packaging waste is a significant component of this.

This project enhances the economic and technical feasibility of packaging plastics upcycling by transforming the products of advanced recycling technologies into carbon nanotubes (CNTs), which have much higher values (>£100 000 per tonne) compared to pyrolysis oil and gasification syngas (<£600 per tonne). In the process, hydrogen is also produced, which provides us with the opportunity to tailor the process to meet hydrogen demands as well as carbon nanotubes.

With a growing interest in the use of hydrogen fuels, this technology can potentially feed into other ongoing commercial work in hydrogen fuel production. With local companies investing in new hydrogen powered buses, this process can help meet the growing demand for hydrogen fuel production. Working with local companies and in line with the Northern Ireland Executive plan to focus on green energy, this project has the possibility to give the NI economy a clear economic advantage.

3.5.4 Challenges

The workforce must be ready to meet and overcome the challenges set out in this waste management strategy and allow stakeholders to deliver the proposed actions as they aim to meet the targets set for each sector. The change required to meet the targets and wider climate change ambitions means new skills will be needed to deliver new business models and collection services and operate updated and new facilities that will manage an increasing range of waste streams from a wider range of sectors.

The CIWM Presidential Report 2021, [Skills for the Future: The Journey to 2030](#), identified a range of skills requirements to allow the transition to a circular economy. This is summarised in Appendix 4c. Aside from further identification of the skills needed, new approaches to training an increasingly agile workforce through a range of in-person and remote means will need to be developed. Recruitment into the waste management sector has slowed in recent years and a drive to attract new labour to help meet the new job roles will demand new employment and training strategies.

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In terms of research, several challenges exist, particularly around data collection and quality with inconsistencies and gaps making it difficult to understand the complete picture of waste management. The increasing complexity of waste streams which is precipitated by evolving waste types makes it difficult for research to keep pace with these new challenges. Finally, economic constraints can impact our ability to produce leading research, not only due to limitations with funding but also because of the, often, high costs associated with developing new technologies or carrying out detailed waste audits.

3.5.5 Actions

To build a pathway towards improved skills and training, DAERA will:

56. **Enable the skills related to resources and waste management, such as design, repair and refurbishment, necessary to transition to a resource-efficient and low-carbon economy. Work with other stakeholders to ensure this is also included in just transition planning.**
57. **Continue to support research and development of innovative technologies and solutions that will help improve the waste management sector in Northern Ireland and the transition to a circular economy.**
58. **Provide funding to support third sector organisations to enable the updating of skills and training needs.**

3.6 Enforcement

3.6.1 Introduction

Compliance with regulations is an important element in ensuring that we continue to maintain a safe and healthy environment in Northern Ireland. DAERA will be continuing with the risk-based approach to enforcement, detailed in the 2013 Waste Management Strategy, coupled with the learnings from the past 12 years. DAERA takes a risk-based approach using “Best Available Techniques (BAT)” to waste regulation compliance. Our primary goal in the first instance is to ensure compliance with legislation, but to make use of enforcement when necessary. The purpose of enforcement is to mitigate and prevent the environmental and social damage caused by waste due to non-compliance with waste regulations. The aim is to increase compliance with local and international legislation and standards, and to prevent and mitigate pollution, littering and illegal dumping of waste. Improving the visibility and awareness of the socio-economic and environmental benefits of compliance is another key purpose of enforcement.

Effective enforcement is a key component in securing compliance with legislation, delivering government objectives, enhancing economic prosperity, and protecting animal health and welfare, public health and environmental quality.

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An essential part of achieving compliance is to make sure that the sector is adequately trained and understands the systems and processes put in place by DAERA. Higher rates of compliance can be achieved by educating all stakeholders about where and when to obtain consent for certain activities, as well as licensing, authorisation and permit requirements.

Whilst DAERA expects full voluntary compliance with legislative and regulatory requirements for waste management the department will ensure that it targets its resources and capability against those individuals and companies posing the greatest risk and harm to the environment. Often this takes the form of illegal waste activities such as depositing, keeping, disposing and treating waste in contravention of legislation and outside of the regulation framework.

Whilst aiming to increase capacity for enforcement DAERA continues to address waste criminality through the application of the 4 'P' principles of 'Pursue, Prevent, Protect and Prepare'.

The main points of the [enforcement policy](#) are:

- Take actions and make decisions that are proportionate to the significance of the offence and the harm caused.
- Take a consistent approach to enforcement and decision-making for enforcement.
- Be transparent so that those who we regulate understand what is expected of each stakeholder.
- Take targeted action against those who pose or cause serious damage to DAERA's key objectives, operate illegally outside the regulatory regime, intentionally and/or persistently break the law, commit a criminal offence for the purpose of receiving a payment and/or who acquire significant financial advantage for their crime.
- Collaborate with and support all stakeholders to identify best solutions.
- Design policies that support regulators and enforcers in securing compliance to meet policy objectives at the same time as having regard for economic growth.
- Fulfil our legislative duty by conducting investigations to a high standard into those who breach legislation and those who work illegally, outside of the regulatory framework. Therefore, where necessary and where sufficient evidence is available, prepare and submit prosecution files to the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) and represent the department throughout the court process.
- Where feasible DAERA will use powers under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (POCA) to retrieve monies gained through illegal waste activities supporting the 'Polluter Pays' principle.

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The classification of waste is a vital component of ensuring compliance, and DAERA will continue to uphold an effective waste management system and environmentally compliant infrastructure through robust enforcement, achieved by consistently implementing regulations across Northern Ireland.

3.6.2 Challenges

Ensuring compliance with regulations is not without its challenges. The amount of communications engagement and direct support provided to newly obligated sectors early on is directly related to the amount of compliance work and enforcement activity that may be required subsequently.

Data is an incredibly important aspect of ensuring effective enforcement. Gathering evidence of non-compliance or potential breaches of regulations can prove difficult at times and requires a large amount of resource or investment in recording technologies. Currently, this limited data availability makes it difficult to review non-compliance and the level of adherence to the regulations.

Another challenge is ascertaining the scale of businesses and subsectors that are in scope of the current and future targets as laid out in this strategy. Ascertaining the resource needs of all business/subsectors that are in scope must be addressed early via appraisal of the best routes to engage with obligated stakeholders, assessment of the likely numbers of cases that will require additional compliance checks and then reviewing the potential need for an enforcement activity to be undertaken. Developing cases and an evidence bundle against non-compliant businesses whose owners or managers are not regularly on site, or organisations with premises situated in shared business locations can be challenging in the quest to identify breaches of the regulations.

Clarification of the roles and responsibilities of the organisations responsible for compliance is required to identify synergies and ensure the most efficient use of resources. Within these organisations, the staff involved in compliance and enforcement need to receive ongoing training and development to provide meaningful insights into how sectors operate.

Understanding the extent and seriousness of illegal waste crime is also a challenge for NIEA. In 23/24 NIEA received 1205 reports of potential non-compliance and waste criminality. The Environmental Crime Unit (ECU) received 576 of these incidents to progress. The reports are received from members of the public and through other governmental bodies. NIEA believe that this is not a full representation of the scale of waste criminality present within Northern Ireland nor does it capture the extent of serious and organised waste criminality.

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3.6.3 Actions

To address these challenges, DAERA commits to:

59. **Introduce a single Incident Management System which will assist in centralising data capture/incident management across a range of business areas (including illegal waste activity).**
60. **Seek to ensure that all newly obligated subsectors are aware of their respective responsibilities. This will improve effective enforcement.**
61. **Increase capacity and capability to receive, assess, develop and disseminate intelligence.**
62. **Develop our understanding of Organised Crime Groups and crime types to ensure we deploy our resources where we will have the highest impact.**
63. **Develop partnership working to deliver disruption and enforcement interventions.**

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A worker wearing an orange hard hat and a dark blue high-visibility jacket with reflective yellow stripes is seen from the side, talking on a mobile phone. The worker is standing in front of a large, dense pile of sorted waste, including various types of plastic and metal. The background is slightly blurred, emphasizing the worker and the phone. The scene is lit with warm, golden light, suggesting an outdoor setting during sunrise or sunset.

Monitoring Progress

4. Monitoring Progress

4.1 Introduction

The aims, actions and targets set out in this draft strategy represent an ambitious new vision for the future of waste management. To deliver this we recognise that DAERA has a key role in providing strong leadership, both in terms of driving progress through our own commitments but also, where required, bringing stakeholders and key players together in pursuit of the greater vision. Supporting governance structures, alongside clear performance indicators and baselines, are vital to ensure the required changes are delivered and appropriate monitoring and evaluation can be carried out to measure our progress over the life of the strategy.

Looking beyond Northern Ireland, it is imperative we work with other UK nations and Republic of Ireland to join up policy so that we can achieve shared goals. This includes continued participation in relevant forums, such as the Resources and Waste Common Framework and the North/South Ministerial Council, as well as regular engagement at official level.

4.1.1 Measuring our successes

DAERA will develop a set of indicators to measure progress against the strategy's objectives. It may be necessary to incorporate additional indicators in future years.

Alongside the high-level indicators, individual targets and actions set out in the draft strategy will be monitored, totalling **10 targets** and **63 actions** covering waste prevention; recycling; other recovery; disposal; better regulation and enforcement, and communication and engagement. Appendix 2 outlines the anticipated delivery dates for each action within an action plan.

4.1.2 Building the data we need

To assess our progress in any meaningful way we need data. Data is limited for some sectors and material streams, and an important part of the strategy will be filling these data gaps. DAERA has committed to improving data over the lifetime of this draft strategy, particularly in relation to the introduction of digital waste tracking that will help fill data gaps. We will also seek to work with the sector to identify further information needs and potential data sources, and to steadily increase the range of datasets available.

4.1.3 Assessing and reviewing our impacts

A fundamental part of monitoring will be regular reporting on progress against each action and target. DAERA will produce a report midway through the 6-year period of this strategy to update on progress. A final review and report will be completed following the end of the 6-year period.



Responding to the Consultation



5. Responding to the Consultation

5.1 Responses

You can find a copy of the questions associated with this consultation in the consultation document. It is not essential for everyone to answer every question, rather, we would prefer you to only answer the questions you feel are relevant to you or the organisation you are responding on behalf of.

Please respond to this consultation online by accessing the consultation at the following link: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/rethinking-our-resources-northern-ireland-resources-and-waste-management-strategy>

We are encouraging everyone to respond to this consultation through our Citizen Space website as this makes analysing the responses and any future decision making more consistent and provides better data outputs.

When responding, please state whether you are doing so as an individual or representing the views of an organisation. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please make it clear who the organisation represents, and where applicable, how the views of its members were assembled.

5.2 Audience

DAERA welcomes views from all interested stakeholders including councils, waste collectors, representatives from the waste and recycling industry, trade bodies, businesses, non-governmental organisations, third sector organisations, the public and others.

5.3 Closing Date

Responses should be submitted by **23:59 on 8th April 2026**.

5.4 Confidentiality

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives the public a right of access to any information held by a public authority, the Department in this case. This includes information provided in response to this consultation.

The Department will publish a synopsis of responses to the consultation. This will include a list of names of organisations that responded but not personal names, addresses or other contact details.

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The Department cannot automatically consider information supplied to it in response to a consultation, to be confidential. However, it does have a responsibility to decide whether any information provided by you in response to a consultation, including information about your identity, should be made public or treated as confidential. If you do not wish information about your identity to be made public, please include an explanation in your response. Please be aware that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Please note, if your computer automatically includes a confidentiality disclaimer, it won't count as a confidentiality request.

Should you respond in an individual capacity the Department will process your personal data in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. This means that your personal information will not be disclosed to third parties should you request confidentiality. For further information about confidentiality of responses please contact the [Information Commissioners Office](#).

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Appendices



Appendix 1: List of Targets

Target
1. Achieve a waste recycling rate of at least 70% by 2030.
2. Achieve a municipal waste recycling rate of 55% by 2025.
3. Achieve a municipal waste recycling rate of 60% by 2030.
4. Achieve a municipal waste recycling rate of 65% by 2035.
5. Achieve a 10% cap on the amount of waste going to landfill by 2035.
6. DAERA will continue to tackle the problem of littering and will continue to work with stakeholders to advance our anti-litter agenda including the introduction of bans or levies on certain materials..
7. DAERA will continue to lead the development of multi-year, integrated Communications and Engagement for waste and recycling.
8. DAERA will continue to support updating skills and training needs to facilitate a shift to a more Circular Economy in Northern Ireland.
9. DAERA will work with Devolved Administrations to develop and implement the first phase of mandatory Digital Waste Tracking across the UK by October 2026.
10. DAERA will continue to develop a greater understanding of Serious and Organised Crime's involvement in environmental crime, to enhance capabilities in tackling this issue.

Appendix 2: Full List of Actions

There are many targets and actions set out in this strategy. In the interests of brevity and ensuring the main document is accessible to all, the actions needed to achieve targets have been summarised in each section within the main document. A full list of the relevant actions is available here, in Appendix 2.

Strategy Chapter	Actions	Date
Household Waste	1. Define what is to be included in the waste recycling 70% target and identify the contributions required from the household, business, commercial and industrial sectors.	By 31 December 2026
	2. Introduce an EPR scheme for household packaging.	By 31 December 2025
	3. Flexible plastic packaging to be collected for recycling from households.	By 31 March 2027
	4. Develop reform of the Producer Responsibility Schemes for WEEE and Batteries by 2027, and End of Life Vehicles in line with Windsor Framework requirements and UK ambition.	WEEE by 30 June 2027 Batteries by 31 December 2027 End of Life Vehicles in line with Windsor Framework requirements and UK ambition
	5. Introduce DRS for single use drinks containers in Northern Ireland.	By 31 December 2027
	6. Conduct an up-to-date waste compositional analysis to determine the composition of household waste in Northern Ireland.	By 31 March 2027
	7. Develop guidance to ensure all councils in Northern Ireland collect a core set of materials that includes glass bottles, paper and card, plastic bottles, plastic pots tubs and trays, cartons and metal packaging. Plastic film will be introduced to the core set in 2027. The core set will be reviewed regularly.	By 31 March 2027

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Strategy Chapter	Actions	Date
	<p>8. Develop guidance to set out minimum service standards for local councils on delivering household recycling collections, in collaboration with all councils and wider stakeholders.</p>	By 31 March 2027
	<p>9. Develop plans to ensure that all councils provide food waste collection services to all households in Northern Ireland and enhance their existing food waste collections to increase capture of food waste.</p>	Ongoing through NCAP and behaviour change campaigns
	<p>10. Administer the Household Waste Recycling Collaborative Change Programme (HWRCCP) as a funding mechanism for Councils to transform kerbside recycling and Household Recycling Centre infrastructure and services to realise the economic potential of recycling to the economy.</p>	Final applications by 31 March 2026
	<p>11. Implement measures to divert more household biodegradable waste from landfill.</p>	By 31 December 2027
	<p>12. Develop guidance for all councils in Northern Ireland to assist in reducing residual waste collected from households, reflecting the move towards the collection of more recyclables, reuse and waste prevention by end of March 2027. Household circumstances will be considered and exemptions provided where appropriate.</p>	By 31 March 2027
	<p>13. Implement and review the activities in the Waste Prevention Programme.</p>	By 31 December 2026
	<p>14. Review the feasibility of setting waste prevention targets for Northern Ireland.</p>	Ongoing during the lifetime of the revised waste prevention programme
	<p>15. Continue to promote the MyRecyclingNI website and encourage councils to improve their end destination data reporting to ensure households understand where their recyclable materials are being processed.</p>	Ongoing, updated annually in line with LAMWC stats

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Strategy Chapter	Actions	Date
Non-household Municipal Waste	16. Deliver a targeted national campaign to raise awareness in advance of the introduction of any new workplace recycling practices.	By 31 March 2027
	17. Work with councils and service providers to develop a minimum service standard for non-household waste and recycling services.	By 31 March 2027
	18. Develop guidance, tools and resources to support workplaces to implement effective recycling practices.	By 31 December 2027
	19. Work with Invest NI, trade bodies, councils and other stakeholders to ensure businesses are aware of the requirements and the support available to them.	Ongoing. Will continue for lifetime of the Strategy
	20. Undertake a review of the Food Waste Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 with a view to extending the scope to all businesses.	By 31 December 2027
	21. Develop regulations requiring businesses and other non-household organisations to present a consistent core list of materials for recycling. The core list of materials will mirror the core list of materials collected by household waste and recycling services to achieve consistency across sectors.	By 31 December 2028
	22. Progress actions to reduce or eliminate the disposal of NHM biodegradable waste to landfill.	By 31 December 2027
	23. Review, with councils, the potential for household recycling centres (HRCs) to be adapted to accept, measure and monitor non-household waste and recycling.	By 31 December 2029
	24. Through waste composition analysis, establish overall and sectoral baseline non-household waste compositions and arisings.	By 30 June 2027
	25. Establish a reporting framework to capture non-household waste and recycling performance data, including end destinations for materials.	By 31 March 2027

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Strategy Chapter	Actions	Date
Commercial and Industrial Waste	26. For industrial sectors outside the scope of NHM waste, gather baseline data on C&I arisings, composition and recycling performance.	By 30 June 2027
	27. Work with Invest NI and business sector groups to maintain awareness of the technical advisory support available to businesses and organisations in scope of future industrial recycling targets.	Ongoing. Will continue for lifetime of the Strategy
Construction and Demolition Waste	28. Undertake a review of C&D waste data to identify improvements in how it is captured, the treatment routes utilised and the overall composition of C&D waste to identify reduction, reuse, recycling and recovery opportunities.	By 30 June 2027
	29. Based on these data improvements, develop a baseline for C&D waste arisings and current reuse, recycling and recovery rates.	By 30 June 2027
Hazardous Waste	30. Continue to monitor the issues of Persistent Organic Pollutants in waste and engage with and update stakeholders on their legal requirements and any other issues arising.	Ongoing. Will continue for lifetime of the Strategy
	31. Ensure all sites accepting hazardous waste codes have been fully trained in Technical Guidance WM3.	Ongoing. Will continue for lifetime of the Strategy
	32. In collaboration with industry, the third sector and councils, build on existing schemes to establish widespread collection platforms via HRCs for surplus paint from household and commercial waste streams by 2027.	By 31 December 2027
	33. Undertake effective regulation of the movement and management of hazardous waste.	Ongoing. Will continue for lifetime of the Strategy
	34. Eliminate the use of Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs), in line with commitments under the Stockholm Convention.	By 31 December 2025

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Strategy Chapter	Actions	Date
Agricultural Waste	35. Work with key stakeholders to improve information on waste arisings in the agricultural sector.	By 31 December 2028
	36. Work with stakeholders to establish and celebrate the good resource and waste management practice already in existence in the agricultural sector in Northern Ireland and provide new support tools and guidance to enable the sector to manage waste more effectively.	By 31 December 2028
	37. Review existing data sources, opportunities to improve data capture and options to share information useful for the sector to improve performance.	By 31 December 2028
Litter and Fly-Tipping	38. Legislate for beverage containers and bottles to have lids and caps that will remain attached (tethered) to reduce commonly littered bottle caps.	By 31 December 2026
	39. Prepare regulations to restrict the sale or supply of ten commonly littered single-use plastic items.	By 31 December 2026
	40. Prepare regulations to implement clearer labelling of products that contain single use plastic to allow customers to make informed choices.	By 31 December 2026
	41. Prepare regulations to set a requirement for 25% average recycled content in PET bottles by 2025 and 30% average recycled content in all beverage bottles by 2030 to reduce the amount of virgin plastic that is used in manufacture.	By 31 December 2026
	42. Prepare regulations to enable the NI Assembly to restrict the supply and sale of wet wipes containing plastic to help tackle plastic & micro-plastic pollution.	By 31 December 2025

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Strategy Chapter	Actions	Date
	43. Develop a proposal for a consumption reduction plan and targets for single use plastic takeaway cups and food containers to reduce unnecessary waste and tackle plastic pollution.	By 31 December 2026
	44. Work to implement a consistent approach to data collection across Northern Ireland regarding fly-tipping and illegal waste disposal.	Ongoing. Will continue for lifetime of the Strategy
	45. Aim to sign up all district councils to the Fly-Tipping Protocol.	By 31 March 2026
	46. We will continue to collaborate with the voluntary producer responsibility scheme for chewing gum.	Ongoing. Will continue for lifetime of the Strategy
Infrastructure	47. DAERA will respond to all input requests that are submitted to DAERA for planning of waste infrastructure.	Ongoing. Will continue for lifetime of the Strategy
	48. To continue to monitor non-hazardous landfill capacity and continue to assess the level of permitted and planned landfill infrastructure.	Ongoing. Will continue for lifetime of the Strategy
	49. Engage with each of the three local council waste management groups to identify how their waste management plans may need to be updated regarding waste management infrastructure.	By 30 April 2027
Communications and Engagement	50. Continue to utilise behaviour change theory and interventions to generate necessary improvements in correct recycling from citizens at home and in the workplace.	Ongoing. Will continue for lifetime of the Strategy
	51. Continue to communicate and engage with stakeholders in support of new policies and regulations through the Communications and Engagement Plan.	Ongoing. Will continue for lifetime of the Strategy

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Strategy Chapter	Actions	Date
	<p>52. Support existing and new strategic partners in the delivery of communications and engagement activities, including coordinating messages and campaigns across government departments.</p>	Ongoing. Will continue for lifetime of the Strategy
	<p>53. Continue to partner with external organisations, where appropriate, to deliver campaigns to engage the education sector and address target waste streams, global waste problems and littering.</p>	Ongoing. Will continue for lifetime of the Strategy
	<p>54. Work to establish a Northern Ireland Business Recycling Advisory Group.</p>	By 31 March 2026
	<p>55. Work in partnership with Northern Ireland National Communications Action Plan (NCAP) to co-ordinate the delivery of national and local communication activities with Councils to improve the quality and quantity of household recycling, including changes to recycling services.</p>	Ongoing. Will continue for lifetime of the Strategy
Research, Innovation and Skills for the Future	<p>56. Enable the skills related to resources and waste management, such as design, repair and refurbishment, necessary to transition to a resource-efficient and low-carbon economy. Work with other stakeholders to ensure this is also included in just transition planning.</p>	Ongoing. Will continue for lifetime of the Strategy
	<p>57. Continue to support research and development of innovative technologies and solutions that will help improve the waste management sector in Northern Ireland and the transition to a circular economy.</p>	Ongoing. Will continue for lifetime of the Strategy
	<p>58. Provide funding to support third sector organisations to enable the updating of skills and training needs.</p>	Ongoing, subject to funding availability and appropriate business cases

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Strategy Chapter	Actions	Date
Enforcement	59. Introduce a single Incident Management System which will assist in centralising data capture/incident management across a range of business areas (including illegal waste activity).	By 31 March 2026
	60. Seek to ensure that all newly obligated subsectors are aware of their respective responsibilities. This will improve effective enforcement.	Ongoing. Will continue for lifetime of the Strategy
	61. Increase capacity and capability to receive, assess, develop and disseminate intelligence.	Ongoing. Will continue for lifetime of the Strategy
	62. Develop our understanding of Organised Crime Groups and crime types to ensure we deploy our resources where we will have the highest impact.	Ongoing. Will continue for lifetime of the Strategy
	63. Develop partnership working to deliver disruption and enforcement interventions.	Ongoing. Will continue for lifetime of the Strategy

Appendix 3: Further Information

Appendix 3a: Legislative Context

This appendix sets out, in detail, the legislative and statutory drivers that inform waste management and policy development in NI.

There are several significant pieces of national, UK and international legislation which set out how stakeholders in Northern Ireland are required to manage waste. Three recent pieces of legislation call for a considerable step change in the way waste is handled, with new targets and funding mechanisms, changes to the way the waste management sector should operate and implications for how it will futureproof itself in the wake of climate change as we transition to a more circular economy. This strategy will set out the actions and policy measures necessary to achieve the requirements in the legislation.

In addition, the Windsor Framework, a post-EU Exit legal agreement between the EU and the UK which adjusts the operation of the NI Protocol will have an impact on some areas of resource and waste management.

The Waste and Contaminated Land (NI) Order 1997 (as amended)

The [Waste and Contaminated Land \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1997](#) (WCLO) places a statutory obligation on DAERA to produce a waste management plan and revise it every sixth year. The legislation also sets out that the overall objective of the plan must be protecting the environment and human health by preventing or reducing the generation of waste and the adverse impacts of the generation and management of waste, and by reducing overall impacts of resource use and improving resource efficiency.

The WCLO brought into domestic legislation the revised EU Waste Framework Directive, which in turn formed part of the EU Circular Economy Package (CEP), to which the UK had committed prior to EU Exit. The CEP was transposed into domestic legislation in December 2020 by [The Waste \(Circular Economy\) \(Amendment\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2020](#) and brought new duties around waste collection, recovery, preparing for reuse and recycling. It also contains several key new targets:

- 65% of municipal waste to be prepared for reuse and recycled by 2035 (with interim targets of 55% by 2025 and 60% by 2030); and
- 70% of all packaging to be recycled by 2030; and
- The amount of municipal waste sent to landfill to be reduced to 10% or less of the total amount of municipal waste generated (by weight) by 2035.

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Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022

The passing of Northern Ireland's first climate change legislation, the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022, has set the ambition for achieving net zero by 2050 and the waste sector has an important role to play in contributing to this.

Climate Action Plan (CAP)

Northern Ireland's first draft CAP will set out the draft policies and proposals to achieve reductions in emissions from nine sectors, including the waste management sector. Its focus is on meeting the first carbon budget period, which covers the five years from 2023 to 2027. A carbon budget sets a limit on the maximum amount of greenhouse gas emissions that can be produced over a five-year period.

In June 2023, DAERA launched a 16-week public consultation on Northern Ireland's 2030 & 2040 emissions reduction targets and the first three carbon budgets (2023-2027, 2028-2032 and 2033-2037). The consultation, which closed in October 2023, also sought views on the Climate Change Committee (CCC) Advice Report: The Path to a Net Zero Northern Ireland.

For the waste management sector specifically, the CCC has recommended a raft of new policies that target emissions right across the sector, with the aim of achieving the CCC's recommended 28.4% reduction within the first carbon budget period, 2023-2027.

DAERA has developed or is developing several of the CCC's recommendations – those that will have the greatest impact on emissions and can realistically be delivered – into proposals for the waste sector's contribution to Northern Ireland's CAP, informed by DAERA's own Northern Ireland specific data.

These proposals aim to reduce emissions in the waste management sector through two key interventions:

- Reducing landfill emissions through the improved collection of food waste and a new proposal to restrict or ban biodegradable waste to landfill.
- Increasing recycling rates and improving quality. To achieve this, targets have been set to recycle 65% of municipal waste while reducing waste to landfill to no more than 10% of the total by 2035. This is supported by two new proposals to increase household recycling and the introduction of mandatory recycling for the commercial and industrial sector.

DAERA will begin scoping work on the CCC policy recommendations to develop proposals for the second carbon budget (2028-2032) that will drive down emissions further, achieving the CCC's recommended reductions for that period as well as contributing to the 2030 interim target agreed on in the carbon budget consultation mentioned previously.

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Proposals for the second carbon budget may look at further enhancements to recycling processes, as well as strengthening waste prevention and reuse in Northern Ireland, with the aim of practically eliminating the need to landfill or export waste, while ensuring resources are sent to the most economically and environmentally beneficial destination possible.

The draft CAP focuses on nine sectors, (energy production and supply (including for residential, public and district heating and cooling purposes); transport (including shipping and aviation); infrastructure (including infrastructure for electric vehicular transport); business and industrial processes; residential and public (in relation to buildings in these sectors); waste management; land use and land-use change, including forestry and agriculture) that outlines policies and proposals that each sector will seek to implement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions within the first carbon budget period, 2023-2027.

A consultation on the draft Climate Action Plan was launched on the 19th of June 2025 for 16 weeks and closed for responses on the 8th of October 2025. This consultation sets out 52 policies and proposals for consideration with the aim of achieving the required reductions within the first carbon budget.

Policies and proposals for the waste sector are discussed in more detail in the body of this strategy and form much of the content in the recently closed consultation, *Rethinking Our Resources: Measures for Climate Action and a Circular Economy in Northern Ireland*. In addition to the requirement to produce a CAP, Section 18 of the [Climate Change Act \(NI\) 2022](#) states that the Department must ensure that at least 70% of waste is recycled by 2030, and it must also develop and publish sectoral plans for the waste management sector setting out how the sector will contribute to the achievement of the targets in the Act. The intention is to develop this following publication of the draft Climate Action Plan.

One of the outcomes of this strategy and the associated consultation will be to define the scope of the 70% recycling target and to outline how DAERA plans to achieve it.

Environment Act 2021

[The Environment Act 2021](#) sets the framework for the UK's environmental governance post EU Exit, including establishing a new Office for Environmental Protection (OEP), putting environmental principles into domestic law and requiring the publication of Environmental Improvement Plans. The OEP's remit extends to Northern Ireland with a principal objective of contributing to environmental protection and the improvement of the natural environment through its statutory functions of:

- Monitoring and reporting on environmental improvement plans.
- Monitoring and reporting on the implementation of NI environmental law.

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- Advising on changes to NI environmental law and other matters relating to the natural environment.
- Handling complaints about relevant public authorities, investigating where appropriate; and
- Taking enforcement action, where necessary, against non-compliant public authorities.

Following Defra's publication for England, DAERA have developed an environmental principles policy statement (EPPS) for Northern Ireland. The Environment Act details five environmental principles in paragraph 6(5) of Schedule 2. These are internationally recognised as successful benchmarks for environmental protection and enhancement.

The principles are:

The **integration principle**: ensuring environmental protection requirements are integrated into Departments' policies and activities, with a view to promoting sustainable development.

The **prevention principle**: anticipating and preventing any potential environmental harm rather than reacting to any damage caused by unregulated action.

The **precautionary principle**: assists with decision-making where there is scientific uncertainty and is a core principle of environmental law. It requires that "...where there are threats of serious [or] irreversible environmental damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation"

The **rectification at source principle**: environmental damage should, as a priority, be rectified at source to ensure damage to the environment is tackled when (and where) it occurs so that it does not have a long-term environmental impact, spread further afield or have a delayed effect.

The **'polluter pays' principle**: the costs of preventing, controlling and remediating pollution or other environmental damage should be borne by those who cause it rather than those suffering from the effects of environmental damage, or the community at large.

NI's first Environmental Improvement Plan

An Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) is defined as a plan for significantly improving the natural environment. Northern Ireland's first EIP 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; create opportunities to develop our economy; elevate Northern Ireland to an environmental leader; and enable us to play our part in protecting the global environment for many decades to come.

The draft EIP received Executive approval on the 26th of September 2024. It was published and laid at the NI Assembly on the 27th of September 2024.

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The publishing of the EIP sets the clock running for DAERA to produce an EIP annual progress report by January 2026. The reporting period covers the 12 months starting from 27th of September 2024. The OEP is required to monitor progress against the EIP and publish annual reports within 6 months of DAERA's progress report. It may include consideration of how progress could be improved, and whether the data published by DAERA is adequate. DAERA must then respond to the OEP's annual report, addressing any recommendations made. This will deliver a new robust and independent mechanism to monitor environmental improvement, with reports published and laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly.

The Environment Act 2021 also has implications for all nations of the UK. The main areas affecting Northern Ireland are:

- Powers to introduce extended producer responsibility schemes.
- Powers to introduce deposit return schemes.
- Powers to introduce a digital waste tracking system.
- Powers to introduce regulations around repairability, durability and recyclability of products placed on the market.

The Windsor Framework

Introduced in February 2023, following agreement by the EU and UK to amend the original NI Protocol, the Windsor Framework provides a new set of arrangements to restore the smooth flow of trade within the UK Internal Market and to safeguard NI's place within the Union. This will undoubtedly have an impact on resources and waste, although the details and understanding of the outworkings of this impact are still being determined. DAERA will continue to discharge its obligations under the WF in accordance with its statutory requirements under the applicable law.

Appendix 3b: WCLO Requirements for a Waste Management Plan

This section highlights the Department's obligations within the WCLO for preparing a waste management plan, and how this waste management strategy will fulfil those obligations.

Waste management plan

19.— (1) The Department shall have a waste management plan containing its policies in relation to the recovery and disposal of waste in Northern Ireland.

This document covers this requirement in its entirety.

(2) The Department—

(a) shall review the waste management plan at least every sixth year.

(b) may from time to time modify the waste management plan.

but this paragraph shall not apply to so much of a waste management plan as relates to the matters mentioned in paragraphs 8 to 11 of Part 2 of Schedule 3.

This strategy has been informed by the review of the 2013 waste management strategy and the 2019 waste management plan.

(3) The waste management plan shall consist of a statement which relates to the whole of Northern Ireland.

The geographical scope of this strategy is the whole of Northern Ireland.

(4) The waste management plan: -

(a) shall include a statement of the Department's policies for attaining the objectives set out in [Part 1](#) Schedule 3;

These requirements are laid out throughout the strategy. Specifically, the application of the waste hierarchy is addressed in section 1.3, self-sufficiency and proximity are addressed within section 3.2, and the protection of human health and the environment is addressed through the application of the actions contained within the strategy and are covered by the SEA and HRA.

(b) shall include the matters set out in [Part 2](#) of that Schedule.

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The analysis of the current waste management situation and general policies in relation to waste and litter are addressed throughout each section within Part 2 of the strategy. The targets and actions are focused on delivering these requirements.

Policies in relation to packaging are addressed in section 1.3.3, while policies in relation to the separate collection of waste are addressed throughout Part 2, particularly section 2.1 and 2.2. Both requirements are addressed through the targets and actions within the strategy.

There is a focus on policies in relation to bio-waste through the targets and actions within the strategy. Sections 2.1, 2.2 and 3.2 also address biowaste issues.

Re-use is a theme that runs throughout the strategy along with prevention aspects. Particularly, a range of actions as well as sections within Part 1 and Part 2 of the strategy address prevention and re-use aspects.

Policies in relation to recycling targets and landfill reduction targets are addressed throughout the entirety of this strategy including within the Targets and actions.

(c) may include the matters set out in [Part 3](#) of that Schedule; and

This requirement is not mandatory however, elements of this requirement are considered throughout the strategy. Economic means for tackling waste include Household Waste Recycling Collaborative Change Programme (actions), EPR (section 1.3.3) and DRS schemes (section 1.3.4), whilst behaviour change and awareness campaigns are considered in section 3.4. Many targets and actions within the strategy also focus on these elements.

(d) for the purposes of litter prevention, must conform to—

- (i) the programmes of measures published pursuant to [regulation 14\(1\)](#) of the Marine Strategy Regulations 2010; and
- (ii) each programme of measures proposed under [regulation 12\(1\)](#) of the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017.

Litter prevention is addressed through a range of actions and in particular section 2.7 of the strategy. This section conforms to both the regulations above as the policies and actions within the strategy are designed to improve the environment by tackling litter issues throughout Northern Ireland.

Separately the Environmental Improvement Plan for Northern Ireland, mentioned within this strategy, includes a commitment to publish Northern Ireland's first litter strategy by 2027.

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(4A) Steps taken before the coming into operation of this paragraph in relation to the waste management plan may be steps for the purposes of Articles 19, 19A, 19B and 19C.

These requirements will be covered by the consultation procedure once the strategy is released for consultation. These will be addressed through a 12-week consultation period were district councils and other such bodies or persons appearing to the Department to be representative of the interests of industry as it considers appropriate.

Also, responses to any public consultation relating to the Waste Management Plan/Strategy will be analysed and presented to consultees in the form of a Summary of Responses document. A Departmental Response document will also be published outlining the outcomes of the consultation.

(5) In preparing the waste management plan the Department—

- (a) shall consult district councils and such other bodies or persons appearing to it to be representative of the interests of industry as it considers appropriate and may consult such other bodies or persons as it considers appropriate.

There will be a 12-week consultation period were district councils and other such bodies or persons appearing to the Department to be representative of the interests of industry as it considers appropriate.

(b) may carry out a survey or investigation into—

- (i) the kinds or quantities of waste which it appears to it is likely to be situated in Northern Ireland,
- (ii) the facilities which are or appear to it likely to be available or needed in Northern Ireland for recovering or disposing of any such waste,
- (iii) any other matter which the Department considers appropriate in connection with its preparation of the plan.

The tasks in (5)(b) are not an essential requirement, however, the Department has commissioned a project to assess waste arisings and waste composition. The last full Waste Composition Analysis (WCA) was carried out in 2017, and a set of updated data is required as we endeavour to meet our ambitious environmental targets. DAERA has secured funding for an updated WCA to be completed via the Waste and Resources Action Programme. The 2-year programme is due to complete in March 2026 and will provide DAERA with an updated dataset in respect of municipal waste (households and businesses/organisations the produce waste similar in nature to that produced from households), Commercial and Industrial wastes (C&I) and Construction, Demolition and Excavation wastes (C, D&E).

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The Department has commissioned the SIB to undertake an analysis of NI waste arisings infrastructure through to 2050 which as per the Climate Change Committee recommendations will enable it to publish an assessment of residual waste treatment capacity needs through to 2050. This SIB report will assist with informing policy to meet requirements within Northern Ireland's first Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) and the draft Climate Action Plan (CAP) as well as fulfilling the obligations of the other drivers including the WLCO.

(6) Before carrying out a survey or investigation under paragraph (5)(b), the Department shall consult such bodies or persons appearing to it to be representative of the interests of industry as it may consider appropriate and shall consult such other bodies or persons as it may consider appropriate.

Again, the task in (6) are not compulsory unless (5)(b) is carried out. However, extensive consultation and research is ongoing which will continue to inform the Departmental position and further our knowledge.

(7) The Department shall make its findings available to any bodies or persons it consults in accordance with paragraph (5)(a) or (6).

Responses to any public consultation relating to the Waste Management Plan/Strategy will be analysed and presented to consultees in the form of a Summary of Responses document. A Departmental Response document will also be published outlining the outcomes of the consultation.

(8) The Department shall ensure that the waste management plan conforms to the plan for the reduction of biodegradable waste going to landfill required by section 20(1) of the Waste and Emissions Trading Act 2003.

This requirement is detailed within the infrastructure and capacity section (3.2) and addressed by the ongoing work in developing the diverting biodegradable waste from landfill proposal highlighted within the draft Climate Action Plan section (Appendix 3).

Developing a waste management strategy and waste management plan is only part of the process. Section 23 of the WLCO also outlines what local councils must do in relation to preparing or modifying their waste management plans. Together these plans will give a more holistic picture of waste management in Northern Ireland.

Appendix 3c: Roles and Responsibilities

Government

UK Government and Devolved Administrations

While waste is largely a devolved matter, a shared four nation vision will be key to grasping the opportunities and overcoming barriers to achieve our common environmental goals.

The four governments are committed to the transition to a circular economy that creates opportunities for economic growth in a fair way, and which will contribute to the achievement of our respective net-zero, environmental and wider policy aims. This transition will create jobs, increase economic competitiveness and resilience, shorten supply chains, increase economic added value and improve resource efficiency and productivity from the re-circulation of goods and materials.

All four governments are at different stages of the journey towards a low-carbon circular economy, however there are common goals—preserving resources, reducing carbon emissions and growing the economy. There are also common challenges including industry concerns around new regulations and additional burdens on business and the costs of reform impacting consumers.

To mitigate these challenges, it is crucial we grasp the opportunity to collaborate closely on driving circularity across the UK, leveraging our shared objectives and individual priorities to deliver meaningful and enduring change.

There are reserved levers that could play a key role in driving change, for example VAT incentives, export controls, and demand-side interventions (e.g. product design requirements). Close collaboration with UK Government and the Devolved Administrations will be key to success.

Northern Ireland Assembly

The devolved institutions in Northern Ireland are constituted under the Northern Ireland Act 1998, with several institutional reforms having taken place since then.

Powers were transferred from the UK Parliament to allow decisions and laws to be made at a local level in Northern Ireland.

The Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive Committee make laws and decisions on most of the issues affecting everyday life in Northern Ireland, including agriculture, economic development, local government, environmental issues, planning and transport.

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Central Government

Government in all its forms plays a central role in developing the legislation, policy and targets that assist businesses and residents adopt circular living and business models. It needs to ensure that adequate funding and support for innovation, research and development are available to address climate change, develop green jobs and address biodiversity commitments. The Draft Green Growth Strategy for Northern Ireland contains commitments to reduce our wasteful use of resources through greater efficiency and an increasingly diverse and circular economy.

The Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs has responsibility for implementing elements of the Climate Change Act, such as Climate Action Plans. It is the responsibility of each department to implement policies, proposals, and strategies to achieve the reductions necessary, in line with the requirements for named sectors in legislation and section 52 of the Climate Change Act which sets out departmental responsibilities. The Executive also has a role to adopt key policies and programmes that are essential in delivering the targets for reducing carbon emissions that the Climate Change Act now requires.

DAERA

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) has responsibility for policy on food, farming, the environment, fisheries, forestry and sustainability, and for the development of the rural sector in Northern Ireland. It supports the sustainable development of the agri-food, environmental, fishing and forestry sectors of the Northern Ireland economy, having regard for the needs of consumers, the protection of human, animal and plant health, the welfare of animals, and the conservation and enhancement of the environment.

Waste is a devolved policy area within the UK. DAERA is responsible for delivering waste management policy within Northern Ireland that aligns with the agreed commitments set out in the Environment Act 2021. Northern Ireland's own legislative framework both helps meet and surpass the UK policy commitments. With the passing of Northern Ireland's Climate Change Act in 2022, the waste sector now has new statutory obligations to decarbonise by 2050.

The [DAERA corporate plan](#) sets strategic direction for the 2025-27 period and beyond and helps ensure that work is strategically aligned; policy interventions are coherent, effective and deliverable; resources are collectively focused; and that DAERA work collaboratively with partners to address the many challenges faced in delivering the Departments key priorities.

DAERA will deliver many policies, programmes and services during the life of this corporate plan, but the Department are committing to delivering ten key pledges by the end of the Assembly mandate in May 2027, one of which is the Waste Management Strategy.

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DAERA has two executive agencies:

- Forest Service
- Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA).

DAERA and NIEA have responsibility in Northern Ireland for making sure waste and resources are managed in a sustainable and safe way.

NIEA

NIEA's primary purpose is to protect and enhance Northern Ireland's environment, and in doing so, deliver health and well-being benefits and support economic growth. As an executive agency within DAERA, NIEA is a key contributor to DAERA's vision of

“Delivering a net zero nature positive future, supporting sustainable agriculture and thriving rural communities”.

In line with NIEA's overall purpose, it has established its own [key priorities](#):

- Environmental Regulation, Protection and Enforcement;
- Water Quality; and
- Nature Recovery.

As well as supporting the delivery of significant elements of wider departmental programmes, regulation and enforcement will be key to the delivery of NIEA's work in 2024-2025 whereby NIEA aim to support economic operators while safeguarding nature.

As an Executive Agency, NIEA are committed to delivering a high-quality service that meets the needs of those they serve. NIEA will therefore ensure openness and transparency, a robust governance framework supported by clear communications to empower their people to deliver the best for our natural environment.

Department for the Economy

The Department for the Economy responsibilities includes:

- Wider economic policy, including specific areas like energy, tourism and telecoms.
- The operation of a range of employment and skills programmes.
- Oversight and funding of the further and higher education sectors.
- Various aspects of employment law.

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- The management and operation of various EU funding programmes.
- Energy, including renewables.

The Department for the Economy's (DfE) 2025/26 Business Plan sets out what DfE will do to grow a globally competitive and sustainable economy. It focuses on four key Priorities:

- To increase the proportion of working-age people in Good Jobs so that working families enjoy a decent standard of living
- To raise Productivity, which is the fundamental driver of economic growth and overall living standards
- To promote Regional Balance, ensuring that everyone shares in the benefits of prosperity
- To reduce Carbon Emissions, in order to safeguard the planet for future generations.

The Department for the Economy launched a public consultation on the draft *Circular Economy Strategy for Northern Ireland* in January 2023. The draft strategy sets out our vision to create an innovative, inclusive and competitive economy, with responsible production and consumption at its core.

Strategic Investment Board

Strategic Investment Board Limited (SIB) was created as a company limited by guarantee and owned by The Executive Office and offers support for infrastructure programmes across Northern Ireland. SIB helps the public sector develop and deliver major programmes and projects including waste related projects such as managing arc21's residual waste treatment project.

Northern Ireland's local government

Local Councils

Councils in Northern Ireland play a key role in the delivery of the waste management strategy, having a responsibility to collect and manage all household waste and some non-household municipal waste.

All eleven councils collect a wide selection of household wastes at the kerbside. Besides kerbside collections, local councils offer additional recycling facilities at 93 recycling centres and more than 350 council-operated bring banks for the recycling of separate wastes such as glass, cans, textiles and clothing.

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Councils also provide a range of functions that directly and indirectly relate to the waste strategy, including:

- local planning functions
- street cleaning
- environmental protection
- environmental improvement
- enforcement byelaws, such as those around litter.

Council waste management groups

Councils in Northern Ireland formed three regional waste management groups. Recognising that it is the responsibility of individual district councils in Northern Ireland to prepare a Waste Management Plan under the provisions of the Waste and Contaminated Land (Northern Ireland) Order 1997, each of the groups joined forces to commit to a regional waste strategy.

arc21

arc21 is an umbrella waste management group in Northern Ireland representing six councils on the eastern coast:

- Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council
- Ards and North Down Borough Council
- Belfast City Council
- Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council
- Mid and East Antrim Borough Council
- Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.

It was established in 2003 and was formally incorporated in 2004 following a process of increasing co-operation among its constituent councils.

Joint Council Group

The Joint Council Group comprises three councils:

- Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council
- Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
- Mid Ulster District Council.

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North West Region Waste Management Group

The North West Region Waste Management Group represents a voluntary grouping of two district councils, comprising:

- Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council
- Derry City and Strabane District Council.

It was originally established in 1999 as one of three subregional groups in recognition by all district councils in Northern Ireland of the mutual benefits to be gained from a regional approach to waste management planning.

Private Sector

Waste management companies

Waste management companies provide a wide range of waste and recycling services across a range of commercial and industrial sectors in Northern Ireland. They range from small family-owned businesses to some of the largest multinational waste management companies. All these waste management companies fulfil a key role in realising the economic and environmental benefits of creating a circular economy for resources.

There are benefits to be achieved through collaborative actions that will improve recycling rates and material quality, all leading to innovation and investment and a green economy creating jobs and prosperity. By working collaboratively to unlock these benefits, organisations working in the sector can also contribute to the delivery of national targets for waste and recycling.

Reprocessors

Having the appropriate waste reprocessing and treatment infrastructure built and operating effectively at all levels of the waste hierarchy is critical to enabling the most efficient treatment of Northern Ireland's resources and waste.

Waste management reprocessors in Northern Ireland provide a range of sorting, treatment and reprocessing capacity for a range of material types. These processes are designed to improve recycling rates and material quality.

The infrastructure is also supplemented by reuse opportunities provided by charities, charity shops and the members of Northern Ireland Resources Network (NIRN), the representative body for reuse and repair organisations.

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Packaging Producers

Through new packaging EPR legislation the producers of packaging (above certain thresholds) will have responsibility to meet higher recycling targets for specific materials used in packaging and use simpler recycling labelling on products.

Trade bodies

Waste trade bodies play a key role in the resources and waste industry. These organisations represent the interests of various stakeholders involved in waste management, including government agencies, waste management companies, reprocessors, recycling firms and environmental advocacy groups. Some of the key roles and functions of waste trade bodies include:

- policy advocacy
- best practice development
- education and engagement
- training and certification
- information sharing
- networking
- compliance support
- research and development.

Third Sector

Environmental organisations and NGOs

These groups advocate sustainable waste management practices, conduct research, raise public awareness, and often work on projects to reduce waste and improve recycling and waste management systems.

Communities

Our communities play a key role in developing and delivering this waste management strategy. Key to its success is understanding the challenges that communities face in managing waste effectively due to a range of social, economic and environmental factors. In some cases, this can lead to increases in waste generation or waste being disposed of incorrectly.

Communities' and citizens' participation are essential if waste and recycling targets and net zero ambitions are to be met.

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Engaging our communities is not just about providing the right services in the right place at the right time but also allowing them to fully engage and participate in the opportunities a circular economy represents, for example local reuse and repair hubs, volunteering opportunities, access to skills and training, and ultimately potential employment opportunities.

There can be gaps in understanding what services are available and a lack of awareness of the importance of correct waste disposal. These may result in incorrect or illegal disposal of waste. Addressing these aspects requires our commitment to a combination of effective policy, community education and engagement, infrastructure development, innovative solutions for waste reduction, reuse, recycling, recovery and ultimately, if required, enforcement.

Appendix 3d: Skills Required for the Future

This has been based on the findings of CIWM Presidential Report 2021, [Skills for the Future: The Journey to 2030](#).

Soft Skills

- Systems thinking
- Change management
- Business continuity
- Application of different business models
- Project management
- People management
- Entrepreneurial thinking
- Leadership
- Crisis management
- Commercial awareness
- Negotiation and contract management
- Communications and behavioural change

Design

- Waste management and circular economy for designers
- Life cycle analysis
- Understand the need and the potential to design out disposability

Technology

- Digital literacy
- Artificial Intelligence (AI)/ machine learning
- Material sciences
- Data

Health and Safety

- Health and wellbeing
- Hazards presented by new materials
- Fire safety
- Electric vehicles (end of life)
- Autonomous vehicles

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Frontline Services

- Material science and composition
- Technical skills
- Procurement
- Development of appropriate metrics
- Innovation
- Recruitment

Reuse and Repair

- Specialist skills
- Problem solving
- Reverse logistics
- Auditing

Circular Economy

- Whole-life costing
- Carbon accounting
- Extended producer responsibility
- Increased Internet of Things (IOT), machine learning and AI
- Product as a service and new business models
- Industrial symbiosis

Climate Change

- Carbon literacy
- Metrics
- Waste treatment and disposal technology
- Carbon efficient fleet, including electric vehicles and natural gas vehicles
- Carbon capture and storage technology

Appendix 4: Glossary

Term	Abbreviation	Explanation
Agricultural Waste		Agricultural waste is material that is left over, unwanted or a burden, material that can no longer be used for its original purpose, it is out of date or has become damaged or unsuitable for use.
Agri-Food & Biosciences Institute	AFBI	AFBI is a leading provider of scientific research and services to government, non-governmental organisations and commercial organisations.
Agriculture, Plastics Environment UK	APE UK	APE UK is an industry-led, not-for-profit body to collect used agri-plastics, funded by manufacturers and distributors/merchants supplying farmers and growers.
Anaerobic Digestion	AD	A treatment process where organic wastes – mainly food waste – is broken down naturally by micro-organisms under anaerobic conditions (meaning, occurring in the absence of oxygen). This process produces biogas and fertiliser (digestate) and is therefore considered to be a form of recycling.
Animal By-Products	ABP	ABPs are defined as entire bodies or parts of animals, products of animal origin or other products obtained from animals which are not intended for human consumption. ABPs are a potential source of risks to public and animal health. Legislation has been in place for many years to control these risks by setting out the requirements for the collection, storage, transport, treatment, use and disposal of animal by-products.
Biodegradable Waste	BW	Any waste that is capable of undergoing anaerobic decomposition, such as food and garden waste, and paper and paperboard.
Chartered Institute of Wastes Management	CIWM	CIWM is the leading professional membership organisation for individuals in the sustainability, resources and waste management sector.

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Term	Abbreviation	Explanation
Circular Economy	CE	A model of production and consumption that involves sharing, leasing, reusing, repairing, refurbishing and recycling existing materials and products for as long as possible.
Circular Economy Package	CEP	The EU Circular Economy Package introduced a revised legislative framework, identifying steps for the reduction of waste and establishing a long-term path for waste management and recycling. The relevant requirements of the amended Waste Framework Directive were transposed into domestic legislation in Northern Ireland on 18 December 2020 via the Waste (Circular Economy) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 .
Circularity		A practice which focuses on reducing waste as much as possible while keeping a product's value intact for a longer period.
College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise	CAFRE	CAFRE is a college that provides a range of courses leading students to a career in agri-food and rural businesses.
Climate Action Plan	CAP	CAP sets out the proposals and policies, covering the areas of responsibility of each Northern Ireland department, for meeting a carbon budget for a set budgetary period and also has to set out how the 2030, 2040 and 2050 emissions reduction targets will be met.
Climate Change Committee	CCC	The UK Climate Change Committee is the statutory, independent body of expert climate change advisors to the UK government and all UK devolved administrations (including Northern Ireland).
Closed-loop recycling		Closed-loop recycling is when a material is reprocessed and used to manufacture another product in the same product category.
Combined Heat and Power	CHP	CHP is a highly efficient process that captures and utilises the heat that is a by-product of the electricity generation process.

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Term	Abbreviation	Explanation
Commercial and Industrial	C&I	Commercial and industrial waste means non-hazardous mixed waste and separately collected waste of larger quantities than municipal waste originating from commercial and industrial activities and/or premises, including paper and cardboard, glass, metal, plastic, bio-waste, wood and bulky waste.
Commingled		Dry recycling materials that are presented for collection together in one bin.
Composting		The process through which organic matter, including food and garden waste, decomposes to generate compost. See also: IVC.
Consistency		In this document, refers to the range of measures being proposed by government to improve the quantity and quality of recycling and composting in Northern Ireland and to reducing variation in local arrangements for waste and recycling collections.
Construction and Demolition	C&D	C&D waste can be a mixture of surplus material resulting from construction, demolition, excavation, refurbishment, renovation, road works and site clearance. These activities generate a wide variety of waste materials including, but not limited to, wood, plaster, metals, asphaltic substances, bricks, block, concrete, native vegetation, excavation dirt, rock, stone and gravel.
Contamination		Contamination occurs when incorrect or non-target items are erroneously placed into recycling containers preventing the correct or target recyclable items from being recycled, e.g. food waste mixed with dry recycling.
Core Set		A standardised set of materials to be collected by all council areas. This would include, at a minimum, glass, paper and card, metal and plastics.
Council		The organisation that is officially responsible for all the public services and facilities in a particular area. Northern Ireland is divided into 11 council areas.

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Term	Abbreviation	Explanation
Council Waste Management Plans	WMP	<p>The primary purpose of council WMPs is to set out the arrangements for the management of the wastes arising within the council areas, in fulfilment of the councils' statutory obligations under the EU Waste Framework Directive, and the Waste and Contaminated Land (Northern Ireland) Order 1997.</p> <p>Each plan sets in place basic building blocks to ensure that waste management practices become more sustainable, while ensuring councils should meet their statutory obligations and targets.</p>
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs	DAERA	DAERA has responsibility for food, farming, environmental, fisheries, forestry and sustainability policy and the development of the rural sector in Northern Ireland.
Deposit Return Scheme	DRS	A system whereby consumers of qualifying drinks containers will have a deposit added to the cost of their drinks. The deposit is redeemable following the return of the containers to specified return points or reverse vending machines.
Digital Waste Tracking	DWT	Mandatory DWT will help businesses and government move towards a circular economy by joining up and digitising currently fragmented systems to provide a single comprehensive way of tracking the amount and type of waste being produced and where it ends up.
Discussion Document	DD	In this document, we refer to the Discussion Document as the public discussion document on the Future Recycling and separation of Waste of a Household Nature in Northern Ireland , which was consulted upon between 26 June and 4 October 2020.
Dry recyclables		Recyclable waste streams that do not include wet material, such as food and garden waste.
Dry recycling		That part of household waste or municipal waste comprising waste that can be recovered, recycled or reprocessed, such as aluminium and steel cans, paper, plastic bottles or cardboard.

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Term	Abbreviation	Explanation
Emissions Trading Scheme	ETS	The UK ETS replaced the UK's participation in the European Union ETS on 1 January 2021. ETSs usually work on the cap-and-trade principle, where a cap is set on the total amount of certain greenhouse gases that can be emitted by sectors covered by the scheme.
Energy from Waste	EfW	An energy recovery process that generates power in the form of electricity, heat or transport fuels from the controlled incineration of residual waste.
Equality Screening Assessment	EQIA	An equality screening assessment is a process that evaluates a policy, service, or decision to determine if it could unfairly impact different groups of people, particularly those with protected characteristics like race, gender, disability, or age.
European Waste Catalogue	EWC	The waste classification code, also referred to as LoW (List of Waste) or EWC (European Waste Catalogue) code, are classification codes for common types of waste.
Extended Producer Responsibility	EPR	An environmental policy approach where producers are responsible for the post-consumer stage of their products. The approach shifts the responsibilities and costs away from governments and councils upstream to producers. It also incentivises producers to consider environmental impacts when designing their products.
Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging	pEPR	Currently being introduced across the UK nations, pEPR will shift the cost of managing packaging waste from councils to packaging producers. It includes modulation of producer fees to incentivise recyclability of packaging produced, increased recycling targets and clearer labelling for consumers.
Food Waste		Food waste is all food material that has become a waste, whether processed, partially processed or unprocessed, intended to be, or reasonably expected to be consumed by humans and including any substance, including water, intentionally incorporated into the food during its manufacture, preparation or treatment. This includes the following: food scraps, teabags and coffee grounds.
Gate Fee		The fee charged for the disposal of solid waste at any public or private landfill, transfer station and/or resource recovery or recycling facilities.

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Term	Abbreviation	Explanation
Green Growth Strategy		The Green Growth Strategy is the Northern Ireland Executive's multi-decade strategy, balancing climate, environment and the economy in Northern Ireland. It sets out the long-term vision for tackling the climate crisis in the right way.
Greenhouse Gases	GHG	Gases that contribute to global warming by absorbing and emitting radiation such as carbon dioxide and methane.
Hazardous Waste		Hazardous wastes are those that are deemed dangerous to human health or the environment and are difficult to handle.
Household Waste	HH	Household waste includes materials collected directly from households via kerbside collections, services to communal properties, material taken to bring sites and household recycling centres, and several other smaller sources including litter bins.
Household Recycling Centre	HRC	Council recycling centres for household waste. Most can recycle paper, glass and plastics, and some also collect metal and organic waste.
Household Waste Recycling Collaborative Change Programme	HWRCCP	A fund to assist councils to transform recycling services. The programme focuses on increasing the quality and quantity of recycling, to realise the economic potential of recycling to the local economy. It provides capital grants for spending such as collection vehicles, bins, and improvements to amenity sites or waste recycling centres.
In-vessel Composting	IVC	A composting process involving the aerobic (occurring in the presence of oxygen) breakdown of garden and food waste in a contained environment. Resulting product is used as a soil enricher.
Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful	KNIB	KNIB is an independent charity dedicated to creating a world where people and nature thrive.
Linear economy		The traditional economic approach in the UK structured as take, make, use and waste.
Love Food Hate Waste	LFHW	LFHW is a national brand that runs campaigns aimed at radically reducing the amount of food which is wasted in UK homes.

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Term	Abbreviation	Explanation
Materials Recovery Facility	MRF	A facility where material that has been co-collected is sorted into different groups ready for reprocessing, for example plastic bottles, paper and cans.
Multi-stream		Dry recycling materials that are presented for collection by the household in separate containers.
Municipal Waste	MW	Defined as waste from households and waste from other sources, such as retail, administration, education, health services, accommodation and food services, and other services and activities, that is similar in nature and composition to waste from households.
MyRecyclingNI		A website funded by DAERA and delivered by WRAP to allow you to see what happens to council collected waste and recycling in Northern Ireland.
Net Zero		The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 sets a target of at least a 100% reduction in net zero GHG emissions by 2050 (i.e. net zero emissions by 2050) for Northern Ireland compared to baseline, along with interim targets including at least a 48% reduction in net emissions by 2030.
Northern Ireland Resources Network	NIRN	NIRN is the representative body for reuse and repair organisations.
Northern Ireland Landfill Allowance Scheme	NILAS	NILAS was introduced in 2005 and translated the Landfill Directive targets into annual allowances for each council in Northern Ireland for each year to 2019/20.
Non-household Municipal	NHM	NHM waste is collected from sources other than households where the waste is similar in nature and composition. Most businesses, public sector and third sector organisations produce NHM waste.
Non-governmental organisations	NGOs	A non-profit entity that is not part of government or a government body.

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Term	Abbreviation	Explanation
Northern Ireland Environment Agency	NIEA	An executive agency within DAERA. Its primary purpose is to protect and enhance Northern Ireland's environment, and in doing so, deliver health and well-being benefits and support economic growth.
Office for Environmental Protection	OEP	The OEP is a public body that protects and improves the environment by holding government and other public authorities to account.
Open loop recycling		Open loop recycling is when products are reprocessed, and the materials produced are used in a different application.
Persistent Organic Pollutants	POPs	POPs are a group of chemical substances that persist in the environment, may accumulate in food and human tissue and are toxic.
Planning Policy Statement	PPS	Planning Policy Statements (PPS) contain policies on land use and other planning matters, for example telecommunications or the built heritage, and apply to the whole of Northern Ireland.
QualiTEE		An exception assessment to determine if mixed dry recycling collections delivers materials that are of comparable quality to separately collected materials. The assessment also covers if separate collections are Technically feasible, incur disproportionate Economic costs or offer a better Environmental outcome. Formerly known as TEEP.
Refuse-Derived Fuel	RDF	Consists largely of organic components of municipal waste (such as plastics and biodegradable waste). This can then be used in a variety of ways to generate electricity, most commonly as an additional fuel used with coal in power stations or in cement kilns.
Residual waste		"Black bag" waste – waste collected to be sent for energy recovery or landfill. As known as general waste. Non-hazardous waste material that cannot be reused or recycled and needs to be sent to energy recovery or disposal. Residual waste includes materials produced by industrial, mining and agricultural operations.
Rural Needs Impact Assessment	RNIA	A Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA) is a process required by the Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 that helps public authorities consider and address the specific social and economic needs of rural communities in Northern Ireland when developing, implementing, or revising policies, strategies, plans, or public services.

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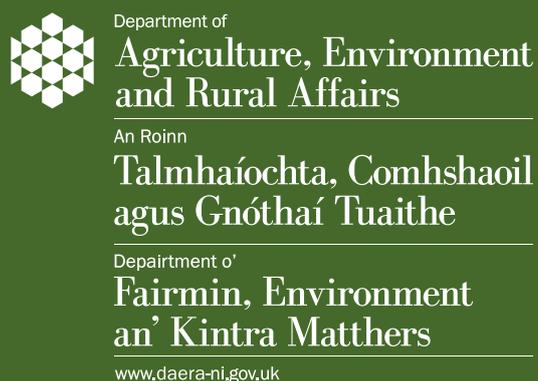
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Term	Abbreviation	Explanation
Separately collected		Collection of each of the recyclable waste streams separately from one another.
Solid Recovered Fuels	SRF	SRF are produced from recovered waste, mainly commercial and industrial waste.
Single-use plastics	SUP	SUPs are used once, or for a short period of time, before being thrown away.
UN Sustainable Development Goals	UN SDGs	The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals are worldwide commitments to create positive global change by the year 2030.
Waste and Contaminated Land (NI) Order 1997	WCLO	WCLO is the legislation for introduction of measures designed to increase control over the processing and handling of waste including waste management licensing, duty of care, registration of carriers, special waste and producer responsibility. This has been extensively amended since its inception.
WasteDataFlow	WDF	WasteDataFlow is the web-based system for municipal waste data reporting by UK local authorities to government, managed by NIEA in Northern Ireland.
Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment	WEEE	Items or products that have a plug or need a battery to operate, and which fall into 14 broad categories of electrical and electronic equipment as outlined by the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Regulations 2013
Waste Management Plan	WMP	A waste management plan is a documented strategy for how a business or organisation will handle, reduce, and dispose of the waste it produces in a safe, legal, and efficient manner.
Waste and Resources Action Programme	WRAP	A non-governmental organisation that receives funding from DAERA to undertake research and support with policy delivery (registered UK Charity No. 1159512).
Revised Waste Framework Directive	rWFD	rWFD establishes a legal framework for treating waste in the European Union. The framework is designed to protect the environment and human health by emphasising the importance of proper waste management, recovery and recycling techniques to reduce pressure on resources and improve their use.

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Rethinking Our Resources:

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Department of
Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs

An Roinn
Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe

Department o'
Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers

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Public Consultation: Rethinking Our Resources - Northern Ireland Resources and Waste Management Strategy

Purpose

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) is seeking views on the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy for Northern Ireland.

This consultation process covers a range of issues relevant to the development of an updated Northern Ireland Resources and Waste Management Strategy. This new strategy aims to maximise the potential for better use of the resources consumed in Northern Ireland, to prevent them becoming waste, or where generated, to ensure they are captured and processed into products that minimise environmental pollution. The strategy builds on previous plans by broadening the range of sectors obligated, presenting new actions to achieve higher targets, and setting out the greater ambition necessary to meet net zero. In proposing considerable improvements to the management of all Northern Ireland's waste, the strategy provides a wider 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.

The Climate Change Act requires that at least 70% of waste must be recycled by 2030 in Northern Ireland.

Layout of the Resources and Waste Management Strategy

The draft Northern Ireland Resources and Waste Management Strategy is divided into four parts..

- 1. Part 1: The Need for Change** - Outlines the vision, targets, and objectives driving the strategy.
- 2. Part 2: Enabling Change and Empowering Action** - Details actions for seven significant waste categories to drive the required change.
- 3. Part 3: Making it Happen** - Discusses the necessary conditions for effective resource management, including infrastructure, collaboration, communication, research, and enforcement.
- 4. Part 4: Monitoring Progress** - Explains how success will be measured and reported.

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Making a Submission

This consultation is organised around thematic areas. Respondents are requested to consider 27 questions, of which four are mandatory. Mandatory questions only relate to the respondent details. It is acknowledged that not all aspects of the strategy are relevant to all respondents.

Part 1 - The Need for Change, sets the scene, outlining the overall vision, targets and objectives of the Resources and Waste Management Strategy. Questions in this section are optional.

Part 2 - Enabling Change and Empowering Action, details actions across seven significant waste categories. Throughout this section respondents can choose which questions they wish to respond to and may choose to respond only to the questions or thematic areas relevant to them. Questions in this section are optional.

Part 3 - Making it Happen, focusses on how we turn the Resources and Waste Management Strategy into reality and make it happen in Northern Ireland. Questions in this section are optional.

Part 4 - Monitor and Evaluation, focusses on measuring progress through monitoring and evaluation. The question in this section is optional.

Part 5 - Supporting Documentation, concentrates on the supporting documentation, specifically the Waste and Contaminated Land (NI) Order 1997 Requirements (WCLO), Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA), Equality Screening Assessment (EQIA) and Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA). Questions in this section are optional.

All submissions are welcome and will be considered in developing the new Northern Ireland Resources and Waste Management Strategy.

Responses to this consultation are to be submitted online through Citizen Space. The consultation can be accessed following this link:

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/rethinking-our-resources-northern-ireland-resources-and-waste-management-strategy>

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Question Summary and Response Required

Below is a summary of how the consultation is structured on Citizen Space.

There are a total of **27 questions** to be answered, with **four** of them mandatory.

Response Required	No of Questions	Mandatory	Optional
Introduction and respondent details	4 questions	✓	
Part 1 - The Need for Change			
Sets the scene and provides background to this strategy	3 questions		✓
Part 2 - Enabling Change and Empowering Action			
Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022	1 question		✓
Household waste	1 question		✓
Non-household municipal waste	1 question		✓
Commercial and industrial waste	1 question		✓
Construction and demolition waste	1 question		✓
Hazardous waste	1 question		✓
Agricultural waste	1 question		✓
Litter and fly-tipping	1 question		✓
Summary	1 question		✓
Part 3 - Making it Happen			
Infrastructure and capacity	1 question		✓
Working Together to Achieve Shared Goals	1 question		✓
Communication and engagement	1 question		✓
Research, Innovation and Skills, for the Future	1 question		✓
Enforcement	1 question		✓
Part 4 - Monitoring Progress			
Monitoring and Evaluation	1 question		✓
Part 5 - Supporting Documentation			
Waste and Contaminated Land (WCLO)	1 question		✓
Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)	1 question		✓
Habitat Regulatory Assessment (HRA)	1 question		✓
Equality Screening Assessment (EQIA)	1 question		✓
Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA)	1 question		✓

Data Protection

DAERA is committed to engaging with stakeholders in a clear, open, and transparent manner. Any person or organisation can make a submission in relation to this consultation via Citizen Space. Guidance is provided on the 'Confidentiality' of responses under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, in Annex 1 for your reference. Also, if you require any further information, please contact a member of the consultation team on WastePolicyTeam@daera-ni.gov.uk

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Introduction and Respondent Details

Northern Ireland has enormous opportunities to put the resources flowing through its economy to better use, increasing their value to the economy, offering scope for social gain, such as job creation, and reducing their impact on the environment. While the beginnings of a circular economy have emerged in recent years, with much higher recycling rates, there is potential to go further in realising value from the materials arising as waste at the end of their life. The strategy sets out the government's vision for a more progressive approach to managing waste in Northern Ireland and this consultation document is designed to capture your thoughts on the strategy.

Everyone uses resources and creates waste, whether at home as a householder, in the workplace, or out and about. Equally, most organisations generate or handle waste to a greater or lesser extent.

The range of stakeholders generating and handling resources includes citizens, councils and diverse business types including retail, hospitality, education, healthcare, transport and manufacturing. All these sectors produce varying quantities and types of waste, reflective of their size and current business operating models. Each stakeholder faces different levels of challenge in making the transition, and so to be effective the strategy aims to deliver actions that resolve burdens, designing and tailoring new support to each sector so that improvements can be made and further opportunities identified.

This consultation is open to anyone, but we expect it to be of greatest interest to:

- Councils
- Waste management companies
- Reprocessors
- Trade bodies
- Business and industry
- The agricultural sector
- The construction and demolition sector
- Environmental organisations and
- Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO)

Please complete questions 1 to 4, to allow us to capture the background and geographical location of respondents.

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Question 1: What is your name?**Question 2: What is your email address?****Question 3: What local Council area do you live in?**

- Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council
- Ards and North Down Borough Council
- Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council
- Belfast City Council
- Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council
- Derry City and Strabane District Council
- Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
- Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council
- Mid and East Antrim Borough Council
- Mid Ulster District Council
- Newry, Mourne and Down District Council
- Other - Republic of Ireland
- Other - UK
- Other - EU
- Other - Rest of World

Question 4: Which category best represents you from the list below?

- Householder / Citizen
- Local Government
- Representative Body / Member Organisations and Trade Bodies
- Construction and Built Environment
- Retail and Hospitality
- Social Enterprise / Third & Voluntary Sector
- Research and Development
- Central Government
- Education
- Healthcare
- Transport
- Manufacturing
- Agriculture
- Waste & Resource Management, Treatment & Reprocessing
- Other, please specify.

Part 1: The Need for Change

Part 1, The Need for Change, provides the background to the Resources and Waste Management Strategy, explaining how it relates to previous strategy documents, relevant legislation at national, UK and international level, and the drivers for change.

Over the last two decades in Northern Ireland, we have made significant improvements in how our waste is managed, but new legal commitments and targets mean we now have a unique opportunity to put Northern Ireland's resources to better use, increasing their value to the economy, offering job creation and reducing their impact on the environment. Waste management is not just about how we treat waste but how we are able to manage our valuable resources throughout their full lifecycle by influencing how we consume, how we prevent waste, how we capture it for recycling and how we treat it at the end of its useful life. This is a core aim of the strategy.

Improving how resources and waste are managed will require action from all sectors. We recognise that everyone living and working here uses resources and creates waste. Equally, most organisations generate or handle waste to a greater or lesser extent. Some, such as councils, waste management companies and recyclers, have a particular interest in this strategy. Given this broad audience, the strategy has been written to be accessible to all. This means that some of the more detailed and technical areas of waste management will be found within the appendices, rather than the main document. A glossary is also available in the appendices.

The Aim of the Resources and Waste Management Strategy

There is ambition to drive more waste diversion from sectors traditionally in scope of waste management plus new, previously underrepresented, areas. Achieving this will require the adoption of innovative and effective interventions.

The aim of this strategy is to outline a comprehensive framework to guide these interventions over the next 6 years (the lifetime of this strategy). By taking a proactive and robust approach, the proposed targets and actions aim to ensure long term sustainability, maximising their positive impact even beyond the initial span of the strategy.

This will involve the integration of modern technology, collaborative partnerships and policy reforms to deliver measurable outcomes. By focusing on both immediate and enduring solutions the strategy seeks to establish a transformative shift in resource efficiency and waste diversion practises ensuring resilience and adaptability to future demands.

The Scope of the Resources and Waste Management Strategy

The proposed scope of this strategy is for controlled wastes generated by households, commercial and industrial premises and category 3 animal by products as defined in Article 10 of Regulation (EC) 1069/2009. Managing these specific, yet widely generated resources, will make key contributions to the Climate Change Act recycling target and Net Zero commitments.

Whilst there are clear improvements in how Northern Ireland has managed its waste over time, international strategies show that, because of diminishing returns associated with the earlier

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drivers, improving both resource use and waste diversion will require even more innovation and a redesign of policy measures to drive the necessary change. This strategy provides the long-term plan to drive significant environmental change, but it also provides clear, effective and realistic shorter-term tactics and actions necessary to drive the required outcomes.

Over the next few pages, we ask for your thoughts regarding our proposed vision, targets and objectives for the waste management strategy.

Vision

Our vision is for 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.

Question 5: Do you agree with the vision for the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy? If your answer is no, please explain why.

- Agree
- Disagree
- No opinion
- If you disagree, please explain your answer, free text (max 500 words)

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Our Targets

Achieve a waste recycling rate of at least 70% by 2030.

Achieve a municipal waste recycling rate of 55% by 2025.

Achieve a municipal waste recycling rate of 60% by 2030.

Achieve a municipal waste recycling rate of 65% by 2035.

Achieve a 10% cap on the amount of waste going to landfill by 2035.

DAERA will continue to tackle the problem of littering and will continue to work with stakeholders to advance our anti-litter agenda including the introduction of bans or levies on certain materials.

DAERA will continue to lead the development of multi-year, integrated Communications and Engagement for waste and recycling.

DAERA will continue to support updating skills and training needs to facilitate a shift to a more Circular Economy in Northern Ireland.

DAERA will work with Devolved Administrations to develop and implement the first phase of mandatory Digital Waste Tracking across the UK by October 2026.

DAERA will continue to develop a greater understanding of Serious and Organised Crime's involvement in environmental crime, to enhance capabilities in tackling this issue.

Question 6: Do you agree with the targets for the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy? If your answer is no, please explain why.

- Agree
- Disagree
- No opinion
- If you disagree, please explain your answer, free text (max 500 words)

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Objectives

1. Increase waste diversion

- Reduce reliance on landfill and recovery, reduce loss of valuable resources, reduce littering and reduce instances of waste crime.

2. Enhance Resource Efficiency

- Increase the quantity and quality of recycling to improve the environment, grow a low-carbon circular economy and to meet our legal targets.

3. Improve Communications and Skills

- Invest in comprehensive communication campaigns and behaviour change to improve resource and waste management. Work with the relevant sectors to ensure the right skills are in place to enable a transition to a circular economy.

4. Strengthen Partnerships and Collaboration

- Work with businesses, industries, communities and the waste sector to develop shared responsibility for waste management and sustainable resource use.

Question 7: Do you agree with the objectives for the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy? If your answer is no, please explain why.

- Agree
- Disagree
- No opinion
- If you disagree, please explain your answer, free text (max 500 words)

Part 2: Enabling Change and Empowering Action

Part 2, Enabling Change and Empowering Action, addresses the seven categories of waste that either form a significant part of Northern Ireland's waste stream, such as household waste, or that warrant specific consideration because of their impacts, for example hazardous waste.

The proposed scope of the Resources and Waste Management Strategy is for controlled wastes generated by households, commercial and industrial premises and category 3 animal by products, as defined in Article 10 of Regulation (EC) 1069/2009.

This part of the strategy sets out seven categories of waste:

1. Household waste
2. Non-household municipal waste
3. Commercial and industrial waste
4. Construction and demolition waste
5. Hazardous waste
6. Agricultural waste
7. Litter and fly-tipping

Specific sections in the strategy, for each of the seven categories of waste, summarise the:

- sector background,
- key challenges for managing this waste,
- proposed targets, and
- proposed actions necessary to drive the required change.

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Climate Change

Section 18 of the [Climate Change Act \(NI\) 2022](#) states that the Department must ensure that at least 70% of waste is recycled by 2030, and it must also develop and publish sectoral plans for the waste management sector setting out how the sector will contribute to the achievement of the targets in the Act. Using this consultation, DAERA aim to define the scope of the 70% recycling target and identify the contributions.

Question 8: Do you agree that the sectors in scope of the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy, which are controlled wastes consisting of household waste, non-household municipal waste, commercial and industrial waste, construction and demolition waste, hazardous waste and agricultural waste, should be the sectors in scope of achieving the Climate Change Act (NI) 2022 70% recycling rate target for Northern Ireland?

- Agree
- Disagree
- No opinion
- If you disagree, please explain your answer, free text (max 500 words)

Household waste

The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 incorporates several requirements for the decarbonisation of the waste sector. 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.

Amendments made in 2020 to the Waste and Contaminated Land (NI) Order 1997 (WCLO) introduced new municipal recycling targets – for households and businesses who produce waste similar to that from households.

The targets and actions relevant to each are set out below.

Targets

1. Achieve a waste recycling rate of at least 70% by 2030;
2. Achieve a municipal waste recycling rate of 55% by 2025;
3. Achieve a municipal waste recycling rate of 60% by 2030;
4. Achieve a municipal waste recycling rate of 65% by 2035; and
5. Achieve a 10% cap on the amount of waste going to landfill by 2035.

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Actions

DAERA commits to the following actions:

Increase our recycling rates and improve material quality

- 1) Define what is to be included in the waste recycling 70% target and identify the contributions required from the household, business, commercial and industrial sectors by the end of December 2026.
- 2) Introduce an EPR scheme for household packaging by end of December 2025.
- 3) Flexible plastic packaging to be collected for recycling from households by 31 March 2027.
- 4) Develop reform of the Producer Responsibility Schemes for WEEE and Batteries by 2027, and End of Life Vehicles in line with Windsor Framework requirements and UK ambition.
- 5) Introduce DRS for single use drinks containers in Northern Ireland by the end of December 2027.
- 6) By 31 March 2027, conduct an up-to-date waste compositional analysis to determine the composition of household waste in Northern Ireland.
- 7) Develop guidance to ensure all councils in Northern Ireland collect a core set of materials that includes glass bottles, paper and card, plastic bottles, plastic pots tubs and trays, cartons and metal packaging. Plastic film will be introduced to the core set by the end of March 2027. The core set will be reviewed regularly.
- 8) Develop guidance to set out minimum service standards for local councils on delivering household recycling collections, in collaboration with all councils and wider stakeholders by the end of March 2027.
- 9) Develop plans to ensure that all councils provide food waste collection services to all households in Northern Ireland and enhance their existing food waste collections to increase capture of food waste.
- 10) Administer the Household Waste Recycling Collaborative Change Programme (HWRCCP) as a funding mechanism for Councils to transform kerbside recycling and Household Recycling Centre infrastructure and services to realise the economic potential of recycling to the economy. Final applications by 31st March 2026.

Reduce waste going to landfill

- 11) Implement measures to divert more biodegradable waste from landfill by the end of December 2027.
- 12) Develop guidance for all councils in Northern Ireland to assist in reducing residual waste collected from households, reflecting the move towards the collection of more recyclables, reuse and waste prevention by the end of March 2027. Household circumstances will be considered and exemptions provided where appropriate.

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Promote waste prevention and reuse

- 13) Implement and review the activities in the Waste Prevention Programme by the end of December 2026.
- 14) Review the feasibility of setting waste prevention targets for Northern Ireland.

Promote more sustainable and efficient use of our resources

- 15) Continue to promote the MyRecyclingNI website and encourage councils to improve their end destination data reporting to ensure households understand where their recyclable materials are being processed.

Question 9: Do you support the following actions set out for household waste in the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy? If your answer is no, please explain why.

Actions	Yes, support	No, do not support	No opinion	If no, why?
Increase our recycling rates and improve material quality				
Actions 1 to 10 proposed to increase recycling rates and improve recycling quality of household waste				
Reduce waste going to landfill				
Actions 11 to 12 proposed to reduce the amount of waste arisings from households going to landfill				
Promote waste prevention and reuse				
Actions 13 to 14 proposed to promote household waste prevention and reuse in Northern Ireland (These actions are in conjunction with those in the Waste Prevention Programme)				
Promote more sustainable and efficient use of our resources				
Action 15 proposed to promote more sustainable and efficient use of our resources generated from household waste				

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Non-household municipal waste

The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 incorporates several requirements for the decarbonisation of the waste sector. It is important to note that the 70% recycling target in this Act potentially relates to all waste generated in Northern Ireland, not specifically non-household waste.

Amendments made in 2020 to the Waste and Contaminated Land (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 (WCLO) introduced new municipal recycling targets - for households and businesses who produce waste similar to that from households.

The targets and actions for each are set out below.

Targets

The targets for each are set out below.

1. Achieve a waste recycling rate of at least 70% by 2030;
2. Achieve a municipal waste recycling rate of 55% by 2025;
3. Achieve a municipal waste recycling rate of 60% by 2030;
4. Achieve a municipal waste recycling rate of 65% by 2035; and
5. Achieve a 10% cap on the amount of waste going to landfill by 2035.

Actions

To increase NHM recycling rates, DAERA commits to the following:

Communications and behaviour change

- 16) By the end of March 2027, to deliver a targeted national campaign to raise awareness in advance of the introduction of any new workplace recycling practices.

Guidance and support to businesses and workplaces

- 17) Work with councils and service providers to develop a minimum service standard for non-household waste and recycling services by the end of March 2027.
- 18) Develop guidance, tools and resources to support workplaces to implement effective recycling practices by the end of December 2027.
- 19) Work with Invest NI, trade bodies, councils and other stakeholders to ensure businesses are aware of the requirements and the support available to them.

Regulation and policy development

- 20) Undertake a review of the Food Waste Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 with a view to extending the scope to all businesses by the end of December 2027.

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- 21) Develop regulations requiring businesses and other non-household organisations to present a consistent core list of materials for recycling. The core list of materials will mirror the core list of materials collected by household waste and recycling services to achieve consistency across sectors by the end of December 2028.
- 22) Progress actions to reduce or eliminate the disposal of NHM biodegradable waste to landfill by the end of December 2027.
- 23) Review, with councils, the potential for household recycling centres (HRCs) to be adapted to accept, measure and monitor non-household waste and recycling by the end of December 2029.

Data, performance targets and reporting

- 24) Through waste composition analysis, establish overall and sectoral baseline non-household waste compositions and arisings by the end of June 2027.
- 25) Establish a reporting framework to capture non-household waste and recycling performance data, including end destinations for materials by the end of March 2027.

Question 10: Do you support the following actions set out for non-household municipal waste in the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy? If your answer is no, please explain why.

Actions	Yes, support	No, do not support	No opinion	If no, why?
Communications and behaviour change				
Action 16 in relation to communications and behaviour change relating to non-household municipal waste				
Guidance and support to businesses and workplaces				
Actions 17 to 19 in relation to the provision of guidance and support to business and workplaces in relation to non-household municipal waste recycling and best practice				
Regulation and policy development				
Actions 20 to 23 in relation to the development of policy and regulation pertaining to non-household municipal waste				
Data, performance targets and reporting				
Actions 24 and 25 relating to data, performance targets and reporting of non-household municipal waste				

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Commercial and industrial waste

Robust data on commercial and industrial waste arisings is not on a par with household and non-household municipal waste data due to the lack of mandatory reporting.

The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 incorporates several requirements for the decarbonisation of the waste sector. It is important to note that the 70% recycling target in this Act potentially relates to all waste generated in Northern Ireland, not specifically commercial and industrial waste.

The target and actions for this waste stream are set out below.

Targets

1. Achieve a waste recycling rate of at least 70% by 2030.

Actions

DAERA commits to the following:

Obtaining improved data on C&I waste

- 26) For industrial sectors outside the scope of NHM waste, gather baseline data on C&I arisings, composition and recycling performance by the end of June 2027.

Providing guidance and support tools for businesses

- 27) Work with Invest NI and business sector groups to maintain awareness of the technical advisory support available to businesses and organisations in scope of future industrial recycling targets.

Question 11: Do you support the following actions set out for commercial and industrial waste in the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy? If your answer is no, please explain why.

Actions	Yes, support	No, do not support	No opinion	If no, why?
Obtaining improved data on C&I waste				
Action 26 proposed to increase recycling by obtaining improved data on C&I waste.				
Providing guidance and support tools for businesses				
Action 27 proposed to provide guidance and support tools to producers of commercial and industrial waste.				

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Construction and demolition waste

The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 incorporates several requirements for the decarbonisation of the waste sector. It is important to note that the 70% recycling target in this Act potentially relates to all waste generated in Northern Ireland, not specifically construction and demolition waste.

Under the revised [Waste Framework Directive](#), C&D waste is a priority waste stream. It sets the following objectives:

- Promote selective demolition to enable removal and safe handling of hazardous substances and facilitate reuse and high-quality recycling by selective removal of materials and to ensure the establishment of sorting systems for construction and demolition waste at least for wood, mineral fractions (concrete, bricks, tiles and ceramics, stones), metal, glass, plastic and plaster.
- Reduce waste generation in processes related to industrial production, extraction of minerals, manufacturing, construction and demolition, taking into account best available techniques.

The targets and actions for this waste stream are set out below.

Targets

1. Achieve a waste recycling rate of at least 70% by 2030.

Actions

Increasing and improving C&D waste treatment

To increase and improve C&D waste treatment, DAERA commits to the following:

- 28) Undertake a review of C&D waste data to identify improvements in how it is captured, the treatment routes utilised and the overall composition of C&D waste to identify reduction, reuse, recycling and recovery opportunities by the end of June 2027.
- 29) Based on these data improvements, develop a baseline for C&D waste arisings and current reuse, recycling and recovery rates by the end of June 2027.

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Question 12: Do you agree with the following actions proposing to improve construction and demolition waste recycling and diversion from landfill and ensuring better data collection in the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy? If your answer is no, please explain why.

Actions	Yes, support	No, do not support	No opinion	If no, why?
Construction and demolition waste				
Actions 28 and 29 proposed to improve construction and demolition waste recycling and diversion from landfill and ensure better data collection.				

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Hazardous waste

Hazardous wastes are those that are deemed dangerous to human health or the environment and are difficult to handle. Hazardous waste is being generated by households and across multiple industrial sectors, and there is scope to reduce the amount through targeted waste prevention programmes.

The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 incorporates several requirements for the decarbonisation of the waste sector. It is important to note that the 70% recycling target in this Act potentially relates to all waste generated in Northern Ireland, not specifically hazardous waste.

The target and actions for this waste stream are set out below.

Targets

1. Achieve a waste recycling rate of at least 70% by 2030.

Actions

To reduce the use of and exposure to hazardous substances, and to increase the reuse, recycling and correct handling of hazardous wastes in Northern Ireland, DAERA commits to:

- 30) Continue to monitor the issues of persistent organic pollutants (POPs) in waste and engage with and update stakeholders on their legal requirements and any other issues arising.
- 31) Ensure all sites accepting hazardous waste codes have been fully trained in Technical Guidance WM3.
- 32) In collaboration with industry, the third sector and councils, build on existing schemes to establish widespread collection platforms via HRCs for surplus paint from household and commercial waste streams by the end of December 2027.
- 33) Undertake effective regulation of the movement and management of hazardous waste.
- 34) Eliminate the use of Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs) by the end of December 2025, in line with commitments under the Stockholm Convention.

Rethinking Our Resources:

Northern Ireland Resources and Waste Management Strategy - Questions

Question 13: Do you agree with the following actions proposing to increase the reuse, recycling and correct handling of hazardous wastes in Northern Ireland, in the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy? If your answer is no, please explain why.

Actions	Yes, support	No, do not support	No opinion	If no, why?
Hazardous waste				
Actions 30 to 34 proposed to reduce the use of and exposure to hazardous substances, and to increase the reuse, recycling and correct handling of hazardous wastes in Northern Ireland				

Rethinking Our Resources:

Northern Ireland Resources and Waste Management Strategy - Questions

Agricultural waste

Given the large agricultural sector tonnage generated in Northern Ireland and the high concentration of both organic and plastic waste within the arisings, there appears to be great potential for the sector to contribute to the 70% recycling target, if deemed within scope of the definition.

The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 incorporates several requirements for the decarbonisation of the waste sector. It is important to note that the 70% recycling target in this Act potentially relates to all waste generated in Northern Ireland, not specifically agricultural waste.

The targets and actions for this waste stream are set out below.

Targets

1. Achieve a waste recycling rate of at least 70% by 2030.

Actions

Support farmers move up the waste hierarchy and improve recycling of waste materials.

- 35) Work with key stakeholders to improve information on waste arisings in the agricultural sector by the end of December 2028.
- 36) Work with stakeholders to establish and celebrate the good resource and waste management practice already in existence in the agricultural sector in Northern Ireland and provide new support tools and guidance to enable the sector to manage waste more effectively by the end of December 2028.
- 37) Review existing data sources, opportunities to improve data capture and options to share information useful for the sector to improve performance by the end of December 2028.

Question 14: Do you agree with the following actions proposing to increase recycling of materials arising from the agricultural sector in the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy? If your answer is no, please explain why.

Actions	Yes, support	No, do not support	No opinion	If no, why?
Agricultural waste				
Actions 35 to 37 proposed to increase recycling of materials arising from the agricultural sector				

Rethinking Our Resources:

Northern Ireland Resources and Waste Management Strategy - Questions

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Litter and fly-tipping

Litter causes negative local environmental impacts, is unsightly and costs local ratepayers money to be removed. Fly tipping is generally defined as the illegal dumping of rubbish or bulky items on land without a licence or permit to accept waste. It pollutes the land and waterways and can be dangerous to human and animal health.

The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 incorporates several requirements for the decarbonisation of the waste sector. It is important to note that the 70% recycling target in this Act potentially relates to all waste generated in Northern Ireland, not specifically litter and fly-tipping. The targets and actions for this waste stream are set out below.

Targets

6. DAERA will continue to tackle the problem of littering and will continue to work with stakeholders to advance our anti-litter agenda including the introduction of bans or levies on certain materials.

Actions

DAERA commits to the following:

Litter

- 38) Legislate for beverage containers and bottles to have lids and caps that will remain attached (tethered) to reduce commonly littered bottle caps by the end of December 2026.
- 39) Prepare regulations to restrict the sale or supply of ten commonly littered single-use plastic items by the end of December 2026.
- 40) Prepare regulations to implement clearer labelling of products that contain single use plastic to allow customers to make informed choices by the end of December 2026.
- 41) Prepare regulations to set a requirement for 25% average recycled content in PET bottles by 2025 and 30% average recycled content in all beverage bottles by 2030 to reduce the amount of virgin plastic that is used in manufacture by the end of December 2026.
- 42) Prepare regulations to restrict the supply and sale of wet wipes containing plastic to help tackle plastic & micro-plastic pollution by the end of December 2025.
- 43) Develop a proposal for a consumption reduction plan and targets for single use plastic takeaway cups and food containers to reduce unnecessary waste and tackle plastic pollution by the end of December 2026.

Rethinking Our Resources:

Northern Ireland Resources and Waste Management Strategy - Questions

Fly-tipping and Illegal Waste Disposal

- 44) Work to implement a consistent approach to data collection across Northern Ireland regarding fly-tipping and illegal waste disposal.
- 45) Aim to sign up all district councils to the Fly-Tipping Protocol by the end of March 2026.
- 46) We will continue to collaborate with the voluntary producer responsibility scheme for chewing gum.

Question 15: Do you agree with the following actions proposed to reduce litter and fly-tipping in the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy? If your answer is no, please explain why.

Actions	Yes, support	No, do not support	No opinion	If no, why?
Litter				
Actions 38 to 43 propose to reduce litter				
Fly-tipping and Illegal Waste Disposal				
Actions 44 to 46 propose to reduce fly-tipping				

Overall

Question 16: Do you agree that the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy covers the main issues and key considerations for all seven waste streams detailed in Part 2?

- Agree
- Disagree
- No opinion
- If you disagree, please explain your answer, free text (max 500 words)

Part 3: Making It Happen

Part 3, Making it Happen, Discusses the necessary conditions for effective resource management, including infrastructure, collaboration, communication, research, and enforcement.

This part of the strategy covers five areas of action to deliver the strategy and build on the waste stream specific actions.

- Infrastructure and Capacity
- Working Together to Achieve Shared Goals
- Communication and Engagement
- Research, Innovation and Skills for the Future
- Enforcement

National reviews show that Northern Ireland does not have sufficient capacity to process all the potentially available mixed recyclables from household and commercial sources, nor does it have the medium-term landfill capacity to dispose of residual waste. It is therefore important that we put additional focus on the other four areas within this section.

The multi-faceted nature of the waste sector means there is a diverse range of stakeholders and having due regard to the impact new policy and legislative decision making has on the sector is of key significance. Working together with the sector is the only way to achieve this.

Infrastructure and capacity

Waste management infrastructure is needed to make sure that waste and recyclables generated are handled safely, managed and processed into new products. A robust infrastructure is needed to respond to the changing volume and composition of waste and ideally treated or disposed of within the region in which it is produced. Planning and development decisions must be based on robust and up to date data and are evidence based.

Actions

Enabling improved waste infrastructure capacity

- 47) DAERA will respond to all input requests that are submitted to DAERA for planning of waste infrastructure.
- 48) To continue to monitor non-hazardous landfill capacity and continue to assess the level of permitted and planned landfill infrastructure.
- 49) Engage with each of the three local council waste management groups to identify how their waste management plans may need to be updated regarding waste management infrastructure by the end of April 2027.

Rethinking Our Resources:

Northern Ireland Resources and Waste Management Strategy - Questions

Question 17: Do you agree with the following actions relating to waste infrastructure and capacity in the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy? If your answer is no, please explain why.

Actions	Yes, support	No, do not support	No opinion	If no, why?
Infrastructure and capacity				
Actions 47 to 49 proposed in relation to infrastructure and capacity				

Rethinking Our Resources:

Northern Ireland Resources and Waste Management Strategy - Questions

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Working Together to Achieve Shared Goals

The resource and waste sector is a multi-layered and multi-dimensional sector with a significant number of stakeholders.

The roles and responsibilities assigned to the various parties in the resource and waste sector in Northern Ireland will support a number of the targets outlined in this strategy.

This strategy sets out **a call to action for collective responsibility**, and over the lifetime of this strategy, we aim to enable all players in the sector to work collaboratively to support the implementation of the actions detailed in this strategy, this will involve **collaboration between Government, industry and wider stakeholders**.

There are no specific actions under this section of the strategy, but DAERA are interested in your views in relation to the **list of proposed stakeholders, partners and sectors**:

- Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA)
- Department for the Economy
- Northern Ireland's councils
- Council waste management groups
- Waste management companies
- Reprocessors
- Communities
- Representative Body / Member Organisations and Trade Bodies
- Business and industry
- The agricultural sector
- The construction and demolition sector
- Environmental organisations and NGOs
- Research and Development
- Education
- Healthcare

Question 18: The Department envisages working with the stakeholders, partners and sectors listed above. Are there any additional stakeholders, partners and sectors that should be included?

- Yes
- No
- No opinion
- If your answer is yes, please detail additions, free text (max 500 words)

Rethinking Our Resources:

Northern Ireland Resources and Waste Management Strategy - Questions

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Communication and engagement

There are a diverse range of stakeholders across the waste sector and their ability to work together to support the delivery of new policy and be involved in legislative decision making is significant.

Target

7. DAERA will continue to lead the development of multi-year, integrated Communications and Engagement for waste and recycling.

Actions

To facilitate increased communications and engagement amongst all stakeholders and bring about behavioural change in relation to resources and waste DAERA will:

- 50) Continue to utilise behaviour change theory and interventions to generate necessary improvements in correct recycling from citizens at home and in the workplace.
- 51) Continue to communicate and engage with stakeholders in support of new policies and regulations through the Communications and Engagement Plan.
- 52) Support existing and new strategic partners in the delivery of communications and engagement activities, including coordinating messages and campaigns across government departments.
- 53) Continue to partner with external organisations, where appropriate, to deliver campaigns to engage the education sector and address target waste streams, global waste problems and littering.
- 54) Work to establish a Northern Ireland Business Recycling Advisory Group by the end of March 2026.
- 55) Work in partnership with Northern Ireland National Communications Action Plan (NCAP) to co-ordinate the delivery of national and local communication activities with Councils to improve the quality and quantity of household recycling, including changes to recycling services.

Question 19: Do you agree with the following actions proposed to facilitate increased communications and engagement amongst all stakeholders in the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy? If your answer is no, please explain why.

Rethinking Our Resources:

Northern Ireland Resources and Waste Management Strategy - Questions

Actions	Yes, support	No, do not support	No opinion	If no, why?
Communications and engagement				
Actions 50 to 55 proposed to facilitate increased communications and engagement amongst all stakeholders in relation to resources and waste				

Rethinking Our Resources:

Northern Ireland Resources and Waste Management Strategy - Questions

Research, Innovation and Skills for the Future

The shift from a linear to a circular economic model will inevitably drive changes in skill and training needs and will require many stakeholders’ input to successfully deliver the changes required.

Targets

To play its part, DAERA will:

- 8. DAERA will continue to support updating skills and training needs to facilitate a shift to a more Circular Economy in Northern Ireland.
- 9. DAERA will work with Devolved Administrations to develop and implement the first phase of mandatory Digital Waste Tracking across the UK by October 2026.

Actions

To build a pathway towards improved skills and training, DAERA will:

- 56) Enable the skills related to resources and waste management, such as design, repair and refurbishment, necessary to transition to a resource-efficient and low-carbon economy. Work with other stakeholders to ensure this is also included in just transition planning.
- 57) Continue to support research and development of innovative technologies and solutions that will help improve the waste management sector in Northern Ireland and the transition to a circular economy.
- 58) Provide funding to support third sector organisations to enable the updating of skills and training needs.

Question 20: Do you agree with the following actions on skills, training and research required for the future in the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy? If your answer is no, please explain why.

Actions	Yes, support	No, do not support	No opinion	If no, why?
Skills, training and research				
Actions 56 to 58 proposed in relation to research, innovation and skills				

Rethinking Our Resources:

Northern Ireland Resources and Waste Management Strategy - Questions

Enforcement

Compliance with regulations is an important element in ensuring that we continue to maintain a safe and healthy environment in Northern Ireland. Protection and enhancement of Northern’s Ireland’s environment is integral to this strategy and supporting compliance with local and international legislation and standards and using effective and consistent enforcement are central to those priorities.

Targets

- 10. DAERA will continue to develop a greater understanding of Serious and Organised Crime’s involvement in environmental crime, to enhance capabilities in tackling this issue.

Actions

To address these challenges, DAERA commits to:

- 59) Introduce a single Incident Management System which will assist in centralising data capture/incident management across a range of business areas (including illegal waste activity) by the end of March 2026.
- 60) Seek to ensure that all newly obligated subsectors are aware of their respective responsibilities. This will improve effective enforcement.
- 61) Increase capacity and capability to receive, assess, develop and disseminate intelligence. Ongoing. Will continue for lifetime of the Strategy.
- 62) Develop our understanding of Organised Crime Groups and crime types to ensure we deploy our resources where we will have the highest impact. Ongoing. Will continue for lifetime of the Strategy.
- 63) Develop partnership working to deliver disruption and enforcement interventions. Ongoing. Will continue for lifetime of the Strategy.

Question 21: Do you agree with the following actions proposing to improve compliance and enforcement in the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy? If your answer is no, please explain why.

Actions	Yes, support	No, do not support	No opinion	If no, why?
Enforcement				
Actions 59 to 63 proposed to improve compliance and enforcement				

Part 4: Monitoring Progress

The aims, actions and targets set out in this strategy represent an ambitious new vision for the future of waste management. To deliver this we recognise that DAERA has a key role in providing strong leadership, both in terms of driving progress through our own commitments but also, where required, bringing stakeholders and key players together in pursuit of the greater vision. Supporting governance structures, alongside clear performance indicators and baselines, are vital to ensure the required changes are delivered and appropriate monitoring and evaluation can be carried out to measure our progress over the life of the strategy.

Looking beyond Northern Ireland, it is imperative we work with other UK nations and Republic of Ireland to join up policy so that we can achieve shared goals. This includes continued participation in relevant forums, such as the Resources and Waste Common Framework and the North/South Ministerial Council, as well as regular engagement at official level.

Alongside the high-level indicators, individual targets and actions set out in the strategy will be monitored, totalling 10 targets and 63 actions covering waste prevention; recycling; other recovery; disposal; better regulation and enforcement, and communication and engagement.

A fundamental part of monitoring will be regular reporting on progress against each action and target. DAERA will produce a report midway through the 6-year period of this strategy to update on progress. A final review and report will be completed following the end of the 6-year period.

There are no specific actions under this section of the strategy, but DAERA are interested in your views in relation to the following question.

Question 22: Do you agree with the described approach in Section 4 of the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy to monitoring and evaluation?

- Agree
- Disagree
- No opinion
- If you disagree, please explain your answer, free text (max 500 words)

Rethinking Our Resources:

Northern Ireland Resources and Waste Management Strategy - Questions

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Part 5: Supporting Documentation

The Waste and Contaminated Land (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 (WCLO) places a statutory obligation on DAERA to produce a waste management plan and revise it every sixth year. The legislation also sets out that the overall objective of the plan must be protecting the environment and human health by preventing or reducing the generation of waste and the adverse impacts of the generation and management of waste, and by reducing overall impacts of resource use and improving resource efficiency.

Waste and Contaminated Land (NI) Order 1997 Requirements (WCLO)

Question 23: Referring to Appendix 3b of the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy, do you agree the Waste and Contaminated Land (NI) Order 1997 requirements for a waste management plan are sufficiently addressed throughout the strategy?

- Agree
- Disagree
- No opinion
- If you disagree, please explain your answer, free text (max 500 words)

Rethinking Our Resources:

Northern Ireland Resources and Waste Management Strategy - Questions

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Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) are essential tools in ensuring that plans, programmes, and projects are developed in a way that safeguards the environment and protects biodiversity.

SEA is a systematic process used to evaluate the likely significant environmental effects of proposed strategies, plans, or programmes before they are adopted. It ensures that environmental considerations are integrated at an early stage of decision-making, supporting sustainable development and compliance with environmental legislation. SEA is a requirement of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024 legislation and the Environmental Report is the final output of the SEA process.

The HRA is a legal requirement under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995. for any plan or project that could have significant effects on protected sites, such as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs). It assesses whether proposals could adversely affect the integrity of these designated sites and ensures that adequate measures are in place to avoid or mitigate harm.

Together, SEA and HRA provide a structured framework for balancing development needs with environmental protection, ensuring that decision-makers have the information necessary to make informed, legally compliant, and sustainable choices.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

Question 24: Do you agree with the conclusions of the Environmental Report, assessing the potential impact of the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy on the Northern Ireland environment?

- Agree
- Disagree
- No opinion
- If you disagree, please explain your answer, free text (max 500 words)

Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA)

Question 25: Do you agree with the conclusions of the Habitats Regulations Assessment of the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy?

- Agree
- Disagree
- No opinion
- If you disagree, please explain your answer, free text (max 500 words)

Rethinking Our Resources:

Northern Ireland Resources and Waste Management Strategy - Questions

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An Equality Screening is one of the key tools to enable public authorities to fulfil their statutory obligations and mainstream the Section 75 equality and good relations duties into policy development. It provides an opportunity to improve decision-making, support 'evidence based' policy making and can help improve a public authority's service provision through a systematic review of all services, policies, procedures, practices and/or decisions.

Public authorities must undertake a Rural Needs Impact Assessment when developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies and plans and when designing and delivering public services. A Rural Needs Impact Assessment is a step-by-step process aimed at helping public authorities to ensure that the due regard duty imposed under section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 ('the Act') duty is fulfilled.

Equality Screening Assessment (EQ Screen)

Question 26: Do you agree with the conclusions of the Equality Screening Assessment of the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy?

- Agree
- Disagree
- No opinion
- If you disagree, please explain your answer, free text (max 500 words)

Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA)

Question 27: Do you agree with the conclusions of the Rural Needs Impact Assessment of the draft Resources and Waste Management Strategy?

- Agree
- Disagree
- No opinion
- If you disagree, please explain your answer, free text (max 500 words)

Rethinking Our Resources:

Northern Ireland Resources and Waste Management Strategy - Questions

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Part 6: How To Respond

This consultation will run for **12 weeks**, opening on **15th of January 2026** and closing at **23:59 on 8th April 2026**.

Responses to this consultation are to be completed online at the following link:

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/rethinking-our-resources-northern-ireland-resources-and-waste-management-strategy>

What we will do with your responses

When the consultation has closed, we will analyse your responses. Once analysed we will use these to publish a final Resources and Waste Management Strategy.

ANNEX 1 Publication of Responses

Confidentiality

The Department will publish a summary of responses following completion of the consultation process. Your response, and all other responses to the consultation may be disclosed on request. The Department can refuse to disclose information only in exceptional circumstances. Before you submit your response, please read the paragraphs below on the confidentiality of consultations as these provide guidance on the legal position of any information given by you in response to this consultation. Any confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system in e-mail responses will not be treated as such a request.

Data Protection

Section 8 (e) of the Data Protection Act 2018 permits processing of personal data when necessary for an activity that supports or promotes democratic engagement. Information provided by respondents to this consultation exercise will be held and used for the purposes of the administration of this current exercise and subsequently disposed of in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation.

Freedom of Information

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 gives the public a right of access to any information held by a public authority (the Department in this case). This right of access to information includes information provided in response to a consultation. The Department cannot automatically consider information supplied to it as confidential in response to a consultation. However, it does have the responsibility to decide whether any information provided by you in response to this consultation, including information about your identity, should be made public or treated as confidential. This means that information provided by you in response to the consultation is unlikely to be treated as confidential, except in very particular circumstances.

The Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the Freedom of Information Act provides that:

- The Department should only accept information from third parties in confidence if it is necessary to obtain that information in connection with the exercise of any of the Department's functions and it would not otherwise be provided;
- The Department should not agree to hold information received from third parties 'in confidence' which is not confidential in nature;
- Acceptance by the Department of confidentiality provisions must be for good reasons, capable of being justified to the Information Commissioner.

For further information about confidentiality of responses, please contact the Information Commissioner's Office: Telephone: 0303 123 1113

Email: ni@ico.org.uk Website: <https://ico.org.uk>

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

An Roinn

**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Department o'

**Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers**

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Unclassified

ITEM 9**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
	If multiple:
Meeting	Environment Committee
Date of Meeting	04 March 2026
Responsible Director	Director of Environmental Services
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Estates
Report title	Notice of Motion 616 Donaghadee Harbour and Parade
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Response from DfI Minister Appendix 2 - Response from DfI Consultancy Service
File Reference (if applicable)	65368 / NOM 616
Legislation	Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014
Resource Implications	Budget Narrative: No budgetary implications if report recommendations are agreed.
Screening Requirements	<i>The Council will commit to consider the implication of all reports under the categories of Section 75, Rural Needs, Data Protection, Climate and Sustainability:</i> Screening carried out – Screened out
Link to Corporate Plan Priority and Outcome	Priority 2: Environmental 2. An environmentally sustainable and resilient Council and Borough meeting our net zero carbon targets

If multiple:

	If multiple:
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Background

As a result of a significant report into the opportunities for development of Donaghadee Harbour in 2020 by RPS, a further Council decision was taken in April 2024 as follows, as a result of a Member's motion.

“That this Council recognises the significant opportunities which the redevelopment of Donaghadee Harbour could bring to the local economy in terms of leisure sailing and tourism and thus instructs officers to work with local groups to scope potential operational facilities which could enhance the offering in the Harbour and further brings back a feasibility report on the various options, including costings and possible funding streams.

Further, that this Council recognises the issues associated with high winds and coastal change and reviews the original 2020 Harbour Study conducted by RPS including the necessity for an offshore breakwater and agrees to bring back a report in time to be presented to Council in September 2024, outlining the budget required to undertake this work, any key considerations, next steps and identify which stakeholders would need to be involved.”

An update report was presented to the Council in September 2024 providing information on works completed to date which included the following concerning the first part of the motion.

“Officers met with representatives from the Sailing Club and other relevant groups on 9 May and discussed a number of potential small-scale operational improvements to the harbour. Officers felt the meeting was productive and a number of low or no-cost improvements have been implemented.”

To address the second part of the NoM concerning the review of the RPS report, the September update report also proposed some questions that could be put to consultants in order to form the scope of a subsequent technical report concerning in particular the necessity of an offshore breakwater.

In November 2024 it was reported back to Members that the Council had received confirmation from the Secretary of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, that the Council had been allocated funding (£21,100) from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund in order to undertake the further investigation work as set out in the September report to Committee.

The findings of this report were presented to the Environment Committee at its meeting on 11 June 2025. Council agreed that the Council as a result of its findings should write to the DFI Minister, sharing the findings of the report and ask that the recommended enhanced coastal defences schemes be progressed for the inner and outer parades in Donaghadee, (given that these were public roads for which DFI are responsible in relation to flood protection) and that an update report be brought back to Council in six months. The matter was shared with the Minister at a cross-party

meeting of Ards and North Down Members, including the Mayor shortly afterwards at Stormont, which was followed up with a copy of the said report on 8 July 2025.

Key Issues

The 2025 report had drawn a number of conclusions, most pertinent of which are as follows.

1. The risk of flooding is to the public infrastructure either side of Lemons Wharf rather than the harbour itself.
2. It is clear that a breakwater would not have any justifiable impact on managing overtopping and flooding along the parade, and no impact whatsoever on influencing overtopping or flooding on the harbour itself.
3. A breakwater would however improve tidal conditions in the harbour and therefore its use by recreational vessels. However, to provide this would entail a substantial cost
4. The report recommended recurved seawalls and rock armouring along the promenade as an extension to what is already provided there. This is DFI's responsibility and why the report was sent to them and a meeting with the Minister held about that. (Protection of public highways is the DFI's responsibility). The Minister replied to the Council's initial letter which asked for this to be considered, and a reply was received on 24 July 2025, attached at Appendix 1. However, given the more recent collapse of part of the sea wall in that location, a follow up letter was sent to the Minister's office in February 2026 suggesting a reconsideration of that position. A reply to that is included at appendix 2.

Next Steps

From the work done to date, continuing to pursue a breakwater project would be very difficult to justify financially and so officers recommend that no further activity should be embarked upon in relation to this matter.

Summary

1. The report clearly says that a breakwater would improve conditions in the harbour for vessels and therefore have a possible direct benefit on recreational use, but without it being shown that it would improve coastal protection from flooding, it would be extremely difficult to justify the cost for that alone (irrespective of the source of public funding required).
2. The DFI have indicated that they currently have no plans to further improve the coastal defences along the public infrastructure at The Parade and Shore Street at this time.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council Notes this update.



Department for

Infrastructure

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From the office of the Minister for Infrastructure
LIZ KIMMINS MLA

Ms Susie McCullough

Susie.McCullough@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

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Belfast, BT7 2JA

Telephone: (028) 9054 0540

Email: Private.office@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

Your reference:

Our reference: COR-0558-2025

24 July 2025

Susie, a chara,

SEA DEFENCES DONAGHADEE

Thank you for your email of 8 July 2025 and a copy of Donaghadee Coastal Flood Study dated 2 April 2025.

As you are aware, within Donaghadee my Department is responsible for a short section of sea wall that supports road infrastructure and is considered to be separate from the harbour. My Department has no other assets within the area for which we are responsible.

I welcome sight of your report and will consider its contents, however, at the moment, my Department currently has no plans to install rock armour, recurve walls or alter the alignment of the small section of sea wall for which it is responsible.

Is mise le meas,

LIZ KIMMINS MLA
Minister for Infrastructure



Department for

Infrastructure

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Consultancy Services

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Your ref:
Our ref: **TOF-0142-2026**
Date: 19/02/2026

Dear Mr Steele

RE: Sea Defences – Donaghadee

Thank you for your correspondence of 13 February regarding sea defences in Donaghadee. As previously outlined by the Minister in her response to Ms Susie McCullough (COR-0558-2025), the Department's responsibility is limited to the short section of sea wall supporting the public road between Bridge Street and Townhall Lane, and this position remains unchanged.

Following the recent weather-related damage, prompt repairs were carried out to the small affected section of wall to ensure public safety. Subsequent inspections confirmed that the remaining Department-owned wall is in good overall condition, and there is no evidence to suggest that additional strengthening or enhancement measures are required.

While we acknowledge the concerns raised in the Council's report, the Department has no plans to introduce rock armour, recurving of the wall, or other enhancement measures to the section within our ownership.

I trust you find this reply helpful.

Yours sincerely,

IAN MCCLUNG

Head of Consultancy Services

Unclassified

ITEM 10**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
	If multiple:
Meeting	Environment Committee
Date of Meeting	04 March 2026
Responsible Director	Director of Environmental Services
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Estates
Report title	Update on Green Fleet
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Roadmap to Green Fleet (October 2024) Appendix 2 - Green Fleet Action Plan
File Reference (if applicable)	79001
Legislation	Other Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022
Resource Implications	None Narrative:
Screening Requirements	<i>The Council will commit to consider the implication of all reports under the categories of Section 75, Rural Needs, Data Protection, Climate and Sustainability:</i> Screening of decision not required
Link to Corporate Plan Priority and Outcome	Priority 2: Environmental 2. An environmentally sustainable and resilient Council and Borough meeting our net zero carbon targets If multiple:

Background

In January 2024 Council agreed that, after reviewing the Alternate Fuel feasibility study, commissioned by East Border Region group of Councils, Officers would use the information contained therein as a basis for our own "Roadmap to a Green Fleet" document. This document was subsequently developed, outlining that the most viable fuel for our smaller vehicles is battery electric (BEV) and the most viable fuel for our heavier fleet is Hydrogen. The Roadmap to Green Fleet (attached at Appendix 1) was agreed in October 2024.

The report noted that the transition to a green fleet contributes to the Council's Roadmap to Sustainability, Action 16 the delivery of a Carbon Reduction Strategy, and contributes to the outworking following its declaration of a Climate Emergency. However, the report also noted some significant challenges to our ability to transition toward a green fleet in an efficient and effective way.

Key Issues

The Roadmap to Green fleet document noted numerous challenges in achieving the required 48% reduction in Carbon by 2030, when considering the Fleet as a stand-alone component. The difficulties noted and explained within the report included: refuelling infrastructure, technological uncertainty, operational suitability, budget, depot suitability and skills and equipment.

Update

Due to these challenges, a phased approach was agreed, which included the following:

- Installing charging infrastructure at North Road Depot, to maximise use of the current NIE transformer, without needing to upgrade it at this time.
- Having the staff and resources in place to maintain the new renewable fleet.
- Replacing all suitable vehicles with battery equivalent
- Exploring hydrogen power and the potential for hydrogen sharing agreements with suitable public sector organisations.
- Review the suitability of our depots, ensuring they can meet the organisation's needs to deliver phase 2 of this strategy.
- Utilise HVO to achieve additional carbon savings, if required, to meet the 2030 target of 48% reduction.

Following agreement of the Roadmap to Green Fleet, an action plan was developed to track progress and has been updated and attached at Appendix 2.

Replacement of suitable vehicles with BEV

At present 6 vehicles are due to be replaced with BEV. Traditionally, Council would generally purchase vehicles outright, however for a number of reasons Officers are currently investigating leasing our electric vans. As part of the procurement strategy, Officers will carry out a cost benefit analysis on leasing vs purchase and the outcome of the subsequent procurement process will be reported in due course.

Next Steps

Officers will continue to progress the actions highlighted within the Action Plan and bring a further update to committee at an appropriate juncture but no later than March 2027.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council **Notes** the contents of this report.

Unclassified

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ITEM 8**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Environment Committee
Date of Meeting	02 October 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Environment
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Assets and Property Services
Date of Report	15 August 2024
File Reference	79001
Legislation	N/A
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Roadmap to Green Fleet
Attachments	

Background

In January 2024 Council agreed that following on from an Alternate Fuel feasibility study commissioned by East Border Region group of Councils, Officers would use this as a basis for development of our own "Roadmap to a Green Fleet" document.

The feasibility study determined that the most viable fuel for our smaller vehicles is battery electric (BEV) and the most viable fuel for our heavier fleet is hydrogen. This contributes to the Councils Roadmap to Sustainability, Action 16 on the delivery of a Carbon Reduction Strategy and is a key activity in relation to our declaration of a Climate Emergency.

Members will be aware that the first milestone under the Climate Change Act (NI) 2022 is to have a 48% reduction in greenhouse gases (GHGs) by 2030 with a 100% reduction being in place by 2050.

Landscape

Not Applicable

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Members should note that this a hugely complex subject with much uncertainty and constantly changing factors that affect the viability of alternate fuels and our ability to transition toward them in an efficient and effective way. These factors include:

Refuelling Infrastructure

The first stage of our green fleet plan, will involve transition of 49 lighter vehicles to BEVs. The power requirement to keep the proposed 49 electric vehicles charged is considerable and would require a significant upgrade to our electrical infrastructure at our Depot. NIE has estimated this upgrade to cost approximately £140k, in addition to the charging infrastructure itself which could cost a further £102k. However, the existing NIE supply is sufficient to charge a number of electric vehicles and should be ample for the vehicles scheduled for replacement over the next 2 years according to our programmed replacement schedule, with an investment of around £50k for charging infrastructure (funding for this has been applied for via the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Northern Ireland).

Similarly, hydrogen refuelling currently presents significant challenges in terms of both infrastructure and security of supply of renewable hydrogen. There may be scope in the future to enter into Hydrogen Partnerships with other public sector organisations however it will be challenging to align needs and will require considerable time to set up. Officers will continue to keep this option under review.

Technological Uncertainty

Both BEV and hydrogen powered vehicles involve relatively new and constantly developing technology. From 2035, the sale of new liquid petroleum gas, petrol, and diesel cars, as well as hybrid vehicles, will be banned across the UK and by 2036 all new HGV's up to 26 tonnes must be zero emission from the tail pipe (2040 for +26T). This legislative requirement will prompt the manufacturers to make significant changes to their vehicles and rapidly develop new technologies. What is cutting edge today could be obsolete next year. Any vehicles that we do change to an alternate fuel now, could be better suited to a future technology when it becomes available at a later date.

It is also worth noting that grid electricity is currently not 100% renewable, so BEVs still result in carbon emissions associated with power station electricity supply. That said, grid electricity produces 19% less gCO₂ per kW than fossil fuel powered internal combustion engines. In addition, the Climate Change Act set a target stating that 80% of electricity within the distribution network must come from renewables by 2030, so in the longer term much of this carbon should be removed at source.

Operational Suitability

Currently it is only feasible to change our small vans to electric power. The larger vans and small lorries are not suited due to BEV's reduced payload and towing capacity (due to the weight of the batteries). The technological uncertainty of the industry means that whilst some vehicles are not currently viable to run on electric or hydrogen, they could be viable in the near future.

Costs

Currently, electric vans are typically 30% more expensive than their internal combustion engine (ICE) equivalent and hydrogen powered refuse vehicles are also significantly

Not Applicable

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more expensive. It is envisaged that as the 2035 ban on ICE vehicles approaches, manufacturers will need to make the alternate fuel vehicles more appealing to consumers and this along with greatly increased scale of production of such vehicles, should lead to reduced pricing.

Depot Suitability

As noted above, the refuelling infrastructure required for a green fleet requires significant investment. In addition, some insurers specify that BEVs must be charged outdoors for fire safety reasons - and our Balloo Depot has limited suitable outside space. Due to these and several other factors, the long-term suitability of our Depots needs to be explored and this should ideally be done in advance of any significant investment in infrastructure. A review of our depots is being considered and will be reported to Council in due course.

Skills & Equipment

A technologically advanced fleet will require our existing vehicle maintenance staff to retrain in alternate fuel vehicles and the purchase of appropriate vehicle maintenance equipment. This change will take time and money to implement. Any alternate fuel vehicles bought prior to the implementation of these changes will need to be maintained by contractor on an interim basis, at additional cost.

Use of Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO)

What is HVO

HVO is a synthetic, premium quality biofuel made from 100% raw materials. HVO is both renewable and sustainable.

- It is considered renewable because it is manufactured from plant and animal oils/fats, which can be regrown when new feedstock is needed.
- It is considered sustainable because the crops used to manufacture HVO do not damage the environment, do not use land which has been claimed from other use (rainforest etc) and does not displace animals or other key aspects of the natural ecosystem.

The HVO production process removes unsaturation and contaminants, resulting in a pure hydrocarbon fuel. It is much more stable and likely to last longer in the tank than conventional biodiesel and gas oil. It is classified as a “drop-in replacement” for fossil fuels, meaning no physical changes to the vehicles are needed.

HVO manufacturers claim it can reduce emissions by up to 90%. Therefore for example, in the case of an average vehicle mileage of 12,000 miles a year, the use of HVO would mean that up to 10,800 of those miles would in effect be emission free.

How can HVO help us achieve our Net Zero Targets

In theory it would be possible to move all our vehicles to HVO in/before 2030 and achieve a 90% reduction in GHG's to exceed our target under the Act. However, this would reduce the amount of time we have to phase-in zero-emission vehicles, making the capital replacement less affordable (it is easier to financially plan for replacing 200

Not Applicable

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vehicles over 26 years, than 200 vehicles over 20 years). It would also result in significantly increased costs, as currently HVO is 40% more expensive than diesel. This would mean annual fuel costs rising by £440k per year at current prices.

In addition, when we consider manufacturers' requirement to have zero emissions from the tailpipe by 2036, HVO is unlikely to play a long-term role. HVO is therefore seen as a stop-gap measure rather than a long-term solution. However, this stop-gap measure may be vital if we need to boost our carbon reduction as the 2030 deadline approaches. For example, if we achieve a 20% reduction by 2029 through use of other measures and need a further 28% reduction to meet the requirements of the Act, we can switch a part of the remaining fleet to HVO to achieve this.

A Phased Approach

Given this turbulent landscape it may be unwise to move hastily toward alternate fuel vehicles. To do so would present risks of excess costs and wasted money on infrastructure and sub-optimal vehicles.

With the first milestone under the Climate Change Act being a 48% reduction in greenhouse gasses by 2030, this first target needs to be our immediate priority. A phased approach would therefore seem to be appropriate, with Phase 1 focusing on 2024 to 2030 and achieving the 48% reduction necessary to comply with the Act. This phase will focus on our smaller vehicles which will be battery electric vehicles (BEV's), as determined by the Alternate Fuel feasibility study.

Phase 2 can be confirmed closer to 2030 when, we anticipate, much of the uncertainty in the landscape has been addressed. This phase will focus on the rest of the fleet and the expected move toward hydrogen powered heavier vehicles.

Phase 1 of Green Fleet Roadmap

Phase 1 will include the following:

- Install charging infrastructure at North Road Depot, to maximise use of the current NIE transformer, without needing to upgrade it currently.
- Ensure the staff and resources are in place to maintain the new renewables powered fleet.
- Replace all suitable vehicles with battery equivalent (see schedule attached).
- Explore hydrogen power and the potential for hydrogen sharing agreements with suitable public sector organisations.
- Review the suitability of our depots, ensuring they can meet the organisation's needs to deliver phase 2 of this strategy.
- Utilise HVO to achieve additional carbon savings, if required, to meet the 2030 target of 48% reduction.

Not Applicable

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Costs

The following are the high-level estimated total lifecycle costs for the 49 vehicles included in Phase 1 of our green fleet plan, based on 8k miles per annum (current average).

A lease option has been costed and may be worth considering due to certainty of costs and flexibility in the rapidly changing technological environment.

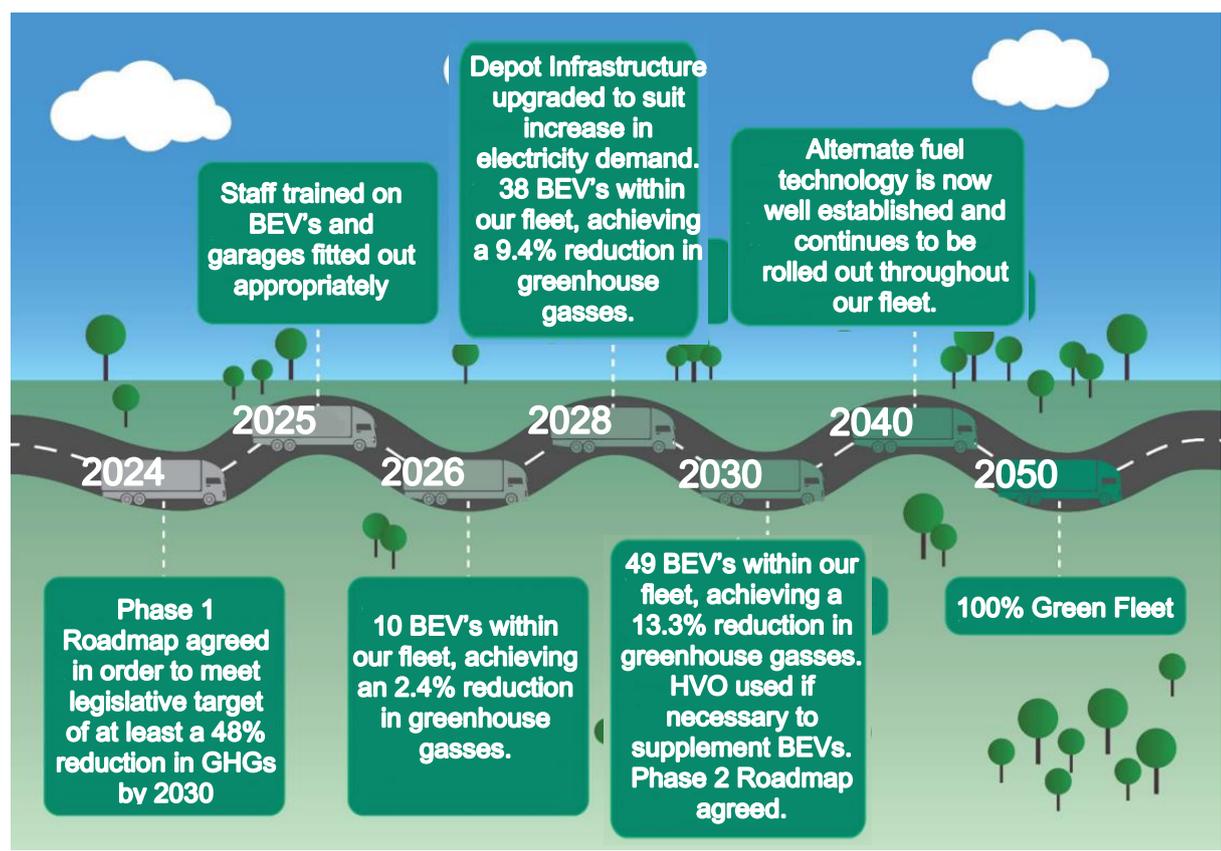
Cost Description	Diesel Vehicles (purchased)	BEV (purchased)	BEV (leased)
Infrastructure costs	£0	£50,000	£50,000
Purchase/Lease Cost (based on current typical costs)	£1,258,124	£1,663,403	£1,705,200
Fuel Cost	£436,541	£274,400	£274,400
Maintenance (incl. Batteries)	£82,320	£79,380	£54,880
Tax	£82,230	£65,170	£65,170
Total	£1,859,215	£2,132,353	£2,149,650
Net additional financial costs	n/a	£273,138	£290,435
Carbon emissions (tCO ₂ e)	1108	250	250
Net Carbon savings (tCO ₂ e)	n/a	858	858

Whilst the life-cycle costs of both BEV options are more expensive than the diesel equivalents (largely due to the relatively low annual mileage of our fleet) they are achieving a significant saving of 858 tCO₂e and making a significant contribution to our obligations under the 2022 Climate Change Act (NI).

Key Dates and Milestones

The diagram below shows the anticipated journey to a green fleet.

Not Applicable



RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council agrees the approach outlined above, subject to preparation of further business cases as required during the rates setting process.

Green Fleet Action Plan 2025-2030

Area of focus/Challenge	Action	Owner	March 2026 Update
Refuelling infrastructure	Install charging infrastructure at North Road Depot, to maximise use of the current NIE transformer.	Transport Manager/Technical Manager	Charging infrastructure for 6 vehicles complete.
Refuelling infrastructure	Install charging infrastructure at Balloo Depot, within limited space available.	Transport Manager/Technical Manager	In progress.
Refuelling infrastructure	Explore Hydrogen Partnerships with other Public sector organisations	Director of Environmental Services	Initial conversations with Translink indicate potential for a future collaborative arrangement. Ongoing.
Technological uncertainty	Continuously scan the horizon for emerging technologies and best practice elsewhere.	Director of Environmental Services, Head of Estates, Transport Manager	No new technologies emerging. Hydrogen still looking the most favourable for the heavy fleet although many obstacles/difficulties still remaining and only sporadic use currently across all HGV sectors.
Operational suitability	Replacing all suitable vehicles with battery equivalent, in line with vehicle replacement policy.	Transport manager	Procurement strategy currently in development, report to follow.
Budget	Secure budget for transition to Green fleet, including any infrastructure costs.	Head of Estates	Budget approved for 2026/27 for EV infrastructure.
Depot suitability	Review the suitability of our depots, ensuring they can meet the organisation's needs to deliver phase 2 of this strategy.	Head of Estates	Following a procurement process the consultancy team has now been appointed and work has begun.
Skills and equipment	Ensure staff and resources in place to maintain the new renewable fleet.	Head of Estates	Mechanics now trained on BEVs.

Unclassified

ITEM 11

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
	If multiple:
Meeting	Environment Committee
Date of Meeting	04 March 2026
Responsible Director	Director of Environmental Services
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Estates
Report title	Quarterly Sustainable Energy Management Strategy Update 2025-2026 Quarter 3
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Updated Sustainable Energy Management Strategy Action Plan
File Reference (if applicable)	QSEMSU/2526/Q3
Legislation	Other Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland)
Resource Implications	Budget Narrative: Supported with agreed resources
Screening Requirements	<i>The Council will commit to consider the implication of all reports under the categories of Section 75, Rural Needs, Data Protection, Climate and Sustainability:</i> Screening will be required if agreed
Link to Corporate Plan Priority and Outcome	Priority 2: Environmental 2. An environmentally sustainable and resilient Council and Borough meeting our net zero carbon targets If multiple:

Background

In June 2024 Council agreed the Sustainable Energy Management Strategy and Action Plan. One of the actions within the Plan was to “Improve governance arrangements to ensure that energy management has effective oversight and accountability within the Council.”

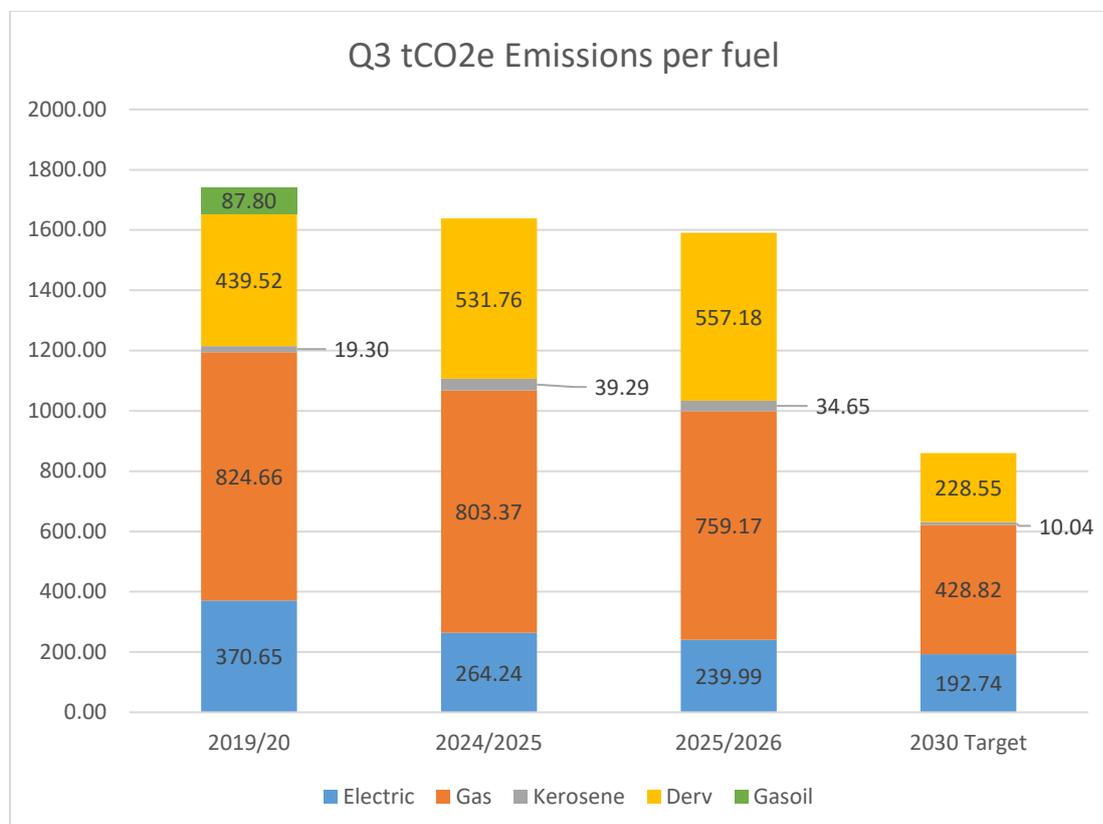
Improving oversight and accountability within the Council for energy management will ensure that consumption performance and the implementation of the Strategy and this action plan will be continuously monitored. Improved monitoring and governance will improve energy performance by ensuring actions are effectively implemented and consumption trends routinely monitored, which should result in reduced consumption, costs, and emissions.

Key Issues

This report is part of our ongoing quarterly series, tracking energy consumption against our 2019/20 baseline and highlighting current and upcoming energy-saving initiatives.

Period:	Reported in:
Quarter 1: April to June	September
Quarter 2: July to September	December
Quarter 3: October to December	March
Quarter 4: January to March	June

Energy Consumption for this Period



Electricity

As shown in the graph above, electricity consumption increased in Q3, rising by 14% compared with the same period in the 2024/25 financial year. Despite this increase, the impact on emissions was mitigated by the use of green energy supply, resulting in a net reduction of 24.26 tCO₂.

When measured against our baseline year, Q3 also demonstrated a notable improvement, delivering a 6.5% reduction in carbon emissions, equivalent to 130.66 tCO₂. This reflects continued progress towards our emissions reduction objectives. We remain committed to building on this momentum through the implementation of additional energy-saving measures and by strengthening staff engagement across both new and existing initiatives, in support of our 2030 target.

A review of electricity consumption data has been undertaken to identify the underlying causes of the increase observed in Q3. This analysis indicates that several leisure centres, sports pavilions and community centres recorded higher electricity usage compared to the same reporting period last year. While this is currently assumed to be linked to increased occupancy and facility usage, further investigation is required. Targeted energy efficiency initiatives will be developed and implemented at these sites as part of ongoing efforts to manage and reduce consumption.

Sites with the most significant decreases in electricity consumption:

- North Road Depot Waste Transfer Station
- Queens Leisure Centre
- Ards Blair Mayne Leisure Centre
- Green Road Community Centre
- Portavogie Community Centre
- Bangor City Hall
- Signal Centre

Sites with the most significant increases in electricity consumption:

- Bangor Aurora Leisure Centre
- Environmental Resource Centre
- Balloo Avenue Bangor Recycling Centre
- Queens Hall Newtownards Library
- Londonderry Park
- Comber Leisure Centre
- Hamilton Hub
- Donaghadee Community Centre
- Spafield Pavilion
- Church Street Offices

Gas

Natural gas consumption decreased by 5.5% in Q3, compared to the same period in the 2024/25 financial year, resulting in an estimated 44.2 tCO₂ reduction in emissions.

Relative to our baseline year, Q3 also showed continued progress, with an 7.9% decrease in gas consumption, equivalent to a 65.49 tCO₂ reduction.

Sites with the most significant decreases in gas consumption:

- North Road Depot Waste Transfer Station
- Environmental Resource Centre
- Ards Blair Mayne Leisure Centre
- Bangor Aurora Leisure Centre
- Queens Leisure Centre

Sites with the most significant increases in gas consumption:

- Comber Leisure Centre
- Signal Centre
- Hamilton Hub
- Donaghadee Community Centre
- Bangor City Hall
- Londonderry Park
- Alderman George Green Community Centre
- Redburn Community Centre
- Queens Hall Newtownards Library

Looking ahead, further action will be required to reduce gas consumption across the estate. Gas remains the Council's second-largest source of carbon emissions and addressing this is critical to achieving our 2030 emissions reduction targets. Planned measures include:

- Reviewing and lowering existing heating control set-point temperatures to optimise energy use.
- Assessing the operational efficiencies of leisure centres with swimming pools. These are the Council's largest gas consumers and carbon emitters. This assessment should identify opportunities for further savings through behavioural change and system optimisation.
- Reviewing and lowering swimming pool temperatures where operationally feasible.
- Automating heating controls and expanding remote management capabilities to enhance control and consistency.
- Transitioning to electric heating systems, supported by solar PV and other low-carbon generation technologies, to support long-term decarbonisation.

Kerosene

Kerosene oil is typically procured at the start of Q1 each year to replenish depleted stocks and ensure readiness for the autumn heating season. In some instances, depleted stocks are also replenished in Q2, where oil prices have shown further reductions over the summer period. This approach helps maintain continuity of public

services in the event of an unexpected drop in temperature. This advance stocking ensures adequate supply when usage rises.

Kerosene consumption has seen a reduction of 12% in Q3 compared to the same period in 2024/25 financial year, resulting in a 4.6 tCO₂ emissions reduction.

A comparison of Q3 weather trend data for 2024/25 and 2025/26 indicates broadly similar temperature and climate conditions. Therefore, the observed reduction in consumption can reasonably be attributed to depleted fuel stocks being replenished in Q1.

Historical data from 2019/20 suggests that six community centre central heating systems were previously operating on Gas Oil (red diesel). These systems have since been upgraded to use Kerosene, which has contributed to an apparent increase in reported consumption. As such, caution should be exercised when comparing Kerosene usage data between 2025/26 and the baseline year, as the fuel switch impacts the comparability of figures.

As a result, kerosene stock data however shows an apparent increase in kerosene purchased in Q3 compared to the baseline 2019/20 year, for the reasons outlined above.

Diesel

Carbon emissions figures for gas oil (red diesel) used in small plant and Derv (diesel) used in the road fleet have been combined to provide a cumulative total for 2019/20 Q3 diesel emission, in line with the 2022 reform on red diesel usage.

Considering the combined reporting of diesel consumption, overall usage has increased by 5.7% in Q3, leading to an increase of 29.9 tCO₂ emissions compared to the 2019/20 baseline year

Diesel consumption in Q3 was also higher than in the same reporting period in 2024/25. This increase is primarily attributable to reduced operating efficiency across several vehicle categories, including rear-end loaders (RELs), refuse collection vehicles (RCVs), MacPac units, and 4x4s. In addition, the fleet travelled an extra 10,805 miles during the period, consuming a further 20,426 litres of diesel.

Total fleet mileage for this reporting period was 424,142 miles, representing a 2.5% increase compared with the same reporting period in the previous financial year. Diesel consumption totalled 209,335 litres, reflecting a 4.78% increase compared with the same reporting period in the previous financial year.

A comparison with the previous financial year shows no increase in fleet vehicles

As a result, carbon emissions rose by 25.4 tCO₂ compared with the previous year, representing a 3.6% increase.

Consumption Costs

The table below presents fuel consumption costs for each year, along with the corresponding unit prices. This allows for a comparison of both usage and changes in market rates over time.

Quarter 3 Utility/Fuel Type	2019/20 Costs £(NET)	2019/20 Unit Rate £/unit (NET)	2025/26 Costs £(NET)	2025/26 Unit Rate £/unit (NET)	Projected Cost of 2019/20 Usage at Current Unit Rates £(NET)	Projected Cost Saving Between 2025/26 and 2019/20 Usage at Current Unit Rates £(NET)	Percentage Cost Difference Between 2025/26 and 2019/20 Usage at Current Unit Rates
Electric	£218,370	£0.15	£383,205	£0.28	£409,839	£26,634	6.5% decrease
Gas	£175,759	£0.04	£163,097	£0.04	£176,250	£13,153	7.5% decrease
Kerosene	£3,337	£0.44	£7,259	£0.53	£4,044	£-3,215	79% increase
Derv	£165,454	£1.01	£236,846	£1.13	£184,885	£-51,961	28% increase
Gasoil	£17,811	£0.56	N/A	£0.70	£22,418	N/A	N/A
TOTAL	£580,731	-	£790,407	-	£797,436	£-15,389	1% decrease

Highlights of Energy Saving Initiatives Delivered this Reporting Period

List below of recent energy saving initiatives in Q3:

Description	Annual energy saving estimate	Annual tCO ₂ e reduction estimate	Annual cost saving estimate £(NET)
Ballygowan Community Centre Solar PV	8,230 kWh	1.5	£2,421
Green Road Community Centre Solar PV	6,758 kWh	1.2	£1,937
Skipperstone Community Centre Solar PV	4,250 kWh	0.8	£1,920
Manor Court Community Centre Solar PV	2943 kWh	0.5	£629
Portavogie Community Centre Solar PV	7348 kWh	1.3	£2,138
TOTAL	29,529 kWh	5.3	£9045

Refer to the attached updated Sustainable Energy Action Plan for comprehensive updates on all noted actions.

Next Steps

From the next reporting period, the Energy Efficiency Officer will highlight any increases in building energy consumption to relevant Service Unit Managers. This will enable identification of root causes and facilitate discussion on targets and long-term actions to achieve measurable reductions in energy consumption.

Future Measures Currently Under Consideration/Planning

- Use the Council's monthly newsletter to share energy-saving best practices with staff, encouraging their active participation in further reducing energy consumption.
- Develop and implement a council-wide policy for the seasonal shutdown of heating systems during the summer months across the entire estate.
- Develop and implement an employee e-learning programme to promote awareness and best practices for energy conservation in the workplace.
- Replacement of boilers at various Council properties and upgrade of control systems.
- Design of new lighting control and LED lighting at North Road Depot and Environmental Resource Centre
- Design of new lighting control and LED lighting at various Council properties
- Solar PV Installation at chosen compatible Council properties.
- Continuation of Car Park lighting LED installation.
- Walk-round surveys of properties to examine and review existing controls and settings.
- Surveys of existing buildings for insulation installation to be carried out and implemented.
- Energy targets & KPI's for service unit managers to be agreed for 2025/2026.
- Introduction of Half-Hourly Automatic Meter Reading (AMR) systems in highest energy consuming buildings.
- Installation of double-glazed windows at Church Street Offices.
- Installation of double-glazed windows at Ballygowan Community Centre

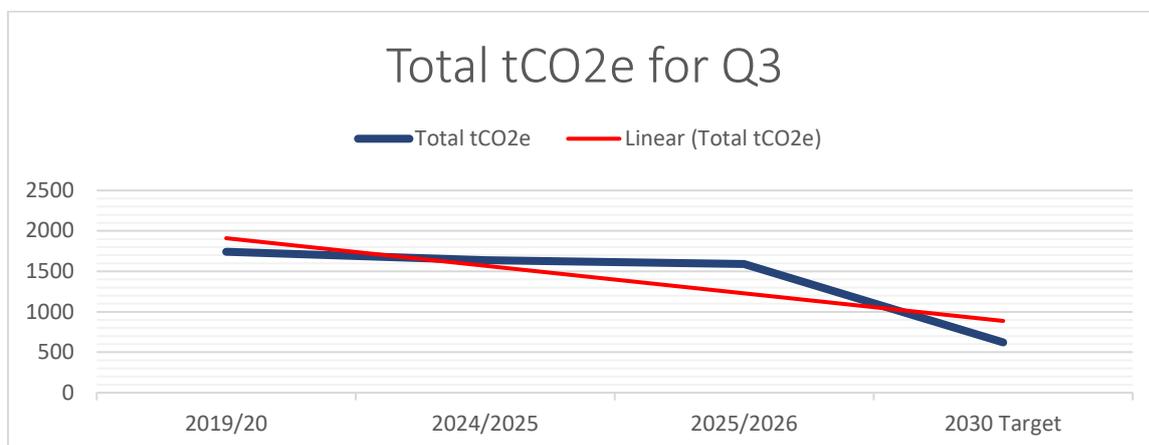
List below of future planned works

Description	Annual energy saving estimate	Annual tCO₂e reduction estimate	Annual cost saving estimate £(NET)
Queen's Leisure Centre – LED Lighting Upgrade	11,977 kWh	2.1	£2,515
Combers Leisure Centre – Dome Lighting	8,553 kWh	1.5	£2,566
Ards Blair Mayne Leisure Centre Solar PV	226,515 kWh	40	£67,107
Bangor Sportsplex LED Lighting (Outdoor Floodlights)	11,866 kWh	2.1	£2,966

Bangor Sportsplex LED Lighting (Car Park)	7854 kWh	1.4	£2,123
Environmental Resource Centre Solar PV	81,358 kWh	14.4	£20,340
Bangor Aurora Leisure Centre LED Lighting upgrade	37,739 kWh	6.6	£9,057
North Road Depot Waste Transfer Station LED lighting upgrade	17,860 kWh	3.2	£4,338
Environmental Resource Centre LED lighting upgrade	7,523 kWh	1.3	£1,805
TOTAL	403,391 kWh	71.2	£110,694

Summary

The graph below illustrates our overall energy emissions for this period, set against the 2030 target. The linear trendline represents the trajectory required to achieve our 48% emission reduction target by 2030. A modest level of overall progress has been made towards achieving our emissions reduction goals. While we are currently behind the linear trendline target, with sufficient investment and continued efforts particularly regarding transition to a greener fleet, officers believe that we will achieve our long-term targets.



RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council **Notes** the latest quarterly energy consumption update.

Appendix 1

Ards and North Down Borough Council Sustainable Energy Management Strategy

ACTION PLAN

This action plan has been divided into the following sections/ themes:

1. Enabling Actions
2. Generic/ Behavioural Actions; and
3. Building Specific Actions

This action plan shall be for a three-year period, after which a revised action plan will be developed with further details.

It is envisaged that the follow up action plan will include more specific actions in terms of buildings and systems improvements i.e. after the actions within this plan related to further detailed surveys and feasibility studies are completed.

This initial action plan focuses on getting the systems, governance, and oversight arrangements in place within the Council to ensure effective sustainable energy management, with some specific actions also included which were identified during the high-level energy surveys.

Further update reports will include costs and timescales for the actions.

The actions presented within each of these sections/ themes are in order of priority and benefit in terms of consumption and carbon emissions reduction potential.

The actions are also classified as follows:

1. Urgent- within 6-9 months of the Actions Plan being endorsed.
2. Short Term- within 12 months
3. Medium Term- -within 24- 36 months

The Action Plan will be subject to annual review. A Progress Report shall be prepared, presented, and approved by Environment Committee.

Enabling Actions

Theme	Priority/ Lead Responsibility	Action	Rationale/ Notes	Benefit	Progress
Enhanced Energy Management Governance	Urgent Head of Assets & Property Services Director of Environment	Improve governance arrangements to ensure that energy management has effective oversight and accountability within the Council.	Improving oversight and accountability within the Council for energy management will ensure that consumption performance and the implementation of the Strategy and this action plan will be continuously monitored. Energy Management should be a standing agenda item to allow it to be regularly reviewed through the Council's 'Climate Change Working Group.	Improved monitoring and governance will improve energy performance by ensuring actions are effectively implemented, consumption trends routinely monitored, which should result in reduced consumption, costs, and emissions.	Ongoing
Formal Energy and Carbon Management Policy	Urgent Director Of Environment	Develop a formal policy for the Council to include a requirement for space heating to be switched off during a predetermined period during the summer.	Having a formal approved policy will support energy and carbon management efforts as well as demonstrate the Council's commitment to reducing energy consumption and carbon emissions.	Enhanced Reputation (the Policy should be made publicly available) Should support efforts/ actions to reduce consumption, costs, and emissions.	All heating switched off in Council offices between May and September, with the exception of any sporadic period of cold. Policy to be drafted for review and approval
Energy check/ audit programme	Urgent Director of Environment	Introduce an energy check/ audit programme to introduce a structured review process for energy and carbon management in prioritised buildings.	Having a programme where energy checks/ audits are completed will proactively monitor performance. Key areas to review during these checks/ audits include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Time and temperature set points on heating controls and building management systems (e.g. AHUs, boiler heating timers etc.) 	Reduced energy consumption and costs A thorough, robust, proactive audit programme has the potential to realise considerable savings in consumption, costs, and emissions. Estimated realistic savings of between 3-5% of energy costs.	Ongoing

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lighting and equipment left on unnecessarily. ○ Out of hours consumption (where aM&T systems have been installed or where half hourly electricity data is available). 	<table border="1"> <tr> <th>Savings</th> <th>Cost</th> <th>Carbon</th> </tr> <tr> <td>3%</td> <td>£62k</td> <td>124T</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5%</td> <td>£104k</td> <td>207T</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Savings	Cost	Carbon	3%	£62k	124T	5%	£104k	207T				
Savings	Cost	Carbon															
3%	£62k	124T															
5%	£104k	207T															
Energy and Carbon Awareness	<p>Short term</p> <p>Director of Environment</p> <p>Director of Corporate Services Development and Administration</p>	<p>Development and roll out of an energy and carbon awareness campaign to promote energy efficiency and carbon emissions reduction. Key content could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lighting and equipment switch off messaging. ○ Heating set points ○ Other key behavioural messages <p>The campaign should be designed and delivered to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All staff, via generic sessions ○ Focussed sessions and materials for prioritised staff/ buildings i.e. those with high consumption e.g. leisure centres. <p>This should be completed to complement the Council's existing Sustainability Communications Programme</p>	<p>Employee engagement in energy efficiency and carbon reduction has many benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Energy savings: Saving energy saves money and reduces an organisation's carbon footprint. ○ Employee satisfaction: participation in employee engagement schemes can make employees feel valued. Knowing that their organisation cares about sustainability can improve employee satisfaction and employee retention. ○ Reputation: an employee engagement/ awareness scheme around sustainability shows that an organisation cares about both its employees and the environment. This can improve an organisation's reputation and improve employee attraction. <p>The campaign should comprise information/ training sessions as well as the design and display of awareness messages e.g. posters/ signage with equipment and lighting switch off when not in use.</p> <p>Whilst the priority should be in higher consuming buildings, the messaging should be displayed throughout the Council Estate.</p>	<p>A well implemented employee engagement scheme can lead to energy savings of approximately 5-10%.</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <th>Savings</th> <th>Carbon</th> </tr> <tr> <td>5%</td> <td>207T</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10%</td> <td>414T</td> </tr> </table> <p>It could also lead to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Employee satisfaction ○ Council reputation <p>The campaign would also support the related commitments and actions within the Council's wider 'Corporate Plan' and 'Roadmap to Sustainability'</p>	Savings	Carbon	5%	207T	10%	414T	<p>Energy Officer to progress development of presentations to the different groups, along with a mandatory e-learning module for all staff with access to a computer for energy efficiency training.</p> <p>Energy Officer has engaged trialed platform from Energy Saving Trust, and currently awaiting quotation for integration into corporate learning management system</p> <p>Energy consumption figures shared with Leisure and Community Centres to show big users.</p>						
Savings	Carbon																
5%	207T																
10%	414T																

Generic/ Behavioural Actions

Theme	Priority/ Responsibility	Action	Rationale/ Notes	Benefit	
Sustainable energy design	Urgent Director of Place plus Head of Strategic Capital Unit	Develop a Capital Projects Sustainability Policy to be agreed by Council	<p>Consideration, in particular, should be given to the introduction of specifications which should include the following key criteria, subject to business cases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Zero/ Low carbon technologies ○ Effective zoning e.g. of heating and lighting systems ○ Energy and carbon performance targets e.g. as set out in the BREEAM performance standard. ○ Effective commissioning of key plant and equipment e.g. AHUs, low carbon/ renewable technologies ○ Installation of efficient equipment, fittings, and controls e.g. boiler upgrades, LED lighting, PIR and daylight sensors, smart heating programmers, variable speed drives (VSDs) on pumps etc. <p>Building sustainable structures not only reduces their environmental impact but also offers economic advantages.</p> <p>Sustainable buildings are more efficient and cost less to operate than conventionally built buildings.</p>	<p>Enhanced Corporate Reputation</p> <p>Consumption and carbon emissions reduction and cost savings.</p> <p>Although the upfront costs can be higher for more sustainable new builds and refurbishments, a newly built green asset has been found to have 14% lower operational costs over five years when compared to a conventionally designed and constructed building (World Green Building Council).¹</p> <p>In addition, the briefing paper 'Assessing carbon emissions in BREEAM' published in 2016 demonstrated that the average CO2 savings for a BREEAM assessed building is 22%, whilst a BREEAM Excellent building is expected to reduce carbon emissions by 33% when compared to conventional builds.</p>	<p>We are implementing lighting controls and LED fittings in properties as and when we can. We are also implementing controls installations in larger consuming buildings to help reduce electric costs.</p> <p>Pursuing implementation of electric heating to reduce use of hydro-carbon heating systems.</p> <p>Future works to be aligned with 10-Year programme for M&E infrastructure renewal</p>

¹ <https://bregroup.com/breeam-news/six-ways-to-get-the-most-out-of-breeam/>

<p>Existing/ historic energy improvement quotations</p>	<p>Urgent Director of Environment</p>	<p>Complete an exercise to gather all energy efficiency related upgrade quotations e.g. LED lighting upgrades, which should then be reviewed with those deemed beneficial taken forward.</p>	<p>During the completion of the review and auditing project, it was advised that quotes had been received in the past which were not taken forward.</p> <p>Such quotes received would include estimated cost savings and payback. Reviewing these and revisiting them where the projects are deemed feasible will result in consumption and cost savings.</p> <p>LEDs are more energy efficient than traditional halogen bulbs. They also last five times longer and use 80% less energy to produce the same amount of light. (Energy Saving Trust)</p>	<p>Consumption and carbon emissions reduction and cost savings should projects be implemented.</p> <p>Considering that lighting can contribute to a third of a building's overall electricity consumption, transitioning to LED lighting is a swift and budget-friendly method to cut costs.</p> <p>For example, a traditional 600x600 4x18w fluorescent fitting, when swapped with a 600x600 30w LED panel, can reduce the related electricity consumption by approximately 55%.</p> <p>In many applications, the volume of fittings in-situ can multiply these savings even further.</p> <p>Adding lighting controls, such as dimming, and PIR sensors can also increase these savings further.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Assets & Property progressing car park lighting schemes currently.</p>
<p>Improve energy and carbon performance reporting</p>	<p>Urgent Director of Environment</p>	<p>Improve availability of energy consumption and carbon emissions information to high consuming building managers e.g. Leisure Centres</p>	<p>Examples of information which could be provided include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly reports on consumption and cost • Updates on work being completed e.g. related to actions contained within the action plan 	<p>This should promote and compliment energy awareness in the Leisure Centres and a sense of ownership to assist with energy management.</p> <p>Improved high level oversight of energy and</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Energy dashboard is progressing well. Year against year comparison capable within the dashboard.</p>

		Improve reporting of energy and carbon performance through the Climate Change Working Group		carbon management through the Climate Change Working Group should increase the likelihood of energy improvements being realised.	Sub-dashboards are being created for the different department to easily view their own figures and compare to previous years.
Building insulation	Short term Director of Environment	Complete detailed building insulation reviews to identify opportunities to upgrade to improve efficiency	<p>During construction, Council policy has been to typically to install insulation to meet but not exceed, the levels stipulated by the Building Control regulations at that time. These levels have varied over time and older buildings often suffer from inadequate insulation by modern standards. There therefore may be significant opportunities to complete insulation upgrades across the Council to reduce heat loss and improve energy efficiency.</p> <p>Works and reviews should focus in on older buildings and those with higher heating related energy consumption. Improvements to insulation levels in buildings will also increase the potential to lower temperature set points in heating boilers due to the reduction in heat loss from those buildings.</p>	<p>Reduced heating related energy consumption, costs, and carbon emissions.</p> <p>Estimated savings of 10% across 30% of the Council's Estate/ Building Stock heating costs (Natural Gas & Kerosene).</p> <p>Savings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs £64.5k • Carbon 255 tonnes 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Insulation to be upgraded as part of any significant refurbishment project.</p> <p>Energy Officer to carry out building surveys on existing insulation levels and recommendation reports.</p>
Space Planning/Rationalisation	Short term Corporate Leadership Team	Develop an effective space rationalisation regime to complement existing work on flexible working arrangements.	<p>Rationalisation of office and other Council space should be prioritised where possible to poorer energy performing buildings.</p> <p>Energy efficiency of existing building stock should be a key consideration for any space rationalisation efforts.</p>	Closing down inefficient buildings/ areas will result in low-cost reduction in energy-related running costs, reducing consumption and carbon emissions	Ongoing as part of corporate centralisation strategy

			No energy efficiency expenditure should be completed on buildings/ areas identified for closure (including those 'at risk')								
Automatic Monitoring & Targeting (a M&T)	<p>Medium term (Short term for the trial installation)</p> <p>Director of Environment</p>	Install an aM&T system in prioritised buildings on key energy supply meters to monitor consumption closely and proactively on a regular basis in targeted buildings.	<p>aM&T is a key tool to proactively monitor and manage energy consumption.</p> <p>Having aM&T systems available will vastly improve the Council's energy management efforts through the timely identification of abnormal consumption patterns allowing them to be investigated and addressed quicker, resulting in reducing unnecessary consumption and costs.</p> <p>It is recommended that such a system is installed in one trial building to assess suitability e.g. on the main incoming energy supplies in one of the leisure centres.</p> <p>Linked to the need for dedicated energy management staff/ resource, aM&T systems are effective tools but only where there is enough time for them to be interrogated on a regular basis.</p> <p>aM&T systems can be purchased outright or can be installed as part of a monthly management arrangement with a specialist consultant who install the system and monitor it on a client's behalf.</p>	<p>It is estimated that this technology can help identify energy savings of 4 – 20% or more, with average cost savings of 10-15% being typically realised.</p> <p>For the Council Estate, estimated carbon reduction would be on the lower side of the typical savings (estimated as 5%-10%) primarily due to the variance in the Estate's building stock.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Savings</th> <th>Carbon</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>5%</td> <td>207T</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10%</td> <td>414T</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Savings	Carbon	5%	207T	10%	414T	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Further investigation into most suitable buildings required.</p> <p>Investigation of costs, energy savings and payback period required for top consuming buildings initially, and then progress to other buildings.</p> <p>Initial costings required to possibly address within 2025/26 budget.</p>
Savings	Carbon										
5%	207T										
10%	414T										

Wind Turbine Generator feasibility study	Medium term Director of Environment	Complete an options appraisal/ feasibility study on the potential to install wind turbine generators at Council sites.	A specialist consultant should be engaged with knowledge of planning implications to complete such an appraisal/ study.	Increased use of renewable electricity, resulting in reduced grid dependency, cost reduction and carbon emissions reduction	Further investigation required.
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Building Specific Actions

Note: buildings referenced in the Action column are presented in order of focus/ priority)

Theme	Priority/ Lead Responsibility	Action	Rationale/ Notes	Benefit	
Building Management Systems	Urgent Director of Environment	Complete detailed BMS reviews at the following locations with focus on energy efficiency to assess potential to reduce consumption through time settings, temperature settings, the installation of additional controls etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Bangor Sportsplex o Comber Leisure Centre o Town Hall, The Castle 	High level reviews of existing BMSs in the locations identified have the potential to reduce energy consumption considerably. By way of example, it was noted that the Air Handling Units (AHU's) associated with the main pool area at Ards Blair Mayne were running 24 hours per day. There is an opportunity here to reduce these 'out of hours' i.e. when the facility is closed, and the pool cover is on. Similarly, there would also be potential to ramp back on the pool recirculation pumps 'out of hours'. The completion of more focussed BMS audits/ reviews are likely to identify more opportunities to reduce consumption, costs, and emissions.	Consumption, cost, and emissions reduction.	Recently completed works to upgrade BMS controls for zoning of NRD. Work now required at Ards Blair Mayne, Bangor Sportsplex Comber LC and Town Hall to be aligned with 10-Year programme for M&E infrastructure renewal Explore the development of a framework to deliver improvements in BMS operational efficiency
Boiler temperature settings	Short term Director of Environment	Complete exercises at each of the following locations to optimise the temperature settings on the heating to maximise the efficiency of the condensing boilers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Comber Leisure Centre o Queen's Leisure Complex o Donaghadee Community Centre o Kilcooley Community Centre 	An ideal design temperature for a condensing boiler commercial heating system would be 65°C supply, 45°C return. The lower return temperature means it can operate in part-condensing mode all year round. Although this is the most efficient setting other factors need to be considered. Such factors include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o how well the building is insulated, o the pipe runs throughout the building/ building size; and o potential for legionella risk. 	Reduced consumption, costs, and emissions	Ongoing Propose aligning this initiative with scheduled major building insulation works to maximise operational efficiency

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Waste Transfer Station, Baloo Drive ○ Ards Blair Mayne (pool water and pool hall temperatures) 	<p>To complement this action, it is therefore vital that building insulation is also upgraded to prevent heat loss and support the lowering of temperature set points on boilers.</p> <p>It is recommended that set points are gradually lowered e.g. by 1°C each time, with periods of monitoring between each lowering until the set points gets to an optimum point in terms of lower temperature set point and building comfort.</p>		
Solar Reflective/Control film on Windows	<p>Short term</p> <p>Director of Environment</p>	<p>Install Solar Reflective/Control film on the Church Street building.</p> <p>Install Solar Reflective/Control film and UPVC double glazing on the NRD Building</p> <p>Install Solar Reflective/Control film and UPVC double glazing on the Ballygowan Community Centre</p>	<p>The identified buildings were very warm during the audit visits, with staff members mentioning the overheating and comfort issues. Additional portable air conditioning had been introduced to try to address the issue (with the associated energy consumption implications).</p> <p>The application of solar film to the windows in those areas experiencing overheating will reduce solar gain and will also retain heat, thereby improving both comfort levels and efficiency.</p> <p>Installing uPVC double glazing offers significant energy-saving benefits by providing enhanced insulation, which helps reduce heat loss in the winter and keeps your the building cooler in the summer, reducing energy costs. Consider contact sensors on windows for feedback to BMS to control heating zone to prevent wasted heating/cooling when windows are left open.</p>	<p>Electricity consumption, costs, and emissions reduction.</p> <p>Film is a widely used solution which can result in up to 1/3 savings on associated cooling requirements/ costs for those spaces which are subject to excessive solar gain. It also has comfort benefits for space users.</p>	<p>New UPVC double glazing is scheduled for installation at this location in Q2 2025/26 (summer), aimed at reducing solar gain and enhancing natural ventilation to support passive cooling.</p> <p>Good practice guidance will be issued to staff to promote effective use of office space for cooling. The need for this initiative will be reviewed following implementation of the above.</p>

<p>Pipework insulation</p>	<p>Short term Director of Environment</p>	<p>Complete insulation of pipework at the following locations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ City Hall, the Castle (significant lengths requiring insulation) ○ Ballygowan Village Hall ○ Marquis Hall, Bangor ○ Ards Blair Mayne (fit jackets to sand filters) 	<p>Insulating pipework will reduce heat loss, thereby improving the efficiency of the heating systems</p>	<p>Electricity consumption, costs, and emissions reduction.</p> <p>Generally, maximum savings of 10-20% can be realised. This however depends on the length of uninsulated pipe run, pipe/ valve size etc.</p>	<p>Quotes received but deemed no feasible as installation costs far outweighed the energy savings its would bring. Possibly look at again in the future if surplus budget available. Insulation was completed at City Hall Bangor previously.</p> <p>Opportunities for improvement will be highlighted during the statutory building surveys.</p> <p>To be aligned with 10-Year programme for M&E infrastructure renewal</p>
<p>Solar PV</p>	<p>Short term Director of Environment</p>	<p>Consider the installation of Solar PV at the following locations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ards Blair Mayne Leisure Centre (add to existing system and check that existing system is operational) ○ Bangor Sportsplex (add to existing system and check that existing system is operational) ○ Queen’s Leisure Complex 	<p>Engage a specialist installer or independent solar consultant to design/ specify systems for each building which optimises the amount of generated renewable electricity used on site, thereby minimising grid electricity use and avoidance of associated carbon emissions.</p> <p>Designs/ specifications should be developed using half hourly consumption/ load data.</p>	<p>Increased use of renewable electricity, resulting in reduced grid dependency, cost reduction and carbon emissions reduction</p>	<p>100kWp Solar PV installation completed at North Road Depot.</p> <p>Installation to progress in Q3 with Ballygowan, Portavogie, Manor Court, Green Road and Skipperstone community centres</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Donaghadee Community Centre ○ Hamilton Road Community Hub ○ Manor Court Community Centre ○ Queen’s Hall ○ Recycling Centre, Bangor ○ Skipperstone Community Centre ○ Glen Community Centre ○ Portavogie Community Centre ○ Green Road Community Centre ○ Alderman Green Community Centre ○ Kircubbin Community Centre ○ North Road Works Depot ○ Kilcooley Community Centre ○ Whitechurch Cemetery ○ 2 Church Street ○ Clandeboye Cemetery ○ Conlig Community Centre 	<p>There is likely to be potential to install additional PV systems at sites with such systems already installed.</p> <p>Consideration should also be given to the ‘future proofing’ of any installations i.e. to facilitate the introduction of battery storage systems once the technology is more commercially available.</p>		<p>Installation to progress in Q4 with Ards Blair Mayne Leisure Centre</p> <p>Pre-construction information to be prepared and detailed designs to commence with Londonderry Park and Bangor Aurora Leisure centre in 2025/26 business year.</p>
Northern Community Leisure Trust (Serco) Operated Facilities	<p>Medium term</p> <p>Director of Environment</p>	Completion of energy assessments for each building/ facility	<p>The completion of the assessments will ensure opportunities to optimise consumption are identified and</p> <p>Due to the nature of the facilities multiple leisure sites and pavilions), these are high consuming buildings and as such have the potential for good energy reduction opportunities to be identified.</p>	Identification of reduction and other opportunities prior to facility handover and assessment of priority to rectify in terms of energy cost, consumption, and emissions reduction.	<p>Explore the development of a framework to deliver improvements in BMS operational efficiency</p> <p>Engage a specialist external provider to conduct building</p>

			Efforts should focus on BMS settings and controls on key plant such as AHUs, pumps etc. and the potential to upgrade existing inefficient fittings e.g. lighting as well as introduce/ increase the use of low/ zero carbon technologies such as solar PV.		performance assessments
Boiler replacement	Medium term Director of Environment	Upgrade the following, less efficient heating boilers to improve the efficient use of energy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Comber Adult Learning Centre ○ Green Road Community Centre ○ Groomsport Boathouse ○ Kircubbin Community Centre ○ Manor Court ○ Portavogie Community Centre ○ Queen’s Hall ○ Skipperstone Community Centre ○ North Road Depot ○ Ards Blair Mayne (replace existing hot water boilers with plater heat exchangers) 	Upgrading to a more efficient heating boiler should result on average 5-10% energy efficiency improvement benefits and subsequent reduction in consumption, costs, and emissions. These upgrades should be prioritised based on consumption and building use/ occupancy levels at each location. Upgrades should be completed after consideration has been given to the fuel switching action point in locations using kerosene.	Consumption, cost, and emissions reduction.	Boilers to be replaced at end of life aligned with 10-Year programme for M&E infrastructure renewal Works completed at Bangor Sportsplex
Low carbon fuel replacement	Medium term Director of Environment	Complete a feasibility review to assess potential to migrate to lower carbon fuels at the following locations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bangor Sportsplex 	The highlighted location using Kerosene as a heating fuel, which is a high carbon fuel when compared to others currently available. Lower carbon options include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Natural Gas- limitations on availability may restrict this option. 	Reduced carbon emissions Currently, LPG costs are comparable with natural gas and kerosene costs. The benefit would be on	Review will start upon completion of the installation of above boilers. Possible heat pump project at

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Kircubbin Community Centre ○ Portavogie Community Centre ○ Queen’s Hall ○ Skipperstone Community Centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Propane- this could be utilized where natural gas is not available. ○ BioLPG- a lower carbon alternative to ‘virgin’ propane, though it is a higher cost fuel. ○ Electric- electrification of heating in buildings could be considered, particularly along with the installation of solar PV. <p>This action focuses on carbon reduction. Cost savings may be realized but its focus is more on reducing the Council’s carbon emissions.</p>	<p>lowering carbon emissions.</p> <p>BioLPG costs are approximately 15-20% higher than standard LPG.</p> <p>Carbon emissions associated with standard LPG are approximately 40% less carbon intensive than kerosene.</p> <p>BioLPG is effectively zero carbon rated.</p>	<p>Kircubbin/Portavogie CC due to current UF heating. Feasibility Study to be carried out by APS</p> <p>To be aligned with 10-Year programme for M&E infrastructure renewal. Pursuing implementation of electric heating to reduce use of hydro-carbon heating systems.</p> <p>To be aligned Solar PV installation programme to allow electrical consumption to be offset by solar generation.</p>
<p>Lighting upgrades to LED equivalents</p>	<p>Medium term</p> <p>Director of Environment</p>	<p>Complete lighting upgrades to LED equivalents (and install PIR/ daylight controls) in the following buildings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Baloo Waste Transfer Station (T5 fittings in the main waste ‘shed’) ○ Bangor Sportsplex (internal lighting T8 & pitches to LED) ○ Glen Community Centre (T8 fittings) 	<p>Upgrading to LED lighting as well as introducing automated PIR and/ or daylight sensors will reduce electricity consumption, costs, and emissions.</p> <p>LED fittings also reduce ‘whole life’ maintenance costs due primarily to their longer life spans.</p>	<p>Electricity consumption, costs, and emissions reduction</p> <p>Typical savings of 30% can be realised through the installation of PIR controls and LED lighting when compared with older fittings.</p>	<p>Lighting controls added to dome area and internally within Ards Blair Mayne to control lights via daylight levels primarily and PIR sensing as secondary control.</p> <p>Detailed design completed at North Road Depot to allow costs to be</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Kilcooley Community Centre (install PIRs to existing LED) ○ Kircubbin Community Centre (T8) ○ Church Street Office ○ Comber Adult Learning Centre ○ Conlig Community Centre ○ Alderman George Green Community Centre (PIR) ○ Redburn Community Centre ○ Tower House (PIR) ○ Portavogie Community Centre (PIR) ○ Queen’s Hall (PIR) ○ Queen’s Leisure Complex (PIR) ○ Manor Court (T5 fittings to be replaced with LED) ○ City Hall, The Castle (existing fittings to be replaced with LED and controls) ○ Ards Blair Mayne (microcell and PIR sensors fitted and time control added) ○ North Road Depot (fit LED lighting to all other areas that currently do not have LED) ○ Aurora (LED replacements of fluorescent and microcell/PIR controls) 			<p>understood for replacement of remaining fluorescent lights with lighting controls.</p> <p>Currently working through zone by zone to replace light fittings and controls at Aurora Leisure Centre, and is ongoing.</p> <p>Opportunities for improvement will be highlighted during the statutory building surveys.</p>
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<p>Electric Storage Heaters</p>	<p>Medium term Director of Environment</p>	<p>Complete upgrades to more efficient alternatives to existing, aged storage heater units in the following locations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ards Arts Centre (partial replacement) ○ North Down Museum ○ Portaferry Market House 	<p>Move to more efficient storage heaters will reduce consumption.</p>	<p>Electricity consumption, costs, and emissions reduction</p>	<p>Opportunities for improvement will be highlighted during the statutory building surveys.</p> <p>To be aligned with 10-Year programme for M&E infrastructure renewal</p> <p>Pursuing implementation of electric heating to reduce use of hydro-carbon heating systems.</p> <p>To be aligned Solar PV installation programme to allow electrical consumption to be offset by solar generation.</p>
<p>Glazing upgrades</p>	<p>Medium term Director of Environment</p>	<p>Complete glazing upgrades to the following buildings.</p> <p>Install secondary glazing in the following listed buildings:</p>	<p>Upgrading glazing at the identified locations will reduce heat loss from the buildings, thereby improving energy efficiency.</p>	<p>Electricity consumption, costs, and emissions reduction.</p> <p>Glazing upgrades from single pane reduces heat loss from the respective areas being upgraded. Up to 15%</p>	<p>Works to install secondary glazed windows at Church Street offices to commence 2025/26</p> <p>Pre-construction information to be prepared and</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ North Road Depot○ Ballygowan Community Centre○ North Down Museum○ Portaferry Market House (1st Floor)○ Tower House		savings on heating costs in those areas can be realised.	detailed designs to commence with North Road Depot and Ballygowan Community Centre in 2025/26 business year.
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Unclassified

ITEM 12

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
	If multiple:
Meeting	Environment Committee
Date of Meeting	04 March 2026
Responsible Director	Director of Environmental Services
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Waste and Cleansing Services
Report title	Northern Ireland Local Authority Municipal Waste Management Statistics, April to June 2025
Attachments	Appendix 1 - LACMW Q2 2025/26 Report
File Reference (if applicable)	53042
Legislation	Other Waste and Contaminated Land (NI) Order 1997
Resource Implications	None Narrative:
Screening Requirements	<i>The Council will commit to consider the implication of all reports under the categories of Section 75, Rural Needs, Data Protection, Climate and Sustainability:</i> Screening of decision not required
Link to Corporate Plan Priority and Outcome	Priority 2: Environmental 2. An environmentally sustainable and resilient Council and Borough meeting our net zero carbon targets If multiple:

Background

The official waste management statistics for the second quarter of 2025/2026 (July to September 2025) have been released by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency.

The aim of this report is to:

1. Report key quarterly waste management performance statistics relative to the same period last year and other Northern Ireland councils.
2. Provide some detail around operational waste service management activities/actions that have been implemented during the quarter with the aim of improving performance.

In summary, all key indicators are very positive for this reporting period. They demonstrate continuous improvement in recycling achieved as a result of householder participation and combined communications, monitoring and enforcement interventions.

Our residual (non-recycled waste) is now disposed of via a new residual waste treatment contract, and we recorded a 38.2% increase in the waste energy recovery rate - the largest of all Councils.

Key headlines

Sources: Quarterly data from DAERA’s quarterly waste statistics reports. Annual performance data from DAERA’s waste statistics 2024/25 annual report. [www.daera-ni.gov.uk]

Table 1: Overall performance 2025/26 vs 2024/25

Household Waste Recycling Rate (KPI(a2)) (National recycling performance indicator)					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual
2024 - 2025	59.8%	58.1%	53.6%	51.5%	56.1%
2025 - 2026	63.1%	61.0%			
CHANGE	+3.3%	+2.9%			
Waste From Household Recycling Rates (Official UK recycling measure)					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual
2024 - 2025	59.7%	58.0%	53.5%	51.4%	55.9%
2025 - 2026	62.7%	60.9%			
CHANGE	+3.0%	+2.9%			
NI Household Recycling Rate Ranking (KPI(a2))					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual
2024 - 2025	3rd	3rd	3rd	2nd	3rd
2025 - 2026	1st	2nd			
CHANGE	up 2	up 1			

Composting Rate					
	Q1	Q2	Q 3	Q 4	Annual
2024 - 2025	38.8%	38.1%	30%	25.7%	33.6%
2025 - 2026	37.3%	37.3%			
CHANGE	-1.5%	-0.8%			

Dry Recycling Rate					
	Q1	Q2	Q 3	Q 4	Annual
2024 - 2025	20.6%	19.5%	23.3%	25.4%	22.1%
2025 - 2026	25.4%	23.3%			
CHANGE	+4.8%	+3.8%			

The headlines for household waste recycling are:

- **Household waste recycling rate (KPI(a2))** rose by 2.9% compared to the same quarter last year, from 58.1% to 61%. This is 7.4 percentage points higher than the NI average of 53.6%. We were ranked second out of the eleven NI Councils for our household waste recycling rate, up one place from the same quarter last year.
- **Waste from households recycling rate** rose 2.9% to 60.9% compared to the same quarter last year.
- **Household waste composting rate** fell by 0.8% compared to the same quarter last year - from 38.1% to 37.3%. Our household waste composting rate was 6.7% higher than the NI average of 30.6%. Ards and North Down was ranked joint 3rd in the council performance table for this stream.
- **Household waste dry recycling rate** rose by 3.8% compared to the same quarter last year - from 19.5% to 23.3%. Our household waste dry recycling rate (i.e. recycling of items other than organic food and garden waste) was 0.6% higher than the N.I. average of 22.7%.
- **Kerbside compostables capture rate** is 78.2% compared to a NI Council average of 71.3%.

Table 2: HRC performance 2025/26 vs 2024/25

HRC waste received (total tonnes)					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual
2024 - 2025	5,769	5,971	4,555	4,663	20,959
2025 - 2026	5,824	6,275			
CHANGE	+1%	+5.1%			

HRC residual (tonnes)					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual
2024 - 2025	1,474	1,445	1,245	769	4,933
2025 - 2026	1,364	1,283			

CHANGE	down 7.5%	down 11%			
HRC recycling (tonnes)					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual
2024 - 2025	4,295	4,526	3,310	3,894	16,026
2025 - 2026	4,460	4,992			
CHANGE	up 3.8%	up 10.3%			
HRC recycling (%)					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual
2024 - 2025	74.0%	75.8%	72.7%	83%	76.4%
2025 - 2026	76.6%	79.6%			
CHANGE	up 2.6%	up 3.8%			

The headlines for HRC performance are:

- **Total HRC waste per capita** averaged 37.9kg, compared to an average 46.4kg per capita for all other NI councils.
- **HRC residual waste per capita** was 7.6kg, compared to an average of 16.6kg per capita for all other NI councils.
- **HRC recycling percentage** was 79.6% in this quarter, compared to an average rate of 64.2% for other Councils. During the same quarter the previous year, our HRC recycling rate was 75.8%, compared to an average of 65.6% for other Councils.

Table 3: Kerbside performance 2025/26 vs 2024/25

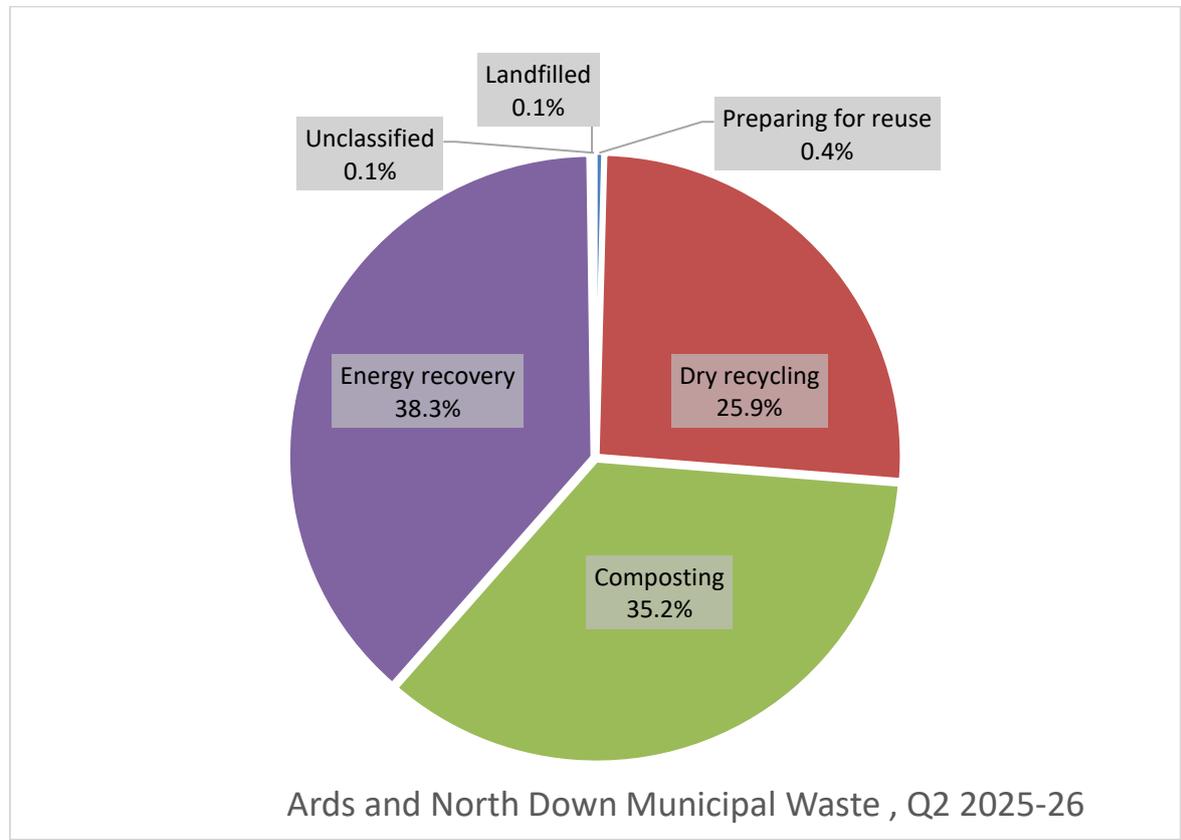
Total kerbside waste collected (tonnes)					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual
2024 - 2025	16,109	16,038	13,919	14,446	60,512
2025 - 2026	15,610	15,874			
CHANGE	down 3.1%	down 3.0%			
Kerbside residual collected (tonnes)					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual
2024 - 2025	6,029	6,543	6,143	7,205	25,920
2025 - 2026	5,992	6,744			
CHANGE	down 0.6%	up 3.0%			
Kerbside recycling collected (tonnes)					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual
2024 - 2025	10,080	9,495	7,776	7,241	34,592
2025 - 2026	9,618	9,130			

CHANGE	down 4.6%	down 3.0%			
Kerbside collected for recycling (%)					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Annual
2024 - 2025	62.6%	59.5%	55.8%	50.1%	57.1%
2025 - 2026	61.6%	57.5%			
CHANGE	down 1%	down 2.0%			

The headlines for kerbside collection performance are:

- **Kerbside collected waste per capita** averaged 95.9kg during this quarter. The average for all other Northern Ireland councils was 90kg per capita.
- **Kerbside collected residual waste per capita** averaged 40.7kg per capita, compared to an average of 47.2k per capita for the other Northern Ireland councils.
- **Kerbside collected recycling per capita** averaged 55.2kg per capita, compared to an average of 42.9kg per capita for the other Northern Ireland councils.
- **Kerbside recycling percentage** (the proportion of waste collected for recycling through our kerbside bin collection) was 57.5%. Although this is lower than for the same quarter in the previous year, it remains higher than the 47.6% average for other Northern Ireland councils.

Municipal waste overview



In Quarter 2 of 2025/26, 61% (13,831 tonnes) of the Council’s municipal waste was sent for recycling or composting. This included all material received through kerbside collections, HRCs, bring sites, and non-household collections.

The Council reported that 0.4% (93 tonnes) was sent for re-use or repair.

For residual waste, 38.3% (8,691 tonnes) was sent for energy recovery during the quarter, and 0.1% (20 tonnes) was rejected as non-target material by our reprocessors and sent to landfill.

Operational Performance Improvement Measures

MC1 - Marketing and Communications Indicators

50 social media posts were issued across Facebook, Instagram and X. These represented a mix of educational and operational messages including:

Paint Reuse Scheme at HRCs, School Uniform Project (Donations and Pop-Up shops promotion), Recycling videos (Blue Bin Burp, Recycling Journey, Glass Recycling), aluminium/foil recycling, Chewing Gum Grant/purchase of equipment, and Battery Recycling/HRCs Fires. Operational messages included HRCs summer opening hours and the pedestrian access trial, temporary changes to bin collections (Bank Holidays) and facilities access (HRC sites and public toilets.)

1 x press release issued. Copy available on website at [Council Secures Funding to tackle Chewing Gum on Borough's Streets - Ards and North Down Borough Council](#)

Chewing Gum – Purchase of Equipment
3 July 2025

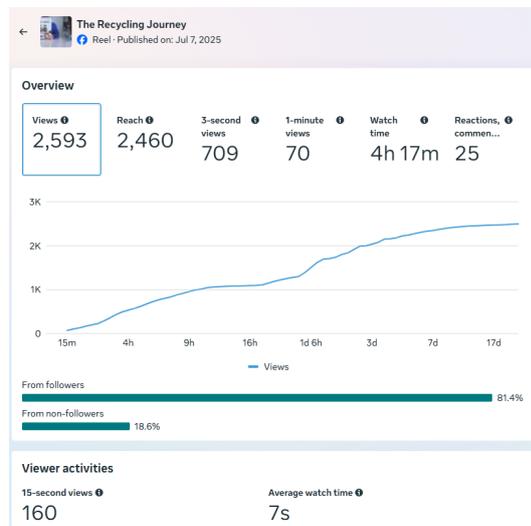


Performance

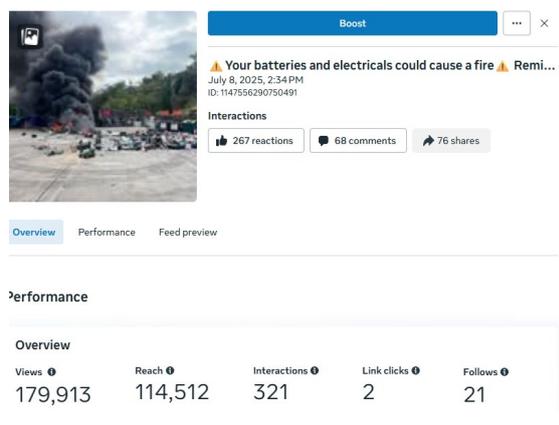
Overview				
Views	Reach	Interactions	Link clicks	Follows
24,061	13,843	87	15	1



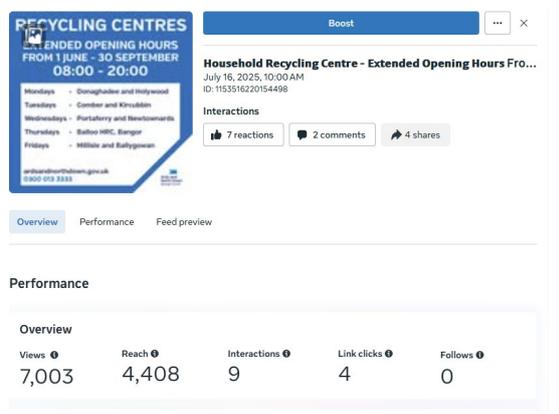
Recycling Journey video 7 July 2025



HRC fire/safe battery disposal 8 July 2025 [Posted in response to a fire at N'Ards HRC]



Extended summer Opening Hours at HRCs 16 July 2025



RECYCLING CENTRES

EXTENDED OPENING HOURS FROM 1 JUNE - 30 SEPTEMBER 08:00 - 20:00

- Mondays** - Donaghadee and Holywood
- Tuesdays** - Comber and Kircubbin
- Wednesdays** - Portaferry and Newtownards
- Thursdays** - Balloo HRC, Bangor
- Fridays** - Millisle and Ballygowan

ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk
0300 013 3333

School Uniform Project: Multiple posts throughout the month
 Example - Date for Diary post re: pop up shops / 18 July 2025

Performance				
Overview				
Views	Reach	Interactions	Link clicks	Follows
29,288	16,458	96	--	3



HRC Pedestrian Access trial
 21 July 2025

Performance				
Overview				
Views	Reach	Interactions	Link clicks	Follows
17,873	8,984	46	5	3

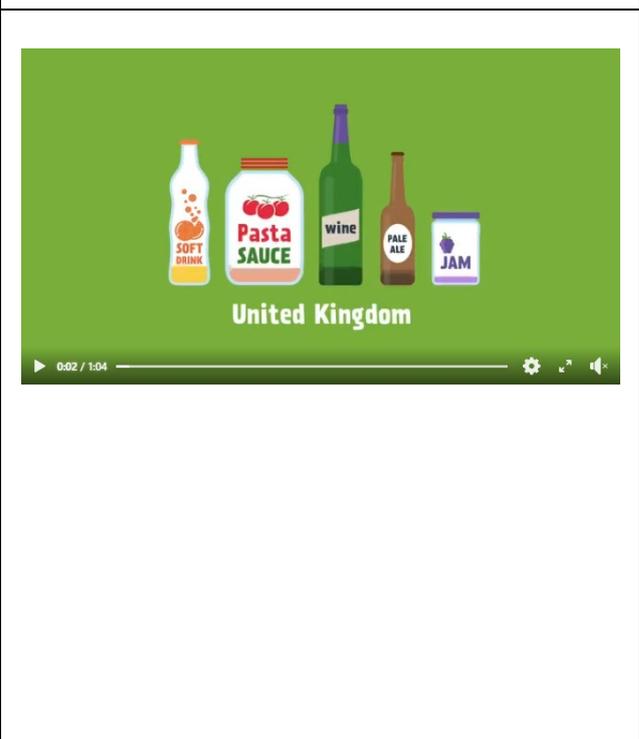


Glass Recycling video
 22 July 2025

Overview					
Views	Reach	3-second views	1-minute views	Watch time	Reactions, comments...
1,298	1,262	260	15	1h 20m	3

From followers: 83%
 From non-followers: 17%

Viewer activities
 15-second views: 62
 Average watch time: 4s



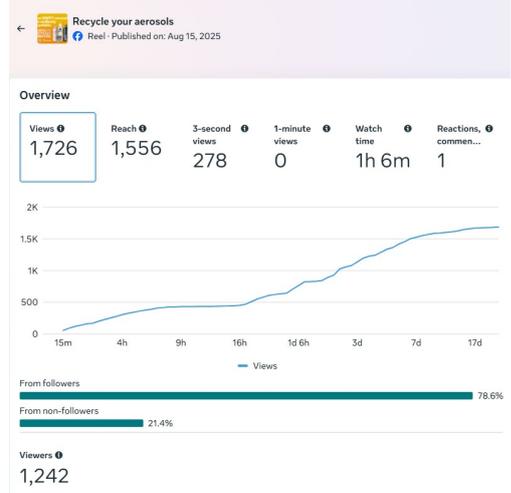
Blue Bin Burp video 28 July 2025



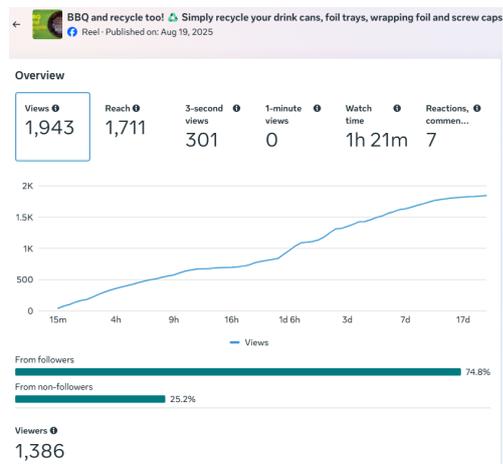
Paint Reuse Scheme Expands Borough-Wide 30 July 2025



Aerosol (aluminium) Recycling 15 August 2025 (Alupro video assets)



Foil (aluminium) recycling – BBQs
19 August 2025 (Alupro video assets)



Recycle week / 22-30 September 2025

Multiple posts across FB and Insta using WRAP assets / characters with Ards and North Down Recycles tagline



MC2 Bin-Ovation

- 5 Bin-Ovation 'News and Info' articles were published including four service / Bank Holiday updates and a post promoting International E-Waste Day.
- 9 Bin-Ovation push notifications issued.
- 1,928 Bin-Ovation downloads recorded.

MC3 – Officers delivered 16 community and engagement events, talking to 776 people.

- 12 x Summer Schemes
- 1 x Schools
- 1 x Adult groups
- 1 x Community Safety project (Urban Samurai)
- 1 x Brownies group

Household Recycling Centre Indicators

HRC1 Volume of blue bin recyclable materials separated from mixed waste by residents on-site: 757,220 litres.

This equates to approximately 32 tons of blue bin waste. This material includes recyclables removed from residual waste following intervention and engagement with HRC staff. This practice both increases recycling and provides an opportunity to engage with site users on the value of recycling. - promoting more efficient separation of waste in the home and greater use of blue bins at the kerbside.

This represents just one type of recyclable waste category which was prevented from entering landfill skips at HRCs because of our more focused attention to supervision of landfill skip access; many other recyclable waste types will also have been prevented from entering the landfill skips.

HRC2 Number of visitors turned away from site: 697

HRC2a – Number of HRC bookings: 85,160

HRC2b – Average number of HRC visits per household: 1.18 (averaged across the 71,976 households in the Borough)

2.3 Kerbside Household Waste Collections Indicators



KS1 – Number of recycling alert stickers applied to grey bins (yellow): 1913

KS2 – Number of recycling alert stickers applied to grey bins (amber): 133

KS3 – Number of recycling alert stickers applied to grey bins (red): 53

2.4 Summary and Trend Analysis of Indicators

Indicator Reference	Monitoring Period 9 (Jan to Mar 2025)	Monitoring Period 10 (Apr to Jun 2025)	Monitoring Period 11 (Jul to Sept 2025)
MC1 Social media posts	83	41	50
MC2 Print press and online articles	6	0	1
MC3	9	17	16

Engagement events/sessions			
HRC1 Blue bin waste (litres)	677,500	719,940	757,220
HRC2 Visitors denied entry	653	645	697
HRC2a No. of bookings	73,224	80,136	85,160
HRC2b Average no. of HRC visits per household in the Borough	1.02	1.11	1.18
KS1 Yellow warning stickers on grey bins	1860	1938	1913
KS2 Amber warning stickers on grey bins	145	161	133
KS3 Red warning stickers on grey bins	71	88	53

2.5 Summary Analysis

Our overall recycling performance demonstrates an increase of 2.9 percentage points over the same quarter in 2024/25 with the Council ranked 2nd in the NI council recycling performance table. This quarter's performance is largely due to good diversion at the Council's network of HRCs.

The total tonnage of material collected at the kerbside and the tonnage collected for recycling both dropped by 3% in comparison to the same quarter in 2024/25. The tonnage of non-recyclable material collected at kerbside increased by 3%.

Waste tonnages fluctuate across the year because of changes in demand for services and seasonal factors, for example, increases in garden waste during spring and summer. One of the reasons for this could be the sensitivity of garden waste to seasonal growth conditions. In comparison to the same period in 2024/25, Q2 2025/26 had higher rainfall and below average sunshine which may have resulted in reduced growth and less material being placed out for kerbside collection.

During the quarter July to September 2025, we recorded:

- A 3.8% increase in the proportion of HRC materials diverted for reuse and recycling over the same period in 2024/25.
- A household waste recycling rate of 61%; the second highest household recycling rate of the 11 NI councils. This is an increase of 2.9 percentage points from the same quarter in 2024/25.

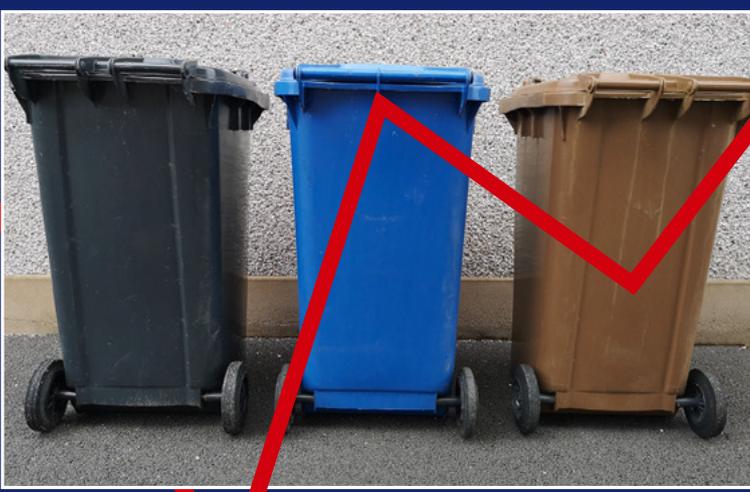
ANDBC's recycling performance is driven by strong resident engagement, making clear feedback on results and material destinations essential. The live NI Resources and Waste Management Strategy provides an indication of the Department's future policy framework, but clearer policy direction is anticipated when DAERA publishes its response to its 2024 Rethinking Our Resources consultation. The recycling consultation response is expected to outline consistent material collection requirements and new opportunities to support workplace recycling. This will inform and shape the Council's future waste and recycling service plans.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council Notes this report.

Northern Ireland Local Authority Collected Municipal Waste Management Statistics

Quarterly provisional estimates for July to September 2025



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

An Roinn
**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

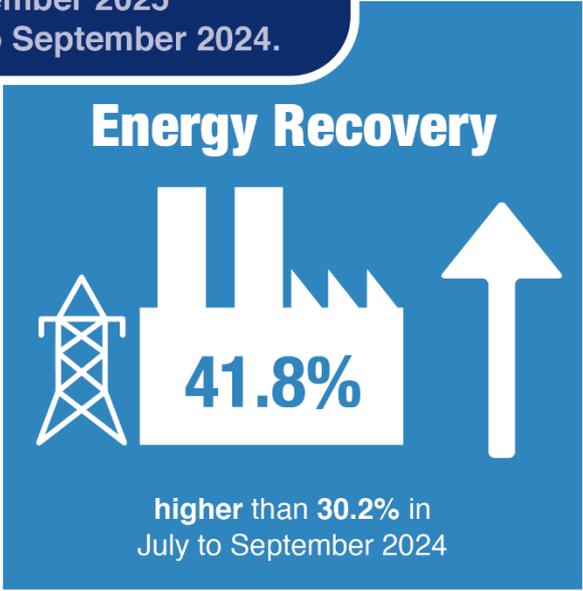
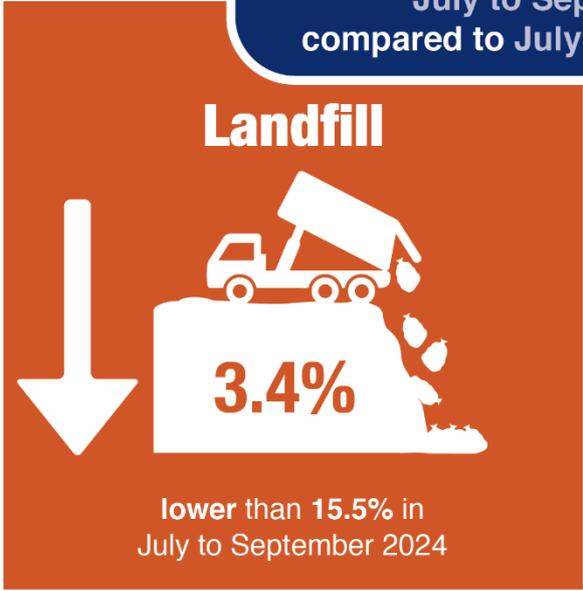
Department o'
**Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers**

www.daera-ni.gov.uk

Northern Ireland waste management statistics – July to September 2025



Recycling, energy recovery and landfill rates of LAC municipal waste July to September 2025 compared to July to September 2024.



Key Points

- Northern Ireland's councils collected 273,182 tonnes of waste during July to September 2025. This was higher than the 267,125 tonnes collected during July to September 2024.
- During July to September 2025, 53.3 per cent of waste collected by councils was sent for recycling which was similar to the 53.0 per cent recycling rate recorded in the same quarter of 2024.
- The landfill rate for waste collected by councils was 3.4 per cent in July to September 2025 which was a fall from the rate recorded during July to September 2024 (15.5 per cent). In the longer term, landfill rates decreased from 71.8 per cent recorded in July to September 2006.
- During July to September 2025, 41.8 per cent of waste arisings were sent for energy recovery which was higher than the 30.2 per cent reported in July to September 2024. In the longer term, energy recovery rates have increased from 0.1 per cent recorded during July to September 2009.
- Household waste accounted for 87.1 per cent of all Local Authority collected (LAC) waste during this period.
- The recycling rate for household waste only was 53.6 per cent during July to September 2025, similar to the 53.8 per cent recorded during July to September 2024. The landfill rate for household waste was 3.3 per cent which was lower than the rate recorded in July to September 2024 (15.1 per cent).

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Accredited Official Statistics	11

Reader Information

This document may be made available in alternative formats, please contact us to discuss your requirements. Definitions of key terms used in this publication are available in [Appendix 2 – Glossary](#) of the latest Annual Report.

Purpose

This is a quarterly publication which reports provisional statistics on the key measurements of local authority collected municipal waste for councils and waste management groups in Northern Ireland.

The data contained are used by local authorities, waste management groups, Devolved Administrations and UK Government to measure progress towards achieving targets from various waste strategies including:

- The revised Northern Ireland Waste Management Strategy
- The Waste Framework Directive

Data on household recycling was a population indicator for the previous Programme for Government (PfG) and has been included as an indicator in the current PfG 2024-2027 'Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most'.

The data are also used by media, the general public and special interest groups to inform policy and lifestyle choices related to the treatment of waste.

Further details are available in [Appendix 1 – Main Uses of Data](#) of the Annual Report.

Next Updates

- Provisional statistics for October to December 2025 are scheduled for publication in April 2026.
- Finalised data for 2025/26 are scheduled to be published in November 2026 and will supersede previously published data from the four quarterly returns for that financial year.
- The scheduled dates for all upcoming publications are available from the GOV.UK statistics release calendar: www.gov.uk/search/research-and-statistics

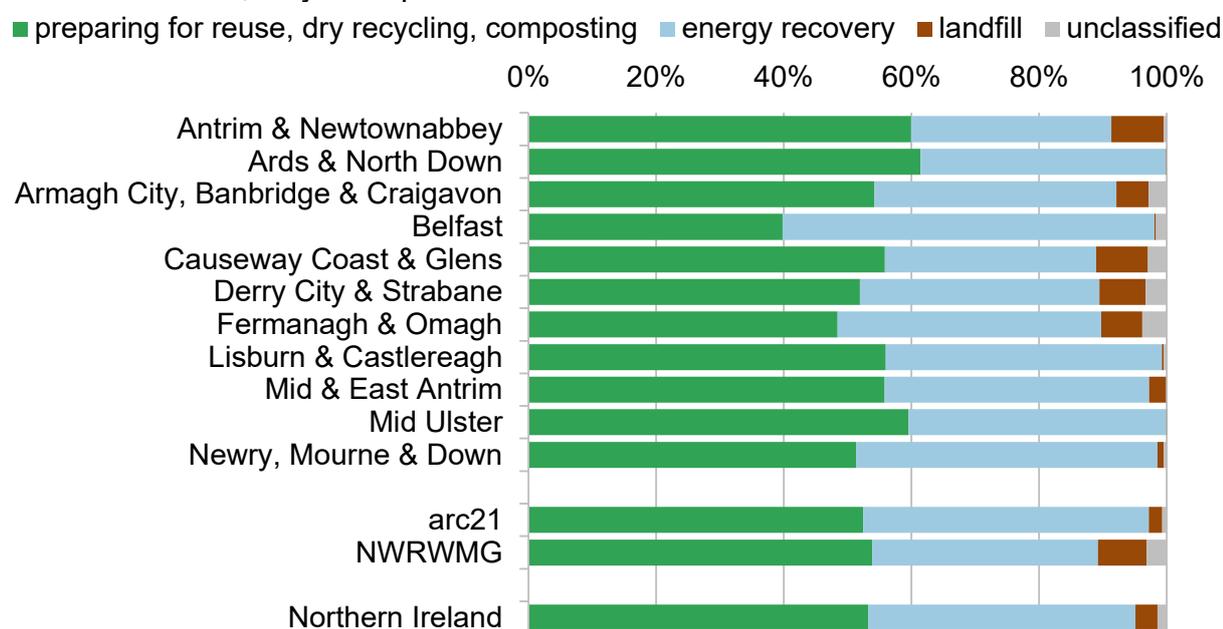
Overview

This report presents information on the quantities of Local Authority Collected (LAC) municipal waste managed in Northern Ireland between July and September 2025. The report is split into four sections, each of which cover local authority collected municipal waste and, where appropriate, household waste:

- waste arisings (pages 2-3),
- recycling (pages 4-5),
- energy recovery (pages 6-7),
- landfill (pages 8-10).

Figure 1: Waste preparing for reuse, dry recycling, composting, energy recovery and landfill rates by council and waste management group

Northern Ireland, July to September 2025



At the Northern Ireland level, 53.3 per cent of waste collected by councils was sent for preparing for reuse, dry recycling and composting between July and September 2025. Energy recovery accounted for 41.8 per cent and 3.4 per cent was landfilled. The remaining 1.5 per cent unaccounted for is likely to involve moisture and/or gaseous losses from the amount of waste collected. Each of the rates are discussed in detail in the appropriate section of the report.

The rate of waste sent for preparing for reuse, dry recycling and composting is similar to the rate reported in July to September 2024 (53.0 per cent). The landfill rate decreased by 12.1 percentage points whilst the energy recovery rate increased by 11.6 percentage points from July to September 2024. Household waste accounted for 87.1 per cent of total waste collected by councils. Household waste includes materials collected directly from households via kerbside collections, material taken to bring sites and civic amenity sites as well as several other smaller sources.

Waste arisings

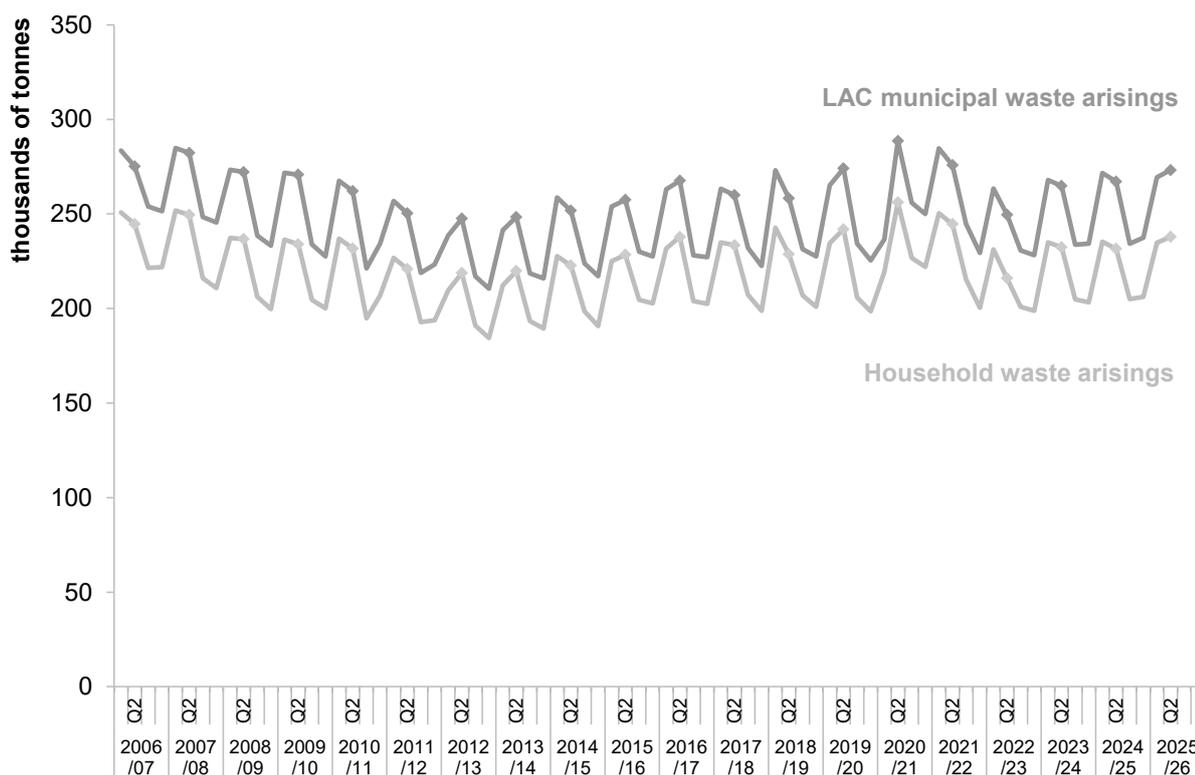
Northern Ireland’s councils collected 273,182 tonnes of waste between July and September 2025. This was higher than the 267,125 tonnes collected during July to September 2024. Factors affecting LAC municipal waste arisings, the majority of which is household waste, include individual household behaviours, the advice and collection services provided by councils, the state of the economy and weather conditions during the specific quarter.

The total quantity of local authority collected (LAC) municipal waste arisings is a key performance indicator, KPI (j). This indicator is used to monitor performance under the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015.

Since 2006/07 household waste has usually accounted for 86-90 per cent of total waste collected by councils each quarter, apart from April to June 2020 when Covid-19 restrictions resulted in a larger than normal proportion of household waste being collected. During July to September 2025 household waste accounted for 87.1 per cent. The remaining 12.9 per cent was non-household waste such as rubble/soil and commercial/industrial waste.

Figure 2: Waste arisings

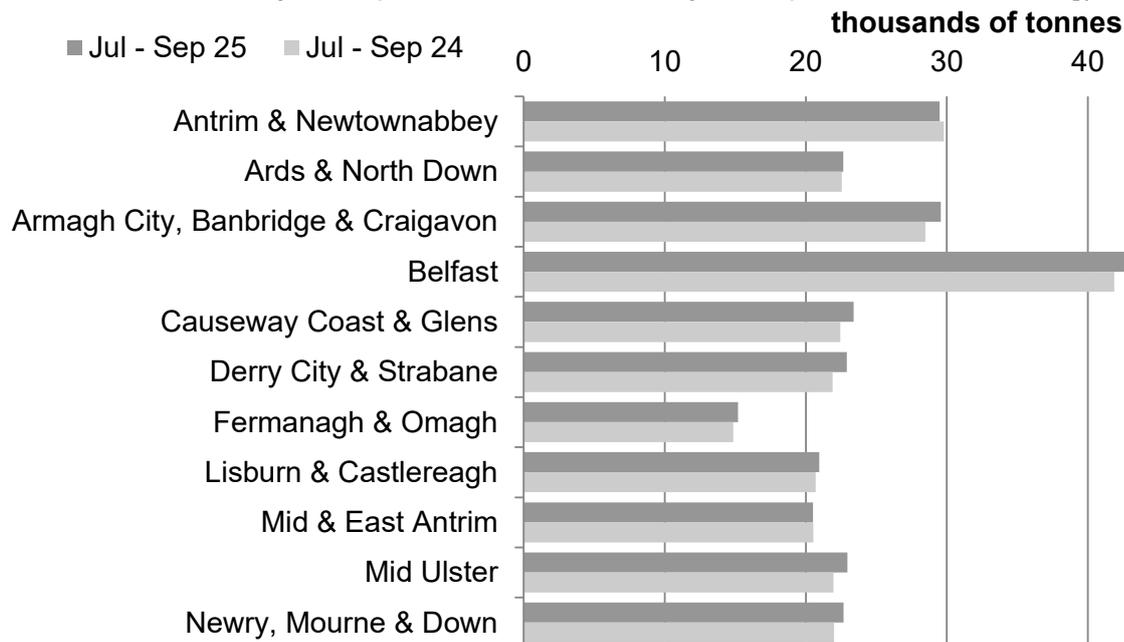
Northern Ireland, quarterly from 2006/07 to 2025/26 KPI (j)



The longer-term trend for July to September saw a gradual reduction in LAC municipal waste arisings of 12.3 per cent across five years, from 282,309 tonnes between July to September 2007 to a low of 247,487 tonnes between the same three months of 2012. From July to September 2012 until a peak for the July to September quarter of 288,605 tonnes in 2020, arisings showed a generally increasing trend. From the July to September peak, arisings fell to 249,575 tonnes in July to September 2022 with 273,182 tonnes collected in the latest quarter.

Figure 3: Waste arisings by council

Northern Ireland, July to September 2024 and July to September 2025, KPI (j)



The proportion of waste collected by each council broadly reflects the population within the councils. Belfast collected the most waste at 42,841 tonnes, whilst Fermanagh & Omagh collected the least at 15,197 tonnes.

Nine councils reported an increase in total arisings in July to September 2025 compared to the same period in 2024 with one council reporting a decrease in total arisings¹.

Derry City & Strabane reported the largest increase from July to September 2024 and July to September 2025 of 4.6 per cent followed by Mid Ulster and Causeway Coast and Glens with increases of 4.5 per cent and 4.3 per cent respectively. Antrim and Newtownabbey reported a decrease in total arisings in July to September 2025 compared to the same period in 2024, falling by 1.0 per cent.

The total quantity of waste collected at kerbside was 1.3 per cent higher than the amount collected in July to September 2024 while the quantity of waste collected at civic amenity sites increased by 5.4 per cent.

These statistics can be found in Table 1 and Table 2 of the accompanying data tables spreadsheet and in the [time series dataset](#).

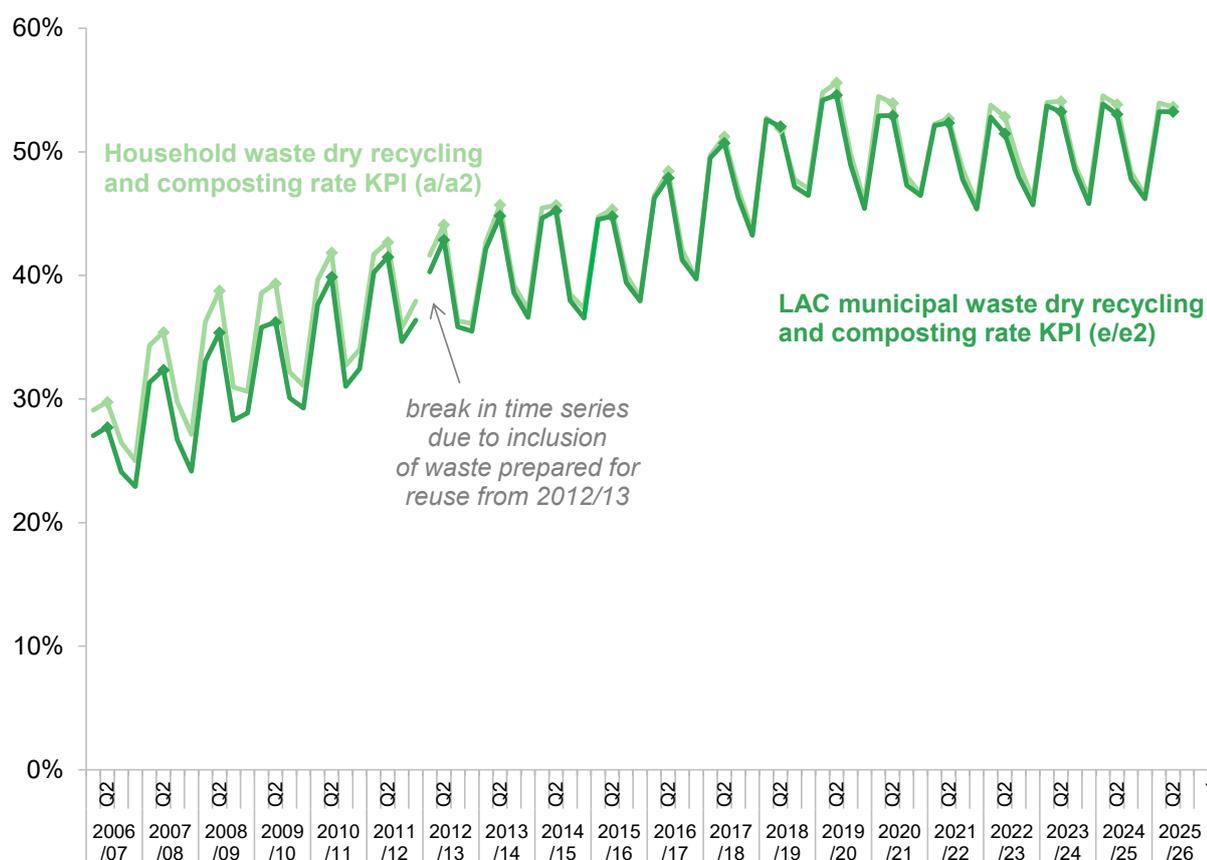
¹ Very small increases or decreases in figures (<0.5 per cent or <0.5 percentage points) are not highlighted in the commentary.

Recycling

This section of the report looks at local authority collected (LAC) municipal waste and household waste recycling rates, both of which include waste sent for preparing for reuse, dry recycling and composting.

There were 145,479 tonnes of LAC municipal waste sent for preparing for reuse, dry recycling and composting (referred to as 'recycling' for the rest of this section) during July to September 2025. The waste recycling rate was 53.3 per cent, similar to the 53.0 per cent of waste sent for recycling during July to September 2024.

Figure 4: Waste sent for preparing for reuse, dry recycling and composting
Northern Ireland, quarterly from 2006/07 to 2025/26, KPIs (a), (a2), (e) and (e2)



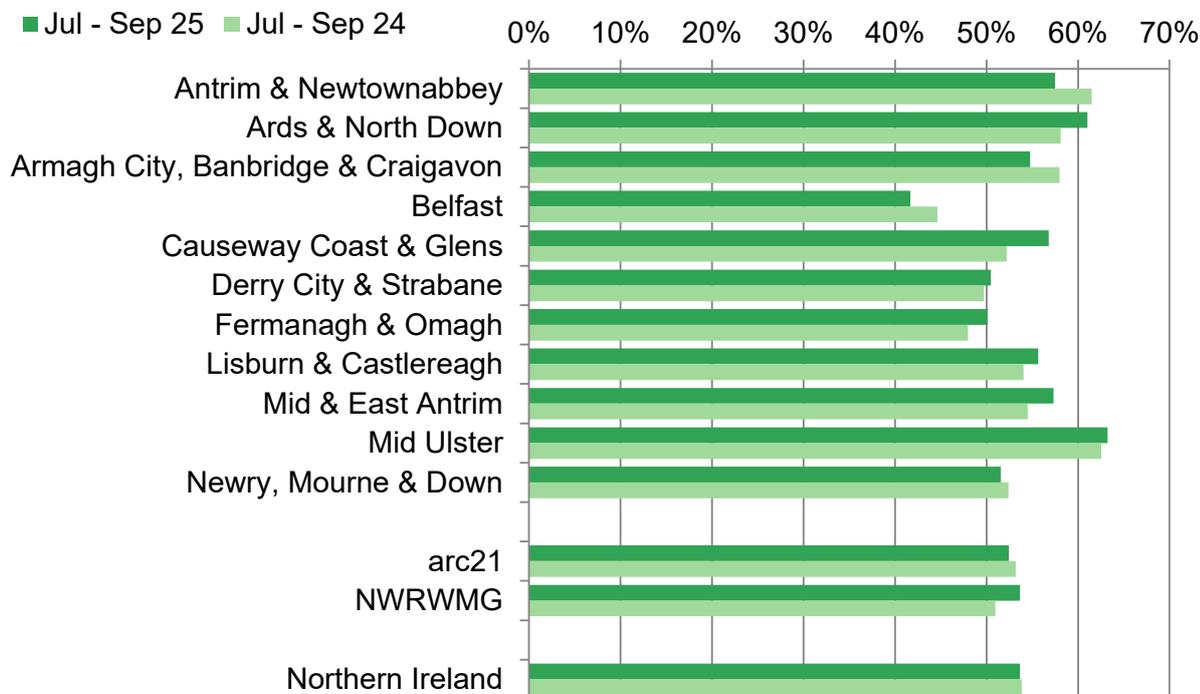
These statistics show seasonal variation which is driven by the quantities of garden waste sent for composting. Greater quantities of garden waste are collected and sent for composting during the spring and summer quarters, April to June and July to September.

The longer term trend for Local Authority Collected municipal waste recycling for the July to September quarter has been a general increase from 27.7 per cent in July to September 2006 to 54.6 per cent in July to September 2019. Since July to September 2020 the local authority collected municipal waste recycling rate has remained relatively similar with a recycling rate of 53.3 per cent recorded in July to September 2025. Waste sent for preparing for reuse (835 tonnes this quarter) has been included since 2012/13 and adds 0.3 percentage points to the overall LAC recycling rate in July to September 2025.

The recycling rate for household waste was 53.6 per cent during July to September 2025, similar to 53.8 per cent recorded during July to September 2024. The proportion of household waste sent for dry recycling made up 22.7 per cent, composting 30.6 per cent and preparing for reuse 0.4 per cent.

Figure 5: Household waste preparing for reuse, dry recycling and composting rate by council and waste management group

Northern Ireland, July to September 2024 and July to September 2025, KPI (a2)



Causeway Coast & Glens reported the largest increase in their household recycling rate compared to July to September 2024 at 4.6 percentage points followed by Ards & North Down with an increase of 2.9 percentage points. Five other councils recorded an increase in their household recycling rates in July to September 2025 compared to July to September 2024. The household recycling rate decreased in four councils with the largest decrease of 4.0 percentage points recorded in Antrim & Newtownabbey.

The arc21 waste management group (Antrim & Newtownabbey; Ards & North Down; Belfast; Lisburn & Castlereagh; Mid & East Antrim; and Newry, Mourne & Down) recycling rate for household waste was 52.4 per cent while NWRWVG (Causeway Coast & Glens and Derry City & Strabane) had a recycling rate for household waste of 53.6 per cent during July to September 2025.

Waste sent for recycling is included in a number of key performance indicators, KPI (a), (a2), (e), and (e2). These indicators are used to monitor performance under the Local Government (Performance Indicators and Standards) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015. The household waste annual recycling rate is included as an indicator for the current [Programme for Government \(PfG\) 2024-2027 'Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most'](#).

These statistics can be found in Tables 4 and 12 of the accompanying data tables spreadsheet and in the [time series dataset](#).

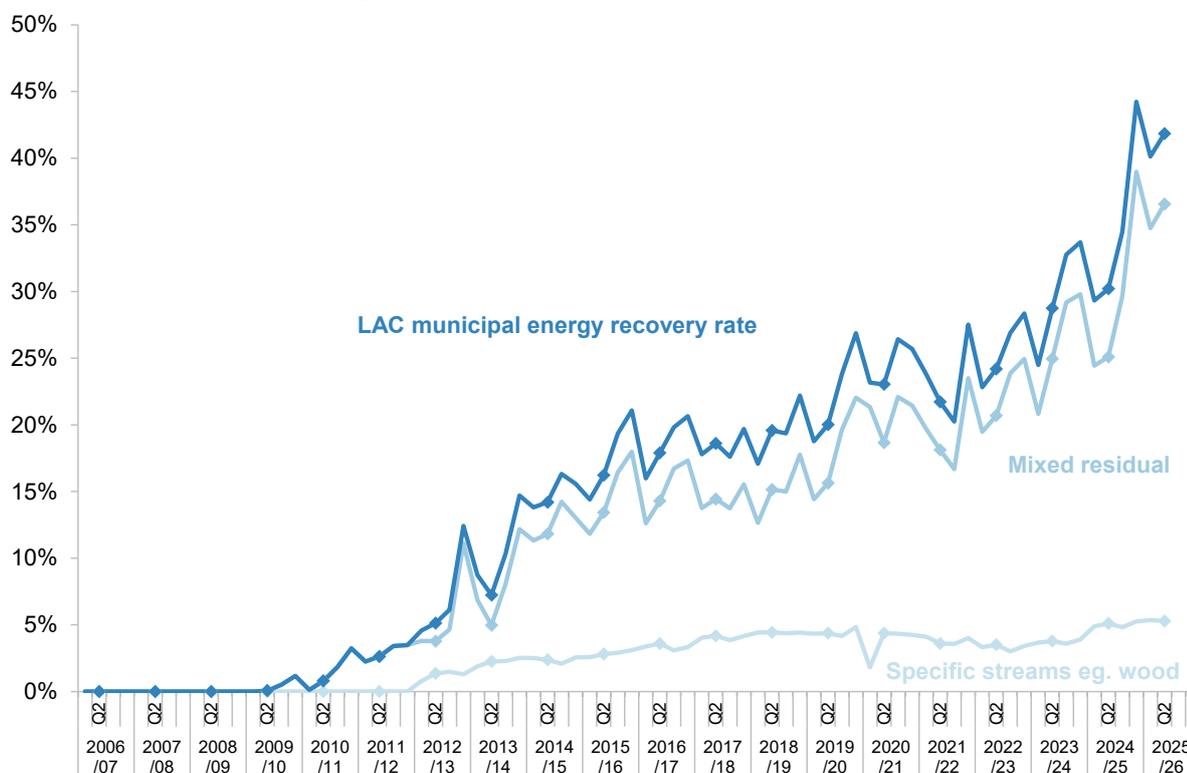
Energy recovery

This quarterly report includes statistics on energy recovery, which is the term used when value is gained from waste products by converting them into energy. All energy recovery statistics reported in this section are derived from material sent for energy recovery via incineration/gasification, although other technologies exist. Energy recovery via anaerobic digestion is not included in this section and is explained further in [Appendix 1 – Limitations of Data](#) of the latest Annual Report.

From July to September 2025, 114,283 tonnes of waste arisings were sent for energy recovery. This produced a waste energy recovery rate of 41.8 per cent, the highest July to September quarterly energy recovery rate ever recorded for Northern Ireland. The majority of energy recovery comes from mixed residual waste, with a smaller proportion from specific streams, e.g. wood.

Figure 6: Waste sent for energy recovery via incineration

Northern Ireland, quarterly from 2006/07 to 2025/26

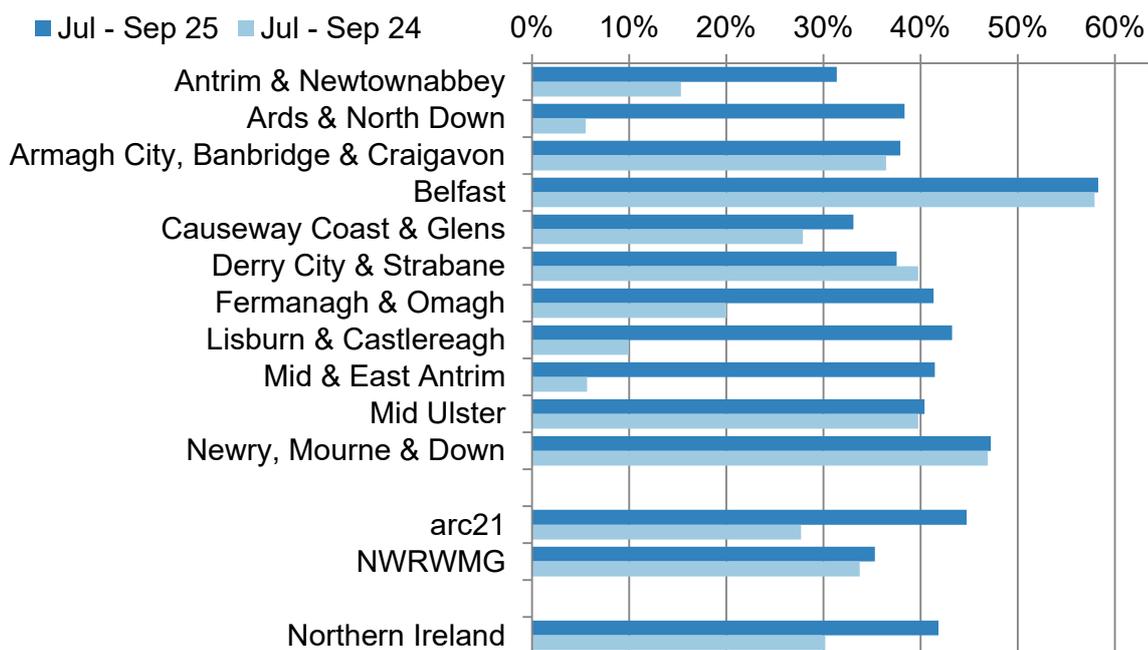


There was zero, or very small quantities, of waste sent for energy recovery before 2009/10. Strong growth began during 2009/10 with the energy recovery rate increasing from 0.1 per cent during July to September 2009 to 41.8 per cent for the same three months of 2025. Most of the growth since 2009/10 has been driven by mixed residual waste sent for energy recovery (from 0.1 per cent during July to September 2009 to 36.6 per cent in July to September 2025). The specific stream proportion was 5.3 per cent in July to September 2025.

Mixed residual waste sent for energy recovery is combustible residual waste collected from the kerbside and from civic amenity sites which is processed into refuse derived fuel at material recovery facilities. The specific streams element of energy recovery is mostly wood but also includes furniture, carpets and mattresses, mostly collected from civic amenity sites.

Figure 7: Waste energy recovery rate by council and waste management group

Northern Ireland, July to September 2024 and July to September 2025



The highest waste energy recovery rate was recorded in Belfast at 58.3 per cent followed by Newry, Mourne & Down with 47.2 per cent. Eight councils recorded an increase in the waste energy recovery rate in July to September 2025 compared to the same quarter in 2024 with the largest increase of 35.8 percentage points recorded in Mid & East Antrim followed by Lisburn & Castlereagh with an increase of 33.3 percentage points and Ards & North Down reporting an increase of 32.8 percentage points. Fermanagh & Omagh reported a 21.3 percentage points increase while Antrim & Newtownabbey reported an increase of 16.0 percentage points. Derry City & Strabane recorded a decrease in their waste energy recovery rate in July to September 2025 compared to the same quarter in 2024.

The arc21 waste energy recovery rate was 44.7 per cent while NWRWVG had a waste recovery rate of 35.3 per cent during July to September 2025. The energy recovery rate for arc21 increased by 17.0 percentage points in July to September 2025 compared to the same quarter in 2024

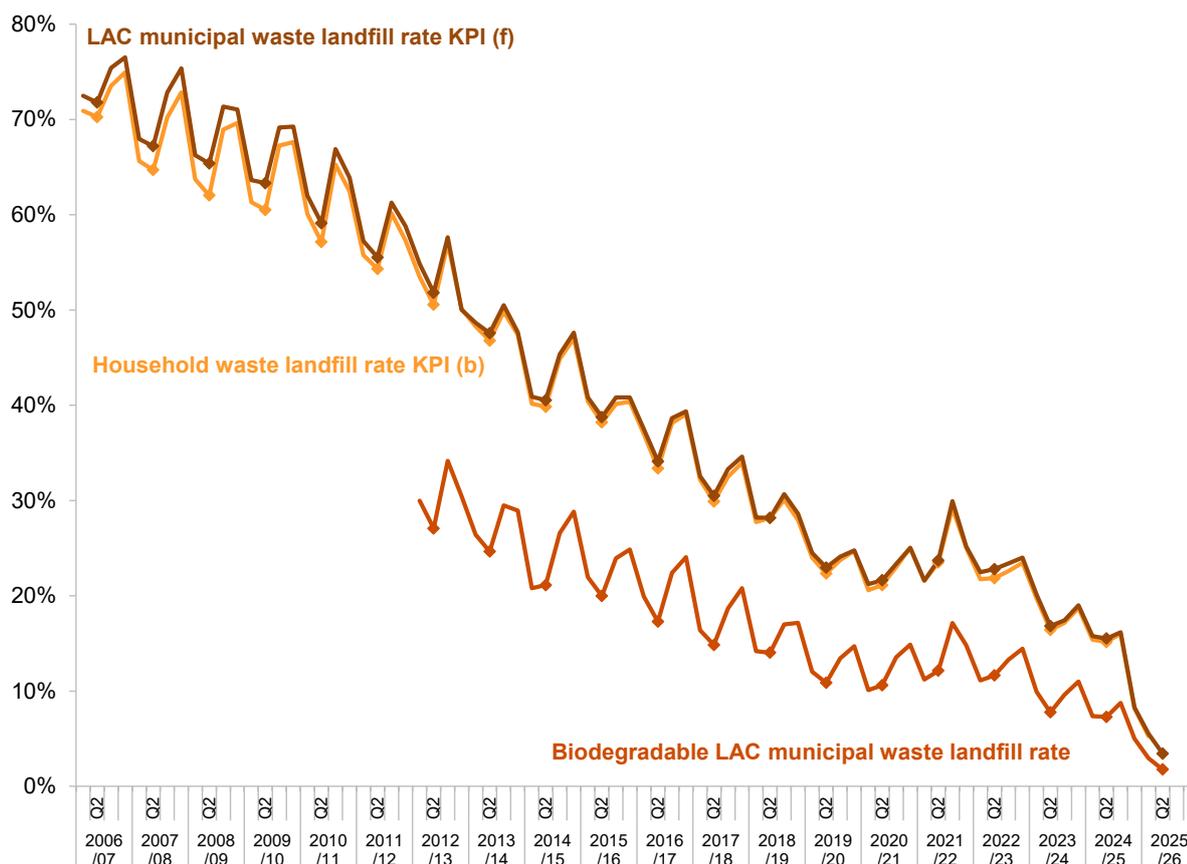
These statistics can be found in Tables 3 and 4 of the accompanying data tables spreadsheet and in the [time series dataset](#).

Landfill

The quantity of LAC municipal waste sent to landfill decreased by 77.3 per cent, from 41,441 tonnes during July to September 2024 to 9,399 tonnes during July to September 2025. The quarterly landfill rate for July to September 2025 is 3.4 per cent, lower than the 15.5 per cent recorded during the same quarter of 2024 and the lowest landfill rate recorded for Northern Ireland.

Figure 8: Waste sent to landfill

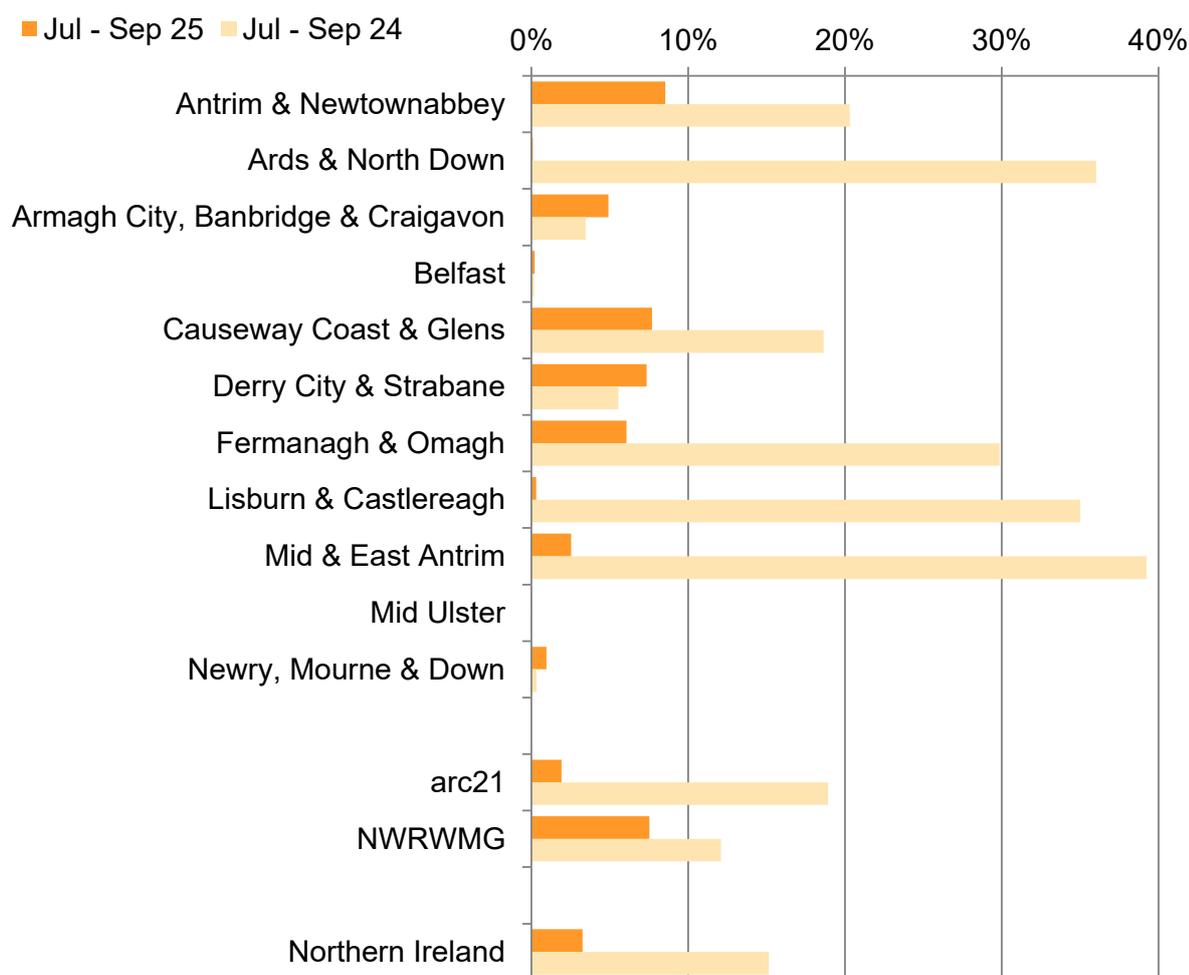
Northern Ireland, quarterly from 2006/07 to 2025/26, KPIs (b) and (f)



The longer term trend has seen the July to September LAC municipal waste landfill rate fall from 71.8 per cent in 2006 to a low of 3.4 per cent in 2025. Note that the landfill rate exhibits seasonality and the April to June and July to September quarters tend to have lower rates than October to December and January to March. The seasonality stems from the higher level of compostable garden waste arising during spring and summer. The latest quarterly landfill rate for household waste only is 3.3 per cent.

Increasing energy recovery rates, a tax on landfill and the statutory requirement for all councils in Northern Ireland to provide households with a container for food to enable its separate collection have all contributed to the long-term reduction in landfill rates.

Figure 9: Household waste landfilled by council and waste management group
 Northern Ireland, July to September 2024 and July to September 2025, KPI (b)



The highest household waste landfill rates in July to September 2025 were recorded in Antrim & Newtownabbey, Causeway Coast & Glens and Derry City & Strabane at 8.5, 7.7 and 7.3 per cent respectively. Mid Ulster, Ards & North Down, Belfast, Lisburn & Castlereagh and Newry, Mourne & Down each recorded a landfill rate of less than one per cent in July to September 2025.

The household waste landfill rate decreased in six district councils in July to September 2025 compared to the same three months in 2024, with the largest decrease recorded in Mid & East Antrim at 36.7 percentage points followed by Ards & North Down, Lisburn & Castlereagh and Fermanagh & Omagh with 35.9, 34.7 and 23.8 percentage points reduction respectively. Three district councils recorded an increase in the waste landfill rate in July to September 2025 compared to the same quarter in 2024 with the largest increase of 1.8 percentage points recorded in Derry City & Strabane.

The arc21 household waste landfill rate was 1.9 per cent while NWRWVG had a household waste landfill rate of 7.5 per cent during July to September 2025. The household waste landfill rate for arc21 decreased by 17.0 percentage points in July to September 2025 compared to the same quarter in 2024.

The large reductions in landfill recorded can be linked to the increase in waste sent for energy recovery over the same period.

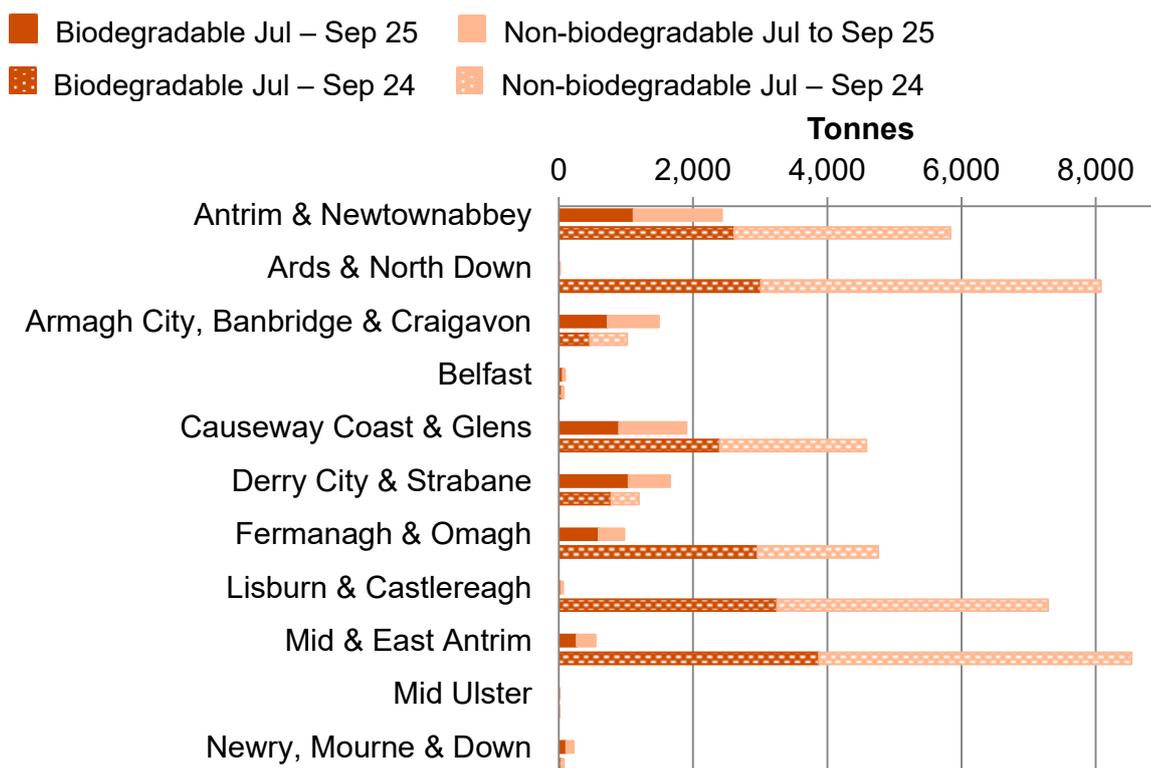
Biodegradable waste to landfill

The Landfill Allowance Scheme (NI) Regulations 2004 (as amended) placed a statutory responsibility on councils, in each scheme year, to landfill no more than the quantity of biodegradable waste for which they had allowances. The scheme concluded at the end of the 2019/20 financial year, however the continued monitoring of biodegradable waste is required for [existing target commitments](#) which specify that it must be reduced to 35 per cent of the total amount (by weight) of biodegradable municipal waste produced in 1995.

Northern Ireland’s councils sent 4,848 tonnes of biodegradable waste to landfill during July to September 2025, which was 51.6 per cent of all LAC municipal waste sent to landfill. During the same quarter last year, 19,450 tonnes of biodegradable waste was sent to landfill which was 46.9 per cent of all LAC municipal waste sent to landfill.

Figure 10 displays the tonnages of LAC biodegradable and non-biodegradable waste sent to landfill by each council, comparing them with other councils and to the same quarter last year.

Figure 10: Biodegradable and non-biodegradable waste to landfill by council
Northern Ireland, July to September 2024 and July to September 2025



There is considerable variation between councils in the quantities of biodegradable waste sent to landfill, as well as the proportion of biodegradable waste in total landfill. The largest proportions of biodegradable waste in landfill were recorded in Belfast, 63.8 per cent (58 tonnes) followed by Derry City & Strabane, 62.8 per cent (1,041 tonnes) and Fermanagh & Omagh, 61.0 per cent (595 tonnes). Ards & North Down recorded the lowest proportion of biodegradable waste in landfill at 39.9 per cent (8 tonnes).

Accredited Official Statistics

[Accredited Official Statistics](#) are official statistics that have been independently reviewed by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR) and confirmed to comply with the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#). Producers of accredited official statistics² are legally required to ensure they maintain compliance with the Code.

These accredited official statistics were independently reviewed by OSR in September 2013 in the [Assessment Report 263 Statistics on the Environment and Waste Management in Northern Ireland](#), with [accreditation confirmed](#) in January 2014. They comply with the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice and should be labelled National Statistics (or 'accredited official statistics').

In October 2020, a [compliance check](#) was completed for the waste statistics produced by each of the UK regions and confirmed that the designation (or 'accredited official statistics' labelling) should continue. The trustworthiness, quality and value of the statistics, including the coherence of the data source, methods and quality assurance (QA) arrangements, and the presentation of the statistics were reviewed with a final outcome that the statistics can continue to be designated as National Statistics (or 'accredited official statistics').

Our [Statistics Charter](#) provides further details of how we apply the principles and practices of the Code in the production and publication of our official statistics.

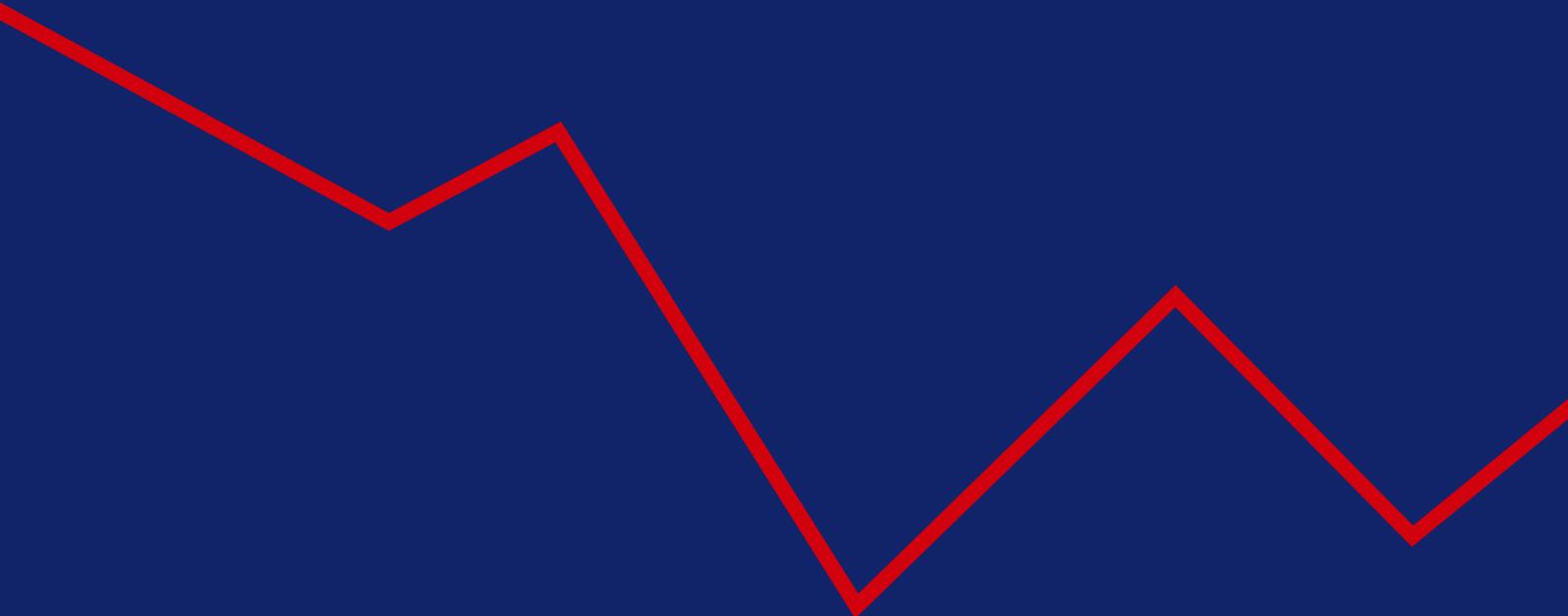
Our statistical practice is regulated by OSR. They set the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics that all producers of official statistics should adhere to.

You are welcome to contact us directly with any comments about how we meet these standards.

Alternatively, you can contact OSR by emailing regulation@statistics.gov.uk or via the [OSR website](#).

² Accredited Official Statistics are called National Statistics in the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007

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and Rural Affairs**

An Roinn

**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Department o'

**Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers**

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Unclassified

ITEM 13**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
	If multiple:
Meeting	Environment Committee
Date of Meeting	04 March 2026
Responsible Director	Director of Environmental Services
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Parks and Cemeteries
Report title	Notice of Motion 665 - Comber Dog Park
Attachments	
File Reference (if applicable)	NOM 665
Legislation	Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014
Resource Implications	Staffing Narrative: carry out proposed feasibility study
Screening Requirements	<i>The Council will commit to consider the implication of all reports under the categories of Section 75, Rural Needs, Data Protection, Climate and Sustainability:</i> Screening of decision not required
Link to Corporate Plan Priority and Outcome	Priority 3: Social 1. An engaged Borough with citizens and businesses who have opportunities to influence the delivery of services, plans and investment If multiple:

Background

In April 2025 the following decision was agreed by Council as a result of a Notice of Motion:

“We are all aware that dog ownership has increased significantly over the past years. There is fenced of area on “Muckers” in Comber, which is currently being used by NIW which when they have finished their work might lend itself to creating a dog park. This Council should bring back a report that explores the options for creating a dog park in Comber.”

The proposal reflects growing interest in dedicated spaces for dog exercise and training, as well as wider discussions around balancing the needs of different park users. Designated dog parks can offer benefits in certain contexts, including more structured off-lead space and clearer separation of uses. However, they can also have implications for park management, maintenance, enforcement, biodiversity, amenity use, and community cohesion. As such, any proposal requires consideration of evidence of need, suitability of the location, and local community views.

Key Issues

Comber Park Way currently operates as an informal open space used by a range of park users, including walkers, families, and dog owners. There is no existing designation for off-lead dog use beyond general controls, and no formal dog park infrastructure is in place. Operational feedback indicates that the site functions largely without significant conflict between user groups. The space consists of a large green with tree planting, pitch, skate park etc. The site is characteristically “wet” and ground conditions during wet spells would be marshy. The site is also used weekly for a Park Run event.

Parks officers met with colleagues in NET, to request a history of enforcement records relating to dog use which have been reviewed to identify any trends or recurring issues that might support the need for a designated dog park facility. Recorded Incidents – Muckers Field, Comber (2018–2024): A review of dog-related reports at Muckers Field, Comber, since 2018, shows there were four recorded dog-related incidents over this recorded period i.e. 2018, 2020, 2023 & 2024.

The frequency and nature of these incidents are extremely low and largely relate to isolated matters. Enforcement data does not indicate persistent issues with dog behaviour, lack of control, or conflict at this location. Taken together, the available evidence suggests that current arrangements are generally effective and that there is no demonstrated enforcement-led requirement for the introduction of a dedicated dog park or introduction of a dog order at Comber, Muckers Field at this time.

Officers considered the following factors when assessment of need:

- Compatibility with existing recreational uses and shared-space principles
- Potential impacts on grassed areas and wider biodiversity
- Health and safety considerations, including fencing, entrances and dog/user separation
- Visual and amenity impacts on neighbouring residents
- Ongoing maintenance, cleansing, and enforcement requirements

- Capital and revenue cost implications

While no clear operational or enforcement need has been identified, it was recognised that potential community interest and demand should be explored further. A local community survey and engagement exercise was undertaken to:

- Gauge public support or opposition to a dog park at Comber, Muckers Field
- Understand levels of satisfaction with current arrangements
- Identify specific concerns, including noise, safety, cleanliness, and impact on other users
- Capture views on alternative approaches or locations, if relevant

Analysis of the Comber Dog Park survey responses shows that the majority of participants do not support the creation of a designated dog park at Mucker's Field. Out of the 35 responses received, 19 respondents indicated "No", compared with 14 who said "Yes" and 2 who were unsure. Notably, 28 respondents identified as dog walkers, indicating that feedback came predominantly from regular users who walk dogs in the area. The "No" responses frequently referenced concerns about cost, antisocial behaviour, dog waste, and a preference for maintaining the space as it currently is or using it for alternative community purposes such as seating, gardens, or other recreational facilities. Many daily users of the field, including dog owners, expressed apprehension that a dedicated dog park may not address existing issues and could introduce new management or enforcement challenges. Overall, the survey results indicate that there is not sufficient community support at this time to advance the proposal for a designated dog park at Mucker's Field.

Next Steps

This site is a vital asset for Comber, and public consultations highlighted strong community interest in its improvement. To move forward, officers will progress a feasibility study to develop a formal business case for future budget review.

Summary

Current enforcement and operational data do not justify the immediate creation of a dedicated dog park in Comber. While public opinion remains divided over the dog park proposal, there is a clear case for a comprehensive feasibility study to inform a potential business case for the wider site.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council **Notes** this report.